



PERISCOPE VIEW

The Newsletter of the Barrow-in Furness Branch
of

The Submariners Association

Patron: Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce KG GCB OBE DL

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'Nothing in the world, nothing that you may think or dream of, or anyone may tell you, no arguments however specious, no appeals however seductive, must lead you to abandon that naval supremacy on which the life of our country depends.'

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

EDITORIAL

Hello Everybody,

If the picture on this month's Front Page looks familiar – it should do - as it was on the Front Page of the February 2020 Issue. It shows our Branch Members in the bar of the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess at Faslane on last year's K13 Visit. I thought I'd use it again for the benefit of those Branch members suffering withdrawal symptoms as this year's visit to Scotland and HM Naval Base Clyde for the K13 Ceremonies couldn't take place.

As a result of the cancellation of this year's K13 we missed our usual stops at the service stations on the way up and back for a coffee and a sandwich, the Royal Bar couldn't benefit from our usual visit for a pint (or two) on our arrival in Helensburgh and Callaghan's Butchers in Sinclair Street will just have to hold on to our usual purchases of haggis, black puddings and square (Lorne) sausage until this time next year! But at least we managed to miss the West of Scotland Branch's pre-dinner drinks – a strange concoction of their own making which does a good impression of paint stripper!

I hope everyone is keeping well and still avoiding the Viruses – I had a message on my computer this afternoon to say my computer had been checked by MacAfee to tell me that I was clear of Viruses - but I think that only referred to the Computer and not me!

Have you had your anti-COVID-19 vaccine jab yet? Both Margaret and I have had ours – not at the same time –but just a couple of weeks apart. We went to the Alfred Barrow Centre and I must say they are most efficient there. If you get your call to go you will be in and out in no time at all! One side effect seems to be extreme tiredness for a day or two and feeling a bit off as well

I know Dave Smith has already reminded everyone that National and Branch Subs are due again but as payment at Branch Meetings is currently not possible it will be appreciated if you can arrange to pay via Direct Debit (details on the National Website) or Standing Order. If you still want to pay by cash or cheque then contact Mick Mailey whose contact details are above on the List of Branch Officers. But make sure you get your subs to Mick in good time so he can pay National and to sure the Branch is able to vote at the National Conference.

As you all know last year's National Conference was cancelled because of COVID-19 as was the Reunion. This year's Conference is planned for March and the National Secretary has been setting up the arrangements to hold via Zoom with one representative per Branch with the Secretary able to call on Speakers in turn. All of last year's Proposals and Recommendations are still there plus a couple of new ones. Voting will also

be done via Zoom using a system which automatically registers 'Yes's, 'Noes' and 'Abstentions' and calculates the percentages which means that 'Tellers' will not be needed this year. Details have been circulated by the National Secretary.

This year's Annual Reunion/Families Weekend is now planned for August. It's at the same hotel as we planned to use last year and the prices are the same. If you planned to go last year and paid up don't worry – your money and booking is safe but make sure you confirm with Iain Mackenzie that you still plan to go. If

you haven't booked yet and would like to go – it not too late to book!

In the meantime take it steady everyone – hopefully it won't be too long before we can all get back to normal, hold Branch Meetings, have our socials and other events, forget about masks, social-distancing and staying indoors – but at least we are till allowed to go out for walks, exercise and shopping!

Best Regards,

Barrie

SECRETARIAL BITS

The amendment to the Barrow Proposal with regards to a limitation on the amount the NMC can spend without referring to the Branches has been accepted and is now included in the National Conference Agenda. The amendment calls for Zoom meeting rather than the calling of an EGM due to the costs involved in arranging an EGM and notes the success of utilizing Zoom for recent meetings. The Branch agreed to this change, but it should be by exception rather than the rule. Rob Pointer recently forwarded a Mesothelioma UK newsletter Winter 2020 which details the Mesothelioma UK commission for a design of a memorial sculptor to honour mesothelioma patients from the armed forces. Should anyone wishing to donate they can do so by visiting www.mesothelioma.uk.com/armed-forces-memorial-donation/ or contact 0800 169 2409.

Dave Smith

SOCIAL REPORT

No Social Report this month. Unfortunately – as you all know - the Social Programme so carefully put together by Alex for 2020 had to be constantly changed and replanned as circumstances dictated and, in the end, nothing which was intended was able to go ahead – 2021 has started out in the same way!

Alex is working on a Branch Social Programme for 2021 which, hopefully, will include most – if not all – of the usual events but we will just have to wait and see how things progress and if restrictions are either eased or lifted. As we already we know that the normal K13 Weekend programme has been cancelled and the First Footing to the Morecambe Branch has been deferred and will be later than usual this year. Travel to Scotland is still not permitted except for work and, in any case, access to HMS Naval Base is not possible. I hope to get a report on the limited K13 Remembrance Service planned for the Base Church - attended by Base personnel only - and the wreath laying and poppy crosses to be placed on the graves in the Garelochhead Cemetery

FEBRUARY 2021 BRANCH CALENDAR

February Branch Meeting Tues 2nd Feb
Committee Meeting As Required

MARCH 2021 BRANCH CALENDAR

March Branch Meeting Tues 2nd Mar
Committee Meeting As Required

APRIL 2021 BRANCH CALENDAR

April Branch Meeting Tues 6th Apr

NOTE: All February/March/April Meetings and Events are subject to cancellation at very short notice and are dependent on further Government advice!

FEBRUARY BRANCH BIRTHDAYS

J. (Jimmy) Rimmer 04/02/1974
D. (Yorke) Thornton 20/02/1948
W.P. (Billy) Daniels 24/02/1940
A. (Alex) Webb 16/02/1960
R. (Richard) O'Callaghan 21/02/1974

Happy Birthday All!

REMEMBERING FORMER BRANCH MEMBERS

'CROSSED THE BAR' - FEBRUARY

Frederick Ralph Pillifent	1982
Walter A Brakewell	1995
Wallace King	1999
Geoffrey Bond	2000
Robert Moody	2002
Ronald Cooper	2007
Kenneth Williams	2014
David Crossland	2014
Anthony Sainty	2015
Alan Geoffrey Pillifent	2019
John Dalton	2019
John W B Taylor	2019

RESURGAM

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opinion of the Editor, The Submariners Association, the MoD or the Submarine Service unless otherwise stated. The Submariners Association may not agree with the opinions expressed in this Newsletter but encourages publication as a matter of interest.

