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HALIFAX, N.S.
1981

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15 December 1994

RAYMOND STANLEY

Raymond Stanley, a member of the Ottawa Chapter, was born in Motherwell, Scotland in 1921, coming to the United States when he was 14 month old and was raised in Waterford, N.Y. He ran away from home in 1935 at the age of 14 and went to work on the Barge Canal in New York State until he was 16, at which time he made a decision to join the United States Navy. Ray had a grand time thereafter working on Motor Torpedo Boats and Yard Tugboats since they were what he had been trained for. In 1943 he signed up for Diver training, taking his hardhat course at the famous Pier 88 in New York Harbour where they worked on the sunken ship SS NORMANDIE, which had burned out at her jetty and flipped over. It seemed that the President wanted her to be utilized as a troopship so it was renamed the LAFAYETTE. He was only involved in the Atlantic side of the War when in 1942 his Torpedo Boat Squadron and crew were being shipped aboard a Tanker to Holy Loch, Scotland in convoy, however half way across it was sunk with all PT Boats onboard. The survivors that were picked up were then returned to the USA and given ten days survivors leave. Ray was then sent to Treasure Island in San Francisco and then out to the Pacific for the rest of the War. He was shipped on the HOLLANDIA to Australia at a Ship Repair Unit(SRU) where they did quite a lot of work there. Frequently they would take him away to complete diving jobs in and around that part of the Pacific, after completion of which he would be returned to the SRU. When they successfully recaptured the Phillipines he was shipped up to #3002 SRU at Subic Bay in Luzon and again he would be sent out on tasks from time-to-time before returning to his SRU. One of the main tasks at that time was to recover documents and records from sunken ships, which were vital for intelligence purposes at that time. Additionally, to facilitate entry and exit for Allied shipping, the wrecks in Manila harbour had to be blown up to give adequate clearance. He has had almost all the hairy diving experiences one can think of; one that sticks in his mind particularly was the time he got really stuck in the mud and it took four other Divers to come down and blow him out with air hoses and water hoses to finally free him from the mud. One of the funniest things that happened to him, and all Divers will recall how things seem to follow in their wake due to the suction behind them when plodding underwater, was when he was going through a section of a ship in dead cold water(water that you Canadian Divers would well know!)and every time he stopped he would hear something go 'bump - bump' on his helmet. This was getting to him after a while consequently he wheeled around the one time he stopped and was startled to be staring directly into the face of a dead cat!! Being of good Scots heritage and strong of heart, I immediately fainted, but only for a split second before I quickly came to my senses and realized what it was, then went on with the job at hand. Ray lost most of his photographs, artifacts and memorabilia from his days in the Navy when his house burned down a number of years ago, however he still holds to this day a rubber stamp used aboard the Royal Navy Destroyer Escort the HMS SPRAGUE which he served aboard as a Diver for a while before she was sunk in Subic Bay. She was one of the USN Destroyers given to the RN and later returned to the USN. What had caused her to sink was that someone left some valves open. The Divers then had to go down, shut the valves and raise the ship to the surface - said operation.. being successfully achieved. He recalls that as a Petty Officer serving aboard this RN ship, he was issued his tot of Rum neat and saving it thereafter until he had a goodly amount before using it. Ray was very fortunate at that time to have a couple of buddies who were teetotalers as they gave him their ration of Rum also and it all worked out quite well for him to say the least. In 1946 he had a quite serious diving accident where he was caught

for some time underwater and ended up with a case of the bends so bad that the Navy retired him, leaving him on the retired list. All of the names of the stalwart Divers he knew from his diving days seem to have faded from memory but they were all great guys who would do anything for each other. He meets some of them occasionally at the USN Salvage Divers Reunions and they seem to have put down roots all over the USA, i.e. San Diego, Biloxi Miss, Des Moines Iowa, Connecticut, etc. He finally retired for good from his position as the Deputy Chief of Police and lives with his good wife, Elaine, at 45 Sixth Street, Waterford, N.Y. USA 12188. Ray travels to Ottawa frequently and said he would like to meet anybody in the area who would like to sit on the Sparks Street Mall to enjoy a Watneys or two and spin some yarns. When he retired from the Navy in 1946 he was a Chief Bos'n's Mate.

REMEMBERING ROSS DICKINSON

The Diving Unit is unique in that every Diver by nature of his profession is an individual, a special character. Many and varied are these unpredictable heroes, yet none more so than "Uncle Ross". LCDR Ross Dickinson, XO and CO of FDU(Atlantic) brought an unmistakable, romantic flavour to the personality brew we are all familiar with - myself of course being the only 'normal' person there. Anyway, Ross was a great story teller, his stories somewhat more embellished in each telling; yet interesting, exciting, almost believable and compelling anecdotes are told about his many adventures to this day.

However, all is not fiction, far from it - Ross served in WWII aboard Motor Launches (ML's are similar to MTB's) outside Halifax, screaming along at 30 knots in the night, seeking enemy U-Boats. Ross also gained his Naval Pilot Wings flying a Tracker aircraft over the Rockies from Calgary to British Columbia. Ross was an Engineer in fact, having spent several years gaining this distinction in University. He was a fixer and inovator, nothing fazed him, from laying Atlantic cable to cutie antics. Add to this his phenomenal, perhaps photographic memory. So envision a shiny sports car, Sam - his dog, the lanky 6'2" grinning Commander who, casually it seemed, ran the Diving Unit during some of its most hectic operations.

