



# IN DEPTH

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DISCLAIMER: The opinions or exertions expressed in "In Depth" are those of the authors' and not necessarily those of the Editor, the National and State Committees of SAA or the Royal Australian Navy.

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## **Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Group**

The MRCG is a nation-wide service set up to provide workers compensation services to members and ex-members of the Australian Defence Force, including reservists, declared members, cadets and instructors of cadets who are injured during or develop a disease because of their work. When a person is injured, or develops an illness that can be linked to their service in the ADF, they may be eligible to be compensated for that injury or illness. Compensation is commonly associated with a loss. If, due to the injury or illness, the person actually incurs an expense or loses income, or suffers functional impairment, their employer (the Commonwealth of Australia) may be liable to compensate them for that loss or impairment. MRCG also administers the Transition Management Service (TMS). This service is run on behalf of the Department of Defence to assist potential or actual medically discharging clients with the transition between military and civilian life. This service is provided whether the client has an accepted claim or not.

## **The Legislation Administrated by DVA**

**There are four Acts that provide compensation coverage for current and former members of the ADF. They are the:**

- [Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988](#) (SRCA)
- [Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986](#) (VEA)
- [Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004](#) (MRCA), and
- [Defence Act 1903](#) (DA)

The MRCG within DVA is responsible for administering claims for compensation and rehabilitation under the SRCA, the MRCA and the *Defence Act 1903* for members and former members of the Australian Defence Force. Commonwealth Employees compensation for peacetime service was introduced in 1930 (the 1930Act) This Act was amended in 1949 to recognise ADF personnel as commonwealth employees; however the cause of Injury had to be 100% due to Nature of Service. This Act was further amended in 1971, requiring service made a 1% contribution to the Injury or disease. Mental disorders and back conditions were not compensable under these Acts. The SRCA was enacted 01 December 1988 and is the administrative authority for the 1930 and 1971 Acts. Liability can only be accepted by SRCA for injury or disease under the 1930 or 71 Act if that injury or disease would have been compensable under those Acts. With the introduction of SRCA a whole person injury of at least 10% is required for liability to be accepted. Prior to the 7

April 1994 Injury disease or death caused by Operational Service can only be claimed under the VEA. Post 7 April 1994 Injury Disease or death caused by Operational Service can be claimed under either the VEA or the SRCA up to and including the 30 June 2004.

Basic Benefits for SRCA include:

- Rehabilitation and return to work services
- Weekly payments for loss of wages/income (called Incapacity Payments)
- Lump sum for a permanent impairment & non-economic loss based on a whole person impairment percentage rating
- Medical and associated travel costs, household services and attendant care
- Payment to dependants as a result of a service related death
- Addition payment for severe injury or death under the *Defence Act 1903*.

Basic benefits for MRCA include:

- Rehabilitation and return to work services
- Weekly payments for loss of wages/income (called Incapacity Payments)
- Periodic payment (weekly payment) for a permanent impairment or a lump sum equivalent or in some circumstances a combination of both based on permanent impairment points and loss of lifestyle
- "Special Rate Disability Pension" – where the client meets certain criteria – a tax free fortnightly payment for life with the Gold Card
- White Cards, medical and associated travel costs, household services and attendant care
- Payment to dependants as a result of a service related death.

### **Dual Eligibility VEA and SRCA**

Many current and former members of the ADF will have coverage under both the VEA and SRCA. Those members can claim under both Acts and are then able to choose which benefits they wish to receive under either Act. However, members and former members who have "dual eligibility" cannot be compensated twice for the same injury. To ensure that this doesn't happen, DVA "offsets" benefits from one Act against the benefits of the other Act. For example if a person chooses to receive a lump sum under the SRCA for a permanent impairment, any disability pension entitlement they have under the VEA will be reduced to take into account the value of the lump sum.

The effect of this pension reduction is for life. This does not affect any Incapacity payments (payment for loss of wages) or other benefits.

If a client is injured as a result of service after 1 July 2004, they will be covered under the MRCA only. However, if a client aggravates a condition which they had accepted under the VEA, they can elect to continue coverage under the VEA or they can switch fully to benefits under MRCA

More about benefits and how to get them in the next issue. If you are not sure, ask your Pension Officer, or give me a call. Cheers Max.

### **ECONOMIC PAYMENT VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

The Rudd Government will deliver a \$4.8 billion down payment to Australian's four million veterans' affairs pensioners, other pensioners, carers and seniors. This payment provides them with immediate financial help in the lead up to comprehensive reform of the pension system.

This decisive action is part of the Rudd Government's \$10.4 billion Economic Security Strategy to protect the Australian economy and support veterans, other pensioners and low income families during the global financial crisis.

From the fortnight beginning 8 December 2008, payments will be made to:

- All Service Pensioners, including Partner Service Pensioners;

- All War Widows receiving Income Support Supplement;
- All gold Card holders, including War Widows, receiving Seniors Concession Allowance who are above the veteran pension age;
- All disability Pensioners at 100% or above who are over veteran age;
- All Commonwealth Seniors Health Car (CHSC) holders;
- All age Pensioners;
- All Centrelink Disability Support Pensioners;
- All Centrelink Carer Payment recipients; and
- Other Centrelink clients including wife and widows B pensioners, partner and bereavement allowance, and various income support clients over pension age.

Payments from the Department of Veteran's Affairs will be made on 18 December 2008.

Single pensioners will receive \$1400; whole couples will share \$2100. More than 326,000 veterans' affairs pensioners will receive a total of some \$407 million.

Around 4000 people receiving a benefit from the Veterans' Children Education Scheme will also receive a one-off payment of \$1000.

People who are receiving Carer Allowance will also receive \$1000 for each eligible person they care for.

Payments will be made automatically to all eligible people, will be tax exempt and will not be included for income-testing purposes.

### **Who is not eligible for the payment and why?**

As the payments are directed at older Australians and those on the lowest incomes, **those whose income is above the limit** to receive an income support pension such as the Service Pension, Income Support Supplement, Disability Support Pension or Carer Pension will not receive the payment. People in this situation have annual incomes above \$40,501 as a single or \$67,652 as a couple (not including their DVA disability compensation pension), or they have assets above \$550,000 for a single home owner, \$675,000 for a single non-home owner, \$873,500 for a couple owning a home and \$998,000 for a couple not owning a home.

For similar reason, those over veteran pension age who do not have a Gold Card and whose income is above the limit to receive an income support pension or the CHSC are also excluded. People who have adjusted taxable incomes of less than \$50,000 for singles and \$80,000 for couples are eligible for the CHSC.

Ineligible people include approximately 2,200 TPIs under veteran pension age out of a total of more than 29,000 TPIs. These 2,200 are not included because they have income (above their TPI pension) or assets that exceeds the eligibility limits for income support.

In the same way, out of approximately 107,000 War Widows, 1260 under the veteran pension age of 58.5 are not eligible for payment because their income or assets is above the limit for the Income Support Supplement (\$40,124 pa income, or homeowner assets of \$546,500, or non-home owner assets of \$671,000).

The above information supplied by the AVADSC office via an email from DVA dated 21 October 2008.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Peter,

G'day, I was most interested in the article on the Post War U-Boats, by Nick Hall, especially the loss of *U-Hai* in the North Sea, on 14 Sept 1966.

