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FOUNDED  
HALIFAX, N.S.  
1981

**FOUNDING MEMBERS**

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First President  
Stanley F. Watts

15 September 1994

**DIVING TENDER #7 aka  
YARD MAINTENANCE TENDER No.7**

The Winter of '53 and Spring of '54 was pretty quiet except for some endurance dives to see how long some poor sods could stay on the bottom in the cold harbour waters. Brand new white woolen underwear had arrived and were tried out with a drysuit, first wearing one set then two, with mixed results - too itchy or too bulky. These were compared with the ones using the smelly blue one-piecers, no amount of dry cleaning or washing by CVD removed that odour until one lad removed the ersatz rubber padding built in the shoulders but, even with three sets of underwear they did not prove satisfactory. You see, the lads would go to the bottom of the shotline and just stand there without moving until they couldn't take it any more, then come up. All the time this was going on there were mutterings among the Sirs about when the new undies were due to arrive, and what was taking so long to evaluate longjohns for goodness sake! Along about Spring-time, when the waters were starting to warm up, a Sir from Upper Canada comes on board with a bundle and quite a wide grin saying that these here sets of underwear were the best thing since bottled beer for keeping nice and snuggly warm in the harshest of Winter conditions, and he ought to know as he had used them all Winter while skiing the mountain slopes, and the evaluation was done apres ski while poking down the toddies. Well, the lads appreciated this even if there was a faint aroma of perfume on one of them, without a doubt. These garments were tightly knit virgin angora white wool with overlapping flaps at the neck and chest, thumb straps on the wrists to prevent the sleeves from riding up and sewn in booties; you can almost understand why that Sir from Upper Canada wanted the trials to last all Winter! But not my lads, all they could think of was the shaking and shivering and wondering if they could hack it. The only flaw in them was that they couldn't be thrown in a washer or dryer, they had to be dry cleaned or hand washed and hung out to dry(if this wasn't followed they tended to shrink to pigmy size), outside of that they were thought to be just dandy. And the gloves, now, they were separate to be worn under rubber gloves and did they ever make swell Christmas presents for the young'uns. Later on towards Summer, the Stores lad was dispatched to the Diving School to do a complete change-over muster in order to put a stop to all the rumours floating around as to what was happening. Some thought the hardhat boys were going to take over the self-contained troops, and some thought the opposite, but our lads knew better - we took them over lock, stock and barrel. Not that the hardhats had that much anyway, because it only took an hour or so to do the full chore. There was no need to count the ballast, who would want to thief pig iron bars?! Outside of a few complete sets of Standard Mk 5s and hoses there wasn't much else unless you counted the hand cranked air pump(circa 1914) and the hand cranked gas compressor on the midship hatch, that was it. Anyway, the amalgamation went pretty smoothly. Now, every trained hardhat Diver had the option of joining the Diving and Explosive Disposal Unit as it was now called, or fading from the diving world entirely. About half of them did join, as they saw the handwriting on the wall(or maybe a greater future than they now enjoyed, or possibly they didn't want to return to their original Trade). Eventually most of them became Senior Instructors in the Unit that took them over, a quirk of fate perhaps, as some of them had a hidden nasty streak buried deep inside. The grand aim of the senior Sirs was to have a topnotch, second to no one, all-around trained Diving Unit. All were to be capable of surface air supplied diving, self-contained mixed gas diving, salvage diving, using underwater cutting and welding gear, surface and underwater explosives, ID and disposal of underwater ordnance, and the list goes on. But the first thing that was decided after seeing the change-overs was to get the boys in shape and physically capable of doing all this stuff, now these lads weren't obese by any standards, it was just that they packed a few extra pounds and had done most of their diving up in Comeau's Tavern, or other such like places! DT #5 was now in the slips for a very much needed refit and

