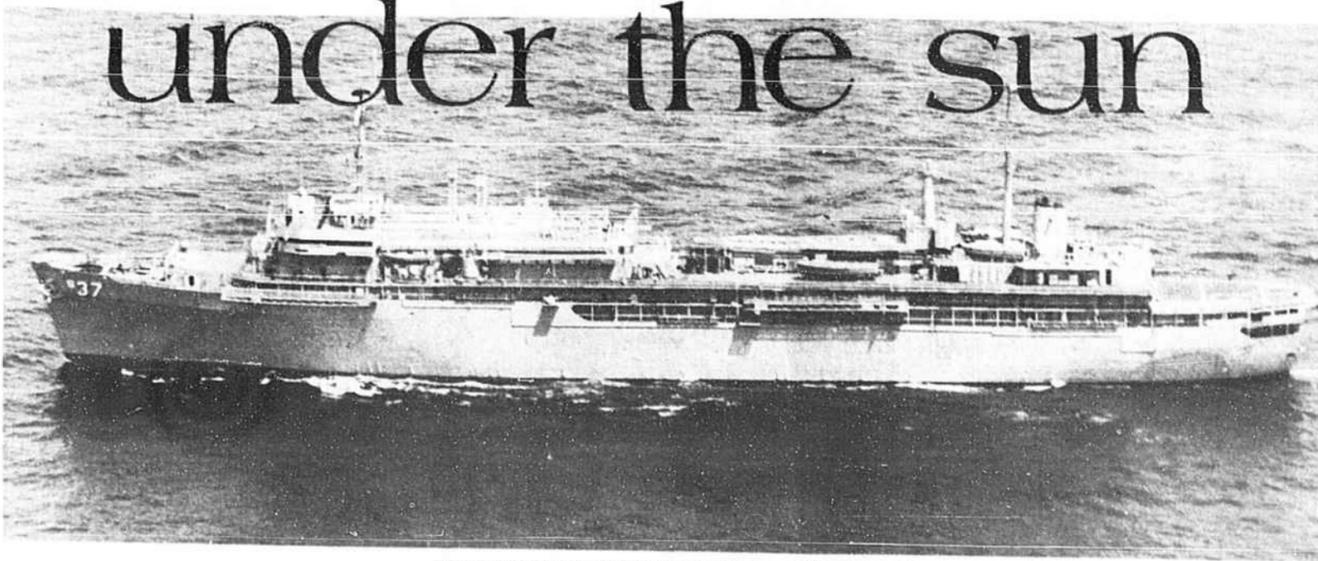


under the sun



THE USS DIXON under way off the Southern California coast.



SUSAN PIVER serves aboard the submarine tender USS Dixon, homeported in San Diego. The 21-year-old petty officer third class is the daughter of Shirley Piver of Shallotte.

Shallotte Native Operates Store On Submarine Tender

BY BARRY SEYMOUR

Journalist Assigned To The Navy Public Affairs Center, San Diego

"Run silent, run deep" have long been watchwords for the submarine service, but today's modern attack subs couldn't run at all without the support from ships like the submarine tender USS Dixon.

Susan Piver, daughter of Shirley Piver of Shallotte, is a part of that support system. She is a ship's serviceman aboard the Dixon, homeported in San Diego, California. The 21-year-old petty officer third class is a 1982 graduate of West Brunswick High School.

"I'm the ship's store operator," she says. "I've also worked as a purchasing agent and records keeper for my division."

"Our ship's store serves the whole crew. We sell personal items like toothpaste and uniform items, but we also sell stereos, cameras and other things."

"We really need the store when the ship goes to sea. The prices are often better than in the civilian world too, so it can be a bargain for the crew as well."

The Dixon's mission is to provide intermediate level support for attack submarines, doing work that otherwise would require a sub to visit a shipyard. That support includes repairing equipment, issuing and repairing torpedoes and missiles and supplying spare parts.

