

Chuck Rolfe, Editor
RR2
Kinburn, Ontario
Canada
KOA 2H0
Phone(613)832-1653



FOUNDED
HALIFAX, N.S.
1981

FOUNDING MEMBERS

Glenn Adams P. Eng
André Desrochers
Leo Goneau
Terry Havlik
Michael Walsh

First President
Stanley F. Watts

DIPPERS DIGEST #34

15 September, 1998

DIVING TENDER #7

WAVES. There are all kinds of waves, there's those little ones that are pleasing to the eye, to the ones that make you horribly sick, and a multitude of types in between. This particular sort is made when an object sinks beneath the surface and leaves a Sirs cap in the centre of the increasing rings, and it happened something like this. It was time for this Senior Sir to take his departure from the senior Service for quieter pastures and leave the assortment of odd bodies behind, perhaps with fond memories, although at times that Peeper across the harbour had laid some pretty strong language on his eardrums from time to time, usually because (being an ex-lad of mine) he not only stuck up for his Sirs and the troop, but the Aces too! So, with their high feelings for him, the whole Diving Unit on that cold coast commenced making all the requisite preparations for his proper send-off. Naturally the Stewards were kept busy refilling his glass bottomed mug with that 150 proof Nelsons Blood, simply to ensure that he was in the proper frame of mind, but still able to manoeuvre. Meanwhile the Aces were oiling up the four-wheeled dolly's wheels, which had sitting on its foundation a white (originally) cast iron bathtub with a length of hawser tied to the front steering axle. Now the idea behind all this was to have a passing-out parade, with the Aces towing him to the Naval Armament Depot and on to the Gun Wharf, where he would dismount and board the Pace Craft (a moulded thin-skinned plywood punt!) and then be towed by swimmers back to the abbatoir (French Cable Wharf). In due time, he appeared at the Brow, saluted and, ramrod straight (marvellous capacity he had), marched to his personal chariot where he made himself comfortable, ensuring his dress sword was properly stowed and smiled benignly as all the lads cheered him off through the Main Gate (there was only one). The Ace who thought up the idea of a rope on the front for hauling the cargo surely had stopped there, not thinking to install one on the back end. Everything went as planned while going up the hill and on the level, however going down hill things degenerated as no one had thought of a braking system to control the vehicle. Mind you, throughout the ordeal of free-running down that fairly long grade leading to the entrance of the Naval Armament Depot, not once did that smile falter, or the ramrod stiff back bend; it may be he thought of it as a part of the program - together with all the panicky language being uttered by the pullees and brakees! In any case, the arrival and departure otherwise went smoothly, with the enthusiastic swimmers moving him smartly along until the whole procession came abreast of the floating relic from WWII at French Cable Wharf, called home by some, and differently by others! Now, whether it was pre-planned or not, the lads let go of the hauling line and went to the sides of the boat and started rocking it. The Sir (smart lad that he was) figured out that he was in for a dunking, and being in his best bib-and-tucker certainly didn't want to get it wet, so he unsheathed his weapon and commenced to smack the tilters with the flat of his ceremonial blade. About the only thing he accomplished was to unbalance himself to the point of no return, and decided that if he was going to enter the water he would do it in the proper form and manner. So, with feet together, sword raised in the proper Pusser salute, hardly causing a ripple, he sank beneath the surface, leaving his hat floating in an ever expanding ring of displaced water. Now that is called a "cute" wave. There are other types also, like waves lapping against a beach shore, the proud bow wave caused by a Tribal Class Destroyer steaming full out (when the Aces are on the ball, of course), and then there are the stormy which freeze on the gun's and rigging where it threatens to wreak havoc and instability (not to mention an upset stomach), plus the kind that sucks an ogling sightseer out into the briny when they get too close to the edge of a rocky shore, thereby paying me a visit from time to time. There is a scientific reason behind these rogue waves, but who in heck cares, it just happens occasionally, but it is best to be out of its way when it does. At times however, there is not much of a choice, like what happened when that floating bathtub, manned by some of my old crew had a part in it, and went something like this. It was towards the end of a class of future

diving Sirs, were Standard Diving was under instruction, and someone decided to run an exercise where the Diver, after a deep dive, would do most of his decompression stops in a chamber. Here he would be in relative comfort with a companion to chat with and pass the time, even accompanied with a supply of hot coffee and those tiny sandwiches with the crust cut off, fer gawds sakes! Not so the training done by our lads, they did it in the oggin with a leaky suit, ensured so by the instructor of course, and the fire in my bogie also allowed to die out, so there was no heating for them in the dead of winter. Anyway, the African Queen steamed out of the harbour (she had a hot exhaust then) and anchored out in deep water near the approaches to that great city (Halifax) and the class made ready with the student and the Stand-by Diver, who was also in Hard Hat rig waiting for the dive to commence. That particular summer day was picture post-card perfect with no clouds in the blue sky, no wind, no fog, no rain, not even a ripple from the head of McNabs Island right down to Bedford Basin. Everything appeared to be just perfect, except that once past Lawlor Island the sea let you know it was still the boss by producing these regular oily-like undulations from zero to about three to four foot high swells, just enough to roll that bathtub with a propellor on its blunt end, even though the anchor held firm and kept her pointed in one direction. For whatever reason, the Boats Sir deferred the decision to dive to the Cox'n (an ex lad of mine) who was to say the least, uncomfortable, kept looking up to the sky, out to seaward, and down at the swells, shook his head and said that it would be safer to wait for a while to see if the waters would abate a little. He had, you see, a picture in his mind of the Diver being bounced around on that metal stage and something unpleasant taking place - after all, they were Sirs! The wait was getting to be pretty long and the Divers becoming more uncomfortable, what with the sun beating down and them sitting on their stools fully clad, less the helmet, so both were told to strip down to their corselettes until it was time to boot up again. As the time went by, the Boat Driver's agitation became more obvious as the finger-snapping, palm thumping became more pronounced (a nervous habit) and said to hell with it, its too damn late to start the exercise and time to get on home before supper, and to hell with my Cox'n and his okay, wishing no doubt to be back in his palm treed garden. The sidelong glances and mutterings from the class didn't seem to faze my lad at all, who was then ordered to ring down to crank up the main engines (there was only one), but when there wasn't even a quiver on the tachometer, and no belch of blue smoke emitting from the funnel, he went down to the hole and found the two Stokers and the Electrician arguing about whose fault it was that those eight pistons weren't going up and down like they were supposed to do when it was in a WWII Sherman tank. Although he hadn't been in the Armoured Corps, he knew he wasn't to blame because the Gennies had kept running and his batteries were topped up, and to prove it he crossed a couple of terminals, which promptly melted his screwdriver and burned the palm of his hand. The Aces, seeing the result of his Pusser testing, agreed that there was plenty of juice and the problem had to be elsewhere. First they checked the oil, yep okay, then the cooling system, yep okay, then removed the starter and nudged the crank over, yep okay and not seized (they had just put in a gallon of oil shortly before), next they took the twister over to the battery bank and hooked up, yep okay, now what? Aha! it had to be in the cables, and sure enough one of the lines had corroded inside its sheathing where it was unseen from the outside. So the Aces were off the hook and the Electrician, being happy that he was not in the poop, passed on the bad news to the Sir. Quite some time had passed before this tidbit of information came to light and, in the meantime, not wishing to spend any more time rolling around the oggin hooked to the bottom by anchor chain while the engineroom staff sorted out the problem, he radioed the Diving Unit of his plight. They had a Glen tug dispatched to take the 'dead in the water' African Queen under tow, which is a rather unpleasant feeling, I know. However, he was spared this when a cloud of blue smoke came out the pipe, and the tachometer came alive, which brought a smile and the finger snapping to a halt. All the bunks below were taken up by the class under training, who were all exhausted by that waiting around and doing nothing. The crew was employed securing all the odds and ends that needed tying up, while the anchor was hoisted and brought up as the bathtub was making a gentle turn to starboard. In the wheelhouse, disgusted looks were still directed at my lad, along with a few snide remarks which were starting to take effect, when that favourite prayer HOLY C-----t!!! was screamed out by one of the hands who happened to be looking out the Port window, while everyone there eye-balled the scene with stark horror and started their Hail Mary's or Our Fathers. The Cox'n shoved the throttle "balls-to-the-walls" (she only had one), got down on one knee so that he could spin that wheel faster than he ever had before, in order to bring its pointy end up to meet this humongous wall of sea that was bearing down on them at a tremendous rate of speed. But, before the nose came around completely, it hit the Port bow with a force strong and high enough to push that high bridge structure over until one of the lads was standing upright, leaving his footprints on the white insulation on the starboard side, while

