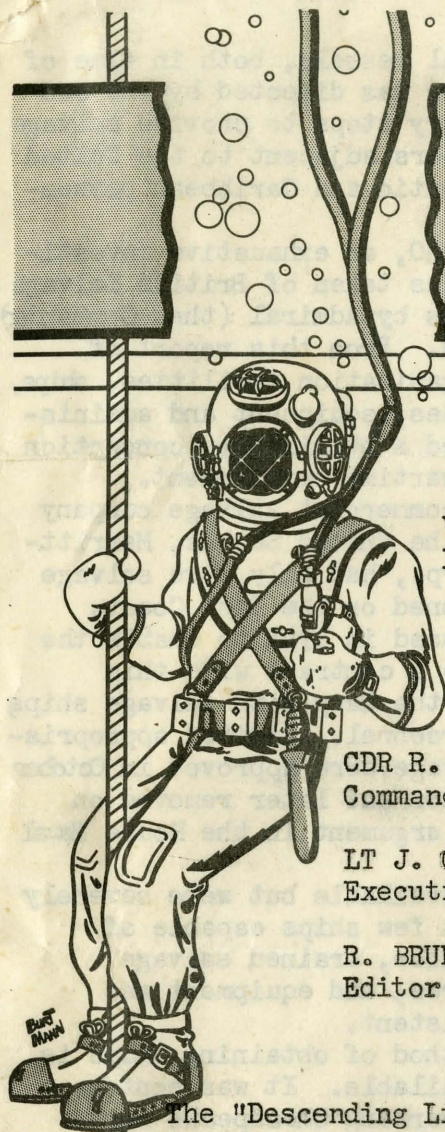


# DESCENDING LINE

U. S. NAVAL SCHOOL, SALVAGE, BAYONNE, N. J.



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CDR R. K. THURMAN  
Commanding Officer

LT J. C. McNICOL  
Executive Officer

R. BRUNING YNCA(DV)  
Editor

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## PROCUREMENT OF DIVING MANUALS

Personnel desiring their own personal copy of the BuShips Diving Manual should write to the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C., enclosing \$1.25 plus postage.

A SURE WAY TO THE FUTURE IS THROUGH  
SAVINGS BONDS

## DESCENDING LINE REESTABLISHED

### SALVAGE SCHOOL CARRIES ON PIER 88 NEWSPAPER

The "Descending Line" which was so familiar to many of the Salvage School old-timers at Pier 88 is once again, with this issue, serving the best interests of salvage by disseminating the hot scoop to the alumni.

Current plans call for an issue monthly, around the first day. It will be sent to Commanding Officers of salvage vessels and diving officers of diving activities.

The aim of the "Descending Line" will be to inform salvage personnel of new techniques, experiences, location of personnel and matters pertaining to salvage training.

"We are particularly interested," says CDR Thurman, "to hear from all salvage personnel. Drop a postal card to us, giving your name, return address, class number or instructor status.

"The 'Descending Line' would like to express appreciation to the Naval Supply Depot at Bayonne for advice and assistance rendered in the preparation of the paper. It is particularly desired to thank Mr. Burt Mann, the Depot Artist, for the eye-catching format.

"It is hoped that Commanding Officers will keep us in mind when mailing in their reports of completed salvage operations, in order that we may publicize the experiences and knowledge to other salvage activities.

"The 'Descending Line' will welcome any contributions to further interest in salvage and suggestions to improve the paper."

## USE OF DIVING DESIGNATORS ENCOURAGED

It has been noted many divers have been assigned to non-diving type vessels due to the failure of commands to utilize diver designators (DV) as shown in RAMI Manual Art D-103 and Secondary NJCs. All qualified divers should make use of their designators in all official correspondence.

SECOND CLASS AS PREREQUISITE FOR SALVAGE  
DIVER PROPOSED

The Chief of Naval Personnel is planning, commencing in January 1955, to make qualification as 2nd Class Diver a prerequisite for Salvage Diver training. In addition, qualification as Salvage Diver will be required prior to entering the Deep Sea School for First Class Diver instruction.

This will permit 2nd Class Divers to become Salvage Divers in ten weeks. 2nd Class Divers who are candidates for Salvage School, whose qualifications have lapsed less than one year, will be requalified at the Salvage School at the commencement of classes. 2nd Class divers whose qualifications have lapsed over one year will be required to take 2 week refresher course at the Salvage School prior to Salvage Diver training.

A Salvage Diver whose qualification has lapsed over one year will require present five week Salvage Refresher course and those whose have lapsed less than one year will be required to requalify in accordance with BuPers Manual Article C-7408 at local facilities.

Officers qualified as Second Class Divers will receive credit for four weeks of the present fourteen week Salvage Officers Course.

SALVAGE SCHOOL TRAINING DIVERS SINCE 1942

During the period between the World Wars, the US Navy carried on no salvage operations of any size. All work on naval vessels requiring large salvage operations or assistance was done on contract with Merritt-Chapman and Scott Corp. on a "no cure - no pay" basis. This corporation was the only one in existence in the U. S. that had facilities, equipment and trained personnel capable of undertaking salvage work on ships of any tonnage. The U. S. Navy did not, therefore, have to maintain costly, fully equipped salvage equipment which would not be used very much.