I was serving on *Osiris* at that time and we were crossing from Denmark, to the Pentland Firth, heading back to Faslane; we had a beam sea the whole way across the North Sea and I don't think anybody got much sleep with the rocking and rolling.

I was always under the impression that *U-Hai* was lost because of a weld failure on her hull, which caused her flooding aft and sinking; however when doing some surfing of the web, I came across this site, which tells a different story. [www.ubootehrenmal.de/en/memorial/plate-essay.htm](http://www.ubootehrenmal.de/en/memorial/plate-essay.htm)

Regards, Buster Keating,  
Rockingham WA 6168

Dear Peter,

I was going through the Weekly Telegraph (obviously) and thought that you might be interested in this obituary for Fraser VC.

Getting stuck under a 10,000 ton Jap' cruiser would not 've been much fun, so him and Mrs. Magennis' little boy definitely earned their VCs. Mind you the poor old Kiwi would've felt a bit out of it wouldn't he? Probably got a MiD or something.

I seem to remember reading in an edition of "In Depth" about Magennis coming alongside various ships' accommodation ladders, the one reserved for senior officers, and throwing the gangway staff 10 left when he tried to challenge him. Blimey it would've been good to see a snotty or OOD doing "the wall of death" around the quarterdeck and tripping over every ringbolt they could find getting their shit together while doing the Funky Chicken!

Pete, I also remember an ex WW2 submariner who used to spin me a ditty about a VC submariner who drafted into "Dolphin" and was offered any of the plumb jobs available, working in the garden or library, whatever. But he insisted on driving the DUSTCART around so every body would have to stand and face it and chop one off as it went by, because of who was driving. I don't think it was Magennis, but can't for the life of me remember the bloke's name.

Sorry I didn't make the AGM, but I can't really plan much being a carer for Mum. Hope for Perth.

All the best, Ian Doig  
Cygnet, Tasmania 7112

Dear Peter

I enclose a copy of the recent obit in the London Daily Telegraph for Ian Fraser in case you may not have seen it.

Part of my war service, in the submarine *Sceptre*, was towing midgets in two European operations. I met Ian Fraser in the course of midget training in Scotland (as I recall – could have been elsewhere!)

Anyway – make use of the enclosed if you wish.

As ever, Brian.

Captain Brian Baynham RN (Rtd)  
Katoomba, NSW 2780.

**Editorial:** As LCDR Ian Fraser VC DSC RNR (Rtd) was the last submariner Victoria Cross holder,

I have included the copy of his obituary which was printed in the London Daily Telegraph early September 2008.

For Ian Doig, the Kiwi officer with Fraser was Sub-Lieutenant William (Kiwi) James Lanyon Smith RNZNVR; he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and was presented the medal by HRH the King at Buckingham Palace on 20 July 1948. The other member of the crew was ERA3 Charles Alfred Reed; he was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal which was presented by HRH the King at Buckingham Palace on 26 February 1946.

Although not mentioned in the obituary, both Fraser and Magennis were presented their Victoria Cross by HRH the King at an investiture at Buckingham Palace on 11 December 1945.

## **OBITUARY**

Lieutenant-Commander Ian Fraser, who died on Monday, 1 September 2008, aged 87, won the Victoria Cross as captain of the midget submarine ***XE3*** in Operation Struggle, a daring attack on the Japanese 10,000-ton heavy cruiser ***Takao*** in the Johore Straits, off Singapore Dockyard, just before the end of the Second World War.

***Takao*** had previously been damaged in action. But it was thought she could be repaired and used as a floating gun-battery to defend the Straits.

Towed by the submarine ***Stygian***, ***XE3*** sailed on July 26 from Labuan, off Borneo. “Tich” Fraser and his crew — Sub-Lieutenant “Kiwi” Smith (RNZNVR), Artificer Charles Reed and the frogman diver Leading Seaman “Mick” Magennis — transferred from ***Stygian*** on July 30 to relieve ***XE3***’s passage crew. That night, at 11 pm, the midget sub slipped its tow at the eastern end of the Singapore Channel.

The party now set off on an intricate and dangerous passage of some 40 miles. They passed shoals and wrecks and crossed minefields to proceed between Singapore Island and the Johore mainland. Had they fallen into Japanese hands they would probably have been executed as spies.

***XE3*** made a steady five knots on the surface and passed the Johore listening posts just after 2am on July 31. At 4.30am Fraser had to dive hurriedly to avoid a tanker and its escort which came looming up out of the dark, and ***XE3*** hit the bottom at 36ft. This damaged the logs which measured speed and distance on which Fraser relied for his dead-reckoning navigation.

In the heat and confinement of the X Craft, conditions were extremely unpleasant. The men kept themselves going by sipping orange juice from the refrigerator before taking Benzedrine tablets at 6am.

Three hours later, Fraser sighted the line of buoys which marked the boom, and, waiting outside, managed to follow a small, unwary trawler through. As ***XE3*** worked her way steadily up the Straits at 40ft, Magennis began to dress in his rubber frogman’s suit, assisted by Fraser. Inside the submarine, the temperature was 85 degrees and the air heavy and sticky.

At 12.50 Fraser saw the shore of Singapore Island to his left, some buildings ahead, and then the target — ***Takao***. “Although she seemed to appear with the suddenness of an apparition,” he recalled, “I had the feeling that I had been staring at her for a long time. She was heavily camouflaged and she lay in the exact position I had plotted on my chart.”

An hour later, when the crew had been submerged for nine hours and had been 19 hours without proper sleep, he began his attack.

*Takao* was anchored with her stern only 100 yards from the Singapore side of the Straits. The depth of water around her was between only 11ft and 17ft, but she lay across a depression in the seabed some 500ft wide. Fraser had somehow to get *XE3* across the shallows and into the hole below *Takao* (though he had told the depot-ship staff that this would be impossible).

The first attack on *Takao*'s bow was too fine. Fraser retired and at 3am he tried again. This time he slid *XE3* neatly under the target. Magennis went out through the "wet and dry compartment" (which could be flooded and pumped to let a diver in or out of the submarine) and began to fix limpet mines to *Takao*'s bottom.

Since the plates were covered in marine growth, he had to chip and clear away for more than half an hour before he could place his six mines properly. But their magnets were unaccountably weak, and the mines kept floating up and away, with Magennis swimming after them.

When Magennis came back to the sub, Fraser's next task was to release the two side-charges, each two tons of Amatol explosive. The port charge dropped away cleanly, but the starboard side stuck. So, too, did *XE3*, underneath *Takao*. Fraser and his crew had a frantic few minutes' manoeuvring before the submarine came free.

Fraser wanted to go out to release the remaining charge, but Magennis insisted that he was the diver and he would go. Armed with a spanner, he climbed out again and in five minutes — the longest five minutes of Fraser's life — he released the charge.

*XE3* returned to Stygian and was taken in tow again, reaching Labuan on August 4. The charges duly detonated and blew a great hole in *Takao*'s bottom. Fraser was dismayed to find there were plans for him to repeat Struggle. He felt he had done enough and more than enough, and was greatly relieved when the end of the war made the operation unnecessary.

On his way back to Britain, Fraser passed through Singapore and was shown over the remains of *Takao*. To his bitter disappointment, he found that there had been only a skeleton crew on board. The Japanese Navy had written her off.

Nevertheless, he and Magennis were both awarded the Victoria Cross.