the rest were hanging white knuckled to the windows or sliding across the deck, but not so for my lad as he had the wheel to cling to. That first wall of water was bad enough, let alone the trough that followed, after cresting that wave there was nothing under her bow except space, and being heavier than air it plunged downwards while starting to right herself. After what seemed like an eternity the Boat was stopped dead in her tracks by the following wave, and that's when the athiests started to call on gawds, trying to talk with a mouthfull of briny, which had entered when their jaws were agape, through the open windows. A fluke perhaps, but one that coming on sort of an angle, was enough to push that bunch of formed steel a little straighter and then weathered the tons of sea water that were bound to bury her right there. Inside the wheelhouse the lads were picking themselves off the deck, or wherever they had landed, the wheel was being spun around the opposite way in hopes of correcting the swing - with no result as there wasn't any water there. There also wasn't any sunlight to see the rev counter go way past its safety indication as the tank engine acted like it was on a downhill charge at the enemy! I do not know how much Oxygen was saved to make any difference to the environment, but there wasn't a breath taken until the Boat stopped her plunge and started to rise to the surface again, shaking off water like a shaggy dog would. The rest of the oncoming waves decreased in size, allowing the lads to turn their blue faces pink again by feeding their starved lungs. Down below in the crews quarters, all those who were in the Port bunks were either on the deck or wrapped around the Messdeck table stanchion. In one case, one lad landed on top of the chap in the Starboard side, who quickly and loudly proclaimed it wasn't his day for boys and would he get the eff off! Everything had been emptied out of the cold box and the deck resembled a giant omelette, the workshop and dressing room looked like the aftermath of a typhoon had struck it. However, outside of a broken wrist and some bruises(egos too) there wasn't any great damage done by the unforgiving sea, and she continued on her turn to Starboard. By this time everyone had their wits about them, if somewhat shakily, the Cox'n remembered the tug that had been dispatched and was now about a half a mile away, informing them that a "Big One" was headed their way and that the Boat was now mobile and out of harms way - speaking cool as a cucumber!! Upon peering at the Glen tug it was noted it ride up the crest, bows and propeller dry and spinning furiously, disappear completely, then emerge like L'il Toot in the cartoons, bob up and down a few times and turn for home. The Sir, after seeing there was a competent body on the wheel, made Rounds for any serious damage inspection, and noting none decided that a little nerve tonic was in order as his hands had started to shake and his stomach to flip flop. Proceeding to his locker where his emergency rations were stored, he found it a bit difficult at first to get the top off the jug, but it finally came undone and he had a few glugs of this libation, whereupon he found he could screw it back on pretty smoothly. Nelsons Blood will do that. Anyway, during the run back to the Diving Unit at French Cable Wharf there were no more snide remarks or sidelong glances, finger snapping nor mutterings from anyone - the next one could be the "Farewell wave".

To Be Continued.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

For those whose membership with the Association will be expiring as of 31 Dec 98, we have enclosed a Membership Renewal Form in the September Issue. This is the method we utilize to inform members they should complete the Form, attach a cheque for one or more years and send to the Chapter they wish to be a member of. Those who do not receive this Form - not to worry, you are a paid-up member for the following year. Membership fees continue to be only \$10.00 per year, which hasn't changed since the start-up of CNDA - a real value to you. We urge you to continue your membership which will ensure you continue receiving every issue of the DIPPERS DIGEST. We value you as a member in our Fraternal Organization.

RETIREMENT

The SKAALRUD Dynasty has come to an end in the Canadian Navy as Darryl has now joined his brothers Milt and Larry Skaalrud in retirement. He spent 32 years in the Navy, mostly at the Wet Coast Diving Unit at Esquimalt, British Columbia. Darryl has taken on a Contract Job of Range Clearance work at the former Army Base in Calgary, Alberta which is being returned to the Sarcee Indian Band(part of the Plains Indians), from whom the land was appropriated way back when. A great retirement party was held for him on 30 Jun 98 - all your friends who couldn't make it out West wish you well in your future endeavours.

HERE AND THERE

That stalwart Diver of yore, Bob Wigmore congratulates Wally Green, Gord Weston, Patrick Warner, John Cole and Chuck Rolfe and all those who organized the 97 Ottawa Reunion into the success it was-a fine effort and he personally wants them to know it. He relates his experience after leaving the Citadel Inn Hotel and proceeding to to airport for home. This story was prompted after

