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DIPPERS DIGEST #21

15 March 1995

DIVING TENDER #7 aka
YARD MAINTENANCE TENDER No.7

Before the wet Coast Chiefie returned to Lotus Land and a well earned retirement, there was a farewell party laid on for him and it was a good one too, as there was plenty of grub and strangely, quite a bit of hard booze, all imported or label-less. Now no one mentioned this at the time as good manners forbade looking a gift horse in the mouth, and besides, who cared anyway as long as it was free and plentiful. Anyway, half way through the evening the Skipper comes up to Chiefie "I say, Chief, I received a thank you communication from the Canadian National Railways a while back and was wondering what it was all about, know anything?". "Just helping out an old mate" the Chief replies with a big HAR HAR. "Very well done, Chief," says he walking away still not knowing what it was about, and after a few more belts of free spirits didn't care either as long as the big Brass across the harbour didn't know. What happened is this. During the week Chiefie got a phone call from one of the Auxiliary Vessels for contraband that had just come back from a run to Bermuda, and they hadn't found an ounce of the forbidden nectar. But they did hear some splashes at the time and the scuttles were open even though it was raining pretty darn hard, so what did he think? Because it was a Saturday and as soon as the mustering of the Duty Watch was over, the Chief took me steaming full out to the splash site, knowing the Pier was empty as the ship was seen in her berth in the Yard. With all eyes looking for the best possible spot to tie up approximately where the Auxiliary crews Mess would have been, it was some time before anyone saw the humungous Mobile Crane Barge on the opposite side of the Pier with her hook down and bubbles coming up near the wires. Upon closer inspection of the Pier, it was noticed that some pilings and walings were splintered like toothpicks, and a few feet of railway tracks were bent out of shape. These were the days of the last remaining steam engines still being used by the CNR, and this one proved to be a bit too heavy for the rotting supports, deciding to go for a little dip in the harbour. Luckily, we found out later, the Engineer realized what was about to happen in plenty of time and opened the steam valve while the Fireman dumped his coals, otherwise when that hot boiler and the cold water met, there would have been one mighty big bang! It wasn't long after our Diver went down that a burlap potato sack was sent up filled with objects that clinked a bit and was stored in Chiefie's locker in the midship hold. Also being curious by nature, he had sent the lad over to see what was going on over at the other side of the Pier. It was no great problem as I carried 200 ft of hose and the lad on the bottom stretched the whole coil before he came up on an unusual sight. Right there before his eyes was a Choo-Choo train upside down, with her 2-4-8 wheels standing proud, a civilian hardhat Diver straining to put a wire strop between the 2-4 wheels. When he saw my lad, he signalled to give a hand with that chunk of wire he was wrestling with; he had already secured one end of the locomotive to the Crane, but I guess he was pretty tired and would appreciate a hand. Anyway, topside said 'OK' and, with a fresh Diver to help, it didn't take very long to hook up the remaining sling. After my lad was undressed, Chiefie decides to stay around for a while to see what was going to happen, as nothing like this had ever occurred in his memory, even when he was part of the Royal Navy Grand Fleet. Too soon, as some of my lads complained, the iron horse surfaced dripping mud and water, was hauled clear of the water and then I was away back to the Unit. You see, Chiefie had sprung and shared some of the recovered items and the boys were watching the big lift while imbibing 180 proof salvage and, of course, rules were rules. However I'm digressing somewhat, getting back to the Torpedo Testing Barge, there were plans afoot to bring her back to operational standards since there now was a steady stream of troops humping cylinders back and forth every day, and this was creating quite a strain on their one and only compressor, which of course was breaking down regularly. So, to this end, my Stoker(Ace) and the C2MM

