

Newsletter

Keeping UW Branch personnel informed

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Editor Speaks for the first time about living with tourettes

I have been in post at Navy Command Head Quarters for a little over 15 months now, dabbling in the field of In Service Capability Mangement and representing you as the Fleet ASW Warrant Officer. In that time a lot has happened which more than justifies me providing you with an update on UW Branch matters. Although this newsletter contains a lot of serious information, I have tried to turn down its tone somewhat which should provide lighter (but useful) reading. You will be pleased to know that I have had treatment for my tourettes and it will not (I hope) make an appearance in this newsletter.

Sonar developments give a bright future to the UW Branch

S2050 - Ultra Electronics in Weymouth won the contract to upgrade Sonar 2050. Although still highly capable of detecting submarines, our primary T23 Hull Mounted sonar uses 1980s technology with components that are no longer available, therefore it is appropriate to do a Technology Refresh. The proposed HCI (Human Computer Interface) will see us operating the sonar in a totally different way and It could be a game changer . The project to refresh S2050 is well underway and First of Class fit is forecast to be in early 2018. S2050TR will be cross decked to the Type 26 Global Combat Ship (GCS) which will allow the transfer of operator skills from T23. S2087 - The Inboard Refresh was installed into PTLTD as a

precursor to full Technology Refresh of our LFAS capability. The upgrade includes highly efficient server based cabinets, a much faster processing capability, larger operator displays and additional enhancement applications. Wet end equipment remains the same and the way we operate the sonar remains largely the same. S2087TR will be fitted to the remainder of our FFTA in 2016 and the order of fit will be based on ship availability. S2087 TR will also cross deck to the T26 GCS, once again allowing the transfer of operator skills. Further enhancements will follow and it is an aspiration to converge the passive elements of S2087 towards the submarine sonar 2076.



New Marine Protected Areas could become an environmental headache

There is a storm brewing in the world of Environmental Protection which may (if we do not react) prevent us from conducting our core business as Sonar Ratings in the near future. This comes in the form of a number of additional Marine Protected Areas which are waiting to be approved by the Scottish Government in areas that surround the UK. In particular they cover areas which we routinely use for ASW training during exercise Joint Warrior, Submarine Command Courses and other ASW training exercises. As you may or may not be aware, when we do our Sonar Risk Assessments using Sonar 2117, whenever one of these Marine Protected Areas (MMA) is identified, the advice given is that we should not transmit on sonar at all. Luckily for us we have an Environmental Safety specialist at NCHQ who is liaising with a number of outside environmental authorities and fighting the RNs cause for us. NCHQ along with JTEPS is currently considering bespoke mitigation that will allow us to continue sonar operation in these areas whilst also being considerate of the Marine Mammals and Marine Reptiles that inhabit these waters. You will be aware of a recent NCHQ directive to report ASW Active Sonar activity to the JNCC – this is one of the measures that we are taking to show external authorities that the RN is doing its utmost to remain environmentally compliant.

Maintaining ASW SQEP is a tricky business

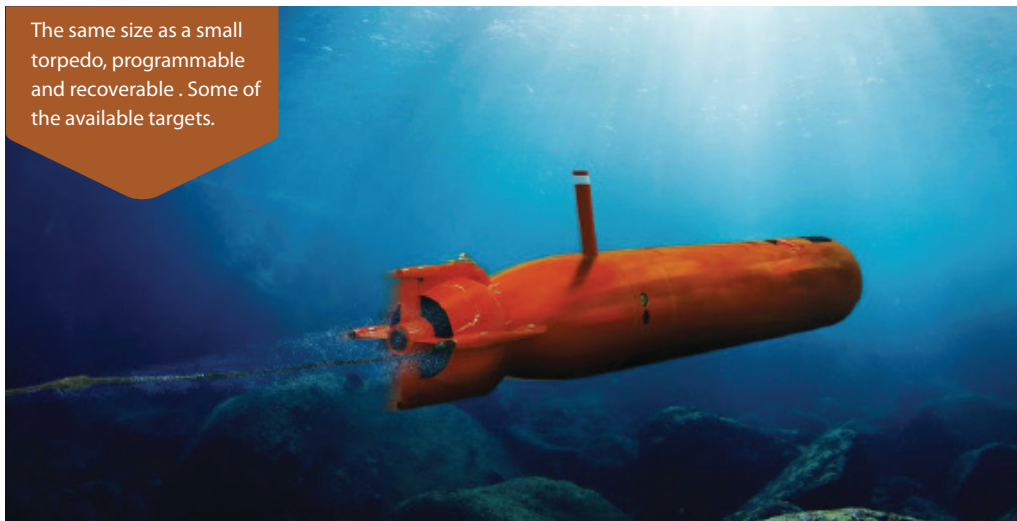
The maintenance of ASW SQEP has been a contentious issue for some time, the opportunity to do our core job is often limited by busy programmes and essential tasking. A reduced number of live submarines for ASW training exercises and EMATT targets that aren't compatible with S2087 (Active) are some of the contributors to this ongoing problem.

