H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

A MAGAZINE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

JULY, 2018

№ 20

OUR SWORDS WE BARE
OUR SPIRITS DARE

CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION IS ROBIN SMITH

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Superb - Defending Britain Since 1710

ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

As a pimply adolescent I laboured to understand 'how many beans make five', but had no doubt who was busy laying rail track over vast areas of the globe, coloured pink on the map, half of Africa, half South America, the Antipodes et al. Britannia also ruled the waves, lost a few fights en route to 'nipping slavery in the bud'.

In Europe now that accolade belongs to 'La Belle France'. Also now pre-eminent 'laying rail track' over the aforementioned continents is China. World attention is presently focused on China's progress towards a 'blue water navy'. To think it will have three proper 'cat and trap' aircraft carriers before another eighteen months have elapsed is an eye opener. Construction of Chinese 'friendship' naval bases in Sri Lanka, Mogadishu, Venezuela, and now talk of Argentina are well under way. This, when Russia tightens its grip on its Syrian base at Tartus, with an aim to disrupt the traditional status quo.

A very recent cat and mouse game in the Med., conducted between 'our' latest 'A-class sub' and what N.A.T.O. code named **'Black Hole'**, the latest Russian attack sub. whose 'silence under water' is rattling our cage has made an impact. It seems possible that the basis for that technology jump was via the infamous U.S. naval spy and brother, seduced, not by ideology, but cash; as ever, betrayal from within!

Late in 2017 a pair of Chinese cutting edge frigates visited London's docklands en route to exercises in N.A.T.O.'s back yard, the Baltic. One understands this was noticed by a few 'members at Westminster', when they glanced up while filling in their expense sheets, it caused a ripple of alarm!, but insufficient to cause a release of cash to decent ship builders so as 'we' could have a pair of decent frigates visit Canary Wharf. Those M.P.'s, ignorant of China's global reach in days gone past, saw it as a 'world first' …

Despite those problems with 'the beans' I was aware Chinese ships had mapped Greenland with wonderful accuracy in 1410 -20 -30. The controversial '*Vinland*" map of Atlantic Europe outshine people like Columbus, who came by centuries later.

The first decent mapping of Southern Ocean, after Chinese cartography in early 1400's, was done by the famous son of Whitby, J. Cook, 350 years later. In 1420, a sight never yet seen in the world, a fleet set sail in command of Chinese Emperor Zhu Di's eunuch admiral, with orders to 'Proceed all the way to the end of the Earth'. They did that, their treasure map of the U.S. west coast is amazing.

Today, June 14th, is 'Falklands Day', which reminds me they mapped South Georgia and the Falklands in late 1430.

Where does he get all this balderdash? You may ask.

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Allow me to recommend a book published in 2002, following 15 years of research, titled

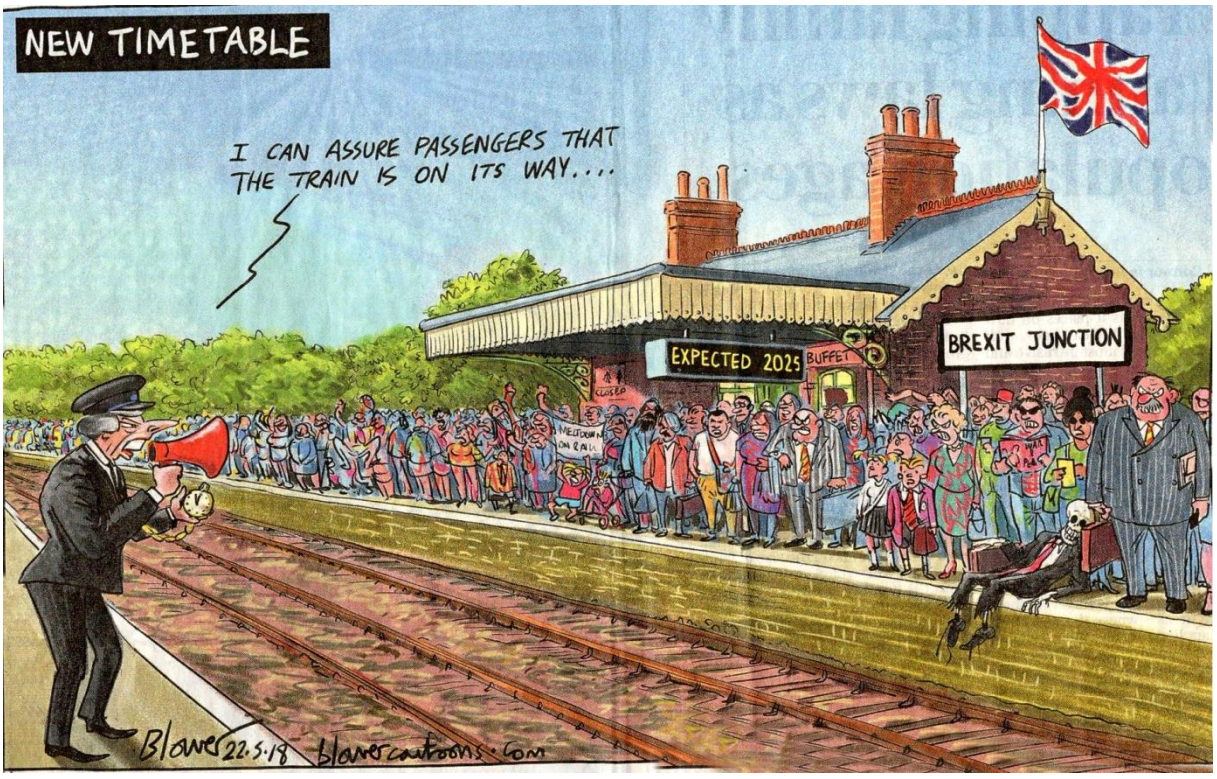
'1421, when China discovered the world'.

Initial interest/attraction for me, was the author Gavin Menzies, born in China 1937, a submariner Royal Navy from 59 to 70, did time back on China Station as captain of *H.M.S. Rorqual* (mine laying sub.) 68 to 70. This is no quick read; without the appendix it is a 600 pager. I guarantee you will be enthralled.

Before return to rail track, I see China has just conferred on President Putin their very top 'friendship decoration' whilst on a visit to agree their aim; to marginalize U.S. current dominance of the high seas. I take comfort from the fact a Donald is running things in the' 48', not a Barak.

China's aim to trade with Europe 'by rail' is now up and running. The plan, announced in 2013, saw the 'first train' arrive at the old Corytown Refinery site on the Thames, just in from Southend, a couple of months ago. The site is cleared and a massive distribution depot has been erected. Reportedly a 'ribbon' was broken on the train's arrival. This was so low key, unannounced, it seemed a bit odd to me. The train set off from China's east coast town of Yiwu. It did the 7,500 miles in 18 days.

Corytown (Essex) was the 15th stop en route, cutting two weeks from the time taken by container ship: Shipping cost were halved; It crossed Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany, Belgium, France and under the Channel Tunnel. The U.K. portion consisted of 34 containers, a creditable start, but Watch this Space. April 10th a return load for China left Stanford-le-Hope, Essex, for Zhu Jiang. Proper Planning does seem to prevent Piss Poor Performance.



Locally, commuters from Margate to London Bridge celebrate a red letter day if they make it into work on time!

The obvious upside to this tale is avoidance of last month's incident when a massive container vessel lost 76 of its 'box load' in a storm. That was only one ship!

Fortunately boxes are now made to float up in a short time. I believe many a yacht had vanished without trace, hitting just negative buoyant containers.

Hope it's of interest.

