

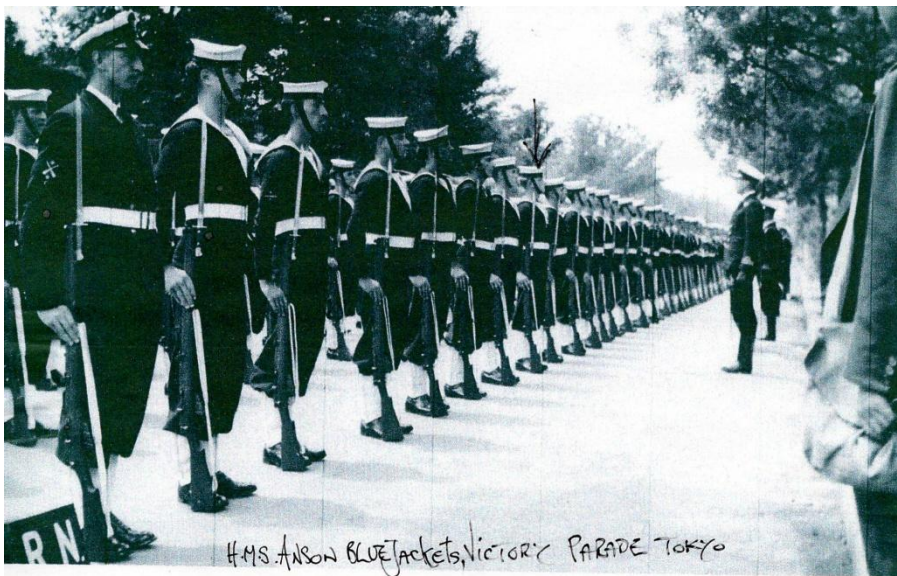
Greetings Shipmates,

In the last newsletter's ramble about *Ganges*, Felixstowe's transition from R.A.F. facility to major container port was mentioned. After posting, it dawned a relic of that time is a short mile away in elder brother's gateway. The story is this: King George's Fund for Sailors, used old moored mines, painted red, as collection boxes sited around coastal resorts, y'all must be familiar with.



The one from Felixstowe appeared at a yard in Ipswich, a part of my working orbit, rescue and transport to Kent was immediate. Unloaded in centre of bro's drive he was a bit nonplussed arriving home from work but, being an old sailor type, was delighted with the gift, and suspected who giveth.

A rub down and a coat of gloss soon had it as a house name plate. It's been there for years now and I expect to inherit it in his will. At 92 years old he was on *Anson* in the British Pacific Fleet. A picture of him in Victory parade Tokyo 1945 as a member of their Blue Jacket Guard. I was able to compare it to the Naval Guard drawn



up last month to receive the Admiral of Indian Navy accompanied by Second Sea Lord. I judge 'current crop' at five out of ten, pale copy of those other 'ancient mariners'. A look down their rank shows individual characters, hats all the same but different, own stamp gently applied. A look at current crop indicates proper uniform seldom worn, not allowed beyond barrack gates. The working rig festooned with name tags, union flags etc., style taken from other navies. Is it to remind them what their name is and

who they are working for? I am interested in the chap at 'action stations'; how long does it take him to dress when the klaxon sounds, will his 'elf and safety' kit take him down like a brick if knocked over side?

M.O.D. Minister (Private Pike Williamson) is fired! It now looks like the initial reason offered is a fabrication by 'senior civil servant' Sidwell, who is allowed to conduct vendettas because of his friendship with Prime Minister May, is a major force. If you thought only dictators gather power to wield unquestioned axe, know Sidwell is Cabinet Secretary – Head of the Civil Service and National Security Advisor.

Three posts are a record in history for any U.K. Parliament – how did that come about? I have queried Williamson's pedigree and ability, but give credit for fighting treasury, and getting, an extra £1.8 billion into the defence budget. A very big plus is the rapport he struck up with Aussie defence minister (a lady) lobbying to get B.A.E. Frigate design chosen for R.A.N; benefit to the U.K. a reported £20 billion.

