H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

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CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION, ROBIN SMITH

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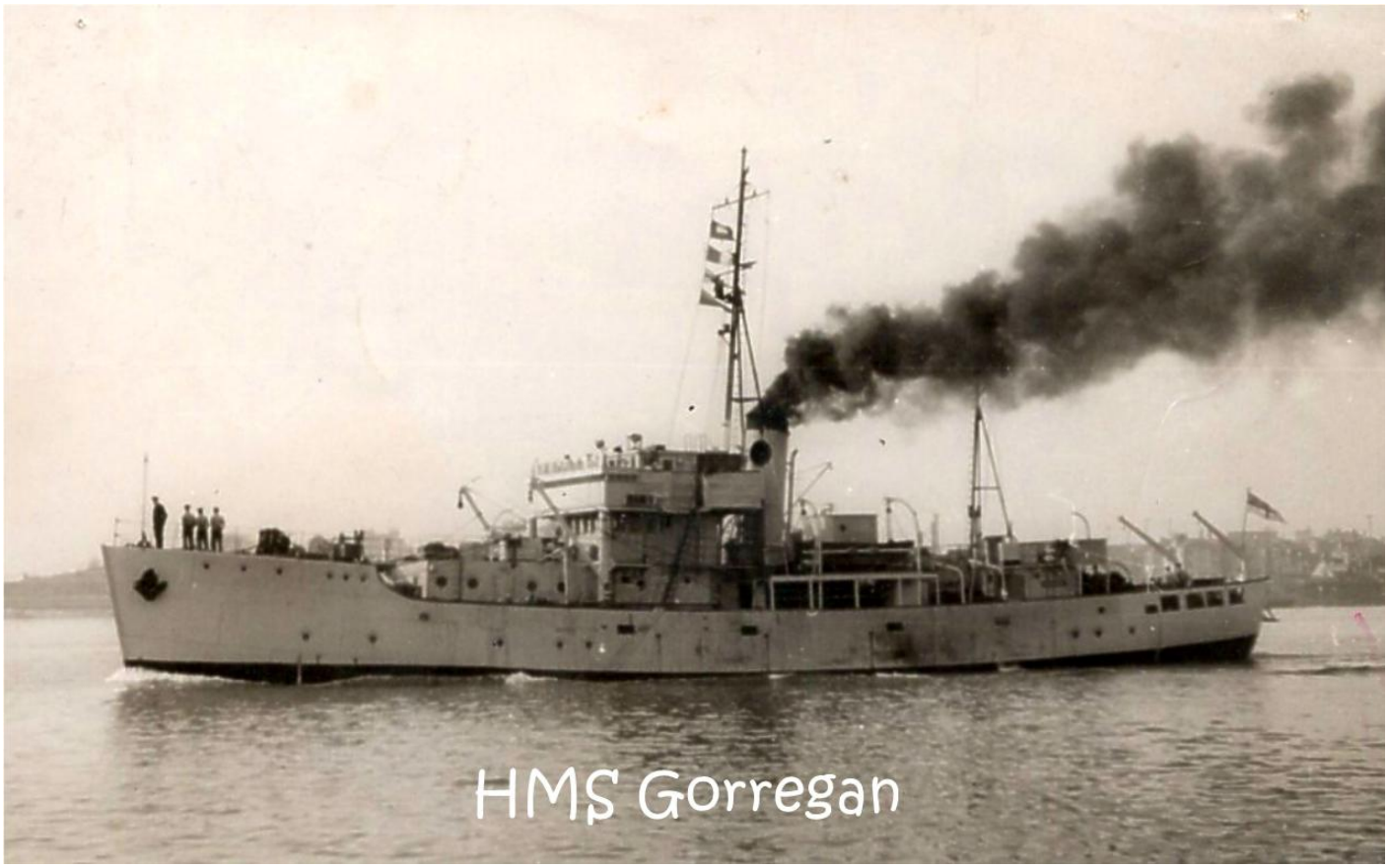
ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates

Some time ago Rob suggested previous ship stories would be okay for inclusion.

A trawl through the dust in my glory hole provided snaps that could serve to lace this together The vessel in question is the ***Gorregan***, an Isle class trawler, built, I think, at Selby, Yorks in 1944.



Just out of some kind of reserve, a 12 pounder removed from the well deck, replaced by Oerlikan tubs, plus an instrument space and spare officer's cabin in its place. The work was done to suit ***HMS Vernon*** requirements for a trials vessel, to locate and de-activate ground mines. The R.N lagged behind in this art as they became more sophisticated, more selective in what they detonated for and when. This period had a new description coined for the 'clearance task'. The word 'sweeping' was dropped for 'hunting' in those squadrons on 'ground mine location', it being more electronic as opposed to 'sweeps with cutters'. Our Captain was a two and a half, Roberts V.C. of submarine fame, removal of unexploded bomb from 'outer casing' whilst under threat of enemy aircraft turning up and being abandoned 'trapped in casing'. I think he was a Middie at that time.

Gorregan's crew was a mere handful but he totally failed to connect with any lower deck, uncommunicative and dour. If on the bridge with him at sea never a friendly enquiring word, him

in right corner, you in left. He eventually left, replaced by a really great Fleet Air Arm Senior Commander; must have been completing his time in the mob, obviously of advanced years. A 'sailor's sailor' his yacht, when tied up alongside, was nearly as long as his trawler, crew person was his wife, lived ashore a lot just a mile along the road at Hoares Inn, South Queensferry. Our home port being ***HMS Lochinvar*** at Port Edgar, South Queensferry, virtually in the shadow of the Forth rail bridge. Our squadron consisted of six wooden, so called, Mickey Mouses, diesel engine "L" sweepers for electric mines.

A party piece, in at least two of them, was reaching up from the mess table slowly sinking a dinner knife up to the hilt in an overhead beam. Story was of rushed construction during the 'great struggle' - WW2, with unseasoned timber, still green in parts, in the U.S.A. Our captain's F.A.A. Heritage obvious from the attention from F.A.A. pilots at Donibristle, their airfield north of the Forth.

A roar to startle Old Nick – had all ready to change Y-fronts as one or two planes tried to get between the chimney and mast, out of the blue at break-neck speed. From my time in ***Triumph*** I know, when allowed a play period, F.A.A. young pilots border on the lunatic, to look down on them from a sponson below flight deck level, thrilled me beyond belief or, having a go at the 'towed splash target' with guns and rockets – then – such play allowed them to fly into Taranto harbour and decimated a chunk of Italian fleet in a bi-plane that does 90 mph when pressed, whose 'skin' was 'Irish linen' plus two coats of dope – the sort of spec the R.A.F. saddled the F.A.A. with before the navy got that service back.

Gorregan leader 51st Mine Hunting Squadron with her brood, all captained by young lieutenants on their first command.

'Trawler coaling' was done on a wall outside Rosyth dockyard next to the Boom Defence School. Their sleeve badge, long gone, a shackle crossed by a marlin spike. Their vessels were all coal burners with names beginning with BAR, capable of lifting 24 tons on their bow horns, a midget submarine of that time.

Coaling followed R.N. tradition, no one excused, braid included. Stokers had all upper deck jobs. 12 ton mineral rail wagons at wall's edge above the ship bunker hatch, when clips are knocked off by a stoker an avalanche roared down in a cloud of dust that covered everything. Attempts at sealing off mess decks etc. was done with toilet rolls spread with pusser's soft soap –

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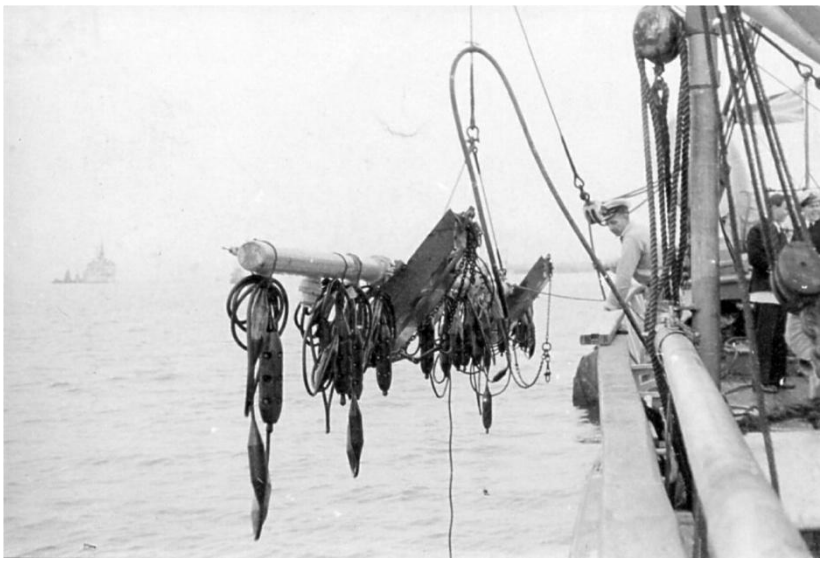
bandage-like -. The finest dust still got into every nook and cranny. Trimming inside bunkers was strictly seaman's work; face mask was a strip of wet flannel as coal poured in, vision was marginal but breathing dust-free was vital. All went well 'til the level got up, then the cry 'Push into corners and sides'; eventually one lay prone - still trying to get another cubic foot or two on board, a proper knuckle-skinner. Dust and fines that settled to bunker bottom had an alternative use, especially savoured by our officer trio.

