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EDITORIAL:

This will be the first edition that I will be producing and I have taken this opportunity to produce it in a new format.

There will be other changes too, I will be editing items to ensure that they are current, interesting and to the point.

Peters historical items will continue, but edited down in some cases. The full articles (and others) will be placed in his new home at http://submarinesaustralia.com/history_submarines.htm.

Thanks Peter for a job well done, you have left big shoes to fill. BZ

From the President

A new broom is sweeping through the halls of the Association as Norm takes over from Peter Smith. The Executive supports his plans to improve communications with Branches and Members.

There are still actions outstanding from the AGM last year, the most difficult being Incorporation. It is not as simple as some thought but it will be resolved. We will keep you informed of progress on this and all other outstanding issues.

It is pleasing to see the number of new members that have joined in January. It is important that we continue to grow, numbers count when talking to Government departments.

If you are not a member (or a lapsed one) I ask you to consider joining. We have kept our subscription fees low so that it is not a huge cost, it can cost less than \$10 a year.

I have had several requests for information

Secretary's Report

For my sins I am your acting National Secretary till the next AGM and I look forward to the challenges ahead in the coming months. My main focus will be on improving communications and recruiting. So, if you are not a Member yet, watch out!

It has been a busy month since I took over from Peter Smith and my first job was to validate Member's list with the Branches. My thanks to QLD Secretary Rob Woolrych for his assistance.

It turned out to be a bigger job than anticipated and most of the blame lies with the YOU. Please advise the Association when you change contact details.

Two of the outstanding items from the 2008 AGM have now been actioned.

The first is affiliation with the NAA. The application has been made by John Rana

on our Welfare Fund recently and details of the Fund will be promulgated on the website soon. One important thing to remember, only full members of the Association are eligible for assistance.

As we move into 2009 we have to think of those that we lost last year, the toll grows as we all grow older. It is important that we support those that have lost a partner or friend and our thoughts go out to them all.

It is also important that we support our Members that are ill, the healing powers of friendship can never be underestimated. If you know of a mate that is ill contact him, it will be appreciated.

Finally, I wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year, may it be a good one.

and I have spoken with the NAA President Les Dwyer who said it will be put to council in April.

The second is the introduction of the new Member's Card and you will find more information on them in this edition.

The two major outstanding items from the AGM, Incorporation and Registration of SAA name and logo are underway. This has proved more difficult than originally thought, but we're on to it.

I am always available to discuss your views and suggestions on any matter concerning the Association.

If you receive this by snail mail and have access to a computer please let us know to save effort.

On Eternal Patrol

Peter Warren Vidler

Life Member and former National Treasurer Peter (Rasputin) Warren Vidler died at 2330, Monday, 1 December 2008. Peter developed prostate cancer which unfortunately had spread through his body to the bones of his shoulders and ribs and had started attacking his throat, he passed away quietly at home in his sleep.

Peter joined submarines in 1964 and went to England to undergo his training at HMS Dolphin. On completion of his initial training he joined HMS Porpoise in the latter part of 1964 to undergo his Part Three, he left the boat in 1966.

In 1976 he spent several months in HMS Walrus while waiting to join HMS Otway as commissioning crew later that year. Peter, as plank-owner returned to Australia on Otway's delivery voyage home to HMAS Platypus.

Peter left the boat in 1968 and that same year joined HMAS Oxley, he left the boat and the Navy as a Petty Officer EWRSM in 1970.

Peter joined the Association in May 1989 and with the formation of the New South Wales branch he served on the various committees, later he was elected to the National Executive as Treasurer, a position he maintained until poor health forced him to resign. Peter was made a Life Member at the 2005 AGM.

Peter's great love was for trout fishing, on his retirement from the workforce and the SAA Executive; Peter moved to the town of Finely near the Victorian border to be close to the fishing on the Murray River.

Peter (Pig Pen) Passmore Peter

Peter (Pig Pen) Passmore died in December in Northern New South Wales.

Peter underwent his initial submarine training in 1975; he joined his first boat HMS Odin in December to undergo his Part Three, completing it in May 1976. Later that year he joined HMAS Ovens and stayed with the boat until 1977. Later in 1977, Peter joined HMAS Orion and served in the boat for two years before leaving her in 1979 to spend four years inboard at HMAS Platypus. In 1983, Peter returned to sea in HMAS Onslow where he stayed until 1986, this was to be his last boat. He left the Navy as a POMTP3SM and moved to the Grafton area to live. Peter joined the SAA in October 1995.

John Hughes on Eternal Patrol

John Hughes, ex ABUCSM, passed away in Devonport, Tasmania in November and was buried at East Devonport on Thursday Morning 20th. John was born in 1946. John was a member of the Oxley commissioning crew, and brought the boat home from UK. He went back to Gens where he was posted to Paluma, and from there he paid off and joined the Merchant Navy until a couple of years ago when he retired.

W.E. (Bill) Curtis

It is with sadness that we report the death of esteemed Victorian member Bill Curtis. Bill was born May 1926 and enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1943. He served on board HM Submarines Seraph, Vox, P52, Alatic and Alliance.

He was discharged from the Royal Navy in December 1949 and joined the Royal Australian Navy in September 1950 and was discharged in September 1956. A long and distinguished Navy career was followed by an active participation in the Submarine Association Australia.

Sick Parade

There are many of our mates that have been, or are, suffering from a range of medical problems and I know that the thoughts of the submarine community go out to them and their families during these trying times.