With the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 and in view of the increased Merchant Marine and expansion of the U. S. Navy, it became apparent that the existing salvage facilities would be inadequate because of the hazards of wartime navigation and submarine warfare. Accordingly, in 1940 the Bureau of Ships which is responsible for providing facilities and arrangements for

the salvage of naval vessels, both in time of peace and during war was directed by the CNO to take all necessary steps to provide salvage services in all waters adjacent to the United States and all Atlantic and Caribbean possessions.

At the end of 1940, an exhaustive investigation and survey was taken of British Salvage methods and problems by Admiral (then Commander) W. A. Sullivan, USN. From this report of British salvage organization facilities, ships, personnel, techniques, equipment and administration, we obtained a preliminary conception of an anticipated wartime requirement.

The only large commercial salvage company then operating in the United States, Merritt-Chapman & Scott Corp., had only five salvage vessels, all stationed on the East Coast. Legislation was passed in 1941 to enable the U. S. to enter into a contract with this company to provide the Navy with salvage ships, facilities, and personnel. Limited appropriations for Navy salvage were approved in October 1941. The limitation was later removed on Admiral Sullivan's argument in the House Naval Affairs Committee.

Funds were now available but were severely handicapped in that few ships capable of salvage were available, trained salvage personnel were scarce, and equipment was practically non-existent.

The quickest method of obtaining ships is to use what was available. It was contemplated in 1941 converting Chesapeake Bay fishing boats and ex-Coast Guard Cutters to salvage vessels. This was never undertaken; the conversion of Bird Class Minesweeps to salvage ships being done instead. At that time, it was not known exactly what was wanted and more important what was required of a salvage ship and consequently these converted minesweeps were found to have limited carrying capacity for salvage gear. Later, six tugs which were being built for British account were turned over to the U. S. Navy upon completion.

In view of the shortage of equipment centrally located salvage depots had to be set up so that the under-supplied salvage ships could acquire this equipment when required. This was a poor situation but the best under existing facilities. The huge coastlines and expanses of water that were patrolled by the few available salvage ships made these depots in many instances unavailable.

While it was possible to obtain some ships and equipment, it was perhaps more difficult to obtain personnel trained in undertaking salvage operations. Those available were

needed on salvage jobs just as much as they were needed to train others and work on the administration and organization of Naval Salvage. Naval experience in salvage was too limited to provide a sufficient number of men qualified for this specialized work without specific additional training.

Such was the salvage situation in general as it existed until we got in full mobilization, and the Salvage School was established at Pier 88, New York City, the scene of disaster of the USS LAFAYETTE (formerly the luxury liner NORMANDIE) in May 1942.

During the war the school trained approximately 2500 salvage officers and salvage divers. Personnel trained at the Salvage School participated in every major invasion in both the European and Pacific Theaters, clearing harbors and attack areas of sunken and stranded vessels, salvaging and reclaiming equipment, the value of which was in excess of \$2,000,000,000.00.

In October 1946, the Salvage School was reestablished at the Bayonne, New Jersey Annex of the New York Naval Shipyard. During this period, over 3,000 salvage officers and salvage divers have been trained and assigned to duty involving diving throughout the world.

In addition to training personnel of our own Navy, the following countries have sent students to the Salvage School: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Mexico, Turkey, Chile, Denmark, and the Netherlands. At present we are privileged with the attendance of officers and enlisted personnel from Korea, Philippines and Brazil.

#### CHCARP AXTELL TO NEW DUTY

CHCARP Clair F. AXTELL, USN, long a familiar salvage figure, has been detached from the Salvage School and ordered to the USS PLYMOUTH ROCK (LSD29), at Gulfport, Mississippi, where his ship is being commissioned.

"Axe", as he is known throughout the fleet, had been a master diver since 1947 and served on various salvage vessels.

Prior to assuming duties as Officer in Charge Pierhead, Demolition and Service Craft at the school, he served on the USS KITTIWAKE (ASRL3).

CHCARP Axtell received many commendations for outstanding diving services from several government agencies while assigned to the Salvage School.

#### FAMILIAR FACES AT SCHOOL

The Salvage School is headed by CDR R. K. THURMAN, who certainly needs no introduction to the readers, with LT J. C. McNICOL serving as Executive Officer and Training Officer. In addition, the following officers are assigned:

LTJG J. R. PINGRY  
Personnel Officer  
ENS A. C. SARGENT  
Instr Naval Architecture  
CHBOSN J. V. MORTON  
First Lieutenant  
CHBOSN W. C. KURZ  
OinC Open Sea Diving  
CHBOSN W. R. FREUND  
OinC Service Craft  
CHMACH W. J. KARKUT  
Machinery Officer

ENS R. E. DALEY has reported as Instructor Salvage Demolition. ENS DALEY previously served at the Salvage School as a GMI and was appointed LDO (Ordnance). He is a graduate of the Deep Sea Diving School and served on the USS KITTIWAKE (ASRL3) before reporting to Bayonne.