reading the event of John & Miki Ruse on their return trip home via the train, which was published in the 15 Dec 97 Issue of the DIGEST. Bob's appeared to be a parallel junket, as the two must have been occurring just about the same time. At the outset he says that one, or probably all of the following got him into this disastrous situation on Saturday night at the Banquet:- Ken Dahms, Jim Wilson, Fred Watts, Tom Sawyer and also suspect is Bill Racey and Norm Herd. In any case, not being able to fend them off, with both his hands his hands encumbered with full glasses, he took the easy way out and drank too much. As a result, he woke up late, missed his breakfast appointment with Ken Dahms & finally had a bite to eat with Andy Desrochers and Gilles Lariviere (he thinks it was). He finally did see Jim & Joyce Wilson through his fog before packing his bag and trundling out to the airport terminal early. Thinking he might just as well get a few winks in before boarding the aircraft, he found a nice quiet spot close to the food kiosk which was closed, but still had its newspaper rack outside. After starting to read one of these newspapers, his head started to nod and he fell into a sound sleep. Also Bob is hard of hearing and did not have his hearing aid in at that time. He was awakened by a young lady in uniform who held a large flashlight in her hand at which he was assailed by guilt, thinking to himself "They are arresting me for taking one of their newspapers", however she only said "Come with me quickly and then said *Didn't you hear the alarm?*". He admitted that he had not heard a thing and asked what alarm. She said "The fire alarm - there's a fire in the Terminal and you're the last person to get out, we have to hurry, but don't run". The only thing he could see were a policeman or two, a number of firemen running about and a great throng of people - there must have been at least a thousand or so. Here was this young lady leading me out of the building, crossing the roadway with me into the crowd and then left, leaving Bob right some embarrassed to say the least. He only had a quick glance at the crowd, many of whom had a smirk on their face, so avoiding the stares he could only look at the fire trucks instead. Shock number two! The fire trucks had big letters which read GLOUCESTER CITY FIRE DEPT. He was sure by this time he was sober, but how did he mysteriously arrive in Gloucester when he was certain he had just attended a Diver Reunion in Ottawa? When he arrived home, he looked at his Ontario map and couldn't find the city of Gloucester - had this been a dream after all? The fire alert did happen, he's sure of that - could he have been mistaken about Gloucester? Oh well, old Divers are not like old Soldiers who just fade away, they just keep going to Divers Reunions! See you in Victoria, B.C. in 2000. EDITOR'S RESPONSE: *The city of Ottawa on the Provincial maps also encompasses 6 other cities, namely - Kanata, Nepean, Orleans, Vanier, Rockcliffe and Gloucester (pronounced Gloster!) with the Airport being located in Gloucester, even though it is called the Ottawa International Airport!!*

Bill Ross in Ancaster, Ontario remembers "The Bear", Yvon Gingras when he was the Instructor on Bill's initial Ships Diver Course at the French Cable Wharf on the Dartmouth side of the Halifax harbour. Ging knew that Bill had been a qualified Tradesman (Tinsmith) on Civvie street, so he figured that Bill was a shoo-in to break the record for assembling the "Plumbers Nightmare". Well, he arrived on the bottom in his blacked out facemask and was sitting quite comfortably on something (but didn't know what), commencing the task of assembling the various pipe fittings together. All of a sudden, whatever it was he was half standing - half sitting on started to move! This scared the bejeezus out of him, consequently the bucket with all the fittings & elbows in got tossed over Bill's head, with the parts raining down all over the bottom. Of course he could not find very many of them, so the only recourse left to him was to give the signal to be hauled up. Up top Ging was elated to say the least, looking at his watch and chortling, so proud that one of his students was going to break Ike Eisner's time!! Oh well, he got over his disappointment later after a couple of extra Tots. Bill says it's funny now, but he was sure sweating it out in that cold water, figuring how he was going to pass after that schemozzle. He is real sorry to hear that Ging had passed over the bar - as were all of Ging's friends.

Patrick Warner informs us that he had slowly been receiving Diver's stories since he requested them last year. He envisions some Chapters might be: Diver selection & training; War Service experiences; Foreign exchanges; Heroes & villains; Diving Boats; Sober reflections of close calls; Interaction with other Divers-Navy-Civilians; Diving adventures and other tall tales, etc. Keep in mind that all those famous stories told over a tall glass deserve to be printed for posterity or they will be lost to eternity. Names or touchy data will not be published if required. Write Pat Warner, 462 Byron Ave, Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 6Z5 Phone (613) 725-2981.

Tony Dubois says all is well with him lately and that he has become the President of the Eastern Chapter, Keith Musselman looks after memberships, Andy Desrochers is the Treasurer, John Bryson is the new Secretary and Guy Fenn has become the Vice President. Tony thinks it is time for him to slow down a bit and look at the benefits of retirement.

CHUCK ROLFE

Chuck Rolfe was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where he joined the Royal Canadian Navy on 4 May 51 at HMCS UNICORN when he had just turned 17 years of age, as an Ordinary Seaman Naval Airmen Standard (OSNAS). Prior to that he was part of the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps JERVIS BAY. He retired 38 years later in 1989 as a CP01, having put in his full time in the Regular Force plus 13 in the Naval Reserves. From HMCS UNICORN he joined the many other raw recruits from across the country who took the long train ride to participate in New Entry training at HMCS CORNWALLIS. Being only 17 and green right off the farm, his newfound pals decided they would introduce him to the sailors' world when there was a lengthy stopover in Montreal, at the Windsor Station, by feeding him a quart of beer (he had never drank anything with alcohol before!) then arranged for a lady of the evening for him. Needless to say, the evening did not go as exactly planned for his erstwhile chums!! At any rate, the trailful of raw recruits, plus some rejoining WWII experienced matelots, duly arrived in Saint John, N.B. next morning, where they took the Princess of Acadia ferry across to Digby, and thence down the line a short bit to HMCS CORNWALLIS. Chuck went through all the usual there: New Entry Block, into Algonquin Division (Red & White patches), Parade Square bashing, Basic Seamanship classes weekend liberty to all the towns nearby and as far away as Yarmouth sometimes, time spent in Seagull Block where they adhered strictly to shipboard routine, middle watches (spare me!), flag and light semaphore every morning on the Parade Square for everyone, boat pulling (who won't forget the tides and fog), Physical Training, the Assault Course and the final Passing Out Divisions on the last Friday - glorious days, now that we can all look back on it without having to do it again. Memories come flooding back of the XO, Commander Budge, teaching us Seamanship Classes in the hot sultry dog days of Summer, physically jumping out the ground floor window to nab some misguided sot sauntering by with his hands in his pocket or, frequently, throwing his chalk at some poor classmate falling asleep during his lectures. Then on to Halifax and the Naval Air Station at HMCS SHEARWATER, where it took a full year's course to learn the intricacies of servicing, maintaining and repairing Naval Aircraft such as Avengers and Sea Furies. In 1951 and 1952 Chuck swam for the Atlantic Command Swimming Team, during which he got to know two Divers from the Explosive Disposal Unit who came to Canada from their homes in Bermuda to join the RCN Diving Branch - William Lawrence and Roderick Petty. They returned to Bermuda when their hitch was up, and one of them later found a fortune in sunken treasure off Bermuda, but lost most of it to the Bermuda Government due to legal litigation. After exciting times on Aircraft Carriers/Air Squadrons all over the world, and fast promotions (Wooden Hooky, P2 in less than 5 yrs, etc.), he put in for and passed in April 1967 the Ships Divers course at HMCS GRANBY, located then at the French Cable Wharf at Dartmouth, at the advanced age of 33. Some of the Divers he recalls from that time were Tom Cowan (his course Instructor), Wayne MacDonald (his course Leading Seaman), Freddy Watts, Archie Rose, Ian Hamilton, Dougie Hughes, Dave Pilot, Ike Eisnor, Aubrie Ferrie (being a good Newfoundlander he could run with the best of them), Guy Fenn (another Saskabusher), Glen Frauzel, Alan Sagar (CO of the Unit), Yvon Gingras, Bill Malott, Leo Goneau, Bud Nuquist (USN Exchange Diving Officer), Stan Stephanson and André Desrochers - the Unit's Medic. André used to put the "Silver Stallion" on his desk in Sick Bay and was continually telling the green guys how it was used for a rectal examination. When Wayne MacDonald took us out for our morning run and calisthenics it was usually up to a tavern parking lot on Albion Lake Road in Dartmouth where, if we had to spew because of the hard run and working too hard at calisthenics, Wayne said that it didn't matter much because it was an appropriate place for it! Ian Hamilton, who was on course also, figured he would try getting Wayne into a position where he wouldn't run us too hard on our morning run. To do this he would take LS MacDonald out on a Pub crawl the night before, but it didn't slow Wayne down at all - next morning he had us pounding up that bloody hill past NRC just as hard as ever! It is great now to think back about it, but it was a real bitch to do at the time. One time when the Dockyard Crane operators were on strike there was an urgent requirement on the weekend to do a dome change on one of the DDH's tied up at NAD (Naval Armament Depot) in Dartmouth so a Diving Tender was used to do the job. Chuck stated that it was one of the coldest dives he has ever done - he considers that he was right on the verge of hypothermia - and the Diving Officer broke out the Pusser Rum that was only available for situations like this. He has also worked the Clair Lilly wreck (who hasn't!) off Black Rock Beach in the Halifax Harbour approaches, as there were occurrences of the 250 lb. bombs and other munitions washing ashore from time-to-time, and the local children were in dire jeopardy when they handled them. These would become exposed when a big Nor'Easter blows in, thereby moving the large ships hull plates around on the bottom. One memorable day Chuck was crunching away with the big 6 ft. pry bar at an encrusted munition jammed in by three huge boulders, when it appeared to be something other than a bomb. After about 3 hrs of grinding, prying, crunching and chipping, it finally broke free, and upon attempting to lift it (as we easily could with the 250 lb bombs) found it to be impossible. It was later identified as a 9 in. gun projectile, however it was not shown to be part of the ship's cargo as stated on its manifest. At the end of the day the Divers would tie off five or six of the freed bombs on a hoisting line and then be hoisted aboard the disposal barge for dumping far out to sea. Let me tell you, it is quite some sight to see them bounding, careening and smashing into the huge bottom rocks from where they had been freed, over and up to the hoisting area without blowing up!