- Mike Cordner is now at home and is staying positive with his battle with cancer.
 - Dave Gladman is recuperating from a total left hip replacement.
 - Pat Cullum has heart and suspected bone marrow problems.
 - Eric Armstrong has cancer and DVT.
 - Jim Redwood is recovering from the effects of a subdural hematoma
 - John 'Fred' Fisher is in St John of God Hospital with PTSD.
-

Buddies of the Month

Name: **CMDR Ian Bray** (aka Donkey)

Partner: Vicki

DOB: 7 June 1958

Served on: HMAS Ovens, HMAS Otway, HMAS Otama, HMAS Onslow, HMAS Dechaineux

Lives at: Narrabundah ACT 2604

Ian's comments: Still serving. I joined boats by complete accident. I was bored in skimmers and my girlfriend at the time dumped me for some pot smoking, uni type. So a three month holiday in the UK at HMS Dolphin seemed just the ticket. I was right!

Are you in Buddies? If not go to the website at <http://www.upperiscope.com.au/buddies.htm>



Name: **ABUCSM Mark Hickey** (aka Little Don)

DOB: 25th Mark 1969

Served on: HMAS Orion, HMAS Otway & HMAS Otama

Mark's comments: What can one say? 1 in 3 duty watch: Shower once a week if your lucky: 6 hours on 6 hours off: Turn to: Dust Bunnies: Scrubbing Out: diesel hangovers: oh yes don't forget SSTG. Yes, what can one say but that I absolutely loved it!! Great Mates, Great Travel, Living out allowance! What more could an 18 yr old from the bush have wanted!!



Welcome Aboard

Wright, Trevor John, partner Gladys. Strathpine QLD. Former POUWSM served in HMS Artful, HMS Oracle, & HMAS Otway.

McLean, John Arthur, partner Dagmar. Cleveland QLD. Former LMEDSM served in HMS Token, HMS Narwhal, HMAS Otway & Ovens.

Baker, Rodney Norman, partner Lyn. St Agnes SA. Former WOETSM served in HMAS Otway, Onslow, Ovens & Oxley.

Briggs, Eric John, partner Rosemary. Albury NSW. Former POREL HMS Resolution, Opportune & Revenge 1966 - 1972

Gibson, Brian Ronald, partner Julie. Bassendean WA. Former UW served in HMAS Orion 1978-79

Mitchell, Christopher Alan, partner Cherie. Canning Bridge WA. Former WO2 CCMEA served in HMS/ms Repulse twice, Splendid, & Sovereign 1973 -1992

Osborne, William Terence, partner Sue. O'Connor ACT. Former ABUCSM served in HMAS Otama, Oxley & Ovens 1980 - 1982

Tanner, Ian Michael, partner Cheryl. St Kilda Victoria. Former CPO COMMS served in HMS Orpheus, Oracle, Walrus, Osiris, Opossum & Unseen 1976 - 1994.

Neyland, Allan, partner Michelle. Balmoral Victoria. Former CPOMTPSM served in HMAS Otway twice, Onslow, Otama & Oxley 1976 - 1984

Martin, Cameron, partner Elaine. Narrabeena NSW. Former POPH served in HMAS Orion, Otama and Ovens 1987 - 1992

It was my first Divisions at Carlingford and, at the conclusion, we were trying to cross Pennant Hills Road. A car full of young hoons pulled up in the middle of the road and the driver started to pay out some insults to the sailors, knowing full well that the sailors would not retaliate. With no response from the sailors, and feeling rather big in front of his brain dead mates, his insults became more personal and the language more colourful.

Out of the crowd stepped the Chief Stoker, Harry Carey, and banged his fist on the roof of the car. The occupants of the vehicle all jumped out of their skin at the noise and, in his booming voice, Harry questioned the driver.



"Hey, shit for brains, does your daddy know you have the car?" He cast a withering look at the passengers in the vehicle as the startled driver tried to stammer out a response. "Or are you just taking this bunch of rock apes back to the zoo?"

In his haste to escape the driver stalled the car. Harry cast his gaze over to us gathered at the side of the road and we remained silent as the driver managed to get the car started and drove away, his mortified passengers staring wide-eyed at the silent throng of sailors. Harry looked around at the gathered crowd, sailors and shoppers alike. "Don't you just hate Sunday drivers?" he asked of no-one in particular and strode off.

Submitted by Garry Coombe

An old retired Tiffie and Coxswain were sunning themselves on a Gold Coast Beach when they started a friendly conversation. "I was able to move here to retire on the Gold Coast after my business burned to the ground," the Tiffie said. "The insurance payment sure came in handy."

The Coxswain replied, "I'm here living from an insurance claim when my factory was flooded out."

The Tiffie pondered for a few seconds and then asked, "How do you start a flood?"

BRANCH NEWS

ACT & Northern NSW Branch

The ACT Branch held its Christmas lunch at Grazings Restaurant Royal Hotel Gundaroo, for those that attended SUBCON 08 the weather was much better.

There was a good turn out of members and a great afternoon was had by all, the meal was a delight and we were well and truly pampered. It was good to see Rod & Pat Peters up from Holbrook.

The President (Andy) hopes that all members of the SAA have had a safe and happy Christmas and still enjoying a good New Year.

The next meeting of the ACT Branch will be held on Monday 02 February 09 at the Canberra Services Club, Manuka commencing at 1700, see you there.

Secretary: Geoff Burns JP

02 48494330 M: 0427 435 314 Email gcburns@clearmail.com.au

New South Wales Branch

Glad to report the Christmas get together at Spec Island was a success, nice warm day with a slight breeze across the Harbour, about 40 members, family and friends turned up for a Chicken and Salad Lunch. Raffles were held and won, money collected for Lunch covered the cost of Lunch and we gained a small return from the Raffles. Peter Smith had the Museum open and held a guided tour for those interested (the Kids & guests enjoyed it immensely).