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Many people have freely donated their time to send in their contributions but a special THANK YOU must go to Andy Brierley who has contributed to EVERY issue.

The £6 billion Royal Navy fleet that hardly ever went to sea: Warships that can't sail in the heat spent 80 per cent of the year in dock

The British Royal Navy's six Type 45 £1 billion destroyers barely ever leave their docks
HMS Dauntless and HMS Defender, spent no time at sea during 2017 despite it being 'year of the navy'
The Type 45 destroyers all have engines fitted in 2008 that cut out in warm seas
In December Britain didn't have a single ship on overseas operations anywhere

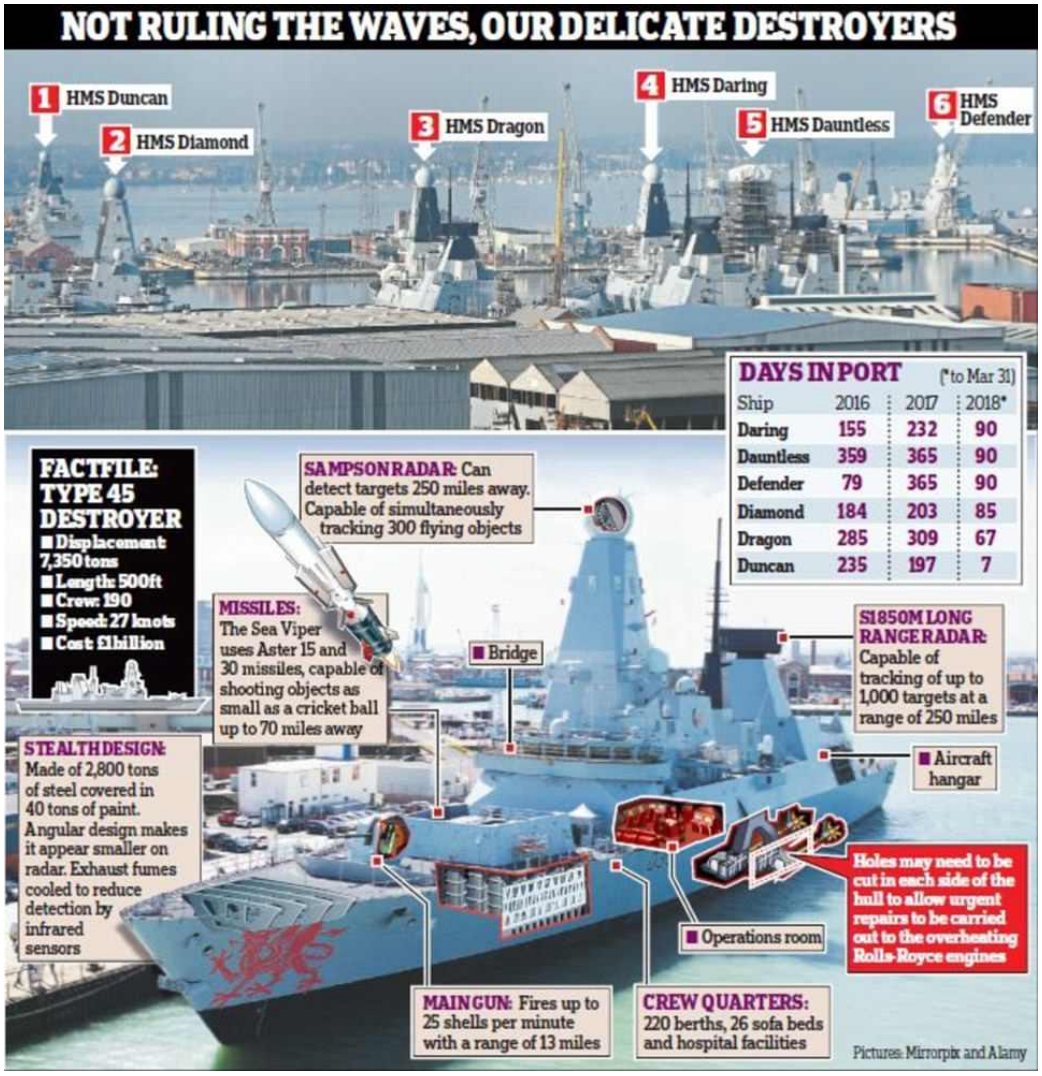
By LARISA BROWN FOR THE DAILY MAIL

Britain's six Type 45 destroyers, described as the backbone of the Royal Navy, spent 80 per cent of last year in dock.

The ships, costing £1billion each, need a multi-million pound refit after repeatedly breaking down in the Persian Gulf. But the work is not due to start until 2020.

Two of the cutting-edge warships, *HMS Dauntless* and *HMS Defender*, did not go to sea at all during 2017 – which had been hailed by officials and ministers as 'the year of the Navy'.

All six warships, which entered service from 2008, were made with an engine system which cuts out in warm seas, leaving sailors stranded for hours in total darkness.



This led to fears that these key vessels – designed to shield the rest of the fleet from air or missile attacks – had become 'sitting ducks'.

Six Type 45 destroyers, described as the backbone of the Royal Navy, spent 80 per cent of last year in dock.

Britain's six Type 45 destroyers, described as the backbone of the Royal Navy, spent 80 per cent of last year in dock

This led to fears that these key vessels – designed to shield the rest of the fleet from air or missile attacks – had become 'sitting ducks'.

HMS Dragon spent 309 days in Portsmouth last year, followed by HMS Daring with 232 days and HMS Diamond with 203.

HMS Duncan spent the most time at sea, but was still in dock for 197 days.

From January to March this year, *HMS Daring, HMS Dauntless* and *HMS Defender* have not left port.

Shockingly, engine-makers Rolls-Royce claim the Ministry of Defence did not tell them the 8,000-ton vessels would spend long periods in warm waters so they were not designed to operate in the heat.

Insiders say a shortage of manpower, Christmas leave for sailors and routine maintenance had also been factors that kept the ships at Portsmouth.

Lord West, former head of the Navy, said: 'It is a disgrace that work on these ships has not been done as a matter of urgency.

'We have so few frigates and destroyers that we should have moved heaven and earth to get the work done.

If there was a national emergency we can't rely on them.'

Whitehall sources, who blame the delays on cuts in maintenance contracts, say Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has since ordered deployments and four of the ships are currently at sea.

However, last December Britain had no major warships on operations anywhere in the world for the first time in living memory.

The absence of any of the Navy's 19 frigates and destroyers overseas was described as a 'strategic embarrassment for the country'.

Defence ministers and service chiefs are pushing for more spending after years of cuts and a budget review is now underway.

The problem first became public knowledge in 2016 when it emerged that two Rolls-Royce turbines on each ship slow down in warm waters and the engine fails to generate enough power.

The system does not recognise this and 'trips out' the ship's generators, resulting in total electrical failure.

The problem does not occur in the North Sea because the engine can generate more power in colder temperatures.

The MoD has set aside £160million to correct the problem by installing extra diesel generators to enhance the power and propulsion systems.

This could involve cutting a giant hole in the side of each ship but work on the first one is not due to start until 2020, followed by sea trials a year later.

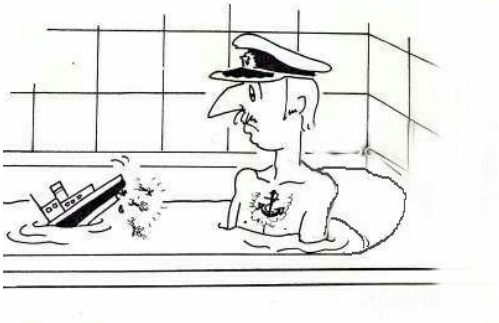
An MoD spokesman said last night: 'The Royal Navy has a truly global presence with 25 ships and submarines currently at sea.