paint job and DT #3 was back again, burping and farting through her exhaust pipe, with no genny, but still moveable if you didn't push the throttle too far and pumped her out regularly, so the decision to move a GV out to Lawlor's Island for the Summer was made. It must have been some sight from shoreside watching this piece of floating concrete with black smoke from the galley fire coming out of the funnel under tow of a Glen tug steaming down the harbour seaward, accompanied by two Diving Tenders trailing three red and yellow Bailey Bridge Pontoons! When they secured to the Island's rickety jetty, the caretaker, his wife and three daughters greeted everybody with a big hello, and was extremely helpful in assisting with some of the small problems that came up such as, because they had no shore power on the jetty he offered us the use of his outlets. Because of the distance to the power source, the juice was only capable of running a few lights and a fridge that we had acquired, but then again who needed power in this little bit of Eden-by-the-sea anyways. Although he was very well mannered and polite to the Sirs and Senior Ratings, he homes in on the group of four lads in the background. Here he was, a retired RCN (lovely name that!) lower decker and right off the bat recognized kindred folks, or did he smell the distinct odour of brew on the make? The lads didn't really care as it only meant another can of juice in the mix, and besides they figured right away what with being on an island he must be making his own anyway which, of course, was right on the button. With all the practice this gent had, and records kept of every batch, he sure had some admirable brews, and he wasn't selfish either, he shared and shared alike, marvellous chap he! Barricades were set up, ropes slung from trees and a couple of ditches dug along a blazed trail going around the derelict WWII VD hospital (abandoned in the late '40s) along a path set up by an ex PTI Sir who turned part time Diving Officer. Not too many of the troops made the course the first time around, but after a few practice runs it came a little easier, if you could believe the talk on the way back. I had forgot to mention that DT #3 and myself were used as Duty Boats at secure to let the married Hands go home at night. Duty Watches were still required but the way things turned out, there was no lack of volunteers in that department. That Summer was idealic beyond thinking, it was the year of lack of rain and the sun shone practically all the time, and outside of a little training there was nothing to do except get a tan, load up one of the pointed Bailey's, strap on the pair of Johnson's and cruise the island. Mind you now, just because the pontoon was loaded with groceries and brew, and the beaches at Silver Sands and Lands End were crowded with young damsels, didn't mean that my boys were up to hanky-panky, no sir, not my lads, but they did manage to go aground a few times and break a few shear pins, but that's what a Stores lad is for, eh? Well, as all good things must come to an end, so did that Summer, but for a few years afterwards and until the island was abandoned, some of the lads always paid a call on the caretaker, his wife and three daughters at Christmas time. The move back to Camber Zero went pretty smooth and DT #5 was due out of refit while DT #3 still burped and had no jenny and still had to be pumped regularly, which made the Camber pretty well crowded. QHM was aware of this problem and arrangements were made to move us to NAD on the Dartmouth side of the harbor. Meanwhile it was decided to retire DT #3 as she was too much of a problem and besides, DT #5 was coming out of refit. When everyone of us was secured, the boss man told the Stores lad to muster the gear on that wooden thing in the corner of the Camber. The wooden thing turned out to be the Torpedo Testing Barge complete with tubes and gasoline powered HP compressors, and they were huge suckers! But after being laid up so long with no maintenance or heat they were a hopeless shambles, which meant of course that all aqua-lung cylinders had to be hand carried up the hill. Also to add to the bad news, there was no steam heat carried to this portion of the camber (nor would there ever be), so one of the GV's was to provide the heat and steam for the Tenders. GV #1 had the best boiler of the two but no fuel, so a trip to the coaling yard was laid on. The securing pins to the shoreside bollards were in pretty poor shape and deemed untrustworthy to carry the weight of the GV, so two mooring clumps were to be laid fore and aft of the barge. This was done by the Floating Crane while the GV was over the other side coaling - these clumps were a fair size - about six feet cubed with an eyebolt on top. The bolt itself was two inches thick and about one foot round, sitting proud dead centre. When the fueling was completed and the GV returned, it was close to supper time and the securing to the ringbolt was delayed till the following day. The Sirs had finished their meal by this time in the tiny Wardroom when the door suddenly burst open and a young lad shouted "*We're sinking sir!*", naturally this was pooh poohed until they noticed a wine glass had a distinct list and a rushing of feet in the passageway. That grabbed their attention right then and there, especially when a loud crunch was heard and a shudder went through the hull. Let me tell you that there was a mad scramble to the Dry Storage area then, what with the water pouring in from a hole in the bottom and some stores getting drowned - the bigger panic was to move the brew that was aging in a locker unseen by