Nothing printed may be construed as policy or an official announcement unless so stated. Otherwise the Association accepts no liability on any issue in this Newsletter.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION DIARIES

2021

The Submariners Association Diaries for 2021 have now arrived – there was a bit of a delay in getting them as SA Committee Member Mark Smith had a bit of difficulty getting them out of the Printers! The same as last year they are priced at £3.00 each to cover costs and make a small profit for the Branch. The six Diaries have now been posted out. I will leave it up to those who ordered them to make sure they get their payment to Mick Mailey as soon as possible and if you would like to add on the cost of the postage I'm sure Mick will appreciate it!

NEWSLETTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Do you have a story to tell or have information you feel should appear in the Newsletter then ring Barrie Downer on 01229 820963 or, if you wish to send me an article, my postal address is The Firs, Dundalk Street, Barrow Island, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria LA14 2RZ. You may also send your contribution by e-mail to me on frozenorth55@gmail.com. Come on – every Submariner has a story to tell – some more than one! Let's see yours in print!

Constructive suggestions about the Newsletter are also very welcome. The Newsletter will be published in the last week of each month i.e. the last week in January for the February 2021 Issue. Please ensure you have any information with me by the 15th of the month to ensure its inclusion in the next issue. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition – keep them stories coming!

FOND FAREWELL TO PERRY AFTER OVER HALF-A-CENTURY OF ROYAL NAVY SERVICE

ROYAL NAVY MEDIA RELEASE Monday, 18th Jan 2021

A Royal Navy Warrant Officer is set to retire from the Senior Service after a career that is thought to be one of the longest in modern times. Warrant Officer 2 Allan Mason (68), affectionately known as “Perry”, has notched-up a staggering 52-and-a-half years in regular service, 40 of them on board or in support of the Submarine Service.

On February 12 the Marine Engineer from Lincolnshire will finally hang-up his overalls for good, but before then there was a poignant farewell to a major part of his life – submarines.

Perry, who served with submarines HMS VALIANT, SCEPTRE, SOVEREIGN, SPLENDID and TORBAY

during his lengthy career, stepped-off a submarine alongside HM Naval Base Clyde for the final time on Friday, December 18th.

“What I will miss the most is the everyday challenge and the people,” said Perry. “It has been a genuine privilege to serve on submarines and to work with a tight-knit team who are focussed on the same goals – getting boats to sea.”

Joining the Royal Navy in 1968 aged just 15-and-a-half, Perry began his career as a Junior Marine Engineer Mechanic (Stoker). His first draft was to the World War Two era ship HMS ULSTER – a U-Class destroyer converted to a Type 15 frigate. This was followed by service on HMS LEOPARD, a Type 14 frigate, and HMS LLANDAFF.

“HMS ULSTER was used as a navigation training ship then so there were some great opportunities to sail all around the UK coast,” recalled Perry. “As a Junior Stoker I had to do external and internal boiler cleans and make sure that tubes were cleaned. The ship used a fuel oil that was like treacle so it was a pretty dirty job.

“In those days everyone lined-up on deck on payday and we were all paid in cash. I spent 18-months on HMS ULSTER and during that time ‘Black Tot Day’ happened – the last time that the daily tot of rum was issued to sailors. I wasn't old enough to have the tot at the time but I remember there were a few grieving crew members on board.”

Perry later spent time at HMS SULTAN, where he was awarded the Institute of Nuclear Engineers' HMS SULTAN Prize, and then joined HMS DOLPHIN in 1981 where he undertook his initial submarine training. This was followed by nuclear training and assignment to the Third Submarine Squadron and HMS VALIANT. After further training and time at sea, Perry eventually qualified as a Category A2 Nuclear Watchkeeper or Chief of Watch, before serving time on board various Swiftsure Class submarines and with HMS TORBAY.

In-between service at sea, he has also spent a considerable amount of time at HM Naval Base Clyde, the Home of the UK Submarine Service. The Engineer is a familiar sight, usually to be found in overalls down a Reactor Compartment, in a bilge, or heading to his next job within the Naval Base.

The depth of Perry's knowledge and experience is something which will be sorely missed at the Naval Base. As well as plaudits from his colleagues at Faslane, Perry also received a specially recorded message by the professional head of the Royal Navy, First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin CB ADC who thanked both Perry and his family for their service.

Perry was also quick to thank his wife and daughter for their support over his career.

During his distinguished career he has been awarded the Iraq Medal, the Operational Service Medal for Operation Veritas, Golden and Diamond Jubilee medals, the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM), his Long Service and Good Conduct badge with three clasps and has become a member of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE).

Although records begin to get sketchy past a certain point, it is thought that Warrant Officer Mason's career is one of the longest in modern times. Both Lord Mountbatten and Admiral Keyes served some 52 years, while Admiral Fisher, who was recalled from retirement, served for 59 years. It is also believed that some Royal Navy Ratings kept on active service during the World Wars also approached Perry's length of Service.

Perry's achievement of 52-and-a-half years however is one which is incredibly rare and even more remarkable for most of it having been spent beneath the waves.

"If anyone is thinking of joining the Submarine Service then I would say to them to go for it. You will never work anywhere else quite like it. Every day will be a challenge and the people you work with will be first-class.

"A submarine is an amazing, unique, vessel and the only comparison would be to the space shuttle.

"I have been very lucky to have had the travel opportunities which I've had, first in General Service where I got to travel all over the world, and then in the Submarine Service where I got to do it again, except this time underwater!"

Sent by: Royal Navy Media, Communications & Engagement (RNMCE) Regional Press Office (Scotland & Northern Ireland), HM Naval Base Clyde.



Warrant Officer Mason's final time onboard one of Her Majesty's Submarines



Personnel from the Submarine Flotilla at HM Naval Base Clyde applaud Perry as he steps off a submarine for the final time during his 52-and-a-half-year career



Perry prepares to step off the submarine alongside HMNB Clyde

£230 MILLION CONTRACT TO SUPPORT ROYAL NAVY TORPEDOES

Cutting-edge Spearfish and Sting Ray torpedoes carried by the Royal Navy are receiving a £230 million maintenance uplift. Ministry of Defence 27th January 2021

The Spearfish and Stingray torpedoes are cutting-edge capabilities, carried on a number of Royal Navy submarines.

