



ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

Seeing those portly veterans gather aboard Fred Olsen's Cruise Liner, Boudicca, to visit 'the beach' in Normandy was sobering. They had survived that ghastly melee and, I suspect, like all old soldiers, most will have faded away by the next anniversary. A double take is



required when you learn of French civilian plight; 15,000 died and 100,000 injured. A further 20,000 died during Normandy fighting between 6th June and mid-August. Caen bombed to powder when Montgomery failed, big time, to meet his own time forecast. With such carnage I'm forced to wonder what was worth celebrating by those coastal dwellers. The region's rebuild dragged on for 20 years or more.

All brought about by a solitary politician who, reportedly, possessed only one bullock! I've told you, in the past, those politicians are odd coves.

In the past I have moaned about sub-standard (to me) 'portrait sculpture' produced in the U.K. since WW2. With ease I could drive you, in a few minutes, to three half-size examples, a total let down of the subjects. Artists' impressions of proposed commonwealth memorial to be built near 'Overlord Beach', with a 'larger than life' group looks like a tour de force. I would love to see it completed; donations keep rolling in, so feel it won't drag on for long.



Orde Charles Wingate DSO

How does one explain the lack of a memorial of any sort/kind to the 'forgotten 14th army' on their 75th anniversary of what the National Army Museum in Chelsea, rated, in 2013, Britain's Greatest Battle - that for Kohima and Imphal. It is ranked above such as Waterloo, Alamein, 'D' Day even. 80,000 Japanese crossed the Chindwin, forced the allies to retreat nearly 1000 miles before the stand at those locations, the gateway to India. Nepalese plus African regiments took part, the latter hardly known about. Following fierce attacks every night for 2½ months, the Japanese General ordered 'the only retreat in Japanese

military history'; death toll for the allies 16,000 - for the Jap invader 30,000.

I am 'surprised' to learn a monument on the famous Red Hill is due construction, following detail planning of scheme originating, and will be completely funded, by Japan. They record it as their hardest land battle of WW2 - anywhere!

The Chindits of Orde Wingate's command were the glaring example of that time on how to take fight to an enemy, killed in a plane crash, hated by the blimps of Whitehall as much for success, as being a junior. I feel Wingate has direct relevance in today's endless mid-east mess of war that drags on without resolution; a guerrilla campaign of the west's choosing. If the Iranians have two dozen plastic 6-man skiffs, with a ton of explosive in their bows, roaming the Hormuz Straits, to kill our mega vessels costing billions, it's time we fought 'like with like'. A much expanded S.B.S. is an excellent start point; highly trained, they have 'murderous intent' each morning on toast, are ever hot to trot.

Ukraine to Myanmar, open war with its 'set piece', battles are now avoided as national policy. Mega ships have evolved into a monstrous liability, not only because they drain national coffers, but who wants to risk one against this generation of hypersonic rockets on a remote colonised island. The Admirals hate sparky two-ring Captains on small vessels with freedom of action - here and now.

Junior Officer Wingate and his 'brown jobs' with their Dakotas keep the 'ball of opportunity' rolling and dealt a shock reversal to the sons of the 'Carnation Kingdom'. TV news showed Olsen's *Boudicca* slip Portsmouth, passing, tied up just below the old signal tower, the R.N's latest Super Carrier - sans catapults- arrestor wires - barriers - landing sight, or 'heavier than air' machines, each of which will cost \$42.200 per flying hour, double that of an F16. The plan fit of F35s are beaten most of the time in exercises against F16s

Test pilots report F35 is substantially inferior to 40 year old F15s in exercise battles. Reported as the most expensive weapon system in history, at \$1.5 trillion and running, exceeding the G.D.P. of its main opponent Russia.

The U.K. has \$2.5 billion invested in its development, but it's only money - yours - ha-ha!

Super Hornets, the war load of current U.S. Super Carriers can be got for a sheet of 'green shield stamps'. In comparison they outperform any opposition you can think up. I'd better apologise to those minus any interest in aircraft, or cash.

Appalling performance by our 'procurement agency' defies description, and I ever ponder how they get away with it; whilst in corridors of power they drone on about vital transgender questions before foisting it upon junior school pupils.

Back to *Boudicca*, whose guise once was Beagle Class destroyer, laid down in 1930, commissioned in my Y.O.B. 1931. A tradition-style greyhound of the seas, served the Empire long and hard until 13th June 1945. On a resupply convoy to the Normandy beach head she was caught 12 miles off Portland Bill by torpedo bombers and cut in two. Recently discovered at 60 meters divers brought up her

bell, now in the diving shop in Portland marina. To me the 6th of June is also Peter Tasker's birthday; I think he would be 90.



Another old comrade, our late chairman and instigator of Superb Association, the late Fred Kinsey, on about three occasions, to my knowledge, made a plea for the organisation that wished to preserve a 'tank landing craft'. Response was lukewarm, to say the least. Of the few examples remaining from those countless hundreds, none could be acquired.

I would love, in the fantasy world, to be able to get Fred on the phone and say, 'What do you think about this apple?'

D-DAY CRAFT'S FUTURE HOME

Here is a first look at an historic war vessel's proposed new home, on the seafront at Portsmouth on the south coast of England. For it has been revealed that plans to permanently display a 200-foot-long D-Day Landing Craft Tank (LCT) on Southsea Beach are secure. The National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) bid to conserve and move LCT 7074 has been backed by a £4.7 million National Lottery grant, awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). LCT 7074 is the sole surviving vessel of her type that took part in the June, 1944 D-Day invasion. Just short of a million pounds from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) previously enabled the NMRN to rescue LCT 7074 from East Float Dock, Birkenhead where she had actually sunk following a chequered post-war career **involving conversion to a floating nightclub**. Successfully moved back to Portsmouth, LCT 7074 will take pride of place outside the "D-Day Story" attraction and be open to visitors from 2020



How do

you make an

old L.S.T. into a night club? In Birkenhead perhaps you supplied your own hand grenades.

I wish you all an easy, relaxed summer and remember not to sweat the small stuff.

Tatty bye the noo,