Williamson also refused to send M.O.D. officials with Sidwell's delegation of 15 Senior Officials to Beijing following the HUAWEI Telecomm. Security debacle. Who authorises the unelected to lead such delegations on our behalf? Surely it can only be the Prime Minister? Today's report that 377 M.P.'s have their (official) credit cards suspended by the expenses watchdog. Since last scrutiny an increase of 20% in the perk has cost the tax payer (us) £120 million. Example cited has Sir Anthony Steen, M.P. for Totnes, getting £8,800.00 over the last four years for upkeep of his 'estate and trees'.

Here I quote his reply on being asked to justify that: 'The public are complaining out of jealousy'!

Blasphemy is not enough I tell myself, you are, also, not a revolutionary, it must be a lie. If Sir Whatshisname was due a tumbrell ride to a guillotine at Tyburn I would allow myself the luxury of a Southern Rail extortionist

Snouts in the trough

A DECADE ago, the expenses scandal tsunami crashed down on Parliament. It exposed the greed and arrogance of our political elite – and their flagrant contempt for the public.

Isolated in their ivory towers, MPs convinced themselves it was perfectly acceptable to spend taxpayers' cash on duck houses, moats and plasma TVs.

A handful were jailed for fraud; hundreds more were forced to repay money after their venality was revealed. To abate public anger, MPs expressed contrition and introduced new rules to prevent such rampant corruption in future. But ten years on, have they learned their lesson? A resounding no.

Nearly two thirds, including that paragon of self-virtue Jeremy Corbyn, have had official credit cards suspended by a watchdog for breaking those same rules.

Some failed to provide receipts, while others did not return ineligible payments – practices which might result in the sack in the private sector. And wouldn't you know: They tried to cover it up!

What makes such abuses so pathetic is that MPs are well-paid on £79,468 a year – a salary most people can only dream of.

Trust in the political process is already at a dangerously low ebb. Last week, in a howl of anger, voters gave the main parties a bloody nose at the ballot box.

Yet it is still difficult to escape the conclusion MPs don't really care. As long as their snouts are in the trough, they'll show two fingers to everybody else.

ticket, to sit alongside the ladies knitting and holler 'OLE' as the blade came down.

Good Governance in the U.K. is a myth; it should be the pivot of all things. Knife murder rampant, punishment to fit crimes non-existent. Small wonder the National Moral Compass points up shit creek.

Lord Baker, on a £4 million bonus from his Russian Oligarch paymaster, refused to reveal the actual salary from E.N. to the M.I.6 enquiry team. He is one of a clutch lobbying for 'sanction easement' on behalf of Russian interests. What price the Nation's secrets? Why bother if the navy has no ships or Tommy Atkins boots? That place had run its course, to blow it up would do a grave injustice to Augustus Pugin, but the clientele could be hosed off the terrace as fish food in Old Father Thames, going out with a surge of turds from Richmond and beyond. I am embarrassed the House Speaker can, on a personal whim, ban an 'allied head of State' from speaking in the commons. Is that our much trumpeted democracy in operation; is it what the Magna Carta had in mind? Baker, the noble lord, is one of several blacklisted by the U.S.A. treasury for criminality, linked to murder, extortion and organised crime. Pressure from China has Taiwan excluded from the Lord Mayor's London Parade. They have provided an attractive float for many years. Could Sidwell have a

dirty digit in that pie? The nation is for sale via Westminster. Enough of that!