Chuck was also active in the Sport Diving scene, and was one of the people who assisted in forming up the HMCS SHEARWATER Scuba Club, with Wayne Catchpugh, Andy MacLaughlin and Chuck drafting up the Constitution for them as well. He was the President of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council when he was drafted to the Rolls Royce manufacturing plant in Montreal in 1972, and thence on to the Bristol Aeroengine plant as the DND Quality Assurance Manager, also in Montreal. During his stay in Quebec

he was the 1st Vice President of the Federation des Clubs de Plongée du Québec (Quebec Diving Council) and when he retired from the Regular Force in 1975 he became the Executive Director for the National Sports Governing Body for diving in the National Sports Center in Ottawa. After 6 years in that position he decided to move back to a Government job in Transport Canada Headquarters as an Airworthiness Inspector, where he prepares Aircraft Manufacturing Standards and Air Regulations.

When he joined the Naval Reserves in January 1976 at HMCS CARLETON, it was in a position as their Chief Diver, and he recalls that when an aircraft had crashed and sank in the Ottawa River on the Aylmer, Quebec side, they called for assistance from the Reserve Diving Unit when the civilian Divers could not locate the aircraft. Chief Rolfe informed them to simply fly over the suspected crash site, spot the traces of gas and oil coming to the surface, follow them to where they rise to the surface, then have the Divers go in well upstream and drift down on it. Sure enough, within 30 minutes they had located the wreckage underwater! In 1977 CPO Rolfe and a Diving Crew (LCDR Mike Lafontaine was in overall charge) were flown up to Gladman Point on King William Island in the North West Territories by an Air Force Hercules aircraft to conduct a search for the remains of Sir John Franklin's ships, the EREBUS and the TERROR, suspected to be around O'Rielly Island in the Arctic. The Herc Pilot made such a hard landing on the gravel strip at Gladman that I thought we had bought the farm. Where his wheels touched down there were huge gouges in the gravel strip, as the Pilot had misjudged how high up he was since both ends of the strip were lower than was the mid point of it. Anyway, there was a resounding crash when he touched down and all our gear we had strapped down was straining to break away, all other loose articles were careening and floating around like missiles in the fuselage - which is where we were all strapped into those most uncomfortable web seats. Having been in the Naval Aviation business with catapult shots off, and arrested landings on the Carrier's Flight Decks, Chuck thought he was rather immune to rough landings, however he didn't reckon with this Air Force Pilot's landing. From the Dew Line base the whole crew were repositioned to a camp they set up on O'Rielly Island, by a Reserve Air Force floatplane, and commenced diving, that is whenever the drifting ice moved far enough away to let them dive! At times there would be no ice cover from horizon to horizon, but three hours later the wind would have moved it so that it was completely iced in. He remembers that he wanted to break an hours diving time and that the longest he got in was 50 minutes in the 30°F water - it was OK for him as he was still very warm in his one zipper 1/2 in. wetsuit, but the surface people in the Zode were freezing their bags off, so they called him up in order for them to go ashore to warm up. Chuck stated that even his hands and feet were toasty warm, and he was really pissed off when they wouldn't let him break an hour. Unfortunately, there was nothing found of either the EREBUS or the TERROR in that area. Four days prior to our planned rendezvous and departure with the Herc back at the landing strip at Gladman, which was to take us back to Winnipeg, Manitoba, the small Air Force floatplane holed one of its floats back at the airstrip, which effectively isolated the Diving Crew on O'Rielly Island, since he could not land on the water there to pick us up. The powers that be even had a civilian airliner drop down from its scheduled route over the Polar region at 20000 ft. to 1000 ft. to do a visual sighting and to see how we were doing, since there was no radio contact between us and the base at Gladman Point - the lousy two way radios they had issued to us back in Winnipeg wouldn't even reach the short distance of 25 miles, no matter how often or when we tried - they were a dead loss to us. DND then hired a civilian floatplane from Yellowknife, NWT, 1000 miles away, on which we had to load our gear and offload at Gladman. After 5 trips everything was recovered, the last two trips the gear was offloaded direct from the floatplane into the awaiting Herc, that's how close it was. The crew then strapped into their seats and off they went to Winnipeg. They all had a distinct aroma, which was only relieved when they were able to wash it off in a hotel shower upon landing. One final thing about this event was that Chuck was ripped off for his combat boots he left in his hotel room when they all went out to supper that evening - it was thought someone had a duplicate key to his room. In the late 70's he can also remember diving on the WWII merchant ship, Lord Strathmore, lying completely upright on the bottom at 120 ft. (just as if she was sailing on the surface) just off Bell Island, Newfoundland with a 30 ft. hole in its side from a torpedo, with shell casings lying all around the DEMS gun on the stern from when it was shooting at the German submarine that sank her in 1942. Bill Racey had hardhat dove this wreck in WWII, and here Chuck was Scuba diving it in 1978. He also recollects some enjoyable dives such as Fiji and Australia, and some others not so memorable like the Rhine River, the Zuider Zee in Europe and San Juan Harbour in Puerto Rico.