Ian Edward Fraser was born on December 18 1920, and was taken at a few months old to Kuala Lumpur, where his father was working as a marine engineer. He went to the Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, and then *HMS Conway*, the training ship in the Mersey.

In 1938 he joined the Blue Funnel Line and went to sea as a cadet in Tuscan Star and Sydney Star. After joining the battleship *Royal Oak* as a midshipman, RNR, for what he thought was to be four months' training, he was aboard for the Fleet Review in Weymouth Bay, Dorset, in July 1939.

When war broke out, Fraser served in the destroyer *Keith*. He was in the destroyer *Montrose* at Dunkirk, and in another destroyer, *Malcolm*, when she and other escorts sank *U-651* in the Atlantic on June 29 1941.

Then — "for no valid reason which I can now recall" — he volunteered for submarines. He served in *P35* and *H43* before joining *Sahib* in the "Fighting Tenth" submarine squadron in the Mediterranean.

He won a DSC in April 1943 after *Sahib*, west of Corsica on January 21 1943, sank *U-301* as well as several Axis supply ships. At a post-patrol party aboard a depot ship, somebody threw a heavy brass

ashtray which broke a bone in Fraser's foot. As a result he was not on *Sahib*'s next patrol, in which the submarine was lost and all but one of its crew became PoWs.

Fraser was appointed first lieutenant of the old submarine *H44* which, after refitting at Sheerness, went to Londonderry, where escort commanders on the surface practised trying to find him. This led to his volunteering for X Craft. He trained in *X20* in Loch Cairnbawn before, in November 1944, taking command of *XE3* — unofficially named “Sigyn”, after the ever-loving wife of Loki in Norse mythology. It adopted the motto “Softly, softly, catchee monkey”.

In 1945 he was appointed an Officer of the US Legion of Merit, and the borough of Wallasey raised more than £300 by public subscription for Fraser and presented him with a Sword of Honour.

It had been Fraser's ambition to transfer to the regular Royal Navy after the war, but it became clear that he was not going to be offered a permanent commission and, in 1946, he withdrew his application. He was discharged the following year.

The VC had changed Fraser's life, and he used it intelligently and resourcefully to give himself as good a start as possible in his new civilian career. With other ex-frogmen and service colleagues he formed his own company, Universal Divers, and became its managing director and later chairman.

To finance the company, Fraser organised a troupe of frogmen, who went through their underwater paces, re-enacting their wartime experiences in X Craft in a 20,000-gallon glass-sided tank at such venues as Belle Vue, Manchester, and the Shakespeare Theatre, Liverpool.

The act unashamedly traded on Fraser's VC, and was fiercely criticised as “commercialising” the award. But while upset by the disapproval, he remained unabashed, and continued with his performances.

With Universal Divers and North Sea Diving Services, which he formed in 1965, he expanded into the field of exploration and maintenance of North Sea oil and gas rigs. After selling out to the Blue Star Line in 1975 he served with Star Off-shore Services until 1982.

Fraser remained in the RNR rank until he retired as a lieutenant- commander in 1966. He was awarded the Reserve Decoration with Long Service Bar, became a JP and vice-president of the Merseyside Branch of the Submarine Old Comrades' Association.

In addition he was a Younger Brother of Trinity House and, since 2002, had been United Kingdom vice-chairman of the VC/GC Association. His memoirs, *Frogman VC*, were published in 1957.

Ian Fraser married, in 1943, his childhood sweetheart, Melba Hughes, who was serving as a Wren at Pwllheli on the north Wales coast when they met. They had four sons and two daughters, one of whom recently predeceased him.

**ACT & SR BRANCH Secretary Geoff BURNS JP 02 48494330 M 0427 435 314**  
[gcburns@clearmail.com.au](mailto:gcburns@clearmail.com.au)

As this is the last “In Depth” for 2008, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the committee and members of the ACT Branch, to offer to all SAA members, whether in Australia or overseas our best wishes for the upcoming festive season. We hope that you all have a safe and prosperous Christmas and New Year with your families and friends and look forward to catching up with you in 2009.

After an extremely hectic and somewhat stressful first six months climaxing with SUBCON 2008 we

have all learnt how to relax a little and enjoy the rewards of putting on a successful conference. To the boys and girls in the WA, who have now to go through the process for 2009 we are positive you will do a tremendous job and we are certainly looking forward to June 2009 in Fremantle.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to those of my committee who for numerous reasons could not continue as members of the committee. Thank you for your support and help over the last twelve months. To our new members, thank you for volunteering your time so that there is a smooth transition and I hope you will not only get something out of the experience for yourselves but also provide us with new ideas and direction. Although it goes without saying, I would like to pay tribute to the old hands who I regard as the glue of the branch without who things could easily fall apart

Following a successful AGM in August the new committee is as follows;

President        Andy Galley  
Vice Pres        Mick Wood  
Secretary        Geoff Burns  
Treasurer        Peter Knights  
Welfare         Mick Carew  
Committee       Alan Harris  
Committee       Kevin Piechowski  
Committee       Rod Peters  
Your shipmate in boats  
Andy (Blue) Galley

**NSW BRANCH Secretary Ken WILLIAMS H 02-80042304 M 0400500604 email [kenwilliams@hotmail.com](mailto:kenwilliams@hotmail.com)**

The NSW Christmas Party has been proposed as a chicken and salads meal at Spectacle Island on Sunday, 7 December 2008. The first boat will leave at 1030 from the wharf on the west side under the Iron Cove Bridge there will be several boat trips to the island, the last at 1200. The Submarine Collection in Building 37 will be open to be viewed. There are several restrictions imposed, all children are to be supervised and watched. There are two areas that are **totally out of bounds**, they being the hill on the southwest end of the island behind the barbecue area and the grounds around the two story house on the northeast end of the island as this is the Commanding Officer's residence and he will be in residence during our time on the island. For catering purposes please contact the Secretary at the phone numbers above or the email or [ken@ballet-dancer.net](mailto:ken@ballet-dancer.net) to give the numbers in your group attending. Costs are \$10 per adult and \$5 for older children and teenagers. Please BYO thirst quenchers, nibblies, hats and sun blocks. A hot water urn will be supplied for those who wish to partake of tea or coffee.

Our next general meeting is scheduled for Sunday 8 February 2009.

We are in the process of searching for a new venue to hold our meetings. At this stage the Feb meeting is scheduled for the same old place but we are working on it.

Our entertainment committee is going to front at the Feb meeting with ideas for gatherings, etc over the next twelve months.

Proposed events in 2009. Venues and dates to be confirmed.

Meeting February

ANZAC Day 25 April (Wed)

Meeting May

SUBCON June in WA

AGM July  
Meeting September  
Meeting November

Merry Christmas to everyone from the executive and members of the NSW State Branch.

**NQSAA BRANCH Secretary Garth SCHMIDT 07 47 880 884 Mobile 0417 747 246 email [susanschmidt@optusnet.com.au](mailto:susanschmidt@optusnet.com.au)**

From the President, Committee and Members of the North Queensland Branch of the SAA, we wish all our brothers across Australia and the world a Very Merry Christmas and a bright and healthy New Year.

With many of our numbers crossing the bar this last year, it is a time for reflection on just what our organisation means to us and the support we need to give our submarine community.