'Since 2016, our Type 45 destroyers have proved indispensable on global missions to protect commercial shipping in the Gulf, support coalition attacks on Daesh (ISIS), prevent the smuggling of weapons into Libya, and lead the NATO maritime task force in the Black Sea and Mediterranean.'

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hi Brian,
Sorry to see the end of a magazine which has proved such a success with Association. From my own experience I know the difficulty in filling such a publication on a regular basis. I was involved with a satirical paper that we published only when we had enough interesting material to fill it, and that was hard enough to keep going.

I can't resist trying to sneak in what I hope shall prove smile worthy for the final edition in July. So here goes -
Retired sea Captain confesses to a friend that he finds his wife so immature.
How's that? asks his friend.
'Well,' says the Captain, 'Every time I take a bath she has the habit of sneaking in and sinks all my boats'.
Allan Harmer



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REUNION REMINDER

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

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

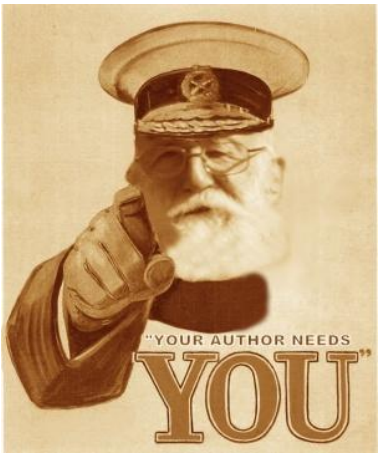
PRICES AND APPLICATION FORMS AVAILABLE BY CLICKING HERE

SCRAN BAG (FREE ADVERTISING)

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

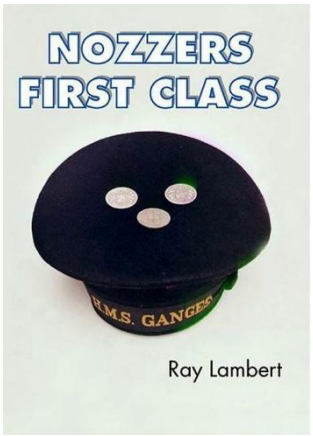
If you have something to say about this section or advertise an article please email Brian at hmssuperb2u@sfr.fr

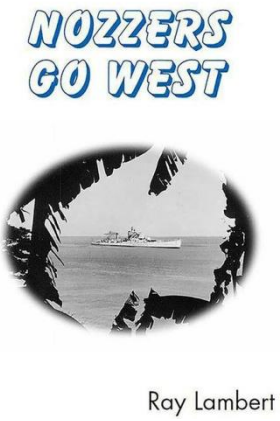
Journalist & Best Selling Author



OUR IN-HOUSE **BEST SELLING AUTHOR** IS OFFERING THE FOLLOWING BOOKS AT A SPECIAL PRICE FOR MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION. BUY NOW AS HE'S JUST HAD HIS 81ST BIRTHDAY AND NEEDS THE MONEY TO KEEP HIMSELF IN THE LUXURY TO WHICH HE'S BECOME ACCUSTOMED AS A **RETIRED ROYAL NAVY VETERAN** !

Ray Lambert



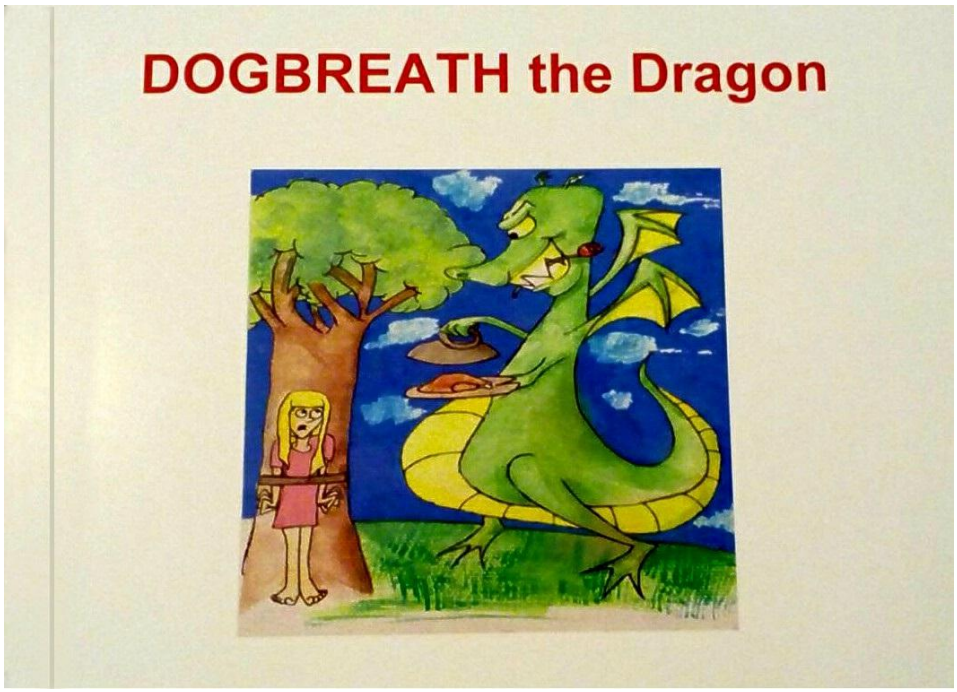


Follow the author when he was a handsome young man in Ganges and as he joins HMS Superb at Chatham. Go with him as he begins the "Luxury Cruise" of 1954-55. Join him from Punta Arenas to Vancouver and much in between. Learn of Guantanamo Bay and the Falklands before they became headline news.

Each book costs £7.99 including UK postage. For more information contact Ray by email

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

SOMETHING FOR THE YOUNGSTERS!



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.

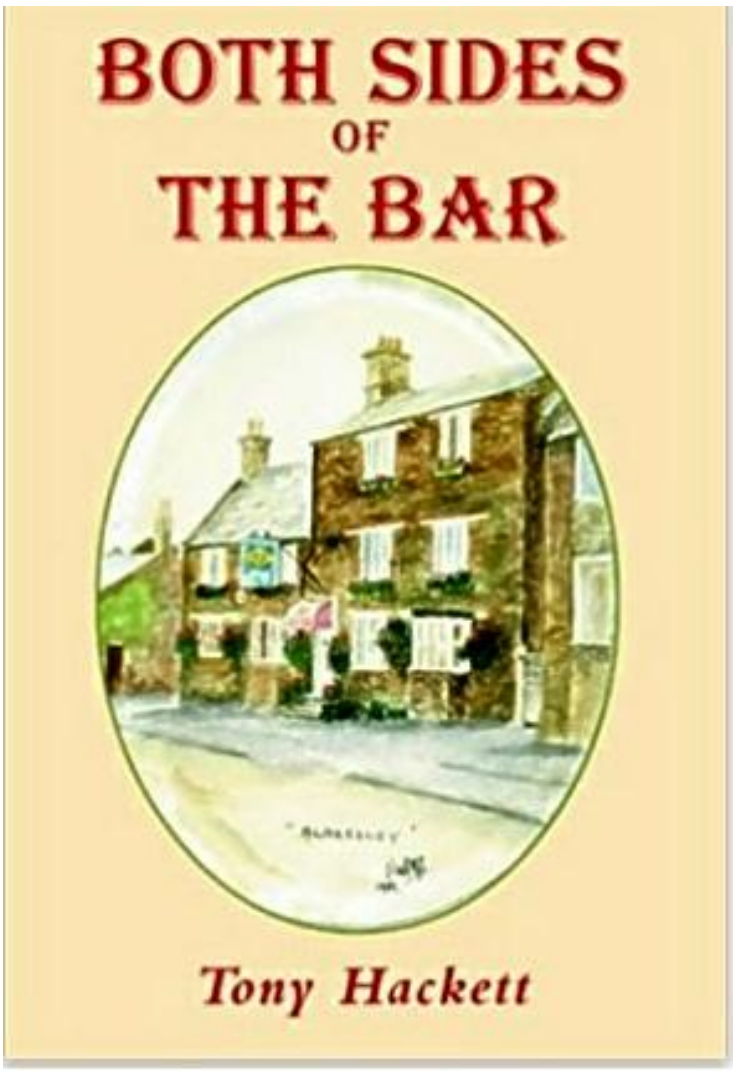
There are bold knights charging to her rescue one of who wins her hand in marriage.