Spearfish torpedoes – which use sonar to home in on targets - are carried by the Royal Navy's Astute class and Trafalgar class hunter-killer submarines and the nuclear deterrent Vanguard class to neutralise underwater and surface threats while Sting Ray torpedoes are deployed on Anti-Submarine Warfare mission, including frigates, Merlin and Wildcat helicopters. They provide a close attack capability which also automatically targets in on enemy threats.

Supporting over 100 skilled jobs at the BAE Systems Broad Oak facility in Portsmouth, the Torpedoes Repair and Maintenance (TRAM) contract will run for six years. TRAM supersedes the Torpedo Capability Contract (TCC) with BAE Systems which ran for 10 years.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:

"Our Royal Navy submarines require sophisticated defensive and offensive underwater weapons to deter a wide range of surface and subsurface threats.

This £230 million investment is crucial in safeguarding the availability and effectiveness of these highly capable weapon systems whilst supporting skilled British jobs.

The contract will help guarantee the Royal Navy's inventory of Spearfish Heavyweight and Sting Ray Lightweight torpedoes. A full suite of maintenance activity is also included. This support ranges from technical repair, provision of spares, stock management, logistics and trials support.

Ensuring the torpedoes are safely stored is vital, so the contract also offers safety, environment and engineering advice to support the continued secure use of the weapons."

Dr Brooke Hoskins, Director of Products and Training Services for BAE Systems Maritime Services said:

“BAE Systems’ teams have developed, manufactured, and supported the UK’s torpedoes since the 1970s. Torpedoes have a vital role in layered anti-submarine warfare. We are incredibly proud to continue delivering these critical support services to the Royal Navy through a combination of our agile and innovative forward thinking and our heritage and expertise.”

MoD COVID-19 UPDATE 8th January 2021

Coronavirus: How Many Personnel Have Tested Positive For COVID-19?

The Ministry of Defence has released new data which reveals how many servicemen and women have tested positive for COVID-19.

Latest statistics released by the Ministry of Defence show that 65,947 UK servicemen and women have been tested for COVID-19, with 3,291 testing positive.

SUBMARINE LOSSES OF WWII

February 1941

Two Submarines were lost in February 1941. They were:

(1) Submarine HMS SNAPPER

HMS SNAPPER is presumed to have been sunk near Ushant on 11th February 1941. The submarine left for her 13th War Patrol in that area on 29th January 1941. Three German Minesweepers (M2, M13 and M25) carried out depth charge attacks on a Submarine in that area on 11th February - after the Minesweepers had been attacked by a Submarine. HMS SNAPPER failed to return from her Patrol and all the crew (thirty-nine Officers and Ratings) were lost. The Crew was made up of the following personnel:

Officers:

Lieutenant Geoffrey Vernon Prowse
Lieutenant Edward Bartle Talbot
Sub Lieutenant George Michael Hamilton Alston
Lieutenant Eric Arthur Ernest Ashby
Warrant Engineer Daniel Patrick Halloran

Ratings:

CPO John William Laker J103942
PO TGM Archibald Stewart, DSM
PO Edward George Matthews, MiD J106725
PO Archibald Sidney Albert Dearn J105902
L/Sea Ronald Frederick Clements J111140
L/Sea Myles Edward Lawson, MiD C/JX 127646
AB Raymond Roy Penny P/SSX 18730
AB Stephen Palmer P/SSX 10028
AB Percival John White J46779
AB Leslie William Chittleborough D/JX 149653
AB George Harry Mellows D/JX 127284
AB William Alfred Rosewarner D/JX 125972
AB Richard Dobbie C/SSX 18117
AB James Leonard Gray C/SSX 20054
AB Charles Arthur Doucy P/JX 167380
PO Tel Reuben Conolly, MiD P/JX 125604
L/Tel Harold William Pownall J114652
L/Tel Ronald Arthur Hobbs C/JX 148131
L/Tel Richard Arthur Wilkinson Dodson C/SSX 25377
Tel Edward Hutchinson Thompson D/JX 134059

L/Sig Reginald Ashton Nesling C/JX 140123
EA3 J W Furlong C/MX 52491
ERA1 Arthur John Cooper, DSM M35070
ERA3 John Thurston Winder D/MX 60552
ERA3 Kenneth Watkins Jones D/MX 52698
ERA Joseph Undy C/MX 70111
SPO Charles Plumb, MiD C/KX 78684
L/Sto Robert Gale Farmer D/KX 84307
L/Sto Victor John Parsons, DSM P/KX 82762
L/Sto Frederick George Sidney James Bashford, MiD C/KX 93867
L/Sto Alfred Bell C/KX 82381
L/Sto William Munro C/KX 88739
Sto1 Kenneth Rhesa White P/KX 92291
Sto1 Walter Ernest Henry Hill C/KX 94286
Sto1 Clarence Straw C/KX 70136
Sto1 James Watson C/KX 94647
Sto1 Thomas John McCleave D/KX 108584

(2) Submarine HMS USK

HMS USK (P41) was lost in the Mediterranean off Cape Bon on or about 25th February 1941. This is the last date on which a signal was received from the Submarine. It is believed that HMS USK was lost in a minefield in that area. There were no survivors from the Crew which consisted of the following personnel:

Officers:

Lieutenant Godfrey Paul Darling
Lieutenant Vivian Longuet Darbyshire
Lieutenant David William Leggatt
Lieutenant Desmond Astridge O'Hara

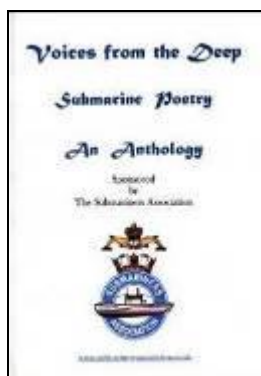
Ratings:

