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# IN DEPTH

Official Newsletter of the Submariners Association

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Patron: Admiral the Lord Boyce KG GCB OBE DL

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### The Submariner

"Of all the branches of men in the Forces there is none which shows more devotion and faces grimmer perils than the Submariner; great deeds are done in the air and on the land, nevertheless nothing surpasses your exploits."

*Sir Winston Churchill 1943*

## EDITORIAL

Well that's the Diamond Jubilee Weekend, Trooping the Colours and the Euro 2012 out of the way. Wimbledon and the Olympics next and then we can get back to normal!

This issue of In Depth includes an article on the exploits of the Australian 'O' Boats in the Cold War era which should jog a few memories for many of our members – particularly the discussions about recognition of 'Cold War Warriors'. Another item discusses the background to the race to grab German U-Boat secrets at the end of WWII leading to the commissioning of HMS METEORITE and the development of HTP propulsion in EXPLORER and EXCALIBUR. Other items cover WWII 'Warship Weeks', details of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of Operation Frankton (Cockleshell Heroes) at the Pointe de Grave Memorial in France – and 'concessionary travel' arrangements, a reminder about booking for this year's 'Mixed Reunion' in Solihull and information about this year's Dundee Memorial Ceremonies. There is a reminder (and a poem) about the loss of the Tot – 42 years

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ago this year – for those with long memories!

John Keating reminded me some time ago about the loss of the AFFRAY and a controversial book on the subject about which he (and others) had strong views and which we published (without comment) in In Depth No. 35. John's E Mail on the Subject is belatedly printed in this Newsletter as is a reply and comments from George Malcolmson at the Submarine Museum. Recently the long overdue Memorial to those lost in AFFRAY was unveiled in the Channel Islands. This Issue contains a poem to AFFRAY crew written at the time of the loss. Thanks once more to all those who have contributed to this Issue. Barrie Downer

### A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN:

**F**riends and Fellow Submariners.

Has it really been three months since I enjoyed the excitement and privilege of being elected as National Chairman? A quarter of a year!! I would like to thank all of you who took the time to send me encouraging words of support. They were greatly appreciated. People always seem to find time to complain so it was very refreshing to know that some of you took the time to write and say something nice!! Thank you.

So far my tenure as Chairman has been without incident! I was particularly pleased that my first 'speaking part' was to welcome everyone to the Reunion Dinner. What could be nicer than to invite your friends to share a meal and a few drinks! That is what we are about! Similarly my first invited function was as a guest at the J J Magennis Dinner hosted by the Northern Ireland Branch. Anyone who has attended a function hosted by this Branch does not need me to tell you how it went! An excellent event, again sharing a meal and a few drinks with friends! With those comments in mind I would like to take this opportunity to encourage Branches to consider seriously how they conduct Branch meetings. Try and reduce the formality and engage in the social

side of the event. If possible encourage participation in some form by wives, partners and family. I'm not going to preach, I would just request that you think on what I have said on this matter.

The search to find a volunteer to relieve me of the role of National Secretary is hopefully nearing a conclusion. I have to say that since the request was promulgated on 4<sup>th</sup> April, the response from members has been very disappointing. Having said that the one man who has stepped forward has shown that he is very keen to take up the challenge. I have had several chats with him on the phone and that has not discouraged him. I have now arranged for the Vice Chairman, John Wood and me to meet the applicant early in July to answer in person any queries or concerns he may have and to explain in detail the role he is taking on. I am confident that after this meeting we will be in a position to name the volunteer and formally introduce him. The formality is that the appointment must be ratified by the delegates at the next National Counsel Conference.

All Branch Secretaries have now been sent copies of the amended Rules & Constitution. The idea is that they print them or forward electronically to their members. At present we only have this document in A4 Format as we search for a suitable printer with reasonable costs to have them produced in the now familiar 'diary insert' size. The present format is perfectly valid and is exactly what will eventually be reproduced in the smaller form. So if you require copy of the Rules & Constitution contact your Branch secretary in the first instance or if that is unsuccessful let me know!

I think by now most of you will have seen photographs of the Duchess of Cambridge wearing the badge of the Submarine Service (Dolphins) during the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. I personally felt that she had bestowed a great honour on all Submariners past and present by this very obvious show of support. I wrote to her expressing these sentiments!

Thankfully I received only two e-mails questioning her entitlement to wear Dolphins!

So just what is her entitlement? I was surprised by the number of members who did not know that her husband, the future King, Prince William is the Commodore-in-Chief of the Submarine Service. He is also Commodore-in-Chief of HMNB Clyde, and Commodore-in-Chief of Scotland! These honours were bestowed on him by the Queen on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2006. These are not actual military ranks but Appointments by the Queen. So the lady who no doubt will one day be our Queen, who presently has access to probably the most magnificent jewellery on the planet made a conscious decision to wear Dolphins on the most public of occasions – that made me proud!

I hope by now you will all have received the relevant paperwork and Application Form for the Family Reunion being held on the weekend of 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at the St. John's Hotel in Solihull. This is the same venue as the Full Members Reunion in March of this year. So we know that the hotel is clean and comfortable with friendly helpful staff and we know that the bar prices are very acceptable. The hotel is very central within the UK and so is accessible from all directions! Above all they want us there!! I know that September seems a long way ahead at the moment, but I would earnestly recommend that you get your accommodation and menu requirements to Dave Barlow as soon as possible. Don't miss this opportunity to have a great weekend amongst your own people! If you are unsure, ask someone who attended the March Reunion and I am confident that they will wholeheartedly recommend this venue. Remember it is not just for families – everyone is welcome to this informal Reunion.

Another date for your diary is Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November – our annual Remembrance Day Parade held on the London Embankment at the National Submarine Memorial. This is traditionally a very well attended event, not only by Association members but a by a

strong contingent of Serving Submariners. Again I would encourage you to do all that you can to attend this excellent service/parade. It is our opportunity to pay our respects to those who have gone before us. Those who helped to earn the reputation we enjoy! Please come along.

Those of you who have met me will know that I am from Glasgow – and proud so to be!! There is a natural rivalry between Glaswegians and the folks from the other side – Edinburgh! So as a Glaswegian and a football fan I was intrigued to learn that Edinburgh has fielded the first all gay football team, the ‘HotScots’ I went along to see them play (out of curiosity

you understand) but I was disappointed. I don’t think they are going to be doing very well. I don’t say this for any homophobic reasons – they are just not tight enough at the back! I will sign off now. Keep on keeping on.

**Jim McMaster**

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### SUBMARINERS SOUND THE ALARM TO SAVE HISTORIC BELL

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The bell from Falklands Conflict submarine, HMS CONQUEROR has been acquired by the Royal Navy Submarine Museum thanks to an alert from former crew members of Conqueror. The historic bell was successfully purchased in an auction this week and is now on display at the Submarine Museum in their ‘Falklands 30: War patrols’ exhibition.

Staff at the Submarine Museum was unsure what they would need to bid to secure the historic bell of HMS CONQUEROR which unexpectedly came up for auction in Plymouth earlier in the week. Because of her pivotal role in the 1982 Falklands conflict CONQUEROR has special place RN submarine history.

Vince Cane, former crew member of HMS CONQUEROR said, “The crew of HMS CONQUEROR remain a very tight knit unit, more than 20 years after the Boat was decommissioned. We meet regularly at Reunions and maintain close contact with one another.



**CONQUEROR ARRIVING AT FASLANE FROM THE FALKLANDS**

“A shipmate, Steve Johnson, became aware of the impending auction of the ships bell and informed us all via the HMS CONQUEROR Facebook page. CONQUEROR has a unique heritage and the crew remain very proud of their affiliation with the boat. The news provoked a strong response from many members, all expressing the view that the bell rightly belonged in the Submarine Museum along with other CONQUEROR memorabilia.

For Bob Mealings, Curator of the Submarine Museum, this was quite an anxious time.

Bob Mealings said, “As soon as the word got out about the auction the emails started coming in from former crew member urging us to make sure we got the bell for the Museum. When maritime artefacts like the CONQUEROR Bell come to auction, it notoriously difficult to say how much they will go for, however thank fully we were successful”

Vince Cane said, “When we found out that the museum intended to bid for the bell a large number of the crew expressed a desire to help with fundraising to ensure the bell was secured. We were delighted to hear that the museum had been successful in its bid and set about raising funds to help cover the costs.”

HMS CONQUEROR (Commander Christopher Wreford-Brown, Royal Navy) was the submarine that sank the Argentine Cruiser BELGRANO during the 1982 Falkland’s Conflict. The bell was purchased for £1,600.00 and is now on display alongside other HMS CONQUEROR artefacts, including her Jolly Roger, her working periscopes and the Captain’s cabin within the ‘Falklands30: War Patrols’ exhibition at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum. This exhibition runs until 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and is free with a valid museum ticket. For more information please visit [www.submarine-museum.co.uk](http://www.submarine-museum.co.uk) or call 023 92510354.

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### Recollections of Assault Unit No.30-II

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Article supplied by ‘Blood’ Reed

The first positive evidence of the existence of Walterboats was found at Hamburg which was entered on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1945. There two of them, U-1408 and U-1410, heavily damaged by bombs, lying on the jetty. The form of their hulls, resembling a gigantic fish rather than a conventional submarine, was an immediate clue to unusual speed. It was clear that certain parts, mainly the ‘boiler’ unit of a turbine drive had been cut out with a blowtorch and

removed. I got hold of Rudolph Blohm of Blohm and Voss, who after a show of reluctance to discuss the machinery, eventually revealed the performance figures for this type, a Type XVII U-boat; disclosed the principle of the Walter drive and confirmed that the fuel was the mysterious hydrogen peroxide.

On the same day the Army advance was halted at Lubeck on political instructions owing to negotiations with the

advancing Russians. Colonel Quill RM obtained permission from the British general to proceed unofficially to Kiel, on the clear understanding that there could be no support if things went wrong. So on 4<sup>th</sup> May a 30 strong A.U. team under Commander Dunstan Curtis, together with a troop of S.A.S raced into Kiel ahead of the 1<sup>st</sup> Army detachments, and proceeded direct to the Walterwerke which they made their HQ. They secured Dr Walter who was living next to his works, which they found 90% intact.

I was at Hamburg on VE day, which strangely passed unnoticed in the rather breath-taking pace of events, and the next day drove up to Kiel. In the comfort of a staff car it was an uniquely moving experience heading through the hordes of Wehrmacht, still fully armed, straggling dejectedly in their thousands toward the detention camps to which they had been directed. On arrival at Kiel I did a preliminary interrogation with Captain A.L. Mumma of the US Navy, of Dr Walter, who spoke good English. We quickly realised how important the place was, clearly needing long term investigation; particularly important, of course, was to find out what technical developments had been passed to the Japanese who were still in the war. After a few days I set up (quite irregularly, but not without justification!) as Engineer Overseer, and was soon joined by Lt Cdrs (E) 'Bill' Haynes and John Pearson, with Lt Cdr D. R. Carling, R.N.V.R and S/Lt W. Crowdy, to coordinate the countless investigators (British and American), and to control the production side.

### **The Walterwerke, Kiel**

The plant itself, situated on the south bank of the Kiel canal, consisted of a series of well-planned red brick buildings with extensive testing cells, laboratories, machine shops, drawing offices and record rooms, and a handsome Board Room which was taken over as our Mess. A feature was the storage arrangements for hydrogen peroxide, contained in two thick-walled 'bunkers', each holding ten 20-ton aluminium tanks. A detachment of the East Surrey regiment took over security duties, though in the event there was very little for them to do.

