



NEWS

THE RBDF PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

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The Founding Father of Diving in The Royal Bahamas Defence Force - Leading Seaman Simeon Gardiner

By: Petty Officer Monique Deveaux

Defence Headquarters, 27 JUL. '21 (RBDF): Like any good father, the goal is to produce an heir to carry on a legacy with the hopes of making a greater influence on their generation. Such was the case of Leading Seaman Simeon Gardiner, who completed the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Course in Panama City, Florida, and as a result, the first official military diver within the Royal Bahamas Defence Force.

During the formative years of diving, the organization did not have a structured dive course. With a wealth of knowledge obtained from naval dive school, Gardiner sought ways to increase the capabilities of the dive unit. He, therefore, requested to conduct a military dive course that would be fashioned after that of the training he attended in Florida.

The development of a military dive unit was a combination of an elite group of RBDF personnel who can be deployed on various crafts as divers, thus, enhancing the operational efficiency and resources of the organization. Instead of having to shorten a patrol to because of a damaged hull, a trained diver on board can investigate and possibly rectify the situation. With sufficient information, necessary maintenance and repairs can be made by the diver. Although the placement of divers on RBDF vessels didn't happen under Gardiner's tour of duty, the legacy he left ensured that this dream was realized.

As it pertains to diving, Leading Seaman Gardiner also envisioned the Force as a strategic partnership within the region.

"I wanted the organization to have the best diving program in the Caribbean; a place where countries in the region can send their divers to be trained. Because it is important to learn from

each other, I wanted to build the region with a cadre of skillful and dedicated divers who can help secure and strengthen our borders.”

The organization has since expanded the RBDF Military Dive Team, from its initial count of nine (9) marines, to a program of ninety (90) military divers inclusive of four (4) female divers. Leading Seaman Gardiner’s legacy was built his on being fair, requiring others to achieve a higher standard, and as a result, qualifying to be a successful military diver.

An entrepreneur, Mr. Gardiner is the proprietor of S&L Welding, East Street South, where he has operated for the past thirty years. The Royal Bahamas Defence Force is grateful for the years of dedicated service Gardiner has contributed to the success of the organization.

In his final words of advice: “To my fellow marines, it is important not only to train but to pass on knowledge to the younger generation. Teach the younger generation to be committed husbands/wives, to be men and women of integrity. We must train the future generation to be good employees, and teach them skills that they may one day become employers.”

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