H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

A MAGAZINE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

OCTOBER, 2017

Nº 11

OUR SWORDS WE BARE
OUR SPIRITS DARE

CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION IS ROBIN SMITH

www.hmssuperb.co.uk and on Facebook

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Superb - Defending Britain Since 1710

ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

The middle part of 2017, as far as the 'popular press' is concerned, must have been the worst in Royal Navy history. Senior officers, Admirals have joined the chorus of condemnation. They say it will be foolhardy to go in harm's way with today's hardware, or lack of. We sail with insufficient bunkers, 'one engine' reported not too long ago. 4.4 missile mags., half empty, no ship-to-ship missiles, no F.A.A. cover, no maritime patrol aircraft, insufficient mechanics for the posts available.

That's all fact, not popular muck raking. How, I wonder in the face of all that, does a captain keep up moral? He must be aware his crew are party to the same information. How will he justify putting to sea, 'suicide missions' are not in the modern young westerner's psyche.

Could a 'Potemkin' type incident occur? Famous mutiny in 1905 when that battle ship refused to sail – a ghastly thought.

On a previous occasion when things R.N. verged on a similar breakdown of the service, it was an Admiral who took up the cudgel; a serving Admiral and Third Sea Lord who played a major part/role in what British History knows as 'the Navy Scare'. Its result was the cabinet embarking on a massive five year construction programme in 1893.

The Admiral was John Fisher, reported as a man of cast iron religious conviction, who had learned the only road to peace was to 'carry a big stick'. He is famously quoted for declaring; 'The essence of war is violence – moderation in war is imbecility'. His keen interest in the lower deck understood a 'fierce pride in their ship and service' was paramount. How do we follow that truism now? He altered food, living conditions, discipline and instituted a route to advancement for the lower deck.

I recall my last rant lamented the fact 'Naval History' is no longer a subject for cadets at Dartmouth. How will they know of predecessors like Fisher who, amongst other modernisations, was instrumental in getting the First Sea Lord – Churchill, to fuel his ships with oil instead of coal?

The 2017 comment could be 'So what?'!

Back then, such a radical move scared our peers into a mad rush for their subsidised bars in Westminster, fearful the move may erode bloated expense accounts.

Shotley told me 70% of the earth's surface is water, 90% of world trade is hauled by sea. Fossil fuels still power the world, and 50% of it reaches the customer by sea.

Nearer to home; a bit of information dropped in a programme last week about life saving in the North Sea, said in 24 hours 1000 vessels of all descriptions will be in that safety section. R.N.'s current influence out there is nil. We are actually being laughed at by our

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most scary opponent above 33° N.

A return to 1950 numbers is pie in the sky. Sufficient to be proud of was eminently feasible for the cash available over the last 30 years, even though they were ' peace bonus' austerity years.

I thought 'destroyer conversions' to A's frigates had little effect on their sleek looks, when fitted with 'limbo' were a lethal answer to the frigate shortage. Hard usage and age put most of these in breakers' yards.

I was acquainted with one, name of Grenville, if memory serves correctly. Gun tub in front of the bridge held a 'twin Bofor' to deactivate a torch was put through barrels four foot from the end, they lay in the tub. At the time I had a silly plan to acquire the mount to which my Italian boss had no objection. Where to stow it in my circumstances at the time killed the scheme.

That may have been all to the good, some called it a 'flak mount'. Had I gone home and confessed 'we own a Bofor mounting dear' the flak would have been intense around my ears, perhaps unendurable.

Have a few colour slides of the vessel during this period, a dirt streaked sad sight.

Whilst on sleek conversions, one that twanged my thong was the ex. Battle Class *Matapan*. She became the Admiralty 'sonar trials ship'. A second funnel fitted is not distinct in my small pic. when enlarged. It was the exhaust for installed extra generation capacity. I can imagine the draughtsman in Pompey dockyard when given the task, he must have been an old romantic to put that lovely 'clipper bow' on her.

The other diagram made my jaw drop.

Year of 1898 British Imperial R.N. stations. Note they show only Capital ships. Lord knows how many 'destroyer torpedo boats' provided their screens.

North America and West Indies station with 15 capitals explains the Bermuda dockyard's size. It must have put heaps of cash into their economy.

What do you think?

I'm off!

Jo was scrolling through our website for me. I was surprised to see D. Repard in the crossing the bar page. The late Fred practised a 'No officers policy'. Why I do not know, being a late comer to 'his association'. To see that policy has been quietly pumped with the bilge water removes a wart from our escutcheon. That is not a slur on Fred who got me back in touch with friends of 50 odd years ago.

To me, simply writing Repard is unmannered, rude. He did not have the officer habit of using ones bald surname – always Able Seaman .... that conferred a status, a recognition of your worth in the larger picture. He was interested in your hopes and aspirations, what made me a 'Shotley Boy', messing, schooling, discipline, who were my instructors etc.. On rare occasions, when chewing the fat in the small office, he lapsed to first names – that sticks – as only my mother ever called me Andrew. He had a keen interest in a previous job I had, a very small part in .... trying to sweep ground mines with a Heath Robinson towed contraption of induction coils and my, then, Captain Roberts V.C..

Lieutenant Commander Repard was my senior officer, not simply because he was elevated in the 'pecking order', more because he had a feel for his people. His natural demeanour engendered a concrete loyalty in the T.S.A. branch (his speciality). 'Gunners are not the same at all, do you think it is due to them ever shouting at each other in as loud a voice a possible?'

I learn, on the website, Lieutenant Commander Repard was passed over for a 'ring' captain. The noble lords shot themselves in the foot – again. I see him in the Commander Walker of *Starling* mode, another master of his trade, passed over till the 'merde hits the fan'! The popular conception of the lower decks as senseless sodomites has it place in novels. The majority of the 'pecked' are sharp enough to know, a few months into commission, which officer is worth his berth.

It may sound bumptious, but I consider, however you slice it, Lieutenant Commander Repard was my shipmate. 'I salute you sire and am certain you 'Rest in Peace''.

Tatty Bye

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There's an article on Commander Repard later in this magazine. Click HERE to read

Iranian warship turns away US battleship in Persian Gulf

A rocket-bearing Iranian military vessel confronted an American battleship in the Gulf and warned it to stay away from a damaged Iranian fishing boat

Sep 10, 2017

The American battleship turned away after the warning from the Iranian vessel, which belonged to the naval branch of the Iranian army.

A rocket-bearing Iranian military vessel confronted an American battleship in the Gulf and warned it to stay away from a damaged Iranian fishing boat, Tasnim news agency reported Sunday, 9 September but the U.S. Navy denied any direct contact with Iranian forces.

The American battleship turned away after the warning from the Iranian vessel, which belonged to the naval branch of the Iranian army, according to Tasnim. The Iranian military vessel then towed the fishing boat, which had sent out a distress signal after taking on water, back to shore.

The agency did not specify when the incident, close to the strategic Strait of Hormuz, took place.

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In statement, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) said the coastal patrol USS

Tempest, operating in the Gulf of Oman on Sept. 6, heard the distress call of an unidentified small boat about 75 nautical miles from the Tempest's position.

At the same time the motor vessel Nordic Voyager, much closer to the boat in distress, offered help and had made visual contact with it. The Tempest offered to support the Nordic Voyager which declined the offer, NAVCENT said.

Following the radio traffic from a distance, USS Tempest heard the Nordic Voyager coordinate additional Iranian Navy help for the vessel in distress to tow it back to Iran.

"At no time was there any direct contact between the U.S. and Iranian maritime forces," NAVCENT spokesman Chloe Morgan said.

Tensions have been on the rise between the Iranian and U.S. military in the Gulf in recent months.

In August, an unarmed Iranian drone came within 100 feet (31 metres) of a U.S. Navy warplane as it prepared to land on an aircraft carrier in the Gulf, a U.S. official said at the time.

And in July, a U.S. Navy ship fired warning shots when an Iranian vessel in the Gulf came within 150 yards (137 metres) in the first such incident since President Donald Trump took office in January, U.S. officials said.