A preliminary investigation was most revealing. There were numerous torpedoes in varying stages of completion; the entire stern of a Type XVII U-boat, which was, coupled to a test brake, and many other test rigs. Nothing seemed to have been sabotaged except in each rig the vital combustion chamber arrangements had been removed, clearly in accordance with a pre-arranged policy.

Dr Walter, a rather heavy, flabby-cheeked man of about 45, talked freely up to point about generalities. He had joined the Nazi Party about 1932; become a leader of industry in Kiel; formed his own company and eventually employed some 4,500 people spread over seven branches some of which were already in Russian hands. He claimed that his underlying thought for many years had been to produce a fast U-boat, and his primary objective was therefore to produce an efficient oxygen carrier for which, after many substances had been tried, hydrogen peroxide had been chosen. The concentration had been raised from 30% in 1934 to over 85%, in which state it was extremely prone to detonation unless properly handled. When it came to discussing the methods of using this liquid in combustion chambers, Walter was

most reluctant to reveal anything, and it was clear that his attitude accorded with the sabotage of the combustion components. Walter, it transpired, was torn between his previous oaths of secrecy, his intense fear of releasing anything to the Russians (who were only 40 miles away, beyond Lubeck), and the evident pressure, which was being put on him by the British and Americans.

Colonel Quill accordingly made an immediate visit to 'Donitz's' H.Q., which had been set up at Flensburg on the Danish border, primarily to demand detailed information of minefields and any technical data which had been released to the Japanese. The matter of divulging secrets was also raised. The next day Capt Mumma U.S.N., Lt Cdr Bryan Connell R.N.V.R. and I were sent to collect this information from the German 4<sup>th</sup> Sea Lord who appended his signature 40 times to a German order that all developments and secrets of research work were to be made known 'to the unit under Colonel Quill' (described as 'Herr Oberst Quell'. Donitz by now the Fuhrer, who was seen walking freely in the street before he was interned, sent a Kapitän zur See to tell Walter (who was a friend of Donitz) personally that nothing whatever was to be withheld. The effect was instantaneous. From that day 7<sup>th</sup> May, Walter and his team kept back nothing.

Then ensued a hilarious series of discoveries. The average rate of finding new weapons for the first fortnight was about two per day. Combustion chambers were retrieved from the bottom of flooded bomb craters. A case containing key torpedo data was dug up from a hole whose position had been revealed by the German Director of torpedoes; (I was then told that his deputy had committed suicide because of the disgrace brought on his superior by this action). Parts of Messerschmidt aircraft jet engines were fetched from the Danish border in a train driven by Lt A. Cameron R.N.V.R., the first train to cross the Kiel Canal down which Cameron also brought Walters peroxide tanker 'Polyp'. At an outstation near 'Boseau' on the nearby 'Ploner Zee', a sinister lake where midget crews, swimmers and other marine pests were trained, was found Walters latest miniature 25 knot one-man U-boat which had been scuttled so successfully that the hull had collapsed under pressure. Here also was a battery of V-1 launching ramps and early catapults for trials. One of these was intended to launch a hero into immortality sitting on top of a V-1; (Walter affirmed that there had been plenty of volunteers but the weapon had not yet been tried out). A scorched earth policy had in many instances only been applied half-heartedly, if at all, as, for example in the destruction of only *half* the peroxide storage tanks. It was stated that just before the occupation every single drawing and calculation had been burned, which was true; but the devious German mind needed to play for safety, and in the event there was found to be a complete microfilm collection of everything, which was produced from under the coal in the office coal cellar. These microfilms formed the basis of the complete investigation of all Walters's developments, and were immediately copied for London and Washington.

With Walter now co-operating fully, he was ordered to complete the submarine test units, various torpedoes, aircraft jet engines, the V-1 launching ramp and other weapons ready for demonstration to the countless

investigators, the naturally curious and the V.I.P.s who arrived by the dozen including the First Lord, First Sea Lord and the U.S. Secretary of the Navy. About 600 Germans were employed, being paid initially from the firms reserves, 'put by', as Walter naively remarked, 'to provide for such a contingency'. About 300 Russian slave workers had been employed in the works, but they had vanished to their compatriots 30 miles to the East as if by magic. Walter said that whereas they had arrived like wild beasts, they had become respectable members of the community. They had caused little trouble, except one day when they demanded to have a bath *en masse*, and on another occasion had shot dead one of the German guards.

We were, of course, acutely conscious of the proximity of the Russians. It was a surprise, to put it mildly, when one day a large North Country sergeant was shown into the office, nearly brought the ceiling down with the vigour of his salute, and announced that not only had he brought the Russians, but he had locked them in a room down the corridor. Expecting an international incident it was with much relief that we discovered he was talking about 'rations' and not Russians. The fear of the Russian soldiery was very real among the German civilians – particularly the women, many of whom, including Walter's secretary whom I took over, carried cyanide capsules for use should their homes be overrun from the East.

About this time I again visited Flensburg for some reason in a small armoured scout car, to see the liner being prepared to accommodate the Allied and German Naval staffs being called to agree on the official surrender details. A smooth-operating R.N.V.R. (Sp) Lt Cdr had been appointed to arrange the domestic side of accommodating so many V.I.P.s in the ship and kindly offered me two or three cases of German 'NAAFI' champagne which I gladly accepted for our small Mess. But he did not make it clear, until I heard guttural shouts and heavy boots on the jetty that each case contained twelve dozen, not twelve bottles! In the event I settled for just one such case, roped over my head in the passenger seat. Mercifully there was no Road Traffic Act or busy Red Caps to worry about; but I badly needed that first bottle when we made it back to Kiel.

### **Hydrogen Peroxide**

All Walter's energies were directed to producing an oxygen carrier to produce large bursts of power for short periods such as might be required by any one of a great many weapons. Briefly, hydrogen peroxide looks like water though it is heavier and in its concentrated form decomposes very readily into steam and oxygen. In contact with certain substances such as paper, oil or rag combustion is immediate and the fluid bursts into flame. It will react chemically with any inflammable material and with any substance easily oxidised, such as iron, in contact with which the temperature will rise rapidly and unless reduced by dilution with water will explode at about 180 deg F., the resulting fire supplying its own oxygen. So the materials used with hydrogen peroxide must be very carefully chosen indeed – usually certain aluminium or stainless steels or plastics, all of which must be scrupulously clean. To achieve the quick but controlled reaction needed for power bursts a catalyst was used; it

was the choice of catalysts that much of the early research was directed.

As an example of the need for cleanliness, Walter told of a factory hand that had eaten far too many onions for his health's sake before entering a peroxide tank to clean it. 'Unfortunately, his gases escaped, you understand, and he was blown – poof - through the manhole of the tank' (which should perhaps be taken with a pinch of salt, or perhaps sage?)

A further development was to pass the steam and oxygen on dissociation into a combustion chamber into which diesel fuel was injected, the burning of the oil producing superheated steam at an extremely high temperature (3,500-4,00 deg F.), too hot in fact to be used in a turbine without further treatment. This 'hot drive' was the basis of the Walterboat machinery, and of certain other weapons.

For a variety of reasons the peroxide could not be stored in the U-boats internal tanks, and was held in large external bags made of plastic (PVC); so the report of 'fuel in leather bags' was by no means far off the mark.

A further property of peroxide deserves mention. Walter's research chemist, Her Oestreich, had a remarkable talent for producing a most explosive potion by adding a teaspoonful of it to a bottle of commercial spirits of wine and letting it mature for a day or two. It went under the name of 'T-Stoff Special.

### **Walterboats**

Walter, starting in 1933 with only three employees, by 1938 had designed, produced and actually done trials on a most remarkable small submarine known as V 80. It had a displacement of 87 tons, a crew of 5, and actually achieved an underwater speed of 25 knots, a speed never again realised by any submarine until after the war. Its very novel hull form had been tested in a wind tunnel at Brunswick instead of the usual test tank. Submerged speed trials had to be carried out at night with a light in the conning tower, which an accompanying E-boat attempted to follow. It is fascinating to speculate what the Admiralty's reaction would have been had they known before the war of this potentially deadly weapon; a clear example of our indifferent pre-war technical intelligence. Thus encouraged the Kriegsmarine produced to Walters design a whole family of trial and operational boats of up to 1600 tons, including a class of 24 Type XVIIIB, two of which we had seen, damaged, on the jetty at Hamburg. But the German losses of their standard diesel-electric boats became so severe that the production of a fast U-boat at the earliest possible moment became imperative. However the Walter drive was not quite complete and there was a serious difficulty in the bulk production of enough peroxide for operational use. So Donitz decided to use one of the larger Walterboat hulls, prefabricated, with battery propulsion for high underwater speed, and this became the well-known Type XXI, which should have been operational in the last few days of the war. Eventually only 5 of the Type XVIIIB were proceeded with; two we had seen and the remaining 3 had passed down the Kiel Canal to go operational only a matter of hours before the entry of 30 A.U. into the Walterwerke. They were scuttled, and two were finally salvaged by the Allies to be towed away to the U.K. and U.S.A.

By 1946 all the important components at the Walterwerke had been transferred to Vickers at Barrow, where Walter

and seven of his key staff and their families were taken to work on submarine development for the Admiralty. The peroxide drive was of course to be overtaken by atomic propulsion, but a great deal of know-how on high-speed submarines had been learned from the German developments under Dr Walter.

The U-boat brought back to the U.K. was used by the Royal Navy as a high-speed target Ex U1407, renamed HMS METEORITE.

### **SALUTE TO THE MEN OF THE 'AFFRAY'**

Hail Submariners! Gone to rest below,  
Not in the throes of battle bravely borne;  
Thro' green tinged depths our signal halliards fly.  
"Blow Negative!" and rise to greet the morn.

Another silent victim of your calling's fate  
Where liest now the "Boat" which bore you down?  
And we who pass o'erhead, and stand and wait  
All help to share the burden of your crown.

Farewell, our comrades of the heaving deep,  
Bless'd with the key of Neptune's high estate  
Farewell you "Pigboat" men, and may you sleep  
In peace below, until you stand before the Golden Gate.

So let each one stand stalwart there and proud  
Commander, Coxswain, Ratings – British men  
Droop not your heads but lift them high and say  
"We did our solemn duty, as we saw it then!"

Come to Salute! My shipmates standing into land  
Our island gateway lights have raised their loom  
Whilst 'neath our keel the yellow moving sand  
Drifts quietly round your mystic silent tomb!

Eric Thompson R.M.S. QUEEN MARY  
Crossing the English Channel April 19<sup>th</sup> 1951

### **WARSHIP WEEKS AND SUBMARINES**

Supplied by Peter Schofield

Seventy years ago this month, Hove Council ran a National Savings Warship Week. The town was set a target of £425,000 and raised the total of £521,000. As a result Hove adopted HMS UNBEATEN. In service since November 1940, she operated in the Mediterranean sinking two submarines and two other vessels before returning for repairs in August 1942. The commanding officer, with some officers and crew, was given lunch in Hove and presented its special Jolly Roger flag to the Mayor.

### **ID CARDS FOR VETERANS**

There has been some discussion on various websites lately about ID cards for Veterans. Finally an e-petition has been started.