(who only knew Fairmile gas engines) were detailed off to see what both of them could do, as my boy Ace had recently successfully completed a Diesel Course. This compressor was a four stage piece of machinery driven by a gas-diesel engine - first you started it off on ordinary gas, then changed over to diesel fuel when it was warmed up. Now I would think that any ordinary person in this situation would call up an experienced diesel and compressor technician for an assessment at least, but not my boys, no sir! First thing they rigged up were jumper cables from my main batteries and hooked up to the starter, which after a couple of spins and grunts promptly burned out! You see, that engine used a 12 volt system and mine was 32 volts. Naturally they reported a rusted out starter unit. Luckily there happened to be one in the shop and they very quickly changed the starter motor; I say quickly because it took two days. First of all, neither one of them had any of the proper tools. Ace wasn't qualified to be issued one and the C2MM had sold or traded most of his tools for tots when he was on the Fairmiles, so there was a lot of running around for sockets and such, and because one of them could read, the new motor had 12V painted in two inch letters, it was hooked up properly. Eventually, they got that engine perking away on the diesel and the C2MM says *"Don't touch anything else till I tell the Sirs,"* and off he goes. I think Ace, the Stoker, was a little annoyed with him as he hadn't spent as much time on this effort as Ace had, and the Motor Mech was always disappearing and returning with booze on his breath - besides, Ace wanted a few laurels for himself. He knew all about clutches, as I had one, so, revving up the engine he eased the bar over, and started watching these funny looking dials start to move. Each stage of the pumping unit had its own gauge, plus a large one on the storage bank with a shutoff valve on each cylinder, and of course a main safety valve. I guess that Ace was mesmerized by all those needles moving at the same time, because the next thing he knew he was lying flat on his back in a cloud of cold fog and couldn't hear a thing. That blow-off valve had been rusted shut for years and Ace hadn't opened up the volume tank valve and wasn't quick enough to realize what was happening when it blew, just as the C2MM and a couple of Sirs were stepping through the door. Well, needless to say, that project was abandoned and the boys kept humping those aqualung jugs up the hill and down again. Very shortly thereafter, everyone said goodbye to Ace, the C2MM and the Torpedo Testing Barge. I guess they were all considered too dangerous to keep around anymore. While waiting for the first of the Clearance Divers courses to commence, both Diving Tenders were kept busy mainly using hardhat Divers and only the occasional swimmer when needed; besides, who wanted to hump those new bigger and heavier jugs around, and of course all the Senior Ratings were of the old hardhat school. It was about that time that my driver approached a younglad, who was also crew, and asked him about the beautiful pair of black eyes his new wife was wearing that he had seen when he was out shopping the other day. In a stern voice he gave vent to the opinion that wife beating was not in the orders of the day; and what was his story? Well, it turned out this way. Last week when they were deep diving in Bedford Basin where the visibility was none too good at the best of times, this young lad had managed to disturb a spool of steel wire cable and the wooden reel collapsed. With nothing to hold the coils in place, it had just sprung out in all directions, putting a turn or two around him at the same time. When this happened, the rust and silt that had been there since WWII clouded everything up, and he couldn't see his way out of the ungodly mess. Topside informed him that he would have to get out on his own as sending another Diver down would only compound the problem. In the meantime, some of the strands of wire had parted and put little pinholes in the suit around his waist, and water was seeping in which made his gonads shrivel up and disappear - mighty cold water at 120 ft in the Basin!! The only thing he could do is wait until the silt settled a bit and then find his way clear of the tangle. It took a while before this happened, also increasing his bottom time. It was some cold lad that got out of the suit after doing the required stops in the water, and the only hot water I had was made in a tea kettle, while the Gate Vessel with hot showeres was over an hours steaming time away. This lad wasn't in the habit of telling tales of the Diving Unit at home, so his sweet young lady didn't know or find out about it until late at night when he was having a nightmare about it and, seeking to console him, put a loving arm around him. Now in his dreams the young lad thought that was another coil of wire wrapping around him and lashed out with a closed hand - POW - right between the peepers! Forever afterwards, whenever he tossed and turned in his sleep, she would never hug him anymore!! As in every other part of the Service, there comes a day set aside for the head Brass to come around and inspect his empire, just to make sure that the troops see him, and to remind them that he hasn't forgotten them even if they're pushed away in some far corner of his domain. The lad's had been kept busy scraping, painting and polishing everything that didn't move, even the GV's

looked presentable! But when he entered the wheelhouse of GREENWOOD, he was taken aback and quite at a loss for words. Now he never said a word, just finished his walk-around and came aboard me to the midship hold where there were a few goodies on the table in case he or his followers were hungry or thirsty. At this time that boat didn't have a permanent crew and if the diving task was only a small job, a couple of troops and a Petty Officer would just take off to do it and that was that. Except of course, there was little or no cleanup, so when the inspection day neared, one of my lads was dispatched to make it presentable. There is no doubt that this young lad was a little put off after all the labour he put in to make me sparkle, and time was running out. Since he owned a spraying rig and had been painting some furniture at home, it was brought aboard the next day, along with some leftover store bought paint he had used on a baby crib. By using that spray gun, the whole boat was done in jig time, except for the panelling behind the wheel. Removing the wheel and taping up the windows his store bought paint was then applied. What was immediately noticed by the broad-banded Gent when he stepped into the wheelhouse was the baby blue-pink speckled ROX-A-TONE. I personally think he was just speechless because he didn't see a Pusser colour, or perhaps he thought his eyes had given out! In any case, GREENWOOD wore that colour for many years - no one painted over it until that paint wore off. It was around this time that a few inventions that were supposed to make a Divers life a little easier showed up for test and evaluation, in the hopes that the Navy would buy a bunch of them. Since 'Flipper' had been around for a long time, this one fellow assumed that a propellor fixed to a bodies toosh was the answer, so he came up with this rig for a tryout. Just picture this if you will, a set of adjustable suspenders, a bicycle seat, six feet of aluminum pipe, a sprocket and chain affixed to a one ft. propellor. The idea was for a lad to be in the water, the contraption fitted to his rear end and buckled down, feet onto the pedals and away you go - right? Well, that's what the brochure said, but what took place was a little different. Either the torque of the screw was wrong or my lad kept pedalling backwards, because he kept sucking himself down to the bottom and ramming that seat up his keester - it being one of the racing types, that hurt like hell! Somehow the body takes a little time to cope with pedalling backwards to go forward, anyway that part was finally mastered. Next, trying to change directions while underway sounded easy, so said the manual. In reality it turned him into a spinner, and it was easy to get a bit dizzy and not watch where you were going, specially in the Naval Armament Depot(NAD) Camber where the jetty walls were almost solid planking to just a few feet from the bottom. After about an hour of this, with all kinds of advice and encouragement from the Sirs, no one else wanted to try this peice of gear, so that was the end of that. The Sirs weren't impressed and my young lad was heard to mutter that he wouldn't buy one either, what with his piles and a headache, over and above his hangover! The next item on the agenda was the one-man submarine, this too was by the same eager salesman. It must have been the inspiration for the famous Beatles song 'Yellow Submarine' because it was just as stupid in the young lads opinion. This yellow, rounded, tapered and propellored piece of fibreglass with a clear perspex canopy didn't look too bad at all sitting on the jetty underneath the Crane, but looking at it a little closer, inside was another set of those pedals and a handled bar to control the tailplanes & rudder. Seeing as how my young lad was already experienced in underwater inventions, he was once again volunteered to be test pilot for this one. Good thinking on the Sirs part, they had figured out that inside the Camber was to constraining so permission to use Halifax harbour was okayed, so there I was, acting as guard boat while the yellow thing was lowered in the water. Judging by the smug look on the inventors face and a thumbs up, this operation was going to go smoothly. Because it floated just so, this was the sign for the Diver to get inside, strap himself in, push the lever forward and pedal like hell. Now this lad had already pedalled like hell and all he got out of it was a couple of sore spots on his body, so he certainly didn't want any new ones. After going around in circles a couple of times, he was signalled to come alongside the jetty where a weight belt was put in the sub, reasoning that it was a bit too light and the belt would help a bit, and of course requiring the lad to pump a little faster. That was the answer okay, but there was a little flaw in the grand design. That extra weight was just enough to gradually sink the craft and only by hauling way back on the stick would keep it from nosing into the bottom. Meanwhile, the lad was running out of puff with all this pedalling. Not wanting to get lost in the deeper part of the harbour, there being no such thing as a depth guage or compass on it, an eye was kept looking around at the silt being churned up, when a jetty piling came up and hit the craft with a thump. One of the first things to happen was the extra ballast shifted forward and the tail rose up a bit so back pedalling didn't do a thing, you see, the inventor had used bike parts