Just beyond the seaward side of the bridge a pair of buoys, suitable for the largest of liners such as would wait for high tide, allowing entry to Thomas Ward's famous Inverkeithing ship breaking yard.

R.N. ships also used those buoys, a favourite of the 51st being ***Vanguard*** which we passed in the narrow fairway on the way out in the morning and back for late tea. One had to look tidy and disciplined to 'pipe the Admiral' as we all passed. Stokers pre-empted that salute by a few minutes. Boiler room blowers turned up to warp factor nine, both bottom fires were open being fed with maniacal zeal, heaps of dust and fines which blew along top of fires under pressure from fans, up the chimney a cloud of oily smuts, the plan was to settle on the *Vanguard*. If their O.O.W. had his telescope on us the utmost glee would be observed with the bridge ducked down below the dodger; childish, but the real deal for getting our small band single-minded.

A radical change to get back to subject I started out with, ground mines!

They lay on the bottom, often covered in mud, being a heavy item. Getting into its magnetic field somehow was key to knowing its presence. Our ship towed a long aluminium pipe, on a bridal; spaced rubber covered tails every so often had inductance coils along their length. Coils tied up for stowing.



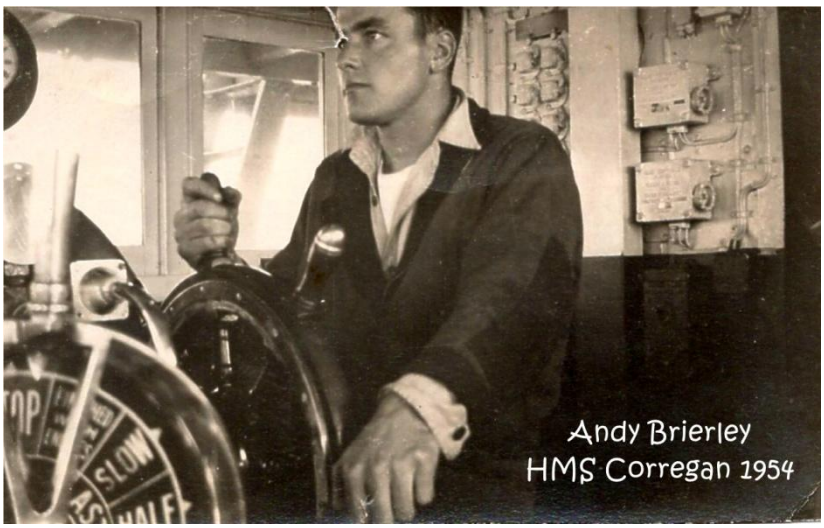
Progress at a stately 3 knots or less; *'otter boards'* on pipe to just clear bottom ground. All electrically connected up towing cable to cabin on well deck, inductance coil wipes mine and shows on paper trace. Counter mining the target in a harbour could not be an ad hoc affair with random dropped charges, cables, pipe lines, buoyage would be at risk. 'Diver over side', mixture bottles, not hard hat, with an open net of approximately 6" squares, 4' x 6" x 8'. Net made of *Cordtex*, which comes on plywood rolls and is about 1½ times as thick as a pusser's cod line. Commonly known as instantaneous fuse it burns at 22,000 foot per second. Three or four wraps round 109 lb. rail track will cut it clean when detonated.

Those who went through the diving school demolition course – clearing fairways – will be familiar with it.

The Demolition Men show on TV has it laid out to, may be, dozens of charges on a structure requiring simultaneous firing.

Another aid was the strangest little ASDIC transducer. It may have avoided hitting moored mines besides seeing the ground variety.

A ball, about the size of a medicine ball, to ship it a brass tube with a 4" bore penetrated the hull centre line, high enough inboard to be above the water line, in what passed as ASDIC space. A small chain, seen in photo, is lowered down this tube to hang well out of the ship's bottom. It was caught in the usual way of heaving a line over the bow on both sides. Then walked to location where the chain emerged. The ends of line walked back to bow with a chain captive, brought inboard, walked back amidships, shackled onto the top of the ASDIC shaft that was lowered as the chain was recovered to the ASDIC space; connect electrics, hey presto, starts to ping; a Heath Robinson system known in its entirety as E.R.L. Thank the Lord the current magic system bears no remote relationship to that.



Final 'Clark Gable' in the wheel house below the open bridge. As the anchor was up and down all day, the helmsman left the wheel, walked the catwalk to the foc'sle with his 2lb. Ball Pein hammer, slipped when bridge shouted; fathoms were called out as normal. He did his allotted task on deck until it was up anchor and back to the wheel.

A couple of the stokers lived an easy up-homers north of the Forth. At day's end the skipper lined the seven of us up for a race to the Forth Bridge. To allow the stokers a quick departure for home, seamen shovelled coal whilst they washed and dressed; at flag drop diesel M.M.s were away in front, but as triple expansion got going on solid gun metal bearings our chief – an E.R.A. – kept feeling them in case the cooling hose was called for, seldom did we lose the race. Multi tasking, a new word these days, was normal practise on the trawlers to the ship's great advantage, most knew how to use the DECCA navigator on the bridge. A priceless education I would not swap for an honours

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degree at Cambridge in some fart-arse profession; insatiable curiosity sated … and all for sixpence and a big orange a week.

This is October 3rd at 5 p.m. Can think of another thing I would rather be doing even though the monsoon continues in Newington.

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COMPLAINTS THAT THOMAS COOK RECEIVED FROM DISGRUNTLED HOLIDAYMAKERS

1. "On my holiday to Goa in India, I was disgusted to find that almost every restaurant served curry. I don't like spicy food."

2. "They should not allow topless sunbathing on the beach. It was very distracting for my husband who just wanted to relax."

3. "We went on holiday to Spain and had a problem with the taxi drivers as they were all Spanish."

4. "We booked an excursion to a water park but no-one told us we had to bring our own swimsuits and towels. We assumed it would be included in the price."

5. "The beach was too sandy. We had to clean everything when we returned to our room."

6. "We found the sand was not like the sand in the brochure. Your brochure shows the sand as white but it was more yellow."

7. "It's lazy of the local shopkeepers in Puerto Vallartato close in the afternoons. I often needed to buy things during 'siesta' time -- this should be banned."

8. "No-one told us there would be fish in the water. The children were scared."

9. "Although the brochure said that there was a fully equipped kitchen, there was no egg-slicer in the drawers."

10. "I think it should be explained in the brochure that the local convenience store does not sell proper biscuits like custard creams or ginger nuts."

11. "The roads were uneven and bumpy, so we could not read the local guide book during the bus ride to the resort. Because of this, we were unaware of many things that would have made our holiday more fun."

12. "It took us nine hours to fly home from Jamaica to England. It took the Americans only three hours to get home. This seems unfair."

13. "I compared the size of our one-bedroom suite to our friends' three-bedroom and ours was significantly smaller."

14. "The brochure stated: 'No hairdressers at the resort.' We're trainee hairdressers and we think they knew and made us wait longer for service."

15. "When we were in Spain, there were too many Spanish people there. The receptionist spoke Spanish, the food was Spanish. No one told us that there would be so many foreigners."

16. "We had to line up outside to catch the boat and there was no air-conditioning."

