

## **Tribute to Fifty Fathoms No Rad: a limited-edition reinterpretation of an iconic model**

**Blancpain reinterprets one of its emblematic historical timepieces, the Fifty Fathoms "no radiations". This mid-1960s diving instrument, of which one version was used by the German Navy's Combat Swimmers, had the characteristic feature of being stamped with a "no radiations" logo indicating that Blancpain was not using luminescent materials composed of radium. This distinctive symbol on the watch dial has forged its success; the timepiece and its variants are now among the most iconic Fifty Fathoms models, which the new Tribute to Fifty Fathoms No Rad intends to honour. Collectors take note: this watch is issued in a 500-piece limited series.**

The Tribute to Fifty Fathoms No Rad watch revisits the historical model that inspired it. Its matt deep black dial is punctuated by geometrical hour-markers, combining traditional round dots as well as rectangles and a diamond-shaped mark at 12 o'clock. The chapter ring, the hands and the time scale on the bezel all feature "old radium"-coloured Super-LumiNova® reprising the beige-orange hue of vintage indicators bearing the patina of time. At 3 o'clock sits a date aperture highlighted by a white rim, as seen on one of the 1960s models. The yellow and red "no radiations" logo remains the dominant element on the dial, adding to the already strong character of this timepiece. The unidirectional rotating bezel, featuring a graduation typical of the initial Fifty Fathoms models, is fitted with a sapphire insert, a distinctive feature of the contemporary collection. Its domed profile contributes to the depth effect of the watch face, already enhanced by the use of a glassbox-type sapphire crystal. Water-resistant to 300 metres, the steel case measures 40.3 mm, a diameter exclusive to limited-edition Fifty Fathoms watches. It houses Blancpain Calibre 1151, a self-winding movement equipped with a silicon balance spring and endowed with a four-day power reserve. Its two barrels are wound by means of a rotor with a cartouche-shaped aperture, a nod to some of the historic timepieces in the collection, including the very first Fifty Fathoms. This now atypical detail was formerly used to increase the suppleness of the oscillating weight in order to safeguard the movement in the event of impacts. The watch comes with a strap in "Tropic"-type rubber, a material very popular with divers back in the day because of its durability and wearer comfort.

With this limited series, Blancpain is restoring a cult instrument from its past as a supplier to the navies of numerous armed forces worldwide. In 1953, French Combat Swimmers were the first to use the Fifty Fathoms for their underwater missions. Thanks to its watertightness, legibility, safety and robustness, the watch immediately became an indispensable component of their equipment. Others were to follow, including the German military, which in the mid-1960s acquired the Fifty Fathoms RPG 1 model, now better known as "BUND No Rad". This name refers to the term "Bundeswehr" (armed forces), engraved on the back of the watches that equipped the "Kampfschwimmer", the elite German frogman commando unit, until the

early 1970s. The distinguishing attribute of the RPG 1 model was the "no radiations" logo, featured for the first time on the dial of a Fifty Fathoms.

In the early 1960s, radium – a radioactive element used in watchmaking for its luminescent properties – was declared harmful to health. To reassure professional divers, as well as experienced amateurs who purchased their Fifty Fathoms watches from specialist equipment providers, Blancpain thus decided to clearly indicate that its timepieces were radium-free – and hence harmless. The special symbol consisting of three red segments on a yellow background with a black cross was accompanied by the words "no radiations" designed to ensure that the message was easily understood. The same logo subsequently appeared on the Fifty Fathoms RPGA 1 model, a calendar-based variant of the "BUND No Rad", for which it would remain the main criterion.

These diver's watches, whose dial indicated the absence of radium through the "no radiations" logo, have become particularly sought-after collector's items. They now form part of the Fifty Fathoms' legendary heritage spanning almost 70 years.