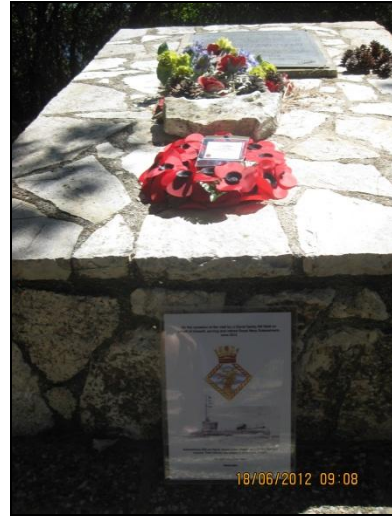
The link is:

[www.submarinersassociation.co.uk](http://www.submarinersassociation.co.uk)

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/14243>

Please pass this to all veterans you know and everybody else you know who would support it, even those serving, as one day they too will be Vets and may want any discounts or privileges that an ID card may afford them. Please get it pushed along, it closes on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012 and has massed over 4,431 signatures already.

### **HMS PERSEUS**



I wondered if this might be of interest for the next publication of 'In Depth'. Having only found out about PERSEUS last year and its connection with Kefalonia, I was determined to follow the story up on my next visit to the island this month. I cobbled together the tribute to the crew of PERSEUS between myself and David "Knocker" White of the Gosport branch of the SA, and the poppy wreath I obtained with my Royal British Legion hat on. The memorial is actually dedicated to the people who looked after John Capes after his escape, but I thought it was an appropriate place for the tributes to submariners still on patrol, it being the only one I could find on Kefalonia. I did deliver the Exhortation and observed a silence in Remembrance. Yours aye, David Saxby

### **Historic shield back on display in Selby**

**The York Press, 3 May 2012**

A piece of Selby's wartime history is back on display in the town after it was saved at auction and refurbished. The shield from HMS STURGEON a Second World War submarine with close links to the town was in poor condition when it was bought at auction by [Selby Town Council](#) in 2010, and has since undergone professional restoration. Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright, leader of the town council, said the shield, which has this week been put on display at Selby Town Hall, was a vital link to the town's history.



He said: "Selby was a maritime town, with ships being built in Selby until relatively recently, but we unfortunately do not have a lot of accessible history. During the Second World War, funds were raised to support the war effort, and one of the activities was Warship Week where towns and villages were asked to raise money to fund the building of warships. Selby raised money to help build a submarine, HMS STURGEON. Larger towns and cities

funded frigates and larger ships and to mark the Warship Week communities were presented with copies of the Badges of the relevant ship." HMS STURGEON ran as a patrol submarine throughout the Second World War, and made history when it completed the first successful torpedo attack of the war.

The vessel was also involved in the hunt for the Battleship BISMARCK. The shields were presented to the former Selby Rural and Urban District Councils when they adopted the submarine in March 1942.

The restoration of the shields was carried out by South Yorkshire-based restorer Mike Howden after they were bought at auction in Scunthorpe two years ago. Councillor Shaw-Wright said: "Mike did a wonderful job on the restoration of the shields. The shields were given to the council as custodian for the people who had raised the funds. Selby District Council allowed Selby Town council to hold one of the HMS STURGEON plaques. I feel very proud that this is now on display in the Town Hall in Selby for all to see, a small but not insignificant reminder of Selby at war."

### An 'Aussie' Submarine Tale

It's the great-untold story of Australian naval history. Throughout the last decade of the cold war, Australian Oberon-class submarines conducted perilous intelligence-gathering operations off the coasts of Vietnam, Indonesia, China and India as part of a global effort to check the Soviet Navy's formidable fleet. Shrouded in secrecy until now, their exposure would have had the power to bring down the government of the day.

Deep below the choppy surface of the South China Sea, they waited in silence. Inside a black barnacled metal cigar, 90 metres long and 8.7 metres wide, the stench of diesel fuel and the sour sweat of the crowded 75 men pervaded the humid heat, but nobody noticed. On the surface above, a new Soviet frigate was heading into Vietnam's Cam Ranh Bay at a gentle five to six knots.

Seeing an opportunity for what submariners call an 'underwater look', the O-boat commanding officer (CO) positioned himself about 1,000 yards (914 metres) behind the frigate to check its speed and course. Then he dived deep and closed quickly to about 200 yards behind the frigate to calculate the depth at which he could photograph its hull shape, propellers, weapons systems and sonar. How close he came would depend on the sea, the keel depth of the frigate and the height of the submarine.

With these calculations in mind, the CO slowed the submarine to about a half-knot above the frigate's speed and listened to course and direction readings from his sonar operators. "Red two getting louder ... Green three...softer ... right ahead," the sonar operators called, indicating how many degrees to port or starboard, or how directly, the two vessels were aligned. When the submarine was just 50 yards behind the frigate, the CO raised his periscope. Now, finally, he could see the wake of the frigate. It was his first close visual sighting."

He brought the submarine to within six feet (1.8 metres) of the frigate's hull and passed silently along one side.

The O-boat's cameras and hydrophones recorded the images and sounds of the Soviet vessel. Once past the frigate, the CO altered course slightly, slowed down, and allowed the unsuspecting surface vessel to overtake the submarine on the opposite side. Again, the cameras and hydrophones were recording. "If you got it right the first time, it generally took about 30 minutes to complete the manoeuvre," retired Rear-Admiral Peter Clarke tells *The AFR Magazine*, 20 years later. "But it was a very full-on thing. You were driving several thousand tons of submarine to within feet of a vessel that you could not see."

Rear-Admiral Clarke commanded the British O-boat HMS OBERON and the nuclear submarine HMS TIRELESS before transferring to the RAN 10 years ago. A former RAN submarine squadron commander and force element group leader, he adds: "You had to have a three-dimensional picture in your head of what was happening in the water. If you were taking an underwater look at a submarine, you were always concerned that it might dive onto you."

An underwater look was particularly perilous in the warm and turbid water of the South China Sea where visibility is poor. "If we'd raised our periscope, we would have punctured the surface ship's hull," another former O-boat commander recalls. But the risks of collision and death, or of the humiliation of discovery and capture, were worth taking for the intelligence rewards. A successful underwater look would give Western navies complete and accurate knowledge of the defensive and offensive performance capabilities of a potential Soviet adversary. In the event of hostilities, this would be an important combat edge.

What exactly the O-boats did from the end of the 1970s until the early 1990s has been one of the great-untold stories of Australian naval history - until now. A decade after the end of the patrols, and nearly five years after the

last O-boat was replaced by the Australian-built Collins class submarines; the navy is still extremely reluctant to discuss the patrols.

Many former O-boat commanders say their work and achievements are still too sensitive to disclose. But they want their story to be told and acknowledged. One reason their freedom to speak openly is still restricted by security regulations is that the Collins class submarines are now engaged in sensitive intelligence-collection activities. "We don't want to spook the neighbourhood," one knowledgeable political figure says.

But some lips have been loosened by the publication of books on the Cold War activities of the US and British submarine forces 'Blind Man's Bluff: The Untold Story of American Submarine Espionage' by Sherry Sontag and Christopher Drew (Public Affairs, 1998), tells the American story. 'We Come Unseen' by Jim Ring (John Murray, 2001) tell the British story.

Against the background of these publications, some Australian politicians, public servants and submariners have been prepared to give 'The AFR Magazine' a glimpse into the secret and silent Cold War world of the O-boats, albeit usually on condition of anonymity. Quite apart from revealing a remarkable chapter of Australian maritime history for the first time, the story of the O-boat patrols shows just how diligently Australia has, down the decades and under successive governments, pursued the US alliance.

The Australian O-boat patrols were a response to increasing concerns about the expansion of the Soviet Pacific Fleet under Admiral Sergei Gorshkov from the early 1970s. "It was the second biggest fleet after the Northern Fleet based at Murmansk," a former intelligence officer recalls. "By the late 1980s, Cam Ranh Bay on Vietnam's east coast had become a highly significant Soviet base. There were at least 15 surface ships, some submarines, 30 bomber aircraft, a SIGINT [signal intelligence] station, missile-handling facilities and 10,000 Soviet troops," he says.

From Cam Ranh Bay, Soviet ships would go into the Pacific to target the West Coast of the US. And they were only a few days' travel from Australia's vital sea lines of communications. So the US and Australia shared concerns about the strategic implications of the big Soviet presence. Ironically, the Cam Ranh Bay base had been built by the Americans during the Vietnam war, but was leased by Vietnam to the Soviet Union in 1979. (In May last year, Russia agreed to hand it back to Vietnam.)

Australia's secret O-boat patrols started in 1978 and ended in 1992. They were cancelled by the then Defence Minister in the Keating Labour government, Senator Robert Ray, who, according to senior submariners, panicked when told that one of the O-boats had come dangerously close to being detected. "We paid a high price with that cancellation, both in terms of the body of knowledge we were developing, and in terms of maintenance of the capability," says one veteran of the patrols.

There were, in all, 16 patrols during those 14 years, meaning that one O-boat was out collecting intelligence continuously for part of each year. Two of the six O-boats - ORION and OTAMA - were the RAN's designated 'mystery boats' and were specially fitted for intelligence collection. They made most of the patrols, but

OTWAY and OXLEY also made secret patrols. ONSLOW and OVENS were not involved, but were deployed to track Soviet submarines moving into the Arabian Gulf from Vladivostok via the Coral Sea, south of Tasmania, across the Great Australian Bight and past Cape Leeuwin in WA. The Soviet subs took this route in an effort to avoid detection, but ONSLOW and OVENS kept an eye on them.

The men primarily responsible for the patrols were former O-boat CO (OTAMA, ONSLOW and OTWAY) Commander Peter Horobin, (was he the young sprog officer who joined in 1964, TRUMP in the British 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron?) who was deputy director of submarine policy, and the electronics expert James Armstrong, director of Navy Electronic Warfare. Horobin was a quiet and utterly determined Australian?; Armstrong a brilliant English boffin who shocked his colleagues when he announced one day that his uncle was Donald Maclean, the notorious Soviet spy.

It is still not clear exactly why the RAN started the patrols. Some former O-boat commanders believe Australia felt it had to contribute high-quality intelligence to the US and UK to establish the RAN's credentials and credibility at what was then the sharp end of the global Cold War submarine contest. Former intelligence officers say the patrols started at the request of the US. What is certain is that the Australian submarine arm won its spurs in these perilous days of the Cold War.

This was partly because the large US nuclear-powered deep ocean attack submarines were less suited to close-in intelligence-collection patrols in relatively shallow coastal waters. Moreover, the US and British nuclear submarine fleets were fully occupied tracking Soviet submarine activity from their submarine bases on the icy Kola Peninsula in the Barents Sea and at Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka peninsula below the Sea of Okhotsk. US boats were also watching Soviet Pacific Fleet headquarters at Vladivostok on the Sea of Japan.

In the Northern waters, especially in the Arctic region, British 'Oberon' class submarines were conducting electronic surveillance; acoustic signature recording and underwater looks. So it fell to the Australian O-boats to target Cam Ranh Bay and the South China Sea. They also, inevitably, took the opportunity to look over, and listen in to, places of interest en route on the coasts of China and India, which had close defence relations with the Soviet Union. "Conventional submarines are much better than nuclear submarines at littoral surveillance," a political figure familiar with the secret patrols says. "They can get into harbours for a decent look. They can get close to boats and have a useful capacity to listen to their emissions and look at their sonar and propulsion systems. "If they get close to the coast they also have a capacity to hear what else is around. By getting close to a facility or to a city you can identify a considerable amount of what is being emitted. And that is useful for targeting purposes," he says.

