



The Dolphin March

On a mild and lovely evening in May a few years ago, three submariners were partaking in a mess dinner hosted to commemorate the **Battle of the Atlantic** at the CFB Esquimalt Wardroom. Esquimalt being a tri-service base it seemed that not only were all three represented, but an amazing number of units from within each service.

Per tradition, the small group from the Naden Band began to play Mess Dinner snippets or versions of the Marches of each of the units represented. Now, while pretty well every unit from the Army and Air Force have their own march (even their cadet corps have their own marches) the Navy • the entire Navy • has only the **Heart Of Oak**.

By the time the Band had begun playing March Snippets the three submariners, representing three generations; the Grilse/Rainbow era, the 1980's 'O' Boat era and the new CO of one of the Victoria Class boats, had sobriety pretty well bound and gagged and locked in a back room.

About half way through what was beginning to feel like an endless list of scattered groups of those who had served at one time or other with the unit whose march was currently being played, standing and singing badly along with the Band, one of the submariners decided that the Submarine Force needed its own march. The other two heartily agreed and that decision sustained them through the rest of the snippets and bad singing.

By the time sobriety had got itself untangled and out of the back room, it was not very gentle explaining to three just what a challenge they had decided to take on. But, being submariners, it was a challenge embraced and therefore necessary to see through to completion.

The Commanding Officer of the Naden Band was recruited, initially as an advisor, to assist with figuring out how to stick handle this marvellous idea through the various levels of bureaucracy, starting with the Navy itself, to actually make it happen.

About a year into the process, one of the submariners was sitting in the Band CO's office lamenting the lack of progress. As the CO leaned back in his chair, a **'I wonder if'** look came across his face and he almost whispered, **"What if you, as President of the Submariners Association, wrote to me, as Commanding Officer of the Band, asking for the Band to write a March for your Association to use during your reunions and other gatherings? I can approve that!"**

Well the President, being an old submariner, responded with, **"And why has it taken a year to come up with that idea?"** Followed by, **"All those in favour? Against? Carried!"**

Over the ensuing year one of the members of the band, bassoonist **PO2 Robyn Jutras**, who had written a new March for the PPCLI's Centenary in 2014, agreed to have a

go at it. The only 'guidance' she was given was that the March would have to include the rhythm of, "**Aoogah, Aoogah, Dive, Dive, Dive**".

Finally, on the 20th of June, 2017, with the Old Submariner in the Band's control room, the Naden Band recorded what had become known as '**The Dolphin March**'.

A mere two days later, at a celebration dinner for the **50th Anniversary of the HMCS Onondaga's** commissioning, the March and its Composer were introduced to the submarine community. It and **PO2 Robyn Jutras** got a standing ovation.

CD copies had been made in advance for everyone in attendance and extras were quickly mailed to the SAOC branches in Ottawa and Halifax. Both played it for their members at their next meeting with a similar reaction. In fact, at the Halifax meeting the late Captain (Ret'd) Ray Hunt immediately proposed that Robyn be made an Honorary Submariner. Of course that was not within the Association's purview but making her an **Honorary Member of the Submariners Association of Canada** was. That motion was quickly adopted by all three branches and shortly afterwards she was presented with a certificate suitable for the occasion as well as an Association ball cap. *(We go all out at times like this).*

When a copy of the march was presented to the then new CO of the Submarine Force, **Captain Chris Robinson**, he promised that Robyn would be invited along for a day trip on one of the boats, '**in due course**'. As we enter 2020 she is still awaiting the invite, but was recently told by the new CO, **Captain Steph Ouellet**, that they have not forgotten and it is still on their agenda.

SAOC Central managed to get an 'unofficial copy' of the March to the then Commander of RCN, Vice-Admiral Ron Lloyd who told his people that if they want a march, make it happen.

Whether or not '**The Dolphin March**' has now 'officially' been accepted by the various levels of bureaucracy, it has most definitely been accepted by the Submarine Force and the Naden Band itself, which regularly includes it in its repertoire at many of its concerts.

And, Robyn was recognized by the Navy as the recipient of a RCN Commendation for writing this March.

So, to Sobriety, "**It seems that your long ago cynicism was uncalled for!**"

If you have not already done so, click the '**Play March**' link on the CD above. It is also, now available on **YouTube** at <https://youtu.be/SZO7tx-Jm-E> (copy and paste) and Robyn has written a Mess Dinner 'snippet' for the next time that three submariners are in attendance.



PO2 Robyn Jutras receiving a RCN Commendation from Capt(N) Christopher Robinson, CO Canadian Submarine Force. CFB Esquimalt Outlook Photo by SLt M.X. Déry