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**

LIFE AFTER THE NAVY



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

JOTTINGS OF A VERY ORDINARY SEAMAN

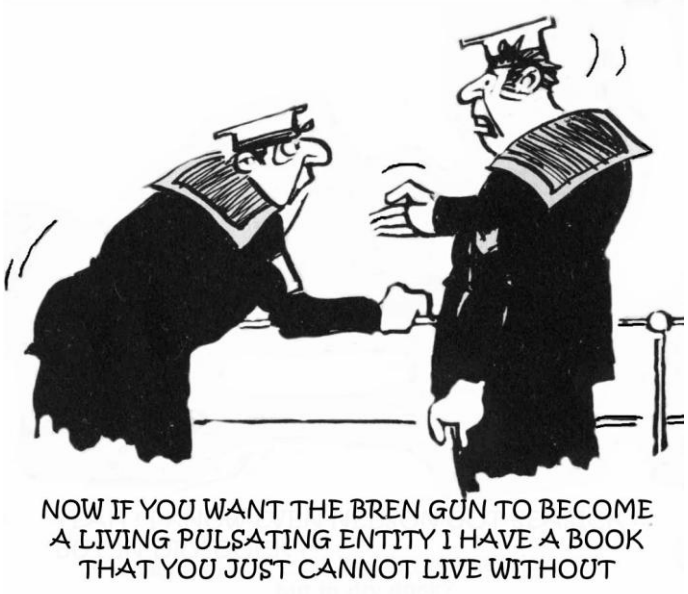
By Ray Lambert

Our old mate Brian 'Gob `n Gaiters' Davies told me that there was instruction on the Bren Gun at Ganges but I was never involved in any, nor did I ever hear of any such instructions.

Therefore I was a bit surprised, when I marched proudly onto my new ship out the Far Flung, to be told that I was now the ship's Bren gunner. How I got singled out was never mentioned; there was no selection process involving other people, it was just an almost throwaway line: "Lambert – Bren Gunner". No explanation, it was just said and then we drifted away.

This was now the end of '59 and ever since my first day with the navy at the beginning of '53, Bren guns had never been mentioned nor crossed my mind. If 'Gob `n Gaiters' was correct and there was instruction at Ganges, then I don't know how I missed it.

No Bren Gun was forthcoming and no further mention was made of it for quite some time until one day, out in the wilds Kuala Lumpur way, we had to dispatch a landing party – and for the first time the Bren gunner was called upon. Up until that moment I had never seen the ship's Bren, let alone stripped or tested it and suddenly there it was being thrust at me. Still no-one asked if I knew what I was doing. We had live ammo; No3 carried four magazines and I had a couple more. After trudging around all day in the blazing sun we took the same amount of ammo back onboard; I still had not fired the thing.



Maybe I should be in the Guinness Book of Records as the Bren gunner who was there to defend his shipmates but only saw his weapon for one day and never fired a shot through the entire commission.

Unknown to the navy and anyone else for that matter, I had spent some time with the army cadets back home and I had become quite a dab hand with the weapon. I could strip and reassemble blindfold but no-one had ever asked me; I could have been a complete Wally and even killed someone for all they knew.

It was a crew of three: No2 carried the weapon (don't ask – it's the navy way!), No3 carried the spare barrel and some magazines and Mr King Pin carried a couple of magazines. No2 was

a horrible know-nothing; a 19 year old who looked like an old 50 with attitude. No sooner had we left the ship and was out of sight then he started. Whinge, whinge, "This gun is too heavy – it's not my job. You're the gunner, you should be carrying it"….whinge, whinge, whinge.

I grabbed the gun, "I'll carry the bloody thing," I said. I was wearing my Ganges Sunday boots (leather soles) and after a lot of trudging about in the boiling heat, we came to a rise in the ground. A couple of the front runners called back that there was a stream just over the top. Naturally everyone rushed to the stream and jumped in fully clothed. With my leather soles and the weight of the gun, I couldn't get a grip on the grass and was well behind the others in their mad rush.

By the time I reached the stream everybody was out of the water – it was absolutely freezing cold to such an extent that some were in pain with chattering teeth.

My good deed by helping the whinger had been rewarded. I was hot but on balance I figured it was better than being cold!

Many people have freely donated their time to send in their contributions but a special THANK YOU must go to Ray Lambert who has contributed to EVERY issue.

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BYGONE NEWSPAPER REPORT

WESTERN GAZETTE

FRIDAY 07 JULY 1911

TRAGIC MISHAP ON H.M.S. SUPERB

THREE MEN SUFFOCATED

LIFE GIVEN FOR A FRIEND

BRAVERY OF MEN AND OFFICERS

Poisonous gas which had accumulated in the vegetable store on board the battleship Superb, off Portland, has caused the deaths of three of her crew.

The victims were:-
William Jones Ship's Steward's assistant
Arthur George Newnham, Cooper
Edward Coll, able seaman

A strange smell was noticed in the neighbourhood of the vegetable store and Jones and Newnham went down to investigate. Both were overcome and died.

Heroic attempts were made by Coll to reach his two comrades but he too, sank down and died.

Mr. G.P. Byrnes the coroner for South Dorset, held an inquest at the Royal Naval Hospital, Portland, on Saturday afternoon. Mr. Wells was chosen as the foreman of the jury.

Mr. H.A. Huxtable, who appeared on behalf of the Admiralty, stated that the Department deeply deplored the loss of three valuable lives. It appeared from the plan that a compartment in the ship's hold was used for storing potatoes.

On Tuesday, Bartlett the captain of the hold, had inspected the compartment and found nothing unusual, but on Thursday he reported a nasty smell. Instructions were given that no-one was to go down until the hold was ventilated, but, unfortunately, these instructions were not carried out, for apparently Jones and Newnham were overcome by foul gas and fell down unconscious. Coll saw them and as would be expected from a British sailor, he went to their assistance and was also overcome.

William James Brewer, the ship's steward, identified the body of Jones and said he was a single man and a native of Gateshead. On the Thursday evening the captain of the hold reported that there was a smell coming from the hatch of the port lower provision hold, where the potatoes were stored. The ship was at sea in the Channel. There were about 130

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bags of potatoes, and some cases of corned beef and some soap. It was not a usual place to carry potatoes. They had to take in extra provisions owing to the Coronation. The potatoes were shipped at Portland on 14th June. He saw them all stowed and they appeared to be sound. They were old potatoes. There was no ventilation when the hatch was closed down. He told Bartlett to ventilate the hold by passing a flexible hose down and pumping some air in and then overhaul the potatoes. He understood this would be done on Friday.

The assistant Jones informed him that he and the cooper (Newnham) were going down together with Coll the second captain of the hold. About 2.15 on Friday he heard that Newnham was in the hold unconscious. When he arrived at the hold he found that the men had been taken out and were in the hands of the medical officers. The potatoes had all been taken up from below since, and there was no more odour than usual. A few he had cut open were all right. The ship had a small potato locker about large enough to hold 1½ days' supply. Most ships had special potato lockers built.

