H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

A MAGAZINE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

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Nº 7

CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION IS ROBIN SMITH

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Superb - Defending Britain Since 1710

ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

So much for 'Universal Justice'. The nation's highest legal beagle is putting 'Max-weight' behind the blocking of an Iraqis attempt to get ex Pres. Blair into court for the lies he told that eventually laid waste to his homeland.

No such effort, no effort at all in fact, was expended in defence of several hundred squaddies, on spurious charges laid by Iraqis in that war, not of their choosing, but orchestrated by Blair that we have been hauled to court. Have read much about Blair, pros and cons, to form an impression.

Clarissa Dickson Wright, youngest female to become a barrister, gave insights in her book Spilling the Beans. They were in the same group during qualification. Blair's common name was Miranda, not wanted in any group at festive occasions, being considered a toady, greasy type. Cannot help feeling that early group assessment was not far wrong.

Rolls-Royce's chairman, I see, is being hotly pursued by the 'financial authorities' for allegedly resorting to bribery to get orders for aircraft engines, marine drives worth countless millions of pounds over many years. One 'Roller' to a bent Sheik to achieve such a coup seems fair game to me. – who would deny it's how business is conducted in a larger or smaller way, the length and breadth of commerce and industry internationally. Rolls deals affected only 'Rolls' Bottom Line', whilst the chancellor wallowed in 'Rolls' generated tax revenue'.

The much vaunted 'Universal Justice' has no place in the Houses of Westminster: fraud is open, rampant: lobbying blatantly conducted in those hallowed halls, in subsidised bars and restaurants, second houses and palatial venues, at 'Tax Payers' Expense'. The difference between 'lying' and 'perjury' came to me recently. To lie in court is 'perjury' because you do it under oath – on the Bible, mostly. The Noble houses at Westminster labour under no such constraint, hence 'lying' is a major plank of their pontifications.

News from Rosyth windbreaks – sailing is now delayed says the M.O.D., due to 'unspecified technical issues' Yawn, yawn!!

I was questioned twice about the small white ensign in my lapel whilst on late holiday – Brits ask 'What is it?'. These folks had never seen a sailor at home in uniform. That is a national rule by Parliament and M.O.D.. Where is that pride in our 'hearts of oak'?, but worry not, gay marriage has the 'Is' dotted and the 'Ts' crossed, passed into the statute books. We can sit back and relax knowing our vital interests sit in 'proud and pristine' order, after countless hours of debate. Vladimir must be quaking in his mukluks.

It came to pass, those shipmates who attended the funeral of Len Sturdy last year, Thought accommodation, food, location at the Fox and Goose, Brent Knoll, Somerset was of superior, friendly order. A loose desire to repeat the exercise hardened. Thus the first anniversary of that event saw Right Royal Marine, Peter Tasker, Carol and Brian Hill, Julie and Bob?, Jim Copus, Andy and Jo Brierley back at that most splendid little hostelry. Brierley had knee replacement a week prior, so Jim Copus took over transport for them. We stayed two nights.

Joan Sturdy, Jo Brierley, Andy Brierley & Len Sturdy in Civvy Street

First night half of Len's family joined us for an unscripted visit, to take grub, grog and gossip. Several fat heads dispersed for home as the witching hour struck. Following night the other half of Len's brood turned up for a repeat performance with the 'Super Boys': most flattering.

They also floated off in the night/morning with obligatory fat heads. like most fine gatherings it was self-generating, accidental even! A note-worthy interlude was shipmate Brian Hill's solo public rendition of the 'Oggie Song' – The Tanner Anthem! By that time of night only a standing ovation was good enough! I do think that if he comes up from Plymouth for the reunion he should be invited to the mike for members delectation, following tots and tucker. It is a fair bet ditties are unsung, unknown on today's segregated mess decks, the glue that held ships' companies together, 'chopped' in the interest of equality on lower decks. When shipmates set off on their various compass bearings for home it seemed a repeat visit was pencilled in for '18.

Failed to mention the major upside, not a glimmer of politics surfaced. A complete Brexit blackout.

Once again this year the Great White Father (Chairman Smith) provided us with his horticultural surplus, boxes of flower plugs and, more importantly, short, strong tomato plants, not the spindly stuff from supermarkets. If last year is any yardstick, a long, fruitful season of tasty toms, not to be grown by hydroponics. The perks of being a Superb old boy are not to be sniffed at.

My carrier obsession was bursting last week when China's home-built example was flooded up and towed to a fitting-out dock. When commissioned, a planned intensive two years of trials are forecast to develop suitable aircraft. They say a fully operational 'strike wing' will be on board for year three. A breath-catching timetable. Named *Shandong* she has a sister, reportedly already under construction.

There is no doubt Uncle Sam's satellites have this under close scrutiny. I wager Uncle Joe's descendants have it under even closer watch. They appear to be putting their eggs in the modern 'sub.' basket. Will be interesting to weigh up their respective strategies in about four years time.

Here's a chuckle: that *Ocean* refit, mentioned a while ago, is now at correct figure of £655 million. M.O.D. commissioned it, run of the mill folly for them. But, wait, they have sold it to Brazil for a reported £80 million. I bet really tough negotiations were needed for that deal. Am I repeating myself? if so forgive me, must be something I feel strongly about.

Three or four mile east of my house is the piddling little hamlet of Milton Regis. Can you imagine what it was like on the day before Christmas in 1914? Mrs. Wildish gave birth to a boy called Dick. He died last month, April 2nd, which makes him 102!

He joined the R.N. Engineering Branch and designated Damage Control Officer *on H.M.S. Prince of Wales* who was then engaged in the Battle of Denmark Strait, May '41.

Excellent optical range finding of *Bismarck* sank *Hood* in half a dozen salvos along with 1415 of her crew. Switching target to the *P of W*, she hit her seven times with 15 shells forcing it to break off the engagement. Back in Rosyth for repair Wildish poked about in a flooded bilge and found an unexploded 15" shell that had entered below the water line and travelled 12 ft. inside. That bit of info. I have never read in the many, many reports of the engagement.

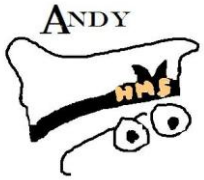
We got away with a massive stroke of luck. The national ego would have suffered a ghastly blow, it could be laying alongside the *Hood* to this day. Both done for in 15 minutes!!

You are aware that the *P of W* and *Repulse* were both sunk by the Japanese air attack off Singapore. Wildish, a junior engineer officer, was at his action station down below and was instrumental in saving many lives amongst the black gang. Badly wounded he was dropped into a Carley float from where he watched the *P of W* go down. He was picked up by the destroyer *Electra*, thus avoiding capture by the Japanese. During your own damage control training, if you handled a 'Splinter box', that was a Wildish idea, a simple fix adopted by navies the world over.

The 'planned maintenance schemes' was another Wildish innovation embedded in the R.N. It was reported that for the 'splinter box' he was awarded £25.00 by the admiralty. Vice Admiral Dick Wildish R.I.P.!