To all those who are hospitalised and fighting health problems, we especially think of you at Christmas.

We as a branch hold our last meeting for the year over the weekend of 8,9 November in Emerald. I sincerely hope we get a good rollup, so we can share some time together, before family commitments distract us over the festive season.

Danny and Shirley Carroll recently spent six weeks jollyng through Africa, visiting such places as S.A. Zambia, Botswana and Egypt. Danny reckons that he needed some time in a familiar location, so spent five days recuperating in Singas to top off the trip.

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**QUEENSLAND BRANCH Secretary Rob H. WOOLRYCH MBE H 07-54421991 email [robjan\\_w@launch.net.au](mailto:robjan_w@launch.net.au)**

As is usual the first plug is for our next Meeting to be held as follows:-

**Venue** Coorparoo RSL, 45 Holdsworth St, COORPAROO

**Where** In the Galaxy Room

**When** 1100 on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2009

To all you non Members of SAA Qld Inc why not make it your New Year's resolution to attend at least one meeting in 2009. With this being your first you may enjoy it and make a habit of coming to join us for some serious discussion and a bit of fun listening to tall stories

**SOCIAL PROGRAMME**

As we have done in the past we are trying to consolidate a Social Programme for up to a year ahead. Queensland is a big State and we know the planning you all put in to travel to our social activities. Below are the results of our "Crystal Ball" planning:-

29 November 2008 BYO Picnic combined with Boat Cruise on Pumicestone Passage, Caloundra (Christmas get together)

11 January 2009 General Meeting (Coorparoo RSL)

24/25 April 2009 General Meeting (Coorparoo RSL) combined with ANZAC Day March Brisbane

01/02 August 2009 Dinner Dance Kedron Wavell RSL plus the AGM on the Sunday

Mid October SAA Qld Inc country Meeting Venues discussed Gladstone/Longreach/Bundaberg etc

Nov/Dec 2009 Christmas get together

**NOTE THESE DATES IN YOUR DIARY FOR NEXT YEAR**

**Stanthorpe Meeting**

The run to Stanthorpe for our "Annual Out of Brisbane Meeting" was a huge success. We combined the gathering with a Wine Tour on the Saturday. We achieved the aim with everyone having a very happy and memorable weekend. Just under 35 at the Meeting with 60 on the Tour which was an excellent turnout.

Our special thanks to those from the Northern Rivers, Grafton and Tenterfield who joined us plus one pair from New Guinea another from Roma and John and Ailsa Head from Bundaberg.

It suffices to say that the Meeting away from "The Big Smoke" will continue and suggestions have been made of Gladstone, Longreach etc. Venue to be decided at the next meeting and we would welcome any suggestions.

The Committee wishes to thank all of you for your support and welcome to our new members.

NEXT MEETING

**When & Where** Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2009 at the Coorparoo RSL, **Time** 1100 in the Galaxy Room

**FINALLY**

To all the SAA outside Queensland and to all the Members of SAA Qld Inc, from President Barry McKeown and the Qld Inc Committee

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS** and to everyone stay safe and well in 2009 and may the New Year be a good year for you all

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**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH Secretary Allen FRANCIS Home # 08 82480643  
Mobile # 0402078959 email [dbfconsa@bigpond.com](mailto:dbfconsa@bigpond.com)**

Things have been extremely quiet down here south of the border in regards to SA Branch business, meetings, both exec and biannual and general get together. Our last function was a luncheon at the Mt Osmond golf club which attracted about 20 people, members/partners/family inclusive. Need I say it, same ol' same ol'. A very enjoyable afternoon had by all in attendance.

A meeting was planned for a wash-up on SUBCON 2008 by members in attendance and outcomes of the AGM but unfortunately this did not occur. (Secretary's fault, out golfin' again)

It's also taken me longer than anticipated to get back into tampering with technology and tapping the keyboards again which has been the reason there has been no inclusion into previous issues. Apologise for the tardiness, but really there hasn't been a great deal to report on.

The Branch's next planned event is the XMAS BBQ to be held on Sunday, 14th December 2008 at the usual spot (hopefully) in Bonython Park (look for the banner) 12:00 for 12:30 start. Slip slop slap and byo chairs and bar B stuff. Byo drinks soft/hard just in case. Haven't persuaded Uncle Scrooge (our worthy Treasurer) to come good with the coffers for a few liquid refreshments as yet. The President informs me he's going to lean on him which could be good for us and possibly bad for him.

Finally on a serious note, on behalf of the President, Executive and members of the SA branch I would like to take this opportunity in wishing all members and their families and the Submarine fraternity on the whole a very Merry Christmas.

**TASMANIA BRANCH Secretary David BYRNE (03) 6223 5880 M 0438 349 239 Email: [dbyrne@exemail.com.au](mailto:dbyrne@exemail.com.au)**

Although not yet over, 2008 has been a good year for the Association in Tasmania. We gained four new members during the year (Tony Vine, Steve Taylor, Peter Reid and Iain Burns) and thankfully lost none.

Some years ago the Tasmanian membership decided that it preferred to operate in a less formal manner than it used to. Regular meetings that involved formality and minute-taking gave way to a greater number of social gatherings that included partners and family. Formal meetings do still occur at the AGM and 'as required' but the emphasis is very much about having a great time in a social atmosphere. We are a small but happy bunch who enjoys each other's company over a beer and bite to eat – just the way life should be!

We regularly gather for restaurant nights, weekends away, Sunday lunch and the occasional barbecue (when the Tasmanian weather permits). Our social co-ordinator, Mike Crellin, is preparing a busy social calendar for next year which should be hitting your mailboxes shortly.

In wrapping up the year the Tasmanian membership would like to thank our National Secretary, Peter Smith and webmaster, Norm Williams for their efforts in publishing 'In Depth' in print and online. We would also like to thank all those members who work behind the scenes to keep the Association going and who organise SUBCON each year.

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 all the very best wishes for a safe, prosperous and Happy New Year in 2009. If you find yourself down in God's Country (Tasmania) this year we'd love to hear from you!

**VICTORIAN BRANCH Secretary Keith 'Boot' HATFIELD M 0408051085 email [kshatfield@bigpond.com](mailto:kshatfield@bigpond.com)**

Victoria runs down to Christmas with our 21st Anniversary on November 16 at the ESU. Following this we have our Christmas Dinner, again, at the ESU, corner Walsh Street and Toorak Road, South Yarra on December 7, both commencing from 12 noon onward. All members are warmly invited to attend any one of our functions. We more than look forward to seeing you at our meetings, especially at this time of year. As time ticks on, friendships become more dear and even more so at this special time.

Wishing all our friends a warm, loving and happy Christmas.

A Happy and Cheerful Christmas to you all from the President, Committee and members of the Victoria Branch.

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**WESTERN AUSTRALIA BRANCH Secretary Paul Meakin Email: [pmea8855@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pmea8855@bigpond.net.au)**

A reminder that the SAA WA Branch will hold its Remembrance Day Service alongside the Submarine Ovens in Fremantle on **Sunday, 9th November**, commencing at 1030. After service refreshments will be at the BAR ORIENT in High Street Fremantle where attendees may enjoy a cool drink and order lunch as desired.

In the absence of any other proposals from Members the Committee has decided to celebrate Christmas with Lunch at the Swan Yacht Club on 30 November 2008. Members will benefit from Funds subsidising wine or beer at the tables. If you are planning to attend please let me know so we can make firm arrangements with the Club. Wives and children of course are most welcome; this will be a social gathering only no formalities."