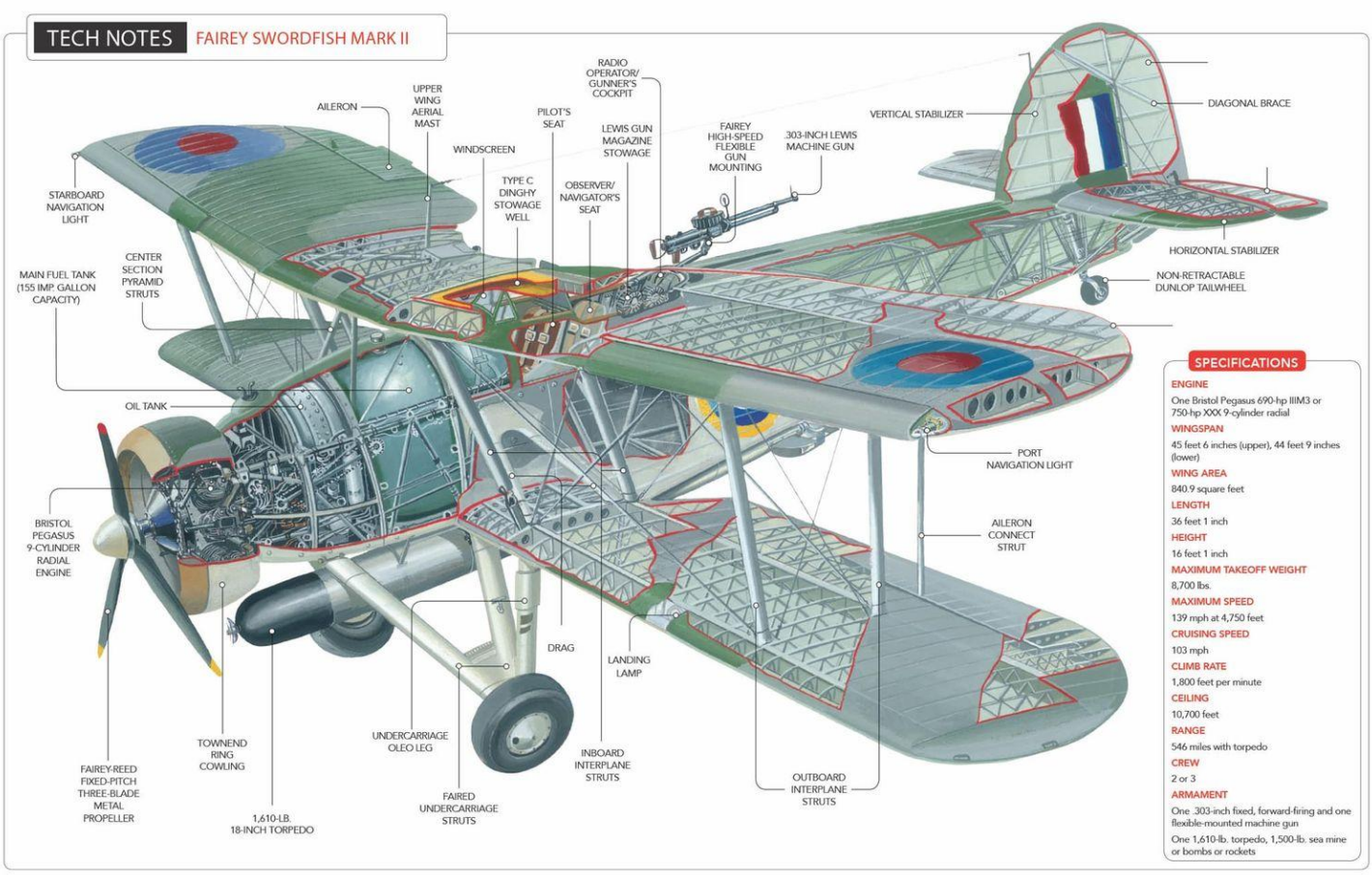
17. "It is your duty as a tour operator to advise us of noisy or unruly guests before we travel."

18. "I was bitten by a mosquito. The brochure did not mention mosquitoes."

19. "My fiancée and I requested twin-beds when we booked, but instead we were placed in a room with a king bed. We now hold you responsible and want to be re-reimbursed for the fact that I became pregnant. This would not have happened if you had put us in the room that we booked."

BE AWARE ...THEY WALK AMONG US and THEY VOTE!

NAVY MATTERS



The Swordfish was also fitted with AVS radar its lower wing was strengthened enabling the aircraft to carry rockets. The Stringbag the name given affectionately to the Swordfish sunk and damaged more Axis warships than any other aircraft in the War in the Atlantic.

Overall, Swordfish-equipped units accounted for 14 U-boats destroyed. Operational sorties of the Swordfish continued into January 1945; the last active missions are believed to have been anti-shipping operations conducted off the coast of Norway by FAA Squadrons 835 and 813, where the Swordfish's manoeuvrability was essential. On May 21st 1945, the last operational squadron, 836 Naval Air Squadron, which had last been engaged in providing resources for the MAC ships, was disbanded shortly following the fall of Germany and the end of the Second World War in Europe

A great feat for an aircraft that many regard as a flimsy obsolete WW1 designed aircraft.

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12 YEARS ON (AND UNDER) THE WAVES – Part 4

by Wiggy Bennett

For those not familiar with the Shetland Islands, Muckle Flugga is the most northerly point of the islands. From here it would take us about 2 days to reach the Clyde, weather permitting. Second highlight was when we surfaced in the Clyde and sent the one word message "Surfaced". Up until then we had maintained radio silence. Finally came the message "Wireless Room make to depot ship 'Passing Rhu Narrows'". You knew then that in about 30 minutes you would be having a hot shower and changing your clothes on the depot ship. It could also mean a period of leave.

Whilst I was on ***Tiptoe*** we made two trips to Russian waters. On the second occasion we had an incident with one of the main engines. Each night we would withdraw from the surveillance area to charge the batteries by snorting. The seas were pretty rough and depth keeping was difficult. The float valve at the top of the snort tube failed to operate correctly with the result that water came down and flooded one of the cylinders and consequently the con rod became bent, thereby putting that engine out of action.

With only one engine it would take twice as long to get a full charge into the battery, and battery power was what we relied upon during daylight hours. The only way to replace the con rod was to take the cylinder head off, no mean feat as it was about two feet square and nearly a foot thick of solid steel! We went down to 300 feet where it was relatively calm and the engine room staff began to strip the defective cylinder down. Even down at 300 feet there was sufficient movement to cause the cylinder head to sway alarmingly on the end of the block and tackle. I think it took about 9 hours continuous work to repair the engine, by which time it was too late to continue charging the batteries, so we had to hope that nothing would come along to harass us and make us use up precious battery power.

It was while I was on ***Tiptoe*** that I completed the 3 years' service required by non -volunteers, my Divisional Officer sent for me and asked if I wished to return to General Service – I gave him a short 4 word reply "No thank you, Sir!"

Whilst on ***Tiptoe*** most of the crew became film stars – more correctly film extras! We had come south from Scottish waters to exercise with ships of the anti-submarine squadron based at Portland, for some reason we had to go into the floating dock in Portland dockyard. It turned

out that a film was being made there (called "The Key" starring William Holden, Trevor Howard, Bryan Forbes and Sophie Loren) and most of the crew were hired as extras. This was great fun but repetitive, scenes seemed to take all day until the Director was satisfied with the action. We didn't mind, the pay was good (£5 a day) and the food from the refreshment truck superb. This diversion from our normal routine lasted a week then it was back to the old routine.

The normal period of service in a boat was 18 months, as I had joined in September 1958 this would take me well into 1960 when ***Tiptoe*** was due to go into refit. With this in mind my girlfriend and I decided to get married in June 1960 when the boat would be in dockyard hands. However the navy had other plans for me! During the early part of 1960 I was informed that I was going on an advancement course for Petty Officer Telegraphist, starting August 1960 and ending February 1961.

Because of ***Tiptoe***'s programme I was to leave her in May and go into ***Dolphin***. We decided to change the wedding to the Christmas period 1960. Being a training establishment, ***Mercury*** would shut down for two weeks over Christmas returning on the 2nd January 1961. The future wife and her mother did a sterling job and managed to get everything organised for 31st December. I was able to find a flat in Southsea so after the wedding we travelled there. The honeymoon was a wet Sunday in Southsea looking for somewhere to eat; then on the Monday back to ***Mercury*** to complete my course. Before I left on the Monday morning I had warned my new bride that I might have to do duty that night, and I did!

The course came to an end in February 1961 (I passed) and I returned to Dolphin to wait my next posting which came during March. The draft was to ***Sealion*** which was building in Birkenhead at Cammell Lairds yard (remember the ***Thetis?***). Leave was granted for me to visit the area and obtain accommodation before joining the boat in April. We found a flat in Birkenhead and now began the most bizarre time I was to spend during my twelve years in the navy.

HM Submarine Sealion

Dockyard routine was as follows:

- Monday report to ships office by 11 am, leave at 3 pm
- Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – report to ships office by 9 am, leave at 3 pm.
- Friday report to ships office by 9 am, leave at 11 am.

I still had the faithful Lambretta and the wife and I were able to put it to good use by going off for weekends, either into North Wales, the Lake District or returning to Chatham to see our parents. We were also able to have a week's honeymoon, touring the Lake District.

As the date for completion of the boat approached she had to go out into Liverpool Bay for diving trials. For this she was accompanied by a seagoing tug which acted as a safety vessel and I was detailed to be onboard the tug to provide a communication link with the shore. It was now that I suffered my second, and last, bout of seasickness! The trials were successful and on the 25th July 1961 Sealion was accepted into the Royal Navy.