some of my lads. It was impossible to stop the flow from the inside because of the force of the flow with that big ringbolt showing, and a swimmer couldn't get close enough as the barge was sitting square on the clump! Meanwhile, the other end with the freshwater tanks was going down with the tide, causing a bigger tilt, so as a stop-gap measure, pumping out was called for. On board were two single cylinder gas waterpumps, which of course hadn't been used in a donkey's age and wouldn't start because we still had our MM(Motor Mechanic) who only knew Fairmile(MTB) engines, and these certainly weren't no twelve 'V' cylinder jobs! Anyway, some of my lads got them going and started to pump out these two tanks, in the meantime the water was still rising inside, and there it was - the Diving Unit had sunk!! Not too far mind you, as the bottom was only ten feet at high tide, which of course it was when the newly bunkered GV was placed over the clump, just barely clearing the ring, and with the falling tide the ring had to go somewhere. Yup, you guessed it, right through the bottom, right through twelve inches of cured concrete! The water level stopped rising when the tide stopped falling, the water tanks empty, the Sirs figured that they had it beat and with the rising tide there would be enough space to shove a piece of plywood over the hole and put a patch in it. Not so, the GV stuck to that clump like you know what. Meanwhile, trying to get a pumping machine from Dockyard proved to be futile because it was the weekend and no Supervisors could be located, so one of the Sirs called the Fire Department in the Yard and a truck was sent from NAD, just up the hill. A problem came up right off the bat, no damn way were they going to use their shiny brass Pumper on dirty ol' salt water but, would use a couple of gas driven AJAX pumps for down below, providing the intake pipes would reach the jetty. Very shortly all three pumps were belching away and the water level started to go down, but because of the high lift and the distance to the pumps, one had to be shut down due to a burned out seal. That pump was really needed so it was carted up to the repair section in the Fire Hall and left to cool down prior to stripping and repairing. Because this was an unusual situation, the mechanic had to calm his nerves and be fortified by a cup of coffee first as nothing like this had ever happened before. On returning he found his workshop full of smoke with a nice little blaze going where the pump was situated. Now instead of grabbing an extinguisher, he runs down to the jetty and informs the Fire Chief that his Firehall is afire. Well sir, in jig time that Pumper truck was up the hill and hooking up to the mains, but the end result was that one other fast thinker had already put the blaze out and there was only minimal smoke damage - the unserviceable pump being eventually repaired. So there it was in one day, the Diving Unit sank and the Fire Hall had a fire in it!! There was a bit of comedy here too, it seemed that the hardhat boys wanted to do the inside work to repair the GV(5-6 feet of water) which meant humping a set of gear off DT #5 and dressing a Diver on the landing just above the top of the water. It didn't work out very well due to a short in the phones somewhere and every time the Diver touched the inside of the helmet, sparks jumped off his teeth. Needless to say, they packed that in and the swimmers managed to do whatever was required. Also the return humping of the gear was left to the swimmers because the hardhat boys were more senior ranks! When the hole was finally patched with cement and things settled down, a class of future Diving Officers was organized for two reasons, one was to give the Mine Clearance Divers(MCD) rated lads a crack at getting paid for their diving and rated DV, and secondly to gain more candidates for an expanding Diving Unit. It was only a dicky run of two weeks and at the end of it a couple of my lads were so rated. Interesting to note, was one lad whose rating read ABNS MCD DV II on his documents. No story would be complete of that era without a few tales concerning an old time Chief(almost due for retirement) who was a West Coast transferee. Although born on our West Coast, he was in the Royal Navy at the time of the Grand Review as a Boy Seaman and witnessed this impressive event first hand on an RN Cruiser that carried the Royal Family and he was so impressed that he could recite, in order, the names of the ships that steamed past, and did so many a time in the midship hold, more-so when he'd had a few wets! As was his want, shortly after dinner he would retire to the heads where he would hum, whistle or recite a few ditties, thereby making the time stretch out so that others requiring to pump their bilges were forced to go to the other GV for relief. Now ol' Chiefie was no slouch in the brain department and when he saw the Pacecraft(8' plywood boat) tied up to the stern he knew right off that something was in the wind. So instead of doing his duty after dinner, he went before the meal and taped an out of order sign on the door and then had his groceries. On week-ends my galley was used instead of the coalfired one on the GV, there not being too many Hands left on board to feed, just the Duty Watch and a couple of single Hands. Strolling to the heads was the signal for two Hands(Shipwrights they were) to get the boat alongside and shove a thunderflash up the discharge spout. But our ol' Chiefie was ready and when they were in position he calmly flushed the 'terlit' as he called it, causing the offal to be expelled directly on