Have had a poorly period, hence time to drone on a bit, plus unable to drive and get away from the table. Hope it's passable reading

Tatty Bye,



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NAVY NEWS

Royal Navy 'far weaker' than it was during Falklands War

HMS Illustrious, the Royal Navy's former aircraft carrier

Britain's Royal Navy is substantially weaker than it was during the Falklands War but could still "cripple" Spain, military experts have said.

Rear-Admiral Chris Parry, a former director of operational capability at the Ministry of Defence, has called on the Government to "appropriately" invest in Britain's military capacity if it wants to "talk big" over Gibraltar.

Members of the Royal Navy walking aboard the flight deck of the HMS Ocean

It came as a former Tory leader suggested that Theresa May would go to war with Spain to defend the sovereignty of the peninsular just as Margaret Thatcher did with the Falklands.

Lord Howard said the Prime Minister will stand by Gibraltar during Brexit talks amid claims of an EU "land grab" for the territory.

As the Government moved to retake the Falkland Islands from Argentina in 1982, the Royal Navy had no fewer than 127 ships — including 60 destroyers and frigates and a dozen nuclear attack submarines - as well as two major amphibious ships and three aircraft carriers.

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Royal Marines advancing during the Falklands War

The latest figures show the Navy has no aircraft carriers in service, 7 nuclear attack submarines, 13 frigates and six destroyers, down from a combined fleet of 33 in 2000. Britain's military budget represented around four percent of GDP in the 1980s under Margaret Thatcher, at a time when the economy was a lot smaller, while it sits at just two per cent under Theresa May.

Rear-Admiral Parry said that he did not believe current tensions would lead to military conflict.

But he said: "If the Government wants to talk big over Gibraltar, or indeed anywhere else, they have to invest appropriately in the military capacity to back that up.

Lord Howard has suggested that Theresa May would go to war with Spain to defend the sovereignty of Gibraltar

"We are a lot less powerful than we were during the Falklands and we are less sustainable over time. Our capacity for actually enforcing our national will in military terms is significantly less.

"Our war fighting assets are weak after years of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and because of the disingenuous way in which the Government has resourced defence.

However, he insisted that Britain's military capability "significantly" over-matches Spain's and that if it came to a war, the UK is - qualitatively - three times more powerful. Our capacity to do them harm is far greater.

But he added: "We could cripple Spain in the medium term and I think the Americans would probably support us too. Spain should learn from history that it is never worth taking us on and that we could still singe the King of Spain's beard".

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HMS AUDACIOUS

Pictured edging out of her dry dock at Barrow-in-Furness, preparations have started to get the Royal Navy's latest submarine water-ready ahead of its first trip in the sea.

She has been ten years in the making but now the 318ft long, 7,400 tonne nuclear-powered *HMS Audacious* took her first trip in water for the first time at the end of April during a floating out ceremony in Cumbria.

A part of a £1billion project, *HMS Audacious* is the fourth out of ten submarine commissioned by the Government to set a new standard in weapons.

When armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles, she will be capable of striking targets up to 745 miles from the coast with pinpoint accuracy.

Powerful: The 318ft long, 7,400 tonne nuclear-powered *HMS Audacious* has cost taxpayers more than £1billion but along with her sisters, sets a new standard in weapons load and stealth

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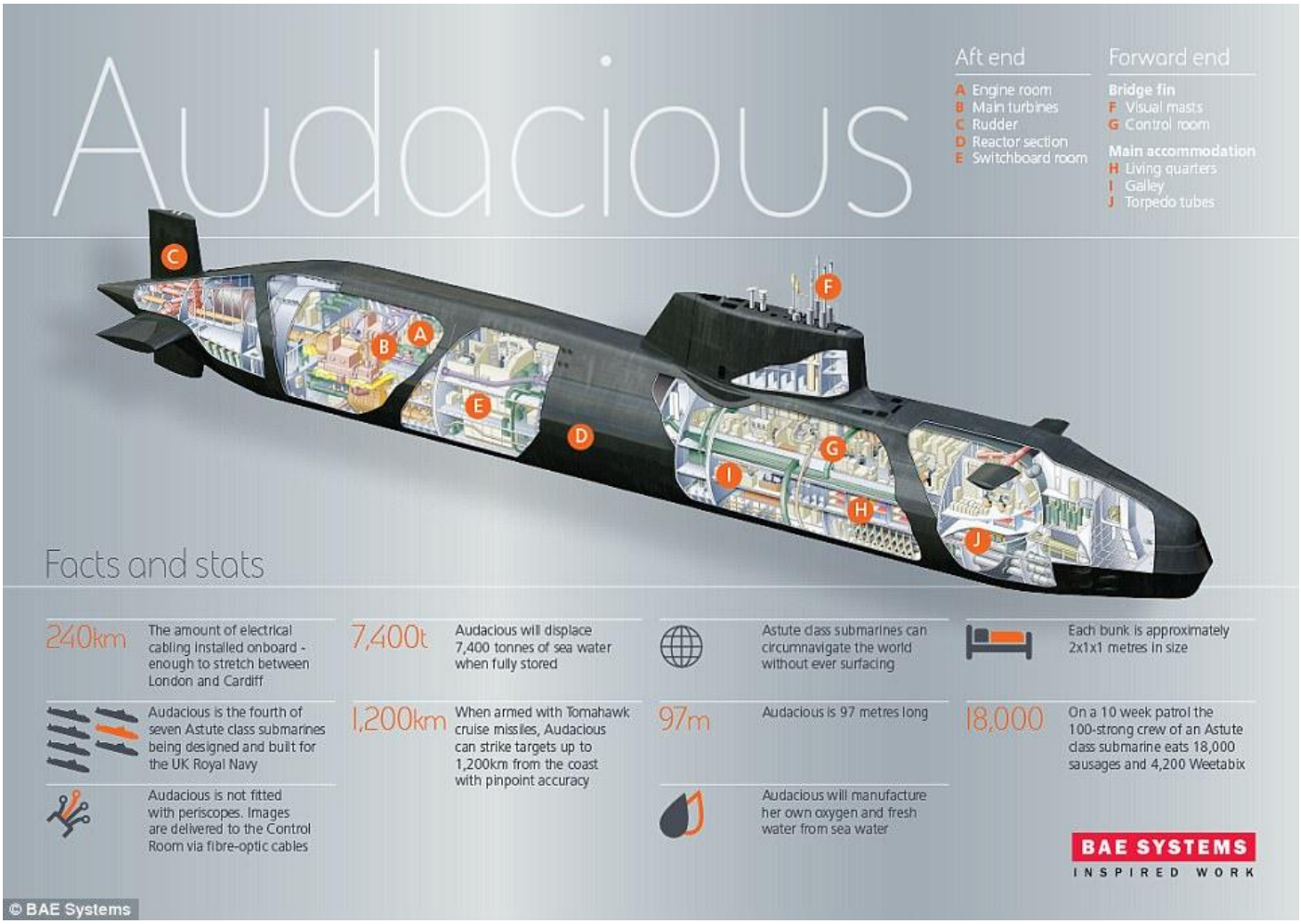

Audacious in numbers:

The giant ship is capable of striking targets with pinpoint accuracy from 745 miles away - the equivalent of aiming for a target in Spain from Plymouth, Devon

Despite global tensions and displays of military prowess, a spokesman for manufactures BAE Systems' Submarines said that April's exercise was a planned procedure.