Once again David the boat driver gave his time to allow us all to get to & from the Island Safely (thanks David) thanks also go to Col & Jenny Ware for helping with the Catering and Wally Whitfield for getting the rolls. Looking forward to our next social day.

Our next meeting is going to be on Sunday 8 February at the City of Sydney RSL, 11:30am. We will be discussing and seeking nominations for the executive for the National AGM. If you have not been to a Meeting for a while, please come and meet some old mates.

From all the SAA NSW Branch we wish you all a very happy, safe and prosperous 2009.

Secretary: Ken Williams

H: 02 80042304 M: 0400 500 604 Email kenwilliams@hotmail.com

Tasmania Branch

Well, another year has come and gone and a new one has arrived with great promise. The weather for the start of the year has been quite warm (for Tassie!) and so a branch BBQ has been planned for Saturday, 7 February at Risdon Book Dam commencing at 11:00. If you would like to come along please RSVP to our Social Co-ordinator, Mike Crellin on 0407 663 649. An electric BBQ in the hut has been booked but please BYO everything else.

Mike has also pencilled in a couple of other functions for later in the year and these are listed in the events Calendar.

Things are fairly quiet at this time of the year as those with young families take the opportunity afforded by the long summer school holidays. David Taylor is getting his land legs back after completing yet another Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race (his 12th race) in his Mumm 36 design yacht, *Pisces*. *Pisces* won the TasPorts Trophy for the first Tasmanian small boat over the line under IRC handicaps – congratulations David.

This year marks what is rumoured to be Kim Pitt's final months in the permanent workforce as he contemplates retirement from his senior position in the Australian Antarctic Division. Kim is looking forward to terrorising the wildlife of Australia in his BRIGHT yellow Landrover. Ian MacDougall is relishing his 'retirement' to the peace and quiet of Tasmania's north west. He and Sonya occasionally make the trek down to the 'big smoke' to check out a different section of the population.

Paul Gregg has been picked up for his brass hat when he gets made up to Commander in January 2010 – congratulations Paul. Paul is currently the Commanding Officer of the the Navy Reserve Diving Team based in Hobart.

The President, Committee and Members of the Tasmanian Branch would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our submarine comrades and their families across the country and abroad a Happy New Year. If you find yourself down in God's Country (Tasmania) this year we'd love to hear from you!

Secretary: David Byrne

H: 036223 5880 M 0438 349 239 Email: dbyrne@exemail.com.au

"The body will grow old but one never has to grow up"

Queensland Branch

Our first meeting of the year was held on the 11 January 2009 at the Coorparoo RSL and was well attended with 35 Members and wives enjoying each others company. Why don't all you Queensland ex-submariners make it a New Year resolution to become supporters, or at least come to a meeting to see the way we conduct business and enjoy ourselves, we are sure that you will want to come again.

The Branch has an interesting Meeting and social programme for 2009 so check the Events Calendar and note these dates in your diary. Try to join us for a bit of simple fun, frivolity and story telling. The possibilities for the Country Meeting are endless so come to the next meeting and give us your suggestions or send them to the Secretary.

SUBMISSIONS TO REVIEW OF CLARKE COMMITTEE FINDINGS

SAA Qld Inc wishes to thank everyone who supported the push to write submission the "The Review Secretariat" with copies to our local MP's regarding our "Active Service" recognition. WE can only hope that your considerable individual efforts will be rewarded. If we at SAA Qld Inc hear of any information coming out of the nation's capital on the subject you will be immediately informed via email and for those interstate using the services of the Website Manager.

The N.A.A. continues their support and the R.S.L. and the A.V.A.D.S.C. have once again indicated that they are right behind us.

FROM THE COMMITTEE

Lastly to all of you, the SAA QLD INC Committee (Barry, Duck Run, Huck, Ian, Paul, Bill & Rob) wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year and we hope you all stay well. Whatever you do, stay safe on the roads, at work and at home.

Secretary: **Rob Woolrych**

Phone: 07 5442 1991 Email robjan_w@launch.net.au

Western Australia Branch

This year will be big one for the SAA in WA with the annual Submarine Conference and Reunion being held mainly in and around Fremantle over the weekend 5-8 June. I am encouraging all past members to renew their membership, and rejoin the happy band of brothers. The Committee is striving to put together a scintillating social program throughout the year and has cut back on the boring standard monthly meetings where reading minutes and letters IN and OUT take up hours of our valuable social time. There will be plenty of opportunity for nostalgia with parades on ANZAC Day, Albany for USN Sub Forces as well as our Memorial Service for Remembrance Day at HMAS Ovens in November. There will also be a mini HMAS Ovens Reunion on the Saturday of the SUBCON. I am making very early enquiries for a Pub to meet at after the ANZAC March and will be very pleased to hear any suggestions from members

Secretary: **Paul Meakin**

Phone: 08 9586 9375 (H) 041 231 4361 Email: pmea8855@bigpond.net.au

Northern Queensland Branch

The next meeting of the North Queensland branch of the SAA will be held over the weekend of 13,14 & 15 February 2009 in Cairns.

Col and Helen Deller have sold their home in Airlie Beach and are presently on the road again.... half their luck. Smokey Dawson from Mackay has finished his radium treatment in Townsville and has his progress confirmed in Brisbane on the 4 February. I am sure a call from any of his mates would brighten his day no end on (07) 49436121.

Secretary: **Garth Schmidt**

Phone 07 4788 0884 Email: schmidts@netspace.net.au

Memories.....