PO Norman Spencer Gissing J114873
PO Christopher James Thomas J106785
L/Sea Sidney George Twiddy C/JX 145272
L/Seaman John Idris Moss Davies D/JX 138552
L/Sea Frederick Charles Oliver Robinson D/JX 125055
L/Sea Jack Stokes J107132
AB Ivor Gwyn Williams D/SSX 20499
AB Peter Franklin Randall C/SSX 21145
AB William Richardson D/JX 142696
AB Eric Hall C/SSX 26837
AB James Percy Amor C/SSX 27177
AB George Augustine Jordan D/JX 134982
Ord Sea William Sowden D/JX 20118
PO Tel William Henry Porter J107908
Tel Patrick George Attride J109062
Tel Arthur Francis Brady C/JX 149361
Tel Herbert Frederick Green D/SSX 23186
L/Sig Euros Bowen Jones J106935
CERA Reginald Francis Bryant M38762
ERA3 Joseph Armstrong Cruikshank P/MX 55809
ERA3 William John Arthur James Martin D/MX 55521
SPO Arthur East D/KX 81578
L/Sto Richard Sidney Cable C/KX 84368
L/Sto James Orrell C/KX 83985
Sto1 James Aitchison C/KX 85851
Sto1 Henry Stanley Kellaway D/KX 75079
Sto1 Bernard Plant D/KX 76308
Sto1 Henry Victor Sutch P/KX 93833

VOICES FROM THE DEEP

A while ago the Submariners Association sponsored a book - 'Voices from The Deep - Submarine Poetry - An Anthology' (see front cover below) as a way of raising funds for the Association. Orders for the Book (14 copies still available) should be sent to me:

Barrie Downer, The Firs, Dundalk Street, Barrow Island, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria LA14 2RZ. Or you can always ask me at a Branch Meeting – whenever we have the next one!



Cheques (£5.00 per copy) should be made payable to the Submariners Association and enclosed with each application

SUBMARINE COMMISSIONING CREW LISTS

Commissioning Crew Lists are still coming in however, things have slowed down a bit of late. I am still looking for 'First Commission' Submarine Crew Lists/Brochures as follows:

PORPOISE (1958), GRAMPUS (1958), NARWHAL (1959), CACHALOT (1959), WALRUS (1961), OBERON (1961), ORPHEUS (1960), ODIN (1962), OTUS (1963), ONYX (1967) & UNICORN (1993)

Also, any Crew Lists for any Re-Commissioning and Re-Dedications of any Conventional 'A', 'S', 'T', 'O' & 'P' Class, and any refitting Nuclear Boat - SSN & SSBN. Have a look through your records and 'Ditty Boxes' and see what you can find. You can contact me by E Mail, Snail Mail or Telephone – see Page 2. Thanks, Barrie

ROYAL NAVY & ROYAL MARINES CHARITY - SUBMARINE FUND (RNRMC SMF)

**THE RNRMC
SUBMARINE
FUND**



SUPPORTING SUBMARINERS AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR LIFE



The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) joined forces with the Royal Navy Submarine Service and existing Submarine Service Family Member organisations to establish the RNRMC Submarine Fund (SMF) in April 2020, drawing on expertise from across the Submarine Community.

With wide SMF Board representation from across the submarine family - Submariners Association, We Remember Submariners (WRS), the Perisher Club, Friends of the Submariner Museum and Team Oardacious - the fund will deliver help and support to serving and veteran members of the Submarine Community and includes dependent family members.

The Board has held 3 virtual Board meeting by Zoom since lockdown in March, has a number of workstreams and requests for support underway and, with the RNRMC and WRS, supported a request for funds from the Submarine Memorial Appeal. The RNRMC SMF has funds, some specifically for the mental health and well-being of the Submarine Community; we are keen to support any and all requests. When a request is received it is discussed and shared between Board members to ensure all Submarine Family members (e.g. SA, WRS, Friends etc) understand the request and decided how both the SMF and individual Family members can support to optimise contributions, efficiency and effect.

With the ongoing support of the RNRMC, a workshop was recently held with the members from the Submarine Community to simplify the grants application process. While requests and donations can currently be made direct via the RNRMC website, citing Submarine Request/Donation, the RNRMC is working to provide an option to specifically enable selection of SMF Requests or Donations, the intent is for this revised site to go live by the end of October.

The broad Submarine Community is, perhaps for the first time, more aware and coordinated than ever before, the challenge now is to ensure our communications are effective, that good news is shared, requests for grants are supported and that donations are made to the SMF. Current pressures of families and crews are recognised, with commitments at sea unprecedented, it is why the SMF has opened links with Clyde Naval links with Clyde Naval Family Services such that we can help our own people. Please think about donating to the SMF, it is there to help our community.

Many thanks your interest, support and help to the Submarine Community; please share this information and donate to help our own.

DIG DEEP TO HELP SUBMARINERS

Dig Deep to help Submariners, past and present and get the RNRMC Submarine Fund off to the best possible start:

Visit rnrmc.org.uk/donate

Please specify in the Comments box that you wish your donation to support the Submarine Fund

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (no. 6047294) and is a registered charity (no.1117794) and Scotland (SC041898).

Registered Office: Building 37, HMS EXCELLENT, Whale Island, Portsmouth, PO2 8ER

THE DESMOND GERRISH AUTOBIOGRAPHY

(Continued from the January 2021 issue of Periscope View)

Piracy Patrols

We Minesweepers were away at sea a lot. Piracy Patrols meant 2 Sweepers and R.F.A. GOLD RANGER away around Borneo for 5 to 6 weeks at a time. Piracy was an age-old problem around Borneo and Indonesia.