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Some familiar names are also seen on the Enlisted Roster.

Instructors. Walt SORENSON BTC of class 2 way back in '46, leads the list with Jerry MONAGHAN, BMC, class 15; Jack McKENZIE BML, class 29 and "Flashbulb" McDOLLE FPL. The First Class Divers, never privileged with attendance at the Salvage School, but nevertheless well known in the fleet, are KILLE, MEC and EISSING, MEC. The "old timers" from Pier 88 may remember "Diving Dan" CRAWFORD, DCC, who is back at the school as an instructor.

PASTOOR, DCC, SCHMIDLING, HMC, and BRUNING, YNC, seem to like duty at the school as they are now on their second tour.

Other Alumni assigned at the school are McKENNEDY, ENC; WALKER, BM2; CALDWELL, BML; and RUTHERFORD, BML.

CALDWELL, BML, has recently returned from Deep Sea School and has qualified as a First Class Diver.

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Salvage personalities who are well known are located as follows:

CDR J. GREELY	BUSHIPS
CAPT L. BELLINGER	COMSERVLANT
CDR J. LEHAN	COMSERVPAC
LCDR J. S. LEONHARD	COMSERVLANT
LCDR J. S. LEES	OinC Net Depot Tiberon Calif
LCDR W. MINOR	Ship Repair Unit New Orleans La.

CONGRATULATIONS to CDR LEES and MINOR on their recent selection to COMMANDER.

CHBOSN CALHOUN is pushing a YTB at San Juan; HANEY and TALLANT pushing "Boots" at Bainbridge and it is anticipated they may influence some volunteers for Salvage School.

### PAPI TO REPORT

Larry PAPI, MEL, First Class Diver, who was an instructor from 1947 to 1949 at the school, will report for duty in November, again taking up his duties as an instructor.

PAPI (known as "little" Papi to distinguish him from his "big" brother who was also an instructor at the school) has been on the SALVAGER, LUISENO and of late the VULCAN since leaving in 1949.

He hails from Chester, Pa., and holds the Bronze Star for diving services rendered during the war.

### CHMACH KARKUT TO BE RELIEVED

CHMACH Walter J. KARKUT, assigned to the School as Machinery Officer, will be relieved in the near future by CHMACH Donald T. PICKFORD who is being ordered from the USS GRASP (ARS24).

### FIFTEEN SHIPS COMPANY AVAILABLE TO COMSERVLANT FOR ASSIGNMENT

Fifteen Salvage School enlisted ship's company have been made available to ComServ Lant for reassignment. Fourteen of the men are seamen and firemen and the list includes PASTOOR, H., DCC, who is completing his 2nd tour of duty at the school. This is one of the largest groups to leave this duty at once.

### SALVAGE CLASS #56 GRADUATES

Graduating from Salvage School on 22 October 1954 were nineteen enlisted USN students, 2 enlisted Brazilians and 2 enlisted Korean students.

Taking top honors in the class was GRUBER, Jack D., BMCA(DV) USN with a 3.70 average.

The class average was 3.35.

Graduates of Class 56 were assigned as follows:

ALCORN, M. A. FP3(DV)	USS NAHANT (AN-83)
BARTLETT, H. D. SN(DV)	USS CASA GRANDE(LSD13)
BRASHEAR, C. M. BM2(DV)	USS TRIPOLI (CVE64)
BROWN, G. J. BM3(DV)	USS SALVAGER (ARSD3)
DIRCKX, L. J. MMFN(DV)	FFA ComWesSeaFron
DUKES, J. A. BMSN (DV)	FFA ComWesSeaFron
FERGUSON, K. W. BM2(DV)	USS BOLSTER (ARS38)
FLOWER, R.V. Jr. MEGFN(DV)	USS TONAWANDA(AN89)
FONTANA, J. P. BM2(DV)	USS GLYNN (APA239)
GRUBER, J. D. BMCA(DV)	USS MARIETTA (AN82)
KRAMER, M. W. BM2(DV)	FFA ComWesSeaFron
LANGVA, H. N. BM3(DV)	USS ROCKWALL (APA230)
LEE, D. V. ENFN(DV)	FFA ComWesSeaFron
McNABB, L. J. ME3(DV)	USS MATACO (ATF86)
MUCKRIDGE, J. M. DCFN(DV)	USS BUSHNELL (ASL5)
RYAN, J. R. MML(DV)	FFA ComWesSeaFron
SANDELLO, M. P. FN(DV)	USS YAZOO (AN92)
SHUTES, D. E. BMSN(DV)	FFA ComWesSeaFron
WRIGHT, G. L. BML(DV)	FlaGrpLantResFlt Green Coves Springs Florida

The "Descending Line" wishes unlimited success to these men in their new chosen venture and it is hoped they will not forget to submit to this paper any new or interesting items or ideas for other divers in the fleet to benefit by.