Years of mutual animosity had eased when Washington lifted sanctions on Tehran last year as part of a deal to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions. But serious differences remain over Iran's ballistic missile programme and conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

The Trump administration, which has taken a hard line on Iran, recently declared that Iran was complying with its nuclear agreement with world powers, but warned that Tehran was not following the spirit of the accord and that Washington would look for ways to strengthen it.

During the presidential campaign last September, Trump vowed that any Iranian vessels that harass the U.S. Navy in the Gulf would be "shot out of the water."

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British treasure hunters find chest that could contain Nazi gold worth £100m in sunken cargo ship

The box was found by UK-based Advanced Marine Services inside the post room of the SS Minden at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean off Iceland

It was claimed that the chest on board the sunken ship is filled with Nazi gold

Iceland's Coast Guard stopped the Seabed Constructor's crew in April

British treasure hunters are seeking permission to recover a mysterious chest from a German ship's watery grave amid claims that it could contain £100m worth of Nazi gold.

The box was found by UK-based Advanced Marine Services inside the post room of the SS Minden at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean off Iceland.

There have been claims that the cargo ship was transporting gold from South American banks to Nazi Germany when it sank in September 1939.

The ship was intercepted by the Royal Navy's *HMS Calypso* and scuttled by its own crew so the vessel couldn't be captured by Britain just weeks after the start of World War II.

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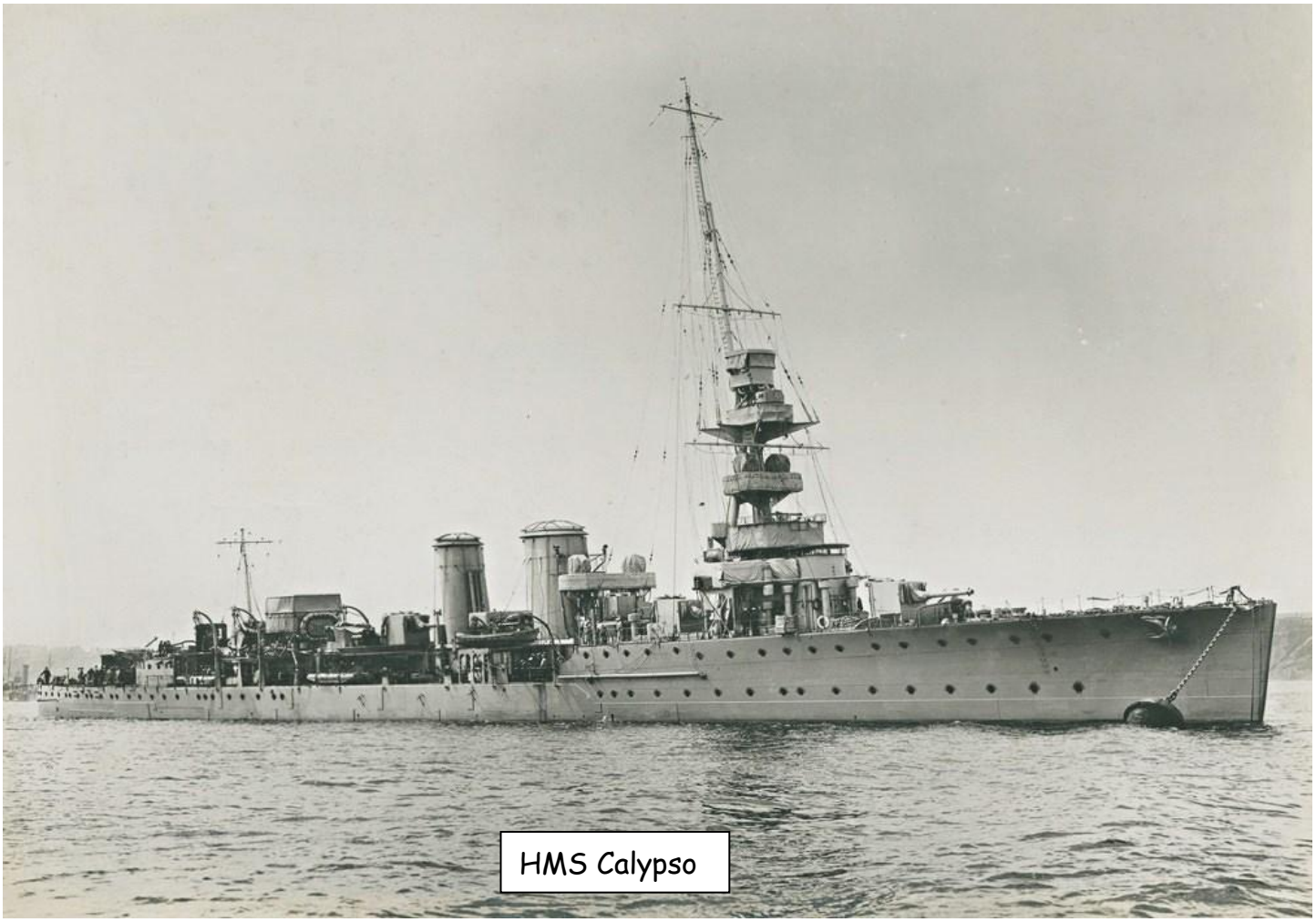
The crew of the Seabed Constructor was previously stopped by Iceland's Coast Guard in April for not having permits to conduct research in the country's waters.

Advanced Marine Services want to bring the chest back to Britain, claiming the contents belong to the finder.

The company is awaiting a decision from Icelandic officials on who owns the wreck and its contents



HMS Calypso

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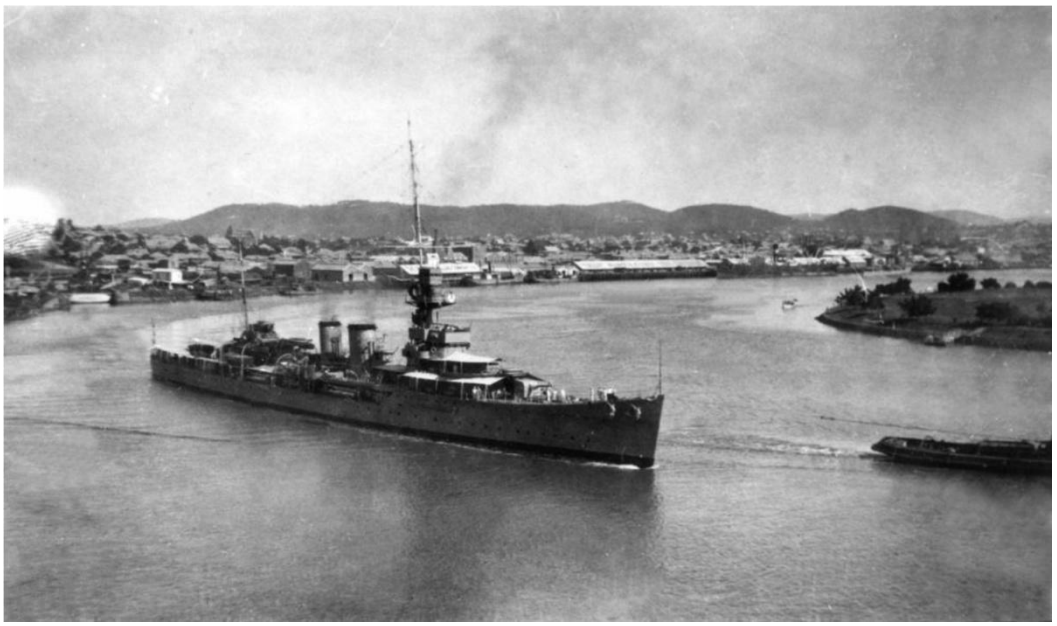
SS. Minden

The *SS Minden* left Brazil on 6th September, 1939 - days after the war broke out - and there were claims that officials from Banco Germanico, a subsidiary of German Dresdner bank, helped load its cargo.

The ship was sunk by its crew nearly three weeks later on September 24.

The crew was rescued by the *HMS Dunedin* and taken to a British naval base.