Commander Pound said the hold had been cleared out by men in diving dress, since when the hold had been ventilated.

In answer to the foreman, the ship's steward said the hold was painted with oxide, and had been painted about May last.

Mr. Wells said oxide was a very bad paint to use in confined spaces, and it would be dangerous to go down there immediately the hatch was opened without there being potatoes.

George Maydell Bartlett, captain of the hold, said on Tuesday evening everything was correct, and the hatch was opened.

On Thursday evening he visited the hold and found a nasty smell. He went to the bottom, returned and closed the hatch behind him. He felt no ill effects from visiting the hold. He reported the matter, and told the assistant-steward Jones, Newnham and Coll not to go down to the hold unless a witness accompanied them.

The steward told him to have the hold ventilated as soon a possible. On Friday afternoon a boy messenger told him that the men had been found in the hold. He went to render assistance and was going down the ladder when he was called back by the assistant fleet surgeon. He then took a rope and tried to get it around Jones, but became unconscious.

The smell was not noticeable at the top, but about a foot below the level of the lower hatch. The men were subsequently got up by men who tried the same means as he had.

The Commander said he went down later, and the sensation of the gas was similar to taking gas at the dentist's.

Edwin Henry Barrett, first class boy of H.M.S. Superb, said on Friday last about 12.30 he went on watch in the midshipman's flat and about 2.30 he was writing a letter near the fore lower provision hold.

Shortly after Coll, second captain of the hold, passed him and went straight to the hatch. Coll said, "Come quick, there are two men down the hold, pass a rope and come down quickly behind me".

A boy named Morse let down a rope and witness followed Coll down and when he had gone down a few steps he saw Coll try to lift Newnham. Coll then dropped.

Witness was on the centre rung of the middle ladder, and did not detect any smell. Seeing something was wrong he returned to the deck, called the doctor, and was sent by him to the Commander.

The Commander said that the men had probably been down there about 20 minutes before Coll found them.

Surgeon Albert Christopher Russack said shortly after two o'clock on Friday he was informed that three men had been suffocated. The messenger led him to the hold. All the men were unconscious and they were brought up and he could find no pulses.

He tried artificial respiration for 2½ hours. He thought the men were suffocated from carbon monoxide poisoning probably generated from decayed organic matter. The gas was similar to that at the bottom of an old well.

The coroner said no doubt the Admiralty would hold a very searching enquiry to avoid a repetition.

A verdict in accordance with the medical evidence was returned. The jury were unanimous in expressing their admiration at the bravery by the deceased Coll, and those who subsequently brought up their bodies.

The Assistant-Steward Jones and A.B. Coll were buried on Sunday afternoon: and the procession was witnessed by hundreds of people. Newnham's body was taken to Gosport.

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Exclusive Rum Experience

WHEN: On 31 August 2018, 19:00 - 23:00

LOCATION: HMS Warrior 1860, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

CATEGORIES: Special Events , Heritage

Exclusive Rum Experience onboard HMS Warrior 1860

Love rum? Want to dine on the most famous warships in the world? Our exclusive rum experience returns onboard HMS Warrior for an exclusive dinner event on Friday 31st August 2018.

A fantastic evening onboard HMS Warrior which will be an experience to remember. Guests will be introduced to hand selected rums to suit the occasion and be given the opportunity to explore the Victorian warship, with plenty of rum in between. Here they will learn about the history of the ship, the heritage of the rum and the Royal Navy's unique connection to the liquor along with exploring different flavour appreciation. Afterwards, dinner will be served with guests treated to musical entertainment throughout the night.

Looking for a unique gift experience? Why not purchase this exclusive ticket as a surprise gift for someone special. Save the day and reserve one of the limited places for a very special rum-inspired evening on board HMS Warrior.

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NATIONAL SERVICE Part 4 of 4

By Peter Wells,
May I955-May 1957

Peter had been inducted into the navy and after the stone frigate at Victoria Barracks had been drafted to *HMS Barbican*. He continues the story.

I'll tell you about my choice of bunk. Winter arrived, much colder than I had experienced before. The heaving lines were frozen in their coils, and it was my job, (as the bloke who almost sank the ship), to go on deck in the dark with a steam hose, to play it on the heaving lines and wire hawsers to defrost them and make them workable for when the ship sailed. As we worked office hours, 9 to 5 while it was daylight, the rest of the crew apart from me and the duty stoker whose job it was, believe it or not, to descend into the bowels of the ship with a quantity of wood and paper, to begin to fire up the boilers.

During these freezing cold nights, after good runs ashore, the sailors bladders would disturb them during the night. To reach the heads it was necessary to climb our ladder, open the hatch, find your way across the cable-strewn deck to the after deck, have your pee, and return.

This of course, was ridiculous. My porthole was the only one in our mess, and had to remain open whatever the weather. Blokes would simply pee in a milk bottle purloined for the purpose, fill it more or less to the top, and hurl it in the direction of the porthole. Another distraction, usually employed when we turned in to our bunks, and the warmth of our bodies brought the fleas from the interiors of our hard horsehair mattresses on to our bodies was as follows. The cry "Flea!" went up, and several perfectly heterosexual men would gather around a mostly naked man to capture the bugs from his body.

Usually the flea made it to the smooth metal deck, and was captured there. It was slowed down a bit by the application of judicious pressure to its body so that its legs still waved about, but it lost its power to jump. It was then put in a tobacco tin lid, a lighted candle was applied to it, and the flea would explode with a loud crack, to hoots all round. Another probably environmentally unfriendly game that occupied the trip from Rosyth under the railway bridge to the anti-submarine net (did I forget to say, that was the raison d'être of our being there), was to warm up the sea gulls, or" shite 'awks" by throwing them sandwiches made with bread (good) and the contents of signal flares (bad).

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The natural reaction of a gull with a belly full of the contents of a signal flare is to drink water. The point of the flare is to explode in a cloud of orange smoke. Eventually the gull explodes in a cloud of feathers. I think this kind of activity is carried on to 'de-sensitise fighting men'. There was a cold war on, and the Russians MIGHT have tried to get through our big net across the Firth.

I was warned of the dangers of 'standing in the bight' while the wire ropes were attached to the top of the nets and the hauling up took place. The bight was the loop of loose wire left on the deck as the slack of the length of wire was taken up. Another danger was the inadvisability of standing in a direct line between the point of attachment of the line to the net, and the winch on the ship.

The singing of the line as it came under strain should have been enough to frighten even a National Service O.D. (Ordinary Seaman) into self preservation, but to reinforce the warning the Chief described in detail the consequence in the event of the line coming adrift from the net, and a description of how far the wire whipping back would cut down into the superstructure should this happen.

In spite of my proven incompetence with drums and wires I was allowed to take part in the normal jobs of running the ship, I steered the ship once we were out into the Firth and heading down past Leith under the railway bridge towards the net.

The sea was rarely rough, and fogs also were unusual. The compass was magnetic, and as we passed under the huge metal bridge the compass needle spun on its mounting. As the winter grew colder on this eastern coast it became more and more awkward to handle comfortably the cold hawsers and the heavy shackles.

It was in the middle of the winter that I committed my next and last act of folly on *Barbican*. It was again my turn to prepare the food for the ship's company, I had become good with chips, which were often on the menu, but had somehow avoided the fish, that was frozen in its batter.