### **MEDALS – LOST, STOLEN OR DAMAGED**

If you have lost your medals, or they have been stolen or damaged, the Department of Defence may be able to reissue the medals. Once two months has elapsed after the date of loss, you can apply to have your medals replace. However, replacements cannot be issued if the medals have been sold or given away.

Please note that replacement medals can only be issued to the Australian Defence Force member or former member who earned the medals. Family members cannot receive replacement medals.

To apply to have your medals replaced, you will need to certify that you have not received any

compensation for the loss, and that no compensation will be claimed. The application form contains a Statutory Declaration for you to give details about how, when and where the loss or damage occurred.

The Application for Issue of Replacement Medals form is available from [www.defence.gov.au/medals](http://www.defence.gov.au/medals) or by telephoning 1800 111 321.

### THE LOSS OF HMS UNITY

In the last issue of "In Depth" Captain George Hunt, in his correspondence to the Editor mentioned that he was a survivor of the sinking of submarine *HMS Unity* in 1940. His comment got my interest going, so I did some research on her loss. The following is from the book "Beneath the Waves – A History of HM Submarine Losses 1904 – 1971" by A. S. Evans, ISBN 0-7183-0601-5. This story deals only with the loss and the subsequent inquiry, other than what is mentioned, Captain Hunt's involvement and his escape with burst eardrums is his own personal story. Ed.

"Day after day, by sea and by air, the German build up of men and material in Norway continued unabated. To help Norway in her struggle against the Nazi war machine, Allied troops had by 15 April made landings in northern Norway. With British and Norwegians fighting side by side, it was ironic that it should have been a Norwegian freighter that sunk HM Submarine *Unity* in a collision which claimed the lives of four submariners.

"At 1730 on the evening of Monday, 29 April, *Unity* (Lieutenant F.J. Brooks) put to sea from Blyth. Visibility on leaving harbour was 300 yards. By the time *Unity* entered the main swept channel, which she did at 1830; visibility had reduced to a hundred yards owing to a heavy mist closing in further. At 1900, Lieutenant G. E. Hunt made an appearance on the bridge to relieve the officer on watch, Lieutenant J.F. Trickey; however, as the OOW was hoping to sight a war channel buoy, Hunt did not take over the watch at once but assisted as a lookout in the search for the buoy.

"Earlier that day the Norwegian freighter *Atle Jarl* had sailed from the Scottish port of Methil, which lies snugly on the north shore of the Firth of Fourth, with a cargo of coal and coke. In convoy the *Atle Jarl* headed south for the Tyne and for her chance encounter with *Unity*.

"At the time Lieutenant Hunt arrived on *Unity*'s bridge to take over the watch, the submarine and *Atle Jarl* (sixth ship of the convoy) were close proximity to each other, though neither vessel was aware of this as darkness and the fog had successfully shielded all movement. At 1907 a prolonged blast of a ship's siren was heard on *Unity*'s bridge. Ordering a long blast in reply, Lieutenant Brooks put the wheel hard to starboard. The submarine was still swinging to starboard when the blast of another siren was heard fine on the starboard bow. On hearing this second siren, Brooks ordered the wheel midships and the engines to full speed astern. Leading Telegraphist Peter Birnie immediately operated the bridge telegraph to FULL SPEED ASTERN, hearing at the same time Lieutenant Brooks order the watertight doors to be shut. At that moment the *Atle Jarl*, steering a course that would take her into collision with *Unity*, was sighted less than 50 yards away as she emerged from the fog. *Unity* sounded three blasts on her siren, to which the Norwegian replied likewise. It was apparent to Brooks that a collision was likely. Realising the danger Brooks gave the order: "Collision stations. Prepare to Abandon Ship." At 1910 the *Atle Jarl* struck the submarine at a speed of 4 knots and at an angle of 90 degrees, in the vicinity of the port forward hydroplane. From reports it appears that the force of the collision was not heavy. *Unity*, going astern at 2 knots, listed very little on impact. When the two vessels drew apart it was evident to Brooks that *Unity* was not about to remain on the surface for long. The engines had been left working at full astern for as long as possible to assist *Unity* in staying afloat, but as the *Atle Jarl* vanished into the fog Brooks ordered them stopped.

"Leading Seaman William Hill, on duty in *Unity*'s engine room, states: "We were going astern for some time when I observed that Able Seaman Hare was attempting to shut the engine room bulkhead

door. By motions to him and the engine room staff this was prevented till both engines were stopped. It was then carried out. We were still going astern when the first lieutenant opened the door and gave orders to abandon ship. Both of us, myself and Able Seaman Miller, made to move forward to obey that order. Miller had preceded me slightly when I received the order: "Stop starboard." I went back and stopped starboard. Then I picked up two lifebelts and, throwing one lifebelt to Miller, left the boat."

"Chief ERA Alfred Potter was in his mess when he felt the motors go full astern. He went to the control room: 'Hearing the order "Shut watertight doors "I went to the engine room door to prevent it being shut before the engines were stopped,' says Potter. 'Able Seaman Hare was trying to shut it. When the engines were stopped I shut the engine room door, thinking it was a precautionary measure. I returned to the control room and found the first lieutenant by the ladder and the crew beginning to go up to the bridge. The first lieutenant said: "No hurry. There is only 3 feet showing on the diving gauges." I did not hear "abandon ship" given. I then realised something was happening and went to my bunk to get my lifebelt. While I was putting this on, DSEA were being got out by the crew. When I left the control there were about six people left. There seemed to be no hurry. I did not feel any bump. When I got onto the bridge the bow of the submarine was awash.'

"Most of the crew had made their way topside and were crowded on the bridge. Because *Unity* had taken a bow-down angle, some of the crew were ordered off the bridge and towards the stern. Now to the experience of ERA Rob Roy McCurrach: 'There was no panic; indeed, such a thing would have been unforgivable. Personally I thought the whole thing another exercise. As far as I can recall, I was the last but one up the ladder. Miller followed me. As I stepped out onto the packed conning tower I heard the captain say: "I must have the main motors stopped." As I went to go down and do this, I almost trod on Miller's head. "I'll go, Bob. I'm better placed", said Miller. He returned below. Then the captain wanted the bridge cleared a bit. I climbed down on to the casing and stood in my stocking-feet on the hull. I felt the vibration stop. As I slid into the water I wondered if I'd catch cold. Momentarily I thought I could do with a piece of my mother's blackberry-and-apple pie. I then swam away from the boat. Turning, I waited to see if there would be some suction as she went down. There was none. When the motors stopped, she went down. Her stern rose high, water steaming from the props, hydroplanes and rudder. I stripped off a great deal of my clothing. I had no lifebelt. The crew were well spread out. Leading Seaman Hill was nearest to me so I swam to him. Just as we reached the top of a swell, we spotted a lifeboat. We made towards it, but they failed to see us and altered course. Most demoralizing that! When Hill and I finally managed to get to a lifeboat, the 3 men aboard were like zombies. Helped by Hill, I managed to get in. I then helped Bill. Between us we then pulled the captain in. I took an oar as we rowed about looking for survivors. I guess we were all in shock. When we went alongside *Atle Jarl* I grabbed the rope ladder at the top of a swell and made my way inboard and down to the boiler room, where I stripped and hung up my sodden clothes.'