A spokesman said: 'This is just a part of its schedule and isn't reactionary. It takes nearly ten years to build so it's floating out is just a very gradual launch but has been planned for some time.' The floating out stage is described as a huge milestone in the submarine's timeline as the ship has just finished her manufacturing stage. 'The next big milestone will be when she leaves Barrow which we expect will be in around a year.'

HMS Audacious is the fourth submarine in the Astute class of ten warships and was officially named during a ceremony at BAE Systems' Submarines site in Cumbria, back in December. Lady Jones, *Audacious'* sponsor and wife of Admiral Sir Phillip Jones, the First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, chose the name.

In keeping with tradition, Lady Jones then smashed a bottle of locally brewed beer against her hull.

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HMS Audacious is the fourth submarine in Astute Class fleet, as well as the largest and most advanced attack submarine in service with the Royal Navy.

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IT'S A WHITEWASH

Landmark Naval crests are reduced to rubble

The last of Dockyard's historic naval emblems have been painted over as part of the major renovation project

The last of Dockyard's historic naval emblems have been painted over as part of the major renovation project on the South Basin.

For decades navy crews proudly painted their ships' crest on the concrete walls surrounding the South Yard where the vessels berthed.

Between 1951 and 1995 scores of vessels from across the world passed through Bermuda and left their mark in the West End.

Over the years the crests have faded away and many of the emblems have been repainted by volunteers.

However, last week the last of the crests were whitewashed as part of the upgrade. Edward Harris, director of the National Museum, revealed that all the crests had been photographed and were available on the museum's website.

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"Some dockyard heritage has been lost in the clearing of the South Yard of the old Royal Naval Dockyard for the erection of buildings for the teams competing in the America's

Cup and the last of the unique ships' crests have now been painted over," Dr Harris said.

"However, all of the crests have been professionally photographed and will eventually be available for viewing on the National Museum website.

"In addition, Moresby House, the old headquarters of HMS Malabar of the North American and West Indies Station is being saved and renovated and will soon overlook the South Yard and all the America's Cup activities in considerable splendour, thanks to a grant from the Government.

"It is hoped that other legacy projects in Bermuda will result as part of the America's Cup events at Bermuda."

The South Yard was built in Dockyard between 1901 and 1910 to accommodate the larger ships that were becoming more commonplace across the world. Between the 1920s and the 1940s the yard was used for basic repairs on passing naval ships.

This continued throughout the Second World War while Bermuda was used as a base for the Allied forces. The South Yard remained the Royal Navy's base in Bermuda for the next four decades.

In 1985 the South Basin was dredged to allow nuclear submarines to come into the South Yard and ten years later the Royal Navy left Bermuda and the South Yard was handed over to the Bermuda Government.

Scores of naval ships left their mark in the South Yard between 1951 and 1995 including well known vessels such as *HMS Brilliant* and *HMS Londonderry* that have since been decommissioned.

And even before then in April 1943 *HMS Argonaut* famously called into the South Yard for repairs after having her entire stern and part of her bow blown off by an Italian submarine.

Rubble from demolished walls and buildings that previously were decorated by hand-drawn and painted Naval crests created by the crews of visiting vessels at the Royal Naval Dockyard since the First World War. The demolition makes way for a new development at Albert Row.

Museum director Edward Harris admitted that although moving the pieces of rock was an option, the biggest problem was the fact that the crests were painted on individual blocks, not one whole wall that could be moved.

"There are many crests that are painted on the walls of buildings, which are either of concrete block or soft Bermuda limestone blocks, the latter also presenting the most difficult of tasks to take apart, as they are individual blocks and not, say, a sheet of painted plywood," said Dr Harris.

"This is a type of transient art that most likely cannot be preserved by removal to another site, where one would somehow have to make sense of them in a new architecture setting, as well, even if one could cut them out of the existing walls in a large block for each crest.

"The crests have been professionally photographed on behalf of the National Museum and thus as historical data, they have been preserved for posterity.

"That is perhaps all that could have been sensibly done with this particular set of heritage objects."

However, Although there in 1954 and 1955 I cannot ever recall seeing this wall perhaps it wasn't on my way out in the direction of the bars! Try as I might I cannot find any photograph of either the Sheffield's or Superb's Crest being included on those walls and I know that both ships were there over several years.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Shipmate John Ward (following a request for more of his memoirs)

I will try and get some time to scribble something down for you but the trouble is that at this time of the year my old troubles start up again , quite a few years ago my doctor after giving me a thorough examination declared that he thought that I wasn't getting enough Greens , so I started having an affair with some Lithuanian bird who works for " Jersey Plants ", I send her money and in return she sends me young plants like 100 Geraniums plus 70 free
then 100 petunias and 70 free on top of that there's the 100 begonias with 70 free plus all the other " Bargains " she feels fit to send.

My doctor certainly knew his stuff cause I am now in the garden nearly 23 hours a day feeling the therapeutic effect of all the Greens.

The constant bending & lifting gives all the muscles and joints a sharp reminder of what they were meant for and my hearing is improving as I can now hear Janet indoors rattle the tea mugs from 15 yards away, she won't let me give her a cuddle anymore cause she reckons that I smell of manure and my fingernails are disgusting, so the good news is that my garden looks lovely but the bad news is that my love life is shot
All the best
Sharky

Re the appeal from the granddaughter of Joe Heaton's old oppo, John Eccleston
Hi Brian,
The big birthday was Friday.
He loved his surprise and we spent along time talking about memories and the navy etc.
I told him all about the website I will pay soon just been mega busy with sorting his birthday out and I am off on holiday soon.
He is considering going to reunion in October , he said that he would see how he felt there the time.
Thank you so much for all your help other the last few months, I am so grateful
Regards
Melissa

Thanks again for sending a copy of the H MS Superb magazine.
When I see you in October I shall bring with me my book of photographs from the 1954/55 commission. I managed 2 commissions on the Superb.
Regards Bill Cook

Another first class job Brian, very well done and keep up the good work old matey.
Ray Lambert

Thank you Brian for all of your help
Wendy Norman

Keep up the good work Brian you are doing a great job.
Hope things are going well for you and Libby looking forward to seeing you both again.
Best Wishes
Joe Heaton

I congratulate you for the effort you have put out over the past few years to make the website and magazine a great source of history of the Superb and its crew. I always enjoy seeing something about myself. I enjoyed reading it and enjoyed the feeling the good old days. I enjoy anything that makes me feel younger. That sometimes becomes a problem. Ha Ha.
Take care and thanks again for keeping me a part of the HMS Superb family.
George Messmer

Here's wishing a blessed 81st, may the Good Lord bless and keep you for many more years to come, enjoy this very special day with your loved ones and friends, have a Nelson's Blood for me, cheers mate.
Charlie Tellis

Come the back-end of winter and I cop out for a bad dose of flue. Anyway, whilst laid up I have used the time to note down a couple of memories from my 1956/7 cruise. I will forward them to you to see if by chance you think they may fit in somewhere.
Keep up the good work,
Regards Allan Harmer

From Shipmate Phil Grimson
As you are now a member of the Crumbly Clan you are eligible to view messages from an elderly Crumbly to his physique (as is usual when the crumbliness takes hold) Hopefully, I have many years ahead to look forward to - and exchange banter with my old shipmates - but that is in the hands of fate, but up to date am feeling in fine fettle. I'll close down now before you fall asleep

mate. Keep up the good work you're doing. This little exchange between mind and spirit will enlighten you to expect a similar experience in years to come - unless you have conducted yourself in an entirely different way. If this is helpful please post to your old Navy mates. They may thank you for it -or possibly throw bricks at you!