Having prepared the chips, cooked then in the hot oil in a huge pan on the gas stove, I drained them off and wrapped them in paper to keep warm in the hot cabinet, I took the pieces of frozen fish from the freezer, tested the temperature of the oil, and dropped all the fish pieces into the oil. With a great hiss the pieces of fish exploded into tiny pieces and the pieces dashed around on top of the oil as if they had come alive.

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I considered any alternatives there might be. Could I fish out all the bits, make some more batter, press the floating tiny pieces of fish and batter together in fish shapes, and try frying them again. I dismissed this idea. The crew were beginning to filter back aboard and would be hungry. Unusually, I considered that honesty would be the best policy, and took sufficient eggs from the store, and began to fry them. There was no published menu, and my confession could wait until the next day. I really don't remember the outcome, but I was still serving on *Barbican* later on when an invitation to volunteer for another ship appeared on the A.R, & Q.I. Notice board, (That's Admiralty Regulations and Queen's Instruction notice board).

The received wisdom was that if you dropped too many clangers on one ship the best thing to do was to join another, and with any luck, and the home port of the second ship being far enough away from the first ship, your reputation would stay with the first. And to be honest I had spent long enough at North Queensferry, I had hoped that my lack of experience with girls might diminish with some wild Scottish lassie, either at the dances at Dunfs (Dunfermline) or in the sexpot that was supposed to be Edinburgh.

Talk in the mess during the evenings when anyone was there and not just out 'filling their boots' was about nothing else than of tales of 'derring do'. There was a sailor's hostel in Prince's Street, in Edinburgh, opposite the Waverley Hotel, which facilitated a night ashore. Small beds along a dark corridor divided one from another by varnished plywood partitions constituted the accommodation.

My messmates came home from evenings in Edinburgh laden with gifts - chocolates, watches for example, given to them by grateful sexual partners. Terry told me, in his usual adult know it all way that the partners of these messmates were men, and that it wasn't considered homosexual if you were the donor and not the recipient.

I don't know that I fully understood what he meant at the time, but it dawned on me later. My curiosity and naivety led me to the incident of the 'bus conductress'. I went to the dance hall at Dunfs a few times just in case, but of course, came out empty handed. The most successful hunter in our group was a Killick, a leading hand, who would leap on to one of the tables when he had drunk enough courage, point to an area at the front of his trousers, and shout, "Who was the best bastard in here before I came in!", and glared round the hall.

I kept quiet, but I was always back on board before he was. Until one evening I began talking to a shy, quite plain young woman dressed in a bus clippie's uniform, a wallflower just as I was. Our speech was stilted, and not stimulating, but eventually I gathered that she

wouldn't mind if I saw her home. It turned out that there was a bus, and I would pay although she didn't. She lived at a place towards Kirkcaldy along the Firth called Burntisland. I had never heard of either but didn't let that discourage me.

I was dressed in my very un-tiddly 'sprogs' no.1 uniform, no top coat, and the weather was freezing. She knew the times of the buses, of course, and we caught the bus towards Kirkcaldy. I was feeling very good about this. We arrived at Burntisland, and the place was very grim.

Most towns were pretty grim in I956, but this place was very grim. I began to hope her house was warm at least.

We stopped at a small, two storied terrace house beside the main road. There wasn't a porch on the front door, and she didn't seem to have a key. The house seemed empty. We kissed, and held each other close, and it was good. And arousing. It went on for about half an hour, when a light came on in the upstairs front window, and a very loud, deep, Scottish voice shouted, in a very unfriendly way, "Maggie, come in her - NOW!" She said, "That's ma Dad, Cheerio", opened the door with her key, and disappeared in to the house. I walked disconsolately toward the sea and the road.

I wasn't aroused now, and I had a dilemma. I had to be back on board at by the latest 0830. There wasn't another bus to Rosyth that night, although there was one very early in the morning. It was dry, which was good, but the frost was incredible, which wasn't. There was absolutely no traffic on the road in either direction.

I sat on a low wall to think. Behind the wall dry leaves were heaped up to the top of the wall. It was a churchyard, and I thought that I was unlikely to be disturbed. I climbed over, and heaped dry leaves over me as deep as I could. I knew that hedgehogs hibernated in this way. My feet were cold, but otherwise I soon became warm enough to sleep. I guessed I would wake in time for the early bus, and in fact woke several times during the night, and in plenty of time for the bus. I managed to clear most of the crushed leaves and twigs from my clothes, and sat, shivering, at the bus stop until the bus arrived.

Arriving on board I crept past the sleeping night duty man on the bridge, and to my bunk in the mess unnoticed.

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The ship that was seeking volunteers was *HMS Superb*, a cruiser, that had spent her last few years on the West Indies Station, up and down the American coast, visiting towns on

that coast, and was famous for 'strangling grippos', and heat. I applied.

'Strangling grippos' was a term applied to sailors who took advantage of the generosity of ex-patriate families, or, sometimes more dubiously, single men, who offered hospitality to lonely sailors in return just for their company. There were tales of sailors marrying into these families, and gaining thereby. And it was very warm. And Terry Rossiter wasn't interested in going there because his time was nearly up, and the huge wages for doing very little at 'The Sunday Times' beckoned.

Terry, who was apparently very much in love, and was looking forward to marrying Jean as soon as he could, introduced me to a way of getting 'home' as much as we could. My wage was four shillings a day, Terry's a little more because of his seniority. We could arrange our shifts more or less as we pleased as long as it suited our opposite number's, (and Terry). Each alternate weekend I had saved enough money for a one way ticket back to the ship from London. We would arrange for a long weekend off, from Friday until late Monday. We had to hitch-hike down to London, and depending on how long the hitch took, could spend time with our loved ones.

I was still a virgin, but Terry wasn't, meaning that our rewards were different.
Fish lorries doing the regular run from Aberdeen down to London were potentially the best lifts, but were sporadic, and of differing quality. The best drivers invited you to share their cab, and didn't talk too much, the very worst one said I could sit on the tailboard, and hold on tight to the boxes rattling behind me. One dropped me off outside Catterick Camp, saying he wasn't going any further.

The fact that I was one matelot amongst three thousand weekending 'pongos' (soldiers) didn't help me to get another hitch. After a long walk I did find a sympathetic driver, but my weekend was down to a very few hours before I had to return. My ardour meant that I was often nearly late for the trains leaving from King's Cross Station back to the ship.

On one occasion as I ran for the already slowly moving train and my little 'Pussers' case containing my weekend necessities fell open as I was dragged into the train by the strong arm of a helpful soldier. My girl friend picked up the contents of my case, and I collected them in a fortnights time. I didn't consider asking my girlfriend what she thought about my decision to volunteer to go abroad for fifteen months, on a wonderful adventure. I thought she'd be pleased for me. Surprisingly quickly my draft came through to join my new ship.

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HMS Superb - Portsmouth

Escaping from heartbroken goodbyes, promises, and tears I arrived at Portsmouth to meet my new ship. And how magnificent she looked to me. One hundred and seventy metres long, with nine fifteen centimetre guns, ten centimetre guns, eight torpedo tubes, several smaller anti-aircraft guns and depth charges on the after deck. I made my way aboard, and was directed to the jaunties cabin, that's the Master at Arms, said to be the one not to upset on the ship. Or even his batman. "The hand that wakes the Jaunty rules the ship." All the buzzes, the rumours, right or wrong, came from him.

My mess was to be with the 'Topmen' near the bow of the ship, at the pointed end, with a mixed crew of coxswains, (of the Admiral Lord Cairns beautiful barge), and of the smaller boats which would be tied to the boom when we were in port. Able Seaman Tonics, a Cornishman, was a coxswain. More of him later.

Being all men in one small place, of course there was the pecking order ritual to get over. I didn't jump on the mess table and ask who was best before I arrived. It was quite obvious that my presence was barely noticed by the more senior hands 'National Service OD', bottom of the pile.