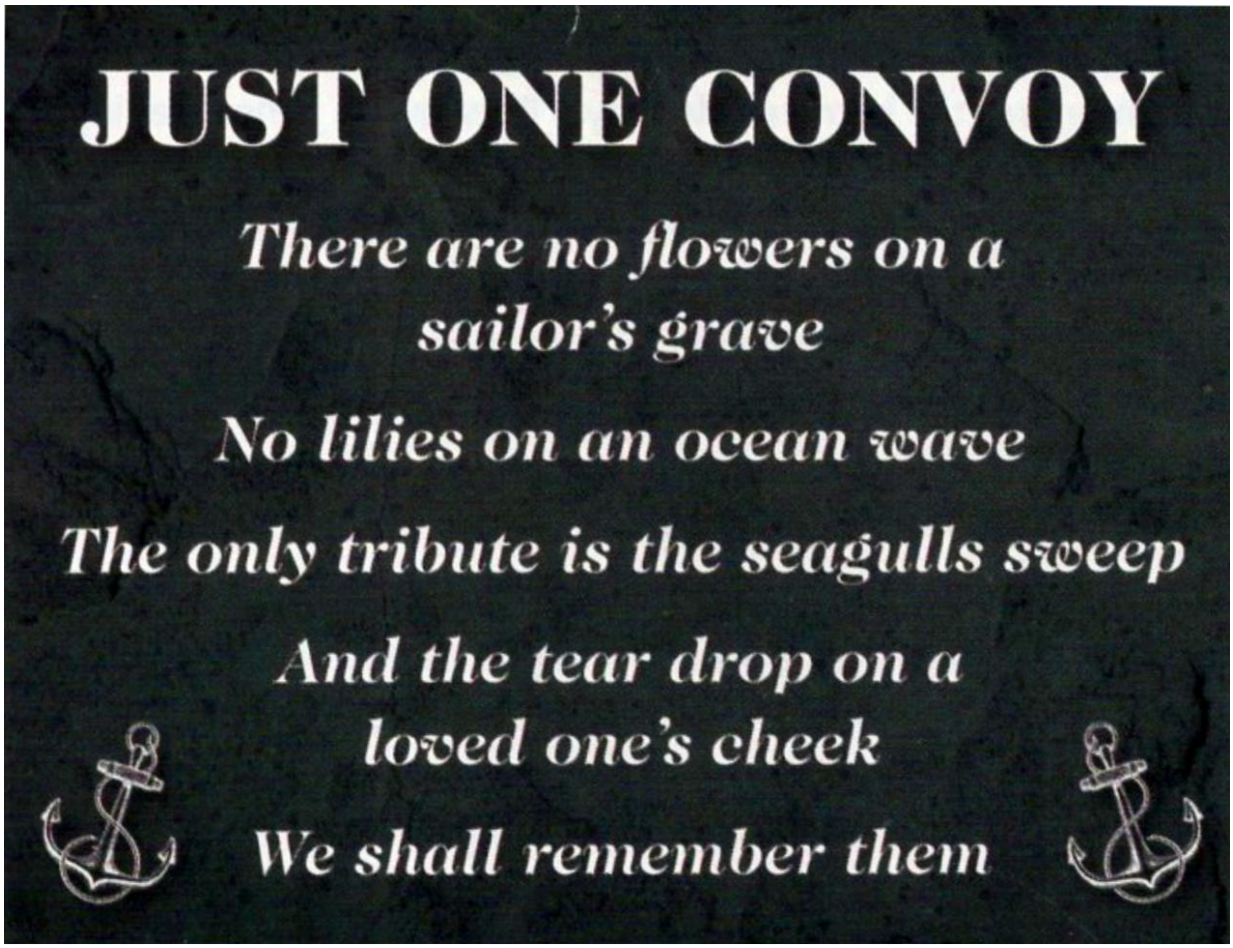
Within a week or two we left Liverpool and made our way to the Gareloch to join the 3rd Submarine Squadron and commence what is known as a work-up. This is when the entire ships company learn to work as a team and become proficient in all aspects of submarine operations. You also carry out trials of equipment at greater and greater depths to make sure that everything works as it should. It was while we were at 300 feet checking that the torpedo bow and stern doors worked correctly that the cry "FLOODING IN THE AFTER ENDS" came through over the Tannoy. Immediately the watertight door to the after ends was shut and we made our way to the surface. It turned out that the gland nut on the hydraulic ram had not been tightened correctly, the opening and shutting of the torpedo tube doors at various depths had caused it to gradually rotate until it fell off!

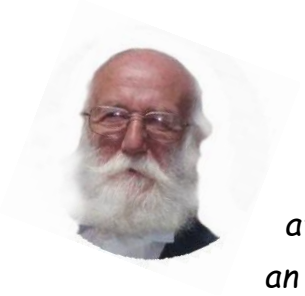
It was on Sealion that I made my fourth visit to Arctic waters. We had been on station for nearly three weeks watching a major exercise when we were rumbled. At first the Russians hassled us with small charges while we tried to escape from the exercise area, after a while these became louder, either they were closer or using larger charges. Anyway, the Russians kept us submerged for nearly 3 days while we made our way out into the Arctic Ocean and the safety of Norwegian territorial waters. When the Captain decided that we had reached the right area we surfaced, started the main engines and made for closer inshore. The Russian speaking radio operators on board reported that the leading Russian ship signalled "Thank you Sealion for the exercise, have a safe journey home!" So much for security!

As we had been compromised we had to stay on the surface from now on so we sent the signal to base that we had surfaced which must have caused some consternation back at base as we started to receive signals asking for information. It was now that our main radio transmitter decided to fail so we were not able to get any more information to base until we came within the range of our low powered standby transmitter. From what I remember the rest of that trip was uneventful.

In December '61 our baby was due to be born. By now my wife and I were living in an attic flat in Helensburgh pending being offered a married quarter near to the Faslane base. So that help was on hand during the run up to the birth my wife and I decided that it would be best for her to be at her mother's for the birth, therefore the last month of pregnancy was in Chatham. The midwife had calculated that the baby would arrive before Christmas so I managed to get the first part of leave, returning to Faslane on the 28th. Baby obliged by arriving on the 18th, the wife's doctor passed her fit to travel so on Boxing Day we caught the sleeper train to Glasgow and returned to our flat. After about a month the effort of getting a pram up and down 4 flights of steps from the flat took its toll on my wife and the local doctor told her that she must take it easy and have plenty of bed rest! I applied for compassionate leave but was told that due to the boats programme this could not be granted. We decided that the best thing would be for wife and baby to return to her parents in Chatham and look for somewhere to live in that locality.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH





NOZZERS GO WEST Part 17

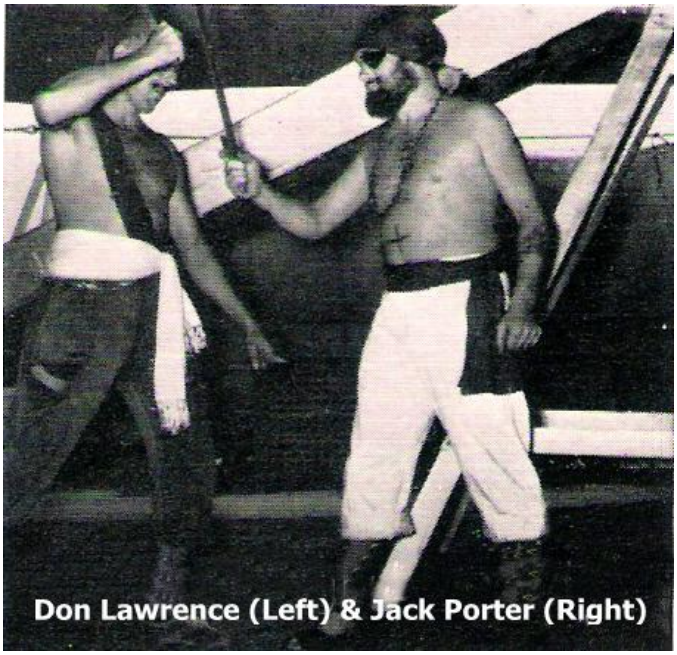
With that, the barman brought over two bottles of spirit and the man gave them to Ginger. They all breathed a sigh of relief. The man was on the level after all. Then, taking a minute to write his name and address on the back of an old business card, he gave it to them. After that and with another exaggerated round of hand shaking they bade him farewell and jumped in the taxi only to find the heavy, who hadn't said a word all the time he had been in their company, had got in the front.

That man took them all the way back to the ship and then watched them go up the gangway before returning to Lima. All the time he still hadn't said a word. Luckily he had left before Ginger reached the upper deck because it would have been embarrassing to have him see a Royal Marine gangway sentry take Ginger's bottles and throw them both over the side. They'd had a good afternoon out on the town and had plenty of free booze but they were not going to get those bottles courtesy of a turkey-necked, arrogant know-nothing corporal.

The day they arrived was Saturday and the ship was open to visitors. Luckily Ginger was not on duty that weekend and he missed the pleasure of more than 1,600 pairs of feet tramping everywhere. He decided to go ashore again on the Sunday, mostly to avoid being press-ganged into helping marshal visitors through flats and up and down ladders. It was a wise decision because upon his return he learned that the Sunday visitors had outdone the Saturday crowds by more than an extra thousand: almost 2,800 had trooped up the gangway on Sunday.

The visitors had managed quite well without him, apparently and, as far as he could ascertain, not one among the four and a half thousand had even asked for him, either by name or description over the entire weekend.

The next day however, his good fortune ran out. The ship had hosted a children's party and this time his presence was required. It was their first attempt at a children's party and everyone wanted it to be just right.


