

† Cdre B.V. Hegarty, DSC

— Capt D.B. Reaper SAN (Ret)

BRIAN VINCENT HEGARTY was born in Newlands, Cape Town, on 25 August 1917. He was educated at St Joseph's College, Rondebosch, and SA College High School. He matriculated from the latter in 1935. His passion as a young lad was sailing and he often sailed with the famous Advocate Beauclerck Upington in his yacht *Innisfallen*.

He joined the Seaward Defence Force in November 1939 and was promoted to Sub-Lieutenant on 1 June 1940. He attended a Sub-Lieutenant's Qualifying Course from July to November 1940 at the RNVR (SA) Base in Port Elizabeth. After serving in Cape waters for a few months he proceeded North to the Mediterranean where he served aboard HMSAS *Southern Sea* in Egypt, Israel, Libya and Cuneana, from December 1940 until April 1942, as Watchkeeper/Gunnery Officer. He returned to the Union in May 1942 serving in HMSAS *Robinson* and HMSAS *Benoni* in South African waters. In November 1942 he returned to the Mediterranean for his second tour of duty, as Commanding Officer HMSAS *Seksern* until September 1944, when he returned to the Union for a short visit. It was during the latter tour of duty when the *Seksern* was employed in Tobruk and Benghazi and had to frequently transit the 'bomb alley' to Alexandria, that he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

He returned to the Mediterranean in October 1944, for a third tour and reported for duty in Marseilles to serve as second in command to the then Lt Cdr H.H. Biermann on board HMSAS *Gamtoos*, who has described him as a most efficient, reliable and capable Naval Officer.

He applied to join the Permanent Force (SANF) in 1945 and was appointed in the rank of Lieutenant on 1 June 1946. After serving as the Executive Officer at HMSAS *Unitie* until the end of May 1946, he was sent to Pretoria to serve on the Staff of Director General SANF, Commodore F.J. Dean. In March 1947 he proceeded to the United Kingdom to undergo a Lieutenant Qualifying course with the Royal Navy.

Together with Lt Tommy Farr he attended courses at HMS *Excellent*, *Dryad Mercury* and *Osprey* and also at HMS *Siskin* where he obtained his 'A' Flying Licence. It is rumoured that he never flew solo again! On completion of these courses he was appointed as Assistant to the Military Advisor in South Africa House, London. On his return to South Africa in 1949 he was appointed in Command of HMSAS *Pietermaritzburg* and in June 1950 was promoted to Lieutenant-Commander. He left her in



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1951 and was appointed as Officer Commanding SAS *Unitie* in January 1952. To his great joy he was reappointed to a seagoing post in Command of SAS *Transvaal* in December 1952 where he served until he went to Pretoria once again as Staff Officer Reserves at Defence Headquarters from March until July 1955. From July 1955 until May 1958 he served on the Staff of the Military Adviser, as SA Naval Liaison Officer in South Africa House, London. During this period on 1 December 1957 he was promoted to Commander. In June 1958 on his return to South Africa (the SAN had moved lock, stock and barrel from Durban to Simon's Town on April 1957) he was appointed as Officer Commanding SA Naval Barracks Simon's Town until February 1960 when he stood by SAS *Transvaal*, as

Officer Commanding designate after the ship's conversion and modernisation. In October she commissioned and he enjoyed two happy years in her until March 1962 when he came ashore to take over as Staff Officer (Operations) and Deputy Director to Naval Chief of Staff. In December 1962 he was promoted to Captain and appointed in Command of SAS *Vrystaat* and Senior Officer, 10th Frigate Squadron. In November of 1963 he attended a course in the UK for commanding officers of ships flying helicopters and on his return to the RSA was appointed in Command of SAS *Simon van der Stel*, after her conversion to a helicopter carrier. Here he remained until January 1965 and in February was appointed in command of SAS *President Steyn* until March 1966 when he was selected as the Director of a Scientific Expedition to Bouvet Island. After that he commanded the SAS *Jan van Riebeeck* on her completion of conversion to helicopter carrier from April 1966 until September 1966.

This was to be his last seagoing appointment as in September 1966 he was appointed as Officer Commanding Minesweeping Base and Senior Officer Reserve Fleet. He held this post until October 1967 when he was appointed as Military, Air and Naval Attaché in Argentina. On 1 December 1968 he was promoted to Commodore and reappointed as the Military Attaché in Buenos Aires. Here he served with distinction and was awarded the 'Distincion Al Merito — Fuerza Aerea' by the Argentinian Air Force and received the 'Gran Oficial De La Orden De Mayo Al Merito Naval' in 1972, for his contribution to cementing relations between the two countries. On his return to the RSA in March 1972 he was appointed as Director Training and Manning at Naval Headquarters, the post he held until his retirement on 30 June 1974.

Brian Vincent Hegarty died on 7 September 1993. I was privileged to know and serve under him on various occasions during my service career and his passing has left us all the poorer. His ability to relate the many amusing incidents he experienced during the serious war years when he served in various ships of the SANF in the Mediterranean, will be remembered by those of us who served with him in the post-war years. He was a modest man with a delightful sense of humour, coupled with what can only be described as an 'impish and infectious' laugh.

It was during his second term in London that he met and married his lovely life's companion Jacqueline Elizabeth Andre Terlien (Bonnie) on 27 October 1957. Together with her son Bruce, they formed a very close knit family unit and it was a tragic occurrence for Bruce that both Bonnie and Brian died within a short period of one another in the second half of this year. Brian's passing brings to a close yet another chapter in the history of the SAN.