the would-be culprits. For obvious reasons it was never tried again! One of the Chiefie's favourite habits was to take a short nap before dinner so he would be rested up enough to tackle the food. I had a new OD Cook now in the galley who wasn't too clued up (to be kind to him) and this one day spaghetti and meatballs were on the menu. No stretch of anyones imagination could ever begin to think that what he served up was that, and when most of it was returned untouched through the pass-thru, he figured that it wasn't very good and tossed the whole mess into the gash bucket which was right handy beside the stove. Just then Chiefie gave a little snort, and realizing he had forgotten about him, Cook dove into the bucket, scooped out a couple of hands full and put it in the oven, thinking the Chief was still asleep. After Chiefie finished rubbing his eyes and scratching his stomach, the young Cook opened up the oven and handed the plate over with a flourish, saying "Saved ya some din-din sir". Now no one in the fore Mess knew exactly what happened next (the Chief wasn't really that sleepy) but they heard one gawd awful roar and then after that a shuffling of feet, and the young Chef was on the upper deck. The next Cook wasn't very much better either. One of his nicer touches was to usually have on hand a pot of hot soup, which went down pretty good specially after a cold dive, but for some reason you couldn't stop this Chef from putting in the pot pieces of weiner or chopped up bologna and handfuls of garlic powder - the end result being almost a full pot gash-canned or thrown over the side. This one day however, a bowl was pushed through the hole with a request for a full ladle of soup and ten seconds later for another one, beaming like a Cheshire cat our Chef inquired "Good soup, eh?", "Like hell" the other says, "my mattress is on fire and give me another bowl quick". Boy, there was nothing like that soup of his to suppress a flame, it should have been patented. It happened around that time that some of the lads were getting into a bit too much trouble ashore due to the evils of John Barleycorn, coming back on board and creating a disturbance in the Messes and drinking their joy juices on board, so the order went out NO BOOZE ON BOARD. No one in particular liked that edict, least of all our Chiefie, but orders is orders he says. Late one Saturday night a couple of the lads were reeling a bit when they came to the brow of GV #1 and who should be standing there at the head of it but our ol' Chiefie. "Okay boys" says he "I'm going to see if you are smuggling any booze on board, you know the rules". One of the lads had a pint of rum in his trousers and rather than give it up for someone else to enjoy, he gave a big heave and threw it over the GV and myself to land in the water, where it promptly sank. When this happened, the Chief looked the lad in the eye and with awe in his voice inquired with these famous words "What in hell do you think this is here, the Flying School?" Needless to say, a young lad was dressed the next morning and the pair of them did enjoy a couple of free tots. It was a sad day when his time was up and he departed for home on the West Coast, as he was one of the very few boat drivers who didn't put a hurt on my hull. By this time I looked so much like DT #5 that only my smoother lines and finer fittings made any real difference. We were both outfitted with hardhat and aqua-lung with a LeRoi compressor on the midship hatch and both kept pretty busy, but only on shallow water dives. One day this job comes up in Bedford Basin that's going to require some decompressing in the water, which no one really liked, and our Stoker was to ensure there was sufficient fuel on board for the genny and compressor. A garage on the jetty right next to the GV was converted for just that purpose, and I was loaded up to the gills plus two jerry cans that were tied down back aft. The next morning bright and early, I was sailed and anchored over the work area where a Diver was sent down who happened to be a Sir, an old time salvage trained Diver and boss of the boat. His bottom time for two stops was completed and he was on his way up from the seabed when the LeRoi gave a couple of chugs and stopped dead. The Stoker I had this time around was no Ace, this lad was a good Engineer and the first thing he quickly checks is the gas tank with a dip stick (no gauge on these compressors), dry as a bone - which isn't right, a full tank should be good for at least four hours straight running. Unlashing the jerry can back aft he found that empty too, also the one on the other side! The last thing left was to drain the tank of the genny, and doing that gave him about two quarts of gas and the genny then conks out. So there he was, no gas to run the compressor for any length of time and the Diver starting his twenty foot stop in the water, and me sitting there with a belly full of diesel fuel that's of no use. When they did me over they also put in a volume tank and with the Diver aware of the problem, using the minimal amount of air, there was just enough to complete the stops. Well sir, there was no doubt that somebody had taken the petrol, outright thievery is what it was, and retribution was in order. The Sir swore everyone on board to secrecy because he had the solution in hand. Therefore, even though the Unit had a full-time Naval Stores and Victualling Storesman, my young Stores lad still had all the keys to the locks on the doors and late at night he used one to open up the Inflammable Stores where the gasoline in 45 gal. drums and solvents were kept and had done his deed as ordered. The next Monday morning there were three messages in the QM's

shack for the boss, all saying they would be adrift due to their cars engines seizing up. You see, there was a long weekend coming up that week and that new Storesman was making a buck on the side selling cheap gas, but what he didn't know was that there was five pounds of sugar mix in each barrel. There wasn't much thievery after that unless you want to count the chicken thieves, but that was later on. The Unit now had lost it's old name and been given a new one, The Operational Diving Unit, a little shorter perhaps, but with a fuller meaning. Outside of the normal chores associated with the Fleet, a lot of civilian jobs kept coming in, like body searches and such, and even from the wing walkers who had heard of us. One in particular that my crew was tasked to carry out - during the last Winter an Exchange USAF Pilot with the RCAF went into a dive flying a Mustang aircraft and didn't straighten out, leaving a twenty foot hole in the ice on the Miramichi River out of Chatham, New Brunswick. Immediately this happened, the wing walkers took compass bearings on four points on both sides of the River on three consecutive days, with different results each time. Finally it dawned on them that the ice was moving and no salvaging could be done at this time, so the call for diving assistance was delayed until the Spring runoff was over. Besides, they had their bearings all documented, right? Come early Summer and the Spring runoff being finished, a team of four Divers flew up to the closest RCAF Air Base(Chatham, N.B.) where a hired lobster boat had to be utilized as the RCAF high speed rescue boat was undergoing repairs at that time. Now the wing walkers bring out the chart with it's bearings and direct Alphonse(the boat man)exactly where to go, but there appeared to be a distinct lack of communications here because Alphonse kept shaking his head and wouldn't throw out his hook to moor. This situation kept being repeated until finally my Sir took a look at the chart and compasses used, then looked at Alphonse the boat man and gave him a thumbs up. Now this fisherman didn't need any fancy charts or gizmos to show anybody exactly where that wreck was, he had been on the river long enough to go to any spot you wanted, even twenty years ago, much less last Winter. Right enough, the boat was directly spotted over the wreck, right where Alphonse took them. You see, when the wing walkers took the bearings, they transcribed them on the chart as True, without giving consideration to Variation and Deviation, but with all that nothing can beat a local on his home waters. By this time they were using the Canadian Mk 1 drysuit, it wasn't too bad a suit, a little on the flimsy side at first but later on the next few batches were better. But there were too many pieces to it - if you counted the gloves there were nine: trousers with braces, top half with a hard ring for cuffs, two rubber cuffs, a hood that tended to suck your eardrums out, neck ring and clamp, and a pair of gloves. A lot of trouble to dress and on dives over fifteen feet for any length of time, your wrists puffed up like a balloon, but it was the best we had at the time and better than the lads were used to, where you celebrated with a wet if you had a dry dive. Yes, I purposely left out the girdle that went over the roll-up, didn't sound macho at all. Even though they were directly over the site, the current was too strong to swim against, so extra weights and a pair of Standard boots was the answer. Macabre as it sounds, the Service demanded that we recover seven pounds of flesh in order to pronounce that man dead. There were body parts strewn around and in the wreck of the aircraft, but the Diver couldn't hold onto them long enough to get them in a recovery bag as they tended to squish right through the fingers, so another plan of attack was used. The fast RCAF crash boat was repaired by this time but was held back until a drag was made up and hooked onto the stern. The drag was simply a pole of iron surrounded by coils of barbed wire with a line on each end to form a yoke. After each sweep the Coroner would remove the pieces recovered until he estimated the seven pounds were in his container, and the operation then ceased. Besides the harrowing ride back in a Catalina Flying Boat, the thing that bothered my lads the most were the fishermen cracking open and eating tinkers with homemade bread and partridge berry jam all during the recovery job. I would like at this time, before the memories fade away, to say that it is not my intention to embarrass or ridicule anyone or intentionally leave out the very many other experiences, and there were very many events and adventures that had transpired up to this period. The facts were that a lot of these happenings didn't have a bearing on my immediate crew although they did occur within the Diving Unit, but not aboard or around myself. Perhaps those lads who aren't on the bottom, as me, could narrate these other well known tales themselves in order for them to be printed in the DIGEST. During the Summer and Fall, additional gear and equipment kept arriving from over the pond, and a huge pile it was, what with larger aqua-lung cylinders and regulators and something called Clearance Diving Breathing Apparatus(CDBA) and it's associated parts, complete with a man-killer oxygen pump. No one at the time knew exactly how to use this gear until the Unit acquired a couple of RN trained Divers. Very shortly, after a few weeks of training in this gear, four senior Rates were sent over to the UK for complete instruction and use of the gear, returning six months later