The men who drove the O-boats were among the most remarkable Australian seafarers of their generation. Former Commanding Officers remember their training at the famous British 'Perisher' Submarine Command Course and their patrols as the most intensely lived moments of their lives. They included the legendary Commander Bob Woolrych, now an avocado farmer in

Queensland, and retired Rear-Admiral Peter Briggs, who ended a distinguished naval career in charge of the 'Collins' class submarine repair operation. Others remain in sensitive naval and intelligence posts.

The RAN acquired its six O-boats over 10 years from 1967 to replace a British submarine squadron that had operated in Australia since World War II. Built in Scotland, the O-boats were in service for 30 years. With refits and updates, they were the most silent and capable conventional diesel-electric submarines of their time and ideal for coastal intelligence collection. The submerged displacement weight of the O-boats was 2,400 tons; their draft was 5.5 metres. Their maximum speed was 12 knots on the surface and 17.5 knots submerged. Their maximum safe dive depth was 200 metres. Fully armed, the O-boats carried 28 torpedoes that could be fired from six torpedo tubes. They could carry 100,000 gallons of diesel fuel in internal tanks and in numbers three and five of the main ballast tanks. In theory, they could circumnavigate the globe without refuelling.

Designed to accommodate a crew of five officers and 57 ratings, the so-called 'mystery boats' usually went on patrol with more than 70 people on board. In addition to their normal complement, there were always some submarine service trainees and civilian 'spooks' operating specialised intelligence-collection equipment. Among the crew, monitoring communications from shore facilities and vessels at sea, were specialist linguists, fluent in Russian and regional languages, who could warn of any indication that the submarine had been detected. During patrols, perhaps not more than 10 people on board would know the boat's location. A curtain was placed around the chart table to discourage curious crewmembers. Once on patrol, crews quickly adjusted to the crowding and the stink of diesel and sweat; to 'hot-bunking' or sleeping on torpedo racks; to careful water use and to the need for minimal noise.

Initial personal tensions evaporated quickly once patrols were under way, although some COs noted that they tended to resurface as patrols ended and crews neared home. One O-boat had an unpopular executive officer named Trevor. The crew smuggled a budgerigar aboard, named it 'Trevor the Budgie' and trained it to shit on the officer's white shirt.

On top of the crowded, uncomfortable conditions, O-boat crews had to endure occasional food shortages. One crew famously survived for weeks on omelettes, scrambled eggs and Pavlova when it found its supplies reduced to egg powder alone. Another ran out of toilet paper in the first week of a six-week patrol.

More generally, life on the O-boats was lonely and isolated, as well as perilous. There was no communication with families. Personal bad news was withheld from crew members until patrols ended. And there was always the possibility of death at sea, or capture and imprisonment - or execution - as spies. To the dismay of some O-boat veterans, the Australian Government has refused to recognise their service as warlike and denied their request for an active service medal. The issue particularly rankles with Bob Woolrych. "In the event of capture, there were quite specific instructions on what to ask for in order to get better treatment. We thought it an exercise in pissing into the

wind at the time. We would have been thrown to the sharks," he says.

The O-boats were organised in two watches and could be brought to action on either watch. Crews worked six-hour shifts and had four meals per day. Commanding officers, though, tended to survive on only two to two-and-a-half hours' sleep in every 24-hour period on patrol. "You were always prowling," one CO recalls.

The story of the O-boats is a salutary reminder of the seriousness of the long Cold War nuclear standoff that ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The derring-do of underwater looks wasn't the main activity of the O-boats. During their six-week patrols, mostly out of HMAS PLATYPUS, their base in Neutral Bay, Sydney, they spent most of their time submerged in the South China Sea, with antennas raised above the water, conducting electronic surveillance. "Hoovering stuff out of the atmosphere," is how one former commander describes the activity.

Their other task was to record the acoustic signatures of Soviet surface ships and submarines. The O-boat would lie submerged and silent, passive sonar hydrophones switched on, to record the sounds of passing ships and submarines. "We have been able to identify signatures for individual ships. Hulls, air-conditioning, pumps, have characteristic sound signatures," a commander recalls. The recorded sound signatures were fed into the computers of Australian, American and British submarines. This would enable them to identify the vessel and its capabilities in the event of hostilities. Again the combat edge would be important.

Although they operated under rules of engagement that prevented them from trespassing on the territorial waters of littoral states, they were permitted to pursue interesting targets if the CO judged the intelligence pay-off was worth the risk. The strictly enforced rule, however was that the O-boats had to stay on the high seas. As one former Commander says: "There was no need to enter territorial waters and the penalties were too high if you were caught. Most of the navy didn't know what we were doing, and probably only two politicians - the prime minister and the defence minister. You had an obligation to get it right, because if you stuffed up you could bring down a government." The O-boats were certainly not permitted to make pre-emptive torpedo attacks against potential adversaries, but they were permitted to go within six feet (1.8 metres) of vessels for those 'underwater looks'.

With the growth of the Soviet nuclear submarine fleet in the Atlantic theatre in the 1970s, the US navy set itself the task of achieving timely indications and warnings 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Assisted by the smaller British submarine fleet, the US succeeded. A main focus of the British activity was high-quality intelligence collection, including from British Oberon class submarines.

Australian O-boat commanders agree that the Australian program grew out of the British program and from the strong historical and cultural links between the British and Australian submarine services. According to some authorities, however, the patrols may have acquired special urgency following the New Zealand Government decision in 1984 to exclude nuclear-armed American warships, and indeed all nuclear-armed vessels, from NZ

waters. The Americans responded to what they saw as a major crisis in the Western alliance by excluding New Zealand from what was known at the time as the 'Five Eyes' - the intelligence-sharing arrangements between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK and the US. The group was known secretly as 'AUSCANNZUKUS'. It held annual conferences with plenary, working and top-secret sessions.

The US eventually agreed that New Zealand could remain a member of the Five Eyes, but that it could not continue to receive the top-level information. At the time, despite its opposition to the NZ nuclear-ship policy, Australia found itself disadvantaged by regional association with New Zealand. Australian delegates at the 1984 and 1985 conferences, held in Washington and Ottawa, sensed that they too were being excluded from what one authority called "the really sexy stuff".

They were certainly excluded from the top-secret sessions. The result was a more intense Australian effort to regain US favour and full Five Eyes access by producing more and better intelligence information from its O-boat patrols. It was a gambit that worked to Australia's great advantage.

But long before these developments Australia had selected ORION and OTAMA to be its 'mystery boats'. They were given a specialised fit with, among other things, upward-looking cameras, detuned hydrophones to record unfiltered noise, and other sensors. Initially, however, the program did not have strong political or even navy support. "A lot was done by blokes on an 'ad hoc' basis," Rear Admiral Clarke remembers. "The Defence Science and Technology Organisation and the Defence Signals Directorate worked on bits and pieces and so did some navy boffins. It was good stuff, done on a wing and a prayer. They did outstanding work."

Another former CO remembers that ORION, at least, was worked up for its role as a 'mystery boat' before it left the UK for Australia. "The Royal Navy were very good to us," another CO says. "They took out a lot of old gear and we got better cameras." A typical O-boat patrol would last from six to eight weeks from its beginning to its end at HMAS PLATYPUS.

The first eight to 10 days would be a fast surface transit at about 12 knots. Then a surface-dive transit would follow at seven to 10 knots before a so-called 'discreet transit' into the area of operations. During three to three-and-a-half weeks on station - listening, recording, watching - the O-boat remained submerged, with only masts raised, operating in what was called 'ultra-quiet' state.

The vessel might move out to sea from its offshore position at night in order to perform noisy tasks, including discharging wastes and charging batteries. On its return home, the boat's performance would be affected by the drag created by barnacles that grew quickly in the warm South China Sea waters, clinging even to periscope lenses. Some O-boat commanders surfaced and scraped the barnacles at sea before entering port; others preferred to remove them with high-pressure water hoses once they were docked.

Despite the dangers they faced and the extraordinary intelligence they collected, there seems a consensus among former O-boat commanders that their patrols into the Pacific, South China Sea and the Indian Ocean were relatively less intense and less important than the US and

British patrols in the Atlantic, Arctic and northern Pacific regions. "For Washington," a former commander says, "the primary interest was the Atlantic. It was more politically sensitive. Washington and London saw the Atlantic threat as more immediate than the Pacific threat." "I think we were always up against the second 11," says another. Russian technology was never as good as ours. The Russians out of Cam Ranh Bay were not built for the tropics. They relied on petty officers and a crew of conscripts who knew very little. Their operations in the Pacific were at the lower end of the scale. They may have been better in home waters." None of this diminishes in any way the Cold War contribution of the O-boats. Senior figures in the US administration acknowledge the importance of their role and estimate that the Collins class submarines now boost US naval capability in the Pacific by 20 per cent. At the very least, as one O-boat commander puts it, the secret patrols admitted Australia to one of the biggest big games in the Cold War and demonstrated the capacity of the Australian submarine arm at a time of high international tension.

And where are they now? ONSLOW is at Sydney's Darling Harbour; OXLEY is in a park at Holbrook in southern NSW; OVENS is in Fremantle, WA; OTAMA is being prepared for display at Hastings, Victoria; OXLEY's fin is on display at HMAS STIRLING, WA; and ORION will be scrapped.

Mystery boats no longer, the O-boats are now museum attractions, climbed over daily by children and parents who marvel at the equipment and machinery packed into their claustrophobic narrowness. They ask how more than 70 human beings managed to exist for nearly two months at a time inside these cramped and dangerous spaces far below the surface of the sea. The answer is simple: they were brave and balanced men who knew they were doing vital work for their country - 'A test of their mettle.'

"The work was known to very few in government, defence and navy. The missions were conducted as 'war patrols' and the tasks undertaken by these submarines considered ... to be among the most hazardous undertaken by RAN seagoing units for many decades." These words were written by the national president of the Australian Submarine Association, Captain Barry Nobes (Rtd), to the Defence Force Chief General Peter Cosgrove as part of a plea for the Australian Active Service Medal (Special Operations) to be awarded to submariners who served on the secret spy patrols.

Reflecting the submariners' view that they had not been adequately recognised with the award of the Australian Service Medal (with Special Ops clasp), Nobes reminded Cosgrove that the O-boat patrols "were of great importance to the nation in the era of the Cold War." But Cosgrove was unmoved. Whether the AASM or the ASM was the appropriate medal, he replied in August this year, hinged on the definition of 'warlike' and 'non-warlike' operations 'under current regulations'. And the reviewing officers had determined the O-boat service warranted the ASM with special ops clasp because the operations were non-warlike.

Why? "... The nature of these patrols was not warlike," Cosgrove wrote, "because the application of force was not authorised, there was no expectations of casualties, there was no state of declared war, there were no

conventional combat operations against an armed adversary [and] they were not peace-enforcement operations." Cosgrove's ruling offended O-boat drivers who had operated under rules of engagement that allowed hot pursuit of intelligence targets and permitted submarines to move to within feet of surface ships for intelligence-collection purposes. But Cosgrove was adamant, telling the submariners that they could be proud of their ASM with special ops clasp, and concluding: "I regret that I can be of no further assistance to you in the matter."

Some submariners were annoyed by Captain Nobes's subsequent advice to them: "... we should accept this decision with the knowledge that we have done our best to secure a favourable outcome, but the regulations ... are very unlikely to be changed [and] do not permit it. I believe that any further submissions will be futile and possibly counter-productive in other areas, such as health and welfare, where we really do need support. It is unlikely that this will be the last word on the medal issue. Submariners are tough and determined old salts and their claim for the AASM does seem to have been sunk by regulations that define warlike service very narrowly indeed. If the nature of the patrols and the dangers to which they exposed crews were not in the ordinary meaning of the word 'warlike', then it is hard to see just what would qualify.

