

HM SM Torbay – Freedom of Torbay

Extracted from Herald & Express by Norrie Millen with kind permission of the newspaper

HMS TORBAY has been granted the Freedom of the Borough. More than 100 sailors from the submarine marched through Torquay town centre this morning as part of the ceremony. Commander Dan Knight, HMS Torbay, received the honorary Freedom of the Borough of Torbay at the traditional ceremony.

It began outside the town hall by a parade of the crew from the town hall with ceremonial guard, platoons and the Royal Marines' Band. The sailors marched from the town hall, down through Union Street and Fleet Street, along the Strand before circling around the clock tower. The event finished with a salute returned by the council outside the war memorial.

Commanding Officer - Commander Knight said: "Our ship's company and I, and our predecessors over the past 28 years, are immensely grateful to the Torbay community for the support shown.

"Not only to HM S/M Torbay, but to the Royal Navy as a whole throughout this great borough's history. Today is a wonderful celebration of that support."

"As submariners, we routinely spend long periods away from home, at sea, conducting tasks that we can't readily discuss, isolated from our friends and family.

"Those working conditions are made all the more tolerable by the knowledge that we have the support of both our families, and the wider community we serve.

"Today is important because it is a clear demonstration of our commitment to you, and your commitment to the people that serve you."

HMS Torbay was officially recognised as an affiliate of the Borough of Torbay in 1989.

Since then, the submarine has maintained strong links with many associations including sea cadets and RNA Torbay. The crew also take part in Torbay remembrance ceremonies and work with charities and schools.

Mayor Gordon Oliver presented Commander Knight with the Freedom of the Borough of Torbay scroll at the ceremony.

He said: "I am delighted that Commander Knight and his crew have found time in their busy schedule to come here today, visiting schools and charities across the Bay.

"It is therefore a great honour to present this honorary Freedom of the Borough of Torbay to Commander Knight on behalf of HMS Torbay. You risk your lives to protect us so we sleep at night knowing we are safe.

"On behalf of the people of Torbay, from the bottom of our hearts, we say thank you."

Chief Petty Officer Jim Tozer, serves on board HMS Torbay and lives in Torquay. He said: "Having been in the Royal Navy for 16 years it is a special occasion for me to be able to parade through my home town. Events like today are becoming rarer and it will stand out in the memories of everyone involved as an exceptional event."

Chief Petty Officer Neil Abraham, also of Torquay, said: "I am proud to be representing the Royal Navy in my home town and it is extra special to me that my family can come and watch the parade through the streets."

The Freedom of the Borough historically gives the crew the right to bear arms in the borough



President's Patter

Freedom of Torbay

by Peter Brown

On arrival at Town Hall, Torquay, we gathered upstairs with others and met up with Captain RN, CO of HM Submarines, Devonport, CPO Coxswain of HMS Torbay, Commander CO, HMS Torbay, and others from the Council including the Mayor, Gordon Oliver. We went out beside the saluting base for the arrival of the RM Band heading the parade of the boat's crew with their armed escort (complete with fixed bayonets!).

They all turned to face the dais and the Mayor gave his address, followed by the CO of HMS Torbay and a brief service by an HM Padre'.

At 10:15 the Parade marched off down Union Street and we had a lift to the Cenotaph in Princess Gardens. It was there at about 10:45 that the Parade arrived and the salute was taken by Jane Barnby, Chairman of Torbay Council.

Another lift to Livermead House Hotel, ahead of the crowd from the parade and we gathered in the bar area for a refresher and many yarns of past and present in the Service!

At 12 noon all were mustered in the ballroom area (approximately 150) and a Buffet Lunch was served to a never ending queue! But it all went so well before some of the Crew were off to visit some of the schools in Torbay, not before the Chairman had given her vote of thanks to all who served in HMS Torbay and the CO replied with his thanks to Torbay Council and presented cheques to Torbay Sea Cadets and another Charity.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Peter Brown'.