

COMMANDER CRABB MYSTERY.

Commander Crabb's name has jumped into the news since the Soviet cruiser Ordshonikidze came to Portsmouth Harbour bringing Bulganin and Khrushchev on their visit to Britain. The Russian warship aroused much comment at the time; what could be seen of her speed and equipment was impressive. But as yet her name was not linked with that of Commander Lionel Crabb, G.M., a distinguished Naval frogman who took part in the attempt to rescue the men trapped in the submarine Truculent disaster, six years ago. Pathe News brings you exclusive pictures of Commander Crabb and his colleagues at work on that tragic day - Friday January 13th, 1950. Here is Crabb himself, preparing for a dive to the doomed submarine.

During the Ordshonikidze's visit, her captain reported a frogman had been seen alongside. The British Navy denied it. But eleven days later, the British Press were talking about Commander Crabb. He was missing, reported killed while testing new underwater equipment. The explanation seemed thin, and public opinion was not satisfied. There was questions in the House; Labour leaders were saying, "We may have quarrelled with our guests at dinner, but at least we didn't search their luggage". Russia sent a Note of protest; Britain sent a Note of apology, and Sir Anthony Eden told the House, "What was done was done without the authority or the knowledge of Her Majesty's Ministers. Appropriate disciplinary steps are being taken". He would say no more, on the grounds that "certain things are the responsibility of the Prime Minister himself"- which the House, and the world, took to mean the secret service.

So the mystery remains: what was Commander Crabb doing when he disappeared? Was he spying on the Soviet cruiser? Was Naval Intelligence, without the Government's knowledge, guilty of a blunder which might have imperilled the success of one of the most vital international meetings since the war? Did he die - or is he still alive - somewhere?

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