I WAS TALKING TO MYSELF THE OTHER DAY!
I GET THE RIGHT ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS IN THIS WAY
I SAID TO FACE, "EACH TIME I LOOK INTO THE MIRROR
YOU'RE LOOKING OLDER AND MORE WRINKLY
AND IT'S SOMETHING THAT I REALLY DO NOT LIKE!
HE SAID "OY, GRANDAD, KNOCK IT OFF
"IT'S YOURSELF YOU'RE LOOKING AT YOU CHEEKY SOD
IT'S BECAUSE YOUR LIFESTYLE'S BEEN SO DODGY
THAT YOUR TUM-TUM'S GETTING PODGY
SO CUT THE CACKLE AND GET BACK ON YOUR BIKE
LATER I PURSUED THE CONVERSATION
WITH BODY, MY CLOSEST BLOOD RELATION
"WHAT DO YOU SAY MATE, DO YOU THINK FACE IS RIGHT
OR IS HE MOANING 'COS I KEPT UP LATE LAST NIGHT?
AFTER ALL, YOU ENJOYED THE COMPANY AND BOOZE
AND THEN WE MET THAT BIRD AND HAD A LITTLE SMOOZE
THEN BODY TOLD ME STRAIGHT OUT," YES, HE'S RIGHT!
YOU DIDN'T JUST KEEP US UP LATE LAST NIGHT
YOU KEPT THE PAIR OF US UP ALL FLAMING' NIGHT
NO WONDER HE'S GOT WRINKLES AND I'VE GOT SUSPICIOUS PIMPLES
SO, IN FUTURE, GROW UP GRACEFULLY, ALRIGHT?
Phil Grimson

Thanks Brian,
Clive Godley

Thank you for thinking of us. I do follow you on Facebook and give Dad news now and again. His dementia is taking hold a bit more but certainly happily chats about the old Navy days.
Very kind of you.
Best wishes
Amanda Keane

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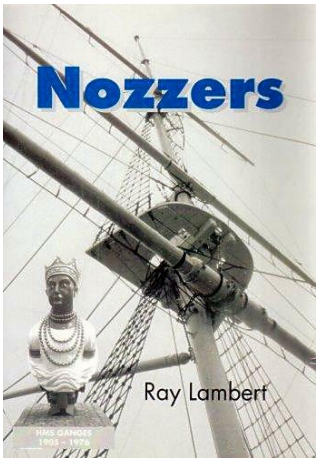
SCRAN BAG (FREE ADVERTISING)

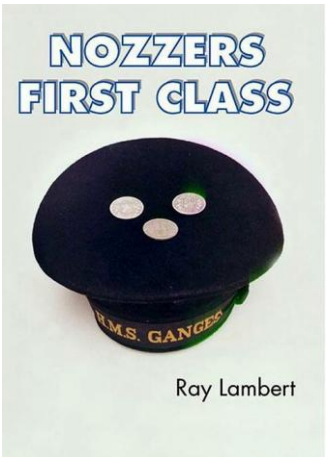
This section contains adverts from members. If you decide to purchase an item from them please note you deal directly with the member selling.

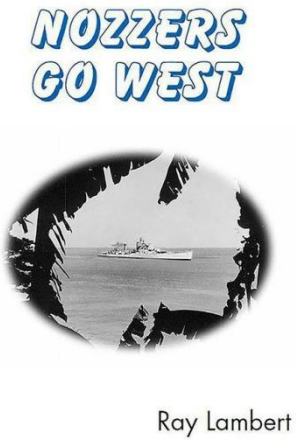
If you have something to say about this section or advertise an article please email Brian at hmssuperb2u@sfr.fr

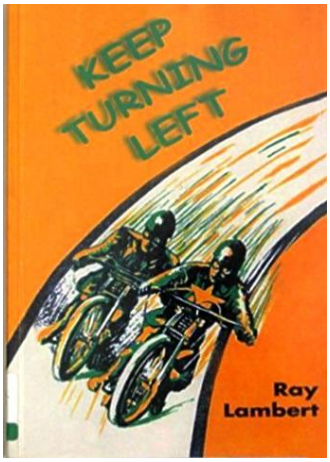
Ray Lambert

Has some of his books for sale which may remind you of how it was when we had wooden ships and iron men (well almost!)









Follow the author when he was a handsome young man in Ganges and as he joins HMS Superb at Chatham. Go with him as he begins the "Luxury Cruise" of 1954-55. Join him from Punta Arenas to Vancouver and much in between. Learn of Guantanamo Bay and the Falklands before they became headline news.

Ray also knows his speedway onions – having reported on Canterbury and Crayford speedway clubs in the 1970s – and isn't afraid to ride his hobbyhorses in some style.

Each book costs £7.95 including UK postage. For more information contact Ray by email

Click here to **contact Ray** **by email**

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SOME PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE FIRST COMMISSION OF HMS SUPERB 1945 - 1947 - PART 3/4

(by Ted G. Davy, AB - Seaman Torpedoman)

Leaving Venice we sailed down the Adriatic in company with the Squadron Flagship *HMS Orion*. Then there occurred an incident which put us in the media spotlight. Not relying on memory after seventy years, the following account is what I wrote in 1964 to a historian who planned to write a book about this and a later tragic event in the Corfu channel.

"As we passed down the rugged Albanian coast on the morning (approx. 0730 ?) of the incident, we were startled to hear gunfire, and, rushing to the port side of the upper deck, saw shell splashes which were considerably short of both ships. As I recall, no general announcement was given over the P/A system, but the explanation, that Albanian coastal guns had opened fire on us spread over the ship like wildfire. . . . No action alarm was given, the two cruisers continued to steam in the same direction, and merely increased their speed.

"I remember wondering at the time why we did not return fire, though the common sense of the policy was quickly realized. . . . As far as we were concerned, the immediate and memorable result of the incident was an unexpected but delightful stay at Corfu whilst awaiting further orders from the government."

HMS Superb patrolling off Corfu, 1946

At the time of the Corfu "incident" I was not as objective as this. A letter I wrote to the ship's newspaper criticizing the decision not to return fire caused a bit of a stir on board. But I don't think I was the only one on the lower deck to hold this view. (Looking back, it would have been a no-contest: between the *Orion* and ourselves our fire power was fifteen 6-inch guns; the Albanians were believed to have had only a few weapons of a much lighter calibre.) Regardless, in retrospect the official decision was right.