What made things a little more difficult was the fact that the rest of the crew had been together since the beginning of the cruise at Chatham. I joined a mess that had shaken down before I joined at Pompey. I knew enough to keep my head down, and not try to impress anybody with big words or quotations. I chose an accent that would make me sound acceptable.

I was allocated a place to sling my hammock right above the hammock store, a curved fronted rack in a corner of the mess, so that if I turned in before any of the rest I could look forward to some kind of attention by blokes, often 'merry', giving me some sort of hearty physical greeting when they returned from a run ashore, or an antisocial watch time, with a blow or a push as they hauled their rolled up hammock from the store. Just one of the mess thought it was his job to sort me out.

He was a signalman, and had done boy's service since the age of sixteen. As 'top boy' during his training he had the privilege of standing on the tiny button, no hands, at the top of the high flag mast at his barracks. At no time did I try to match or challenge his version of this story, but he still seemed determined to show me how much better than me he thought he was.

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He continued to bully me for some time, until at last we finished locked in a fierce fight

under the mess table. I made enough of an impression on him to ensure that he didn't bother me again.

I worked 'part of ship' during the rest of the 'at sea' training, which meant painting, polishing, washing and oiling appropriate places at the front end and the sides of the ship. I grew to love the ship, and most of the fairly mundane tasks. The most challenging task was that of painting the sides of the bow, under and over the huge anchors. A 'bosun's chair', a short board with holes at each end, was hung from the guard rails that went all round the ship's upper deck.

(EDITOR'S NOTE - Peter's memoirs end here; maybe he was going to add some more but unfortunately he never got around to it. Thanks go to Peter's son Steven who kindly sent in his father's work.)

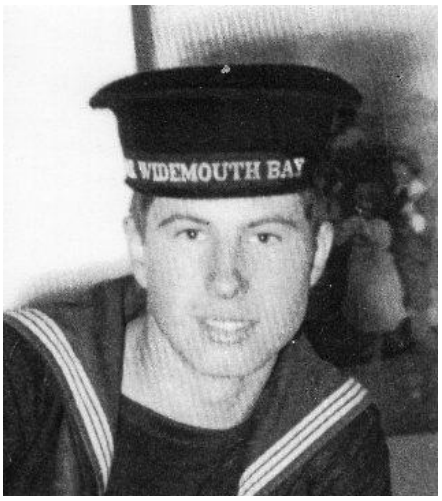
REUNION REMINDER

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

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

PRICES AND APPLICATION FORM AVAILABLE CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD

Malcolm Milham – 1965



Joined Royal Navy, 10th July 1951, trained at *HMS Ganges*, aged 15 and 4 months. 1st Foreign, America and West Indies, including run in with Argies in the Falklands, Feb 1953, then Attempted Coup, British Guiana. At Coronation Fleet Review at Spithead on Cruiser *HMS Superb*. 1956 EOKA Cyprus and then Suez Landings and assault. Last ship was HMS Victorious, where I was an Assistant Intercept Officer (Fighter Controller), using first ever 3D Radar. Left RN on 11th November 1959.

Joined Territorial Army 5th Bn BUFFS, December 1959 (Needed the cash), became Corporal Signals Platoon. Called up Easter 1965 for 6 months service with 1 Royal Sussex in Aden. Posted to Canterbury Depot 24th May 65.

Flew from Gatwick 28th May. Aircraft went U/S at Istanbul, arrived 0500/29 in Aden.

Moved into 3 Platoon, A Company, 1 Royal Sussex at Radfan Camp, lovely air conditioned tent, took the walls down and let the sand through.

blow

L/Cpl Pete Bunch with his concrete gang. Radfan Camp Aden 1965

They were still building the camp, so L/Cpl Pete Bunch took the concrete gang under his wing, helped them improve their methods. A lot of us had Union Cards from our Civvy jobs, this helped us get on with the labourers and also get faults put right especially the Electricity, we were always priority (unofficially).

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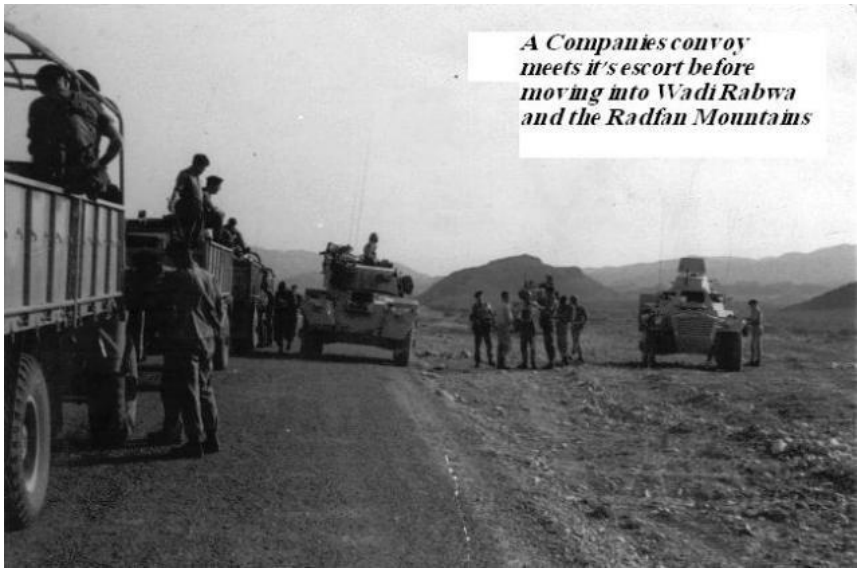
3 days training, 4 days IS Patrols, notified moving to Radfan, 3 days extra training, 10 days after arrival on a truck in the up country convoy.

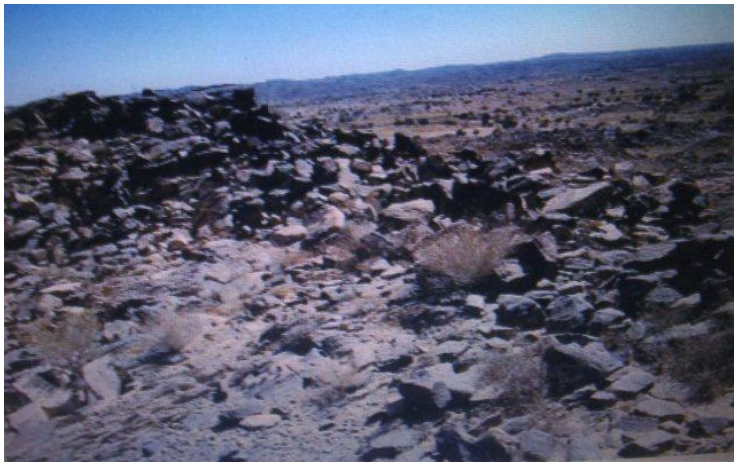

A Companies convoy meets it's escort before moving into Wadi Rabwa and the Radfan Mountains

This is PB Piccadilly, Call Sign H10, Many units only knew it by its C/S. This is where you eat, slept and patrolled from, nothing else.

There were no lights, only two red torches inside the Command tent and these were inside the second tent built inside and under blankets. Nobody smoked after 1800hrs, no radios, water was heavily rationed, NO BEER, no NAAFI. You kept movement to a minimum and talked in whispers. We had a 'Terp' with us who we watched like a hawk at evening meal times, if he sat up in the open to eat his meal, OK, if he sat down by the defensive wall, so did you, he had been talking to the locals during the day on a Standing Patrol. Another thing, you made sure you had done your business by about 1700hrs, the bog was some 60 yards outside the wall and you did not want to be a sitting target.

