

## 18. TORPEDO DEPOTS

These, although not an integral part of the Dockyard, are often situated inside the Dockyard area. The Depots are in charge of Engineer Officers, R.N., usually styled Torpedo Engineer Officers, functioning under the direction of the Director of Armament Supply, Admiralty, and under the general control of the Superintendent of the Yard, but also working directly under the C. in C. in many matters.

The Depot is responsible for the replenishment and refreshment of the Fleet based on the Port, with torpedoes, paravanes and associated components and stores, and consists of the usual workshops, stores, administrative and clerical offices, a small drawing office, etc. The workmen employed are fitters, coppersmiths, smiths, skilled and ordinary labourers.

The early history of the Depot at Portsmouth is not at all clear. The main workshops date from 1886.

In their earlier days 18" and 14" Torpedoes were ranged at Horsea Island but since the 1914/18 war all ranging has been done at Weymouth.

The Depot originally functioned under Captain H.M.S. *VERNON* but was transferred to the control of the Superintendent of Ordnance Stores early in this century. The Officer in charge has been variously described as Staff Engineer, Naval Engineer, Manager Torpedo Depot, Superintendent Torpedo Depot, and now Torpedo Engineer Officer.

It is recorded that the first 21" Torpedo, 21" Mk. I, No.1, was sent from Portsmouth to Weymouth for ranging and lost on its first run. It was not recovered despite much sweeping. Twenty years later another 21" Torpedo sank on the same range. The sweep brought up not the latest Torpedo but the original 21" Mark I, No. 1.