In an email to Brett Hinson an old mate of his, CPOSA Wayne Hannah reminisced; "I remember when you impersonated a ministry of health official in the \$5.95 "all you can eat" fish 'n' chip pub in Woolloomooloo after some staff member walked in with a snake wrapped around his arm and trotted off out the back into the galley.

We had drunk about 20 million stubbies of VB (each). You went up (after we had cleaned up 3 plates of said fish n chips (each) and argued that they were in violation of health standards and could close them down (with a snap of the fingers) JUST LIKE THAT !!

When they said sorry and what could they do to rectify the situation you were awesome and said ... "well we don't intend paying"... for the feed saving us \$5.95 (each). The frikkin stubbies was what you should have asked for cos that cost us frikkin \$50 (each) Ahh, what a great nite!"



"Has anyone seen the roast that was in the galley?"



Arrangements have been made with Get Wines Direct for SAA members to purchase fine wines as and when they wish from the Internet that will provide a 5% return to the Association.

This company is recommended by well know wine quaffer Paul Meakin for over two years with absolute satisfaction.

You order what wines you want when you want and within 4-8 days Australia Post will deliver to your door.

There is a very wide selection of wines and you can either occasionally look up the website when you want to order or you can go on their e-mail out list for twice weekly specials like these:

Dolly's Shack Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc 2008
(Produced By Neil Pike)
Don't Pay \$16.95 - Price: \$7.95
Taylor Ferguson Sparkling Moscato
Don't Pay \$15.95 - Price: \$7.95

Please review the website list and when you place your order be sure to include the CLUB ID number to go onto your order so the SAA can claim the 5%.

The web site is www.getwinesdirect.com and the process of ordering is eazy peazy. But remember to use one of the following codes.

SAA ID Number is 3558
WA ID Number is 9375

SAA Blazer Pocket Badge and Dress Berets

A lot of people have been asking for these, well now they are here.

The Submarine Association Australia logo is hand embroidered in gold bullion. These are high quality and look great.

The pocket badges are on black material and have 4 pins on the back so that they can be removed and used on any jacket.



Visit the Slops Van now at
http://upperiscope.com.au/slops_van.html



One would hardly believe that this man's nickname used to be 'Two Combs' but it's true. New Member of the SAA, Rod Baker, sent the photo with his comments "*Sorry for the quality, but the subject matter is well past his prime. I put the premature hair loss and ageing down to the stress caused by overwork (typical of the POLTO) and carrying the members of the Engineering and Executive departments.*"

Agent Orange

There is a growing body of information that the herbicide Agent Orange was present in the fresh water tanks in Navy ships that were on the gun-line in the Mekon Delta. Although the separators/evaporators and/or water distillers do a very good job of separating the salt and other impurities from the water, it was not taking out the chemicals that was also in the water, hence the sailors were bathing in and ingesting contaminated water. Ed.

The following information was written by Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Rod Bain MBBS FRCA FANZCA JP RAN (Rtd) under the title of "Agent Orange may be associated with an increased risk of prostate cancer."

The herbicide Agent Orange was sprayed by the United States in the former South Vietnam during the Vietnam War from 1962 to 1971, and exposed veterans were found to have an increased risk of developing several types of cancer*. However, studies have shown that there was only a weak association to Agent Orange and the development of prostate cancer specifically.

With Vietnam War veterans now entering their 60s, a new study has looked at the link between Agent Orange and prostate cancer**. The authors measured the relative risk of developing prostate cancer amongst 13,144 Vietnam veterans who were noted as 'exposed' or 'unexposed' to Agent Orange, and were followed between 1998 and 2006.

The study found that twice as many men exposed to Agent Orange had prostate cancer. Exposed men developed the disease at a younger age, and had a more aggressive cancer than those who were not exposed. The results suggest that those exposed to Agent Orange should be classified at high risk of developing prostate cancer, in addition to men with African-American heritage and men with a family history of the disease.

It is known that during childhood development, exposure to toxic chemicals such as vinclozolin (a fungicide) increases the risk of reproductive problems when older. This study is interesting because it shows that normal, healthy men may still be at risk.

Further understanding factors is needed. Agent Orange is just one of many toxic chemicals that men are exposed to over their lifetime that may affect reproductive health. However, the association between Agent Orange and prostate cancer in the study is strong and should serve to inform both clinical practice and future research about the effects of Agent Orange exposure.

* Institute of Medicine (IOM) Veterans and Agent Orange, Update 2000. Washington, DC: National Academy

** Chamie K., deVere White RW, Volpp B, Lee D, Ok J, Ellison LM. Agent Orange exposure, Vietnam War veterans, and the risk of prostate cancer. Cancer; e-pub 29 July 2008

Veterans' Affairs

Operational Service or Peacetime Service.

The following are my own observations and do not reflect the opinion of the editor or any one else. Can Special Operations in HMA Submarines attract Operational Service? To answer this question firstly a little history lesson, followed by the Veterans Entitlements Act.

The Australian Service Medal and its sister medal the Australian Active Service Medal, were both established by Letters Patent on 13 September 1988, published in Gazette S335 and 336 of 2 November 1988

These medals were introduced to recognise participation in relatively minor operations. Clasps were to be issued to indicate the actual theatre of operations in which the recipients were involved.

The Government left open the question of establishing separate medals for service in major conflicts (that is a medal without a clasp, similar to Vietnam Medal of 1968) and then Prime Minister Bob Hawke stated in Parliament in November 1988 that the Government would consider separate medals when appropriate in accordance with established tradition.

The basic difference between the two service medals is that the Australian Service Medal is granted for service in non-warlike situations where as the Australian Active Service Medal, as the name indicates, is awarded for service in warlike operations.