"*Unity* had taken an angle of 25 degrees. When she sank four to five minutes after the collision, she took two of the crew with her Lieutenant John Low, the first lieutenant and Able Seaman Henry Miller.

"The submariners, who minutes earlier had been going quietly about their duties, had found themselves floundering in the cold North Sea with a convoy scattered around in the mist. The *Atle Jarl* had not strayed far from the scene. In half an hour all but two of the survivors had been rescued and transferred to *Atle Jarl*. At the request of Lieutenant Brooks, the freighter's master agreed to remain in the vicinity for an hour and thirty minutes in the hope of rescuing the two missing crew, Able Seaman Hare and Stoker Shelton. Neither was recovered.

"The conduct of his ship's company in such trying circumstances gave Brooks cause for much satisfaction. In his report of the incident he singled out several of the ship's company for special

mention: Lieutenant J.F. Trickey for his assistance and encouragement of ratings in difficulties in the sea, particularly as Trickey was unable to swim more than a few yards; Lieutenant G.E. Hunt for his cheerfulness and efficiency during rescue, and later aboard *Atle Jarl*; Stoker Alfred Burvill for risking his life in attempting to rescue a drowning shipmate. Brooks was also generously disposed to mention the Norwegians for their promptness in dispatching two rescue boats and for their kindness over the hours that followed.

“After survivors’ leaves, *Unity*’s crew was divided among *HMS Upright* and *Utmost*, both nearing completion at Vickers.

“It transpired that Lieutenant Brooks had been unaware that the Methil-Tyne convoy was at sea. This should not have been the case. Before sailing Blyth, Lieutenant Brooks should have received signal 1428/29/4 (2.28pm./20<sup>th</sup>/April), which among other things would have informed him that the Methil-Tyne convoy was due off Blyth at about 1930. Brooks was certain that he had not been shown or told of this signal. Lieutenant Trickey, Lieutenant Hunt and Leading Signaller Moon, *Unity*’s signaller, all denied knowledge of signal 1428/29/4/. On the afternoon of 23 May a court of inquiry convened at Blyth to investigate the collision. *Unity*’s captain was summoned to give evidence.

“Question: ‘Were you sending the usual signals for the prevention of collision at sea whilst you were underway?’

Lt Brooks: ‘No.’

Question: ‘I take it, then, that the first sound signal you made was after hearing one long blast from the direction right ahead?’

Lt Brooks: ‘Yes.’

Question: ‘Did you anticipate that the war channel would be clear of shipping?’

Lt Brooks: ‘Yes, except small craft.’

Question: ‘Have you got any listening devices by which you can hear under water?’

Lt Brooks: ‘Yes.’

Question: ‘Were these manned?’

Lt Brooks: ‘No sir.’

Question: ‘Would you tell the board, briefly, what these devices are?’

Lt Brooks: ‘An A/S receiving set.’

Question: ‘Was it in working order?’

Lt Brooks: ‘Yes.’

Question: ‘Is the set of any use, when running on the surface, for detecting the presence of any ship at reasonable distance?’

Lt Brooks: ‘No, not with both engines running as the sound made by the engines muffles the reception of outside noise.’

Question: ‘In view of the very low visibility, what were your objections to running on the motors only, so that you could have made use of your A/S set?’

Lt Brooks: ‘In view of the fact that the run up the swept channel was five hours’ duration I would not have been justified in exhausting my batteries at this time.’

Question ‘What was the state of the watertight doors on leaving Blyth?’

Lt Brooks: 'Fore-end doors shut. Remainder open.'

Question: 'Were you in patrol routine?'

Lt Brooks 'Yes.'

Question: 'According to Captains S6's report, you had no knowledge of Commander-In-Chief's Rosyth; signal timed 1428/29/4 indicating, among other things, that convoy Methil-Tyne was due off Blyth at about 1930?'

Lt Brooks: 'No. I had no knowledge of this.'

Question: 'Is there any statement you would like to make regarding your ignorance of the contents of this signal?'

Lt Brooks: 'Had I known of a southbound convoy was due I should have taken steps to keep out of its way.'

Question: 'What steps would you have taken to avoid the convoy?'

Lt Brooks: 'I could have delayed my time of sailing, or proceeded outside the swept channel where practicable.'

Question: 'Can you explain why this signal 1428/29/4 was not shown to you?'

Lt Brooks; 'My signalman, who should have collected the signal, and my navigating officer, who checks all signals shortly before sailing, both say they had not seen this signal.'

Question: 'With regard to the signal concerning the movements of the Methil-Tyne convoy: it seems clear that there must inevitably be certain space of time before the typing of your sailing orders and the moment of sailing – and during this time movement signals might be received. Therefore, what steps did you take to find out the latest information?'

Lt Brooks: 'The movement of the ships likely to affect *Unity* on passage and patrol were contained in an appendix to the patrol orders. This appendix was completed shortly before sailing. I took this appendix into the staff office and went through it with the Staff Officer Operations. After this, as normal routine, I should have gone through any signals affecting me with the staff officer, and discuss it with him. As it was now practically time to sail, our discussion consisted of little more than going through the appendix and the question of convoy Methil-Tyne did not come up.'

Question: 'As the signal 1428/29/4 arrived before you sailed at 1730, can you give a reason for it not being shown to you?'

Lt Brooks: 'No. It should have been collected by my signalman from the distributing office and shown to me. Had it arrived at the last moment, it should have been brought to the submarine by messenger just before sailing.'

"In an attempt to discover why signal 1428/29/4 had not been brought to the attention of Lieutenant Brooks, Chief Yeoman of Signals Christopher Reading, in charge of the DSO (Signal Distribution Office) of *HMS Elfin*, was called and asked if he could recall distributing to *Unity* signal 1428/29/4 from C-in-C Rosyth. The chief yeoman replied that the signalman on watch had distributed that signal and that he himself had no explanation as to why *Unity* had seemingly not received it. In answer to a question as to whether the signal had been received in the SDO in sufficient time to have been collected by Leading Signalman Moon, the chief yeoman stated that the signal had been received in ample time and there was no question of having to send it to *Unity* by special messenger. When asked if he remembered if anyone else had taken any signals for *Unity* that day, Reading answered that a Wren messenger had, and that she had taken them after Leading Signalman Moon

had visited the SDO.

“Signalman Walter Warren performed his duties at the Signal Distribution Office. He had been summoned to the inquiry.

Question: ‘Which watch were you keeping on 29 April, the day *Unity* sailed for patrol?’

Sig. Warren: ‘I had the afternoon watch.’

Question: ‘Do you remember a signal 1428/29/4 being received from Commander-in-Chief, Rosyth, concerning the movements of certain ships and the Methil-Tyne convoy which was due off Blyth about 1930?’

Sig. Warren: ‘Yes.’

Question: ‘Can you remember what the distribution of that signal was?’

Sig. Warren: ‘Captain S, Commander S, Staff Officer Operations, *Unity* and *Seal*.’

Question: ‘How was it distributed to *HMS Unity*?’

Sig. Warren: ‘*Unity* has a distribution pigeon-hole and *Unity*’s signalman collects them at regular intervals.’

Question: ‘Can you remember whether this signal was still in *Unity*’s pigeon-hole and if so when?’