During the 1985 Divers Reunion in Halifax, Wally Green and Chuck Rolfe got together and decided it was high time that another CNDA Chapter should be formed in Ottawa. However, it wasn't until Feb. 1988 before it became a reality, due mainly to both of their work situations:- Wally was off around the world in his Foreign Affairs position while Chuck was doing business with Transport Canada in the United States and across Canada. Chuck also produces the DIPPERS DIGEST for which he has much material, but he states he would like more of the Divers stories to be sent to him in order to have a stock for future editions of the DIGEST. He also conducts the administrative details of the CNDA National Office and has drafted a Constitution for the Association.

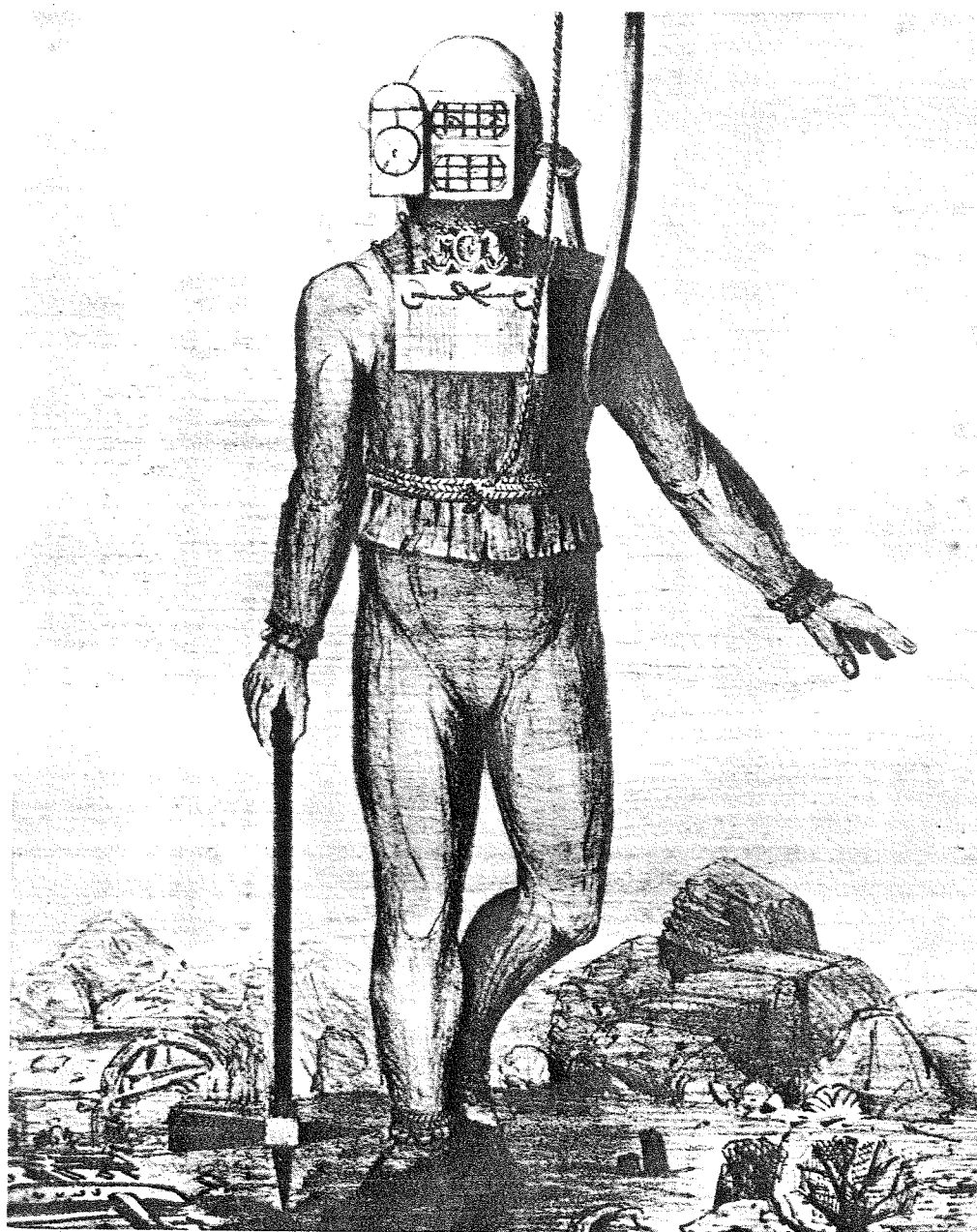
Chuck presently lives 33 miles West of Ottawa with one of his sons at RR2, Kinburn, Ont. KOA 2HO Phone (613) 832-1653 while his youngest daughter is attending 3rd year in Dalhousie University at Halifax, N.S. He is thinking of retiring for good in 1992 when he finishes 35 years service with the Federal Government. He is thinking of finding a place in Nova Scotia where he can drop into the water for his favourite seafood (scallops) when he feels like it, or take a boat and go fishing in the briny or in fresh water. He recalls when he and Gerry Young used to go up past Sheet Harbour to some scallop beds, and between them they would get 60 lbs of shucked scallops in a day, and he wonders if it will ever be so good again. Oh, the sacrilege of it all - this from a prairie dog!

Over our Shoulder

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Salvage from HMS Malabar

A diver of the mid-1800s wears a patented diving suit. Note lamp affixed to the helmet.



In the last issue of the *Crowsnest*,¹ I described the circumstances surrounding the grounding of HMS *Malabar*, a 74-gun ships-of-the-line, on the reefs off Cape Bear on the southeastern tip of Prince Edward Island, while on her way to Pictou, Nova Scotia to embark part of the 93rd Highland Regiment. Although this grounding could have had serious consequences, resulting in the loss of ship and crew, the vagaries of the weather, together with the actions of those on board, led to the successful refloating of the ship with only the loss of her false keel and a leak of three inches of water an hour.

The *Malabar* was sailing down the east coast of Prince Edward Island on Friday, 19 October 1838, when she ran aground just after noon. The rest of the day was spent in making soundings around the ship to determine her position with respect to deep water. As the evening approached, seventeen guns were heaved overboard to lighten the ship. In the morning, in the face of a freshening wind, an additional nineteen guns, some shot and several anchors were also disposed of to lighten the ship further. The wind freshened to a gale from the southeast during the morning and this allowed the captain to manoeuvre this lightened ship into deep water and seek safe anchorage in Three Rivers (Cardigan Bay).