Piracy went on in the Sulu Sea – an almost forgotten patch of very shallow ocean riddled with coral reefs and small inhabited islands stretching all down Borneo's east coast right down to the Indonesian Islands. On my first Patrol I was astonished to find most of this area blank on our charts, with the terse words "NEVER SURVEYED" in the middle of these expansive areas covering most of the chart, riddled with shallow submerged reefs. To steer safely through the unmarked twisting deep-water channels, I went up Wilkie's mast, so that you could see the underwater reefs better, plus the modern availability of Polaroid sunglasses, which doubled your vision while peering through the surface glare and your eyesight penetrated the undersea world quite clearly. Nevertheless, you went at dead slow speed and I was imprisoned up the mast until I'd got the ship through the reefs into deep water again. This could take as long as 8 hours, so a wide brimmed 'floppy' hat and cotton clothing was essential in the Tropics, plus a dumb waiter my Crew had rigged up, to deliver cold drinks and snacks as the hours ticked by. A message went down to the Officers' Steward in the Wardroom asking for a jug of iced lime juice to be delivered to the Captain. Jones, a young man not blessed with quick thinking, duly appeared on the Bridge, with gleaming silver salver, jug of iced lime juice and polished glass, asking the Duty Signalman, "Where is the Skipper?" Terse answer. "Up the mast". "Oh, very funny, I don't think! Now tell me where he is. I've got work to do". At this point, the Officer of the Watch intervened and said, "Strange as it may seem to you Jones, the Captain is up the mast. Go on to the roof of the Bridge and you will see a hoist. Put the jug on the hoist and haul it up to the Captain". Jones didn't like heights but got up the ladder to the Bridge roof and worked the pulley to get the jug to me. Before departing, he had the forethought to shout up to me, "Will you have lunch in the Wardroom or up there, Sir?" We steeled on sandwiches up the mast.

The Pirates

Copra, from the coconut, was the main crop of all these little islands. They had to get their annual harvest to a port where large ships called. The only port on the east coast of Borneo was a small trading post called Sandakan. So, 3 or 4 islanders would set off with the island's crop carried in a primitive small sailing craft, on a journey of hundreds of miles, to sell the crop to the merchants in Sandakan. The Pirates intercepted them at sea and either stole the entire cargo to sell themselves or rob the islanders of the lump sum of money if they caught them returning home. Borneo, in those days, was a British Colony and, over the years, had tasked the British Navy to do occasional 'blitzes' on the Pirates. Never high on Admiralty's list of commitments – it was only small amounts of cargo involved and in a very remote area, difficult to police by anybody.

There had been a 'blitz' a few years before I joined 'Wilkie', when the Navy, together with the Borneo Police, had arrested a handful of Pirates, who were convicted in Court, mainly on the evidence of the islander boatmen victims. The penalty for Piracy was hanging or at the very least, a Life Sentence in jail. Following this, the remaining Pirates realised the only people who could convict them in Court were their victims. So they began murdering the crew of any craft they robbed. Once this grisly business started, the British Government ordered Admiralty to provide regular patrols, to stamp this out.

In my time, H.M.S. PUNCHESTON arrested a suspicious dugout canoe equipped with a powerful outboard engine and a crew of 3, who were not fishermen or cargo carriers. We knew as we approached Pirates they ditched their machine guns overboard or tied them to marker buoys, before we could get alongside them. PUNCHESTON searched very thoroughly and found 3 spent bullet cases in the bilge of the canoe.

A British Assize Judge, sent from England, found the 3 guilty of murder and all 3 were hanged. The spent bullet cases matched the bullets taken out of the corpses of 2 missing island traders, washed up on the Borneo coast.

Another complication came from Indonesia. Ruled by Dr. Sukarno, another post-war dictator, who had promised the Indonesian people to regain Borneo from the British – it had been part of Indonesia in the distant past. The Pirates were mainly from the Indonesian Islands, but pirated Indonesian islanders as well as Borneo islanders, so the United Nations had drawn a dotted line on the map, saying Britain must eradicate piracy north of the line and Indonesia south of the line. The British Government soon became aware that Indonesian Navy Gunboats, on Piracy Patrols, carried out acts of piracy themselves for their own monetary gain. The occasional Gunboat that illegally crossed the line looking for victims departed at high speed on the approach of a British Minesweeper. Things were pretty tense between the British and Indonesian Governments.

Before departing Singapore on my first Piracy Patrol, the Commander-in-Chief, Far East – Sir David Luce – sent for me. His brief to me was clear and concise. If I intercepted an Indonesian Gunboat in the British part of the Sulu Sea, I was to arrest him if I could catch him (the Gunboats were much faster than us Minesweepers). Should there be any resistance by the Gunboat, I was to open fire with my guns, without waiting for signalled permission to engage from Admiralty. This he gave me in his own handwriting, to save me from Court Martial, since we all knew the proper procedure in peacetime was to get Admiralty permission to open fire. The time delay of signalling to Admiralty in

London and getting an answer back – a matter of hours – was too long for these fast-moving confrontations in the Sulu Sea. Admiral David Luce was a good Commander-in-Chief and became First Sea Lord not long after this job. As it happened, the Indonesian Gunboats got wind of the Royal Navy's tough stance and kept well away from British zones. We had R.F.A. GOLD RANGER based in Sandakan and we would rendezvous with him once every week, to refill our fuel and water tanks. Her Master – Dan de Vere-Moulds – became a close friend of mine. Bored sitting in Sandakan for weeks on end, he and his Crew looked forward to our weekly signal, ordering him to our chosen R/V at sea. At the R/V, as well as the vital fuel and water, he would bring fresh fruit and vegetables from Sandakan, bring us mail and take letters home for posting in Sandakan. His Crew would invite my Crew aboard the Tanker, for beer, supper and a film. After my first 6-week Patrol – it took a full 3 days to get there from Singapore and 3 days back – six Minesweepers went on a "Blitz Patrol" together with H.M.S. BULWARK – a Commando Carrier, with No.42 R.N. Commando embarked and the Carrier's Fleet Air Arm Squadron of Troop-Carrying Helicopters. Once in the Sulu Sea, all of us Minesweepers were loaned a Platoon of R.N. Commandos, to be our Boarding Party. This little Armada spread out in a huge line to sweep right through the Sulu Sea – BULWARK covered 100 miles across herself, since she used her helicopters to search over the horizon abreast herself. We Minesweepers were placed 20 miles apart, horizon-to-horizon in daylight and our radars easily covered this 20 -mile spread at night. The 'Sweep' took about 4 days. As well as boarding every ship and craft we found, we also got rid of drifting buoys and drifting coconut palms, below which the Pirates used to hide their arms. On Day 2, BULWARK sent me to sink a huge iron mooring buoy, drifting loose, spotted by one of her helicopters. We soon found it and the Marine Sergeant asked my permission for his platoon to sink it with their Bren Guns. I didn't think that the Bren's small calibre bullets would hole this monster, but as we had ½ an hour before darkness, I let them try for fun. Well, all the usual rivalry between Sailors and Marines came to the fore and my entire Crew turned out on deck to watch the Marines blasting away at the buoy, with the usual ribald remarks of, "You couldn't hit a Brewery brick wall". Their machine guns emptied magazine after magazine at the buoy – they were hitting it all right – but their small bullets were bouncing off the very thick iron sides of the buoy. With just ten minutes left to sunset and orders in from BULWARK for me to re-join the Big Sweep, I picked up the ship's Talk Mike and said, "Bofors Crew Close-up, 4 Rounds Rapid Fire at the buoy's waterline". By the quick time my Gun crew had closed-up, I had violently spun the ship around to have the bow and therefore the Bofors gun pointing at the buoy – my final order, "Engage". Boom, boom, boom. boom! All 4 shells blasted the buoy and it sank instantly. The Marine Sergeant was with me on the Bridge and he handsomely conceded it was best to leave maritime matters to the Royal Navy! Below decks, in the living accommodation, the Sailors and Royal Marines were bosom buddies, both impressed with the skills of each other as Defenders of the Realm! The BULWARK and massed Minesweepers' offensive put the Pirates out of business for several years. To be continued in March 2021.