Don Lawrence (Left) & Jack Porter (Right)

All through the forenoon, along with almost everyone else on board, he had been engaged in all manner of activities, including sawing, banging, lashing and draping of bunting and that took up all the time until dinner. After dinner, when the children raced aboard they were confronted with a roundabout where the capstan used to be, a slide on the boat deck and a pirate's cave in what used to be the torpedo parting shop plus yards of bunting everywhere and, of course, the ubiquitous pirates in all manner of fancy costume ranging from a stores commander in a sarong to a bare-chested, full bearded swashbuckler in the pirates cave to a stripey-jumpered pirate with silver buckles on his shoes, who was keeping things moving on the upper deck.

He recalled that it was said to be *Sod's Law* that stated something to the effect that if anything had the potential to go wrong, then it most certainly would. But the other law the *Law of Averages,* says that every once in a while things should go right – and this was one of those times. Everything had gone right. It had been a splendid experience and a good day. It had been a pleasure.

His first children's party was a delight and although he hadn't wanted any part of it to start with, he enjoyed it almost as much as the Peruvian kids that they were there to entertain, when he got into the swing of it.

Although Callao and Lima had given them a good time and prices that they could afford, they were not too disappointed when they sailed away just a couple of days later. In some strange way Ginger was ready to be moving on, he had had a good time and a couple of good runs ashore but now, his thoughts were focused ahead; focused on the next day: Friday February 4 - his birthday.

Early the next morning as he was roughly shaken out of his slumbers in order to have yet another opportunity to perfect his holystoning techniques on the quarterdeck before breakfast; he paused for a moment to wish himself 'Happy Birthday'. He was the only one to do so. None of the others on the boys mess deck even acknowledged his presence.

'Yes, a very happy birthday, to you Raymond', he said swinging his legs out of his hammock.

Bowing slightly towards his recently vacated hammock, he replies; 'Well, thank you very much Raymond. That is most kind of you'.

That was the first and, as it transpired, the last of his birthday greetings. Some others, who were fairly close, glanced in his direction at that, probably wondering what he was mumbling about. They all thought he was slightly bonkers any way and this was nothing out of the ordinary. Two minutes later they were all ankle deep in early morning water, courtesy of the South Pacific, with birthdays the last thing on their minds.

That was the lowest point of the momentous occasion of his birthday. It was the low point certainly. They were at sea and heading for Valparaiso. But sadly things didn't improve from there. It was the low point of his day and the remainder of the day stayed at that level.

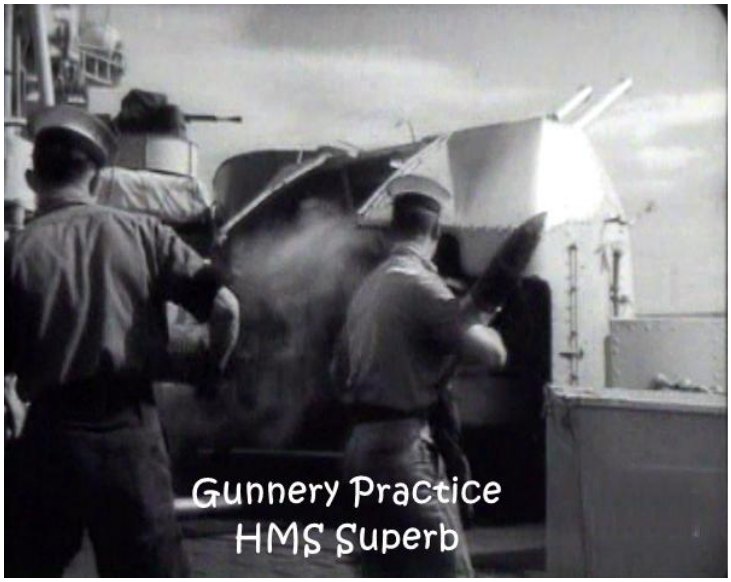
As the last strains of the bugle call summoning them to morning divisions died away they were racing around at top speed again. Breakfast was only just over and the washing-up and returning of the trays to the galley hardly completed when, as they emerged to the upper deck, a reception committee was already there to greet them. The two GIs, the Buffer and other assorted chief gunnery rates were assembled and that, if there was any doubt, signalled that something was about to happen. There appeared no time to waste and not even time to hold divisions, as the Tannoy crackled into life again.

'Hands to action stations for four inch and pom-pom firing'.

'Well whatcha waiting for?' yelled one of the gaggle of experts, just like Cyril Jury, their Ganges instructor used to. Just for a fleeting second Ginger had memories of Ganges flood over him but those memories, thankfully were short lived due to the need to get everything done at once.

"Come on, you know the routine. Covers off, tampions out, clean away ready for action".

Of course they knew the routine. They had been though it enough times with Cyril Jury plus, had these people already forgotten who it was that shot that drogue plane down a couple of months back?



There must have been a quiet word circulated somewhere because, despite all the activity around the four twin mounting, Ginger realized that only the four-inch and the pom-poms were engaged in what was supposed to have been *'action stations'* and that everyone not involved had dispersed or had found a vantage point from where to watch the proceedings.

As one of the loading numbers, Ginger had no real hand in proceedings and didn't know what was going on or what they were firing at. His little world revolved around putting his shell on the fuse machine and then shoving it up the open spout and watching out for the ejected empties that shot back out with some force and bounced about all over the place each time guns recoiled. Somehow he had managed to miss out on his proposed quiet number of sitting on the fuse machine and just following pointers; he had ended up with the heavy job, one that was more suited to the musclemen.

The action stations episode, such as it was, - if, indeed, that was what it was – ended at dinner-time. But that didn't signal a relaxing afternoon would be forthcoming. At the afternoon muster it was announced that the ejected shell casings from the morning's shoot had taken so much paint off the iron deck and, coupled with 4,000 pairs of visitors feet and a children party a few days earlier, the entire deck needed redoing in the dark green that it originally be coated in. Ginger guessed the next bright idea would be and he was not far off the mark. In fact he hit the bullseye when it was decided that it was a suitable job for the boys.

Painting that vast expanse of deck took right up until teatime and then, after a bath and an early supper, Ginger trooped up to the bridge to take his place as lookout until eight o'clock.

It had been a full day, so full that thoughts of birthdays had been pushed right out of his head. It had been a full day and it had been a long day, all the way from scrubbing and holystoning the quarterdeck before anyone else was up, to humping live shells into the gaping chasm of a four inch gun breech with arms that felt as heavy as the shells he was obliged to heft and through painting a deck that appeared as big as a football field right up to his last night jaunt as lookout.

Later, as he climbed into his hammock, thoughts of his early morning birthday greetings came back to him. "Yes, happy bloody birthday" he mumbled. "I've had a wonderful day, thank you; I've been playing with guns. I've been allowed to show my artistic talents with a paint brush and I've been sightseeing on the bridge with officers. Thank you for making my birthday so full of variety".

Less than a minute later he was poleaxed and didn't move until 0545 the next morning, when it started all over again.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

Just a heads up... Military forces have been told to be on standby for a complete England lockdown as of Sunday evening at 6pm... No one is to leave their homes unless you work in Front Line Retail or the NHS. I heard this directly from my neighbour Trigger who is best friends with a guy called Boycey. Boycey knows a guy named Del who drinks down the pub with his uncle Albert. Albert was in the war so he knows his stuff.

A MEMORABLE YEAR

By Sharky Ward

Coronation celebrations were on the horizon giving folks a little bit of something to look forward to but the coming year contained a horror that people certainly didn't think they would have to reckon with.

Pensioners living in Harwich might still remember the January of 1953; it was only 8 years after being badly knocked about by the war, still on rationing and everywhere looking a bit sad.

The year had only just started when a bad mixture of unusually high spring tides and strong northerly winds caused havoc all along the East Coast leaving people dead and homeless with Belgium and the Netherlands flooding badly at a cost in human lives of 2,551, we boys at ***HMS Ganges*** were employed at various places where the sea had broken through filling endless amounts of sandbags to plug the defences.

I remember that at times I had my own little raft that ferried the empty bags and dead animals; bags to be filled up and animals to be disposed of. I used a long pole for propulsion a bit like what they do at Cambridge University just wetter, colder and muddier.

When rinsing out my tin mug I will always think of the mournful look in that dead sheep's eyes staring up at me.

1953 wouldn't leave Harwich alone for long; on the 19th of April a fire started aboard the "Kronprins Fredrik" the large Scandlines ferry, they threw everything into it to fight the blaze, 20 pumps a hundred firemen plus the reserve naval fleet then stationed at

Harwich - just about everyone piled in.

They put so much water into her that she rolled over alongside Parkston Quay, a day later the banks of the river glinted gold & silver, they were cheeses, them little triangular ones and lots bigger, all in their metallic wrappers glinting away in the evening sunshine by their thousands .

The customs and excise men were being run ragged chasing anyone retrieving anything that was floating.