A sequel to this story has appeared in a recently published book on Canadian inventions,² in which the first use of a diver's helmet in North America is reported. John Fraser of Pictou had been employed by Lloyds' of London to do underwater salvage work off the coast of Germany. In the summer of 1842, he brought his equipment to Prince Edward Island and with the help of a second diver, Alexander Munro of Pictou, recovered thirty-five of the *Malabar*'s guns, together with several tons of shot, from the reef off Cape Bear, where they had lain for nearly four years. The guns were worth £18 each, so that this proved a lucrative undertaking. The diving outfit consisted of a large heavy helmet with three windows which fitted very snugly on the shoulders. Underneath this, Fraser wore a

waterproof, india-rubber dress weighted with 120 pounds of lead. The air inlet tube came in above and the outlet with its valve discharged below the helmet. This description suggests that the design of diving suits underwent very little change in the first century or so after their invention.

It should not be presumed that because only thirty-six guns were heaved overboard while the *Malabar* was on the reef, the remainder of the full complement of seventy-four were left on board. In fact, all the lower deck guns had been removed from the ship before she left Plymouth the previous April.

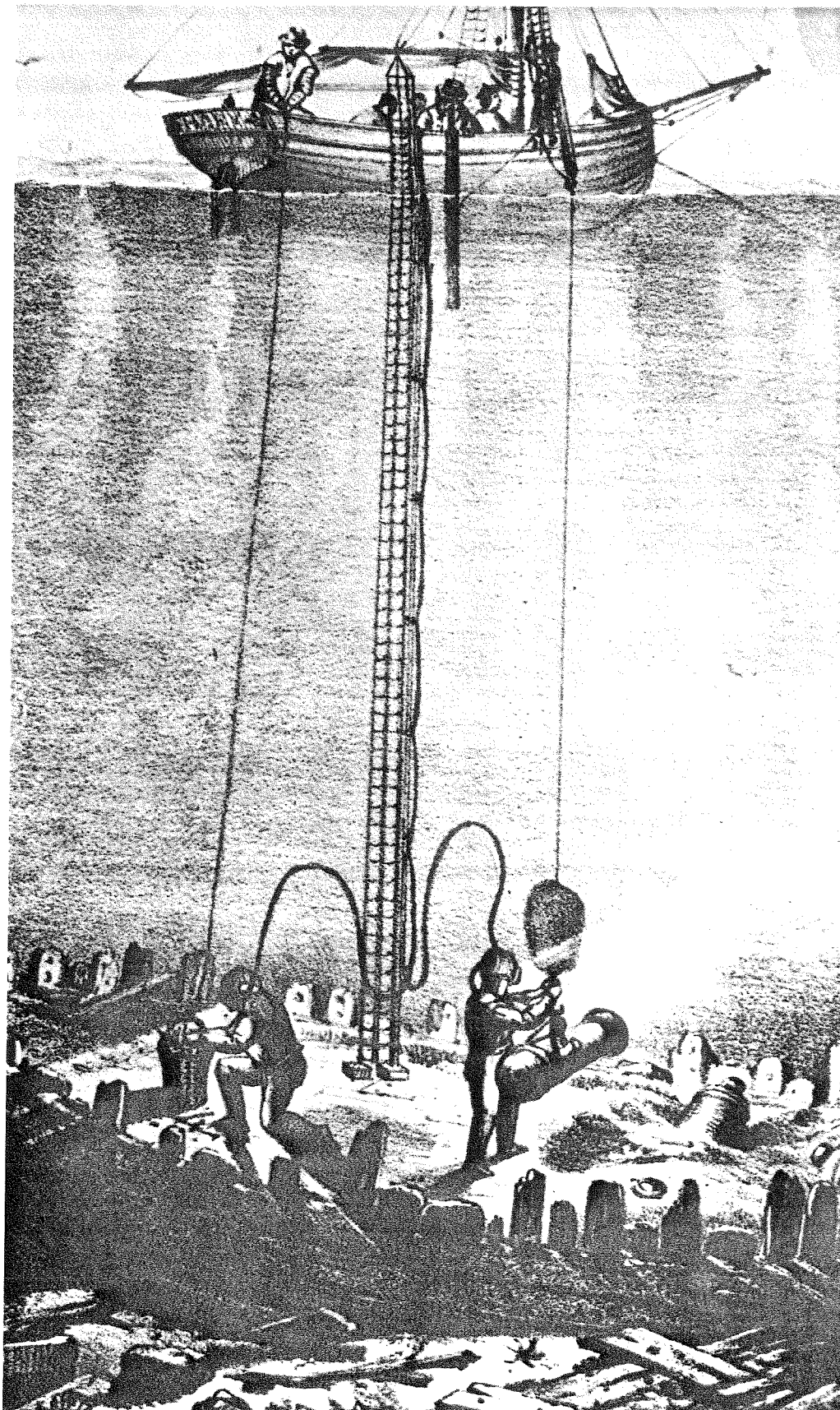
The year 1838 was an interesting one in Canadian military history for it marked the first time that British warships were used as army transports.³ After the rebellions of 1837 in Lower and Upper Canada, the British government undertook a major reinforcement of the army garrisons in British North America. This resulted in the addition of thirteen regiments to the nine already stationed in the country, as well as many regimental drafts. Almost all these troops were moved in modified or converted warships, instead of small chartered merchant vessels, as had been the custom of the past. The *Malabar* was modified for this service by having her main deck covered over and the lower deck guns removed. On her trip across the Atlantic, she brought the 71st Regiment from Cork to Quebec in twenty days, arriving on 14 May 1838. In July, she brought the 73rd Regiment to Quebec from Halifax, and at the time of her accident was on her way to embark a third regiment for Quebec.