As a measure of mitigation, we have conducted a 'Training Target Study' with a view to either buying or leasing a recoverable training target for use by FOST(S) when there is no live submarine available. We are also investigating a replacement for EMATT That can be used by both ships and submarines, and which is compatible with all of our active sonar systems. Although the study is complete, procurement of such training targets is a lengthy process which includes opening up our need for a target to commercial industries, this ensures that we get the best value for our money.

In the interim we can help ourselves by making the most of all ASW training opportunities and using the training systems that we already have at our disposal, (S2087 OBT used with the Towed Array in the water gives an excellent opportunity to detect simulated targets amongst real broadband contacts). MCTS provides an ideal training ground offering seedcorn to complex scenarios and although in S2087 terms it does not reflect the at sea software versions, it is still a perfect place to train in a quiet and friendly environment.

S2087 maintainer training is currently limited by a lack of real S2087 equipment to practice on at MWS, a 'Maintainer Training Kit' will be installed there at the beginning of 2016, which will improve WE training whilst also providing operators an opportunity to experience the latest at sea version of 2087.

The same size as a small torpedo, programmable and recoverable. Some of the available targets.



The UW Branch reinvigoration initiative was instigated in December 2013, this saw a number of measures being implemented which included the prioritisation of our manpower into the FFTA and reducing to a minimum manning profile in the non FFTA ships. We were helped by an opening of recruitment taps in favour of UW ratings for a significant period of time and an amended training pipeline ensured that personnel were given full UW training before being assigned to a ship. Although these measures have resulted in a more balanced and stable AB cadre, there is still an issue at the Leading Hand level with a current shortfall of approximately 42 % against liability; which is an Operational Pinch Point (OPP) in manning terms.

For some time now our Leading Hands have had to endure this shortage in their numbers (greater than 49 % at times), sometimes doing back to back deployments, often going from ship to ship and due to a lack of ASW activity finding themselves manning the Ops Room instead of controlling sonars. increased Voluntary Outflow (VO) rate is often the result of the pressures faced by this important cadre of our branch and in addition, our ABs sometimes see promotion to Leading Hand as an unattractive option; which only compounds the issue further.

For the reinvigoration of our branch to be completely successful I think that we should concentrate our efforts on improving the lot of our Leading Hands, giving them some variety in their employment, empowering them as the Leaders they are and giving them the responsibilities that should come with this important step on the leadership ladder.

If we were to take an example from our Submariner counterparts where instead of sitting at the front of the Sound Room with their operators, our Leading Hands take up a leadership position behind them (at the SD position). Now give them the responsibility of controlling every piece of equipment in that Sound Room, with their ultimate goal to provide a valid subsurface picture to the Command.



The importance of Empowerment

The Sonar Director would still be the figure head in the SDR, however with additional freedom to concentrate on those tasks that are often considered as secondary (e.g records, oceanography, and signature reduction). Moving our Leading Hands to a leadership position would also free up consoles at the front of the SDR where additional information (ambient noise, EPS, Ops Room overlays etc) could be displayed. WO Malcolm and his team at MWS are also looking at how we can get more efficient output from our LFAS displays through screen management.

I do recognise that this approach would require a drastic change of mindset in the way that we manage and operate our sonars. HMS SOMERSET tried this routine during their 'Red October' activity in 2014 and their CPOUW (Tanzy Lee) reports that empowerment of our Leading Hands in the SDR is a viable option for consideration. Please let me know your thoughts on this.