as qualified Instructors. In the meantime, both of us Tenders carried on using the hardhat and the aqua-lung for it's chores that the Fleet always seemed to want done on the weekends. I'm not saying that the Recompression Chamber we had acquired should have been condemned before it arrived, but the only door it had wouldn't seal properly until the pressure went down past the eighty foot mark, and if there was ever a nightmare of a compressor, the new one was it. I say new, because it was new to the Unit, and not newly manufactured. Even though the manufacturers tag read 'Made in USA - 1922' that sucker sure would pump out a lot of air, not good air though as it smelled a bit, but lots of it. The compressor end of it had a bank of three double cylinders the size of a Pusser coffee can, and a four cylinder gas engine to match. In order to start this beast, you made sure that all four cast iron wheels were chocked, opened up each brass valve on top of the cylinders and poured in a few drops of raw gas, shut the valves, cranked one half turn then turn the magneto lever to on. Then two stalwart lads put the eye of a ten foot length of hawser over the crank handle and gave a heave; if it didn't start the whole procedure was started anew. The reason for the hawser was that sometimes it kicked and ran backwards for a few moments and the crank wouldn't come free. You can well imagine the results to the lads cranking her, specially when it had a three foot radius! Every time the Stokers would yank on that line reminded me of the time some of my lads painted the boot topping at the waterline. It was in the Spring after a hard Winter of pushing little ice floes aside and that black stripe was looking pretty shoddy when ol' Chiefie says *"Okay lads, heel the boat over a little and paint the boot topping, it don't look too good"*. Not knowing just exactly how, it was explained to one lad to secure the end of a whip on the boom to a bollard and crank away, thus heeling me over. Not wanting to hand turn the boom winch, as there was already pressure up in the volume tank, he decided to use the air drill, which he did and promptly sprained his wrist when the torque tried to overcome the strain and spun around in the socket, putting a few hurts on his arm. Seeing this, his mate wanted no part of the air wrench, unhooked it and engaged the hand lever, grunting and groaning away while the first lad leaned over the side to see if the hull was rising. Down below, when Chiefie heard my mast creaking and making moaning sounds, he immediately went up top to see what was going on, and when he did, a roar came out of him that matched anything a Parade GI could utter! Instead of hooking the whip to the GV's, they tied it to my own bollard, and all this accomplished was pulling my own stick out by the roots. Eventually, after some instruction and overseeing, the black paint was applied to satisfaction. Mind you, it took quite a while before the West Coast Chief stopped guffawing every time he saw the bandage on the lads arm.