The *Dunedin* turning into Gardens Reach on the Brisbane River. South Brisbane wharves in background



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brian,
Looking at the list who receive the magazine I see you have me down as "1956"! In actual fact I was on her from January '54 until Feb'56.
FRANK NUNN

(Apologies Frank The correct date is now recorded - Brian)

Dear Brian:
Just a short note to thank you for publishing this issue. (And for several past issues!)
Your time and effort on behalf of this cause are truly appreciated.
Couldn't get over that someone wants to remove Nelson from his perch! Where is the world going to?
All the very best, mate!
TED DAVY

I was just browsing around on my notepad, when I came across your association's website. It got my attention, because I joined the "Superb" in the early part of 1954 as a boy seaman and was onboard for the America & West Indies and left in 1956 as an A.B. Another thing that caught my eye on there, was the name of Andy Brierley. I can remember the name and the man, but if it is the same one that I served with he must be getting on in years, because I'm now 80.If he is still around he can get me on stan.townsend@live.co.uk. I also recall Corporal Tasker R.M., P/O Jim Bateman and A/B Aubrey Powell

STAN TOWNSEND

Hi Brian All is well in Port St Lucie. We weathered the hurricane and had no major damage, just a window leaked a little and we need to do some drying out. Sunday nite we lost power which means no air conditioning — not good in 90 degree weather and very, very high humidity. Moved to a local hotel with power and a/c. Slept well that night.
So much for living in Florida. It usually is like paradise weather wise, but there will always be hurricanes. We are in our 24th year in Florida and have experienced over 5 storms in that time.
Thanks again for your email and of course the newsletter which I look forward to getting each month.
GEORGE MESSMER

To: Cllr Maguire, Kevin <k.maguire@cllr.norwich.gov.uk>
Subject: War Memorial
Could you please erect the same barriers around the war memorial that you used for the Lord Mayor's procession, this year's Gay Pride did the same as they seem to do every year at one time I counted twenty seven people clambering all over it and sitting at the very top with their Laptops and cameras. Personally it seems that the word desecration could be used ignorance is another as you just couldn't mistake the memorial for anything else but a war memorial.
I did contact an M P over this issue but she is about as much use as mammary glands on a Cod.
John Ward Norwich

Dear Mr Ward,

Thank you for taking the time to email me about your concerns. I understand how you feel about the war memorial having a special place both in the Nation's and the City's heritage. I have spoken to others about this and they too have been upset by people clambering over the monument during Pride and other events (including Yesterday's Battle of Britain ceremony).

In order to stop this happening again, signs are being ordered for putting out on these occasions asking people not to stand on and to respect the war memorial. There will also either be barriers or red rope put around the memorial depending on the nature of the event (For Pride, it will be barriers).

I am grateful to you for bringing this to the Council's attention.

Yours sincerely Kevin **Maguire**
Labour Wensum Ward and Cabinet Member for Safe City Environment

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HAVE YOU NOTICED THIS?

Police have warned homeowners about a new burglary scheme involving pieces of wood placed on gates.

The scheme sees burglars place small, inconspicuous pieces of wood on to entrance gates into houses or driveways, in such a way that the wood would fall off if the gate were to be opened normally.

More than likely the small piece of wood, where possible, will be placed inside the gate somewhere where it is inconspicuous to the casual glance.

This allows the perpetrators to monitor whether a gate has been opened in a set amount of time - depending if the wood is still in place or not - so they can judge whether a house is being accessed regularly, or if its inhabitants are away.

A house that has not been accessed in a given amount of time would then become a prime target for burglary, as the criminals would feel far less likely to be disturbed in the act.

KEEP 'EM PEELED !

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SCRAN BAG (FREE ADVERTISING)

DON'T KEEP IT A SECRET BUT

Ray Lambert has lowered

his prices for Christmas !

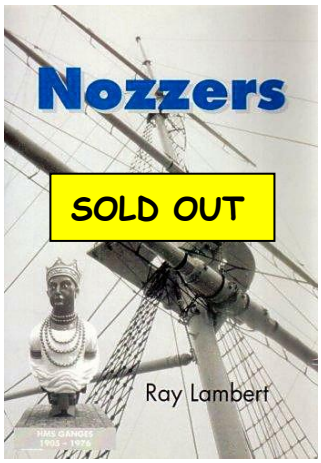
To remind you of how it was when we had wooden ships and iron men (well almost!)

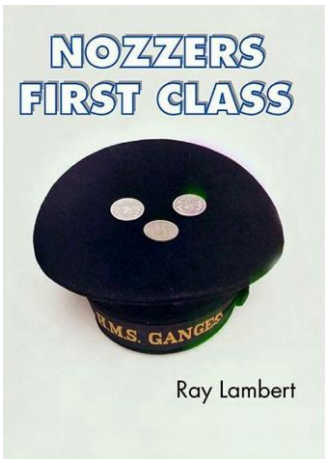
AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR THE MATURE MAN

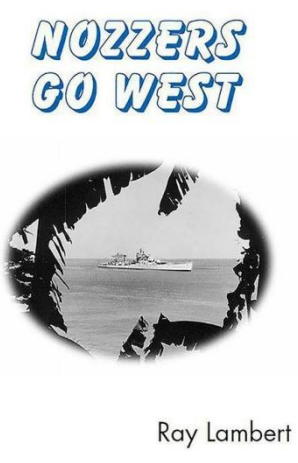
ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE REUNION

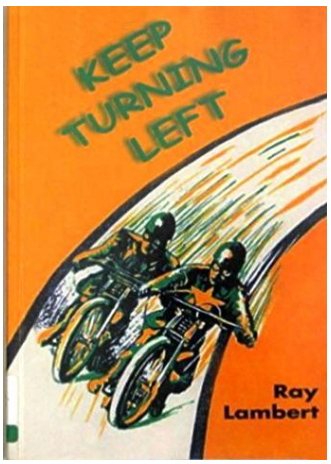
£6 Each

including U.K. postage









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 normally retails at £7.95 including UK postage. For more information contact Ray by email Click here to **contact Ray** **by email**