Certainly to describe such patrols as 'non-warlike' is to play down the hazards and the accomplishments. Service in the O-boats required courage and daring. It was more sustained and more active than much of the military service that now qualifies as active service.

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### Extracts from 'Submarines, Admirals & Navies'

By Lieutenant Commander Colin Mayers

Towards the end of the Great War, not only had the submarine shown a lack of efficiency in her role as a torpedo attacking unit of the Main Battle Fleet, but in her role as an independent operator on the lines of communications, her offensive power had unquestionably dropped to a very low ebb, and many experts who had studied the situation carefully were expressing great doubts whether the underwater vessel could ever again exert the same pressure over the vital trade routes that she had done during the first half of the Great War.

To understand this frame of mind it is necessary to give a brief resume of the principal infirmities to which the submarine was subjected, and which influenced others in forming the opinion that the underwater vessel in future warfare would be relegated to a position of minor importance. It was generally overlooked that during the period of hostilities, the rapid expansion of the materiel, combined with the urgency to train the personnel to man and operate the completed vessels as well as could be managed, had made it practically impossible for any navy to think out carefully how to overcome the many problems connected with submarine tactics or the many design and propulsion shortcomings of these new vessels of war.

When in the opening years of this century submarines were first introduced as real weapons of war and were designed to fire mobile torpedoes, they were supplied

with exactly the same tube equipment as then were fitted to the submerged torpedo tubes of battleships and cruisers; no one thought this arrangement strange; it appeared the obvious thing to do. It had not occurred to a single officer in any of the navies that although it was quite permissible and not of the slightest consequence for a surface ship to discharge a mass of air bubbles into the surrounding waters after a torpedo had been blown out with compressed air, a similar procedure for a submarine would lead, under calm weather conditions, immediately to the betrayal of her position, and be followed by drastic enemy measures to attain her destruction. Not until hostilities were well under way in the World War was it realized what a valuable time had been wasted in the long years of peace through the neglect to study and overcome such a very serious and obvious drawback. The foaming waters, resulting from the masses of escaping air bubbles, resembled a boiling sea round the submarine's position, and it became the source of the gravest anxiety to the submarine Commanding Officer whenever a torpedo was discharged at close range against the enemy. The usual recriminations followed between the Torpedo and the Submarine Schools, each blaming the other for a total lack of foresight or inability to collaborate.

In the German submarines which had been sunk in shallow water off the British coast and had been raised during the period of hostilities, it was discovered that an attempt had been made by the Germans to overcome the danger of these escaping air bubbles through the introduction of a "splash reducer". But although the design was copied it did not operate with thorough reliability, and the problem was never satisfactorily solved in any navy during the war years. The crux of the trouble was due to the fact that a torpedo when driven by a large volume of compressed air through a torpedo tube takes approximately only six-tenths of a second from the moment the firing key is pressed to its complete ejection. In this very short space of time we had to accomplish both the pushing out of the torpedo as well as preventing the compressed air escaping to the outside. Many proposals were examined and put to a practical test, but it was not until about a decade after the ending of the World War that nearly all the important navies had successfully mastered the difficulty of the escaping air bubbles and invisible torpedo discharges became standard practice for all up-to-date submarines.

#### BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP SEA

In addition to the betrayal of the submarine's position to the enemy due to the escaping air bubbles from the torpedo tubes, another very serious difficulty presented itself during the war years in connection with the discharge of a salvo of torpedoes and its effect on the submerged balance or trim, which like that of an airship is a most delicate adjustment. Any upset to this balance makes diving for attack purposes difficult, if not impossible. When a salvo of torpedoes was released, it called for the instantaneous replacement of the discharged weight, with an equivalent amount of seawater. Too little water let in brought the submarine to the surface close to the enemy; too much water taken in sent her down at a steep angle, and in deep water this descent had to be stopped before the submarine reached a crushing depth. Often this hurried blowing of the tanks resulted in too much water leaving the submarine and brought about a

complete upset to the fore-and-aft stability; the boat shot to the surface like a cork and at an awkward angle, before it was possible again to readjust the water weights. This inability to adjust rapidly and automatically the fore-and-aft trim was suspected to be the main cause of several British and German submarines going to their doom during the war. Not until eight years after the ending of hostilities was this serious defect successfully mastered and did it become possible for modern submarines to avoid the devil waiting on the surface and the deep sea waiting underneath.

#### **TORPEDO ANTICS**

Before the war our more experienced Seniors had impressed on the younger generation of Submarine Officers that the fundamental principle to achieve success in submarine attacks was to adhere strictly to Lord Nelson's order given in 1805 to the British Fleet at Trafalgar to "engage the enemy more closely". We were in consequence somewhat surprised when our Senior Submarine Captains returned from the German Coast during the early months of the war and reported that their torpedoes, although correctly aimed and discharged at ranges of about 300 yards and even less had all failed to strike the enemy destroyers or his submarines, and instead the torpedoes had passed under the bottom of their shallow draught opponents. Our natural inclination was to doubt these reports, and we firmly suspected that the real reasons why our Seniors had been missing their targets was due to incorrect aiming, or perhaps overlooking Lord Nelson's advice. However, as the torpedo failures continued, both from the British submarines as well as the German attacks against the British boats, it was decided to investigate why the missiles passed under the keels without hitting. A series of trials disclosed that the torpedoes when fired from submarines, with tubes at 20 to 30 feet below the water, did not pick up their adjusted depth of six to eight feet to hit shallow draught ships until they had covered a horizontal distance of 500 to 600 yards. In other words, the torpedoes took much too long to climb up hill from 30 feet to 8 feet. The gradient was not steep enough. The Submarine Officers blamed the Torpedo School for not informing them how their missiles would "climb uphill", when fired at tactical ranges normally used by submarines in peace exercises. The Torpedo School retaliated that they had no idea that submarines would fire their torpedoes at such extraordinarily short ranges, and that all their experiments in the past had been based on the discharge of torpedoes from the tubes of battleships, cruisers and torpedo boat destroyers, in which it was arranged that the up-gradient should be very gradual to obtain the best results from the torpedo's control mechanism.

After the Torpedo School had overcome the troubles of the individual torpedoes through the introduction of a sharper up-gradient, it was found necessary to undertake another series of investigations to determine why failures

occurred when salvo firing was introduced in submarines and 4 to 6 torpedoes constituted such a salvo. Invariably one or two torpedoes fired from a nest of tubes would never arrive at the finishing line. The torpedoes in the salvo, all with the same theoretical speed and gyro course, but actually with fractionally different speeds and fractionally different gyro courses, would often side-swipe each other, or the propeller of a leading torpedo would bite with its sharply revolving blades into the explosive warhead or air vessel of the torpedo overtaking it from behind, or the torpedoes would rub against the tube fittings as they were discharged from the submarine.

It took some years to investigate these difficulties and to introduce a firing system to obtain the maximum possible efficiency from a large number of torpedoes in a salvo.

These collisions under water between the torpedoes of the salvo often led to their delicate control mechanism being completely thrown out of adjustment, and resulted in these expensive weapons behaving in an extraordinary manner; some would dive to the bottom, sticking in the mud, others jump clear out of the water like huge porpoises, on occasions they have been known to describe a perfect circle and hit the boat from which they were fired.

However, besides all the difficulties connected with the discharge of the torpedoes, there were other matters seriously affecting the conduct of submarine warfare

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#### **SA MIXED REUNION 2012**

An Urgent Message from Dave Barlow

The Mixed Reunion 2012 will take place at the St Johns Hotel Solihull, Solihull B91 1AT Fri 14 Sept – Sun 16 September - the same venue as the 2012 AGM & Reunion with the same costs and conditions. There is ample parking and there will be no charge levied. This has been well advertised out to all SA Members, and all online members have received the information directly. It is the intention to run a bus to the National Arboretum at Alrewas on Saturday Morning subject to there being enough take up and it is only about ½ hour away. The cost will be £8 per person for a 50 seat coach. The plan is to leave after the Laying up of the Colours and return mid-afternoon. If you haven't booked already you need to do so ASAP. The deadline for applications is Saturday 28th July 2012 & I need the full payment by then too. As I had to chase quite a number for payment at the last reunion I am asking that you include the Full payment with your application. Please make your cheques payable to the 'Submariners Association' and send them direct to: Dave Barlow, 84 Holbeck Park Ave, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA13 0SB

Tel: 01229 831196 Email: [dave@davebarlow.plus.com](mailto:dave@davebarlow.plus.com)

SA Members can apply direct by telephone to Dave Barlow, or via email but you must follow up your application with a cheque in the post

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#### **OPERATION FRANKTON** **'Cockleshell Heroes' Memorial**

**From:** Tony Ward

[\[mailto:tonyward@association1664.com\]](mailto:tonyward@association1664.com)

**Sent:** 18 May 2012 17:04

As I'm sure you are aware, the SBS and SBSA commemorate the landing of the ten members of RMBPD on 7 December 1942 in Bordeaux France each year. They were launched by HMS TUNA (CO – Lt Cdr Dick Raikes) and we wondered if there might be any interest in attending the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> December this year. There is a new memorial at Pointe de Grave unveiled in March 2011. This year the Commandant General Royal

Marines, Lord Paddy Ashdown, the British Ambassador and local French school children are partaking. If any of your members are interested, do let me know and I'll send details

Regards, Tony Ward

Support Co-ordinator, SBS Association

Please see message below from Malcolm Cavan for Ferry Concession arrangements for travel to and from the Memorial Ceremonies

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### **BRITTANY FERRIES AND OP FRANKTON CEREMONIES NOV & DEC 2012**

Background

In recent years I have been personally involved with Brittany Ferries, most recently in connection with the Unveiling and Dedication Ceremonies of the Memorial in Le Verdon sur Mer on 31st March 2011. On 30th May Mr Steve Warner, General Manager and I met for a private lunch, in our mutual interests of Rugby Football and Op Frankton Remembrances. The subject of the 70th Anniversary, and the planned events, in Portsmouth in November and in France in December, were discussed.

Brittany Ferries have proposed and pledged a most generous travel concession on the part of Brittany Ferries in recognition of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Operation Frankton, for RN Submariner and RMA Veterans, the Frankton Families and Friends, and Frankton Souvenir members who wish to attend the ceremonies, and travel by Brittany Ferries.

At the Annex I have outlined a simple procedure for making reservations, worked out with and approved by Brittany Ferries, which was based on the 2011 plan, but with some lessons learnt and incorporated.

This generosity above reflects the on-going and enduring support by Brittany Ferries of the Operation Frankton Memorials and Remembrances, to assist those veterans and friends who wish to visit France in November, and how this generosity makes a significant difference to affordability in these cash strapped times.

Please feel free to make known this information within your Associations as it may apply.

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### **BRITTANY FERRIES SUPPORT FOR OP FRANKTON REMEMBRANCE 2012**

The defined terms of this special 75% Discount Concession offer - which applies to members of the RMA, the Submariners Association, the SBS Association, to Frankton Families and Friends and Frankton Souvenir - are:

The offer is open for return travel between the dates of: 29<sup>th</sup> Oct - 9<sup>th</sup> Nov for French visitors to the Nov 4<sup>th</sup> ceremony at Eastney and 2<sup>nd</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 2012 for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Dec ceremonies in France via any Brittany Ferries terminals in France and England.