All during this period, training went on at a rather hectic pace, what with Sirs training to become Diving Officers and Men training to become Clearance Divers and operational jobs carried out, the expansion went on without letup, this also included a Cape style 30 footer with a diesel engine. Now the Unit had two concrete barges, one Torpedo Testing barge, two Diving Tenders, one thirty foot Cape boat called 'GREENWOOD' and a ship's launch or Duty Boat complete with kitchen gear. For those not in the know, the kitchen gear was an arrangement of two baffles controlled by a crank that caused the water to either pass through or reverse itself, allowing the boat to go ahead or astern without engaging a clutch while the propellor turned, engine revs were controlled by the Cox'n blowing on his tooter (Bos'n's Call). Because of the crowding in the Camber, and Duty Boats running back and forth unloading just in front of the GV's, it was beginning to be a little dangerous in the training of Divers end of things, and the last thing anyone wanted was to be chewed up by a passing propellor-to be continued.

#### JIM LARDER

Jim Larder was born in the East Kildonan section of Winnipeg, Manitoba in April, 1943. He grew up there and it was during his High School years that he decided to join the Provincial Lands and Forest as an apprentice Ranger and it was over the three years he spent as a Ranger that he learned to become a Diver. When he was 16 he borrowed some diving gear from a fellow who was his sister's boyfriend and taught himself how to dive. Each Summer he was employed at a large campground where many fishermen congregated, specially on weekends, to go fishing. Jim devised a very lucrative business for himself by sinking old mattress springs off all the docks in the area as well as at each fishing hot spot. On Mondays he would make his rounds underwater recovering all the fishing tackle which had snagged in all bedsprings. Then on Saturdays he would set up a local stand to sell at 50% off list all the booty he had recovered - most of it back to the fishermen who had lost it originally. They all considered this to be quite a good deal, and so did Jim! He also was into locating lost motors and the odd sunken boat. It was quite a good way to meet girls, by letting them try out his diving gear - need we say more!! All of this was a good life, but Jim was getting bored with camp life out in the bush and besides, not

that many good looking girls were around then. So, being an aficionado of boats, water and things aquatic, he decided to join the Royal Canadian Navy. On 26 Nov 62 Jim arrived at HMCS CORNWALLIS, New Entry Training Base, where it appears that he got more than he bargained for. What a surprise he found there after being too long in the bush with lots of peace and quietness. In any event, four months later having come through it all successfully, Ordinary Seaman Weapons Underwater Jim Larder was drafted to Shelburne, N.S. as a messman while awaiting his first ship, which three months later proved to be the Frigate HMCS CAP DE LA MADELEINE. He now felt he was part of the real Navy and his first trip was to sail with Canada's Governor General in the Summer of 1963 to take him around Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island - what a trip. Following that came cruises to Europe, South to the Caribbean, North to the Arctic and then back home to Halifax. Jim applied for and completed his Ships Diver course in February 1964 - one of the coldest Winters on record in Halifax. They dove using the Dunlop drysuit, which was a neck entry and left you cold and wet usually. The absolute worst part though was the neck ring which had to be pulled over your head every time you got into or out of the suit, thereby nearly tearing your ears off 2, 4 or 6 times a day, a real treat. Remember your partner had to help you enter the suit through the neck seal during Operation Awkward, which even in those days still only gave you five minutes to be dressed and in the water - quite a feat in that dry suit. If you weren't fully dressed you went into the water as you were, and with it being 29 to 30°C it didn't take you long to learn how to dress fast! Their course Instructor was Guy Fenn (that well known Saskabusher) and the Standby Diver was Don Bolstad (RIP). The month long course consisted of an hours morning swim, which usually entailed chopping the ice free to get the Tenders before the swim and then running back to GRANBY down the railway tracks through the snowdrifts in the dry suit. On completion of the Ships Diver course he requested a Clearance Divers course and went back to sea. In July 1965 Jim was informed that he should pack his bags to travel to the West Coast to attend a Clearance Divers course at FDU (Pacific) in Victoria, British Columbia. Together with Jim on the course were Ed Paul, John Chaput, Rick Wood and Fred Lamorandiere with the Instructor being the late Bob Thompson (the small one) and the Standby Diver was Ivan Sherlock, who is now retired and living in Thunder Bay, Ontario. It was noted that this was the only course required to carry 40 lb knapsacks during their training runs, yet they had many good memories, i.e. hand-pumping CDBA bottles, Mark V, lots of crab and cold beer. They completed it successfully with Ed Paul remaining on the West Coast while everyone else went to the East Coast, arriving at HMCS GRANBY in time for Christmas 1965. They were all single therefore billeted on board the cold old ship to begin their new careers as hard ass Divers. Since then Jim has worked aboard every Diving Tender, HMCS CORMORANT (twice), worked with the submersible SDL-1 and spent three years at FDU (P) and at present is the Diving Services Chief. He expects he will be retiring sometime in the near future as it is getting near time to move on to other good things. Jim lives at Site 11, A-6, RRI, Porters Lake, Nova Scotia BOJ 2S0

#### 1994 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP REPORT

	<u>Total Membership Issued</u>	<u>1993 Members</u>	<u>1994 Members</u>
OTTAWA CHAPTER	103 plus 1 Life Member	66 plus 1 LM	56 plus 1 LM
WESTERN CHAPTER	120 plus 2 Hon. Member	68 plus 2 HM	66 plus 2 HM
EASTERN CHAPTER	84 plus 1 Hon. Member	42 plus 1 HM	65 plus 1 LM
	307, 1 LM, 3 HM	176, 1LM, 3HM	187, 1LM, 3HM

The Chapter's Membership Directors send a Xeroxed copy of all new membership application forms to the National Office to be recorded and held on file there in order to retain the name, number allocated and date they became a member. It is most important for the National Office to have the information on file and it also alerts the Editor of the DIPPERS DIGEST to send copies to the new member. Information concerning those renewing their membership must also be provided to the National Office for the same purpose. This is one possible cause of members not receiving their newsletter.