Sig. Warren: ‘Not during the afternoon watch.’

Question: ‘Can you remember whether it was still in *Unity*’s pigeon-hole when you went off at four o’clock?’

Sig. Warren: ‘It was in the pigeon-hole.’

When Signalman Warren came off watch at the SDO, Telegraphist Percy Marks took Warren’s post at the office. Marks was asked if he could recall, on commencing his watch at four o’clock, whether there were any signals in *Unity*’s pigeon-hole. To this Marks replied that he was not sure.

Question: ‘Did any arrive whilst you were on watch?’

Tel. Marks: ‘Yes. The first one was the one addressed to the *Seal* and *Unity* and I delivered that by hand to the leading signalman of *Unity*.’

Question: ‘What were the others?’

Tel. Marks: ‘There were five or six QZHs (Signals relating to mines). The leading signalman went into the message room and came and said that they were coming through on the teleprinter. He said he could not wait, so I said I would get them off. Then I went into the message room and asked the teleprinter operator if she could hurry up with them because *Seal* and *Unity* were both under sailing orders. Then as soon as these signals came out, I sent the Wren messenger down to *Seal* and *Unity* with them.’

Question: ‘Do you remember handing message 1428/29/4 from Commander-in-Chief, Rosyth, concerning movements of certain ships?’

Tel. Marks: ‘I cannot remember handling that one sir.’

It would appear that there was no one who could state beyond any doubt that Leading Signalman Moon, or anyone else from *Unity* actually collected or had been handed signal 1428/29/4. Obviously, what Thomas Moon had to say to the court in connection with the signal was the greatest importance.

Question: ‘Can you explain how it was that the signal 1428/29/4 from the Commander-in-Chief,

Rosyth, was not delivered either to the captain of *Unity* nor to any of *Unity's* officers?’

Ldg.Sig. Moon: ‘No.’

Question: ‘did you collect any signals from the Signal Distribution Office shortly before sailing?’

Ldg.Sig. Moon: ‘Just before she sailed.’

Question: ‘Have you recollection as to whether the signal 1428/29/4 was among those that you collected?’

Ldg.Sig. Moon: ‘No.’

Question: ‘What did you do with the signals you collected from the DSO on the afternoon of 29 April?’

Ldg.Sig. Moon: ‘The only signals I can remember collecting from the DSO were I think two QZHs. Four more QZHs were sent down by special messenger just before we sailed. These had been handed to the first lieutenant, who gave them to me. No other signals were received by me.’

As John Low, the first lieutenant was dead, and as all of *Unity's* confidential books, signals publications, and other confidential papers had gone down with the submarine, the question of whether the signal had been received by *Unity* could not be fully substantiated. And there the matter was laid to rest. Perhaps it was only to be expected that Lieutenant Brooks and Leading signalman Moon should come in for certain amount of criticism from the court. *Unity's* patrol orders had stated that she was to proceed with ‘dispatch’. This expression was regarded by submarine officers as implying that a submarine is to proceed on the surface by day, unless compelled to dive, and did not necessarily have the same meaning applicable to surface ships to proceed at three-fifths power. *Unity* had been proceeding at 8 knots – too fast in the limited visibility thought the court, particularly in view of the fact that information contained in the appendix to *Unity's* patrol orders indicated that the enemy were unlikely to be in the vicinity, thus the need for speed was not pressing. The court also felt that Lieutenant Brooks’ failure to use sound signals until the siren of another vessel was heard was a mistake. Very much in Brooks’ favour was his rapid realization that nothing was going to save *Unity* from sinking, and sinking quickly. If Brooks had hesitated in the hope that something could be done to save the submarine, then many of the crew might have perished. The decision of the court as regards Lieutenant Brooks was that sufficient blame could be attributed to him to justify any disciplinary action against him.

The court was of the opinion that Leading Signalman Moon had collected signal 1428/29/4 (and also Captain S6’s signal 1552/29/4 which referred to the former) from the Signal Distribution Office of *HMS Elfin* at some time before *Unity* sailed. In giving evidence, Moon had clearly denied all knowledge of the signals. The failure of the signals’ contents to be made known to Brooks had without doubt been a contributing factor of the collision with *Atle Jarl*. Although much of the blame for *Unity's* loss was directed towards Thomas Moon, a certain degree of responsibility must rest with Lieutenant Brooks and Captain Submarine’s Staff Officer, since they failed to discuss the latest information concerning movements in the war channel, one of the very things for which last-minute meetings at the signal office had been designed.

Though Leading Signalman Moon had been considered neglectful in his duty, the probability of obtaining sufficient evidence to secure a conviction for the offence was deemed remote, and so the assembly of a court martial was not considered justified. It was also considered undesirable that the offence should be dealt with summarily, as the powers of punishment of Captain S would not be compatible with the offence and its consequences. Moon later joined *Utmost* (Lieutenant-Commander R.D. Cayley). When Cayley moved on to command *P311* he took with him Leading Signalman Moon. Moon lost his life when *P311* was sunk with all hands. As Cayley appears to have thought highly of Thomas Moon, Moon must have been a very competent Signalman.

*Unity* had been commissioned in August 1938. Her first captain had been Lieutenant-Commander S.H. Pinchin. After ten months with *Unity*, Pinchin relinquished command to Lieutenant J.F.B. Brown. Brown had been in command for two months when war broke out. He did eight patrols before being relieved by Brooks on 20 April 1940, so Brooks had been *Unity's* captain for only nine days when she sunk.

Lieutenant Brooks had taken his COQC (Perisher) in April 1939. The following July he had been appointed captain of *L23*. Brooks had been Spare CO at Blyth for three weeks when appointed to *Unity*. After survivors' leave he took command of *Upright* at Barrow on 5 July 1940. Brooks did two patrols from Portsmouth prior to taking *Upright* to the Mediterranean, where she became the first 'U' class to do a patrol. In December 1940 he was relieved of his command. In February 1942 Brooks joined the staff at *HMS Dolphin*, the submarine base. After five months he transferred to the Admiralty's Operations Division Staff. On 3 June 1943 Lieutenant-Commander Brooks took to the air in a Beaufighter of W/236 Squadron, probably as an observer. Shortly after becoming airborne the Beaufighter was attacked by 8 Ju88s. The navigator, acting as rear-gunner, was severely wounded. With Francis Brooks having taken over as rear-gunner, the pilot dived to sea-level. The Ju88s remained in pursuit, scoring several hits on the Beaufighter. During one of these attacks Brooks was mortally wounded. Though further damaged, the Beaufighter managed to shake off the enemy and reach Predannack, where she crashed-landed. Thus did *Unity's* captain fail to survive the war.

The report made by Lieutenant Brooks on the exemplary conduct of his ship's company during the collision and its after effects was not ignored by the Navy.

The exemplary conduct of Lieutenant John Low and Able Seaman Henry Miller did not go unrecognised.

The calm demeanour of Lieutenant Low had done much to assist in a speedy and orderly escape. His concern for the safety of the crew and the manner in which he had fulfilled his duty was in keeping with the highest standard expected of submarine officers. Both Low and Miller could not have been aware of the fearful risk of remaining below decks to assist and give every opportunity of clearing the submarine.