in the drive train and it wouldn't go backwards, just ahead. The next thing was the young lad couldn't breathe, his intake hose of the double hose regulator was pinched off behind him, caught between the housing and the frame tubing of the seat. Somehow the belt was toe-snagged and moved back enough to bring the tail down and, cranking like hell, the young lad headed for the surface, undoing the seat harness at the same time. Those propellor blades must have been in overdrive because that yellow piece of fiberglass almost cleared the water coming up like that! That piling coming out and hitting him like that also caused a slight warpage in the frame around the canopy latch mechanism, which put it out of kilter and jammed tight. When my driver saw the rig surface, right away he figured out something was wrong and moved in closer. What he saw was this - the young lad was maskless, blue in the face and kicking away at the clear plastic housing, which was full of water. That pounding must have done some good as the canopy flew open and the lad crawled out before he passed out. Once the Diver was aboard, he was heard to say "No more! What with a sore and bruised head, an aching crotch from that damned Pogo Stick, and now chafe marks on my buns, a hurt chest from the control stick, enough is enough, not only that but the beast tried to strangle me!!". Well, the next day saw the last of that ball breaker as it passed through the Main Gate strapped down on a flatbed truck, destination unknown. The changes in the Branch that were whispers in the wind were now taking place--to be continued.

OBITUARY

OPP Sgt Jim Laverty, Coordinator of the OPP Underwater Search & Recovery Unit. Jim was killed accidentally in a farm accident on 26 Nov 94 near Bobcaygeon, Ont. Sgt Laverty had a long and close association with the Military Divers at the Experimental Diving Unit at DCIEM, FDU's HMCS CORMORANT, Combat Divers and Military EOD teams during his career with the Ontario Prov. Police. Jim was laid to rest on 1 Dec 94 by his peers, close friends and family. Condolences go out to Mrs. Susan Laverty from all his friends in the Military diving family.

IRVING WHALE - SUNKEN BARGE

Naval Divers who took part in OPERATION OIL or "BROKEN ARROW", the recovery of Bunker C oil from the sunken supertanker in Chedabucto Bay Nova Scotia from Feb to Apr 1970, will be most interested to hear that the oil barge "IRVING WHALE", into which the SS ARROW's oil was pumped and which later in 1970 sank off P.E.I.'s North shore, will be raised. She originally had 4200 tonnes of oil on board when she went down in a storm, however with it leaking approximately 20 to 80 litres a day, it will have less than 3000 tonnes remaining. Transport Canada officials in 1994 had projected the cost to raise her would be in the range of \$10 million - Irving Oil Company has agreed to pay 30% !!

Irving to help with barge salvage

CHARLOTTETOWN, (CP) - Irving Oil has agreed to pay 30 per cent of the cost of raising a loaded oil barge that sank off northern Prince Edward Island in 1970. The Irving Whale was carrying more than 4,000 tonnes of heavy, sticky bunker C fuel when it sank.

POLICE DIVER SYMPOSIUM

The 6th INTERNATIONAL POLICE DIVERS SYMPOSIUM will be held in the Royal Connaught Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel (905)546-8111 or FAX (905)546-8118, Hamilton, Ont. Canada from 15-17 Sep 95. Room rates are \$69.00 plus taxes. It is open to all Police, Fire, Military & Medical personnel, with speakers coming from National Defence, OPP, Metro Toronto Police, Virginia State Police, Florida Public Safety, Kenyon Emergency Services (London, UK), Royal Ulster Constabulary (Northern Ireland), Dive Rescue International (Colorado), US Secret Service (Maryland), Diver Alert Network (North Carolina), Professional Underwater Technologies Inc. (Michigan), Bermuda, Korea, Combat Divers, etc. Our own LCDR Robert Gwalchmai will be speaking. Registration fees of \$150.00 payable to International Police Diver Symposium are to be forwarded to: I.P.D.S. Co-ordinator, Rick Rozoski, 30 Fusilier Drive, Hamilton, Ont. L9B 2E1 phone (905)574-6817.

