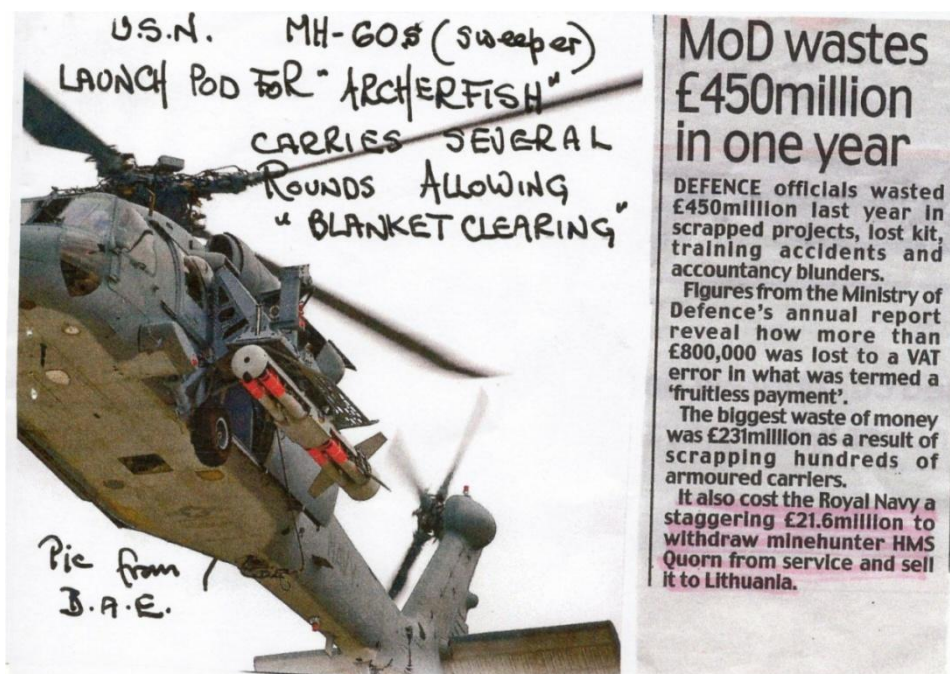


Hello Shipmates,

A couple of months ago in a ramble about 'ground mine hunting', I had opined that things are very often different today. Archerfish, one shot to kill a mine had been in R.N. Service and constant development for about twenty years; B.A. Stevenage, I understand, was its birthplace. This remotely operated device has a laudable property of needing no one in the water. It can be launched at speed from helicopters or ships. High resolution, low light video is received via fibre optic data link. A quick and easy analysis of the target thus makes its elimination virtually instant. The up-side does not stop there, the U.S. Navy had been an Archerfish operator nearly as long as the R.N.; absolute satisfaction reinforced by a new £87 million order to take operational use to 2027. They claim it capable of resisting all anti-mining methods currently known.

I was prompted to write this by a TV news clip of a MH 60 helicopter launching torpedoes from high above 300 ft. A 'shock-resistance programme' plus re-design of the tail section means a torpedo plane no longer has to fly that ghastly suicide profile of 40 odd feet, straight and level.. The film clip was distant but items dropped looked like Archerfish rounds to me - hurrah

for the geeks at Stevenage.



Meanwhile, back at M.O.D., another foul up by their bean counters (clipping attached). At any stretch of the imagination how does one lose £21.6 million selling a redundant mine hunter to Lithuania? Funny how all nation's finest projects are all 'private ventures'; Sea Harriers a favourite of mine!

At long last a new law is to be passed stopping Russia and China preying on our high tech firms; buyouts by devious means! We could not go far wrong if the French way was studied, their intellectual property stays in France by government decree.

A picture of the two Japanese helicopter carriers (whose design twangs my G-string) called by J.S.D.F. 'Helicopter destroyers'. How was that title arrived at? Must be reading the same M.O.D. book our peers were looking at when our next to last pair of carriers was called 'Through deck cruisers'. I once read it was to fool treasury officials about their true purpose. What calibre of official are they for Christ's sake? A junior at ballet school would have wised them up

to it 'flat top', no invention to call them 'just flat'. Back to Japan anxious to convert both for operation of F35's; I conclude they are in cahoots with South Korea currently embarked on a similar exercise with their helicopter landing ship.