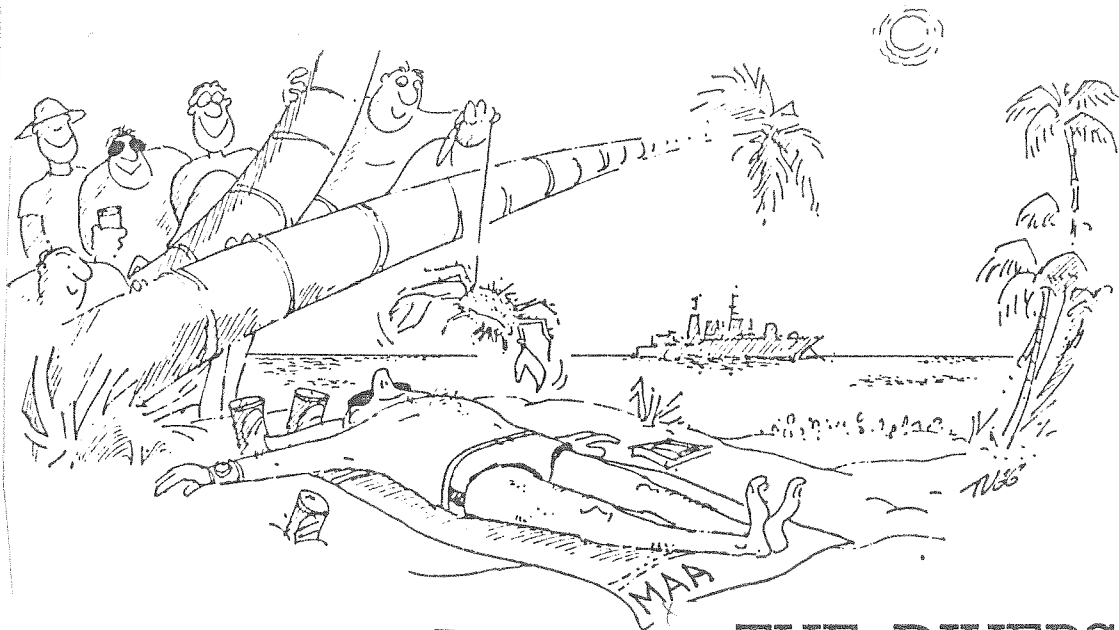
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References

1. J. C. Arnell, "The Grounding of HMS *Malabar*", *Crowsnest*, June 1965, pp. 5-8.
2. J. J. Brown, "Ideas in Exile", McClelland & Stewart (1967), p. 100.
3. J. C. Arnell, "Trooping to the Canadas", *The Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. 53, pp. 143-60 (1967).

This detail from a contemporary lithograph shows the technique used at the time for raising guns from wrecked ship.





Banyan THE DIVERS' BUSY YEAR

THE RCN DIVING Establishments on both East and West coasts had their full share of activities and then some, in the general public service in 1963.

The West Coast unit recovered 243 pieces of explosive ordnance—floats, flares, bombs, shells, grenades, torpedoes, mines and mortars, to name a few categories—most of these from inhabitants of the greater Victoria area, who had been keeping them as souvenirs.

The finding of a live practice bomb March 21 in Victoria touched off what was to become a rash of such findings and, in almost every case, it was personnel from the Pacific Command's operational diving unit who attended to the collection and disposal of the ordnance.

Citizens of the region were made aware of the dangers of such souvenirs, the Pacific Command producing a truck-borne display featuring examples of the ordnance. With an expert to speak on the subject, the display visited every grade school in the area to warn a total of 40,000 pupils of the danger. The same mobile display was set up at the Pacific National Exhibition in

Vancouver where about 60,000 people "got the message" about what to do with ordnance they might already have in their possession or discover in future.

In addition to searches made on behalf of the government agencies for downed government aircraft, contraband and the like, the divers gave recompression treatment to two cases of the "bends" and helped search for two downed civilian aircraft and two bodies.

The East Coast unit totted up a busy year of public service, as follows:

- Assisted RCMP in recovering drowning victims;
- Helped the Department of Transport recover a bathythermograph;
- Treated a civilian suffering from the "bends";
- Investigated and dealt with 2 mines and a quantity of abandoned explosives;
- Processed removal of explosives from wrecks in the Bedford Basin of Halifax harbour and the Robinson Brook area of Newfoundland, and
- Aided a university seismological survey.

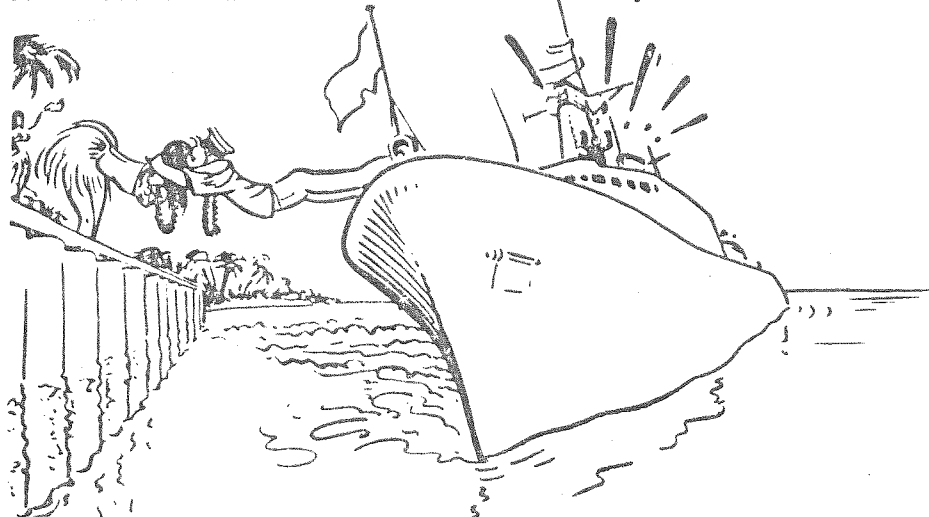
WARRIOR Fleet Diving Unit

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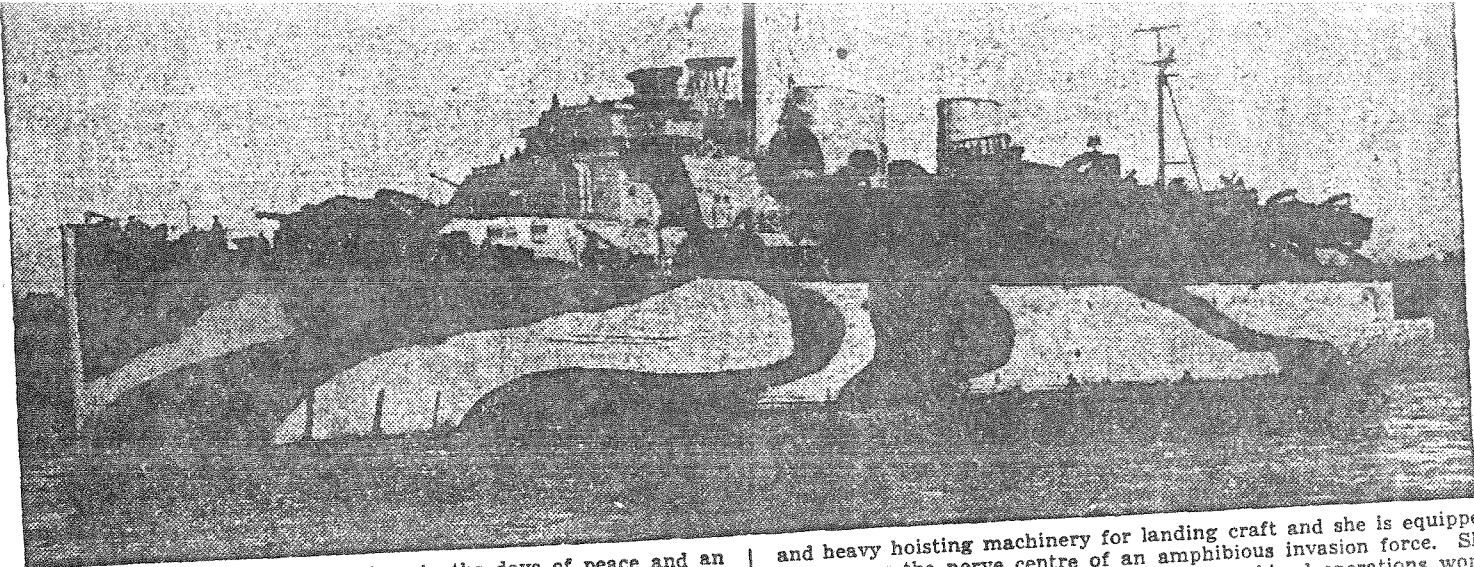


