

With the chat about Bongles and Trongles I just remembered another story from back then. As I remember, Bongles were basically a can with a couple of ball bearings in and when shaken made a 'bongling noise'. 'Trongles' I believe were a more troublesome electronic 'Improvement'!

Location:- Area around the Island of Pulau Tioman, East of Malaysia.
Submarine:- 'Anchorite'.
Date: Sometime around 1966 or 67.
Environment: The exercise had been planned between the Royal Marines SBS and SM7 Submarine 'Anchorite'.
Arrangement:- That the Submarine would be in position some distance off the Island, submerged, at a set time in the middle of the night.
Exercise:- 'Goldfish' with RM Special Boat Section (SBS).

I think that it was a group of about six SBS divers, who were to parachute from a low flying aircraft, out of sight of the Island, in a prearranged location in total darkness, with the Submarine dived at periscope depth. An interesting point is that one of the Marines had an outboard motor strapped to one leg in the jump. He was to release the motor on its line prior to reaching the water.

The Marines hoped that the Submarine would be in a position that had been arranged some while before, but showing no lights. The only indication of our presence was a black flotation bag called a 'Buffalo' on the surface. Under this was a 'Snag line' that had been rigged between the bow and the periscope standards.

The Marines were then to arrange themselves in a line, spread out quite a long way apart and then started 'Bongling or Trongling' so that the Sonar operators in the boat could get a fix on them and the boat steer towards them. Not sure which, but as there had already been many 'Goldfish' exercises, probably they were 'Improved Trongles'.

As the boat approached, the gun tower top hatch was opened remotely. As was arranged for the Gun Tower 'two man escape system', with a dim red light showing inside the tower.

Seeing the approaching 'buffalo' the first Marine would find the snag line and closely followed by the second, they would follow the line down to the open gun tower hatch. Climb down inside and when both are inside, bang on the lower lid. Also, their presence in the tower was indicated by the shadow on the lower hatch window,

The top hatch was shut by the remote rod gearing, and the inboard drain valve and vent was opened. The water from the tower was drained through a hose to the Air conditioning compartment bilge – mostly! It was all a pretty damp affair.

The tower drained, the lower lid was opened, and two very wet divers climbed down into the wardroom passage.

Meanwhile the second pair of divers were 'snagging on' and coming down to the gun tower, waiting for the top hatch to be opened.

The first pair would then find their way forward to the Senior rates mess. Put all the lights on, and demand cans of beer. This in the very early hours of the morning. Watchkeepers

not long off watch and others going on again very soon, made the Marines not overly welcome, especially as their black diving suits were splashing great lumps of South China sea everywhere. Not very welcome at all. Even less when the second and eventually the third pairs arrived, equally thirsty and equally wet.

The diver with the outboard motor had stowed it somewhere inside the casing before entering the gun tower. I think the motor was inside some sort of waterproof cover in the hope that it would start if needed.

At one point whilst running in to pick up the divers, the boat started to lose depth a bit and speeded up. The divers had to nip a bit to catch us up. Got them all though.

The boat then ran in closer to the island and it was almost time for the divers to 'depart' again. In their pairs, they climbed up into the gun tower. No easy feat in their rubber suits, masks and diving gear tanks and other gear. Lower lid shut and clipped, the drain valve checked shut and the flood valve remotely opened. When the lower hatch window showed that they were away the top hatch was shut remotely, the tower drained down and the procedure repeated for the second and then third pairs.

OK for us snug inside our lovely comfortable Submarine, but can you imagine jumping out of an aeroplane, in the dead of night, into total blackness, and landing in the sea, and hoping like hell that there is a Submarine down there waiting to pick you up. If it had not been there, it would have been a very long swim over to the island, probably ten miles away !!!!! But then these guys were SBS Booties !!!!

Having no money with them, the cost of their beers came out of the mess funds !!!!