HERE AND THERE

Dan & Francoise Normandin returned from Exchange Duty with French Navy and is now located in the Ottawa area. John & Patricia Cole off to Florida for some time, hoping to see some of their USN friends there (Bud Nuquist was away in another State) - everyone was saddened to hear of John's young son drowning in the Ottawa River in 94. Dave & Sheila Pilot soon returning from Yuma, Arizona from overwintering. They hope to fly down to Halifax in the Summer to see family & friends. Dave would like to contact retired USN LCDR Don Reeves - lost his latest address (contact Editor if anyone knows it). Bill Lukeman was off to the West Coast, returning by scenic train route. Bill says that Dan McLeod was away to Florida and that he sees Neil Connors in Halifax from time to time. He also ran across the son of Peter Nicholson too. Frank & Stella Meal had a good time in Hawaii and recently enjoyed their 50th Anniversary - congratulations!! Harry Thompson contacts us from their home in Elliot Lake, Ont.

ARCTIC DIVERS 1963

NOV 63

HOW DO YOU get rid of a 50-ton boulder underwater on a beach?

This is only one of many challenges confronting Royal Canadian Navy divers who each year go into the Arctic to clear beaches used for the landing of supplies at various DEW Line sites.

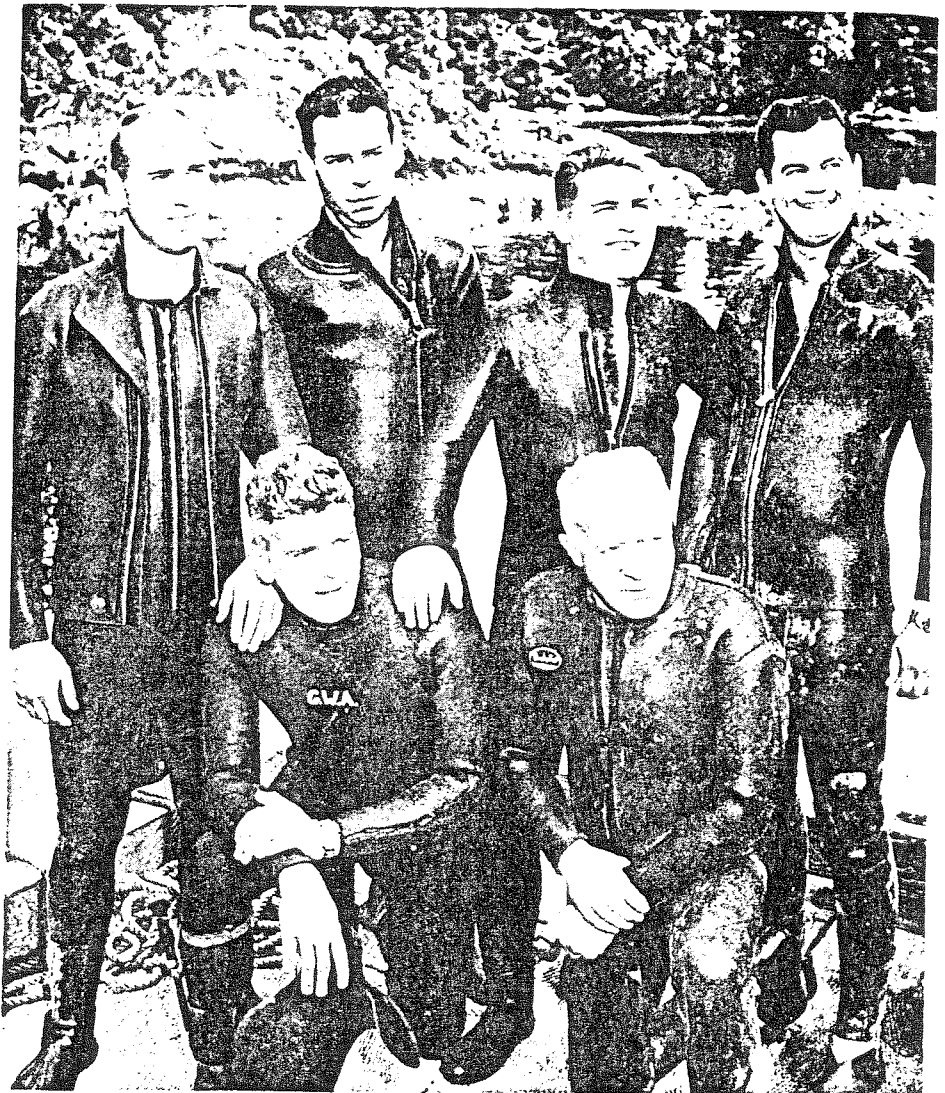
They have a simple and effective way of "removing" such large rocks. Besides the boulder they blast a large hole. A smaller charge is then used to shove the great obstacle into the hole.

Or, if the bottom is almost solid rock and blasting the big hole presents problems, a series of small charges are used to nudge rock out of the way.

Actually blasting to pieces such a large boulder would entail more explosives, and would present the long and tough job of having to move sharp and jagged chunks of rock, according to Lt.-Cdr. Ben Ackerman, officer in charge of the Pacific Command's Operational Diving Unit, located at Esquimalt.