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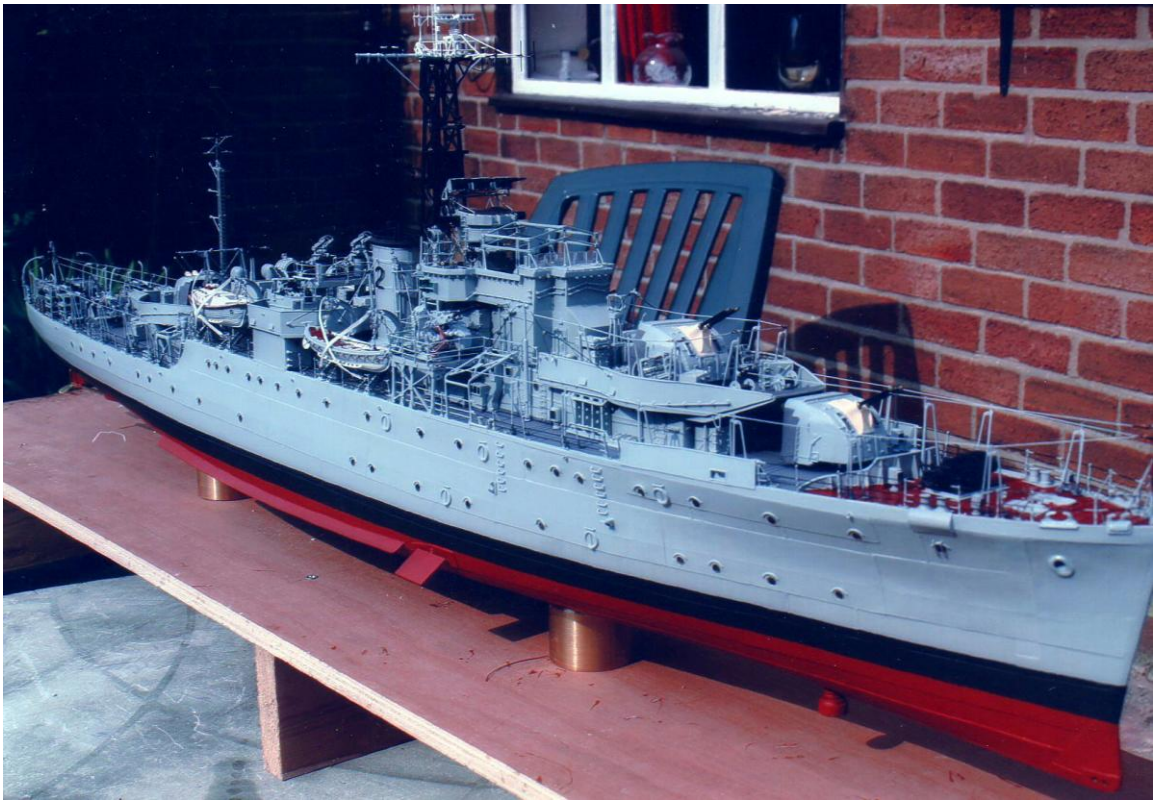
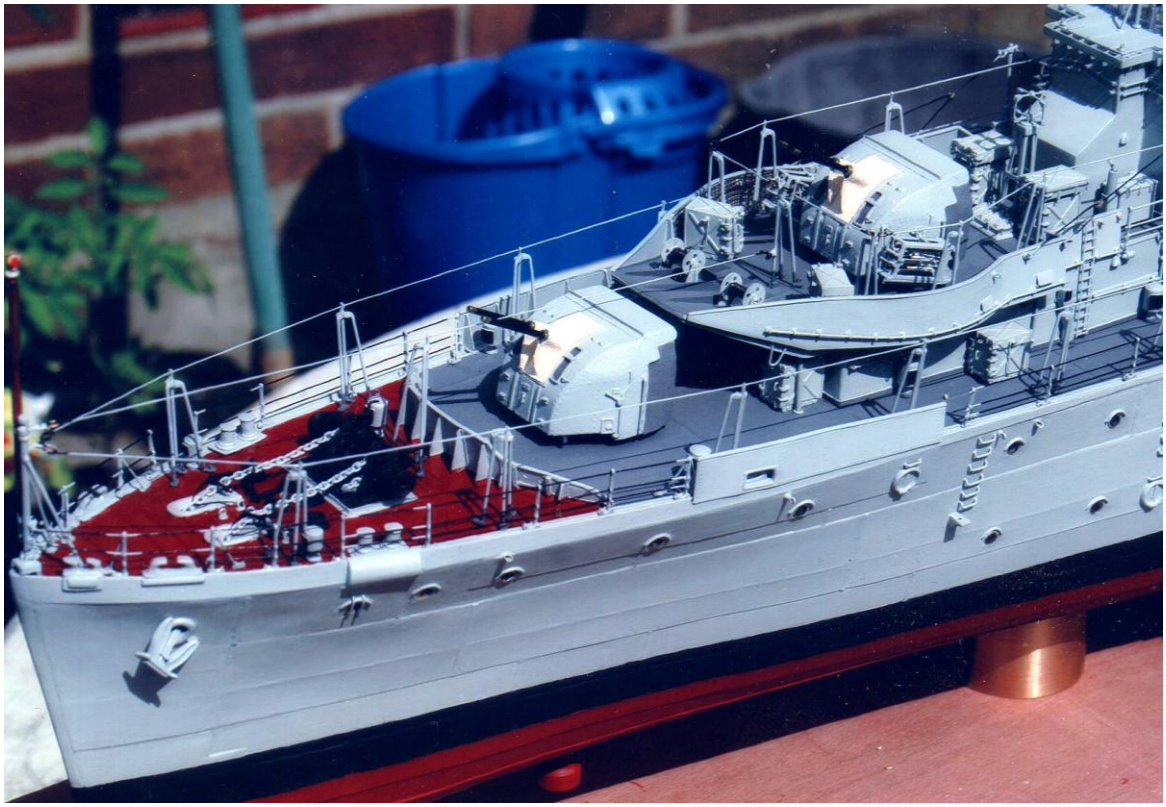
SHIP FOR SALE !

Shipmate Brian Turner has spent 3½ years carefully constructing a model of HMS Cygnet (U38).

The quality of his work is evident from the photos. On 8th April, 1944 in the north Atlantic just north-west of Cape Finisterre the *Cygnet*, together with *HMS Crane,* depth charged and sank the German U-Boat *U-962*.

HMS Cygnet **was a Black Swan Class sloop and the model together with its glass show case is now up for sale**





You can view more photos of the model work by clicking on this **LINK** and examine the detail more minutely.

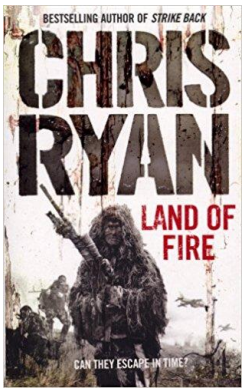
Length of model is 36 inches

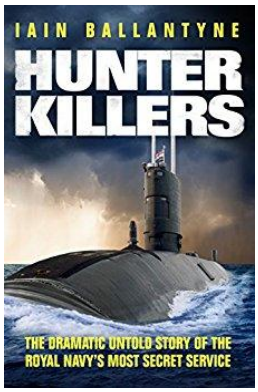
PRICE: £2,000

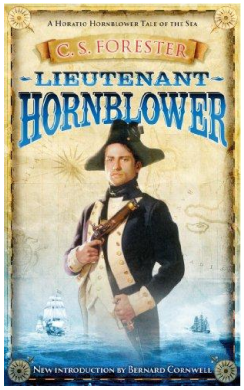
For more details please contact Brian Turner Click **HERE** to send email

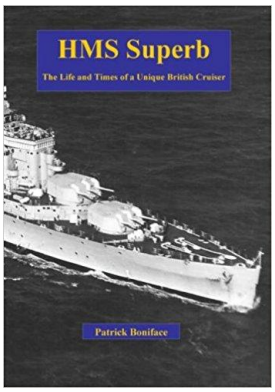
YOU TOO CAN ADVERTISE HERE FOR FREE - CONTACT BRIAN BY EMAIL

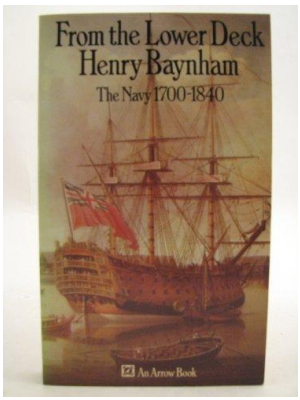
YOU WILL FIND MENTION OF HMS SUPERB IN ALL OF THESE BOOKS











LAND OF FIRE - author Chris Ryan - The submarine *HMS Superb* is mentioned from Chapter 12 (page 121 in the paperback version) when it was involved in the fictional landing of an SAS squad on Tierra del Fuego circa 2002. **Fiction**.

HUNTER KILLERS - author Iain Ballantyne - follows the careers of four daring British submarine captains who risked their lives to keep the rest of us safe, their exploits consigned to the shadows until now. Their experiences encompass the span of the Cold War, from voyages in WW2-era submarines under Arctic ice to nuclear-powered espionage missions in Soviet-dominated seas.

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There are dangerous encounters with Russian spy ships in UK waters and finally, as the communist facade begins to crack, they hold the line against the Kremlin's oceanic

might, playing a leading role in bringing down the Berlin Wall. It is the first time they have spoken out about their covert lives in the submarine service.

This is the dramatic untold story of Britain's most-secret service. Chapter 50 *follows HMS Superb*. **Non Fiction**

LIEUTENANT HORNBLOWER - author C.S. Forrester - In July of 1796 during the Napoleonic Wars when Hornblower's best friend Bush received his commission as lieutenant while serving on *HMS Superb*, and thus took the first significant step in his career as a naval officer. Bush recalls that he relied more on "seamanship and not navigation" to pass the requisite examination. **Fiction**.

HMS SUPERB - author Patrick Boniface - An account of one voyage of the cruiser

between 1954 - 55. Presented as a ship's log with historical content. **Non Fiction**.