HMS Ganges was on the other side of the river and as part of our training they sent us boys out there regularly sailing the large cutters & whalers. My education was crap and if they turned you out of school having mastered the art of reading and writing the teachers were chuffed. This sailing and nautical stuff was far beyond anything I could have imagined.

At school the class behind us there were kids who were too thick to get into the Army. On leaving school I think we had two choices, one was to work in the shoe factories and the second was to work in the shoe factories.

It was a very wide river and sailing one day without a lot of breeze the boat seemed to have stopped whereupon the CPO shouted out for four of us to get out and push, this I thought was ever so funny and rewarded him with a great big grin, he called me lots of things I hadn't heard and changed colour.

How was I to know that there were things called sandbanks?

The Store Keeper

We were deploying to the Gulf. Time was tight, tempers short. One of our fire-pumps was playing up; the suction strainer was knackered, and needed to be replaced. I knew we carried one, and authorised it to be drawn from the stores. Now, I know that a Store's called a Store because it's for storing things in, and if it was meant for issuing things from it'd be called an Issue, but.....

15 minutes later, I got a call from the CPO; Jack Dusty wouldn't release it. I went down to find out why. With dead-pan face and irrefutable logic, I was told "Yessir, I've got the part".

"Let's have it then"

" Nossir, you can't have it"

"Why? "

"'Cos I've only got one, and if I give it to you I won't have any left. Wot'll I do if someone wants one then?"

I'll leave what happened next to your imagination, but the fire pump worked fine after that.

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BACK IN 1956 Part 11

HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES

When I came on board as a liaison officer for the Army I decided that one of the first things I must do was to get to know the language.

Every profession has its own technical terms which it uses in day to day speech. Some expressions I already knew; that my room was called a cabin and that the latrines were called the heads, but when the W.R.A looking after me asked me if I minded if he kept his rabbits in my cabin I was a little shaken. I was relieved when he produced a silver cruet set and an ebony carving of elephants! Then there is the Buffer, no doubt he has something to do with the Fleet Train.

"Hey, half a minute, half a minute! 'Shooting a line', 'Putting up a black', 'Going for a burton', 'Taking a dim view' -- what kind of language is that?"

Some of the officers' names were a little difficult to get hold of at first. There was Lieutenant Commander Senior, one of the engineer officers. There was also a brave and distinguished officer Lieutenant Commander Thomas, who was always known as D.S.O. But when I looked carefully at his medal ribbons, I found he was too shy to wear the decoration.

Another thing, you would think that anyone who had any gash would go to the sick bay to have it bandaged up. Not at all, over the side with the lot!

A nice democratic ceremony takes place at 11.00 each morning-sorry-forenoon-when requestmen are invited to the Captain's table; for a light snack, I suppose, at this time of day.

Some of the signals procedure is a little confusing. When the sports officer made a signal; 'M.R.U. tennis this afternoon' to the K.S.L.I., their sports officer sent it back to their signals officer twice to have the corrupt first group checked. Their tennis team turned up and, naturally, won by a walkover.

My own title of M.I.L.O. has caused some speculation. One look at me will convince anyone that any resemblance to Venus would be a most extraordinary coincidence. The other theory that I have something to do with a milk drink is also incorrect. I would much rather have a glass of gin and tonic! I have thoroughly enjoyed my stay on board and V.M.T. to you all for looking after me so well. M.I.L.O. (Military Intelligence Liaison Officer)

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THE LONG VOYAGE HOME

As the flat, barren coastline of Bahreïn disappeared over the horizon on the morning of January 21st. Few, if any, can have been sorry. In weather more typical of the North Atlantic in mid-winter than the Persian Gulf, we headed for the Straits of Hormuz, our minds full of home. We had been in 'blues' for some weeks now, and it was not until we were well 'round the corner' and into the Arabian Sea that we got out our tropical gear once more, and at every opportunity, proceeded to re-cover our anatomies with that extra-special-going-home-tan!

The next few days at sea passed uneventfully enough, except for that famous occasion during the tug-of-war final. Seamen versus Wardroom, when, with Seamen leading by one pull to nil, and only six inches to go for a 2-0 victory, the rope broke!! Amid the general uproar and cheering, the Commander, who coached the Wardroom team, was heard declaring 'no contest'!

We crossed the equator at 06.00 on 27th January, this time with the nonchalance of much-travelled seafarers and sure enough, Neptune left us alone!

Our first stop was Mombasa to refuel, and we arrived on 28th January. It was good to steam into Kilindini Harbour again, and renew the friendships we had made in June. After the Gulf, it was like Paradise to get ashore into a European-style city, and the 'Tusker' was still as good as ever. At a rough guess, about 2.000 carved wooden animals found their way back on board, and sometime it was difficult to decide if we were living in ***Superb*** or the Ark!

We said goodbye to East Africa on 30th January and set course for Simonstown. This was a six day passage that passed quietly enough-we glimpsed Durban gleaming in the sun of late evening and the dreaded Mozambique Channel was like a mill pond!

Simonstown at last, with the C-in-C South Atlantic Station standing at the entrance to welcome us, and seven glorious days in which to enjoy Cape Town.

This, surely, is one of the world's most beautiful cities, dominated as it is by Table Mountain; and with its luxury shops, air-conditioned cinemas, good restaurants and pretty girls, it certainly provided the best 'run-ashore' we had had.

But, all good things must come to an end, so the 12th February we slowly backed out of the basin and set off on the last lap for home! The weather was perfect, and we all became redder or browner, as the case may be, crossed the line for the fourth time and after brief stops in Freetown and Dakar (where we handed over to H.M.S. Ceylon), reached Sheerness on Sunday March 3rd.

Everyone knew that our locking in on the following day depended on the speed at which could de-ammunition, and a great effort was made by all concerned. The weather, which had been kind

to us all the way home, was still on our side, and shortly after noon on the 4th we glided down the Medway towards Chatham.

For many of the ship's company, this was their first home-coming from a foreign station, and what a home-coming to remember! Sweethearts, wives and parents lined the Bull's Nose and waved as ***Superb*** slid easily into dock and by 14.30 we were along side. We were home!!

HMS SUPERB ARRIVES AT CHATS

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

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Midshipman Richard Sutherland Dale

On 22 February 1815, U.S. Navy Midshipman Richard Sutherland Dale, feverish and in pain, his right leg recently amputated at sea, died in Stennett's Hotel, St. George, Bermuda. He was the last U.S. officer to perish in the War of 1812, ironically, 60 days after the Treaty of Ghent was signed. He was 20 years old.

Today, over two centuries after his death, Dale's grave is the site for an annual commemoration, marking the friendship of Bermuda and the United Kingdom with the United States. Here is the story behind that commemoration.

Midshipman Dale's Father – Commodore Richard Dale, Richard Sutherland Dale was the first son of Commodore Richard Dale (1756 – 1826), an American merchant mariner who became a naval officer in the Continental Navy under John Barry during the War for American Independence. Thus began his heroic and adventurous naval service, which included serving under John Paul Jones, on the ***Bonhomme*** Richard, the ***Alliance***, and the ***Ariel***. Commanding the American privateer ***Queen of France***, he captured several British vessels.

Following the Treaty of Paris, he became one of the six original commodores of the permanent U.S. Navy and commanded a blockade of Tripoli during the First Barbary War under President Thomas Jefferson.

Upon retirement in Philadelphia, he directed the Union Insurance Company, was active in the Society of Cincinnati, and held leadership positions in a number of veterans' organizations and religious societies, until his death at age 69.

H.M.S. Endymion engaging with U.S.S. President
15 January, 1815

The U.S. Navy has named five ships in his honor: USS Dale, 1840-1921; USS Dale DD-4, 1902-1920; USS Dale, DD-290, 1920-1931; USS Dale, DD-353, 1935-1946; and USS Dale, DLG-19 later DDG-19, 1963-2000. Midshipman Richard Sutherland Dale And the Battle between USS President and the British Squadron Richard Sutherland Dale was the second of eight children born to Commodore Richard and Dorothea (née Crathorne) Dale. Like his father, he joined the U.S. Navy, and with his father's influence, rapidly secured a

position as a midshipman on his father's former flagship, the ***US Frigate President*** (44) under the command of Commodore Stephen Decatur.

Although the Treaty of Ghent was signed on December 24, 1814, word of it had not yet reached North America, when, at dawn on January 14, 1815 in treacherous weather, Decatur guided President past the British blockade of New York harbor. The ship was spotted and pursued by a British squadron, consisting of the frigates ***Majestic, Tenedos,*** and ***Pomone***, led by HM Frigate ***Endymion***, commanded by Post Captain Henry Hope. Subsequently, a 15-hour battle raged south of Long Island, New York.

Endymion quickly overtook the ***President***, which had damaged its hull on a sandbar off Sandy Hook. A close exchange of cannon fire ensued, to include bar and chain shot. President was outmaneuvered and suffered numerous casualties. Midshipman Dale was wounded in the right leg. Sources vary as to the cause of his injury (either a cannonball or a sniper's bullet). In a severely crippled state, President surrendered at 7:58 pm. However, when Endymion withdrew for repairs, Decatur made off to escape at 8:30 pm. Minutes later, Decatur surrendered again, when Pomone and Majestic closed on the crippled American.