In July, for the fourth consecutive year, a team of RCN divers from Esquimalt went to the barren western portion of Canada's Arctic to clear a number of DEW Line beaches.

They left Esquimalt on July 6 by air for Edmonton, and from there were



Naval divers of the Pacific Command again went to the western Canadian Arctic to clear beaches used for landing supplies at various DEW line sites. Members of this year's team, standing left to right: were: AB Albert Wood, PO Garth Shaw, Ldg. Sea. Albert J. Lodge, and AB Andrew Ouellette; kneeling, PO George Ackerman and Lt.-Cdr. E. D. (Tom) Thompson. (E-72785)

Micmacs Board Namesake Ship

The "invasion" ended pleasantly enough but at the first it looked as though the Indians were going to take back Canada, starting with the Navy.

The Tribal class destroyer escort *Micmac* was secured at the Naval Armament Depot jetty, Dartmouth, last July, when word arrived from the main gate that a band of Indians had assembled there and wished to visit the ship.

An officer despatched to the gate found a dozen Micmac Indians in tribal regalia, led by a medicine man garbed in a manner calculated to put evil spirits to flight and almost successful in doing the same for the officer.

Conducted on board the ship, the medicine man informed the captain of the ship, Cdr. J. M. Cutts, that he had been instructed by the tribal chief of the Micmacs to visit and bless the ship. Arrangements were promptly made to permit this, and the ceremony was performed on the forecastle.

Afterwards, the braves and maidens were taken on a tour of the ship and then treated to ice cream and cake.

flown to the Arctic. Their places of operation were all desolate, isolated spots. From west to east they travelled from Young Point to Cambridge Bay, a distance of some 1,200 miles of barren Arctic coastline. They worked at eight separate locations and reached each one by air.

The boulders and other debris the divers cleared away are those carried to the shoreline by huge icebergs, then dropped to the bottom with the coming of spring thaws. Some of the boulders are nearly 12 feet in diameter.

They also blasted away, where necessary, remnants of icebergs stranded on

the supply delivery beaches. At times such ice is up to 15 feet thick.

To carry out their task, the explosive-demolition experts employed an estimated 4,000 pounds of explosives.

And there was complaining about summer heat. Water temperatures in that region hover about the 30-degree mark.

In charge of the Arctic beach group this year was Lt.-Cdr. E. D. Thompson, a veteran of 19 years service with the operational diving branch of the RCN.

With him were PO George Ackerman, PO Garth Shaw, Ldg. Sea. Albert J. Lodge, AB Andrew Ouellette and AB Albert Wood.

Club 44

APR 62

— Sailors' Haven —

By

PO Jim Brahan

A NEW, ultra-modern establishment, far beyond the dreams of past leading seamen, has grown from the former Fleet Club at HMCS Naden, Esquimalt.

"Club 44", named after the building in which it is housed, was formerly known as the Fleet Club. Its patrons are seamen of junior ranks serving in the RCN's Pacific Command and their guests.

In 1956, on hearing it was intended to form a club to be used and administered by men up to and including the ranks of leading seamen, a few old-time naval sages made clucking noises with their tongues and flatly said: "It will never work."

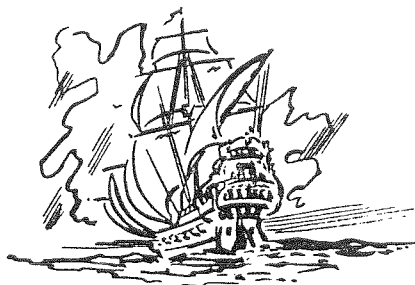
However, after the usual teething troubles at the beginning of a venture of this magnitude, the Fleet Club caught on and the attendance has steadily increased.

Now the pundits are being made to swallow their sour prophecies and the navy men's club has grown to be one of the best on Vancouver Island.

Until January of this year only the second floor of the building was used and the club was open only on week-ends. This proved to be inadequate, as each night the place was filled to capacity and many members and their guests had to be turned away at the door.

With the official opening of Club 44 on January 7, 1962, the entire building was taken over and it operates every night of the week.

The main floor is used as the lounge and there is strict rule that it is for



The efforts and cash contributions of junior seamen in the Pacific has made of "Club 44" a pleasant and relaxing social centre for off-duty hours. (Photo courtesy Ryan Brothers, Victoria)

couples only. The second deck is the games room. Here a man in his leisure hours can play at snooker or ping pong, exercise his skill on the shuffle boards or relax before his favourite television program. In the basement it is intended to set up a snack bar and a banquet room. Some of these features are still in their beginnings because the whole organization is a pay-as-you-go proposition.

Whenever possible, top-flight entertainers are hired for the week-end dances. The club has featured such talent as the famous pianist Lionel Hampton, the vocal groups Four Nites and the Hi-Liters. One of the club favourites is the Australian singer Rolf Harris, who has made two appearances.

Always keeping a weather eye on expenses, management arranges, if at all possible, to billet visiting guest stars in the homes of members. Apparently the entertainers also approve of this arrangement, finding a private home a restful change from a hotel room and a haven from autograph seekers.

For the past three years Cliff Finlayson's "Club Quartette" has been the official orchestra. According to Band-leader Finlayson, they enjoy playing for the dances because, he claims: "It is a good atmosphere and, being a young crowd, they like all types of music."