#### **Making Special Frankton 70th Anniversary Ceremony Concession Reservations:**

Step 1: All reservations, including those from France, are to be made and paid for [in full] at Brittany Ferries UK Passenger Department Tel 0871 244 1400. Once this has been completed one will be given a Reference Number which is needed to proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Telephone or E-Mail Sarah Hall, who is managing the Concession Reservations Programme, provide your details and Reservation Reference Number and quote the Concession Code which is 'Frankton 70' so that the discount can be transacted and buyer refund the discounted 75%.

Sarah's contact details: [sarah.hall@brittanyferries.com](mailto:sarah.hall@brittanyferries.com) Tel No: 0871 24 40 411

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### **Dundee Submarine Memorial**

The Annual Dundee Submarine Memorial Event will take place on Saturday 1st September 2012 at the Dundee Submarine Memorial Site. Please put this date in your Diaries. Further details regarding timings will be advised in due course. All Submariners Association Branches and their Standards are welcome to attend this very prestigious event.

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### **A MATELOT'S FAREWELL TO HIS TOT**

By R W (Sticky) Hartley

You soothed my nerves and warmed my limbs  
and cheered my dismal heart,  
procured my wants, obliged my whims –  
and now it's time to part.  
'Mid endless perils of the deep  
and miseries untold  
you summoned sweet forgetful sleep

cocooned me from the cold.

Ten years ago the 'pound o' leaf'  
that cast its fragrant spell  
about the ship, expired in grief  
and sadness of farewell.  
Though guests may find the pantry bare  
when e're they choose to come  
your hospitality was there:  
a Tot of Pusser's rum.

Two hundred years or more you filled  
the storm tossed sailors need  
now you've been killed by spite distilled  
from jealousy and greed.  
And petty clerks with scrawny necks  
who never saw a wave'  
nor felt the spray nor heaving decks  
consign you to your grave.

Alas! However I protest  
to save myself from hurt,  
they tell me that it's for the best-  
to keep us all alert.  
And so the time has come, old friend'  
to take the final sip.  
Our tears are shed. This is the End.  
Goodbye, and 'Bottoms Up'!"

For those who are 'old and bold' and have long memories – don't forget that the 31st of July 1970 saw the loss of that old tradition – The TOT. On the 31st July this year remember the good times and raise a glass of 'bubbly' and drink to 'Absent Friends'.

#### DEVONPORT AND THE 'TIGER'

Once, in the later 1960's, whilst the 6 inch Cruiser HMS TIGER was berthed alongside in Devonport and, for a change of scenery, a group of ROs decided to visit 'The Camel's Head' which was just a short walk left out of St Leven's Gate.

They knew it was a submariner's pub and that it was a bit lively. In 1978 it was renamed 'The Submarine' but it's long gone now to make way for a new road.

They knew they were in for a bit of banter but when one of the old submariners struck up a friendship with one of the junior 'Sparkers' they were a bit wary. It turned out that the old hand had got round to describing life in a submarine and, in explanation, he got the young 'Sparks' to lie face up on the deck with a pusser's burberry draped over him in such a way to be able to communicate through one sleeve, helpfully held up by the other submariners. There then proceeded a series of orders from the 'Conning Tower' through the sleeve to the young 'Sparks'.

This continued for a few minutes with young 'Sparks' repeating back the orders until several submariners, at a given signal, emptied the dregs of their beer glasses down the sleeve onto the face of young 'Sparks'.

He coughed and spluttered as, soaked in beer, he stood angrily demanding an explanation, Apparently he had forgotten to 'Shut the Conning Tower Hatch'!

(This 'Dit' supplied by Bob Pointer.)

#### A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

##### CREW LISTS

Can repeat my big thank you to all those Members who responded to my request in 'In Depth Nos. 35 & 36' for 'Commissioning Crew' Lists?

Lists are still coming in (over 50 to date) but there must still be a lot more out there!

I am looking for Crew Lists for all Classes of Boats both Diesel and Nuclear. I still need the lists for the 'First Commissions' of the Nuclear's CHURCHILL, TRENCHANT, VIGILANT & ASTUTE and for any subsequent 'Commission' of any Nuclear Boat.

I am also looking for 'Commissioning Crew' lists for any diesel boats of the A, T, S and U Class, O & P Class, EXPLORER & EXCALIBUR and for the 'First (and only) Commission' for the 2400's UNA and UNICORN. Any 'Crew List' for any 'Commission' of any Submarine will be helpful.

'Commissioning Lists' for RAN & RCN Submarines are also needed. Any original copies loaned will be 'copied' and returned.

Thanks again - Barrie Downer

#### SUBMARINE TORPEDO FORK ENQUIRY

The following is a request from the Derbyshire Branch Newsletter. All you UWs and TIs should know straight way! All replies should be forwarded to Nobby Hall!

This picture is of a 'Torpedo Fork'. Each torpedo loaded



into a WW2 submarine had one. The practice was to take this fork off the torpedo as it was being loaded into the tube to be kept as a keepsake, so there are potentially thousands of these things out there in public ownership. This one comes from the 'U' Class British submarine UNBEATEN which was tragically sunk by friendly aircraft whilst in the Bay of Biscay in 1942. On it

you can see the boat's name, the date the 'fish' was fired and the name of the target ship which it hit. If there was no hit, this area of the fork was left blank.

**Question.** Given the sheer bulk of a torpedo's length and girth for the most part, this fork [or clip] was obviously fitted to the rear end of the 'fish' probably on or near the blades of the propeller. Was it? If not, where was it fitted/sited and what was its purpose? Any help will be most appreciated.

#### HMS TALENT HEADS DOWN SOUTH

Borrowed from the Daily Mail

British nuclear submarine sent to Falklands in show of strength as tensions rise ahead of 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of conflict. A fearsome Royal Navy nuclear-powered submarine is on its way to the Falklands as tensions simmer on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Britain's war with Argentina. HMS TALENT, armed with Tomahawk missiles, was despatched in a show of power after Argentina increased friction over the disputed islands with a host of inflammatory stunts. The 'Trafalgar' class 'hunter-killer' vessel arrived in secrecy at a port in South

Africa this week. Simonstown Dock in Cape Town is a strategic staging post for missions to the South Atlantic. Defence sources told the Sun that the submarine was being prepared for a lengthy deployment around the Falklands. It will arrive in time for 14<sup>th</sup> June, the anniversary of the day a British task force ended Argentina's 74-day occupation of the islands 30 years ago. 'Final preparations are being made in South Africa before a deployment to the South Atlantic,' an insider said. 'HMS TALENT will be dropping by the Falklands and keeping watch. 'That's what she is built to do - protect Britain's interests.' The move follows months of antagonism from Argentina, led by Cristina de Fernandez Kirchner, the South American country's first female president since Eva Peron. A source said: 'There's a lot of talk about the Falklands, but there's only one nation in this row with nuclear submarines.' Argentina, which claims sovereignty over the islands calls them Las Malvinas. The MoD declined to comment

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### THE HUNTING SUBMARINE - THE FIGHTING LIFE OF HMS TALLY-HO

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From Mark Trenowden

Hi,

Just a quick note to let you know that I have just re-worked my father's book – 'The Hunting Submarine' and it is now available in electronic format through [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk). The book was well received and has had several incarnations. It was also on the Sandhurst reading list for some time. I still receive emails from Submariners chasing up my father (still alive at 81) and I notice the odd ex TALLY HO-ite amongst your members.

Best regards

Mark Trenowden

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### LETTERS AND E MAILS TO THE EDITOR

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Date: 27/06/2012  
 Name: Andrea  
 Email Address: [siren82@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:siren82@hotmail.co.uk)  
 Comments: Hi I am doing some research into my late grandpa's life serving in the royal navy. I think he would have served in the 50's (possibly mid 50's). His name was Reginald (Reg) Robert Hunt - aka 'Peewee' (or so it says in his hat). I have a couple of photographs of him firstly as a young boy on the HMS Ganges, then a couple of him standing next to the bell aboard the HMS Telemachus with the life ring by his feet. Also another one of him and a few friends. They have hats on but I can't quite make out the sub name but it definitely begins with a U. I know he served in Australia and Singapore in the early to mid 50's but not sure which sub he was on at them times. Oh - he also served on the HMS Seraph as I have a letter he wrote to my gran with that as the response address (unfortunately he didn't date the letter). As far as I know he was a Telegraphist. I would be soooooo pleased if somebody read this who remembers my grandpa and I would love to share my photos. You never know, somebody might be related to one of his friends in my picture. Thanks for reading. Andrea.

Hi it's me again. Further to my message below I have since found out my Grandpa was on the Telemachus in August 1956 in Australia I think as I have found a post marked letter to my Gran on that date. I am currently looking at the Ganges website as this is where my Grandpa trained. In his letter he mentioned a colleague called Larry Holden who had to go into hospital for something but then came back. Is there anyone else who was on the Telemachus in August 1956 on this site? Thanks in Advance. Andrea

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Date: 11<sup>th</sup> Jun 2012  
 Name: Eldreds Auctioneers  
 Email Address: [enquiries@eldreds.net](mailto:enquiries@eldreds.net)  
 Comments: I would like to bring to your attention our auction on 26<sup>th</sup> June in which we will be selling the bell from HMS Conqueror. The bell has been consigned

for sale with an official bill of sale from the bell sale in February 1993 and is estimated at £400-500. Also included in this sale is a South Atlantic Medal. The auction will take place at our auction rooms at 1 Belliver Way, Roborough, Plymouth on Tuesday 26th June, commencing at 11.00am. An illustrated catalogue will be available on our website [www.eldreds.net](http://www.eldreds.net) in the week prior to the auction. For further information please contact:

Eldreds Auctioneers on Tel: 01752 721199

By Editor – What happened at the auction? The answer to this item is at Page 3.

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Date: 11<sup>th</sup> Jun 2012  
 Name: John Francis Austin  
 Email Address: [austinozzie@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:austinozzie@yahoo.co.uk)  
 Comments: Hi! Why was Kate Middleton wearing a S/M badge during the recent Jubilee trials! Has she passed her Part 3?  
By Editor – the answer is in the Chairman's Report on Pages 2 & 3!

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Date: 6<sup>th</sup> Jun, 2012  
 Name: Frank Hawley  
 Email Address: [finlay@hawleyf2s.com](mailto:finlay@hawleyf2s.com)  
 Comments: This may be a tall order for you. My dad was a submariner in WWI and died in 1960 and I have always wanted to confirm this. Name William Hawley. I was in the RNAS 1951 to 1953. NO LFX 9090193  
 By Editor – William Hawley served in Submarines from 29<sup>th</sup> May 1915 to 21<sup>st</sup> Dec 1919 in V2 as a Stoker 1<sup>st</sup> Class and in G10 as a Leading Stoker.