The ship also provides "hotel services," such as electrical power and fresh water, to subs berthed alongside, as well as a variety of personnel, medical, and disbursing services.

Piver entered the Navy in November of 1982. "I joined the Navy to travel," she says. "I come from a small town, so I wanted to broaden my horizons."

"My dad was in the Navy. Originally I didn't want to join—I thought it was the last thing I'd do, but I couldn't afford college, so one day I signed up. My mom loves the idea. She's all for it."

After boot camp in Orlando, Fla., Piver served tours of duty at a naval weapons magazine in Hawaii and a weapons station in Charleston, S.C. She reported aboard the Dixon in September of 1984.

"I like dealing with the crew. I get a good feel for what the crew likes by seeing what they buy. At sea, people do a lot of socializing around the store, too. You learn a lot about the people you work with."

The Dixon was the first ship of her kind to deploy to the Indian Ocean in 1981. During that employment the ship supported U.S. Navy submarines and surface ships.

Piver has yet to go overseas, but did visit Acapulco recently on board the Dixon.

"The city has a lot of natural beauty," she says. "It's similar to Hawaii. I like tropical places—warm water, colorful flowers, the mountains—anything dealing with nature."

"I went parasailing, saw the cliff divers, and took taxi rides to see the area around the city. I also did some shopping."

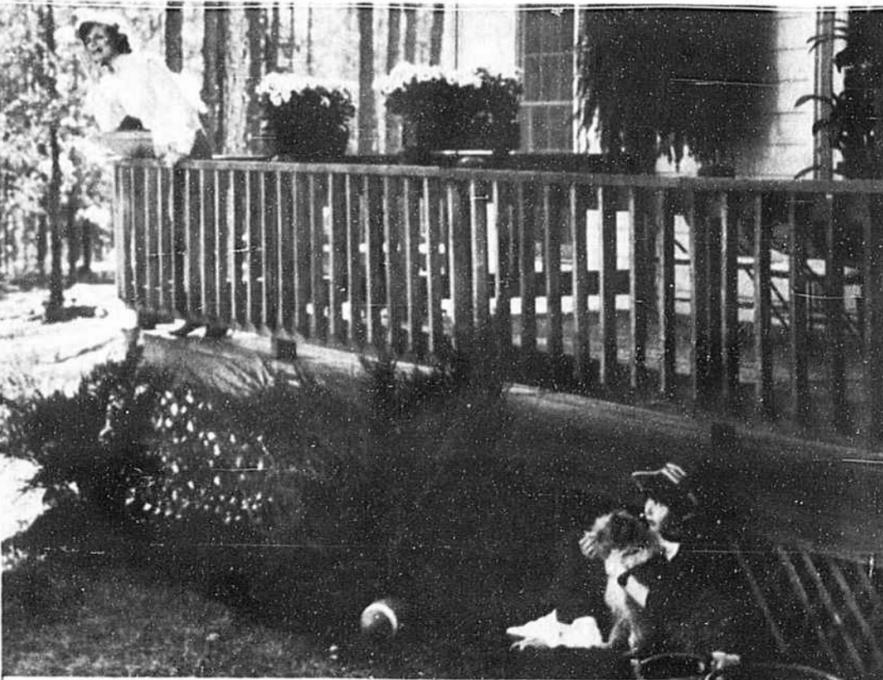
Piver is hoping for order overseas, hopefully to Rota, Spain. She is also planning marriage soon, to Patrick Christian, of LaVergne, after which the couple will travel to Piver's next duty station.

Piver says the Navy has helped her grow.

"I've grown up a lot," she says. "I've seen a lot of people who were different from those I grew up around. It's helped me to widen my views and open up my perspective."



SHIP'S SERVICEMAN SUSAN PIVER of Shallotte runs a well-stocked ship's store. She is a 1982 graduate of West Brunswick High and is a three-year Navy veteran.



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