

# **“ONE ALL ROUND”**

## **A collection of ‘dit’s, stories, memories and down right lies appertaining to the RN Submarine Service collected from other sources!**

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### **Did He, or did he not, volunteer for Submarines**

I wonder if any reader remembers a Signalman T/O. joining HMS Seawolf direct from General Service with no submarine training at all. In fact until I spotted Seawolf coming into the Naval Dockyard at HMS Malabar, Bermuda and BWI Station, it was the first time I had ever set eyes on a submarine.

Let me explain. While serving on HMS Corsair, I put in for higher rate VS3. We had gone into floating Dock for a small refit and while she was there I was sent to the Signal Station at Malabar, to swot up, prior to taking the examination at Admiralty House, Hamilton.

The Seawolf had been tied up in the dockyard for about an hour when onto the signal platform of the station came the Divisional Officer who said to my watch-keeping Oppo, and myself ‘One of you two is going to volunteer for the Seawolf.’ Then he walked away. Silence reigned for a while then we both decided that, if we did not volunteer, that would be that! Little did we know! After all, we were both Twenty-years-old and thought we knew it all. Five minutes later the Divisional Officer’s messenger came up to the signal platform and said, to both of us, ‘Well who is it going to be?’

‘Not me’. Said my chum.  
‘Not me’. I Said.

To which he replied. ‘Right,’ and slapped a draft chit in my hand, saying, ‘as a trained Operator and having had a full year’s sea time in, you have been chosen, so get yourself down to the Sick Bay for a Medical, then pack your bag and Hammock and get down to the boat. It is now 1000 and she sails at 1230’.

Down I went to the Medical man who said ‘How are you?’ I said ‘alright, Sir.’ He signed my draft chit and was sent on my way rejoicing.

In my tiddly white tropical gear, I went aboard the boat and looked down the fore hatch to observe utter confusion.

They were doing routines on two fish. There was oil, cotton waste, non-floaters and sweaty bodies stripped to the waist. A voice, later I found out to be the Coxswain, shouted out ‘What do you want?’

I replied ‘I am the new signalman’  
‘Have you got a boiler suit?’ He asked ‘Yes’ I replied  
‘Well get it on, come over the tower and down the hatch.’ He said.

I arrived in the empty Control Room utterly dumbfounded and just did not have a clue how to get forward or aft.

The Coxswain came to the rescue and took me to see the Skipper, Lt D.W. Mills RN, and Jimmy Lt A.S. Platt. The Skipper asked me if I volunteered and I told him, no. He then explained how I came to be aboard saying that their own signalman had been sent to the UK. He was applying for a relief but that would take some time and he said ‘In the meantime, do the best you can for us and do not be afraid to ask questions.’ I saluted and went forward with the cox’n.

He told me lesson no.1 was not to salute in the boat. He took me on a short tour through the boat and asked if I had any questions. I replied ‘What time do we eat?’

Walking forward to the Fore Ends, the fish were back in their tubes, the mess cleared up, the ladder down, the table hanging from its chains with the Rum Fanny, cups and measure alongside it. They said ‘Do you draw?’ and gave me my tot!

Then an early dinner and, when I saw the grub, I thought this S/M life is not so bad after all. With a tot and a good meal inside of me I went to the bridge when Harbour Stations was called and found that I had my own pair of binoculars. In company with the Skipper, the Navigator and an AB. I felt quite proud as we cleared the harbour and returned the wave from my oppo on the Signal Station.

When we had cleared land, I was told that we were about to dive and instructed in the procedure. I cleared the bridge and took a very shabby 4” Aldis Lamp down the hatch and stood in the Control Room looking up the hatch at the blue sky rapidly disappearing as the Skipper shut the upper lid. The Klaxon sounding was the order for what I thought was mayhem but, of course everything went off as smooth as silk – what a team I thought.

'Up Periscope,' said the Skipper as, in seconds we were down to thirty two feet. He had a good look round and then said to me, 'Come and have a look through the periscope,' this I did and, of course it was all wonderful for me. 'Down periscope,' the Skipper said. 'Well Sherrington, what did you think of your first dive?'

'It was not at all what I expected, Sir,' I said, to which he replied 'We will loop the bloody loop for you next time' and everybody laughed at me.

I quickly got the hang of the boat and all the equipment, flags and logs in good order and after six weeks asked the Skipper what were the chances of me staying on.

'Do you think you will like it then,' he said

'Yes Sir' I replied

Then he said 'I had you weighed up when you came aboard so I never sent for a relief That was the beginning of eighteen months with the finest crew with whom anyone could wish to serve. I was helped by everybody and only left her to come home for a CW Course.