FROM THE LOWER DECK - author Henry Baynham. An Arrow book ISBN 009 9065401. A picture of life in the Royal Navy between 1780 & 1840 as described by common sailors at the time. Mention of *HMS Superb* 74 is on Page 149 of the paperback version by George Watson. **Non Fiction**

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A HARD FOUGHT FOOTBALL MATCH

By Eric Gow

I was on board *HMS Veryan Bay* as a Wireless Operator and we came back to the Falkland Islands in December, 1954. We put a show on for the kids and I was Cinderella. I was doing it until the actual night and I was on watch, I'm glad to say, so the understudy, who was the first Lieutenant, played the part. I was made up because I didn't fancy the part.

I'm led to believe that the show was hilarious, they were drunk, they had beer behind and had a drink each time they went off the stage and coming back on. It was so funny that it had to be put on again in Bermuda for the C in C. It was actually staged again in Bermuda because he'd heard about it.

The *Superb* was the cruiser that was the C in C's ship and she came down to the Falklands while we were on duty down there and we played them at football.

Whilst we were playing football my boss, the Wireless Petty Officer, was one of the instigators of the battle that went on between the *Superb's* crew and ours. On the sidelines watching the match they suddenly got all agitated. This was in Port Stanley.

What happened was the *Superb* came down on a visit and there was a football match organised and I was in the team. Both ship's crews came down to watch the game and there was a bit of argy-bargy. My boss and some the others started a fight on the sidelines and we stopped playing football to watch. My boss got stoppage of leave.

In January we set of again for the Antarctic and my recollection of down there is mainly of icebergs. Huge icebergs, I'm talking a thousand feet high by about 2 miles long. They were huge floating around. Our gunners were practising and firing at these icebergs and missing them!

This is one of the reasons I say that if war breaks out I don't want to be on this ship!

Eric Gow was a British wireless telegraphist who served aboard HMS Implacable, 1952-1953: detached for tests at Research Centre, Porton Down, GB, 1954; served aboard HMS Veryan Bay on West Indies Station and Antarctica, 1954-1955; served as wireless operator in shore stations in GB and Bahrein, 1955-1960. He was Chairman of Porton Down Veterans Association, 2003-2007

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DRAMA IN THE WARDROOM

By Lieutenant-Commander David Repard

In 1955 I was one of several Lieutenant Commanders in the *Superb* and the ship got the most lovely trips and unlike the Africa Station where you could cross from one set of cocktail parties to another across the estuary of a huge river, you have to go quite a long way in the West Indies Station so you had time to recover from the last lot and occasionally stop the ship at sea and paint bits of it.

I was responsible for the quarterdeck which always had to be gleaming. I was always very glad of that sort of thing to do.

However, we got a very strange job and we were told to go to Haiti and wait upon President Tubman of Liberia who was there with some members of his cabinet visiting the chap running Haiti who didn't have a very good reputation at the time what with the Tonton Macoute which were active as a sort of terrorist organisation there.

We were duly told when to appear and we were told when we had to get back to Jamaica in order to introduce the Governor to the President and all the rest of it.

Welcome On Board Mr President

Unfortunately it turned out that the Liberian President thought that we were rather like a taxi awaiting his pleasure and they decided to go on a shopping spree in Haiti and I sent boats in and found that I could get absolutely no joy at all about when they'd be coming. They wouldn't commit themselves.

Lorries full of things like freezers and refrigerators and dishwashers started to arrive, and the sort of boat that you would have taken a President back to the ship in was simply not appropriate to carrying that sort of gubbidge. So I sent back to the ship for a much larger boat and started to load this up and take it back and we were being rather ordered about by one of their lackeys, they were all armed to the teeth, these people, which rather frightened me but we did manage to get them back on board only six or eight hours after the agreed time when we should have sailed.

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So we set off at very high speed and the captain gave them dinner in his cabin and I was bidden to the dinner as well because I'd met them ashore.

Among those present was the Liberian Minister of Defence, a man who rather wanted to smoke a cigar during dinner, before the port was passed which was not thought to be very good manners - in the navy anyway.

So he was told to put his cigar out but we hadn't realised that he had been enjoying his pre-dinner drinks as well, whatever he'd had ashore, and when it was explained to him by the captain, very reasonably, that this really wasn't done we had to drink the Queen's health first, he drew a revolver!

We had to get President Tubman to overrule his Minister of Defence and I said that I'd put his gun into safe custody and lock it up for him and give it back to him afterwards.

Eventually he went to sleep and so we were able to get him put to bed.

The captain had arranged that the President would sleep in his day cabin, rather luxurious quarters, at the after end of the cruiser which,
if we had been able to get the speed predicted, would have been very comfortable for him.

But as were going at 26 knots or thereabouts in order to try and catch up the meeting which they were going to attend the next day, we rattled the false teeth out of them at the aft end of the ship with the propellers going flat out underneath.

They said that during the night they were very uncomfortable and the answer to that, in the most polite language possible, was "Too bloody bad".

We were very glad to get rid of this lot looking dreadfully hung-over, not the President himself. Tubman was a very delightful man but some of his side-kicks were perhaps less so.

It did draw my attention that the navy does the most extraordinary things and still has to use their own initiative on how to handle things which could lead to a diplomatic incident. I mean one wouldn't wish, for example, for one's captain to be shot by a passenger while on passage just because he was the Minister of War or something in Liberia.

So it was an interesting story in itself.

The Tonton Macoute was eventually a special operations unit within the Haitian paramilitary force created by the Dictator Papa Doc Duvalier.

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David Repard served aboard HMS Sheffield in 1940-1941; HMS Tartar, 1942-1943; HMS Byron, 1944-1945; HMS Ganges and HMS Raleigh, 1945-1947; HMS Rodney, 1947-1948; torpedo and anti-submarine officer at HMS Osprey, 1949-1950; TAS officer aboard HMS Battleaxe, 1950-1952; TAS officer at HMS Vernon, 1952-1953; TAS officer aboard HMS Superb, 1954-1955; mine counter-measures officer at HMS Vernon, 1955-1957; staff officer at Directorate of Naval Intelligence, Admiralty, 1957-1958; executive officer aboard HMS Belfast, 1958-1961; TAS staff officer at Underground Headquarters, Northwood, UK, 1961-1963; Assistant Director Undersea Warfare, Naval Staff Admiralty, 1963-1966

This photograph *(kindly donated by the family of Commander Repard)* was taken on board HMS Superb in 1955 on the day he was promoted to Commander

Cdr John David Latimer Repard (David) OBE, DSC, Royal Navy, died on 17th September 2011, aged 90. From the Daily Telegraph dated 23 September 2011:

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JOTTINGS OF A VERY ORDINARY SEAMAN

The Barboat Incident

by Ray Lambert

"They're shelling us," screamed our young ordinary seaman as he half jumped, half fell down the ladder into the forward messdeck where we had just sat down for dinner. His words were almost lost as all hell broke loose directly above us.

With an almighty deafening roar akin to an express train coupled with a low flying aircraft, three six inch shells hurtled overhead and landed in the sea not a dozen yards from our ship's side.

The next few seconds were the most hectic that the little ship had ever seen in her long career, as six very startled naval gunnery observers clawed their way out of the messdeck hatch - half eaten mid-day meal completely forgotten - and were all crouching, white faced right up in the bows by the time the next salvo straddled us.

'Dippo' my old run-ashore oppo, who never looked over healthy at the best of times, was mumbling something about the lack of tin hats - as if they would have made any difference. Someone else observed: "If they want to get rid of us there must be an easier way than sinking the flaming ship from under us!"

In my head the same old question kept buzzing round: what am I doing here?

I joined the navy of my own free will, in fact I volunteered as we all did so, in the back of my mind must have been the thought that at some stage I may have been shot at. But never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined it would be by my own side - and the culprit would be a whacking great cruiser no less!

It all started innocently enough. My ship was in Singapore Dockyard for a minor tidy-up and the ships company were enjoying a wonderful skive in *HMS Terror*, the nearby barracks. One day *HMS Birmingham* came into harbour and requested some gunnery rates to act as observers and spotters for a surface armament exercise, at sea the following day. So it fell to our gunnery officer to call for volunteers in the true naval tradition: "You - you - you - you - you and …er….you", the last mentioned being me.