Submarining - an Hazardous Occupation?

By Barrie Downer

A review of the Service Records of several thousand Naval Ratings in the Submarine Service (taken from National Archive Records in the ADM/188 Series etc.) from the earliest days (1901 to 1939) has highlighted the wide range of risks/hazards to which those Submariners were exposed during their Naval Service. These risks/hazards often resulted in illness, injury, incapacitation or death whilst serving (or shortly thereafter) or resulted in being 'invalided' out of Naval Service either owing to the incapacitation or from unfitness for further Naval Service. These risks/hazards can be divided into those of a 'Medical Nature' and those resulting from 'Accidents' or 'Enemy Action'.

Risks of a Medical Nature.

It should be remembered that until very recently (the late 1960s) no medical professional was carried on a Submarine – very basic medical care was the responsibility of the First Lieutenant and the Coxswain. Naval Surgeons were only carried in the Submarine Bases and Depot Ships. It is only in recent years, following the introduction of nuclear-powered Submarines, that Medical professionals began to be carried onboard as a matter of course. However, their primary role is to monitor the physics of the nuclear power plant and environmental issues – general medical health being a secondary task.

Early Submariners seem, on the whole, to have been a reasonably healthy lot – there was a suggestion that no self-respecting germ or bacteria could survive in early Submarine conditions although humans could! One problem was that until the days of the Second World War there were no antibiotics and few pain killers available and many submariners died from what today would be considered to be minor ailments, conditions or infections.

The following is a list (not necessarily exhaustive) of the medical conditions and illnesses reported on Service Records resulting in the death, incapacitation or 'invaliding' of Submarine Officers and Ratings:

Abscess	Appendicitis	Asthma
Albuminuria	Apoplexy	Astigmatism
Anaemia	Arthritis	Beri beri
Aneurism	Asphyxia	Bronchitis

Blood poisoning	Gonorrhoea	Pancreatitis
Brain diseases	Gout	Peritonitis
Brain tumours	Hernia	Pleurisy
Bright's disease	Haemorrhage - various	Pneumonia
Caisson disease	Heart attacks	Remittent Fever
Cancers (various)	Heart disease	Reynaud's disease
Cellulitis	Heat stroke	Rheumatism
Cholera	Hepatitis	Shock
Defective teeth	Hyperpyrexia	Scalding
Dengue fever	Infections - various	Scarlet fever
Diabetes	Influenza	Septicaemia
Diphtheria	Insanity	Sleep walking
Disease – Nervous System	Intermittent Fever	Stammering
Duodenal Ulcer	Intestinal Obstruction	Stroke
Dysentery	Jaundice	Sun stroke
Emphysema	Kidney disease	Syphilis
Endocarditis	Laryngitis	Tetanus
Encephalitis	Lead poisoning	Thrombosis
Enteritis	Liver disease	Tuberculosis
Enteric Fever	Lunacy	Tumours (various)
Epilepsy	Malaria	Typhoid fever
Eye diseases (various)	Mediterranean fever	Typhus
Fibrosis of the lungs	Meningitis	Ulcerative Colitis
Flat feet	Myopia	Uraemia
Fracture of the skull	Nephritis	Varicose veins
Fracture of the spine	Neurasthenia	Yellow fever
Gastric Ulcer	Otitis externa	

Risks from 'Accident' or 'Enemy Action'

Again, the following list is not necessarily exhaustive, but these events been noted as causes of 'death' or 'invaliding' in many cases:

Burns	Explosion	Road accidents
Crush injuries	Falls (from Ladders or Masts)	Scalding & Steam Leaks
Clothing caught in rotating machinery	Fractures	Secondary drowning
Drowning	Gassing	Shooting
Electrocution	Lightning strikes	Struck by falling objects
	Railway accidents	Suffocation

In the above risks 'Burns' included an Able Seaman who died when a lorry carrying petrol which he was escorting caught fire.

'Explosions' could be 'Petrol Vapour' explosions in 'Holland', A', 'B' & 'C' Class Submarines, 'Crank Case' explosions in both Petrol and early Diesel submarines and 'Hydrogen (battery gas) Explosions' - to which all Classes of Submarines are susceptible – even today.

'Falls' included 'falling from aloft', 'falling from gang planks', 'falling into dock bottoms', 'falling from ladders', 'falling overboard whilst sleepwalking', 'falling into ships holds/bunkers' when coaling ship' in the Submarine Depot Ships and 'falling overboard' from Submarines, Depot Ships and ship's boats. Other 'coaling ship' hazards included being struck by full coal bags when they were being swung inboard, being struck by falling lumps of coal or being overcome by fumes in bunkers when trimming the coal.

You might wonder why Submariners were involved in 'coal ship' accidents but in early Submarine Depot Ships 'coal ship' was a 'whole ship' evolution and even the Officers and 'Spare Crew' were not exempted – only the Captain was excused!!

'Crushing' included torpedoes, shells and heavy loads being dropped, ship's boats dropping when being hoisted 'in' or 'out', rotating equipment or machinery (i.e. gun turrets), breech blocks and cordite/shell hoists.