My memories of Corfu itself are still saddened by the poverty experienced by the local population at the time. When children came aboard and ravenously explored for and ate scraps of food soaked in tea leaves in the mess "gash" bucket, the seriousness of their plight was obvious.

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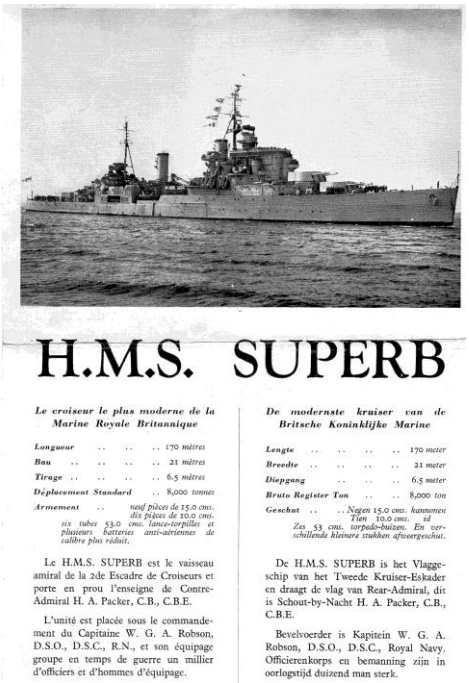
A personal scare when swimming over the side there: hadn't realized the swiftness of the current off Corfu, and needed all my strength to make it back to the ship.
After a few days, the diplomatic row with Albania was apparently resolved. *Superb's* next

scheduled assignment was to Palestine, always a potential trouble spot. The reason for this visit was to relieve *HMS Ajax*, the guard cruiser at the port of Haifa. *Ajax* was to take a month off its duties there and proceed to Montevideo in Uruguay, to participate in the commemoration of the Battle of the River Plate of which she was part in 1940.

Our stay in Haifa was not without tensions, both on board and ashore. It was thought possible that frog men would attempt to attach mines below the *Superb's* waterline. An emergency lookout system was drawn up, but our best defence was to throw small explosives (like miniature depth charges) over the side at irregular intervals. Explosives were the responsibility of the Torpedo Division, and the manufacture of the charges, timing and firing them, was largely performed by the LTOs from our Mess.

It would be another year before the State of Israel came into being, effectively ending the British mandate in Palestine. Until then, different Jewish gangs devised various ways to make life difficult for the UK forces stationed there. For example, when playing a friendly game ashore our cricket team had to be accompanied with an armed escort. One Saturday I and a couple of messmates hitched a ride to Nazareth in a small army truck. We were not out for sightseeing, though, and after a few beers, on the return journey we were ambushed by one of the gangs, and only skilful though reckless driving by an Army Corporal got us out of it safely. Apart from these incidents described, the time we spent in Haifa was quite pleasant. Those who wished (rather few by my observation) could arrange visit places whose names were familiar from the Bible. The climate was delightful and it was warm enough to sleep on the upper deck which was almost a luxury after comfortable camp beds were issued.

The next few months are partly vague in my memory. I believe it was late Summer of 1946 that the Flag (Admiral Packer) of the Second Cruiser Squadron was transferred to *Superb* from HMS *Birmingham* at Portsmouth.



H.M.S. SUPERB

Le croiseur le plus moderne de la Marine Royale Britannique		*De modernste kruiser van de Britsche Koninklijke Marine*	
Longueur	.. .. .. 170 *mètres*	*Lengte*	.. .. 170 *meter*
Bau	.. .. 21 *mètres*	*Breedte*	.. .. 21 *meter*
Tirage	.. .. 6.5 *mètres*	*Diepgang*	.. .. 6.5 *meter*
Déplacement Standard	.. 8,000 *tonnes*	*Bruto Register Ton*	.. .. 8,000 *ton*
Armement	.. *neuf pièces de 15.0 cms. dix pièces de 10.0 cms. six tubes 53.0 cms. lance-torpilles et plusieurs batteries anti-aériennes de calibre plus réduit.*	*Geschut*	.. .. *Negen 15.0 cms. kanonnen Tien 10.0 cms. id Zes 53 cms. torpedo-buizen. En verschillende kleinere stukken afweergeschut.*

Le H.M.S. SUPERB est le vaisseau amiral de la 2de Escadre de Croiseurs et porte en prou l'enseigne de Contre-Admiral H. A. Packer, C.B., C.B.E.

L'unité est placée sous le commandement du Capitaine W. G. A. Robson, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N., et son équipage groupe en temps de guerre un millier d'officiers et d'hommes d'équipage.

De H.M.S. SUPERB is het Vlaggeschip van het Tweede Kruiser-Eskader en draagt de vlag van Rear-Admiral, dit is Schout-by-Nacht H. A. Packer, C.B., C.B.E.

Bevelvoerder is Kapitein W. G. A. Robson, D.S.O., D.S.C., Royal Navy. Officierenkorps en bemanning zijn in oorlogstijd duizend man sterk.

That year we participated in the *Royal Review* on the Clyde. Prior to this we had been in Loch Ewe cleaning and painting ship in preparation. The review was the first after WW2, and is mostly a blank in my memory, but I am reminded of it by a picture of the ship's company "cheering ship" on an overcast day. (Come to think of it, this photo was probably of a rehearsal.)

However, I do have a very clear recollection of how we wound up this interesting year with another short visit abroad in November. This time the destination was Antwerp, and it was part of the commemoration of the *Battle of the River Scheldt* two years earlier.

The PR Department or equivalent at the Admiralty must have thought this visit was important. It issued a bilingual (French and Flemish) pamphlet with

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photos and statistics of the *Superb* for the benefit of our Belgian hosts. Another pamphlet, also bilingual, described the *Beating the Retreat* ceremony which the Marines would perform for the public. I still have copies of these publications.

This visit began with embarrassment. Apparently someone in the Engineering Division had managed to spray a large quantity of oil onto the ship's port side (believe, though not positive, it was port; how this happened, I can't imagine.) Anyway, a large number of stokers had to spend many hours cleaning up the mess so that we could present a smart image to our hosts.

HMS Superb
Antwerp, November, 1946

Like so many English cities, Antwerp suffered much damage in WW2 but had been rebuilding quickly, and there was a vibrant, friendly atmosphere there which made for a really good run ashore.

In January 1947 the winter in England was unbelievably cold. Our departure from its shores in early February was therefore looked forward to as at no other time. The occasion was the first major voyage of the battleship *HMS Vanguard*, the last battlewagon in the RN. Serving as the *Royal Yacht.* it was carrying the Royal Family to South Africa for a lengthy visit. *Superb* was part of the escort which also consisted of other cruisers and destroyers. On this trip more than any other, it was quite an experience passing through the Bay of Biscay, which really lived up to its legendary roughness. Rumour had it that we "sprang a plate." We sailed in line astern of the *Vanguard* and behind us was the light cruiser *HMS Dido* which to me always seemed top heavy with its three forward turrets. Day after day we watched its contortions hardly believing it could keep afloat in those monstrous seas.