### 1994 REUNION

The 5th CNDA Reunion has now come and is past history - but it will not soon be forgotten, as there were 180 guests registered for the gathering of young and ancient underwater warriors. They came from every Province, excepting Saskatchewan and Manitoba, as well as from some States of the USA, and we also saw one of our good Bermudian buddies again. It all commenced when some of those arriving earlier in the week diligently searched out their local friends for a get together, and by Friday they had visited many places in both Halifax and Dartmouth which brought back many memories of their youth - both scintillating and those that were somewhat more somber. Visits were made to HMC DOCKYARD while others dropped by to see what used to be the French Cable Wharf where the ship HMCS GRANBY was located, 10 those many years ago! Memories, ah memories, when we were all part of the Royal Canadian Navy. By Friday afternoon it was time to start the celebrations of the fifth Reunion (previous ones held in 1982 at Halifax, 1985 at Halifax, 1988 at Toronto, 1991 at Victoria) and everyone repaired to the Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic) for the Meet & Greet, held in "Y" Hangar which, incidentally, was built in 1918 for the then USN Lt. R. Byrd (later Admiral Byrd of Polar fame) who was the C.O. of the flying boat Squadron operating there during WWI. Almost everyone who could participated in this most enjoyable gathering and it was most interesting to greet some of the people who were still serving with the Unit - it seems that it was only yesteryear when we were retiring and they were being promoted up the line. Just great to see them all getting in senior positions themselves. Of course there were all those who retired before, with and after us, plus all their gracious ladies or companions who were seeing each other once again. Everyone checked in for Registration and issuing of tickets, followed by some welcome libations served up at the bar, as the sun had become quite warm that day. Sustenance was provided later on with piping hot bowls of chili available together with other condiments, and just before it wrapped up for the day there was an official photograph taken of all who were still there, a copy of which can be obtained at a cost of \$12.00 each - contact André Desrochers at (902) 434-5545. This was followed in the evening with a boisterous gathering in the Hospitality Suite of the Best Western Micmac Hotel in which people were coming and going all evening. In fact, at times it seemed that everyone was in there all at the same time! This went on into the wee hours of the morning, with four or five people who just couldn't get enough of it all. On Saturday morning the National Board of Directors held their customary (and important to all) meeting in the Diving School building on top of the hill at which all the problems of the Association were either resolved or deferred until the next meeting. Your new National Chairman being Stanley F. Watts, 1st Vice Chairman is Gary Reddy, 2nd Vice Chairman is Moe Coulombe and National Directors are Don Deane, Leo Goneau and Norm Herd. Chuck Rolfe remains as the National Secretary/Treasurer and also the DIPPERS DIGEST Editor. Our retiring National Chairman, Al McRae, was thanked for all the time, energy and input he contributed over the past 3 years - all for our collective benefit. Another item of interest was the Association's Founding Members:- Glenn Adams P. Eng, André Desrochers, Leo Goneau, Terry Havlik, Stanley F. Watts and the late Michael Walsh were all voted as Life Members. Harbour tours took place in the morning as well, followed by 'Up Spirits' held on board the only remaining WWII Corvette (mainly used to escort North Atlantic convoys during the war) HMCS SACKVILLE. This is now an historic site for all to see and visit on the Halifax waterfront. We were very lucky in that we were able to have a two hour period set aside just for us to partake of our 'Tot' at tot time which we all found to be reminiscent of the good times in the RCN when we were authorized a tot of rum. In the evening the Mayflower Curling Club was the centre of entertainment, with a lobster dinner laid on for all the bon vivants followed by a most enjoyable period of dancing. There was a quite remarkable wall tapestry of the Fleet Diving Unit and Divers badge auctioned off and won by a very happy member. Those wishing to attend church did so early on Sunday morning in order to allow them to attend a farewell brunch at the gathering of all those who had not left for home. This consisted of steak, eggs and hash browns and as there were no empty seats whatsoever, it appears that not too many of the out of town people went home early! Most of those who had not obtained their Divers pins, badges, crests, hats, T-shirts, mugs, etc. were able at this time to make their selections of same before they left. All this was followed by Bon Chance and Au Revoir - a most happy time for all, but yet saddened to say goodbye to all our old time friends. Another one to retain in our memories!! The 6th Triennial Canadian Naval Divers Reunion is now slated to be held in the Nation's capitol city, Ottawa, Ontario and we hope to see you all there. Please note that a complete list of those registered to attend will be included in the next issue of the DIGEST.