Unfortunately, leaving school at fourteen from St Mary's Senior Mixed, at the Elephant & Castle, I realised my education would not have been good enough for a commission. So, I got married instead and like to think that was a good move as it has lasted forty-two years to date.

I then went on to serve in Stoic, Spiteful, and Ambush and it was on her that we did that twenty eight snort trip in the Arctic, with nothing to eat but steak eggs and chips, but that's another story!

I can hear you saying, what about this 'did he volunteer or not' bit, well I am not certain myself!

Extracted from the 'SOCA News' September 1967 and written by Bill Sherrington, ex Signalman

Having typed this 'dit' out, I reckon he was pushed!! Ed.

### **"OLD NEPTUNES MEN"**

There's a FORT that they call BLOCKHOUSE  
West of POMPEY by the sea  
Where men - lived in stables  
Where - PONGO's horses used to be

They didn't go much - on "Pusser's" bull  
They'd seen enough of that - in "Gens"  
That's why they volunteered for "Boats"  
To live - in Fore and After ends

A special breed - "The Happy Breed"  
Old "Neptune's" men - were these  
"Proteus" blokes - "Poseidon's" folks  
Sons of many Gods - like these

Their night was day - their day was night  
Their "neaters" - they did hoard  
They dined on "Pot Mess" - "Figgy Duff"  
And slept on battery boards

Their "Dartmouth" "Lords" - amidships slept  
The "Piggery" - was its name  
Where dwelt such men - as "Horton"  
And such men - as "Wanklyn" came

'Twas a noble life - with nought to do  
'cept play "Uckers" all day  
Or lie asleep - at fathoms deep  
Where - Dolphinic" mermaids play

No clothes at hand - just a steaming kit  
Fourteen days - no sunlight seen  
Eating "Bakey/Boil"- midst the shale oil  
Ditching "Gash" - the smell obscene

"Hard Layers" theirs - a mere half crown  
"Two Bob" -for men - "Spare Crew"  
Like sardines in a tin - Like old "Herring In"  
"The Trade" - the "Dolphin" few

### NEPTUNUS REX



Front Page SOCA New's, Xmas 1988

### **Continuing Colonial Navy History, Victoria**

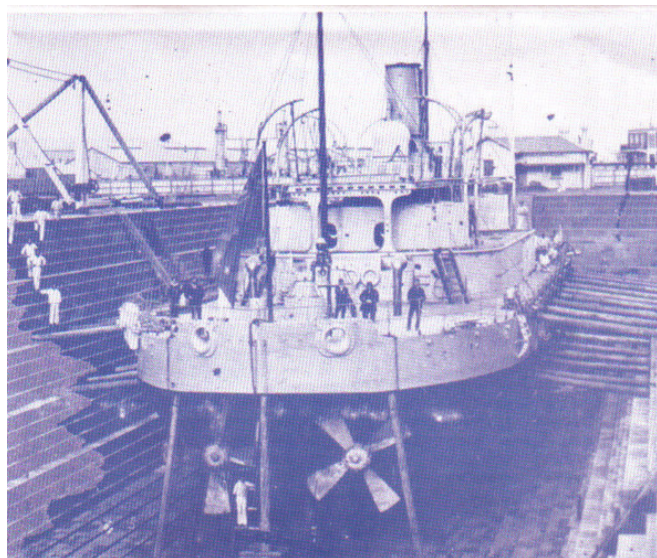
Following the lead taken by the New South Wales Government, the Victorian Government ordered a composite sail-steam sloop named *Victoria* from England. This ship arrived in the colony on the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1856. During her career *Victoria* carried out a large variety of tasks including assisting in the search for Burke & Wills

and delivering the first trout eggs to Tasmania. The highlight of Victoria's career was when the vessel was dispatched to New Zealand during the Maori Wars. This was the first occasion that Australian military or naval forces had been deployed overseas as part of an imperial force

Following their experience with *Victoria* the Colonial Government applied to the Imperial Government for assistance in the acquisition of an ironclad warship. As a result of these requests the Victorian Government was given assistance in the purchase of '*Cerberus*' as well as the loan of a composite steam-sail warship *HMS Nelson*. Supporting the permanent naval forces which manned the ships was an active and well trained Naval Brigade. This brigade was organized into two divisions of approximately 150 men each. One of the divisions was stationed at Port Melbourne and the other was based at Williamstown Naval Depot.