Our contribution to the escort finished at Gibraltar. We were of course still part of the Home Fleet, and then participated in some joint exercises with the Mediterranean Fleet, working in and out of Gibraltar. I recall one night session in which one of our star-shells failed its job and actually hit *HMS Cleopatra*. Many years later a business trip took me from Canada, where I now live, and enjoyed a glass of wine with one of the *Cleo's* crew when she was hit. Needless to say, he remembered the incident well and let me know it.

This period was not all work, however, and for part of the time we were in Casablanca to "Show-the-Flag". One of my personal recollections of this visit was an embarrassing afternoon when I seemed to have completely forgotten the French learned at school, and it was most difficult to deal with a shop keeper who knew little or no English. One other time, I had just bought a pair of sandals made locally, when they were snatched out of my hands as I walked along the sea front. Luckily, officers from a Norwegian merchant ship saw the incident and nabbed the thief.

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Another memory: a Battle class destroyer ferried *Superb's* libertymen from Gibraltar to Tangier. It was just a day trip, an interesting shopping tour really, and I can't be sure if it was exactly at this particular time.

(Next Time: Ted spends the summer in Southend, attends the regatta at Cowes and plays with torpedoes in Weymouth)

If you missed earlier chapters of Ted's Tale they can be read by re-visiting earlier editions of the Magazine - Go to the Archive Section at the end of this Magazine

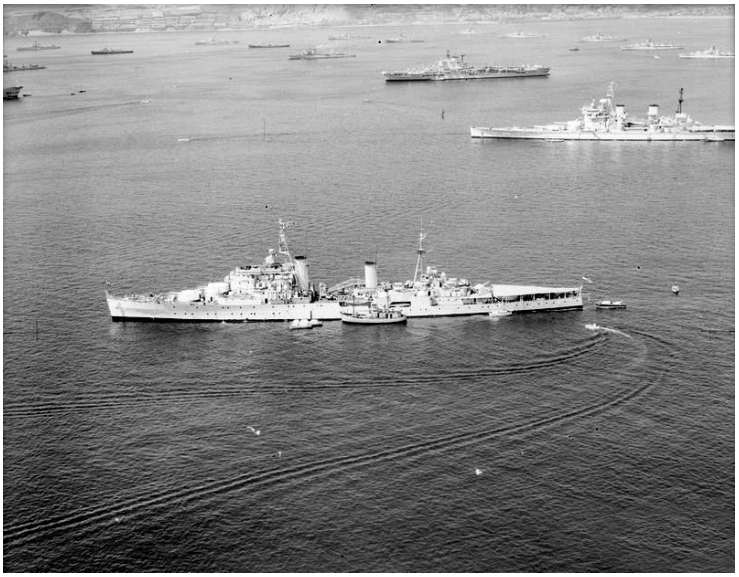
A SHIPWRIGHT'S TALE

(by Bill Long)

As you may recall, I have been known to make saucy remarks about Stokers, but they were made without malice and no disrespect was intended. I think that only the crushers and the chefs had more jibes than my branch, and we didn't really deserve them!

My recollection of the association with the Engine Room branch are recalled with pleasant memories and gratitude for their assistance in my job. So I think a little bit of explanation is in order.

Superb had finished the annual refit in Chatham Dockyard for the '52-'53 cruise, and we left for sea trials off Sheerness. During the refit, new expansion joints for the engine room had been designed and installed but, unfortunately, they did not work, so we returned to the yard and some more new and improved joints were fitted.



Anchored in Mounts Bay; HMS Implacable & HMS Hussar in background

There was an element of time arising as we had to relieve Sheffield on a certain date and these setbacks were reducing the time allowed for us to work-up and arrive at Bermuda on time. The replacement joints didn't work either and with many trips through the locks, the pilot became very familiar with the handling of the ship in and out of the dockyard.

Again, new joints were installed with the same result and, finally, they were fitted to the original design.

Finally our sea trials were pronounced good and we headed back to the dockyard, happy that the delaying episode was behind us. As we were going through the lock at the entrance to the yard, I was down below and, as well as everybody else, was amazed at the speed the dockyard buildings were passing by. This led to much conjecture on the part of the lower deck, with such observations as that the pilot thought he was driving his Daddy's yacht or was on a promise and wanted to get home early.

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Suddenly the situation changed as we came to a rapid stop, for no apparent reason.

It turned out the dockyard maties had installed the wrong fenders in the lock. One of the locks was about 10 feet narrower than the other, and they put the wide set in the narrow lock. They were about 6 feet wide, 4 feet deep and about 15 feet long, and were placed two on either side.

The first two encountered were swept from their mooring lines and slid along the lock wall with the ship, which was finally halted by the second pair.

Efforts were made by the tugs to free the ship by going astern, but there was no movement and Superb was wedged tightly. Luckily the dockyard was able to close the lock gates behind us and we stuck for the night.

A conference was held with all the experts and it was decided to open the lock gates to the river and lower the ship on the ebb tide, allowing the fenders to roll over with the weight of the Superb, and this was indeed what happened. Unfortunately it created a long crease in the ship's side, which was not obvious, but there was quite a bit of buckling on the internal steelwork.

The Commissioned Chippy made an examination and found no gaping holes and as there were no signs of the watertight integrity being compromised, it was decided to continue with the planned departure for Bermuda.

When the news about Superb's mishap reached the Admiralty My Lords were, to say the least, a little peeved that their pretty ship now had an unplanned line running along the ship's side, and expressed concern about how far the damage extended inboard, and the condition of the double bottom. To allay their fears they decided that the whole of the ship's hull should be surveyed, and issued instructions that it be completed forthwith.

So, as we left the U.K. the bottom party, a Stoker P O, four SMs, and I, were detailed to make a report on all of the compartments of the double bottom. This was carried out by the Stokers unbolting the manhole cover and ventilating the area for about 12 hours, when I would enter and make the survey.

These compartments had not been opened since the ship had left the builder's yard in 1945 and many of the bolts were rusted and hard to undo. But the Stokers diligently did their job and worked about 24 hours ahead of my entrance. All the time I was in the compartment one of the SMs was detailed to follow me down under the manhole as a safety feature, in case I ran afoul of bad air or something similar.

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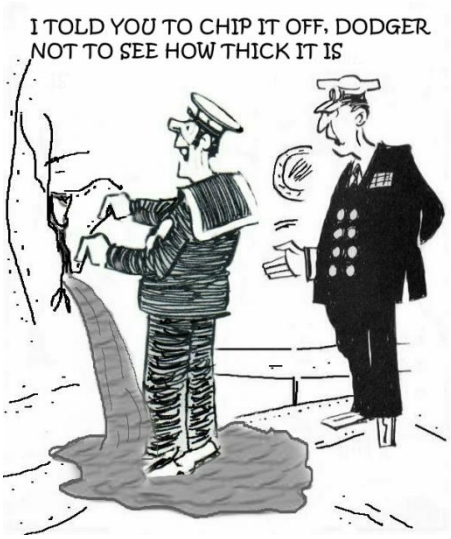
The compartments were honeycombed with mini bulkheads and accessible through lightening holes which, if my memory from the naval architecture course is correct, were

21 inches wide and 15 inches deep. The depth of the double bottom was 36 inches, so I crawled along the bottom and then slithered through the lightening holes like a snake. Mind you, I weighed 10½ stone in those days, so it was fairly easy.