"Uncle Ross" once uttered some words of wisdom to a very Senior Officer, who didn't want to know it seems, or was it a case of a missing aeroplane? Whatever, it appears that this unfortunate event precluded Ross from becoming a flamboyant Admiral. He is gone now, but still missed and remembered - as are so many of the other lovable 'characters' of the Canadian Diving Navy.

Alan Sagar.

OVER THE EDGE

It was the talk of an old treasure ship on Mar's Rock, outside Halifax Harbour, that sent Uncle Ross and I screaming down the Bedford Highway early one morning. The details had been thrashed out over a bottle of Nova Scotia Black-Death Rum at midnight, when Uncle Ross showed me his many valuable curios which he had collected on his adventures in many strange parts of the world. But now we found the small two-seater seaplane warming up on the lake at the Waverly Flying Club. Weather was a worry, but it wasn't a subject to discuss with Uncle Ross, for already he was organizing the loading of diving air bottles into the plane, plus experimental pieces of deep diving air regulators Uncle Ross had personally developed. With this air regulator we hoped to reach 600 ft.

A choppy lake and a heavy load made for a risky takeoff, but it seemed that Uncle Ross's mind was working on the problem of the treasure ship as he almost absentmindedly taxied into wind and very dexterously lifted us off, up and out towards the Atlantic Ocean. Our plan was to fly out over the suspected treasure area for an aerial view. From the various tones of sea colours, particularly inshore, depth and much other valuable search information can be deduced by the experienced Diver's eye. Later, we would land on a nearby lake and hump our diving gear to the shore near the area we were interested in. Despite the air bumps, Uncle Ross handled the plane like a helicopter as we almost hovered over the vital spot. Something black gleamed far down below the surface!! Suddenly it seemed to me that a crash was imminent as the plane swooped too low, and choppy white crested waves leapt towards the planes cabin. However, Uncle Ross relaxed as we taxied to a stop, saying that "We might as well go down now as never".

Together we heaved over the sea anchor and as we did, the dark gleam on the bottom of the seabed lay a few yards off on our port beam, but now my mind became absorbed in a new problem, for what I had not observed from the air was a rapid and menacing whirlpool just beyond our hoped-for treasure wreck. Later I found out local fishermen avoided this spot like the plague and many fatalities had occurred to venturers or unlucky jiggermen in their small boats.

There was never any trace of the bodies to be found afterward. I pointed out the whirlpool to Uncle Ross, but he merely shrugged his enormous shoulders and said laconically "If we don't hurt it, it won't hurt us - we hope" and immediately began strapping on his long endurance diving bottles. It was a question of either quitting right then for me, or going down with Uncle Ross, for I knew that he would go alone if necessary. I couldn't face the Diving Unit Commander if I allowed Uncle Ross to disappear alone, and so I dressed and gave a hand with our underwater detection gear. This electronic scanning equipment would enable us to swim toward any large metal object when the depth of water caused the water to become almost black. Our hoped for wreck was a 1st World War victim carrying gold bullion that only recent searching of wartime archives in Ottawa and the Pentagon had unearthed; Uncle Ross somehow had lines of information through Senior Military Commanders in all parts of the world that even his close friends knew nothing of. A brief thumbs up and Ross was away. I jumped off the bobbing plane float and soon found myself in cool calm water as I raced to keep up with Uncle Ross, who was flying down on a sharp glide towards the bottom. It was lucky for me that my ears were in good diving practice. My inner ear tubes cleared rapidly as I fought increasing pressure and followed down through the air bubbles Uncle Ross sent upwards. Mars Rock has no terrors to Naval Divers; it is a rugged indented rock at 60 ft. two acres across, with long kelp growth-like a jungle waving freely with the tide, a veritable playground for countless types of cold water fish, large and small, and for Divers.

On the bottom we conferred together by hand signals, the detector scan pointed clearly out to seaward; we swam on in good visibility and I relaxed, feeling that it was going to be a 'piece of cake' after all. Quite suddenly, Uncle Ross stopped and stood on his head with opened arms in a gesture of bewilderment. The scan must have become broken due to the pressure it seemed, for now there was no reading at all. But then I realized that Uncle Ross, who never stood on his head without cause, was fast disappearing down what appeared to be a crack or fissure in the rock face. 'GULP' I thought, with a quickening pulse, here we go again. The scan was not broken, the reason for its behavior was that the object we had contacted lay somewhere at the bottom of this crack in the rock, a crack that opened out every moment into a sort of canyon with black walls, where the light quickly grew dimmer and the pressure closed unmistakably around the body like a giant hand that squeezed ever tighter. Dimly I saw Uncle ahead, there was no answer but to plunge on and hope our air supply would last. Below a hundred feet, less than an hour would use up our air supply, and already my luminous wrist depth gauge showed 175 ft. It seemed I had a severe headache but I put this down to "the narks", the Divers reaction to Nitrogen under great pressure below 140 ft, but then I became aware of a great pounding and sadly realized that the rock crack was no accident, and that it must lead us into the heart of the mysterious whirlpool. Some treasure trove this was if it was guarded by certain death for any hunters! The "Narks", which often cause Divers to take off their equipment and offer it to a passing fish with gay abandon, seemed to have got Uncle Ross too, for he was pointing constantly at every point around him like a revolving Roy Rogers. Old Uncle Ross's cracked up at last I thought, better try to get him to the surface somehow. But then I saw for myself strange light coloured shadows flitting all around us. Shadows that on closer view became men, of a light green shade. Several green giants took my arms and forced me downwards towards total blackness and the pounding of water that became unbearable, like a gigantic symphony orchestra in full blast in a sound shattering climax. Before I blacked out, I remember hoping that it was all a dream and that I would soon wake up in the Mess.