Both Endymion and President were heavily damaged and sailed toward Bermuda for repairs. On the way, a heavy storm dismasted both ships. Dale's right leg was amputated.

Arriving in Bermuda as a prisoner of war, he was housed in Stennett's Hotel, where he subsequently died on 22 February 1815, at the age of 20. He was buried in the nearby churchyard of St. Peter's Church (established in 1612), the oldest continuous usage Anglican church in the Western Hemisphere. His family, grateful for the care he received during his confinement, arranged for a large marble stone, resting on six pillars, to be placed over his grave.

Midshipman Dale's story would have ended there, were it not for the efforts of a U.S. Navy officer over a century later. 1932: Captain Scarritt Adams Initiates a Ceremony to Honor Midshipman Dale

An annual ceremony, in St. George, Bermuda, marking Dale's death, began in 1932. The ceremony was initiated at the request of Captain Scarritt Adams (1907 – 1973), U.S. Naval Academy Class

of 1930. Adams was born in St. Louis, Missouri and spent his early years in and around Boston. His family moved to Bermuda in 1917 for his mother's health. His father was a reporter for the New York Times.

Captain Scarritt Adams

In Bermuda, Adams developed a knack for sailing and a love of the sea. Following one year at MIT, he was accepted at the U.S. Naval Academy in 1926. Upon graduating in 1930, he became a gunnery officer on the USS Goff. In 1932 he wrote to the reverend of St. Peter's Church, sending a check, with the request that on Memorial Day, the Dale gravestone would be draped with a U.S. flag and decorated with a wreath of white passion flowers.

Adams' career advanced, to include post-graduate school, intelligence training with the FBI, war duty in the Pacific, command of the USS Whiteside, Chief of Staff of the Naval Striking and Support Forces in Southern Europe, command of the USS Mount McKinley, the USS Baltimore, and the U.S. Naval Receiving Station in Brooklyn, New York. Throughout, he continued the yearly practice of honoring Midshipman Dale.

In 1956, when the Stennett's hotel was restored (the building is now a branch of Butterfield Bank) a historic marker was placed on the exterior wall. The marker reads: In this building then known as the Stennett's Hotel died on February 22, 1815 in his twenty-first year, Midshipman Richard Sutherland Dale of the American Frigate President, severely wounded when that vessel, commanded by Commodore S. Decatur, after a 15 hour engagement, was captured by Captain Henry Hope and brought into St. George's Harbour. Midshipman Dale is buried in St. Peter's Churchyard.

Captain Adams retired from the Navy in 1960. Upon returning to Bermuda in 1963, he attended the Dale commemoration for the first time. By then, the U.S. military had a significant presence in Bermuda dating from 1941 (The U.S. Army left in 1948, the Coast Guard in 1965, and the Air Force in 1970. The Navy and Marines remained until 1995). After the war, members of the armed forces routinely participated in the Memorial Day ceremony to remember Midshipman Dale.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hello Brian.

On the 1954-55 cruise: On our way to Bermuda, and I am squeegeeing the Atlantic off the quarterdeck by the RM's 6 inch turret. There had been an order that the first flying fish to come aboard would be the property of the Captain, for his breakfast.

I see two flying fish land smack into the turret, and they fall to the deck, gasping their lives away. With a furtive look around and believing that no one else is about, I quickly seize the fish with both hands and put them over the side.

"Oi! You, Lee! "A petty officer has materialized out of nowhere, and I am summoned to the bridge where I receive a rollicking for ignoring naval tradition.

I am reminded today of Captain Queeg (of the novel Caine Mutiny) giving a seaman a rollicking for leaving his shirt tail out while the Caine steams over its own (target) tow-line. Good job we weren't towing anything.

On another occasion, Ray Lambert and I were punished for something miniscule, but I can't recall what.

I was given a paper bag and ordered to get some holes for the hammock netting, whilst Ray was sent to get some red oil for the port lamp. We wandered all over the Superb's infrastructure, above and below, as the hands had gleefully caught onto what we were about.

They referred us to virtually every Dept for our quest, and we learned the layout of the ship in detail. We knew it was a "hoax" but the search was mandatory. A good way to learn the ship, though.

Ray and I were caned too, with Nelsonian attention, in the presence of the Master of Arms, the medical officer and Jimmy the One. But that's another story! **Tanzy (Ray Lee)**

Hi Brian,

So sorry to hear about Arline we sat with her and Fred last time, plus Norman a few months ago

Not many left now. It was a funny feeling last weekend when we should have been in the King Charles. I gather the place has been full of asylum seekers recently. I know one year there

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were a lot of east Europeans when Blair opened up the borders .They were all stood in the corridors smoking. We will have to see what the future brings. **Brian Hill**

Hi Brian

Thanks for the magazine. It is a welcome diversion from a sometimes frustrating time. I am like an old car that breaks down from time to time. All is good right now, and other than the headaches involving COVID-19, we are doing fine.

A note about my recent encounter with the Pusser's Gunproof rum. I got this to celebrate the over 60 years since I was aboard The Superb on my photo assignment. I was assigned to the Petty Officers quarters for lunch. As a courtesy, I was made the Honorary Rum Bosun. This entailed me receiving a sip of everyone's rum ration. I could not wait to try a taste of the rum I tasted some 60 years ago. Wow how times have changed. The 107 proof rum almost made my hair stand on end. Certainly not as I remembered. Following lunch and the rum, I had to take my camera gear, which was quite heavy, to an upper level which was high enough to see the splashes from the firing guns. I managed that and mission accomplished. Film was processed OK and photos printed and evaluated.

I will always remember the great time I had when the Petty Officers from the Superb came to our Petty Officers club on the base. The photos you have show we all had a great time. Thanks again for making me an honorary member of this Superb association.

Thank you also for sharing Robin's video with me. It is always the extra mile that makes something special. The association is very fortunate to have Robin at the helm, and you as the producer and editor of the magazine. Job well done. Thanks for including me with this great group of guys and ladies. Cheers **George Messmer**

Thanks again Brian for the October newsletter and the Chairman's video they were both very well done. Hope that the reunion can go ahead in 2021 as a lot of work is put into it by Robin's family. **Alf & Shirley Brown**

I just wanted to say thanks to you both for the YouTube message. Well conceived and well executed..... Well done. **Stuart Osmer**

KEEP 'EM PEELED !

There is an email message in circulation that has being doing the rounds since September 2020 (if not longer!) purporting to originate from the DVLA, The main content is as follows:-

All data transmission over this website is secured. DVLA routine check has found some irregularities in your current profile, which indicates that the information given is no longer accurate or up to date. You are required to update your profile to its latest form to avoid termination of your motoring license. You must use your valid and official information to complete this form. Using any nicknames or short-addresses can lead to rejection of this update.

Following this you are asked to "click and Update" which is in blue and underlined.

By clicking on the incoming email address you will realise that this email is not from the DVLA as the email address of the sender is nfkmo55240@telne.....

(One would imagine the sender's address to mention DVLA somewhere in the address but see below)

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS REQUEST IN ANY WAY, BUT SIMPLY BE SURE TO DELETE THE EMAIL FROM YOUR COMPUTER.

<u>The easiest, and still one of the most effective, ways to protect yourself is to verify the sender</u>

First, **hover** over the "From" display name to see what email address pops up (to hover, move your pointer over the information that you want to verify). It's very common for an attacker to spoof a display name to look like it is coming from someone legitimate, but when you hover over the display name you'll often find that message is actually coming from someone else.

NB In some email accounts this information appears at the foot of the "Reading Pane"