While the medals were only established in late 1988, the Regulations introduced with Letters Patent permitted the Governor-General, on advice of the Minister of Defence, to declare any operation, warlike or non-warlike on or after 14 February 1975 (the date of the new Australian honours system) to be a prescribed operation for the award of these medals

The Governor-General, on the recommendation of the Minister of Defence, also determines the length of service required for a person to qualify for any of these awards.

The two terms used are warlike service and non-warlike service. Under the VEA both forms of service are defined as **Operational Service:** Operational Service: is defined in section 6A-F of the VEA. Operational service is in effect a subset of eligible war service. It has two purposes. It defines the means for basic eligibility for veterans with post WW2 service. It is also a criterion for attracting the generous 'reverse criminal' standard of proof for compensation claims. The standard of proof is relevant in determining the link between a Veterans service injury, disease or death.

Warlike and non warlike service are terms the Australian defence force has used since 1994 to classify service for pay and conditions. In 1997, definitions for warlike and non warlike service were inserted into the VEA effective from 13

May 1997.

Warlike service: under the VEA is defined as service in the ADF of a kind determined by the Minister for Defence to be warlike service. A declaration of warlike service gives access to compensatory payments such as the disability pension. It is also Qualifying service for service pension purposes under the VEA. In 1993, Cabinet agreed that warlike service refers to those military activities where the application of force is authorised to pursue those specific military objectives and there is an expectation of casualties, this involves actual combat against the enemy.

These operations encompass but are not limited to:

- a state of declared war
- conventional combat operations against an armed adversary
- peace enforcement operations that are military operations in support of diplomatic operations between belligerents.

Non warlike service: Is defined under the VEA as service in the ADF of a kind determined by the Minister for defence to be non warlike service. A declaration of non warlike service gives access to compensatory payments such as the disability pension, but is not qualifying service for service pension purposes. Cabinet agreed in 1993 that non warlike service covers those activities short of warlike operations where there is a risk associated with the assigned tasks, and where the application of force is limited to self defence. Casualties could occur but are not expected.

These operations encompass but are not limited to:

Hazardous operations – activities exposing individuals or units to a degree of hazard above and beyond that of normal peacetime duty. These can include mine avoidance and clearance, and weapons inspection and destruction. Also covered are defence force aid to the civil power, service assisted or service protected evacuations, other operations requiring the application of minimum force to protect personnel or property, and similar activities.

Peacekeeping Duties - peacekeeping is an operation involving military personnel, without powers of enforcement, to help restore and maintain peace in an area of conflict with the consent of all parties.

Summary: In the event Special operations in HMA Submarines is determined by the Minister for Defence as Operational Service the benefits are:

Injury disease or death caused during a period of operational Service (warlike or non-warlike) attracts the more lenient standard of proof for claims of compensation.

The award of the AASM (warlike service) is qualifying service for the Service pension.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Peter,

The article about the loss of Unity in the Nov 08 Newsletter is as you say, taken from the book "Beneath the Waves". However, I know that much of this account is as told to the Author by ERA R McCurrach who was not on the Bridge and not closely involved in any of the decision making and so inevitably and unfortunately there are some little inaccuracies, of no great importance.

However, I should like to start with some observations about the start of the war.

(a) Proper life jackets were a thing of the future. We were, however, issued with "Lifebelts" which were rubber tubes which could be tied round the body at chest level and under the arms. They had little tube attached so that the main tube could be inflated by mouth (blowing).

But the tube or life belt was covered in a dark blue sort of denim material! I am amazed that "the powers to be" would choose such a colour! Furthermore, if one blew up the tube, say in the control room before ascending to the bridge, the inflated "lifebelt" make one too bulky to squeeze through the upper conning tower hatch! Without some difficulty.

(b) We were sailing up a swept channel off the NE Coast of England in Home Waters, but were not given an escort. Lone submarines were fair game for trigger happy airmen or indeed our own surface ships

When we were on patrol, "hunting the enemy", we operated under the internationally agreed "Prize Regulations". This involved "visit and Search" of the intended victim (having first stopped him of course) and a merchant ship could not be sunk without making provision for the safety of the crew and passengers, that condition was not considered to be met by just leaving the survivors at sea in the ship's boats!

(d) These restrictions were finally lifted when "sink on sight" zones were established, but it took around 8 months of war to change the rules!

(e) Unity was sunk in April 1940, the 8th month of war. Up until then we had lost 7 British and one Free French submarines, so Unity was the 9th submarine to be sunk, mostly by mines and depth charges.

Unity was sunk largely because, as the then neutral Norwegian ship penetrated the fog and suddenly saw a lone submarine, they had no idea whose side it was on and instinctively turned to ram and sink what might well be a German U-Boat. At the last minute they saw the white ensign and went full speed astern, so when they did hit it was comparatively gentle, but still enough to hole Unity's hull, so that the fore-ends quickly filled with water. Fortunately, Brooks had already ordered Collision Stations and Abandon Ship, etc, so no one was trapped in the fore-ends or tube space.

My captain, Frankie Brooks, had stationed me at the top of the Conning Tower hatch to check each man as he came on to the Bridge and then tell him to go down to the after casing.

Eventually, however, I was able to tell the Captain that I thought everyone was out of the boat except Low and Miller. By this time, of course, there was only Brooks, Trickey (OOW) and me still on the bridge and Unity was about to plunge down. I was then told by the Captain to shut the upper Conning Tower hatch (from above of course) and stand on it to keep it shut until the water pressure took over! This would at least mean that the Control Room and Conning Tower would remain dry and give Low and Miller at least a chance of escape up the Conning Tower.