I did wake up, lights on, even Uncle Ross was smiling down into my bewildered face. "Don't be frightened, son" he said "but we have arrived!" Arrived we had it seemed, in the looney bin at RCN Hospital, but the Nurses (who were pretty alright) were all light green, everyone it seemed was light green - even Uncle Ross. It wasn't faireyland, but an outpost of the Atlantic Deepsea Patrol. In deep Atlantic there are many cities of water folk, the green is a protective covering or seal against the cold, a salve of seaweed covering. The whirlpool was a camouflage against intruders. I didn't realize at once, but I was still surrounded by water and I had no equipment on. I found out our new friends had operated on us so that like them, we 'breathed water' like a fish through tiny slits below and behind the ears. If you see Uncle Ross and casually look, you can still see the scars left behind. Due to our being Divers, and also because even the water people had heard of Uncle Ross's exploits, we were being treated as guests. Life goes on quite normally for these sea people just beyond and below the continental shelf. Uncle and I were privileged to visit a submerged city, travelling by underwater speedcraft; we were also taken down to the 3000 ft. level to witness

a terrifying duel between a whale shark and a fifty foot octopus. It didn't seem long though before we were on our way home and ascending up through the rock fissure to a now calm surface with all our gear in service. Looking at the real sky again, I thought perhaps it was all the effects of diving too deep, but soon Uncle Ross and I were excitedly discussing the whole adventure in every detail. Airborne and then back ashore in Uncle Ross's super fast sports roadster, we were soon screeching to a halt alongside the Diving H.Q. vessel, in time for lunch and a much needed three fingers of Scotch. The next morning, as our diving team headed out Halifax harbour to sea on a secret project for the Naval Research Establishment, we came near to our whirlpool and I wasn't surprised to hear Uncle Ross, who came up to the wheelhouse at that moment say "Port twenty, Quartermaster"!

Now if you don't believe this saga, you need only ask Uncle Ross all about it, for it is exactly as he told me himself.

Any resemblance to true facts or real living people in this story is purely coincidence!

HISTORICAL DISPLAY

George Onley certainly enjoyed the Reunion in Halifax and meeting all the 'legendary' people that he reads about from days of yore. He found that on his flight home they were just closing the boarding gate to his connecting flight at the Toronto airport and he figured he was lucky to get home that night. George has been building some large models of 40's & 50's ships (the Destroyer HMCS HAIDA and the Corvette HMCS SNOWBERRY) as representative of ships of that era, to be put on display at the local Legion as there was no Navy exhibit there at all. He is about to build another 40 inch model, the River Class Frigate HMCS NEW GLASGOW, for which he has obtained the building plans and photographs from the National Archives in Ottawa. He normally displays a cap tally with these models but has been unable to locate a tally for the NEW GLASGOW, so he is requesting anyone who may have one put away with their stuff from their days in the Royal Canadian Navy to contact him about getting one for display. He will also take anything else in the line of Naval artifacts you wish to send him as he wishes to mount a better display than the Army or RCAF. NOTE:-the Editor has sent him some for: HMCS ANNAPOLIS, BONAVENTURE, CARIBOU, DOCKYARD, DRUMMONDVILLE, FORT FRANCES, FUNDY, HOCHELAGA, KAPUSKASING, MAGNIFICENT, NEW LISKEARD, PATRIOT, PORTAGE, SHEARWATER, STETTLER, TRINITY, VICTORIAVILLE, WALLACEBURG and he has his own for HMCS GRANBY, HMCS, HAIDA, SWANSEA and INCH ARRAN. He also has trade badges for WWII and 50's to 70's Divers, LS, P2, P1 and CPO Rank Badges. Send any donations to George at Box 525, Callander, Ont. POH 1H0(752-2939).

RESERVE DIVING

The Laurentian Regional Diving Centre (Divers from Canadian Naval Reserve Units at Ottawa, Montreal, Trois-Rivieres, Quebec City, Rimouski, Chicoutimi and Sept-Iles participated) conducted a very successful Regional Diving Exercise from 23-25 Sep 94 in the St. Lawrence Seaway off Cornwall, Ontario in close cooperation with the Canadian Coast Guard ship SIMCOE. the purpose was to exercise the Naval Reserve Inspection Divers in U/W search techniques, U/W photography and other related duties. P1 Larry Lyver was the FDU(A) representative in attendance, Lt. Patrick Warner was the Officer in Tactical Command and P2 Anne Menard, the Regional Diving Centre Chief oversaw the diving operation.