One unusual case of crushing was that of an Engine Room Artificer who died of 'rupture of the urethra & peritonitis' resulting from being 'accidentally squeezed' in the engines of 'RACER'. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, the verdict of the Coroner's Court was that 'death of the deceased was caused by an accident' and that 'no blame was attached to anyone.'

'Gassing' included being affected by exhaust gasses, carbon monoxide & carbon dioxide concentrations, petrol fumes and 'arseneuired hydrogen' gas which might be generated when submarine batteries are being charged.

And, as if the above listed Illnesses/Risks/Hazards (most of which seem to have been accepted as normal events in the Service) were not enough, some Submariners also had a propensity to commit suicide by a variety of

means including:

- Cutting one's own throat/wrists
- Hanging
- Shooting
- Gassing (coal gas ovens were a favourite)
- Poisoning
- Jumping from heights and/or drowning

Although not counted as suicide, during WWI there were a number of cases whereby Ratings 'Deserted' – noted as 'Run' on their Service Certificates - with an additional note of "Killed in Action" after joining the Army during WWI . They might well have survived the War had they not deserted! Interestingly, although most of the offences listed in the 'Articles of War' gave death as one of the consequences no record has yet been seen of such a sentence being imposed on or carried out on an offending Submariner!

In the grand scheme of things - as far as Submarine Service was concerned - the risks from '**Accidents**' might result in the death or injury of individual Submariners but, very occasionally, of the whole Crew or a large proportion of the Crew, whereas the risks from '**Enemy Action**' generally resulted in the death, not only of the individual Submariner, but more often than not, the loss of his Submarine and the death of the whole of his Crew.

For Ratings serving in Surface Ships (General Service) the risks from 'Accidents' might also result in the death or injury of an individual Rating but 'Enemy Action' might result in death or injury to the individual or a number of the Crew, however, the possibility of survival of some of the Crew is greater.

Whether a 'death in service' arose from a medical cause, accident, enemy action or suicide the fact would be annotated on the Service Record by the letter 'DD' which means 'Discharged Dead' and, usually, the cause is briefly detailed but not always. People researching family history can often get an unexpected surprise when finding out the causes of 'invaliding' or 'death in service'.

In some cases, a Court/Board of Enquiry and Post-Mortem examination was held to ascertain the cause of death, especially for accidents or unexplained deaths – particularly where any individual Officer or Rating or the Navy might have been held accountable. However, a fairly standard annotation at the time was along the lines of 'accident - no blame attributable to anyone' or 'accidentally killed/drowned' as a 'get out' clause with implication that the accident or incident being was the unfortunate victim's own fault.

Today's 'Health and Safety' culture would have a field day!

TRAINING SUBMARINERS – THE EARLY DAYS

By Barrie Downer

The process of Submarine Officer selection and Training is described in the book 'The Story of Our Submarines' by "KLAXON" published by William Blackwood and Sons in 1919 in Chapter 1, Pages 2, 3 & 4. Although written after WWI had finished the Officer selection procedure had probably been in place long since. Before the days of HMS DOLPHIN & Fort Blockhouse the Officers would have been appointed to HMS THAMES or HMS MERCURY at Portsmouth and some to HMS FORTH at Devonport.

NOTE: The following extract is adapted from the 'My Gosport' Website.

HMS DOLPHIN, Fort Blockhouse, Submarine School

The humble beginnings of the Submarine School appear to go back to 1905, when rudimentary submarine training started in a group of three huts at Fort Blockhouse. The Admiralty had acquired Fort Blockhouse from the Army in 1904 and it became the home for a submarine flotilla from that date. Prior to the take-over of Fort Blockhouse from the Army (the Corps of Mining Engineers) the Depot Ship for the Submarine Flotilla had been restricted to the upper reaches of Portsmouth harbour. The establishment name HMS DOLPHIN came from the 929-ton composite screwed sloop HMS DOLPHIN that was berthed at Fort Blockhouse from 1906. The Royal Naval Submarine School slowly evolved, becoming part of an independent submarine command, HMS DOLPHIN (incorporating Fort Blockhouse), in 1912.

KLAXON goes on to say:

'Before I get on to the War itself, I want to give a short description of the entry and training of our personnel both before and after the War began.

In peace time an Officer who wished to join the Submarine Service had first to receive a recommendation from his own Captain. He then had to produce either a first-class certificate for his Torpedo examination for Lieutenant, or, if he had not that qualification, a certificate from the Torpedo-Lieutenant of his ship to the effect that he showed special zeal in that branch of his duties. If his name was accepted it was placed at the bottom of the candidates' list, and in due time, after an interval which

varied from year to year, he was appointed to Fort Blockhouse, the Submarine Depot at Gosport. There the batch of new Officers were medically examined, and (the standard being high) the unfit were weeded out and returned to their ships.

For the next three months he went through a course of practical submarine instruction, his training period terminating in examinations which provided another obstacle, the meshes of which prevented certain candidates from proceeding further.

The Officers of the class were then sent as "third hands" to different boats to await vacancies as First Lieutenants. After two to four years as First Lieutenant (the time varied with the number of new boats built), an Officer obtained command of an A boat (of 204 tons), from which he rose by seniority to larger and more powerful commands.'

'The Men entered in much the same way, being recommended, of first-class character and of excellent physical standard. They went through a less comprehensive training course, but had the same weeding-out to undergo, so that as far as possible the "duds" were got rid of before they had cost the country much in useless teaching.

In wartime it has not been possible to spare the time for the full instructional courses, but the courses continued, although much shortened. The shortage of personnel in the Navy generally cut down the field from which volunteers were drawn, but in spite of this the Submarine Service was able to keep up its voluntary entry, and to continue to retain its standard by drafting back those who were by nature or capabilities unfit for such work. The submarine sailor is a picked man and is the admiration of his Officers. There is a 'Democracy of Things Real' in the boats which is a very fine kind of Democracy. Both men and officers in a submarine know that each man's life is held in the hand of any one of them, who by carelessness or ignorance may make their ship into a common coffin; all ranks live close together, and when the occasion arises, go to their deaths in the same way. The Fear of Death is a great leveller, and in submarines an officer or a man's competency for his job is the only real standard by which he is judged.'

And from pages 14 & 15 of 'KLAXON's book we see how crew training was conducted in a building yard:

'here (is) an account of a typical trial of a new boat, using an E boat of the early 1916 vintage as an illustration.