The main lounge is the most spectacular part of the building. It has been sectionalized into three distinct units

Undersea Drama

By LIEUT. J. S. KEATE,
RCNVR

A false step would mean death to himself and disaster to a Newfoundland harbor—A story of undersea courage in "The Silent Service"

WHEN one reads about medals being awarded in this war, one is inclined to think of heroic actions in the shock and shell of battle. Decorations call up pictures of valiant deeds in the face of enemy fire, but there are a great many which we never hear about, which nonetheless call for raw courage in the performance of routine day-to-day duties.

Such a one was the British Empire Medal awarded not long ago to Able Seaman Albert J. "Ab" Hanley of the Royal Canadian Navy. Perhaps few people outside of Hanley's parents and friends in Saint John, N.B., know the story behind Hanley's decoration, because there wasn't much mention of it in the press, but the fact remains that he performed an act of valor which saved an important war harbor from a serious accident. So up in St. John's, Nfld., they went to bed one night early this year little realizing the heroism that had been displayed in their harbor that day, and Hanley was just as glad—because he's an excessively quiet, modest young sailor, who is content with his lot as an able seaman and doesn't ask any accolades for what he considers the routine performance of his duty.

The odd part of this story is that it all came about by chance. You see Hanley is a naval diver. And divers are a sort of sect unto themselves, unlike any other branch of the service. They work in rotation, like the batting order of a baseball team, each man doing his job as his turn comes up. No one can force them to dive against their will, but in the Newfoundland Command at least, no man has been known to refuse a dive.

Well, on the day about which I'm speaking, a difficult job came up, and it seems that it was "Ab" Hanley's turn to go down. And when the diving officer for the base, Commissioned Bosun Lawrence "Lon" Chaney, thumbed through his list and saw that Hanley was in line for the assignment he felt a certain sense of relief.

"Just the man," he mused. "He's got to be cool and steady as a rock. This is going to be a tough job."

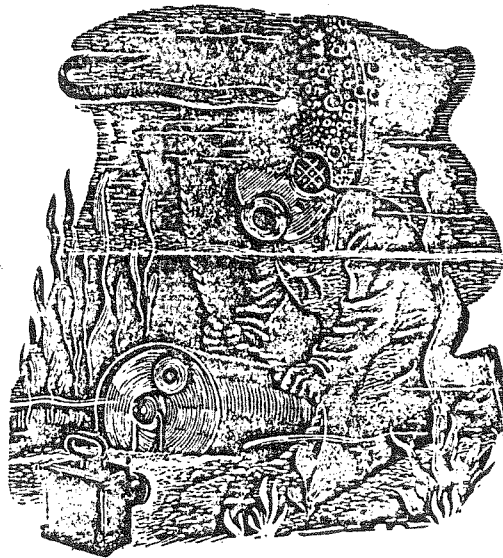
It was a risky operation. A depth charge, laden with 350 pounds of TNT, and two loaded depth charge pistols had been lost off the stern of a warship and had to be recovered.

As long as they remained in the ocean bed they were a hazard—not only to the valuable warship lining the jetties but to the buildings and the street front beyond. An explosion might cause a major catastrophe.

It was not known whether or not the depth charge was set to "safe." Up to a certain depth it would be impotent. But it was known that the two pistols were loaded with a highly explosive chemical and that they needed only a slight jar to be detonated.

This, then, was the highly ticklish job that Hanley faced: to don his diving suit, go down to the ocean bed, grope around in the murky fastnesses of the submarine world, and come back up with the charge and the primers intact.

Visibility on that slimy harbor bed was seven feet, at the best. But Hanley grinned a cheerful



He had to grope around in the eerie underwater world . . .

grin as they screwed on his metal headpiece and waved them good-bye in a lumbering, top-heavy salute as he backed down the ladder and the bubbles closed in over his head.

Thirty feet down he touched bottom and began his eerie underwater search. What went on in his mind, only he knows. His shipmates on the boat up top crossed their fingers and kept pumping air.

At the end of an hour Hanley's breast rope jerked twice and they hauled up breathlessly. Dangling from the line, in a precise sailor's knot, was a dull, metallic object not unlike a grease gun, which they identified as one of the depth charge pistols.

They heaved a sigh of relief. That was one third of the job done!

They didn't have long to wait for the second signal. Another 15 minutes passed, then the line jerked again and they began cautiously to pull up the salvage.

This time the hoisting job was harder. And as the line grew shorter they saw the grey, cylindrical outline of the depth charge breaking water.

Chaney examined it. It was found primed to explode—but fortunately at a depth greater than the young diver was working. Just 20 feet separated the young diver from a blast that would have rocked the whole harbor!

Now the men on the boat breathed easier. Hanley came up for a hot cup of tea and went back to his work with renewed vigor. To look at him you'd think he was searching for lobster traps. Not a line in his face betrayed the tension and anxiety of the moment.

Another 15 minutes passed. Half an hour . . . 45 minutes . . . another hour. This one was being elusive.

But then, all of a sudden, came the signal Chaney and his men had been hoping for. Two sudden sharp jerks on the line meant that Hanley was calling for them to hoist up. They hoisted—and up through the dirty grey wastes of that wartime harbor came the second depth charge pistol, intact. Hanley's job was done. He came to the surface, took off his helmet and said: "Now, boys—how about some lunch?"

People of St. John's walked the streets a few yards away, heedless of the undersea drama which had saved their harbor.