The operations involved locating and recovering 3 lost river navigation buoys, inspecting 10 light piers and island light stations to recover discharged storage batteries and to evaluate preparedness of the Diver's combat readiness. The Coast Guard were pleased to participate in this necessary work and provided a complete crew together with the Medium Buoy Tender, a Fast Rescue Craft, a Boston Whaler and a Work Barge. The 3 missing navigation buoys were recovered from the bottom at 50 ft., recovered a winter spar buoy & one 4 ft. electric light buoy and chain from another buoy, recovered a vast number of batteries and established excellent rapport with the Canadian Coast Guard personnel. The Divers were all happy to be involved with this Regional Diving Centre concept, and to work as a team with Divers from the other far flung Diving Units, and to be billeted at the Transport Canada Training Institute (TCTI) in Cornwall. Too bad there were limited accommodations available at TCTI which precluded all of the Divers who had volunteered from being accepted. Verbal communications were conducted in both English and French - interestingly, the diving vocabulary of most Franco-phone Divers consisted in large part of English technical terms.

The Master Seamen implemented the diving program with their dive teams while P1 Jean Michaud assisted by supporting and coaching the junior Dive Supervisors. P2 Anne Menard masterfully took charge of the events by detailing duties and assignments. The Regular Force Diver,

P1 Larry Lyver ensured that essential safety issues were in effect. Congratulations to the 26 Divers who participated in this excellent operation.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

In the September 1994 issue(#19) of the DIPPERS DIGEST a Membership Renewal Form was included only for those whose membership was about to expire as of 31 Dec 94. Most have attached a cheque to the form and mailed them off to their respective Local Chapters. For those who may have mislaid this Renewal Form, another is enclosed as a reminder to stay current with CNDA. Should this not be forwarded, we remind you that this will be the final DIPPERS DIGEST to be provided to you. DO IT NOW!

94 REUNION PHOTOGRAPHS

The Fleet Diving Unit(Atlantic) held the largest attended Reunion ever in Halifax, Nova Scotia this past September, from which we all came away pleased as punch. An official photograph was taken at the end of the Meet & Greet event late Friday afternoon outside 'Y' Hangar(the old Admiral Byrd's Hangar built in 1917), unfortunately many people had departed by that time. The Unit is looking for any and all photographs or negatives that were taken over the entire weekend in order that they can be displayed in a special photo album for posterities sake. Please send your photo's or negatives along to the XO, Gary Reddy, at 118 Nova Terrace, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2V 1A9 Phone(902)462-5462 and indicate if you wish them to be returned or not. NOTE: the Editor sent a full 2nd set of 60 photo's he took at the Reunion to Gary.

RCMP find cocaine cache off Nova Scotia coast

Ottawa Citizen, Tuesday, November 15, 1994

HALIFAX (CP) — RCMP and military divers have found a huge cache of cocaine that has been submerged off the coast of Nova Scotia for more than a year.

A news release issued Monday by the military said a news conference about their search for the drugs will be held today at the naval dockyard in Halifax.

Divers have been working off and on from HMCS Cormorant over the past year, trying to find the estimated \$25 million in cocaine submerged in more than 53 metres of water.

According to reports, smugglers aboard the vessel Fortune Endeavor in August of 1993 dropped off an estimated 700 kilograms of cocaine and steamed into Halifax.

It's believed the smugglers intended to return for their booty but the law moved in before that could happen.

In major predawn raids at the time, RCMP officers arrested 17 people in four provinces.

Four ships were also seized, including the Endeavor and a smaller vessel, the Arctic Trader, which was moored in Sheet Harbour, N.S.

The cocaine, stored in metal casings, was reported to have been dumped because the smugglers ran into trouble.

Montreal RCMP were the chief investigators in the case, which is believed to be linked to organized crime and the Hell's Angels motorcycle club in Quebec.

Non Sequitur

Seven men awarded Medal of Bravery

Seven men who worked for hours in a vain attempt to rescue six people trapped beneath a capsized boat have been awarded Medals of Bravery. Kenneth Dyne Perry and Dave William Rayment, both of Ganges, B.C., are two commercial divers who, with the help of David Joseph Percy of Vancouver, pulled four bodies from under the vessel in July 1993. The boat had flipped near Galiano Island, filling the water with diesel fuel and debris. Master Cpls. Gavin David Lee and Michael George Simpson, both of Lazo, B.C., and Leading Seamen Brian Eugene Clarke and Njord Stormr Olson, navy divers from Victoria, helped remove the other victims.

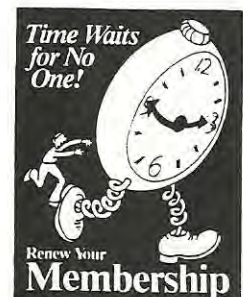
ARCUS



'Where did you say you got your communications degree?'