Meanwhile, down a bit in Australia, their pair of helicopter landing ships, recently bought from Spain, are earmarked for similar treatment.

Suddenly there is going to be a real number of fifth generation Jump Jets in the twitchy southern seas. More of the smaller nations could follow suit being bullied by China. However its sliced Lockheed will revel in a sales boom. Then bear in mind the U.K. is their 1st tier partner. Fallout from that should be substantial for us.

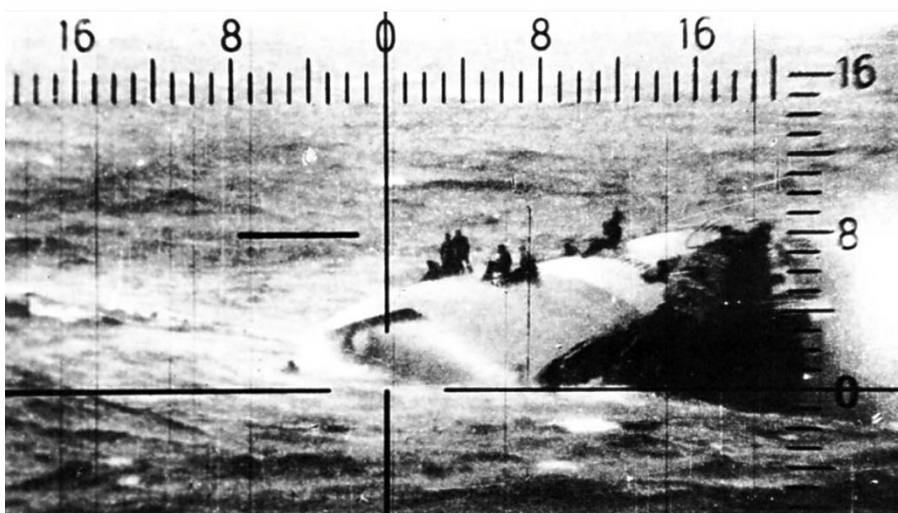
A fleeting earful while swapping TV channels, the London Blitz was evidently the subject and I had missed what was considered one of the war's best photographs; I've no idea what it was but certainly thought provoking in the grand manner.

I am a 'picture person' not a 'photographer' since my young brother sold me his camera, terms of 1/- per week, I have rarely been without one close at hand, a snapper of all and everything that tickles my fancy.

On Superb I had a memorable one of a Canadian destroyer on basin 2 Bermuda dockyard ramming the wall of the basin 1" at near 90°, stern on to us, tied up on the opposite wall. A spurt of black smoke shot out of the funnel, stokers below must have had a 'What the hell was that' moment.

The memory makes me wonder if he was allowed to take it back to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and what happened to his career; bow crumpled back to A-gun, it must have cleared those fell in to 'leave harbour' in Olympic time; what was his name? In his old age does the memory ever give

him a chuckle thinking 'Gee! I got that wrong'.



Memorable and moving to me is not a single picture but a series of six or eight taken through a gun sight on Kriegsmarine cruiser *Hipper*. H.M.S. *Glowworm* H92, built in 1935, was on its own when they met in northern North Sea. To try and avoid a battering,

Captain Lieutenant Commander Roope made smoke to set up a torpedo attack. No match for the

cruiser's guns he rammed *Hipper* causing severe damage, no match for the cruiser's guns she rolled away with the deck about 45°, one can make out the torpedo mount crew still attempting to get one away. One picture has *Glowworm* up-side-down spewing furnace oil, about a dozen bodies clinging on.

Another, a Carley float in an absolute sea of that furnace oil full of the stuff with about eight occupants.

Captain Roope had most certainly been a Middie at Dartmouth when it taught Naval History (no longer does I believe). He adhered to Nelson's advice - 'Engage the enemy more closely'. One officer and thirty-seven men rescued. Captain Roope, being hauled to safety covered in heavy furnace oil, slipped back exhausted and drowned.



I feel the young Canadian Captain may have been in a like mould; it would be nice to know his élan - and spirit - to show Admiral South Atlantic some slick ship handling was not entirely nipped in the bud, we all get off with two monumental gaffes before maturity.

Fare thee all well, be sensible.