Then, all of a sudden, the three of us on the Bridge felt the full force of the dive and we were simply sucked down, completely powerless to combat the downward pull, something I hope I will never repeat. The suction eased as Unity hit the bottom at about 13 fathoms and we somehow managed to fight our way towards the surface. Poor Brooks had hit something with his head which was very painful and Trickey and I both experienced painful ear problems, in my case fractured eardrums and a very sore arm.

Meantime, the Norwegian ship had, perforce, gone south with the convoy because, to suddenly try and turn 180 degrees in thick fog in the middle of a convoy is asking for trouble. However it eventually accomplished and the Alte Jarl came back to look for us.

By this time Unity had sunk, and we three from the Bridge were back on the surface and joining the rest of our group, sadly, however two drifted away and were lost.

Then, back came our Norwegian and eventually we were picked up, dried off and generally helped.

However, the Alte Jarl had no wireless (not compulsory in those days) so having picked us up he rejoined the convoy which had anchored. In due course with the start of daylight the fog lifted and we saw a Destroyer not far off, so we called him by light and passed a signal for him to transmit to Blyth (our Base).

So ended a long night and so finally about 0800 we had been landed and boarded a bus that had been sent to collect us. When we actually landed a group of the "great unwashed" booted us! Some twit must have said we were a captured U-Boat crew! After a few well chosen words in English however the group started a ragged cheer!

At the enquiry there was criticism about Unity's speed in the in fog. It was the aged old business of trying to "proceed with dispatch" weighed against Article 16 of the International Regulations for "The Prevention of Collision at Sea"! Anyway, there is no point in flogging a dead horse and the enquiry eventually found simply that there had been "a collision". No blame was attached to anyone and even the missing signal, before we sailed was pursued no further.

When it was over we were sent on "survivors' leave." But the Germans had just invaded Holland and the Dutch submarines had come steaming over to Britain and so, my leave was cancelled almost before it had really started! So, I raced down to Dolphin where I joined the Dutch submarine O-10 as her Liaison Officer, we then shoved off on covering patrols for the famous "Dunkirk evacuation".

Letter (cont.)

One of the most important things in life is to preserve a sense of humour!

With kind regards,

George Hunt



PS Lieut. Trickey was a cheerful South African Reserve Officer from the South African Naval Forces (SANF).

PPS Looking back on it, when Unity's bows hit the bottom (with a bow down angle) in about 80 feet of water and the incredible suction suddenly stopped, we three on the bridge might only have been perhaps 65 or 70 feet below the surface.

Australia's Submarine Rescue System Fails

The navy is investigating new options to rescue stricken submariners from the ocean floor after its submarine rescue system failed to regain its safety certification. This means there is no deep-sea rescue available for submariners in Australia, 13 years after the federal government promised it would develop an effective local rescue system.

Any stricken Collins class submarine would have to wait until a rescue vehicle was brought out from Britain, raising serious doubts about whether it could be deployed in time.

The revelation comes as the navy orders sweeping new emergency procedures to avoid a Kursk-style disaster, following the near-loss of the HMAS *Dechaineux* and its 55 crew.

The failure to establish a deep-sea rescue capability for submarines in Australia comes after a series of disasters that have befallen the navy's submarine rescue vehicle, the *Remora*.

In December 2006, two men were trapped in *Remora* for 12 hours at a depth of 140m off the coast of Perth when a steel cable connecting it to the mother ship snapped.

It took a further four months for the navy to recover the *Remora*, which was sent back to the manufacturer in Canada for an overhaul, which the navy said would take six to eight months. However, 20 months later, the navy admits that it has still not obtained the full certification for the system to be used again. It is now exploring options for a new submarine rescue system.

The vehicle, which can operate in depths of more than 500m, has to be loaded on to a mother ship and transported to the scene of the accident. It is in storage in Henderson, Western Australia, awaiting sea trials before it can achieve full certification.

A key component of the *Remora* – its launch and recovery system – has been unable to gain a safety certificate because of new requirements imposed on the global safety assessor, Det Norske Veritas.

DNV has told the navy it needs to strengthen the structure and include automatic controls on its existing LARS before it will grant a safety certification. However, such alterations will cost many millions of dollars, forcing the navy to consider alternative options for a rescue system. A defence spokesperson said.

Defence claims the air-transportable British rescue capsule is capable of reaching Australia "in an appropriate time frame" but refuses to specify what this is. "The time to mobilise LR5 from the UK will be dependent on the availability of all forms of transport at the time of the incident and the location of the disabled submarine," a spokesperson said. "This system was in-service with the Royal Navy until last month and is a well proven system."

The navy's Collins class submarines carry five days of emergency reserves on top of their regular stores. However, seabed rescues have to be conducted quickly because of the rapid loss of clean air and bitterly cold conditions.

A navy-commissioned report in 2005 found the submarine rescue system suffered from "a significant number of high risks", including "failure of critical equipment during testing and operation, competence or submarine rescue personnel and the integration of submarine emergency procedures."

Planning for Australia's Future Submarine

The Minister for Defence has announced that a major step forward has been taken in the planning for Australia's future submarine. "Submarines provide a vital military capability for Australia. A key Defence election commitment for this Government is focussed on carefully planning for Australia's next generation of submarine," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

"I have recently approved funding of \$4.67 million for a program of studies in support of the acquisition of Australia's future submarines."

The studies will be managed by a Project Office operating under the joint supervision of the Chief, Capability Development Group and the Chief Executive Officer for the Defence Materiel Organisation.

A Project Office of seventeen people is being established to manage the Future Submarine Project, designated SEA 1000.