The fearless crew of YDT-12 are back from their trip to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit Two, Little Creek, VA. This year's salvage exercise consisted of refloating a grounded vessel using beach gear. LS Craig Shannon and Dell Corbett thought this meant swim suits, a cooler full of beer, and sun tan lotion. LS Brewka and Canning learned that trying to figure-eight a 1 5/8 inch wire can be a little hard on the old shin bones if you aren't careful. MS Jordy Walsh made it all the way through the salvage exercise without getting hurt. Congratulations Jordy, that's a first - remember the MINEX! P2 Frazier and LS J. Larcheveque provided fine entertainment during the trip - they took turns losing their luggage at various airports in the United States and Canada. CPO's Doyle and De Jong drove to the U.S. with the diving equipment. The crew was taking bets that they wouldn't get back into Canada - where did you pick up those 5 inch projectiles guys? Through it all Bosn Raesemann (USN TYPE) managed to keep his sanity. Doc says we can take him off tranquilizers any day now.

The Baggotville Bandits, alias the crew of YDT-8, have returned from a highly successful CF-18 salvage job. The boys really went at it with enthusiasm until they found out they couldn't keep the scrap aluminum they had collected. Nice try guys, better luck next time.



"Able Seaman Johnston, I said let go forward."



H.M.C.S. Prince David, a luxury liner in the days of peace and an auxiliary cruiser in the early days of the war, is wearing new war-paint now. Her once wide decks are cluttered with massive davits

and heavy hoisting machinery for landing craft and she is equipped to serve as the nerve centre of an amphibious invasion force. She carries a battle-tested crew, veterans of combined operations work.

S. ADVOCATE

Dangers and Thrills of a Diver's Life.

Dear Miss B.—A few days ago a parcel of stockings arrived, among them the pair you knit. They were lovely, you have no idea how much they were appreciated, not only by myself but by all the divers who received them. Thank you ever so much.

I don't suppose very many people who live inland know a great deal about the divers or their activities. So in a few pages I shall try to tell you as much as I can about us and our work. Of course, there are many things that cannot be told for obvious reasons. However, here goes.

We are just a small party tucked away in a small corner of the dockyard, forgotten, or almost so, by everyone but the mailman and the repair department. Our job is to repair the ships, or rather the parts of ships, that cannot be reached from the surface. Quite often also we salvage sunken ships or recover articles lost overboard.

We are available to go on jobs at all times and in most any kind of weather. On urgent jobs away from the base we are often flown by plane to the scene.

Our clothing is really our most important article of gear. To keep warm is usually our toughest job during the winter months, as the water often gets below the freezing point. Some of us have even gone "below" through new ice. The first thing we put on is a suit of heavy Jumbo-knit underclothing, which goes on over our ordinary clothing. Then a roll-neck sweater of the same material, and also two pairs of stockings extending well above the knee.

The diving dress itself is next. It is made of heavy rubber and twill. Then boots, helmet, and weights. The boots incidentally weigh from eighteen to twenty pounds each, not exactly dancing pumps. When we are all dressed and ready for the water our clothing alone weighs 225

pounds. Of course, once under water much of the weight is taken by the air inside the suit and the water itself.

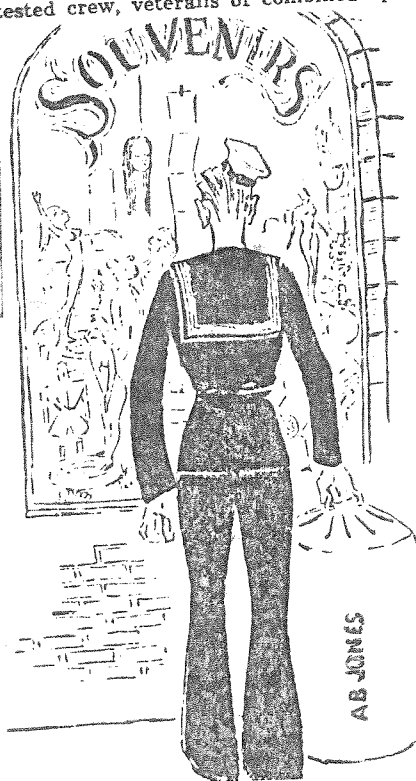
One would think that once under water it would be likened to a total blackout. This is sometimes the case if the bottom is very muddy or the depth very great, but quite often we are fortunate enough to get on a hard bottom where visibility is usually fifteen to thirty feet, depending on the time of day and the weather conditions.

In some places the growth on the floor of the ocean puts the flower gardens up top to shame. Some species of plants grow to a great height and have blooms as big around as small washtubs. They are of every colour of the rainbow and some actually live on fish and animal life, much like our pitcher plants. The fish are attracted by the bright colours and are caught by the plant as soon as they land on it. The plant just closes up and traps the fish like a fly in a huge fist. The fish also are very pretty in their natural surroundings, and they are the most inquisitive things in the world.

I'm afraid this is all I can tell you and I do hope I haven't bored you to pieces with this wee description of us and our work.

So thanking you again for the Diving Dept. and myself. B. R.

(I know you will all enjoy this letter as much as I did for I knew nothing of the work of our divers. This letter came to a friend of mine just before her death last month—one of many such letters for in spite of weakness and ill-health she did an amazing amount of beautiful knitting for the war work of one group to which I belong. Could she have a better memorial than the kindly thoughts of the lads to whom her work has brought comfort? Junia.)



AN UNDERSEA NOTE

Canadian naval divers were involved in dives from 200 to 3,600 feet made near Andros Island in the Bahamas earlier this year.

The men were members of the Submersible Seven (see *Sentinel*, July-August). They accompanied employees of International Hydrodynamics Co., Ltd., Vancouver, who flew down to the Bahamas with the submersible *Pisces III* and support equipment. The trip was made for a five-week survey of an array implant area for the Atlantic Underwater Test & Evaluation Centre. Navy involvement was part of the training on the submersible in readiness for the *Submersible Diver-Lock-Out-I* which Hyco has constructed for the Canadian Armed Forces. The *SDL-I* is one of the most advanced and sophisticated submersibles ever built. OCT 70