During the 1880's further warships, including first and second class torpedo boats and two gunboats, were added to the Victorian Naval Force. As well as these regular warships there was also a large number of Government vessels which were earmarked for naval service in times of tension. By the end of the 1880's *Victoria* had by far the most powerful of all the colonial naval forces. These forces acting in concert with the fortifications located at the heads and other sites around Port Phillip Bay made Melbourne the most heavily defended city in Australia and possibly the Empire.

As with the other colonies expenditure on the naval forces and defence in general fluctuated with the interest and concern shown by the Government. By the early 1890's expenditure on defence had been to such an amount that the naval force was considerably reduced and the two gun boats were also paid off. The final act of the Victorian Naval Forces was to dispatch to China a force to fight the Boxers and to serve as part of the international group.



Victorian monitor, HMVS Cerberus.

**Comment from the Barrow Website Forum on the recent unveiling of the plaque commemorating the 4<sup>th</sup> S/M Division in HMAS Penguin.**

By xbilgerat (whoever he may be!)

Well, was there done that, the S/M 4 re-union and Plaque Un-veiling. Worth all the effort believe me as just the pleasure of seeing all the old places was priceless. Oh how the memories flooded back in a torrent and the pictures flashed through the mind's slide show as if yesterday although in reality over forty years ago. The weather was perfect as the 'big smoke' came to the party with a spring day only Sydney can produce, heaven, I loved every minute of it. A sea of 'white caps' flowed through the HMAS Penguin gangway and oh how the faces have aged. The show went down well without a hitch and I hope to get the photos on the site ASAP. Some good ones I believe of the actual plaque with a model of a 'T' boat above the plaque. Must admit it crossed my mind as to how long before 'it' is rabbited ' by some drunken 'dink staggering back off shore'. I hope no-one does as it is great to have such recognition of the 4th.

Yes indeed, old faces and old places was the rig of the day and as well as the ghost sound of a standing charge filling the air. The sound of a dog barking also came across as if to say hello to all his former shipmates. I pictured him, Nigger because of the PC BS, running along the wharf, tail wagging, ready to escort the boys to the 'wets'. Enough of that now but let me say that the two main organizer did very well, Pat Cullum and Tom McCammont, hope I've got the names right. The whole event was great from the ceremony to the barbeque near the workshops and wharf. A good Aussie feed and even Up Spirits with Pussers Rum. Must say thanks to the RAN as they too were terrific. All the roads in HMAS Penguin are named after the 'boats' of the squadron. BTW, I silently toasted 'absent friends', those who have crossed the bar and those un-able to attend. It was a good feeling to have been part of what is now RN history with a strong urge to 'do it all again' for the pure pleasure of such wonderful times. OK, pipe down now chaps.

All reports I have received from several sources seem to indicate, a good time was had by all. Ed.



**An EX RN Chief and his wife retired and took over a B&B in France, this is his Story**

**Life at the helm of a French B&B**

0700 and the day begins with "Call the Hands". This is the signal to make my Captain a cup of tea and then walk to the *Boulangerie* to purchase the necessary for our guests. You know the score, the usual petit *dejeuner* items eaten in France, *baguette*, *Pain au Chocolate*, *Croissant*, and other cholesterol producing goodies.

One would think that this early morning task would be easy – but no. Going to the bread shop is a long and arduous daily duty. Firstly I have to say *Bonjour* and kiss *Madame* as she arrives in the square to open her shop. Following this I will meet *Monsieur* who will be opening the *Tabac*. *Monsieur* will expect a long handshake of the hands and 5 minutes conversation about the weather, football, and yesterdays events in the *la Republic*. This will be followed by more football; the state of today's youth and yet more football. I eventually arrive at the *L Boulangerie* to be greeted with "*Bonjour Alain*". (I never comment on the mispronunciation of my first name). I am then required to kiss *Madame* twice on each cheek before she will even consider taking my order. Breakfast needs to be on the table in five minutes, I must hurry.

My return home is equally difficult because simple *Francois* will be waiting by his door to greet *L'infirmiere* who arrives daily to assist his mother; she is the oldest inhabitant of the village. After shaking my hand *Francois* will warn me of the dangers of eating too much salt and sugar. I have received this three minute lecture daily for the past two years and I know it by heart. (On one occasion I discovered *Francois* on the top floor of our three story house delivering the same lecture to a bewildered non French speaking guest!)

By the time I return home the Captain is in the galley. Coffee is brewing and the house is stirring. Very soon the first guests arrive in the dining room for breakfast. This is when the usual questions are asked.