3-26 VIEV



NCVA MEETING

Chuck Rolfe and Norm Herd represented NCVA at the Annual Meeting in Toronto of the National Council of Veterans Association on 24 Oct 94. One of the main items of business was the representation of our concerns to the Federal Government. The Government and Senate always consult NCVA when matters of import are being looked into about Veterans. The Chairman of NCVA, Cliff Chadderton (also President of the War Amputations of Canada) noted that they do contact us frequently since they obtain the facts very quickly this way. Another controversial area of discussion was the incorrect docudrama put out by the McKenna brothers called "The Valour and the Horror" which denigrated the RCAF and the Army operations in WWII. They are about to put out another docudrama called "The War at Sea". NCVA already is writing the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the President of the CBC indicating our concern that these two again run down our Naval operations in WWII. Other items of business had to do with WWII commemorative events, the National War Memorial restoration, Canadian Forces Pension Advisory Committee, restructuring (downsizing) of Veterans Affairs Canada, claims of Hong Kong veterans widows pensions, Senate legislation programs, etc. You can see that it is very important that we remain an active member of NCVA.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF VETERAN ASSOCIATIONS IN CANADA

1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Association
The Aircrew Association
Armed Forces Pensioners' / Annuitants' Association of Canada
Bomber Command Association Canada Inc.
Burma Squadrons Association
Canadian Association of Fleet Air Arm Aircrew
Canadian Corps Association
Canadian Fighter Pilots Association
Canadian Naval Air Group
Canadian Naval Divers Association

Canadian Paraplegic Association
Dieppe Veterans and Prisoners of War Association
Eighth Army Veterans' Association of Canada
First Special Service Force Association
Hong Kong Veterans' Association of Canada
The Korea Veterans Association of Canada
National Prisoners of War Association (E.T.) of Canada
Nova Scotia Naval Officers Association
Nursing Sisters' Association of Canada

The Overseas Club - Canadian Red Cross Corps (Overseas Detachment)
The Polish Combatants' Association in Canada
Royal Canadian Air Force Association
The Royal Canadian Army Service Corps Association
The Royal Canadian Naval Association
R.C.A.F. P.O.W. Association
The Sir Arthur Pearson Association of War Blinded
The War Amputations of Canada
War Pensioners of Canada

HERE AND THERE

Harry & Phyllis Thompson will be remaining in Elliot Lake, Ont. this winter as his hip is giving him some problems. You should be able to ice fish, that is if you can hack your way through 5 ft of ice first! Harry recalls on his diving course in Halifax there were Dave Pilot, Bruce Robinson, Vince Patcheson, MacArthur, Rod Petty & Bill Lawrence (Bermuda boys) and that this was the course that swam every morning with the lonely white Beluga whale in Halifax Harbour, which would appear just as soon as they entered the water. Unfortunately, some imbecile shot it and it later died. Harry was talking to Maureen Haywood when he and Phyllis went out to dine with her just before the Reunion and she said that Rick Finlay had died in Montreal a few years ago. It was also very pleasant to see his old buddy Bill Lawrence and they reminisced about the time Harry was Coxn on a small boat and he would always be able to arrive first at the pier at Hamilton, Bermuda as he knew a shortcut. He also dropped in to see the Bear, Yvon Gingras, Harry was looking for Vince Patcheson's address in Toronto (Editor gave it to him). Harry wishes all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Bill Lawrence has retired and turned his land & U/W construction business over to his son. John De Jong was recently in Ottawa on Service business. He has every copy of the DIGEST but the first one and it was sent to him by the Editor. John said the recent promotions were: East Coast:-C2 George Cox, P1 Des Desjardins, P1 Ron McMillan, P1 J.J. Chaisson, P2 Tony Falletta, P2 Bruce Irwin, M/S Stormr Olson & M/S Brian Clarke with P2 Rick Roberts retiring. Experimental Diving Unit in Toronto:-P2 Mark Oliver, M/S Rob McKay, M/S Carl Dutrisac and M/S Josh Boisvert. On board HMCS CORMORANT:-P2 Art Mulack. East Coast:-P1 Rod Goodwin, P2 Andre Fortin, P2 Gord Jones, M/S Charlie Tremblay, M/S Wade Simpson & M/S Del Corbett with John Dohan and two others retiring. Congratulations to all of you! Eric Carlson, Photographer & Diver, writes from St. Catharines, Ont. that he really enjoys all the stories and information from the newsletter. He is working in an Exporting company running the Photograph Department in Toronto and says his confreres there find it hard to believe all the tales and the lifestyle he relates to them of his many years in the RCN. Moe Coulombe is carrying on as per normal up on Vancouver Island and if he keeps catching all those salmon up there, pretty soon there will no longer be anymore salmon runs!! Frank Meal wrote his long time Diving Officer, Eric Cryderman (oldest known RCN Diver-qualified in 1926!) in Keremeos, B.C. and is awaiting his reply.

Victoria-based Navy Divers Break Record



Bob was a Ships Diver!

VICTORIA (CP) — Ten RCN divers returned here Tuesday after making what was believed to have been a world-record mass dive 175 feet below icy Alaskan waters.

The dive took place Nov. 24, more than 800 miles northwest of here, but was kept a closely guarded secret by the navy until the divers returned to port here.

The divers, ranging in rank from lieutenant-commander to able seaman, were led by their commander, Lieut.-Cmdr. Ben Ackerman, to have set a world record for naval personnel wearing self-contained "wet suit" equipment.

Purpose of the dive was to prove the practicability of "wet suits" in extreme depths and extreme cold.

Temperature of the water off Takli glaci, where the dive took place, was 30 degrees, two degrees colder than the freezing point of fresh water and half a degree more than the lowest recorded temperature of salt water.