Reported in the London Gazette, 16 August 1940 for gallantry when sunk in collision: Lieutenant John Niven Angus Low and Able Seaman Henry James Miller, the Empire Gallantry Medal, which was later upgraded to the George Cross (posthumously). The next of kin of both submariners were presented the medal by the King at an Investiture at Buckingham Palace.

Reported in the London Gazette, 1 January 1941 – New Year's Honours List for gallantry when sunk in collision: The following members were Mentioned in Despatches (MiD): POTE Ernest Gregory, LEUT George Edward Hunt, CERA Alfred Potter and LTEL George William Tuson.

**AB Henry Millar (pictured)** who was awarded the posthumous George Cross was the second of the family to die in submarines, his brother having been killed in them

## U-HAI

A new period of submarining began with the foundation of the armed forces in Germany. *U-Hai* (shark) was put in service as the first boat of the new German navy on August 15, 1957. It was a boat of the former "Kriegsmarine" which had been lifted at the Kattegat, near Anholt, by the Hamburg salvage company Beckedorf from 56-m water depth and could be made fully operational again in less

than one year by the Howaldtswerke shipyard in Kiel. *U-Hai* served particularly in the training of young submariners and was altered several times.

Thus it received in 1961 a more aerodynamically bridge casing and in 1964 a new diesel system while the hull was lengthened by 1.45 metres. After the rebuilding *U-Hai* it had a water displacement of 275 metric tons.

*U-Hai* had sailed under the command of Lieutenant Wiedersheim with a crew of 20 men together with the tender *Lech*, the escort ship *Passat*, and the submarines *U-Hecht* and *U-3* from Neustadt/Holstein for a practice journey in the North Sea. It was planned to visit the port of Aberdeen. On height of the Doggerbank the formation got into heavy weather. At Beaufort seven the radio contact between the tender *Lech* which had the disabled *U-Hecht* on account of propeller damage was taken in tow, and the ahead-driving *U-Hai* got lost on September 14, 1966. In the reconstruction of the circumstances carried out after the accident, it is suspected that *U-Hai*, while sailing on the surface, took water via the supply air pipe of the partly pulled out snorkel in the engine room bilge because of on-coming breakers. The developing stern-heaviness was strengthened by the stern diving-cell flooding more and more. Both remained unnoticed at first in the rough seas. When about 18.00 o'clock the high water level was noted in the engine room bilge, the impression of a leakage in the engine room emerged. In the end, the floating position might have been so bad, that even water was streaming in by the conning tower hatch. The commander feared a sinking of the boat and ordered "All hands out of the boat". However, now the boat was quickly filled up with water and already sank when the first ten men of the crew had left the boat. The rest of the crew drowned in the boat when it sank at 40-m depth. Ten survivors floated in the North Sea and slowly froze. The search was begun from midnight. Only at the break of dawn the ship's cook, First Mate Peter Silbernagel, was rescued after 13 hours in the water. He is the only survivor of *U-Hai*.

*U-Hai* was lifted by the recovery crane *Magnus II*, a detailed investigation was initiated. The expert opinion of the December 23, 1966 came to the conclusion that the described concentration of unlucky circumstances was a cause of the sinking and that pump equipment were not used after the discovery of the water level because of wrong assessment of the situation. There are three U-boat losses which have been suffered by German Navies in peace time. In addition, individuals have been killed in the service of submarines in peace time

The newsletter of the German Naval Alliance wrote in 1936: "The submariners; in the war the closest to the enemy, also stand in times of peace close to death." Without sharing this emotionalism, today we think at the U-boat Memorial of the submariners of all navies been killed in the line of their duty in times of peace just like their companions who left their life in the war.

By Michael Setzer ...translated into English language by Karl Schmeink

## **20 DEAD ON SUBMARINE**

Moscow: More than 20 people were killed and another 20 injured when a fire-extinguishing system was inadvertently activated aboard a Russian nuclear submarine in the Pacific Ocean.

Shipyard workers were among the dead in the accident which happened as the unnamed submarine was undergoing sea trials.

Russian navy spokesman Igor Dygalo said the accident had not apparently affected the submarine's nuclear reactor.

The submarine was yesterday (9 November) returning to port in Russia's far-eastern Primorye territory.

From Sydney's "Daily Telegraph" 10.11.2008.

### **ASDIC**

At the end of World War I, Britain had established the Anti-Submarine Division Investigation Committee (ASDIC) to seek ways of building on her successes with both mobile and bottom-laid hydrophones (listening devices) during World War I. The greatest drawbacks of these early experiments had been the interference experienced by the listening ships from their own (self) noise and the lack of directional information on a contact if detected (i.e. inability to localise to attack). By 1920, the team of experts had devised the sonic beam emitted from a transducer housed in a dome under the bow of an escort, which sent out a 'ping' and received an echo back if it struck a solid object. Unfortunately, while it was a major step in being able to detect a submarine, it was not infallible because it could not distinguish between a submarine and a rock, or even a shoal of fish, nor could it detect a submarine on the surface. Regrettably, many in the British Naval Staff decided that the anti-submarine problem had been solved and, confident of the efficacy of the 1922 Declaration on the use of submarines in war, stuck their heads into the sand, concentrating instead on battle fleet supremacy. This over-confidence on two fronts was to cost Britain dear yet again in the forthcoming conflict.

Just as the first equipment for radar was crude in the extreme, so the genesis of asdic appears slightly prehistoric. Britain developed the listening hydrophone through the "Hawkshead Experiment" during World War I, and this was translated into an active and passive format during the 1920s.

From "Submarines & Deep-Sea Vehicles" by Jeffery Tall ISBN 1-85605-634-1

### **NEW MEMBERS - WELCOME ABOARD**

BRIGGS, E.J. (Eric) POREL	282 Downside Street, Albury NSW 2640 HMS/m Resolution, Opportune and Revenge 1966 -1972
CORNISH, J R (Ray) LSTDMS	76 Bradys Gully Road, North Gosford NSW 2250 HMS/m Otter, Odin, Oracle and HMAS Onslow 1968 -1971
GIBSON, B R (Gibbo) ABUW	PO Box 74 Bassendean WA 6934 HMAS Orion 1978-79
MARTIN, C.A. (Cameron) POPH	93 Warringah Road, Narraweena NSW 2099 HMAS Orion, Otama and Ovens 1987 - 1992
MITCHELL, C. A. (Chris) WO2 CCMEA	PO Box 816 Canning Bridge WA 6153. HMS/ms Repulse twice, Splendid, and Sovereign 1973 -1992
NEYLAND, A.M. (Allan) CPOMTPSM	C/- Balmoral Community Collage, Balmoral Victoria 3407 HMAS Otway twice, Onslow, Otama and Oxley 1976 - 1984
OSBORNE, W. T (Bill) ABUCSM	PO Box 6294 O'Connor ACT 2602. HMAS Otama, Oxley and Ovens 1980 - 1982
TANNER I.M (Ian) CPO COMMS 1976 - 1994	21/1 Acland Street, St Kilda, Victoria 3182 HMS/ms Orpheus, Oracle, Walrus, Osiris, Opossum and Unseen

To all readers of In Depth, on behalf of the National Executive all the very best to you and yours over the Christmas period

Yours sincerely,

*Peter Smith*

Peter Smith  
Honorary Editor  
10 November 2008

The picture below is an X-craft in Sydney Harbour off Farm Cove circa 1945.