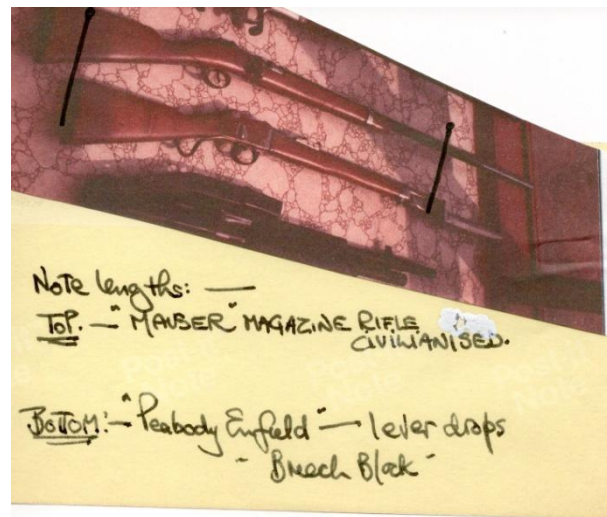
The Times on Sunday had a half page picture of the *U.S.S. George Bush*, proper super carrier. Deck loaded with aircraft, nice bow wave indicating a fair rate of knots, on its way towards Iran by order of President Trump. A law by, late President Regan (I think), requires the U.S. to maintain twelve such carriers in their arsenal. That law seems about to quietly alter with number twelve on the back burner, so to speak. I wonder if China's boast of 'hyper sonic' rockets, proactively referred to as 'carrier busters' is bearing fruit. Russia boasts of a quantum leap in autonomous nuclear armed submersibles of phenomenal range, carriers being their 'prey of choice' followed by the 'boomer fleet'. Meantime Boeing and Lockheed have maturing carrier aircraft projects, free of that expensive pernicious contrary, a pilot costing millions to train and maintain; keep current.

A question that always seems to crop up is; is the new conflict to be fought using the same strategy, tactics and hardware that gained victory last time? What a conundrum to be faced for the person responsible to make the choice; then, half way through the event a simple new idea surfaces to disrupt all the best assumptions. Tanks broke trench warfare in WW1. From final couple of years at school I had a deep interest in fire arms. One that seemed to me to follow the format was the Peabody Enfield, single shot •303, falling block breach – Carbine. Not 'til mid WW2 had our army another short rifle. In South African war, Boers had our army by the tail, all mounted, armed with excellent Mauser noted for rapid movement, wrong footing the P.B.I. (poor bloody infantry) every time.

The P.B.I. walked everywhere in that vast region, packs and all. Horses were for officers only. A bright junior saw the simple answer to a simple question; i.e. mounted infantry with manageable short rifles (carbine) for use on horseback, or afoot. When formed, fortunes had a dramatic change, hot pursuit and classic flanking manoeuvres.

I have an illustration of ladies, in long dresses, manning trench lines at Mafeking armed with the lethal short Peabody Enfield (ultimately relieved by naval field gun crews).

Could have been no delicate maidens with that •303 short barrel kicking back. That •303 was visually just the same as the ones for the rifles on Superb, differing only in that theirs were filled with 'black powder', ours would be 'nitro cellulose', trade name Cordite. I owned two Peabodys in days of yore, 'black powder' round not available, but had access to decent length of aircraft belt from crash site that furthered one's education. Tracer was expected but belt held De Wilde in its place – new to me – its value was it only registered 'strikes' with a flash when hitting, unlike tracer that burned all down its flight path, thus giving away a following aircraft if he was missing " Ken what I mean Jimmy?"



Got off my point there which is; come WW1 Cavalry Generals hated the thought of Privates getting their hands on horses, no plumed head gear, gold leaf breasted jackets, plus –shock horror- no lances!! Not pretty. That winning formula in Africa was chopped by aged blimps.

Tommy Atkins was back, walking into barbed wire 100 yards deep, towards more of Maxims autos than the entire combined armies possessed. Cavalry born to 'exploit breakouts' do not charge 'deep wire', so trench warfare got even more entrenched, flanking with modern weapons reverted to Atkins with a touch of 'trench foot' walking a moonscape towards Armageddon. I feel WW2 has a Watson Watts radio waves, radar, what measure of affrition did that save us, on all fronts.

Feel you have had a belly full of all that; here's a tale read somewhere recently, dates and names make me feel genuine Admiral Sir John Kelly, former Commander of the Fleet, being buried at sea off Portsmouth 1936. The coffin was not weighted so popped right back up, floated a treat. 20 other Admirals were in attendance and contemplated options; tow it back ashore. Or sink it by gun fire from *H.M.S. Curacao's* 3" gun? Chosen option 2 took half an hour to reduce box to match wood.

Literally going with a bang, that *Curacao* must be the one halved in collision with the *Queen Mary* a couple of years later.

God bless y'all and thanks for tuning in.