Only two other divers are believed to have dived deeper. They are two San Diego scientists who dived 180 feet in "wet suits" in the Bering Sea. The feat of the Victoria group may result in a major policy change on RCN approved diving equipment, a naval spokesman said.

Lieut.-Cmdr. Ackerman was one of the first of the group to set foot on the muddy bottom of the sea.

Other members of the team of divers were PO George W. Ackerman, 35, formerly of Toronto; PO Julian G. Verschuere, 36; LS Charles F. Greengrass, 29, Winnipeg; LS Robert Larsen, 26, Toronto; LS Fred W. Oikovich, 29, Vancouver; AB Albert Lodge, 21, Winnipeg; AB Ernest W. Madson, Edmonton; AB Ronald MacKenzie, 24, Welland, Ont.; and AB Padraic Dutton, 21.

The men slid down the anchor cable of HMCS Fortune, one of four Pacific Command minesweepers which had previously

been engaged in joint manoeuvres with the United States Navy in northern waters.

Lieut.-Cmdr. Ackerman said Tuesday that "from the standpoint of proving the suitability of 'wet suit' equipment for deep work in cold water the dive was a major accomplishment."

He said he believed the dive was a record for naval personnel of any nation.

SPECIAL SUITS

"I have never heard of its being equalled, except by the two San Diego scientists . . .," he said.

Suits for the dive were made by a British Columbia firm to specifications of the RCN diving unit at HMCS Naden here.

They were made of 1/4-inch foam-neoprene and individually tailored to each diver.

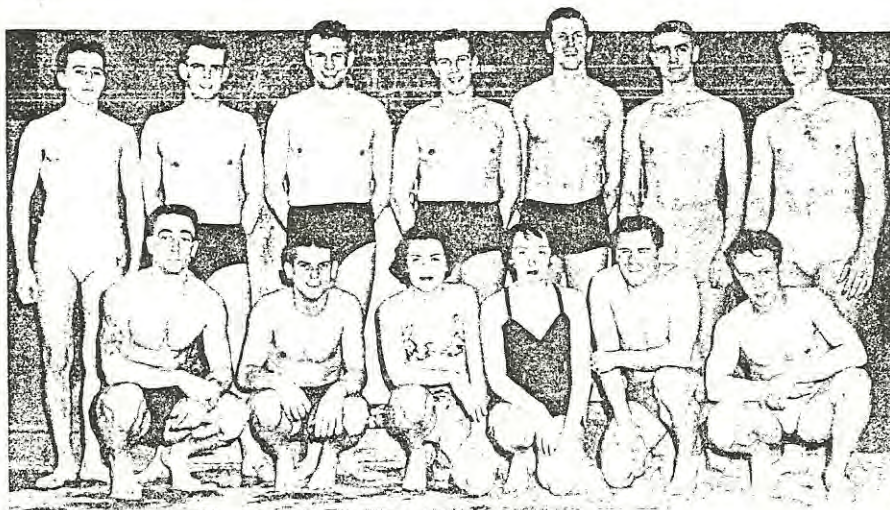
They were called "wet suits" because water actually penetrates the porous synthetic rubber garment and comes in contact with the skin of the diver. Advantage of the suits over those made of non-porous material is that they provide greater freedom of movement and, in some cases, more warmth.

Because portions of the three-piece suits overlap, the trunk of the body is covered with 3/4-inch foam-neoprene but under tremendous pressure at 175 feet this was compressed by half.

"We found we were not cold in spite of the depth and the water temperature," said Lieut.-Cmdr. Ackerman.

"Our safe time at the bottom was 15 minutes, but we stayed only about a minute because there was nothing to be gained by staying longer. We could easily have carried out useful work for the full 15-minute period."

Although their stay on the bottom lasted only one minute, the divers were submerged for 8 minutes each.



Shown above is the Navy swimming team that competed in the Nova Scotia swimming meet and took first place in the men's division. Front row, left to right: PO Albert Trepanier, Ottawa, coach; AB Harold Perry, Guelph, Ont.; Eileen O'Neil, Halifax; Betty McDonald, Dartmouth; Ord. Sea. Joe Perron, Montreal, and AB Les Franks, Toronto.

Back row: Ordinary Seamen Robert Blain, Montreal, and Norman Fleming, Bruce Mines, Ont.; Lieut. Alexander MacRae, Toronto; AB Robert Smith, Cranbrook, B.C.; Ldg. Sea. Gordon Champion, White Rock, B.C.; Able Seamen Bill Lawrence, Bermuda, and AB Rod Petty, Bermuda. Absent from the photo is AB George Renwell. (HS-18830).

1951-52 era. Can you spot the Clearance Divers?



Book Reviews Frogmen

THE FROGMEN OF BURMA: by Lt-Cdr Bruce S. Wright, RCN(R) (Ret.). Foreword by Admiral-of-the-Fleet The Earl Mountbatten of Burma. Pp. 152, illustrated, and with end-paper maps. Published by Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 791 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto 10. Price \$6.50

"The Sub commanding the boom patrol vessel has gone sick. Will you take her out for the night?"

"This question started a chain of events that ended on the other side of the world amid the sandbars of the Irrawaddy River and the mangrove *chaungs* of the Arakan coast of Burma."