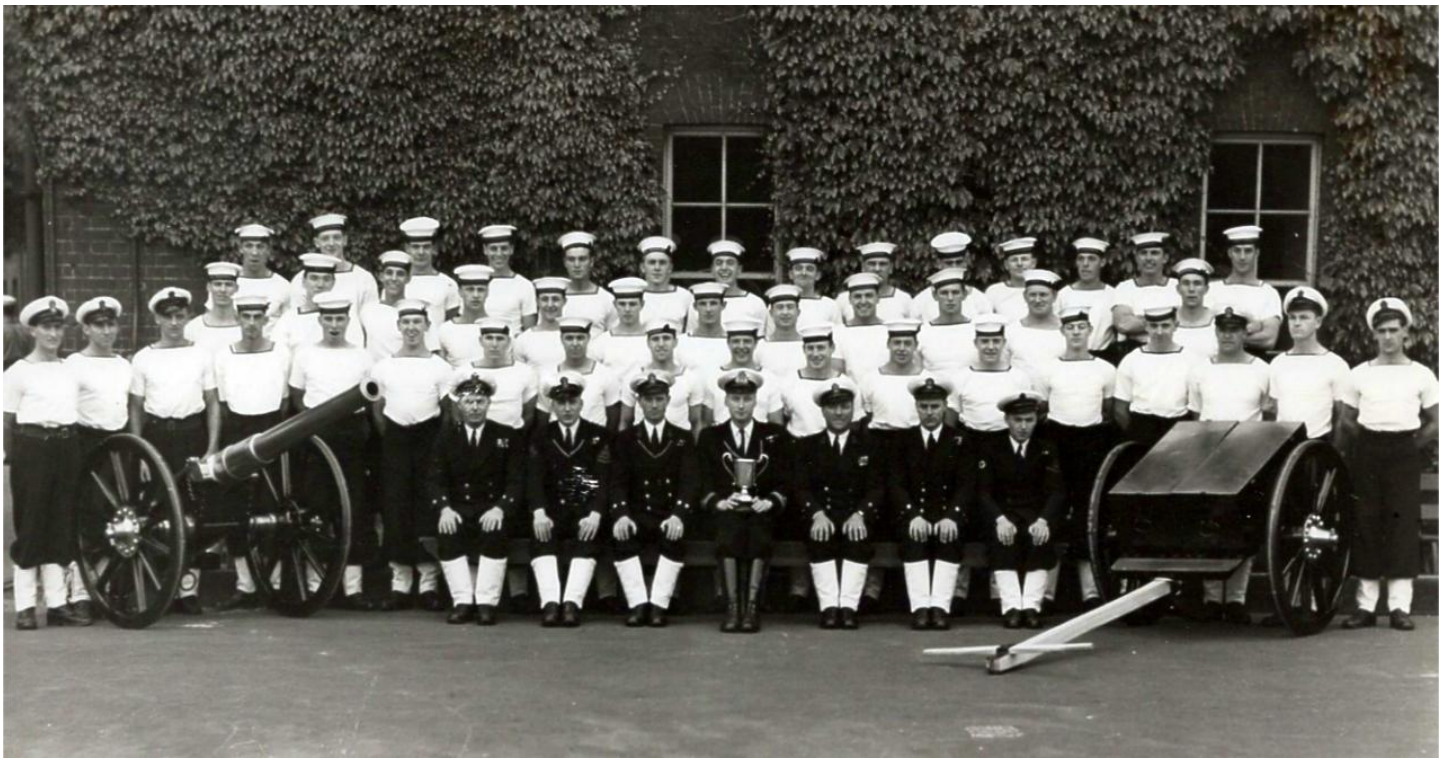
Information below from UK Crimestoppers website:-

<u>If there is a link in the email - resting (but not clicking) your mouse pointer on the link should reveal the destination web address.</u> For instance, on the screen the address might be www.crimestoppers-uk.org but, when you rest your mouse on the link, it shows www.fakeurl.org/index/crimestoppers.

Click HERE to read Crimestoppers' Website

PHOTO ALBUM

Find the Clark Gable look-alike !



Andy Brierley's photo of the 1951 Chatham Field Gun Crew – he's in there somewhere !

While shopping earlier today, I picked up some chicken legs. Just before the young lady rang them up, I asked if she knew whether they were front or back legs.

She paused for a moment, read everything she could on the package and not finding the answer said; "I don't know. Let me go ask my manager".

She came back a few minutes later, looked at me and said, NOT FUNNY!.

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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)

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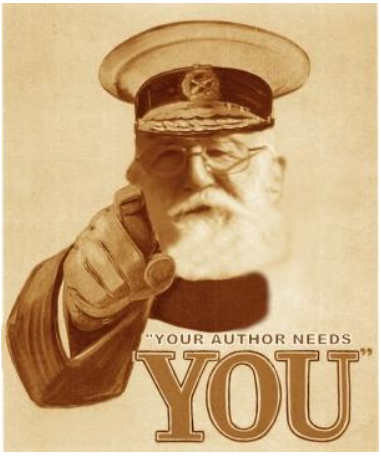
SLOPS

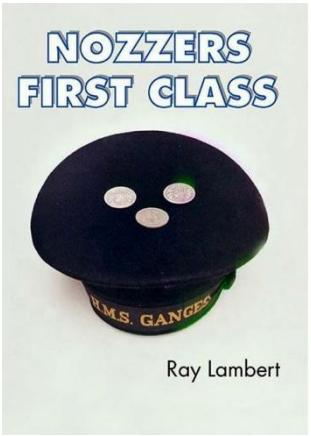
Journalist & Best Selling Author

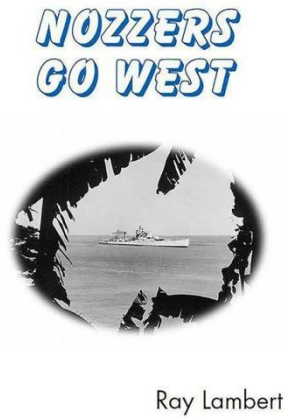


OUR IN-HOUSE **BEST SELLING AUTHOR** IS OFFERING THE FOLLOWING BOOKS AT A SPECIAL PRICE FOR MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

Ray Lambert

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. Each book costs £7.99 including UK postage. Click **HERE** for more information & to contact Ray by email





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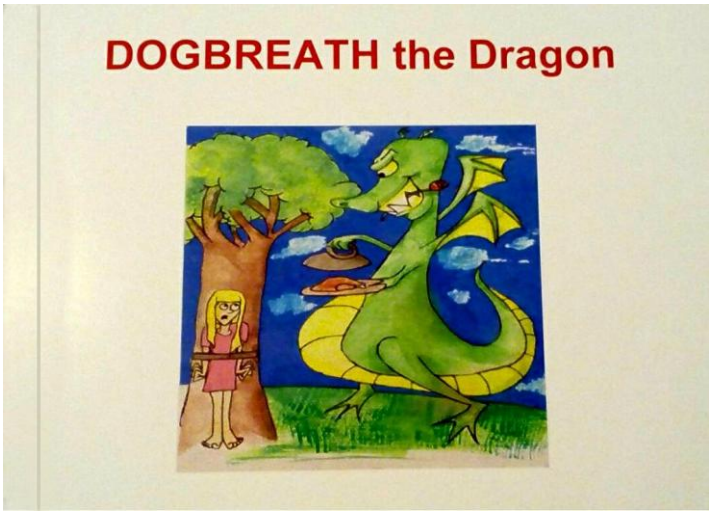
Something for the Youngsters

Phil Grimson



Shipmate Phil Grimson offers his latest book for sale targeted at children from 8 years upward. It is a magical tale of chivalry which should enchant most youngsters and lead them into a make-believe world where

there's fierce and fiery combat when a princess is captured by a dragon.

There are bold knights charging to her rescue one of who wins her hand in marriage.

KINDLE DOWNLOAD £5.59 **PRINTED VERSION £13.99 + P&P***

Phil can be contacted by email by clicking on this LINK

*** IF YOU CONTACT PHIL DIRECTLY YOU CAN BUY THE PAPERBACK BOOK FOR ONLY £12.50 + P&P AND PHIL WILL DONATE £1 TO THE HMS SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION FUNDS**

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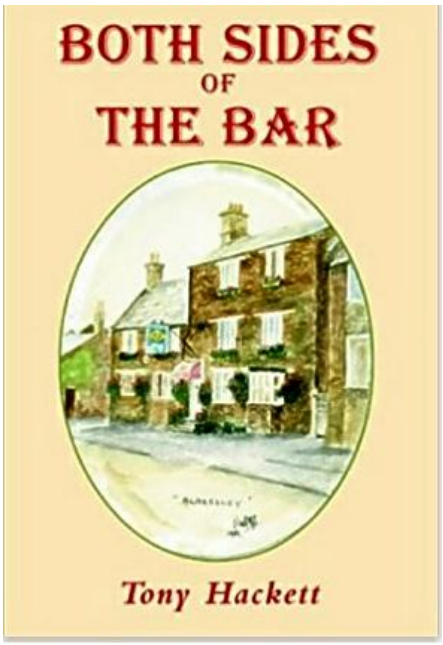
Life After the Navy

Tony Hacket



Tony, the son of a police officer, joined the Royal Navy aged 15 and spent the next 10 years travelling the world. He entered Civvy street in 1959 and went into the pub trade. This book relates Tony's endeavours in balancing his life between his love of rugby, managing often run-down pubs and his love of the sea and finally his successful ownership of his own free-house.

An interesting insight into the trials and tribulations of being self employed.

Available as a hard back book from Amazon at £12.99

PEOPLE SEARCH 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 months

From previous issues

The following message received from Derek Thompson, via Facebook
Just wondered if any of you gents knew my father **Derrick Thompson (Tommo)** he was a stoker mechanic (E) 1st class on board HMS Superb in 1955/56. He passed away in 2003 aged 72. I myself was in the Andrew and served for 23 yrs. I would be grateful if anyone knew him

Neil Cooper, the son of Terry Willey, writes
"My late father appears to be mentioned in the booklet from the 52-53 tour of West Indies. He's stated as leading electricians mate. His full name was **Terry Keith Willey**. Be great to hear from anyone who knew him"

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 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.

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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.

ARCHIVED CONTENT

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

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

Click here to contact Brian Saunders by email