

ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

'Tis May----- one hopes negotiations could be commenced in a mannerly, gentlemanly fashion, to our mutual benefit. To quote the bard; "parting could be such sweet sorrow".

Alas, our N.A.T.O. ally, Spain, made it a platform for a vicious diplomatic attack on Gibraltar, which they desire to occupy, despite residents aversion to such an event.



They violated Gib's territorial waters with a fully armed frigate. In its wake was the 'duty R.N. Guard ship', a plastic boat the size of a family cruiser on the Norfolk Broads.

It was finished in a fetching coat of Pussers light grey and 'allegedly' there was a rifle calibre fire arm in a locker down below: Sum total of the R.N. - U.K. muscle on site! Their desire to humiliate was total and absolute, brought upon us by our peers at Westminster i.e. our own fault.



To be a N.A.T.O member requires all to spend 2% of G.D.P. on its armed forces. Spain is not one of them but I would caution us not to fall out with them at sea. The core of their fleet is an aircraft carrier with 'Harrier' strike squadrons; the aircraft are known in Spain by the name 'Matador'. Their other carrier is also state of the art, as evinced by Australia's recent purchase of two copies.

In the N.A.T.O. alliance one cannot be surprised, President Trump has had a gut full. He goes to the good old U.S. tax payer to make up the short fall, despite picking up 75% of the standing bill. E.U. non-payers see no reason to 'hang their heads in shame'!!.

A couple of days following the frigate picture in the Daily Mail, another with 'Iberian flavour' equally as large, showed a Matador (genuine article, not the aircraft) impaled by the neck on the horn of a bull in a public arena of fare paying patrons baying for blood - a horrid spectacle.

One was meant to feel for the bull fighter. Visible was the bull's shoulder muscles with half a dozen barbed lances rammed in, blood flowing down his flanks; these are placed by another gold braid-suited hero on a padded horse. The beast has no desire to maim, only munch grass and

procreate. Instead he was being goaded, tortured to death by a team of brutal, medieval 'sportsmen'??

On this obscene spectacle I judge our N.A.T.O. ally Spain. Need I stress my total sympathy lays squarely with the poor bloody bull?

Spain's courage to 'strut its stuff' in the aforementioned manner is aided and abetted by M.O.D. - R.N.'s plan to cut another large chunk from '3 Brigade Royal Marines'. Our, about to be delivered, so called 'Super Carrier' was re-designed mid-build (a usual M.O.D. practise) to accommodate 900 Royal Marines.

If names, words or titles mean anything, this vessel is an 'Assault Carrier'. At once you realize, if the M.O.D. bullshits itself U.K. Inc. is beyond hope. I am not computer conversant, but much aware of their magic ability. I wager if you tap in 'America Class Assault Carrier' you will be blown away by the specs., ability, crew size and, above all, the cost of this class. The £6.2 BILLION spent on our super carriers would purchase four 'Americas' in about 5 of the 25 years taken to produce our unmanageable 'white elephants' --- No, I correct that slur on the noble elephant - 'the ROSYTH wind breaks'.

I was prompted to look up the Byng family. George Byng was an Admiral of the Fleet, 1663 - 1733 and Viscount Torrington. He took part in the capture of Gibraltar in 1704. In 1718 decisively defeated a Spanish fleet off Cape Passero, Sicily. A poignant reminder of his son, John Byng, appeared in the 'In Memoriam' column of the Telegraph on the 14th March. He also became an Admiral, without doubt aided by the influence of his famous father.

He was in charge of a small fleet to bring support to British forces in Minorca. His 500 marines were no match for the 5000 French and unable to break the siege, so failed. For this he was Court Marshalled on a spurious charge of 'Failing to do his utmost'. He fell a martyr to 'Political Persecution' in 1757 when bravery and loyalty were insufficient security for for his life and honour.

A 'political scapegoat' was required so he was publically shot by firing squad on the quarter deck of H.M.S. Monarch on March 14th 1757. If you have read *Candide* by Voltaire, the remark 'Pour Encourager Les Autres' will be familiar - he was referring to John Byng's unjust disgrace by his 'chair-borne peers' at Admiralty. 14th March is also the date H.M submarine Thunderbolt went missing off Sicily with her 39 crew. Capt. Lesley Hussey YEO D.S.M..

I had sent my reference book on the T's to shipmate Turner so am unable to verify a thought that it was the ex. *Thetis* when salvaged a few years earlier, and renamed. I bet a Google expert would know in a trice! So that boat claimed two crews in its lifetime.

Two men, were in adjacent seats on an aircraft, one wore a dog collar and other man remarked on the fact. He was then asked, in turn, what his job was. I am a Rabbi he answered. Following a short pause the Holy Father asked, 'Is it still a rule in your religion, that pork is strictly forbidden as a food?'. 'Yes' said the Rabbi 'a hard and fast rule'. Another short pause and Holy Father said 'Have you ever succumbed to the delicious smell, and the desire to partake of a

slice?'. 'Yes' said the Rabbi 'to my eternal shame it did once happen to me' Short silence then Rabbi says to the Father 'Does your religion still practise absolute celibacy, as in the old days?' 'Yes' said the Holy Father 'it is our strictest rule, even to this day'. Silence for a while then Rabbi asks 'Did you ever succumb, falling to the temptations of the flesh and have carnal knowledge of a maiden?'. Holy Father blushes scarlet and confesses that once it did occur and he had been doing penance ever since. Long pause of thoughtful silence is broken by Rabbi who says, 'Sure beats a ham sandwich don't it?' (**typist's comment; the old ones are the best!!**).

Another selection from my rambling thought processes, I put it all down to a lack of Brussels Sprouts!!!!

Tatty bye from him,