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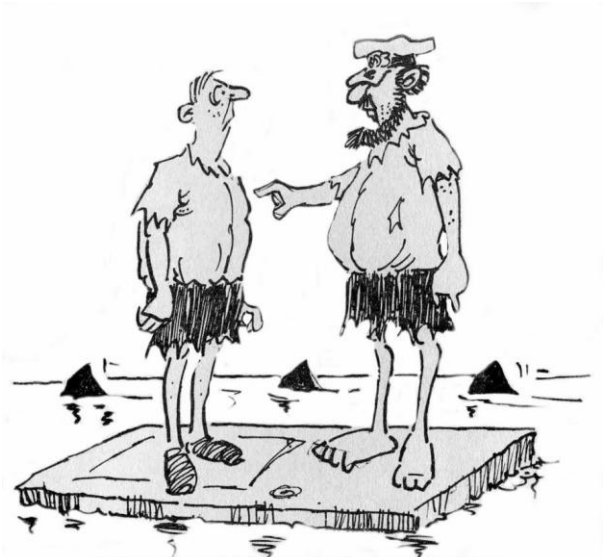
Once detailed there was no way out so the answer was to make the best of it; it was only for one day anyway. With this thought in our minds we commandeered the best grub we

could lay our hands on, not forgetting the jar of rum. It was perks on short trips away from the ship with a small party of men for everyone to have 'neaters' and that thought alone helped to raise our spirits quite a lot. After that there nothing to do but to book an early shake with the duty quartermaster and make tracks for the canteen bar for the rest of the evening.

The following day we were on our way early. Armed with stop watches and clipboards, we climbed aboard an old barboat and headed out to sea. The old barboat, I've forgotten her

name - if she ever had one - had a regular crew of a few Asians that manned the engine room and, apart from those and the captain who was also a stranger, there was only us six 'experts' and our commissioned gunner aboard.



We were towing a target, a kind of woven fence panel on a raft and, once in position the *Birmingham's* triple six-inch guns would open up at our target and we would time their runs and report back on their hits and misses.

But the real fun started at lunchtime. For reasons known only to themselves *Birmingham* opened up again just as we sat down to eat. Somehow their gunnery radar had drifted up the towing line without them realising and locked onto our towing vessel thereby causing their guns to follow suit and giving us a taste of what it feels like to be on the business end.

That incident happened God only knows how many years ago and although I have not met any of my fellow 'survivors' since, that memory is as clear to me as though it happened yesterday.

Naturally the moment the *Birmingham* realised their mistake they sent a signal enquiring if everyone was alright. Our temporary skipper sent back: "Everyone OK - we are just changing our trousers!"

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The Early Years 1945 to 1948 PART 3

(by Lofty) **CONTINUED FROM LAST MONTH**

On 1st September, 1946 we set sail for Portsmouth arriving the next day and secured alongside *HMS Birmingham*. Two days later on Wednesday, 4th September at 0800 the flag of C52 was transferred from *Birmingham* to the *Superb* and an hour and a half later Rear Admiral Cunningham Grahame, CBE boarded.

On 5th September we headed for Portland to participate in exercises, on the way, with *HMS Escapade* and the submarine *Tudor* before finally arriving at Portland.

Five days later we sailed through the English Channel and the North Sea to Invergordon where we remained for the rest of September and into October exercising with the Home Fleet.

On Wednesday, 16th October the C-in-C, Rear Admiral Parker joined the ship in full ceremonial dress of take over command from Rear Admiral Cunningham Grahame who left the ship. The following Monday we visited Golspie on the Sunderland coast before, once again, returning to Invergordon. Then on Wednesday 30th October sailed south to Portland re-fuelling en route from the support tanker *RFA Black Ranger*. Eventually, at 1145 on Saturday, 2nd November, we took station ahead of the battleship *HMS King George V* before entering harbour and securing to Number 3 Buoy at 1402. In port at the same time were the battleships *Nelson* and *Howe*. the frigates *Leeds Castle, Tintagel Castle* with the submarine *Tradewind* and the American cruiser *USS Spokane*.

The next 10 days were spent in Portland and on Tuesday, 12th November we set sail on our official visit to Antwerp. This visit had been timed to coincide with the second anniversary of the re-opening of the port since liberation after the war. Also on board for the visit were two officers and six guardsmen of the 2nd Battalion of the Coldstream Guards.

HMS Superb entering Antwerp Harbour

After leaving Portland we were the subject of numerous mock torpedo attacks from *Mosquito* aircraft from the Royal Naval Air Station, Ford.

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At 0500 on Thursday, 21st November a pilot was embarked at Flushing and the ship continued up the channel where at 0930 we fired a 21 gun National Salute which was returned by the battery at Fort St. Marie. An hour later we arrived at our berth and fired a series of salutes as follows, 13 were fired for Mr. E.G. Sebastian, His Majesty's Consul General and a further eleven for Commodore Timmermans the head of the Belgian Naval Force.

HMS Superb in Antwerp
October, 1946

On Friday, 22 November an official reception was held on board for 120 guests and later that same evening 13 officers and the Rear Admiral dined at the *Cercle Royal Concorde*

On Saturday, 23rd November at 1130 members of the resistance were welcomed on board and made to feel welcome. There was no doubt that these men and woman were very brave people and before they left, the group presented the ship with an embroidered pennant to commemorate their visit. Afterwards they donated a case of *Benedictine* to the ship's officers (the lower deck received nothing) and later in the day the ship was opened to members of the public.

A golf match between the Antwerp Golf Club and the ship's company resulted in a loss for us but a later football match was won by the ship with the result of 6-1.

On Monday, 25th November during the forenoon 18 officers and ratings were entertained to lunch at the Belgian Artillery School. There were other visits too. Excursions to Reuben's House in Antwerp and also to Brussels where the Rear Admiral laid a wreath at the tomb of the Unknown Warrior. A second football match in the afternoon resulted in defeat for our ship and we lost 2-3.

At 1640 the Royal Marine Band "Beat the Retreat" in the Grande Place, Antwerp and in another part of the town 30 members of the ship's company were invited to have tea with the Acting Burgomaster, Monsieur Eekelers at the Hôtel de Ville [1].

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[1] Town Hall

Another mauling for the ship followed the next day when our teams lost both the golf and the football matches.

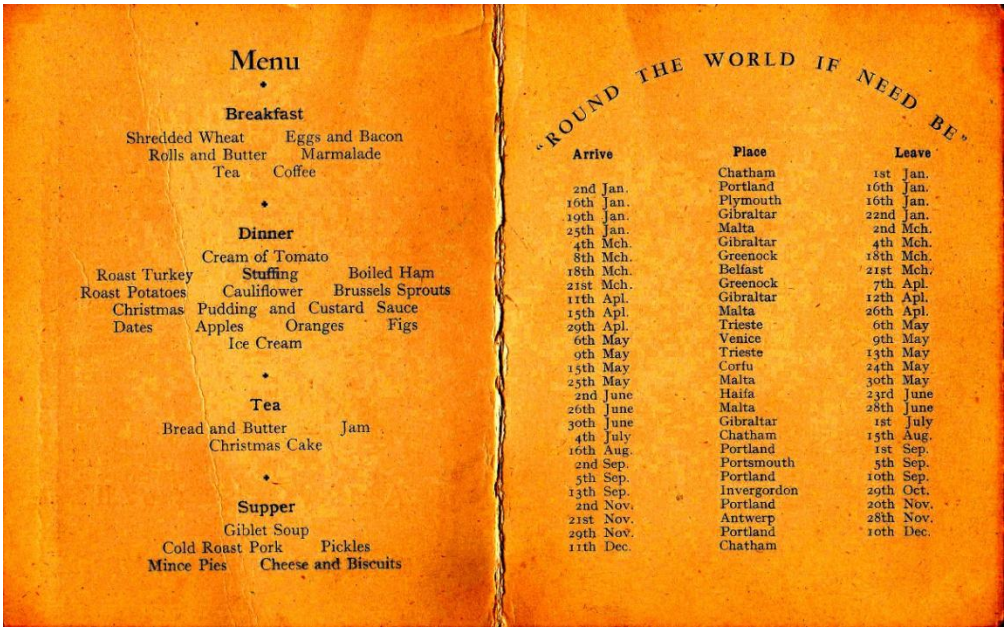
However, more successful was the dinner party at 1930 where the guest list included the Minister of Communications Monsieur Rongeaux, the Governor of the Province of Flanders and Madame Declerck. The Acting Burgomaster and Madame Eekelers, Mr Preston, the United States Consul General and Mrs North, his sister. Finally Brigadier General Spears the Military Attaché. During the dinner party the British film "Blythe Spirit" was shown.