Promotions

On behalf of the UW Branch I would like to Congratulate the following for their recent promotion selections (It is great to see so many):

Promotion to CPO(UW) :
PO P Muir
ACPO J Lovewell

Promotion to PO(UW):
LS N Flack
LS C French
LS JP Goodwin
APO L Hallam
LS L Horobin
LS L Hull
LS S Hyslop
LS SJ Murphy
LS RJ Smith
LS S Stockley
LS M Townsend
LS J Weston
LS GJ Wright

Promotion to LS(UW):
AB MS Allan
AB S Barter
AB C Browne
AB A Haggett
AB A Hallimond
AB J Hayes
AB A Hill
AB A Jamieson
AB R Jones
AB J McGuin
AB S McLean
AB CJ Pope
AB P Smith
AB D Yeomans



P8 Poseidon has potential to put the outer skin back onto our ASW Onion

As many of you know, I have a keen interest in aviation and my newsletter wouldn't be complete without at least one picture of an aircraft. This particular aircraft got my attention because it is a commercial airliner that is converted to conduct ASW. It is a replacement for the ageing P3 Orion and is used by America and India. Based upon the Boeing 737 800 the P8 Poseidon has a range of over 4000 miles. Although its normal operating ceiling is up to 41000 ft, it would most likely operate at about half of that on an ASW mission.

Armed with the Mk54 torpedo, a comprehensive acoustic suite and modern radar makes this a formidable submarine hunter albeit from a higher altitude than that normally seen from other Maritime Patrol Aircraft. Newly titled as a Multi Mission Aircraft (MMA) the UK military would benefit hugely if it owned even 1 or 2 of these aircraft. So why the Onion? Well ASW is like an onion; it has 'Layers' and since the demise of Nimrod MRA4 it is the outer skin of the onion that is missing and we as submarine hunters find ourselves ever so much closer to our underwater adversaries in the ASW battle. Boeing see the UK as a potential market for this aircraft and the RAF have been seen recently sabre rattling in the press about our lack of MPA capability, this at a time when the political arena is becoming ever so much more volatile. Now that the General Election is over it will be interesting to see where we are in regard to MMA capability after the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

The American Dream



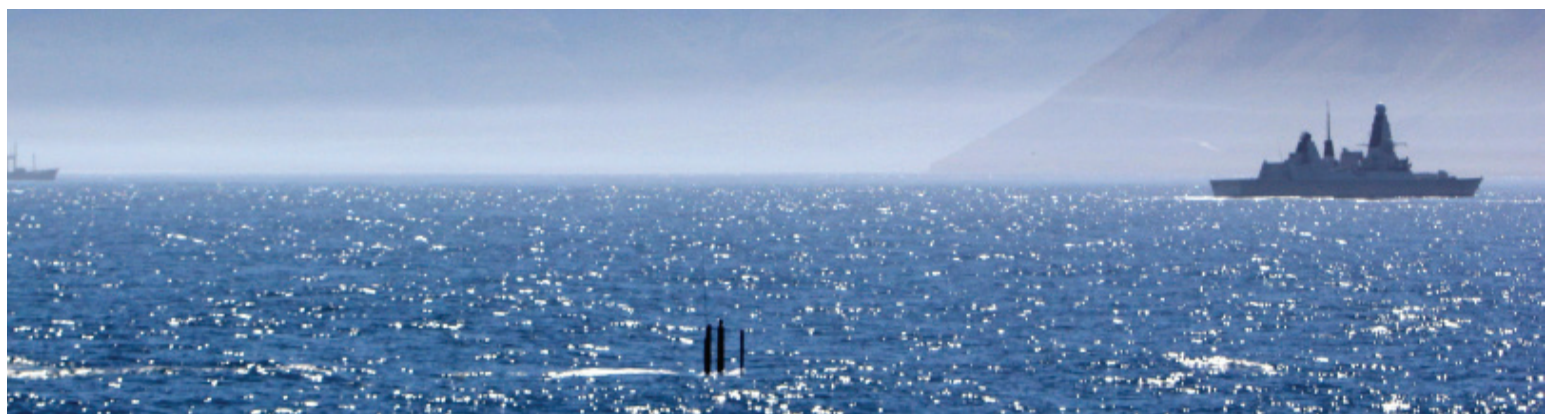
The First UW Branch secondment to NOPF Damneck completed successfully in February this year. LS Charlie Hajigeorgiou and his team flew 3600 miles across the globe to sample life in the sunshine state of Florida USA for a full 7 weeks. At the Naval ocean Processing facility (NOPF) they integrated into this modern sonar facility and experienced the American Dream first hand (well kind of). The main purpose of these secondments is to provide members of the UW Branch with an opportunity to improve their passive ASW SQEP whilst also offering them an insight into what a full assignment there would be like. The facility monitors acoustics on a 24/7 basis and turns amateur analysts into seasoned experts. As you can see by the picture above the American Dream was somewhat thwarted this time due to the cold weather front that remained with them for the majority of their time

in the USA.