That's the story of Able Seaman "Ab" Hanley, B.E.M. It is typical of the dozens of untold acts of heroism which these gallant young Canadian Navy lads dismiss as "routine duty."

LEST THEY be for the passing of the year, the colours displayed on naval officers' sleeves or shoulder straps to distinguish their branches shall be recorded here. All will go—all but two—by December 31, 1959.

The executive branch was undistinguished—that is to say, no coloured distinction cloth appeared between the stripes denoting the executive officers' rank. This was because the executive officers' antecedents were the officers who sailed and fought warships in the days of sail.

With the coming of steam, ships were at last able to blow up (courtesy the engineers) or run aground (thanks to the executive branch) under their own power. The engineers were at first admitted on board only in the status of civilians, but as time went by were grudgingly accorded officer status and wardroom privileges, along with a purple stripe that set them apart from the sailors.

Why purple—the royal colour—was chosen for the engineers in 1863 does not appear to be easy of explanation to anyone outside the branch. It may be that the engineer is conceded to be monarch of all he surveys—as long as he stays in the engineroom.

Scarlet was a natural choice when it came to assigning a branch colour to the ship's surgeons in 1864. The modern

Letters to the Editor

A06 59

ABOUT BRANCH COLOURS

Dear Sir,

In your March 1959 issue I have read with great appreciation the article "The Passing of Distinction Colours." With all respect I think the Royal Canadian Navy is much to be congratulated on withstanding the new arrangement for so long, for the abolition of the distinctive coloured cloth is considered by many to be really nothing but a retrograde measure. In the Merchant Service the colours have been retained, and are most useful for passengers and others to be able to recognize at once members of the purser's staff, and engineer officers, for instance, as well as the doctor of course.

With regard to the original allocation of the different colours, surely the white was chosen for the paymasters because they were mostly dealing with paper and paper-work. Instructors had blue because of the ink! When I was a naval cadet the dark blue for ordnance officers had not been introduced for the simple reason that there was no such person as an ordnance officer; for instructors the cloth was simply "blue" and no shade was specified. On a new uniform it was darkish blue, but when the coat was older the cloth became rather faded, giving rise in my youthful

profession of surgery can trace its beginning to the barber-surgeon of bygone centuries. The red and white striped pole of the barbershop of today recalls an era when the barber was equally skilled in amputating a limb or scraping off a beard.

This one is a puzzler: Where did the supply branch acquire its colour—the



white of stainless Sir Galahad, the life of Astolat? Was it given to the branch in 1864 as an unattainable ideal or did some paymaster the past write the Admiralty Fleet Order himself in a fine Italian hand?

The choice of light blue for the instructor branch was logical and commendable, when one considers the feelings of the "schoolie" after long hours and days of trying to pound reason into the thick heads of reluctant matelots.

Silver grey for the constructors, dark green for the electrical branch and dark blue for ordnance—the association between colour and branch is baffling. As apt a choice as any in the whole pack would appear to be the brick red assigned so recently (1955) to the civil engineers. The maroon of the nursing officer, medical administrator and medical technical officer appears to be simply a variant of the surgeon's scarlet and both shades are being retained.

One colour remains to be considered—the emerald green of the special branch—but modesty forbids any detailed discussion of the colour worn so proudly by this fine body of officers. Intelligence, information, firefighting, law—their talents are legion. And this record of the vicissitudes of the branch distinction colours might never have been written without them.

man rating) does know just sufficient that a commander has three stripes, and that officers are probably to be found in the wardroom about dinner (lunch) time. In he goes and finds no fewer than four or five commanders, and how is the lad to know which is "the" commander? Later in the commission, no doubt, he will recognize the engineer commander as always slightly perspiring, the paymaster commander by his pallid appearance from constantly poring over ledgers, and electrical commander by his hair standing on end from customary electrical disturbances. In any case it is all very difficult.

Yours Sincerely

H. P. MEAD

(A "Seaman" Commander—how grand!)

6 Liskard Gardens,
London, SE3,
England.

BRANCH SUFFIXES REMAIN DEC 58

ALTHOUGH branch distinction colours are disappearing from the uniforms of officers as a step toward the establishment of a general list, rank suffixes—(S), (E), (SB), etc.—are being retained for the present.

General Message 178, 1958, authorizes the optional removal of distinction colours from sleeves, collar badges, and shoulder straps by all officers of the regular force and reserves, except officers in the medical branch, commencing September 1, 1958, and the compulsory removal effective January 1, 1960. The report of the Ad Hoc Committee on RCN Personnel Structure recommended the removal of distinction cloth in order to foster the general list principles.

General Message 178 does not imply any change in the existing branch structure at this time. The use of suffixes to distinguish the branch to which an officer belongs will continue for the present. When the general list is introduced these branch suffixes will be abolished. A requirement will remain, however, to distinguish the special skills possessed by each officer for employment purposes. This will most likely be accomplished by a numerical designation system.

The question now being examined is to what extent serving officers will be affected and a decision will no doubt be reached by about the end of 1958. Before any decision can be made the following are some of the factors which must be considered:—(a) The existing distribution of officers by age and seniority against the ideal distribution;

(b) The background and ability of serving officers; (c) The future officer requirements of the navy; (d) The current shortage of officers; (e) The need to maintain the fighting efficiency of the RCN during the transition period, and (f) the Chief of the Naval Staff's directive that the rights and interests of officers and men are to be carefully guarded.

