

STAR **WOMAN** WORLD CUP FREE ZONE 

NAVY FOR YOU



WHALE OF A TIME: Geraldine Comiskey experiences life at sea

"HOW would you like to go to sea with 50 men?" — It was an offer I couldn't resist.

My country needed me, I told myself as I prepared to board the Naval ship Aisling for a week's patrol. There would be two other girls aboard. I was told: Steward Clare Barry and Telegrapher Tilly Barry (no relation). But that didn't stop people teasing me before I left to meet the ship in Cobh. *The giant guns were muzzled as I boarded for the trip from Cobh to Galway but the feeling of being on a war-ship was always present.*

SICK

Because the crew is so small, and in such a tight space, everyone pulls their weight — even if they're seastick, like I was. At sea, there is no such thing as AWOL — or "Navy Flu", until I came along.

Luckily, I had no rank and could not be disciplined. Officially, I was "conscripted" as a diver, under Diving and Navigation Officer Lt Eddie Mulligan and Leading Shipwright Tom Kennedy, both members of the Navy's elite Diving Unit.

Just a week before I arrived, Eddie had blown up a 35-pounds anti-submarine bomb underwater, off Baltimore.

We found no bombs or mines this time, but I did get to see the propellers underwater. I also got to "drive the

Girl making waves on a

coastal trip

GERALDINE GOMISKEY IS ALL AT SEA



ship" (supervised by Seamen Paul Kelly and Dave Fitzpatrick, with Eddie giving the orders). Oddly, the nausea disappeared when I boarded a Spanish trawler off the west coast with the

Boarding and Gunner Officer, Dubliner Conor O'Dwyer (23) and Petty Officer Ger Menhane (30) from Cork.

Pirate

I felt like a pirate as I

climbed up a rope ladder onto the rusty trawler, but the Spanish skipper welcomed us with mugs of strong black coffee laced with sugar. Conor examined the log book and questioned th



AHOY ME MATEIES: Geraldine's looking ship shape with the crew of the Navy ship Aisling