So begins Lt-Cdr Bruce Wright's marvellous account of the first unit of frogmen formed by the Allies in the Second World War. Moreover, it is his own story; that of the Canadian naval officer who first produced a plan for the Allied troops to use underwater swimmers as an offensive weapon.

It started in January 1941, in St. John's, Nfld., where Lt-Cdr Wright, then a sub-lieutenant, was awaiting a

new posting to a convoy escort. He replaced the ailing commander of the boom patrol vessel; then, while churning back and forth along the boom and net defences outside St. John's Harbour, he conceived the idea of using underwater swimmers in waging war. "During that long night, as we rolled and pitched endlessly from one end of the net to the other," he writes, "my mind ranged over many subjects. However, it always seemed to come back to one fascinating problem: how would I beat such a defence as now lay before me?"

He could not know, of course, that the Italians and Japanese were already at work on the idea of using frogmen. But, in any event, his idea was original among the Allies.

Shortly after this he went to sea in the corvette HMCS *Lethbridge*, put his ideas about frogmen on paper, and triggered a series of events which eventually involved and received the enthusiastic support of Admiral-of-the-Fleet The Earl Mountbatten of Burma.

These events culminated with Lt-

Cdr Wright training and leading a group of skindivers against the Japanese in Burma; a decidedly mixed group of officers and men from different services, each of them qualified as a frogman, commando and parachutist.

They were the 40 officers and men — Canadians, Englishmen, Scotsmen, Welshmen, and one South African — who led the British 14th Army's crossing of the Irrawaddy River in Burma, and the attacks along the Arakan Coast.

Three of the men in Lt-Cdr Wright's unit were decorated for gallantry during the Irrawaddy crossing, one of them a Canadian. Two of the awards were Military Crosses, and were won by F/L G. Harry Avery, RCAF, of Ottawa; and by Lt James E. Turpin of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. The Military Medal was won by Sgt Patrick Colgan, RAF.

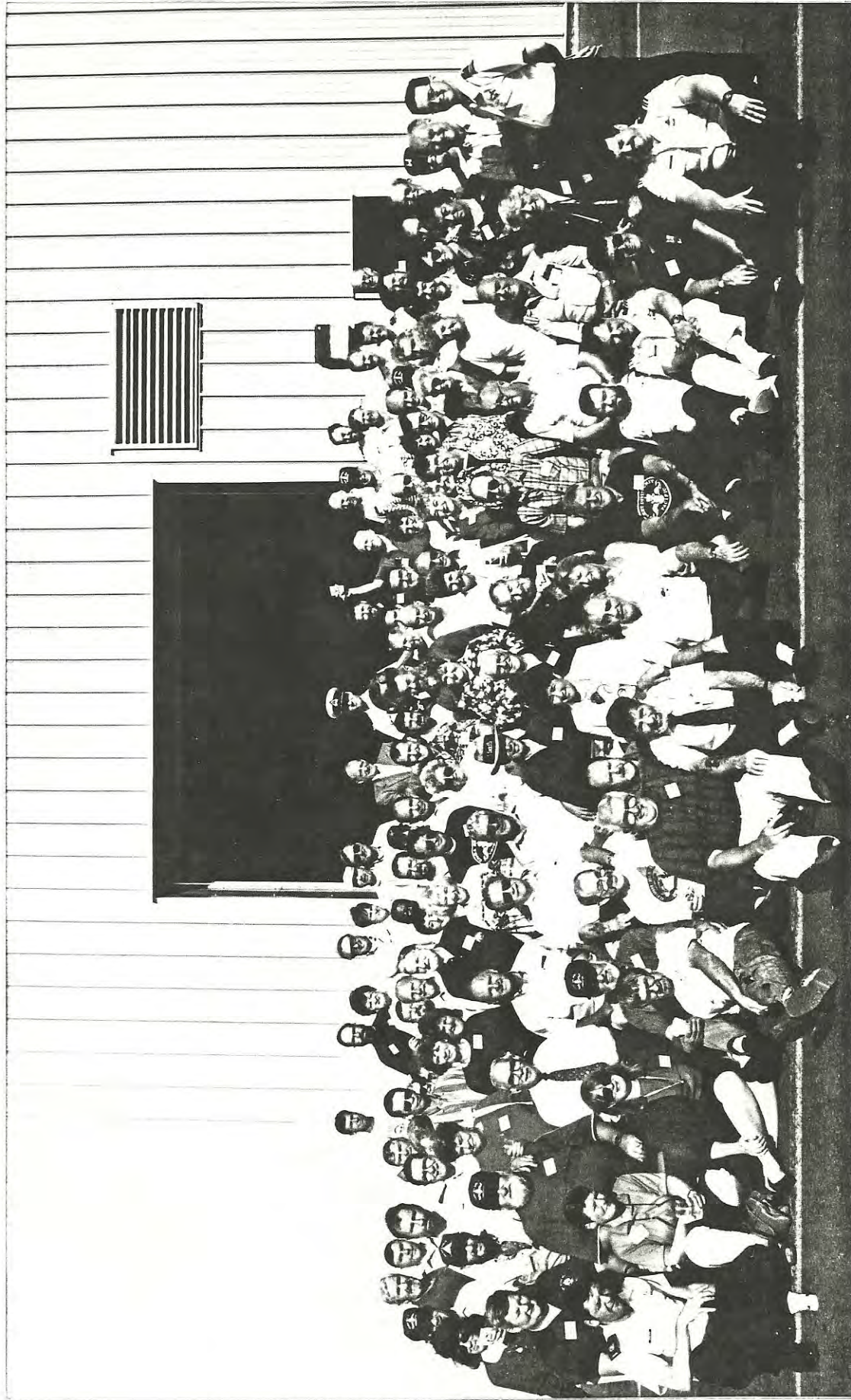
F/L Avery won his MC while commanding No. 4 Section of the Sea Reconnaissance Unit before and during the establishment of a bridgehead on the bank of the Irrawaddy River in the Myitta area; during which he made several night reconnaissances in view of the enemy and gathered valuable information necessary for the furtherance of the operations. Part of the citation to the award states, "On the night of 24-25 February 1945 Flight-Lieutenant Avery led the first assault party across the river and guided craft to the landing beaches under heavy fire. His work was arduous and dangerous, but his remarkable achievements contributed greatly to the successful establishment of the vital bridgehead through which later the whole division passed."