When this jigsaw puzzle is put together it will be possible to determine to what degree a cross-training programme is either essential or desirable and how it should be carried out.

In the meantime, the removal of distinction cloth represents the first step towards the future general list system and provides all officers with a satisfactory period of time in which to make changes in their uniforms.

The following branch distinction colours were being worn at the time General Message 178 was despatched and all but two (the scarlet and maroon of the medical branch) will have disappeared by January 1, 1960.

Engineer	purple
Medical	scarlet
Medical Administrative	scarlet
Nursing	maroon
Medical Technical	maroon
Supply	white
Instructor	light blue
Constructor	silver grey
Electrical	dark green
Ordnance	dark blue
Special Branch	emerald green
Civil Engineer	brick red

MP Praises Guard and Band

When members of the Cornwallis guard and band, who had been taking part in ceremonies attendant on the Royal Visit to Ottawa, visited the House of Commons on July 3, their presence was pointed out by Marcel Lambert, Member of Parliament for Edmonton West, while the House in committee of supply, was discussing the defence estimates. Mr. Lambert said:

"While I am on the subject of our military personnel, Mr. Chairman, if I may be permitted the indulgence of the committee I should like to draw attention to the presence in the gallery of a relatively large number of men of Her Majesty's Royal Canadian Navy. There are 128 officers, chief petty officers and men of Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Cornwallis who performed on the lawns in front of the Parliament buildings on Dominion Day. These officers and men are from a training establishment; they are in the main relatively new to the service, and represent all provinces of Canada. I would certainly congratulate them on the very fine performance on Wednesday evening."



National Defence

Défense nationale

RECEIVED FEB 22 1995

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13 February 1995

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Dear *Sur*

As you may be aware, the ceremonies commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic in 1993 raised considerable awareness of the participation and sacrifices made by Canadian service personnel and Merchant mariners in the Battle of the Atlantic. These ceremonies also rekindled the significant association that had developed between Canadians and the City of Liverpool during the war.

As a result, a private project was initiated to find a suitable way to permanently commemorate Canada's participation in the Battle of the Atlantic and perpetuate close ties with the City of Liverpool. An agreement was reached with the City of Liverpool which will allow Canada to commemorate its maritime contribution to the Battle of the Atlantic by naming and dedicating, a maple tree lined boulevard at the center of the historic Liverpool waterfront area.

The dedication ceremony is planned for the 15 May 1995 in conjunction with a scheduled visit of HMCS TORONTO to Liverpool. This is a unique opportunity as it is unlikely that this level of Naval participation will be available for a dedication ceremony for the foreseeable future. The Canadian High Commissioner and Civic officials from the City of Liverpool will be in attendance and it is anticipated that the Minister of National Defence, representing both service personnel and veterans, will attend. Rear Admiral Garnett, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic will be the Senior Canadian Naval representative and other Canadian and British Naval and Maritime Air representatives will be invited.

This event will be a significant occasion for Canadians, therefore it would be greatly appreciated if you would publicize the ceremony amongst your membership so that anyone who might have an interest in attending can do so. Enclosed is a fact sheet on the Memorial and dedication ceremony to assist in publicizing it.

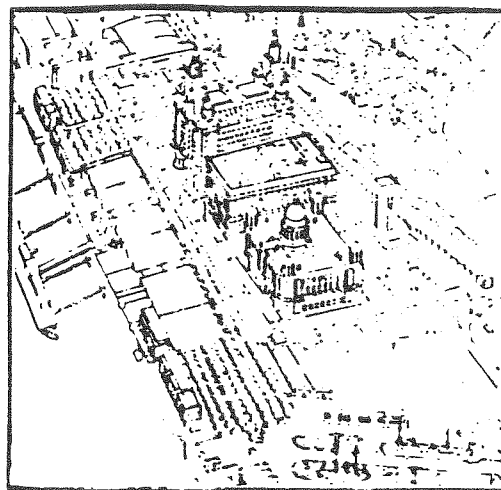
Canada

E.E. Davie
E.E. Davie
Captain(N)
Naval Advisor
for Commander

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF VETERAN ASSOCIATIONS

CANADIAN MEMORIAL LIVERPOOL

1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Association
The Aircrew Association
Air Force Association of Canada
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
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

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The dedication and naming of this boulevard will be a significant event and the ceremony is planned for the 15 May 1995 in conjunction with a visit of HMCS TORONTO to Liverpool. This is a unique opportunity as it is unlikely that this level of Naval participation will be available for a dedication ceremony for the foreseeable future. The Canadian High Commissioner will be in attendance and it is anticipated that the Minister of National Defence, representing both service personnel and veterans will attend. Rear Admiral Garnett, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic will be the Senior Canadian Naval representative. Other Canadian and British Naval and Maritime Air representatives will be invited.

Final details of the ceremony have not yet been determined. Anyone interested in attending may obtain more details by writing the Naval Advisor, Canadian Defence Liaison Staff, London W1X 0AB England or by facsimile 0171 258 6460.

Unfortunately, the financial goal for this project has not yet been reached and this may affect the planned dedication ceremony in May of this year. Donations are, therefore, still urgently required and must be received before 1 May 1995. Contributions of any size will be gratefully accepted and can be forwarded to the Naval Advisor, Canadian Defence Liaison Staff London, London W1X 0AB England. Cheques should be made payable to the "Canadian Memorial Liverpool". All donations will be acknowledged.