The boat I would use as an illustration was in 1915 very new indeed. She was just a standard E boat, with war-taught improvements and additions, and with a war-taught complement of officers and a half-taught complement of men. For a month the men had been given a queer but useful course of instruction by being taken by their First Lieutenant at "Diving Stations," in a disused shed in the building firm's premises. On the walls and floor names and rough sketches of most of the important valves and wheels of the boat herself had been chalked, and though the men laughed and swore at the make-believe, they had learnt a good deal of their drill and the probable sequence of diving orders, without the work of the builders of the E boat being interfered with.

Except in the dinner hour, or during the infrequent holidays, no drill could be carried out aboard owing to the crowds of men working there. Overtime had been continuously worked, and nothing could be allowed to interfere with the firm's sacred "date" - the day on which the Admiralty had been promised delivery.'

'KLAXON' was the pseudonym of Commander John Graham Bower – a Submarine Commanding Officer who was appointed to his first Submarine Command pre-WWI.

SUBMARINERS 'CROSSED THE BAR' REPORTED TO 31st JANUARY 2021

Branch	Date	Name	Rank/Rate	O/N	Age	Submarine Service
Submarine Officers Association	21 st December 2020	Michael Tyndale Cooper	Lieutenant (X) (SM)	N/A	TBA	Submarine Service from January 1960 to 1967 in AURIGA, ODIN (1962), PORPOISE (1964) & TIPTOE (1966)
Sheffield Branch	22nd December 2020	Thomas (Tom) Holden	Leading Seaman (RP2)	C/SSX 820235	89	Submarine Service from 1952 to 1956 in ANDREW & ALCIDE
We Remember Submariners	24 th December 2020	Steve Hanson	Not reported	TBA	TBA	Not reported
We Remember Submariners	27th December 2020	Michael Millar	Chief Petty Officer (SA) (SM)	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service from 1977 to 1987 including REVENGE (S) on recommissioning at Rosyth on 4th September 1982
We Remember Submariners	27th December 2020	Martin P Hopkins	Charge Chief Marine Engineering Artificer	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service in CHURCHILL on commissioning at Barrow on 15th July 1970, VALIANT (2nd Commission Crew on 12th May 1972 & on recommissioning at Chatham on 16th February 1980), TURBULENT (1st Commission Crew) on 28th April 1986 & TRENCHANT (1st Commission Crew) on 14th January 1989
We Remember Submariners	28th December 2020	Samuel Limon	Able Seaman	D129095S	TBA	Submarine Service from 1971 to 1981 in ANDREW (1971 to 1974), OTTER (1974 to 1976) & ORPHEUS (1976 to 1980)
Eastern States Australia	28th December 2020	Alan R Nutton	Leading Radio Operator	P/J96559 7	78	from 1961 to 1968 in ORPHEUS (1962 to 1965) & TABARD (1965 to 1968 & on 'Commissioning' at Sydney in 1965)
Dolphin Branch	30 th December 2020	Patrick Michael Gordon Spencer	Lieutenant Commander (E) (WE)	N/A	90	Submarine Service from April 1955 to January 1962 in ARTEMIS (EO 7th December 1955), SEASCOUT (20th January 1956) & SPITEFUL
Bath Branch	December 2020	Patrick Yates	Petty Officer (UW2)	J818020	89	Submarine Service from August 1954 to October 1956 in TIPTOE
Gosport Branch	January 2021	Anthony (Stan) Stayer	Marine Engineering Mechanician (P)	P/K97765 9W	77	Submarine Service from 1961 to 1983 in TUDOR, THERMOPYLAE, AUROCHS, WALRUS, PORPOISE, ORPHEUS, ANCHORITE, ONYX, SEALION (twice), RENOWN & FINWHALE
Submarine Officers Association	4th January 2021	Paul (Johnnie) Murray-Jones, MiD	Lieutenant Commander	N/A	99	Submarine Service from 26 th February 1942 in TAKU (3rd Hand), H44 (IL), U ^T HER (IL), TRUANT (IL), TRUCULENT (IL), SCEPTRE (IL), U-249 (IL), SAGA (CO), SENTINEL (CO), TABARD (CO), TRUMP (CO 1950), SOLENT (CO), TACITURN (CO 1953)
Submarine Officers Association	6 th January 2020	Henry Edward Over	Lieutenant Commander (E)(ME)	N/A	TBA	Submarine Service in DOLPHIN & (??)

We Remember Submariners	9 th January 2021	Steve Fletcher	TBA	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service including CONQUEROR & OBERON
Scottish Branch	9 th January 2021	Brian John Heyd-Smith	Lieutenant (MESM)	D079571 & C027377 M	TBA	Submarine Service from 1972 to 2005 in COURAGEOUS (TG Tiff & NCOW 1972 to 1976), RNC Greenwich, COURAGEOUS (AMEO 1982 to 1986) & as Lt RNR in SCOTIA (1992 to 1996)
Non-member	11 th January 2021	David Wallace	Petty Officer Telegraphist	Not given	90	Submarine Service from June 1950 to June 1951 in DOLPHIN, AFFRAY (June 1950 to September 1950) & TIRELESS (September 1950 to June 1951)
We Remember Submariners	13 th January 2020	'Buster' Browne	Leading Writer	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service including CHURCHILL
Non-member	15 th January 2021	Collin Willis	Cook	C/SMX 923637	85	Submarine Service from December 1956 to February 1960 in SELENE (6 th December 1956 to 19 th August 1957), SEASCOUT (17 th September 1957 to 15 th November 1959) & DOLPHIN
Non-member	22 nd January 1920	Stephen Goodhead	Marine Engineering Mechanic (M)	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service including SPARTAN (1 st Commission Crew on 22 nd September 1979)
We Remember Submariners	January 2021	Anthony Boyall	Chief Petty Officer	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service including RENOWN (P) on recommissioning at Rosyth
We Remember Submariners	January 2021	George (Colin?) Thorne	TBA	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service including COURAGEOUS, SUPERB & CONQUEROR (?)
Non-member	Not given	A (Tony) Parsons	Charge Chief Weapons Electrical Artificer	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service in RENOWN, REPULSE & REVENGE