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Date: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012  
 Name: Mr Tim Poole  
 Email Address: [tpoole009@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tpoole009@yahoo.co.uk)  
 Comments: I wonder if you may be able to help me? I am trying to find out as much as I can about a British Submarine lost on the 10th April 1940 - HMS Thistle. My mum's brother (William Ronald Rousell) was one of the crew who died on her, and we are visiting the

area where she was lost (near Stavanger, Norway) in a couple of weeks time and although I have rough coordinates for the site I would like to clarify if there are exact coordinates available. Any other information would also be greatly appreciated. We are planning to lay a wreath over the coordinates where she lies. Any help at all would be very much appreciated

By Editor - The position - of the wreck of HMS THISTLE as quoted in the 'U Boat Net' - is 59° 03'N 05° 11'E

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Date: 18<sup>th</sup> May 2012  
 Name: Sandy (Jock) Stuart  
 Email Address: [sandystuart@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:sandystuart@blueyonder.co.uk)  
 Comments: I will be in Gosport from Sun 24<sup>th</sup> till Wed 27<sup>th</sup> of June then travelling to Guzz till Sun 1<sup>st</sup> July. All part of my 65<sup>th</sup> celebrations will be meeting with a lot of old friends so anybody that knows me and would like to meet please get in touch. I am also arranging a trip to Aboretum in Derby in September on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> till Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> staying at Hallmark Inn. Thanks for the heads up from Nobby of Derby Assoc. There will also be quite a few of the 1<sup>st</sup> Commish lads from RESO at all these events

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Date: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2012  
 Name: Brian Reeve  
 Email Address: [b.reeve929@btinternet.com](mailto:b.reeve929@btinternet.com)  
 Comments: Hi to everyone that remembers me. I am trying to find contact details for ex Coxswain Colin Wain. Colin was Cox'n on HMS Sceptre from 1976 - 1983. We are having a Reunion in August at the Royal Hotel, Crewe the weekend of 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> Aug and the lads would like Colin to be there. Any information will help. Thank You. Brian Reeve

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Date: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012  
 Name: Linda Smith  
 Email Address: [AJBMinibuses@talktalk.net](mailto:AJBMinibuses@talktalk.net)  
 Comments: I wonder if I can ask a general question? Is there a site for World War One Submariners (History of/crews/associated info). I and various members of my family are doing family research, and whilst I don't yet have specific detail wonder if there is anywhere I can enquire...thanks  
 By Editor - Linda has been told that there is no specific site but advised of several possible sources.

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Date: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
 Name: Patricia Harrop  
 Email Address: [trish.harrop@btinternet.com](mailto:trish.harrop@btinternet.com)  
 Comments: Hello! Can anyone give me any information on my dad Percival Edward Adams known as Percy. He was a chief marine engineer in the navy and the last Ship he worked on was the HMS Eagle when it went into dry dock in Liverpool in the 50's. He passed away in 1986 but I would like to be able to tell my child and granddaughter all about their granddad. He came from a large family but there were lots of problems within the family. So have never had any contact with them and was brought up in children's homes in Wallasey Cheshire. I can be contacted on [trish.harrop@btinternet.com](mailto:trish.harrop@btinternet.com)  
 Thanks for reading this

By Editor - Not clear if Percival was a submariner - given the HMS Eagle connection he was possibly General Service - Patricia advised of several possible sources.

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Date: 14<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
 Name: Ron Williamson  
 Email Address: [bungy57@hotmail.com](mailto:bungy57@hotmail.com)  
 Comments: I served on Dreadnought 1976 through 1980 and would like to join the Association.  
 Unfortunately there are no Branches near me (on the Canadian prairies). How do I go about joining? I am a member of the Dreadnought Association. I attended the Dreadnought reunion last year and am coming over again this year for the ships visit in Rosyth. Regards, Ron Williamson.  
 By Editor - query passed on to the DREADNOUGHT Association

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Date: 11<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
 Name: Anthony Barton  
 Email Address: [fountainfarm28@yahoo.com](mailto:fountainfarm28@yahoo.com)  
 Comments: I am searching for one of my best mates in the Andrew from the 1950's.  
 By Editor - a name of your mate would help!

#### **Received at the Barrow Website**

**Question:** On the last page of your latest Barrow Branch News Letter (May Issue) there is a photo of Lord Mountbatten. He is in full uniform and wearing what appears to be a set of 'Dolphins' above the massive amount of medals on his chest. Was he a real submariner and, if so, what boats did he serve on and when, or more likely are these just an honouree set? I would be most interested in your reply.

Kind regards  
 Pitt.k (former naval person)

**Answer** Having just been reading 'Mountbatten' by Phillip Ziegler I see in Chapter 3 - Junior Officer - pages 44 & 45 that - whilst appointed to HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH as a Midshipman during WWI Mountbatten spent two months in Submarine K6 as part of his Midshipman's training. At the end of this time the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hand of K6 - Commissioned Gunner Ernest Frary - reported that 'although at first unimpressed by this tall thin figure who lolled about eating chocolates' that 'at the end of the two months he realised that the newcomer had acquired a full working knowledge of the working of a 'K' Boat' and 'wrote a marvellous essay on the subject'. I expect his Essay was in his Midshipman's Journal and may well be in the Mountbatten papers. Ernest Frary's reminiscences are in the Broadlands Archives at N.100 Apparently Mountbatten then expressed a wish to serve in Submarines but was then sent to a small ship - 'P31' - before returning to HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH. It seems he may have been well qualified to wear Dolphins although his time in boats was quite short.

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From: John Keating  
 Sent: January 14, 2012  
 Comment: G'Day from a hot & sunny WA; I feel that I must respond to the article on 'SUBSMASH; The Mysterious Disappearance of HMS AFFRAY', by Alan Gallop, as I believe that is pure sensationalism, the mention of the shooting onboard HMS/M ASTUTE, just adds to that thought in my

mind; the author Alan Gallop mentions that the AFFRAY Board of Inquiry failed to provide any satisfactory explanation & his statement 'At first glance there was no sign to suggest that anything was wrong', is pure B\*\*\*\*cks!!

Two incidents lead me to believe that things were very much wrong onboard AFFRAY before she sailed; a few years ago I read 'Submariner', by John Coote, a former SM CO who did his Perisher with AFFRAY's CO John Blackburn DSC RN; in his book, on Page 154, Chapter 15 (The Perisher & First Command), Coote mentions that AFFRAY had just come out of an extended time in Dockyard hands & was abruptly ordered to sea (without the benefit of any work-up), straight into the potentially dangerous procedure of snorting by night in a main shipping lane.

Coote also mentions that it was not in Blackburn's nature to question his orders, no matter what misgivings he may have felt (what a pity); Coote also goes onto say that another more Senior SM CO, a Lt. Cdr., on a boat in a similar state of operational unreadiness, flatly refused to sail on the exercise, which led to the untimely end of AFFRAY & her fine company (plus the class of 20 young trainee SM Officers & 4 RM's); apparently they were also planning to conduct a canoe launching exercise, close inshore!! Significantly no disciplinary action was taken against the other SM's CO & he was soon afterwards promoted to Cdr.

Secondly, prior to sailing, on the Friday AFFRAY was the subject of a SM Escape inspection; this was conducted by one of the Escape Coxn's from nearby SETT, in this case by CPO Bill Wyatt; Bill is a near neighbour of mine here in WA & he told me that the SM was a 'shambles', equipment was missing, either not in its correct stowages & in some cases, just strewn around the compartment; he would have been accompanied by the Wrecker & finally handed his report, unsigned, to the First Lieut, explaining the reasons for not signing; this unsigned reported meant that they had failed their Escape Inspection & it would have to be redone, before the SM was allowed to sail.

Bill then said that he went into the Senior Rates mess to have a Tot, probably with the Cox'n who he would have known well; Bill said that the atmosphere in that mess was dreadful, with several of the Senior Rates convinced that AFFRAY was not coming back (their CO had a reputation), on completion Bill returned to SETT, made his report on AFFRAY failing her inspection & then went on normal W/E leave.

Bill was also good mates with CPO Cox'n Gordon Selby DSM BEM, who was to have sailed as the Instructor of the trainee SM Officers, but as is well known Gordon collapsed after arriving onboard AFFRAY before she sailed & he was hospitalised in nearby RNH Haslar. Another CPO Instructor went to sea in his place!! Gordon also retired to Australia & I got to know him as well.

Bill returned from W/E leave to discover that AFFRAY had sailed, he queried with the Senior Instructor/OIC SETT, as to who had redone her Escape Inspection, but never received a satisfactory explanation (he believed that a 1<sup>st</sup> SM Sqn Staff Officer had signed off on this). When AFFRAY's loss became apparent, Bill was sent for by the OIC & was informed that he was going on leave & he was not to discuss AFFRAY with the Press. I don't believe he was called to the Board of Inquiry!!

The members of our branch of the SM's Association - Australia Branch, have discussed the loss of AFFRAY from time to time & most agree that she was probably lost as a result of a battery explosion, as the 'A' class had a lot of accidents with Hydrogen Gas problems & several had suffered from battery explosions. Regards, John Keating, President

From: George Malcolmson  
Sent: January 16, 2012 10:50 PM

Comment: Many thanks for copying me into your e mail re the Affray. In one respect it is timely because I understand that a UK Member of Parliament has recently tabled a question in Parliament about re opening the Affray Board of Enquiry. By some strange coincidence this subject always seems to appear in the public domain around the same time as the publication of Mr Gallop's book "Subsmash". A more cynical person than I might make more of a connection between the two events! I understand that "Subsmash" was recently republished in paperback format hence the recent review/advert in the Submariners Association newsletter. I agree with you that the attempt to connect the recent tragic shooting onboard HMS Astute with the loss of the Affray was a tasteless and cheap stunt.

I was interested to hear that CPO Bill Wyatt had conducted an inspection of "escape equipment" onboard Affray just prior to the boat sailing. Just for the record we are talking about CPO Coxswain William Frederick Wyatt P/JX 161773? Is Bill still alive and living in Western Australia? I am sure I have come across his name before, from memory I think he was one of the group of men who went over to the United States for courses during the period just prior to the opening of the 100 foot SETT in the UK.

I am aware of John Coote's book "Submariner" and his comments (apparently you could always rely on Johnnie Coote for a candid opinion on anything to do with submarines!) It would have been interesting to know who the other Commanding Officer was who refused to sail. For once it appears that Johnnie kept quiet. Your E Mail raises some significant issues about the Affray affair that I have never heard before.

I refer to the statement you credit to Bill Wyatt, that despite having not passed Affray's escape equipment inspection that this was subsequently "signed off" by an unidentified officer from 1<sup>st</sup> Submarine Squadron.

Just to be clear Gordon Selby never went onboard Affray, his grip may have been taken onboard but I remember that he told me that he took ill in the Senior Rates Mess in Blockhouse (Dolphin). I imagine that because of his previous history of surviving submarine accidents and sinking's that the story may have been exaggerated for effect by others to place him onboard the submarine.

The bottom line is that the cause of the loss of Affray remains unknown. I am not sure that even lifting the submarine unlikely as that is, would even help solve the mystery. Submariners of the period only saw what the Royal Navy did after the accident. Procedures were put in place and equipment modified on A class submarines that reinforced the belief that the break of the snort mast was the cause of the accident. The original Board of Enquiry did state that the cause of the loss of the submarine was due to the material failure of the metal of which the snort mast was constructed"

It also stated in conclusion that the ship was in an efficient state mechanically and that those onboard had confidence in her and in the Command. I am not sure if you are aware of the subsequent history surrounding the BOE, but many people were not happy with the findings as they were not supported by clear evidence. You are correct in saying that battery explosions had occurred in A class boats but again all these theories are just that, theories. Having met many of the Affray relatives back in 2001 the continuing public debate only serves to draw attention to a hurt that for some people will never go away.