It did cross my mind when I was below the engine or boiler rooms that we'd swept all the mines from WW2, as I'd been on a minesweeper after the war and was very aware how dangerous they could be. I carried a pad for notes, a Pusser's torch and a chipping hammer, which tended to slow me down and hinder progress.

There was obvious bucking in the area around the point of compression and this was expected, but the situation in other areas was disturbing, to say the least. When the ship was ordered and being built there was a change in priorities, and immediate requirements were for escort vessels, so Superb lay, half constructed, on the stocks, exposed to all kinds of weather, which manifested itself in later years.



Many of the compartments did not have a coat of paint at all, resulting in extensive rusting which, in some cases, were large sheets, which fell away when hit with a chipping hammer. In others the rust had fallen away and lay desiccated, covering the bottom like dried tea leaves, to a depth of approximately a ½ inch which, considering the pristine condition of the rest of the ship, was very disturbing.

I dutifully wrote up my findings in the mess every day and, somehow, it always seemed to happen at about 11 o'clock, amazing luck!! Anyway, I had a good relationship with the little gang and was very appreciative of the support they gave me.

Maybe the report was the initiation of the Admiralty's future plans for the ship, as it was never sold to any other navy, as was the usual practise, but ended up in the breaker's yard.

A sad ending for a happy ship with so many pleasant memories.

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HAVE YOU A STORY TO TELL ?

We'd love to print your story so why not put pen to paper

It doesn't need to be a novel - just some of your memories which will eventually be lost forever unless told now

Several members have sent in their own & they are available to read on our website

JOTTINGS OF A VERY ORDINARY SEAMAN PART 3

(by Ray Lambert)

So, having unsuccessfully dipped my toe in the waters of the torpedo world, I now found myself in the rarefied atmosphere of the Gunnery School and straight onto a third class course. By this time they had done away with all the three's categories: AA's, GL's, QA's etc and all were classed as 'seaman gunners'. At the completion of the three month course, the top percentage were 'control' and the remainder were 'quarters', abbreviated to SG (Q) * or (C)*. Being a bit on the clever side (it wasn't difficult) I passed top of the class and that's where my troubles started…….

Come on lad, we'll soon knock you into shape !

As we all know, the navy loves parades, even mini parades and there we were in the long hallway waiting to march up to the temporary fold away desk to be told what we already knew – that we had passed. Having a high percentage, I was SG(C)* and automatically straight onto a second class course straight away, without leaving the Gunnery School. But I had made up my mind I wanted to be a QA, which meant my rate had to be downgraded to SG (Q)* and naturally, that caused problems – no such thing had ever happened before!

I don't know why I dug my heels in because I had no interest whatsoever in a QA's rate. Basically it was a weapons engineering based job and my engineering skills were about on a par with Big Daddy's needlepoint but I stuck to my guns (excuse the unintentional pun!) and the hierarchy relented with those never to be forgotten words: "Have it your own way then and get out of here!"

By coincidence, I was head of the queue so first out but by the time I reached the door that arrogant tosspot had lost his cool and was screaming: "Get out the lot of you, go on everyone out."

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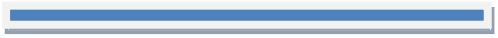
Nevertheless, we all got our rates and, in my case I was booked onto the next available QA 2's class that was being formed…..the good news was that I knew I was safe from

drafts and other complication for the next eighteen months; life was good..

In the main the instructors would be the same GI's from the previous three's course and I knew several of them, through having to wait for my next course start date billeted in the GI's mess, in Hawke block.. The only difference that I could foresee was the more technical stuff would be undertaken by the OA's – the real engineers.

I hadn't given a thought about the new course – I was ashore for the next 18 months and that was all that mattered, life was grand!



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MEMORIES FROM '53

(by Jon Willshir)

They say that you never forget your first Leading hand and I certainly didn't. Mine was the Killick of 7 Mess in Superb for the 1952/3 commission and stayed aboard well into 1954.

I traced G. Emery (I don't know what the G stood for). He insisted on pain of death that he be addressed as Gem (hard G)). At the 2000 reunion of the 8th Destroyer Association I asked a guy from *CONSTANCE* whether he had known Emery. "Know him? Know him? We were oppos" He volunteered Emery's address in Bournemouth and I went to see him.

He was drafted to Portland after leaving *SUPERB*, picked up his rate and stayed on to complete his 22 years. With a friend as partner they bought a hotel in North Devon or Cornwall and when things went bottom up his 'friend' took off leaving Emery to pick up the pieces and clear up the mess.

I'm sure that some members will remember him.

I fondly remember one escapade that could have ended up being painful for me. When in Port of Spain another young scallywag and I bought a hand of bananas and a few quarts of peanut milk off of one of the bum boats. We sat on top of 'A' turret and as the focsle awning was spread were almost invisible. We sat there scoffing ourselves and giggling away as Jack Earnshaw, a gnarled old-school P.O. the Captain of the focsle, ferreted around asking where those two rascals had got to.

We were never discovered and when Hands to Dinner was piped we emerged under the gaze of the 2nd Captain of the focsle, a more junior P.O. and thankfully with a sense of humour. Many were the times when we had him rolled up in laughter which took away the ground under Jack Earnshaw. .

Vice Admiral Sir Hugh Richard (Dick) Janvrin
1968

Did you know that Reggie Tosswill was the Navigating Officer of *Illustrious* home to the Stringbags that battered the Italians at Taranto and when she received a battering from German Stukas then tied up at Palatorio afterwards?

One of the flyers (one of only two to survive the war) was Dick Janvrin later to be Captain (F) at Portland and 2nd Sea Lord, best officer I ever served under. I was his Coxswain when in

Grenville and was then practically fire proof. *Grenville* as senior ship carried a skimmer and Janvrin hated the damn thing. I loved it and it became almost my personal property.

A wonderful leader and worshipped by the lads. When he told a defaulter that he had let the ship down, let him down personally and himself (the defaulter) down, it cut like a knife . Of course those hackneyed words from somebody else would roll over most but coming from him brought on a serious case of contrition. Although his treatment of relationships within a disciplined environment was first class he was never a soft touch.

I do hope that on the Petty Officer's course the point was/is made that it is far more effective to quietly offer a reprimand than to shout and bawl to denigrate some poor miscreant which surely results in his embarrassment and loses his respect. A more sensible approach is more likely to get the guy onside, and correct any perceived shortcoming rather than bawling him out publicly which is likely to alienate him. That's my take anyway and Dick Janvrin's treatment of team members taught me lessons that proved valuable later in my life.

As well as being DCNS he was 2nd sea Lord.

In another website many who served under him in *VICTORIOUS* echo my sentiments.

Boston July, 1953

In this photo the CPO leading the guard is Charlie Reville the CPOGI and the P.O. leading the left hand column was the 2nd Captain of the FX. An R.P.1 which might explain why he was more of a human being than others who had their humanity taken away when attending Gunnery schools.. A confirmed P.O. before he was 26 years old was some going.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The annual Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) Yeovilton International Air Day in Somerset will take place on Saturday 8 July. This popular 'Fly Navy' air show will showcase the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm; its current and future capabilities and historic accomplishments.