"Defence will engage industry to assist development of the project acquisition strategy for Government consideration in the second half of 2009. Work on the concept design of the future submarine will commence in 2010, leading to further consideration by Government in 2011," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

The Future Submarine is expected to enter service around 2025 when the Collins class will begin to be withdrawn from service at the end of their planned lives.

Source ASD-Network

Impotence: Nature's way of saying 'No hard feelings...

Biography - Commodore Steve Davies, RAN



Commodore Steve Davies is the Commander, Australian Navy Submarine Group, responsible for delivery of Australia's submarine capability. The majority of his career has been spent in sea-going appointments in the Submarine Force Element Group, including command of the submarines HMAS Collins (1996-1998) and HMAS Dechauenx (2000-2003).

His shore postings have included service in Canberra in Navy Headquarters and as the Director of Sailor's Career Management.

Commodore Davies joined the RAN College in 1981 and was awarded his Bridge Watchkeeping Certificate in the Canadian ship HMCS Qu'Appelle in 1985.

The following year he qualified as a submarine officer.

The next ten years were spent largely at sea in a variety of seaman officer positions in Oberon class submarines. His shore postings were at the Submarine Warfare Systems Centre and Navy Headquarters.

In 1995 Commodore Davies attended the Royal Netherlands Navy Submarine Command Course, and on return to Australia took command of the recently commissioned submarine HMAS Collins.

Highlights of this command were the first torpedo firings from the new class, participation in its first international exercise and its first overseas deployment. He was promoted to Commander after leaving Collins and served as Commander Sea Training – Submarines, managing and conducting workup training at sea for the submarine fleet.

In 2000 he took command of HMAS Dechauenx. The highlights of this command were the submarine's commissioning in early 2001 then its first operational deployment later that year.

In mid 2002 he took up the position of Chief of Staff in the Submarine FEG.

In December 2006 then Captain Davies took command of HMAS Sirling, the Navy's Fleet Base West, and in July 2008 assumed command of the Submarine Force Element Group.

Commodore Davies holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of NSW and a Master of Arts in International Relations from Kings College, London. He is a graduate of the Royal College of Defence Studies, London.

Congratulations on your promotions:

CPOMTSM Johnathon Chapman

POMTSM Simon Howie

ABCIS Anita Lawton (and a happy Birthday for the 20th January)

Free Telstra Directory Assistance!

Tell all your family/ friends/ business acquaintances - in fact tell everybody about this! For anyone contemplating using the Sensis directory service number, 1234, DON'T!

Sensis, as you may or may not know, is a subsidiary of Telstra. The 1234 number is replacing the Telstra 12456 directory assistance number, but this time with outrageous costs attached: 40c to call the number, then 4c A SECOND!

By law, Telstra have to provide a FREE directory assistance number, because they are still majority owned by the government. They choose however not to pass this number on to the public.

What's the free number? 1223

Thumbs down to Telstra for finding a way to 'charge', for a service that is supposed to be provided for free. Of course, feel free to forward this on...

Barrow yard could face submarine logjam

The editor of a popular guide to the UK's naval vessels fears Barrow shipyard could face a nuclear submarines logjam in the future unless the government orders more Astute class submarines now.

Former Royal Navy officer Steve Bush attacks some of the government's defence policies in the preface to his 2009 edition of the 'British Warships and Auxiliaries' guide which lists all Royal Navy ships and submarines in the fleet.

Although a government review had called Britain's fleet of nuclear-powered, hunter killer class subs with their cruise missiles "an extremely potent weapons system with an important role to play in support of a wide range of operations", the fleet was still being cut.

Mr Bush wrote: "Following delays to the Astute class (submarines) and a lack of follow-on orders, the force is due to drop to just eight submarines and may well settle at seven.

"To date, there are only four Astute class on order and despite the government statement that (hunter killer submarine) production would achieve a 'drumbeat' of one submarine every 22 months, their commitment to a replacement Trident submarine programme could place even this in jeopardy."

He added: "With the Astute programme ongoing, one has to ask if the facilities at BAE Systems at Barrow could cope with building two submarine classes simultaneously.

"One thing is sure, more Astute class need to be ordered soon if fleet numbers, and the drumbeat of 22 months, are to be achieved."

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Leveraging Existing Assets in New Submarine Designs

Four OHIO class strategic missile submarines (SSBNs), scheduled for decommissioning, are being converted to launch the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile and to perform Special Operations Force (SOF) operations as SSGNs.

By leveraging existing assets, the SSGN program eliminates the need for a new submarine design, saving taxpayer dollars. The program's success has received high marks from senior US Navy leadership for meeting its deadlines, allowing the converted vessels to support the global war on terror.

Emphasis on indigenous work is hurting India's readiness for war.

As India's vital submarine arm struggles with dangerously low numbers, a top-end submarine has been taken out of the fleet for a repair programme.

The shocking part is that the repair schedule will last 10 years. Such upgrades have previously been done overseas in two years. One could compare this to a submarine being laid comatose, at least in the case of the INS Sindhukirti, a front-line Kilo class attack submarine of the Indian Navy.

It's been in dry dock at Vizag for a refit programme for close to five years now. It seems that Hindustan Shipyards, the government-owned contractor with little experience in submarine upgrades, will take at least another five years before the submarine can be put to water again.

Unavailable to the submarine-starved Navy for 10 of the 30 years of its useful life, the Sindhukirti is as good as a write off.

Four submarines are stuck in such protracted upgrades. Not surprisingly, just nobody is accountable," said our defence correspondent.

Russia took just two years each to upgrade six similar Kilo class submarines for the Indian Navy. The government insists that it is now building national capability with inhouse upgrades.