3, Platoons Patrol Base. Piccadilly, Aden 1965. Above junction of Wadi Rabwa and Wadi Taym, Radfan Mts

We arrived at the PB about midday on 8th or 9th June 65, to our front was Jebel Meyen at the other side of Wadi Taym, about 2/3 mile away and to our front, was the village of Shaib Tem, the SAS had problems with them, to our left which was east of us was the village of Al Naqil, this had been the scene of a long firefight 13 months before at the time of the SAS having their problems. Both villages were still occupied. The Danaba Basin was a no go area to the locals as was Rabwa Pass, directly beneath us.



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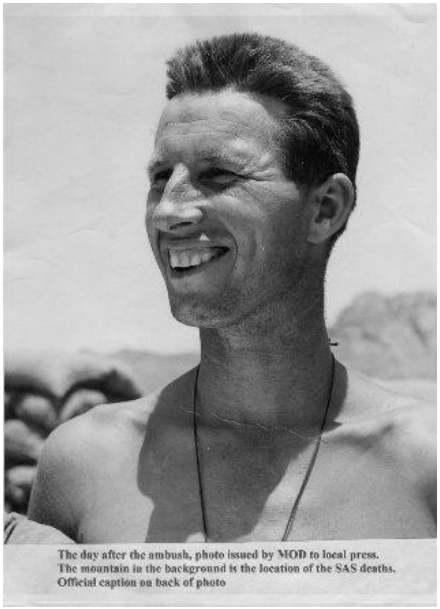
This photo is of the Danaba Basin, to the rear of our PB, this is the area off limits to the locals and rebels, it was possible to grow crops here and had been a rebel stronghold.

Section Commander in 3 Platoon saw quite a bit of action mainly up country firstly in the Radfan with 45 Commando, then Mukerias on the Yemen Border.


The day after the ambush, photo issued by MOD to local press.
The mountain in the background is the location of the SAS deaths.
Official caption on back of photo

Involved in Ambush as 2i/c in Radfan, killed a group of rebels,6th July 65, officer awarded MC. Many a fire fight in this area as they tried to drive us out of our Patrol Base. 1st July 1965 hit by Friendly Fire, lucky, lucky, lucky, 105 shell hit our Heli Pad, but we all managed to take cover.

ADN 65/337/4

One of the most successful ambushes the 1st Battalion The Royal Sussex Regiment set and sprung against dissidents in the South Arabian Radfan mountains resulted recently in the death of at least four tribal dissidents, several wounded and the capture of a rifle, grenade and ammunition.

Twenty-nine year old Corporal Malcolm Milham whose wife, Doreen, lives at [redacted], Ramsgate, Kent, was one of the NCO's who took part in the ambush. A Territorial Army 'Ever Ready' serving with the 5th Buffs attached to the Royal Sussex Regiment, Cpl Milham is seen here in his sand-bagged picquet post high in the Radfan mountains.

We had our first major firefight that evening at about 1745; we finished it off by using a Mobat HESH shell and calling in the 105 pack howitzers from our rear unit. There were several sniping attacks, then an attempt to get into us on 3rd July, which we beat off. Our blue on blue was on the afternoon of 1st July when doing a DF Shoot.

Lt Jock Smith MC with the Killer Group of the Ambush Patrol Mustang after 7th July 1965. Photo IWM

Cpl Milham with Cover Group from Ambush Patrol. Mustang from group is Pte Sullis as wounded during fire fight at ambush. Photo IWM

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They made another attempt to get into us on the night of 6th July, but we were waiting for them on the track they had been using, one of my guys Pte Sullivan got hit in the arm with two entry and exit wounds.

FRONT PAGE HEADLINE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST COMMAND NEWSPAPER 'THE DHOW' 15TH JULY 1965

Thumbs Up For The Royal Sussex!

FOUR DISSIDENTS KILLED IN AMBUSH IN THE RADFAN

THE TWO WOUNDED ADHOC BOTH DIED, MAKING IT 6 KILLED.

FOUR dissidents were killed, another two seriously wounded, and a quantity of arms and ammunition captured in a successful ambush by a patrol of the 1st Battalion, the Royal Sussex Regiment.

The clash took place last week, in a wadi north of Habilayn, in the Radfan.

There was only one British casualty. Private Terry Sullivan of the Territorial Army Emergency Reserve was wounded in the arm.

He was flown to the RAF Hospital Khormaksar Beach, where he is making an excellent recovery from his injury.

Pte. Sullivan, aged 21, told The Dhow about the action.

"There was good visibility from the moon when we set the ambush," he said.

"When we sprung the trap, I could see nine or ten dissidents milling around in confusion before they could place our positions and return our fire with any accuracy.

"I saw one of them — he must have been carrying a mine — explode in a flash."

Terry came to Aden two months ago with the party of "Ever Readies" called up to reinforce Army units in the Middle East.

On his arrival here, he joined the 1st Battalion, the Royal Sussex Regiment.

Wounded but still cheerful, "Ever Ready" Terry Sullivan.

Left Aden 3rd November 65. TA Unit disbanded March 1969.

Joined Kent Army Cadets 1981, became Training Officer 11 units in East Kent Area, Commissioned.

Then County D of E Officer, Coach for County Shooting Team and Cadet Skills Competition. Retired at age 65 April 2001.

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WOMEN IN THE ROYAL NAVY

Joan Burns

Joan Burns was a WRNS despatch rider in the Second World War. Despatch riders had the important task of delivering urgent orders and messages between headquarters and units. The women had not only to be able to ride but to be able to maintain their own bikes. They often worked long hours through adverse weather conditions.

Joan made her first uniform by dyeing her jodhpurs navy blue and blacking her riding boots.

During the war she was fined 10s by the Swansea justices for speeding on her way to work. She was caught going at 53mph at 8.30am on the Mumbles Road.

Her other duties during her career included taking orders out to the D-Day invasion fleet in her launch. She was de-mobbed as Second Officer Joan W M Burns in 1945.

After the war, she told her family that she was very proud of her second stripe, but she didn't know what she had done to deserve it.

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She clearly drew the attention of the locals, as she received many letters from admirers:

Letter 25th March:
'Honoured Miss,
Hoping you will excuse the liberty of me addressing you, but I writes to say as me and my mates was real sorry to see you in trouble with the Perlice on the Mumbles Road this a.m. when we was passing, they r a nasty interpreting lot down by hear. Me and my mates as often admired you from afar, hoping to come closer same day as the saying is, and we wants to say that you ever done it and if the word of the good men will help you its yours we couldn't do less for a young lady with such fine legs excusing the liberty and out in all wethers to, doing her bit for the Old Country all the chaps admires you for it.'

A Christmas card:
'From a chap who cannot forget the young lady who rode around Swansea, always smiling and with always a cheery word for everyone.'

This article was found on the National Museum of the Royal Navy website

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PHOTO ALBUM

Andy Brierley 1954 Cruise

Bill Cook 1956 Cruise

Jim Copus, Pete Tasker & Andy Brierley

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Alongside in Bermuda - Photo supplied by Tony Hackett

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)

Ted Davy (lived in Canada) who was a Torpedoman on board between 1945 & 1947 & died on 26 November, 2017

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PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE

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

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) - Nick **Crump** (USN 1954 - USA) - 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) - Norman **Webber** (1956) - 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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OR EMAIL HIM AT robinsmith173@yahoo.co.uk

An **Application Form** can be downloaded HERE

Our Chairman

ARCHIVED CONTENT

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

2017 EDITIONS

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February, 2018

March, 2018

April, 2018

May, 2018

June, 2018

THIS IS

REALLY

THE END