The Air Station's gates will be open to 40,000 visitors, just as they were 70 years ago, in 1947 at the first ever air show at RNAS Yeovilton, providing the perfect opportunity to see our equipment and meet our personnel first hand.

Over five hours of amazing flying displays and an extensive static display will feature historic naval aircraft and their modern-day counterparts in spectacular role demonstrations. UK and foreign military formation and solo display teams have also been invited to participate at the air show.

Alongside the magnificent flying display there will also be a huge array of ground attractions, from engineering fairs to the latest defence technology exhibitions, Service displays, trade stalls and arena displays. For the thrill seekers, there will be simulators, fairground rides and helicopter pleasure flights to enjoy.

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SUEZ MEDAL

(by Brian Saunders)

Recently I have been asked if there is a medal available for veterans who served during the Suez Crisis (The Superb was there in 1956) and after a little searching on the internet it seems that there is a Suez Clasp which is compatible with the General Service Medal.

However, there is also a Suez Medal and Clasp in existence and it is open to all veterans who served in the Canal Zone from 1945 until 1957 or their next of kin. If issued by the MOD the medal and the clasp are free.

This commemorative medal marks the service of participants and support personnel in the Suez Canal Zone to be worn with pride not alongside gallantry decorations, but separately and distinctively.

On the medal are two sets of dates - 1951/1954 and 1956/1957 - representing the two most recent periods of unrest and conflict. However, applicants are not restricted to these dates as the medal commemorates service in the Canal Zone.

The ribbon represents the involvement of the British and French Forces bordering the sand of the desert and in the centre the canal itself.

Obviously you will need your service number, rank, name & initials and rating which can be professionally diamond engraved on the edge of your Suez Canal Zone Medal making it an even more personal and precious heirloom.

Have a look at this website (and there are others) by clicking **HERE** for more information

If anyone has any comments on this subject please let me know.

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PHOTO ALBUM

Photo supplied by Bill Cook - Bahrain 1956

Have you a photo of the Superb?

We are endeavouring to collect as many photos or newspaper cuttings which relate to members of the crew (that does include YOU) or an image of the ship itself

The reason behind this is to help complete the history of one of the longest serving (by name) British Royal Navy ships

Contact Brian Saunders, if you can help, by email

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Crossed the Bar

Further details of ex shipmates (but not necessarily members of the Association) who have crossed the bar can be found on the appropriate page our website.

To go there please click **HERE**.

Crossed the Bar (Recently Notified)

NO NOTIFICATIONS THIS MONTH

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PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE

If you can assist with any of these appeals please contact Brian Saunders in the first instance. No details will be passed on to third parties without express permission. These appeals will be left in the magazine for a few ..

Message from Facebook

Stanley Mortimer

I joined HMS Superb in September 1955 National Service. Anybody remember me? I was an Able Seaman on the focsle during the Suez war. **Stan Mortimer**

From previous issues

Derek Baldry (Killick Sparker) would like to contact Ginger Dunne from 1956

Stoker Clive Godley would like to get in touch with old shipmates - I have his telephone number and email address so if you'd like it get back to me. (BS)

Larry Boudier who was in the Chatham field gun's crew in 1955 would like to know if anyone e knows of others in that crew

Eleanor Ingalls Fochesato from New Jersey, USA would like to contact John Stevens, from the 1953 cruise to Maine, USA.

Bob Butcher known to many as "Butch" & who served on Superb between Nov 1950 to July 1951 wonders if Curly Watson is still around. He would like to make contact.

Laura Kardo researching her grandfather, Charles Harris, who served around 1951 & 1952. would like to know more about him.

Jeff , the son of Jim Stewart who was on board as a Telegraphist between 1947 & 1951, would be happy to receive any information re his dad. Jim was also on HMS Vidal in 1955

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REUNION REMINDER

A Note for Your Diary
The next Reunion
will be at
The King Charles Hotel,
Gillingham, Kent
Friday, Saturday & Sunday
6th to 8th October
Be There or Be Square !

The main event i.e. The Dinner is held on the Saturday but it's also important to attend the AGM (which is informal & of short duration !) on the Friday evening if you can make it

The Hotel goes out of its way to make us comfortable - the cost of the 2 nights includes Dinner, Bed & Breakfast on the Friday and Saturday & Breakfast on Sunday morning. There's plenty of good humour and loads of raffle prizes. Why not give it a whirl?

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PERSONS WHO RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE

Andy **Brierley** (1954) - Derek **Baldry** (1956) - Alf **Brown** (1954) - Bob **Butcher** (1951) - Ron **Clay** (1956-57) - Bill **Cook** (1956) - Jim **Copus** (1954) - Ted **Davy** (1945 Canada) - John **Eccleston** (1956) - Mark Field (Son of Charlie **Field** 1946) - Eleanor **Fochesato** (USA) - Clive **Godley** (1954) - Maureen Taylor (Daughter of Ron **Gray** 1946) - Phil **Grimson** (1953 & 1954) - Tony **Hacket** (1953) - Terry Hall (son of Bert **Hall** 1946) - Alan **Harmer** (1955 - 56) - Joe **Heaton** (1956) - Brian **Hill** (1954) - Emile [Coder] **Keane** (1954 - 55) - Rita Keeler (Wife of Brian **Keeler** 1954) - Charlie **Kingston** (1956) - Sharon Goodall (Daughter of Fred **Kinsey** Co-Founder 1950-52) - Ray **Lambert** (1955) - Don **Lawrence** (1954) - Peter **MacDonald** (1949-51) - Arthur **Maxted** (1951) - George **Messmer** (USN 1954 - USA) - Malcolm **Milham** (1953) - Wendy **Norman** (Wife of David Norman 1956) - Margaret Norgan (Wife of Jim **Norgan** 1946) - Frank **Nunn** (1956) - Debbie Richardson (Daughter of Bill **Potticary** (1952) - Brian **Saunders** (1954 - 55 France) - Will Sherwood (Son of Bill **Sherwood** 1954) - Rob **Smith** (1956) - Jeff Stewart (Son of Jim **Stewart** 1947 Australia) - Paul Taylor (Son of Ken **Taylor** 1954) - Brian **Turner** (Associate) - John **Voak** - John **Ward** (1953) - Jon **Willshir** (1953 Thailand)

Click here to contact Brian Saunders by email

To send an email from this page

If you are using "GOOGLE CHROME" please right click with your mouse on the link above and select "open link in new tab" otherwise just left click on the link

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MEMBERSHIP

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION ?

THE ANNUAL FEE IS £10 & YOU WILL RECEIVE 4 NEWSLETTERS PER YEAR & ELIGABLE TO ATTEND REUNIONS

TELEPHONE ROBIN SMITH AT 01634 362 379

OR EMAIL HIM AT robinsmith173@yahoo.co.uk

An **Application Form** can be downloaded **HERE**

Chairman Robin Smith

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ARCHIVED CONTENT

Past Copies of the Magazine can be accessed on-line by clicking on the appropriate month

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February, 2017

March, 2017

April, 2017

May, 2017

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