Secondment 2 will be departing the UK on 03 Sep and this team can expect the temperatures to be more akin to what they would expect on the Florida Coast. If you would like to go on one of our future secondments let your UW Senior Rate know and get your name forwarded to your respective flotilla XO. Ideally you should be 21 years old with a driving license and committed to a career in the UW Branch. You will also need to be at OPS and to have completed the latest Core Skill Assessment Schemes prior to departure from the UK. The current accommodation option is to share with the incumbent British military personnel; this will likely change in future secondments. If you would prefer to go on a full time assignment to NOPF, ensure that your JPA preferences are completed and again let your UW Senior Rates know.



HMS Dragon v South African Sub



With the stunning back drop of South Africa, HMS DRAGON tests her ASW prowess against the South African Submarine SAN MANTHATISI a Type 209 SSK. Whilst the Portsmouth based Type 45 destroyer was deployed on APT(S) she was asked to participate in the South African Navy Submarine Command Course. Here during a CASEX E3, RFA Gold Rover can also be seen in the distance.



HMS DEFENDER checks out the UV lighting

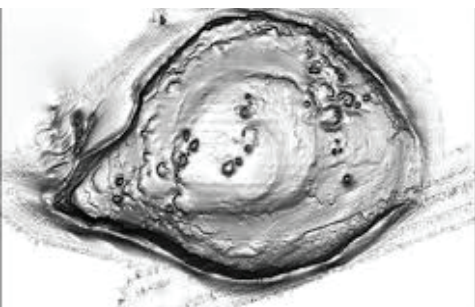
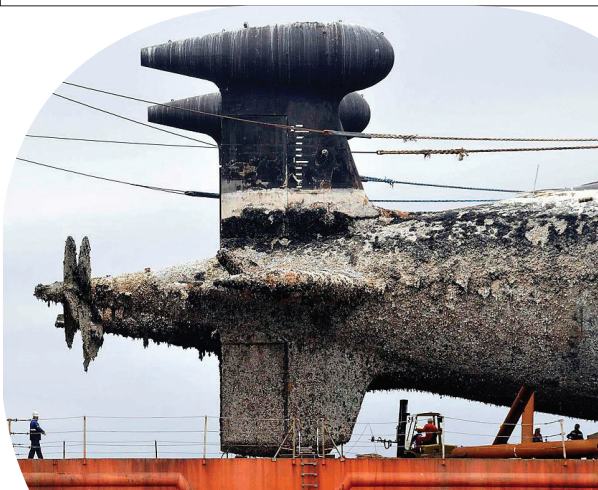
Sticking with the Type 45 theme, PO Bunny Warren sent me this picture of HMS DEFENDER UW team conducting a CASEX during their last EoS deployment. What is it about Tas Apes wanting to turn off all of the lights? Can anyone think of a caption to go with this one??

ASW Efficiency Trophy winners 2014

Now this is how Type 23s do a CASEX! Can you spot all of the UW equipment? HMS RICHMOND is currently deployed away from home and we wish her UW Department all the very best with lot's of in contact time. They were extremely worthy winners of the ASW Efficiency Trophy in 2014 - We congratulate you HMS RICHMOND!



One for the Tas Apes, can you guess what they are?? (Answers in edition 2)



Advertisement

- Do you want your UW team to be showcased in future newsletters? (serious or funny articles/photographs that show what your team does or has been doing in ASW terms)
- Do you have any good survival tips for fellow UW Branch personnel or good ideas that may benefit us all?
- Would you like to see anything in particular in these newsletters?
- If the answer to any of these questions is YES then please contact the editor:

Telephone: 93832 3501 or
email: NAVY SHIPS-ASW WO1

Next Edition

- A look into the future of ASW
- Remembering Andy Cullum
- The ASW onion part 2 showcasing the Airbus C295
- Damneck shout-out
- UW Branch Survival Tips
- FOST the Final Frontier
- Associated with ASW
- More fleet focus
- A history of ASW and the UW Branch