Regards, George

**Obituaries - Members 'Crossed the Bar' 31st Dec 2011 to 1st Apr 2012**

(\*\* indicates WWII Service)

NAME	RANK/RATE	BRANCH	SM SERVICE	SUBMARINES
Ivor C Charlick	Engine Room Artificer **	Australia	Sep 1941 to Jan 1946	THORN, OSIRIS, SPORTSMAN, TRUMP, NEBOJSA
David F Aylmer	Lieutenant Commander	Australia & Eastern States	1953 to 1969	STURDY (55-56), TELEMACHUS(57-58), SERAPH (58-59), AMBUSH (60-61), TOKEN (62-63), TABARD (64) & PORPOISE (67)
Robin J P Heath	Captain	Bath	Jan 1949 to Jan 1983	AURIGA, AUROCHS, SCORCHER, SELENE, TOTEM, ALDERNEY, ANDREW, SEASCOUT, ALCIDE, ACHERON, RENOWN & SKIPJACK
John E Merrett	Leading Seaman (RP2)	Beds & Herts	1952 to 1959	TALLY-HO, THOROUGH & TIPTOE
Peter H Flower	Leading Stoker Mechanic	Burton on Trent & Nottingham	1949 to 1954	SANGUINE, AURIGA, TALENT, STURDY, TEREDO, SENTINEL & TOKEN
J S 'Jim' Badley	Radio Supervisor	Dolphin & Exeter	Oct 1948 to Nov 1962	TELEMACHUS, THOROUGH, SENESCHAL, SENTINEL, AENEAS, ALARIC, TANIN, RAHAV & TALENT
W 'Bill' Ramsden, DSM	Leading Seaman **	Dolphin	Jan 1942 to Jan 1946	SPLENDID
Ronald F Potts	Engine Room Artificer 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Gosport	1953 to 1968	SCOTSMAN, TACITURN, TOTEM, AMPHION, THERMOPYLAE, RORQUAL & ALLIANCE
Keith Wallington	Chief Petty Officer (TASI)	Gosport	1954 to 1967	ALDERNEY, AMBUSH, ARTFUL, ALCIDE & ASTUTE
D B 'Bryan' Tilley	Chief Petty Officer (UC1)	Gosport	1953 to 1968	TRESPASSER (53), ACHERON (53-54), ARTFUL (54), AURIGA (54-55), AMBUSH(55), ALDERNEY, ARTEMIS (57), TURPIN (57), GRAMPUS (58-61), AURIGA (62-64) & WARSPITE (65-68)
Walter S Bore	Chief Petty Officer WEA	Lincoln	1974 to 1993	COURAGEOUS (74-75), REPULSE (76-79), RESOLUTION (81-85), RENOWN (85-89) & REVENGE (91)
George Graham	Stoker Petty Officer **	Manchester	Aug 1939 to Nov 1945	PORPOISE, P35, UMBRA & VIGOROUS
Edmund J Howes	Able Seaman (LTO) **	Middlesex	1942 to 1946	P555, UNSPARING, UNIVERSAL & U-502
R J Alcorn	LM(E) **	New Zealand	1944 to 1947	OTWAY & SLEUTH
Charles Smith	Stoker Petty Officer **	New Zealand	1934 to 1945	OSIRIS, SWORDFISH, URSULA, TRIAD, THRASHER, STOIC & U-1105
Ralph T Nunn	Telegraphist **	Portsmouth	Mar 1945 to Oct 1945	SAFARI
R 'Bob' Sommerville	Able Seaman (UW3)	Scottish	Dec 1955 to Oct 1960	ANCHORITE & THULE
E J Webb	Able Seaman (UW2)	Sunderland	Jan 1956 to May 1960	TRESPASSER, ARTFUL & TALLY-HO
J K Cook	Leading Stoker **	Welsh	Jan 1941 to Jul 1946	UNRULY, VITALITY & NEBOJSA
D L Davies	LTO (Ex Leading Signalman)	Welsh	Mar 1954 to Jun 1960	ALARIC, SENTINEL, THULE, SLEUTH, AURIGA & AMBUSH
Gordon Shackleton	Leading Stoker Mechanic	West Riding	May 1947 to Mar 1954	TIPTOE, SIRDAR & THOROUGH
John R Parrock	Leading Stoker Mechanic	Dolphin	1950 to 1955	SUBTLE, TALLY HO, ASTUTE, SENESCHAL & ALLIANCE
A 'Andy' Anderson	Chief Engine Room Artificer **	Merseyside	1943 to 1946	STYGIAN, SPARK & SHAKESPEARE

**Obituaries – Other Submariners ‘Crossed the Bar’ 31st Dec 2011 to 30th Jun 2012**

(\*\* indicates WWII Service)

NAME	RANK/RATE	BRANCH	SM SERVICE	SUBMARINES
John Peter Angell, MBE, DSC	Lieutenant Commander **	Submarine Officers Association	1940 to 1946	TORBAY, TRIDENT, H43, SEAWOLF, H34 (CO), SEAROVER (CO), TAKU (CO), U-3041 (CO) & U-1105 (CO)
Russell Cameron	Commander	Submarine Officers Association	Not reported	WARSPITE
John (Ken) Chapman	Petty Officer Mechanician **	Gosport RNA	1935 to 1947	TRIDENT, OSIRIS & THULE
Kenneth Edwards	Charge Chief Weapons Engineering Artificer	Non Member	19** to 1989	RENOWN & REPULSE
Joseph Everton	Chief Petty Officer Coxswain	Non Member	1953 to 1970	TOTEM, UPSTART, AUROCHS, ANCHORITE, TRUMP, TABARD, TIRELESS, ACHERON, OTTER, NARWHAL, TRUNCHEON & ALLIANCE
Sidney Harrison	Cook	Non Member	RN 1962 to 1985	TABARD, OPOSSUM, ONYX, WARSPITE & CONQUEROR
Simon Ponsonby	Lieutenant	Submarine Officers Association	Not reported	WARSPITE
M ‘Mick’ O’Hara	OEM1	Non Member	Late 1960’s	OLYMPUS, OSIRIS & TIPTOE
A A (Al) Reay, MBE	Lieutenant Commander	Submarine Officers Association	Not reported	RESOLUTION
Graham Charles Boulderson Rogers	Commander	Submarine Officers Association	1955 to 19**	SANGUINE, TRENCHANT, TURPIN, TEREDO, TRUNCHEON (CO), REVENGE (Port) (XO) & DREADNOUGHT (CO)
K ‘Keith’ Burns	Leading Medical Assistant	Non Member	Not reported	SPARTAN
John Frater	Ordnance Electrical Mechanic	Non Member	Not reported	WARSPITE & CHURCHILL
K ‘Keith’ Dickenson	Chief Engine Room Artificer	Non Member	Not reported	REVENGE, RENOWN & ‘S’ Class
M Z ‘Zorro’ Whitworth	CPO (WO)	Non Member	Not reported	SPARTAN
Dermot Michael Crean	Surgeon Commodore	Submarine Officers Association	Not reported	REVENGE (S)
Hugh Peltor	Captain	Submarine Officers Association	Not reported	ACHERON (CO) & REVENGE (S) (CO)
M Lawes	CPO Mechanician	Non Member	1963 to 1983	ACHERON, SEALION, ORACLE, RESOLUTION, OLYMPUS, WALRUS & PORPOISE
David Hepworth	Admiral **	Submarine Officers Association	1944 to 1961	TRUCULENT, TRENCHANT, TRESPASSER, XE-12, TIPTOE, TACTICIAN, AMPHION, TUDOR, THOROUGH & TUDOR
Thomas Barrow Dowling	Lieutenant Commander **	Submarine Officers Association	1944 to 1957	H32, VITALITY (44), SCORCHER (45), SCEPTRE, SPIRIT, TELEMCHUS, TIRELESS, SIDON, ANCHORITE, TANTIVY, TALENT, SELENE (CO 51 to 53) & ASTUTE (CO 54 to 57)
Norman Pindar	Able Seaman (UW2)	Non Member	1949 to 1958	ACHERON (49), ARTEMIS (49), SEADEVIL (50), ALCIDE (51), ALDERNEY (51-52), TELEMACHUS (53-54) & (58) & THOROUGH (57)

**New Members joining the Submariners Association 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2011 to 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 2012**

(\*\*\*\* - indicates a Serving Member) (\*\* indicates WWII Service)

NAME	RANK/RATE	BRANCH	SM SERVICE	SUBMARINES
L R Dennett	Chief Petty Officer WEA	Barrow in Furness	1986 to 2010	ORACLE (87-88), UPHOLDER (89-92), TALENT (94-97), TURBULENT (99-01), TURBULENT (03-05) & ASTUTE (06-10)
Ian B Anderson	Chief Radio Supervisor	Barrow in Furness	Jan 1986 to Oct 2007	REVENGE (P) (86-92), VICTORIOUS (P) (92-96), TRAFALGAR (98-00) & ASTUTE (05-07)
A J Bain	WEM (R) 1	Dolphin	Jan 1983 to May 1989	CHURCHILL (83-85) & TRENCHANT (87-89)
J D Williams	Petty Officer ET (WESM)	Dolphin	Feb 1988 to Feb 2010	TALENT (89-92), TRENCHANT (93-96), SCEPTRE (96-98), VANGUARD (98-99), VIGILANT (99-00), SUPERB (00-05) (02-08), VIGILANT (09-10)
R Green	Petty Officer Telegraphist **	Dolphin	Sept 1943 to Jan 1947	P555 (OCT 43-FEB 44), SCYTHIAN (MAY 44-SEP 45) & SLEUTH (JUL 46-JAN 47)
D G Saxby	Lieutenant	Dorset	Oct 1969 to Nov 1985	OTUS (70-71), FINWHALE (75-76), OTUS (76-77) & OSIRIS (82-83)
M H Ridge	Lieutenant Commander	Dorset	1981 to 2012	SCEPTRE (81-88), TRIUMPH (89-94) & TALENT (95-98)
M T Hickie	Lieutenant Commander **	East Kent	1942 to 1963	URSULA (42-43), TRUANT (43-44), TACITURN (44-45), ANCHORITE (47-48), SIRDAR (49-50), AMPHION (52-53) & TALLY HO (54-56)
S J Hussey	Commander	Eastern States	1976 to ****	FINWHALE (76), SEALION (76-79), ONSLAUGHT (80-81), ONYX (82), SEALION (83), SPLENDID (86-87), OPOSSUM (88-90), TRAFALGAR (91-92), UPHOLDER (92-93), RENOWN (94-95), REPULSE (95-96), VENGEANCE (99-00) & RANKIN (03-05)
R E McMinn	Chief Petty Officer	Eastern States	1967 to 1972	RAN SUBMARINES
J D Reid	Lieutenant **	Eastern States	1944 to 1945	UNSPARING (44-45)
P D Hussey	WO2 WE	Hull	May 1985 to Oct 2010	REPULSE (S) (88-94), VENGEANCE (98-02), VENGEANCE (S) (04-06), VANGUARD (P) (06-07) & AMBUSH (07-09)
R Bredin	Steward	Northern Ireland	Feb 1976 to Mar 1979	CACHALOT, CONQUEROR & COURAGEOUS
M McDowell		Northern Ireland	1986 to 1991	CONQUEROR, 'O' BOAT & TIRELESS
Douglas G Littlejohns	Captain	Plymouth	1970 to 1987	AMBUSH (68), ONYX (70-71), OBERON (72-72), SOVEREIGN (73-73), OTTER (73-74), OSIRIS (CO) (75-76), SUPERB (XO) (77-78) & SUPERB (CO) (81-83)
R J Lineker	Commander	Welsh	1974 to 2004	OPOSSUM (74), OLYMPUS (74-76) & REPULSE (84-87)