F/L Avery left the RCAF at war's end. He still lives in Ottawa where, from 1959 to 1967 he was employed as Director of Civilian Personnel, Army, in the Department of National Defence. He is now Assistant Director, Regional Operations, in the Public Service Commission.

The Frogmen of Burma is a strong story, told with strength and colour; the punch of reality, with liberal jabs of humour.

Much has been written about frogmen. But here at last are the engrossing details of how it all began and ended for the first of the Allied frogmen in the Second World War . . . MWO J. L. Wilson.

Canadian Naval Divers Association



Reunion 1994 - FDU (A)

The following were all shown to have been registered to attend the Reunion with their wives, companions, consorts or kin:(please excuse us if any names are not included)

ACKERMAN George & Jeannette	JOUDRY Guy & Corrine
ADAMS Glen	KELLY Tom & Joyce
ADAMS Glenn & Paula	KERBY David
ANDERSON Daniel & Christina	LAING Bill
BAILLIE Larry & Bonnie	LARDER Jim & Margaret
BALMFORTH James & Margaret	LARIVIERE Gilles & Marie
BASKETTE Gerry & Lorna	LARSON Red & Emma Greco
BOWERS Rick	LATUS Tony
BREMNER Drew	LAUCKNER Dick
BRYSON John	LAWRENCE Bill
BURKE Lloyd & Jean	LEGAY Rudy
BUSBY Roy	LEYTE Rollie
CAMERON Jack	MACDONALD Neil
CARNAHAN George & Pauline	MACDONALD Wayne
CATCHPAUGH Wayne & Carol	MALOTT Bill & Mary
COLE John & Patricia	MCEWEN John
COLLET Austin	MCLEOD Dan & Rose
CONNELLY Russ	MCRAE Al & Pat
COREN Bob	MAILLOUX Gerry
COULOMBE Moe & David	MARK Henry
COX Fred & Teresita	MATHEWS Darby & Pam
CONNOR Neil & Gloria	MEDDINGS Stanley
CORBETT Jim	MELANSON Fay
CRIPPS Ivan	MUISE Kevin
CROWE Leanne	MUSSELMAN Keith & Janet
CUBITT Bill	NEUMAN Reuben & Ann Marie
DAMS Wolfe	O'CONNOR Victor
DEANE Don & Marty	ONLEY George
DESROCHER Andy & Marie	PAQUIN Joe & Joyce
DOWNIE Bruce	PELLETIER Chuck
DRAKE Bert & Elizabeth	PETERMAN Bill & Shirley
DUBOIS Tony & Helen	PROUSE Norm
EDWARDS Chuck & Beth	QUINN John
EISNER Andrew & Joan	RANK Gordon
FAVREAU Bert	REDDY Gary & Elizabeth
FENN Guy & Jeanne	ROBINSON George & Charlene
FORD Gar	ROLFE Chuck & Andrea
FRAUZEL Glen & Lorraine	ROSS Doug & Linda
GILLIAN Glen & Bonnie	SAGAR Alan
GIRARD Ron	SAWYER Thomas & Laine
GONEAU Leo & Bernice	SEMPLE Sam & Betty
GOULARD Rose, Cathy & Linda	SERBU Nick & Betty
GREELY Brian & Pauline	SILVESTER Dale & Valorie
GREEN Wally & Roma	SKAALRUD Darryl & Sue
GWALCHMAI Robert	STEPHENSON Stan & Joan
HANNIGAN George	THOMPSON George & Vivian
HAYWARD Scott & Jill	THOMPSON Harry & Phyllis
HERD Norm & Wendy	WALKER James & Joan
HESJEDAHN Karl	WAMBOLT Gerry & Rose
HESSON Bob	WATTS Stanley & Rachelle
HEWITT Jim & Norma	WHITNEY Ken & Heather
HEYWOOD Maureen	WIGMORE Robert & Lee
HINES Darrel	WILSON James & Joyce
HILTON Willy & Marg	WILSON Chuck
HODGSON John & Mary Louise	WOOD Richard & Anne
HUGHES Doug & Vi	ZAMBORY John & Patricia
JEAN Charles & Clare	MCDUGALL Scott
JONES Gordon	