The following day there was another dinner party this time on board the ship and the Rear Admiral invited the Belgian Prime Minister Camille Huysmans and his wife and Lady Knatchbull-Hugessen.

At this second dinner party the Loyal Toast was to provide some difficulty inasmuch with the Belgian King in exile, a Prince Regent and a socialist Prime Minister it had been decided on advice from His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to give the collective toast as follows " The King, The Regent and the Belgian Royal Family".

Rear Admiral H.A. Parker instead deferred to the wishes of the Belgian Prime Minister and gave the toast "The Head of State"

On the final day of the visit, at 0900 a contingent of the British cruiser together with a Belgian Naval Force attended a ceremony at the Mariners' Memorial where the Rear Admiral laid a wreath. An hour later we slipped our moorings and, after disembarking the pilot at Flushing, started on our trip back to Portland arriving there at noon on Friday, 29th. We remained here until Tuesday, 10th December and then headed for back to Chatham and Farewell Jetty in Number 3 Basin.



Menu

Breakfast

Shredded Wheat Eggs and Bacon
Rolls and Butter Marmalade
Tea Coffee

Dinner

Cream of Tomato
Roast Turkey Stuffing Boiled Ham
Roast Potatoes Cauliflower Brussels Sprouts
Christmas Pudding and Custard Sauce
Dates Apples Oranges Figs
Ice Cream

Tea

Bread and Butter Jam
Christmas Cake

Supper

Giblet Soup
Cold Roast Pork Pickles
Mince Pies Cheese and Biscuits

"ROUND THE WORLD IF NEED BE"

Arrive	Place	Leave
	Chatham	1st Jan.
2nd Jan.	Portland	16th Jan.
16th Jan.	Plymouth	16th Jan.
19th Jan.	Gibraltar	22nd Jan.
25th Jan.	Malta	2nd Mch.
4th Mch.	Gibraltar	4th Mch.
8th Mch.	Greenock	18th Mch.
18th Mch.	Belfast	21st Mch.
21st Mch.	Greenock	7th Apl.
11th Apl.	Gibraltar	12th Apl.
15th Apl.	Malta	26th Apl.
29th Apl.	Trieste	6th May
6th May	Venice	9th May
9th May	Trieste	13th May
15th May	Corfu	24th May
25th May	Malta	30th May
2nd June	Haifa	23rd June
26th June	Malta	28th June
30th June	Gibraltar	1st July
4th July	Chatham	15th Aug.
16th Aug.	Portland	1st Sep.
2nd Sep.	Portsmouth	5th Sep.
5th Sep.	Portland	10th Sep.
13th Sep.	Invergordon	29th Oct.
2nd Nov.	Portland	20th Nov.
21st Nov.	Antwerp	28th Nov.
29th Nov.	Portland	10th Dec.
11th Dec.	Chatham	

The holiday season was soon upon us and those men to whom duty fell decorated messes with the traditional bunting and after Captain's rounds on Christmas Day the festive meal was enjoyed by all.

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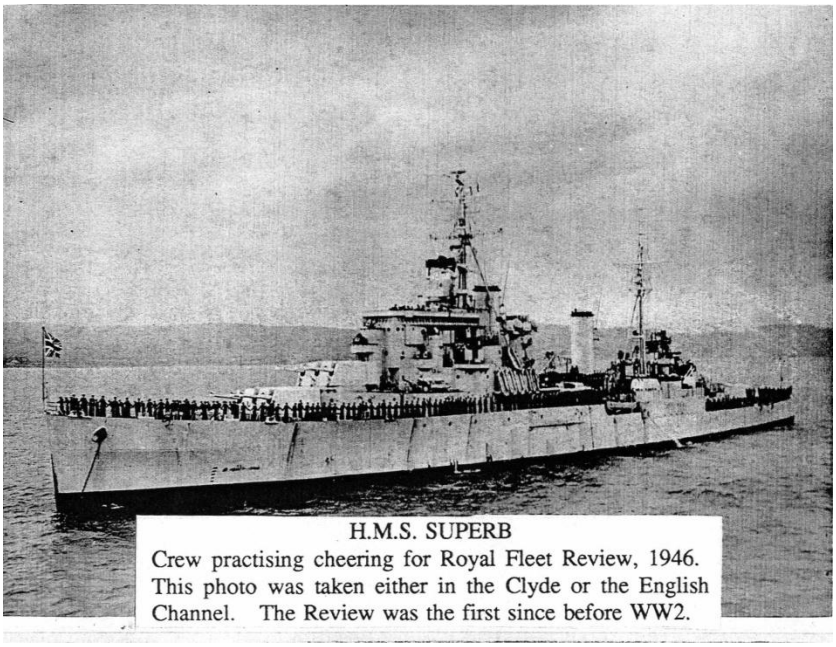
1947

On 20th January the ship sailed up the River Medway past Sheerness and into the English Channel.

Arriving at Portland at 0319 on the next day we waited until 0710 when *HMS Dido* joined us and saluted the flag of Rear Admiral Parker, CB who was on board. At 1100 we exercised "Three cheers for their Majesties" and fired a salute.



H.M.S. SUPERB
Crew practising cheering for Royal Fleet Review, 1946. This photo was taken either in the Clyde or the English Channel. The Review was the first since before WW2.

On Wednesday, 22nd the oiler *Black Ranger* came alongside and the ship re-fuelled as the battleships *Anson* and *Duke of York* entered harbour anchoring some distance away. We remained at Portland until Saturday, 1st February when, along with the Home Fleet, centred on the battleships *Vanguard* and *Duke of York* we slipped to sea bound for Gibraltar.

Once again the ship's sides were lined and the we cheered their Majesties. Destroyers from the 4th and 5th Destroyer Flotillas screened the force.

On Wednesday, 5th February, together with *Dido, we* carried out a series of towing exercises before entering Gibraltar harbour via the North Entrance at 1615 where we tied up alongside 41 Berth with bows facing south.

Leave was granted to Blue and the 1st Part of Stoker White Watch and the following Saturday the ship was opened to hundreds of visitors who sought out the most intricate places and clambered all over the upper works. At 2200, well after the visitors had left, a small electrical fire was discovered in Number 6 Power Room and was quickly extinguished.

At 1755, along with Dido and the destroyers *Myngs* and *Dunkirk,* we left Gibraltar on Wednesday, 12th February, 1946 for passage to Casablanca and at 0753 on the following day passed the cement works at Dar-El-Beida at a speed of 8 knots. Shortly afterwards we picked up a local pilot and at 0826 fired off a 21 gun salute before stopping our engines.

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Clearance being granted we entered harbour and were alongside at 0900. From 1500 more notables came to see the ship and were each given a gun salute as follows: Rear Admiral Barset and Brigadier General Capitant - 13 Guns, The Regional Commissioner for Casablanca Monsieur Philippe Boniface - 11 Guns and the Pasha of Casablanca - 9 Guns.

Three days later on 15th February a dance was held on shore for Chiefs and Petty Officers and we all celebrated until the early hours. The following day, putting on brave faces from the previous evenings effects, we welcomed more visitors for another Open Day.

At 1000 on Thursday, 20th, assisted by tugs, we sailed and shortly after passing the breakwater members of the press corps disembarked. The ship then put on speed and at a 12 knots resumed exercise with *Dido* en route for Gibraltar.

At 1630 on Saturday, 22nd February we entered Number 1 Dock at Gibraltar and by 100 were handed over to Dockyard Control for repairs sustained earlier.

The ship remained in dry dock until 1630 on 6th March when she was gently backed out of the dock with assistance from the tugs and then, stern first, passed through the harbour. The pilot was disembarked at 1645 and we made passage for Portland. The next day we communicated with the *Steamship Robert Hill* which was on voyage to Genoa and on the Saturday, 8th met with the battleship *Duke of York*. *HMS Dido* then joined the group and throughout the next few days the ships carried out lengthy exercises. The Home Fleet arrived in Portland on Wednesday, 12th March. We passed the breakwater at 1030 and secured to Number 3 Buoy.

