

In search of divers... The Navy's clearance diving officers: A Different Breed.

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The Navy is looking for a few good men and women. Are you the sort of officer who could enjoy maintaining hands-on skills throughout your career, working with some of the most versatile service personnel and expert divers in the Canadian Forces, and leading small teams in challenging and sometimes hazardous circumstances? If so, specializing as a naval clearance diving officer (MARS 7ID) could be the right choice for you.

A clearance diving officer must first be a qualified naval officer and a qualified ships diving officer. Then he or she must be a successful student of the preliminary course, which tests leadership, initiative, teamwork, stamina and practical skills in unique breathing apparatus in a variety of demanding tests.

Once you have been successfully screened at the "prelim", as it's known, you will undergo eight months of intense training in attack swimming, bomb disposal, deep diving, explosives, diving medicine, mine-warfare theory, physics and physiology. Once qualified in Canada, two more essential out-of-country qualifications must be obtained: U.S. Navy Salvage Diving Officer and Advanced Explosive Ordnance Disposal Officer, also with the U.S. Forces. These total another 8 months of training, all of which should be completed before your first opera-

tional appointment to a Clearance Diving Team. The combined total of 16 months formal training truly makes you a "long course" graduate in the traditional naval sense. If you serve at one of the Fleet diving units, you will understudy in, and when qualified, assume command of a YARD diving tender. If in HMCS Cormorant, you could find yourself qualifying to be a submersible pilot of the state-of-the art, 2000-foot capable, SDL-1; taking charge of deep dives to over 300 feet using the Canadian-modified Super Lite 17B diving system; and coordinating seabed searches and surveys using the highly-sophisticated side-scan sonar fitted onboard.

If your first diving appointment is to the Experimental Diving Unit at the Defence and Civil Institute of Environmental Medicine in Toronto, you will work on developing diving

equipment, procedures and operational concepts, using world-class facilities, often in international teams manned by the USN, RN and other allied nations.

Later in your career a variety of challenging international exchange positions are open to you as a CDO. The MARS 7ID officers' skills are directly applicable to mine counter measures operations and provide an ideal foundation for further specialization in that field.

In addition to the specialist career, the highly motivated diving officer can successfully progress his naval skills in sea-command and operations. The old "limits" no longer apply and already two officers have achieved commander rank, one serving as a sea-going commanding officer twice thus far. It

takes a lot of hard work and some personal sacrifice to achieve this, while also remaining a credible, competent specialist in the diving field, but it can be done.

Your specialist pay as a clearance diving officer is \$389 monthly. While at sea in HMCS Cormorant you would also draw your full sea pay. These combined make you the highest-paid general service officer specialist in the CF. This gives you some idea of the demands and challenges awaiting the successful applicant. If you're interested, contact the training officer at your nearest clearance diving unit or ship for more information on this demanding and rewarding naval specialization. The recent message MARCOM HQ/SSO TRG//211445Z Dec 90 #4782 solicits for the 1991 course.