The International POLICE DIVERS Symposium has been conducted on a once-every-two-years basis for over ten years. It was the original concept of OPP Staff Sergeant Randy Hancock of the OPP's Underwater Search and Recovery Unit (USRU) who realized that the international police diver and public service diver community needed a private forum to discuss common areas of concern, including but not limited to: tactics, equipment, techniques, training and operations. Initial symposia included guest speakers in bomb disposal, locating and committing evidence from underwater "crime scenes", search and recovery methods, operational communications including underwater communications, the selection and training of police officers, public safety divers and auxiliaries, the equipping and development of future generations of diving equipment special to purpose and specific to operations and a wide variety of other topics including (and not limited to) the security of internationally protected persons, terrorist threats, hazardous and toxic waste, investigation of marine accidents, recovery of stolen property, diving accident (fatality) investigations, protection of vital areas (nuclear plants etc), emergency flood control measures, train derailments, aircraft bombings, drug interdiction, canine marine searches, marine sabotage, unlawful disposal of explosives and weapons, police diver training standards, customs and excise marine inspections, marine offshore patrolling, ice diving techniques, fast water (flood and run-off type) problems, surveillance methods in a marine environment and the remaining whole spectrum of police and public safety diving issues. Particular attention has been paid to marine Accidents, the development of professional tools, techniques and technology and the advent of special to purpose police, public service and military diving teams.

The symposium has attracted the attendance and involvement of the RCMP, the OPP, the Canadian Forces Diving Community (including DCIEM and FDU's) over twenty Canadian Municipal (city and regional) police, law enforcement and public safety units, the US Secret Service, the FBI, the NYPD Diving Team, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Los Angeles Police Department, the New Zealand National Police Service, the Metropolitan Police Department (London, UK), the US Special Forces, the US Navy SEAL Team's and over 85 sheriffs offices county rescue teams, the US and Canadian Coast Guards, the USAF Pararescue team trainers, and the representatives of over 65 different national and international agencies. The International Police Divers Symposium was officially recognized by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the International Brotherhood of FireFighters, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and finally by INTERPOL (the International POLICE Association) in 1993.

The symposium is not open to the public, however all police, public service, military and rescue divers are welcome to attend and contribute expertise, experiences, professional guest appearances as speakers, ideas for training, common problems and solutions and as technical advisors and commercial sponsors.

The International Police Divers symposium has received attendees and members from the Canadian Naval Divers Association and the Combat Divers Association of Canada as well as several other fraternal and military diving associations from the US, the UK, France, New Zealand, Australia

South America, Asia and other areas of the world. The International Police Divers Symposium is a non-commercial, non-partisan and non-profit symposium which is partly sponsored by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNDERWATER INSTRUCTORS (NAUI) as a professional underwater development program. It offers NAUI members a unique opportunity to acquire CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS (CEU's) and an opportunity for all police and public service divers to acquire "cross-over" credit for their professional diving experience and training.

The International Police Divers Symposium has been attended by over 50 Canadian military divers from all aspects of military diving from hyperbaric medicine, equipment development, training (FDU's) and operations (naval and military engineers as well as search and rescue) including aide to the civil power functions.

The next International Police Divers Symposium will be conducted at McMaster University in Hamilton Ontario in early 1995. All past, present and (future) military divers are welcome to attend and to take part in the symposiums professional, social and equipment events in the three day symposium.

The modest registration fee of \$100.00 includes all symposium events as an attendee, two "decompression" socials, a certificate of attendance and a unique opportunity to take part in a truly international event.

For further information on the symposium (registration, participation as a speaker or equipment display or attendance) please call Scott Fuller at (work) (613) 995-3786 or (home) (613) 824-2611.

The 1995 International Police Divers Symposium promises to be a unique event focussing on current issues involving bomb disposal, underwater search techniques (human and electronic) and the evolution of police diver training standards. Over 100 police, public safety and military agencies, departments and teams have already indicated involvement and attendance. In addition, over 50 equipment manufacturers are also to be involved.

DON'T MISS IT....THE 1995 INTERNATIONAL POLICE DIVERS SYMPOSIUM.....  
UPDATE, UPGRADE.....

## SCUBA DIVING

OTTAWA CITIZEN 21 AUG 94

### Quebec coroner might suggest regulating sport

The Canadian Press

MONTREAL — A coroner conducting inquests into scuba diving deaths says he might ask the province to regulate the sport, which has claimed 19 lives in Quebec in the past four years.

"It all depends on what the hearings disclose," said coroner Denis Boudrias, who will conduct inquests in six cities starting Aug. 26. His 1991 re-

port stated that most of the nine deaths the year before were due to human error and negligence. Ten more people have died since.

"If I get the same results as the first hearing, it is quite possible that one of my recommendations will be to have the government set regulations for everyone."

Now, each training centre has its own regulations and certifies its own members.

One of his recommendations was that the government's sports safety board work with diving organizations to develop a basic training program that would consist of at least 40 hours of training.