What this trade-off on time does to India's military readiness is anybody's guess. It took a recent CAG report to blow the lid of the Indian Navy's worst kept secret: that the vital submarine arm faces a crisis of numbers.

The revelations of the report were:

- Only seven of India's 16 submarines are available for combat at any time.
- 10 of these 16 ageing submarines will be due for phase-out by 2012.
- To maintain current numbers, one submarine needs to be inducted every two years but there's been no addition since 2001.
- India's only submarine-making facility in Mumbai was kept idle for 12 years.

Japanese Sub in collision

A Maritime Self-Defense Force submarine that collided with a fishing boat on the 11th January off Kirishima reported

the accident to the Kagoshima Coast Guard Office about one hour and 20 minutes after the incident occurred.

The MSDF set up an accident investigation team Sunday and dispatched investigators to the site. The coast guard office and the investigation team are questioning Cmdr. Yoshito Minemura, 43, captain of the submarine Oyashio, and others about where the submarine and the fishing boat were at the time of the accident and the circumstances surrounding their navigation.

The Oyashio was submerged when it hit the rear of the fishing boat. Paint on the submarine's mast was scraped off and part of the fishing boat's collision fender was damaged.

DHS Home Loans

Michael Gibb (State Secretary for the Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women (Queensland Branch Inc) reports it has come to his attention that Westpac bank which service DHS Home Loans do not have to advise you of any changes to the payments be they a decrease or more specifically an increase.

This could mean that you fall in arrears on your loan. This is hard to detect as your Loan Statement which you receive once or twice a year only shows money paid. You could end up getting a nasty letter from the bank. The way to eradicate this problem is to change to Direct Debit, and the Bank has to notify you of any increase or decrease.

A Stoker and wife were waiting for a bus along with their nine children, also waiting was a blind man.

When the bus arrived there was only room for the wife and the nine kids. The Stoker and blind man decided to walk.

As they walked, the cane of the blind man was annoying the Stoker with the constant clicking on the pavement. He turned to the blind man and said, "If you put a piece of rubber on the end of your stick it wouldn't make so much noise."

The blind man said to the Stoker, "If you had put a rubber on the end of your stick we'd be on the bus now!"

Association Membership Cards

As a result of requests made by the Victorian Branch it was agreed at the 2008 AGM to introduce SAA Membership Cards. It is understood that Members attending reunions etc in the UK needed a card that recognised them as a Member to gain reduced tariffs and other benefits.

A cost effective option has been approved and once a few administrative arrangements completed, will be available for issue.

These will initially be issued to new Members, on renewal and to all that have paid for 25 years. Anyone else wanting one will be required to pay a small admin fee. These cards DO NOT replace Membership Badges which will still be issued.



Events Calendar

The following is a list of Events up until ANZAC Day. A full and detailed list for 2009 events appears at <http://submarinesaustralia.com/events.htm>. Non Members are invited to attend most events, come along and enjoy yourself.

18th January 2009 1200	VIC	General Meeting	Social Meeting. ESU, cnr Walsh Street and Toorak Road. noon. Contact John (Boot) Hatfield for details on 0408 051 085
2nd February 2009 1700	ACT	Annual General Meeting	Venue: Canberra Services Club Manuka . Please make an effort to attend. Contact Geoff Burns for details.
7th February 2009 1100	TAS	Social-BBQ	A BBQ is being held at Risdon Book Dam. An electric BBQ has been booked but please BYO everything else. RSVP to our Social Co-ordinator, Mike Crellin on 0407 663 649.
8th February 2009 1130	NSW	General Meeting	City of Sydney RSL 565 George Street Sydney. Nominations for Executive and Agenda items for Federal AGM.
13-15th February 2009	QLDN	General Meeting & Social	The next meeting will be held in Cairns- venue to be confirmed. For details contact Garth Schmidt on 07 4788 0884
15th February 2009 1200	VIC	21st Annual General Meeting	Venue ESU/Naval Assoc. House, 146W Toorak Road, South Yarra. Contact John (Boot) Hatfield for details on 0408 051 085
15th March 2009	VIC	Social Gathering	Social gathering BBQ at Alan and Lorraine Cooper's place. Contact John (Boot) Hatfield for details on 0408 051 085
19th April 2009	QLD	General Meeting	General Meeting at the Coorparoo RSL. Contact Rob Woolrych 5442 1991 for more information.
19th April 2009 1200	VIC	General Meeting	Social Meeting. ESU, cnr Walsh Street and Toorak Roadnoon. Contact John (Boot) Hatfield for details on 0408 051 085
25th April 2009	ALL	ANZAC Day 2009	If you could let me know what is happening in your area for ANZAC Day and I will post it on our web page. Even if it is just a we will be at pub (insert name) at (insert time) you may bump into someone who lives just around the corner that you have not seen for many years.
25th April 2009	TAS	ANZAC Day 2009	Venue for the after March get together will be the Navy Club. If you would like more information call our Social Co-ordinator, Mike Crellin on 0407 663 649.
25th April 2009	NSW	ANZAC Day 2009	Early starters Combined Services Club Barrack St. Muster 0830 corner George and King Streets. Reunion 1100 in the dining room (up-stairs) at the Stratton Hotel, 247 Castlereagh Street, Sydney. TBC.



SUBCON 2009

&

SAA Annual General Meeting

Will be held in Fremantle on the Queen's Birthday long weekend, commencing

Friday 5th June 2009

The WA Branch would like to invite you to Fremantle and surrounding areas to partake of our hospitality and to visit the many interesting and varied places in our region.

Visit the SUBCON 2009 Website and register
www.submarinesaustralia.com/subcon

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To submit articles for In Depth contact the Secretary

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