Q. Where can we buy a newspaper?

A. The Paper Shop.

Q. Where can we buy petrol?

A. At a garage,

Q. Do you speak French?

A. None at all. I shout very loudly in English and the Foreigners usually understand me!

Q. Why did you leave England?

A. To escape a goal sentence. (I have found this to be a suitable way of stopping any further questions).

After breakfast I stroll to the Bank to deposit the previous nights' takings'. The length of the queue is irrelevant. I must have a five minute conversation with *Jean-Pierre*, the Bank Teller. This is essential to ensure that MY money goes into MY account. "*Alain, would you read my daughter's homework? It is a small item of translation for her English language class which must be handed in tomorrow*".

Having failed to make myself understood between 'there' and 'their' I departed.

I walk back through the Square; it would be rude not to call on *Sylvie* who, as usual, has sat in her bar without a customer since 0800. "*A coffee Alain!*" is her normal daily greeting. I glanced through the daily paper and we then discussed local news. I learnt the names of those that had died within a 25Km radius of the village (most of whom I had never heard of). Following this I was given marriage and birth news, the location of the firemen call out last night and finally, local gossip.

I return home to give the Captain *Sylvie's* news report. (Just the scandal, I leave out all the unnecessary items). On the way home I will probably meet the Post Woman who will have deposited the mail in my post box a few minutes earlier. She will tell me I have X or Y amount of letters and the country of origin. ("*Un Anglais et deux Francaris*") For example. If a bill has arrived she will forewarn me. ("*L'electricite est arrive*"). She doesn't steam open the envelopes to read the contents, but she might as well do so.

After lunch I take the dog for a walk. It must be my lucky day. A tour bus laden with blue rinsed pensioners arrives as the fire siren sounds. The siren is situated on top of the church tower. It is deafening and has the same pitch and tone as that of a Second World War air raid warning. My hobby is to watch the reaction of visitors

"*Wots the 'ells that noise Ernie?*"

"*I dunno Gladys, but the local blokes are all rushing about, it must be summat serious*".

The *Pompier* of France appear to have a 'thing' about blue and two's. No matter how trivial the 'alarm', two emergency vehicles will rush off with sirens sounding and blue lights flashing. Our village firemen serve a vast rural area and have seven emergency vehicles. Sometime all seven will rush off in a crescendo of sound followed by a *Gendarme* vehicle or two. I am convinced that this is done to impress tourists.

Having rescued a cat from a tree or a cow from a swamp, *Le Pompier* return to the station and spend a leisurely hour washing mud and died flies from the vehicles. No doubt this prolonged husbandry will increase the life of the vehicle but also the crew's call out payment.

When evening finally arrives we walk to '*Yannick's Bar*' where I sink as much red wine as the Captain will permit.

Yann is a good friend. He likes to speak in English. But as yet to master the complexities of the language.

Yann once asked the Captain and me to translate 'response' into English. We told him that it was response but suggest that he use 'reply' instead. Yann rushed off to confer with his English speaking barman. He returned to inform us that the correct word was 'answer'.

*"When I watch Anglais football on telly and goal is scored, they show goal again. Then in writing 'reply' in zee top left hand corner of telly screen. That eez a replay"*

*"No Yann. That word is replay"...*

Do we have any regrets on moving to France?  
Only one, we should have done it earlier!!

Did we immigrate to the wrong country?? Ed.



**THE COOK**  
(HOMO SAPIEN?)

Seems to thrive on a diet of insults. Can be easily recognised by excessive amount of bone in head structure. Has no song of its own. Experts are convinced that they eat their young when food is scarce.

### Another 'dit' from the grocer

In 1963 whilst I was an Instructor in the 100ft Submarine Escape Training Tank in HMS DOLPHIN, Gosport, the Russian Cruiser ORDZHONIKIDZE (pronounced Organakinzi) arrived at Portsmouth bringing Khrushchev the Russian Leader for his first visit to the UK.

A large party of Russian Sailors came over from the cruiser to see us operating in the SETT. One of the demonstrations was a free ascent without buoyancy from the 100ft Section. This comprised taking a deep breath of

air at the pressure equivalent to 100ft, coming out of the section and slowly breathing out to relieve the pressure on your lungs as you slowly rose to the surface. CPO Cox'n Vic Street was an expert at this; he could make an ascent last for up to 3 minutes as he released a dribble of air as he slowly ascended to the Tank Top.

Vic, being the character he was made an even slower ascent and the Russians watched goggled eyed as he slowly came to the surface.

As he reached the top he took a large mouthful of water, climbed up the ladder, lifted his right hand to his ear, twisted it and sprayed the water all over the Russians.

They went berserk! LCDR TODD A/CEO who was in the "chair" said 'Street we know you are only fooling but these bastards don't know any difference?'



## Clacker

Permission to Blow the For'd Heads, Sir!!?