Over the following weekend and due to the weather [2] with winds gusting to Force 8 in harbour and the general sea state, particular attention had to be given to the shackles securing the ship to the buoy which were regularly checked.

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[2] 1947 The coldest February ever (-1.9C CET), the second coldest month this century (after January 1963), and the coldest month since January 1814. Many places in England were beneath zero from the 11th to the 23rd; Greenwich registered 14 consecutive days beneath zero. At Oxford frost began at 6 pm on the 10th and continued until 6 am on the 26th. It was a persistent easterly month, large amounts of snow in the east (e.g. 1.35 m of snow lay at Forrest-in-Teesdale (Durham) on the 18th. It was also very dull. There was no sunshine at Kew at all from the 2-22nd inclusive, and only 17 hours of sunshine in total (compared with the average of 61). A side-effect of the easterlies was that the Scottish Highlands had no rain this month, for the first time in recorded history, where it was also very sunny. It was, of course, also snowy, with snowstorms particularly affecting the south, midlands, and east. There was a major snowstorm on the 25-26th. It was also quite a windy month. Buxton had 30 consecutive days of frost. At Kew the maximum temperature of the month was 5C.

On Wednesday, 19th March at 0721 we again sailed for exercises during which the destroyer *Zest* came alongside to oil and we returned to harbour later that day. There we stayed in port until sailing for Chatham on 25th March. Weather was misty as the ship moved through the River Medway and by 1730 we were in the dockyard and secured alongside the cruiser Achilles.

The ship was then moved into dry dock in preparation for more important repairs and a minor refit.

The colours were at half mast on Sunday, 8th April due to the funeral of His Majesty King George II of Greece and the Royal Ensign flew alongside the Greek flag.

At 0900 on 15th April, 1947 Captain R.M.T. Taylor DSC took command thus relieving Captain Robson who departed the ship at 1330.

On the following day the dry dock was flooded and the ship was moved by tugs into Number 1 Basin and to West Wall. She remained there for 2 weeks when she was moved again to Farewell Jetty on Wednesday, 30th April.

On 1st May, 1947 the Flagship we put to sea for passage for Portland and during the month of May took part in the Cruiser Squadron Regatta. The winners were welcomed on board where they were presented with prizes by Rear Admiral H.A. Parker CB.

John Coy, Alice Birk & Charlie Field in Copenhagen

On Friday, 30th May we slipped from Portland and met with the light cruiser *HMS Sirius* and the destroyer *Myngs* in the Solent where sea exercises were conducted in which the force was "attacked" by motor torpedo boats off the Hampshire coastline. At 1433 we stopped engines in order to collect the local pilot who took the ship into Portsmouth harbour. As she was being eased into her berth within the dockyard the tug *Grapple* damaged some of our ship's plates.

By Tuesday, 2nd June returning to the Solent we carried out a series of practice shots before sailing with the destroyer *Aisne* on a visit to Copenhagen. Mr Duffle from the BBC embarked for this passage and recorded interviews with the officers and men for later broadcasting.

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By Monday, 9th June, 1947 we entered the Kattegat and the following morning a pilot embarked to take the ship into Copenhagen harbour. At 0817 she passed the breakwater and fired a 21 Gun salute prior to securing alongside the jetty. Within a few hours Mr Hans Peter Sorenson, the Mayor of the City with Admiral Vedal the C-in-C Danish Navy visited the ship and were accorded full ceremonial honours.

Photographs kindly donated by Ted Davy, Mark Field

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

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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

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Who's this ?

He was a Stoker on the 1956-57 Cruise. Any ideas please let me know.

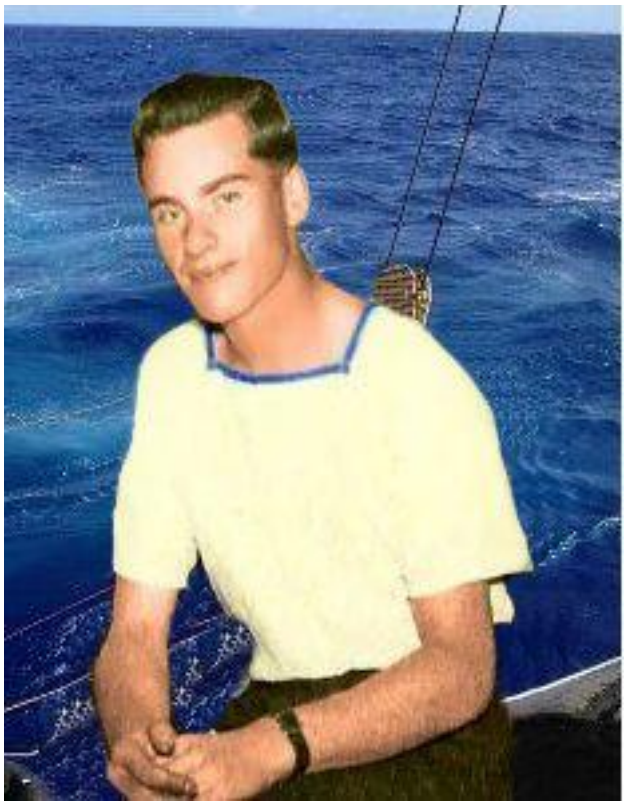

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PHOTO ALBUM

These are some of the photos were sent in by shipmate Malcolm Milham he says "These photos are of our Football Supporters Group, our team was well supported, although I played for the Rugby team, I was the Hooker. This occasion was the Kings Cup, Home Fleet V Med Fleet at Gibraltar spring 1954, the cruiser in background is HMS Glasgow, Flagship of Lord Mountbatten who was C-in-C Med at the time.

We had put on a good chuck up for the Home Team, then the C-in-C appeared and we took the hint and left, in an orderly manner".

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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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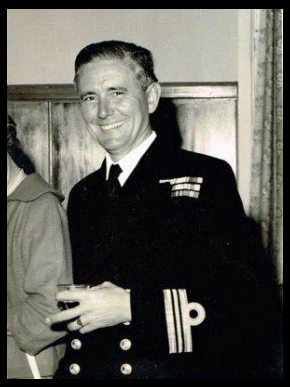
CROSSED THE BAR

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)

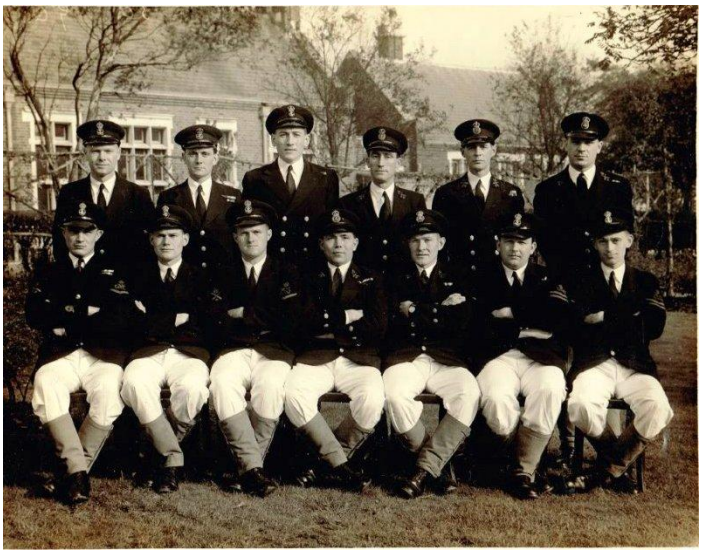
25th April, 2016 in New Zealand - Lieutenant Commander Frederick William (Fred) Ralph served on board – 1952 - 53 - Notified by Fred's daughter



LEFT:

Presentation 50th Anniversary Certificate

RIGHT: Fred Ralph on P.O.s Course (probably). Fred is 2nd from left back row



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 ..

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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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) - 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** (1954) - Dave **Perrin** (1954) - 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) - Pete **Tasker** (1954) - 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

Our Chairman

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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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THE END