H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

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CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION, ROBIN SMITH

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ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

The saying; 'If you have to eat crow – take it while it's hot'; today, fits me well.

First female Secretary of State for Defence, Penny Mordaunt, was accused, by me, of 'nil military experience', no knowledge of ship building and repeating only her civil servants' words. The latter may be correct, the former questionable. Her C.V. made available in scramble for posts in the new cabinet, should Blond Boris become the new P.M. The honourable lady joined 'naval reserve' on leaving university, resigned when standing for a Member of Parliament, in Parliament; at that time a sub-lieutenant. When chosen as a cabinet minister our gracious queen granted promotion to Commander. The honourable lady's common use Christian name – Penny – is an abbreviation of Penelope, being named after the last cruiser of that name. Her C.V. does not read like the usual political hack. What makes me feel I would tug my forelock (if I had one) to this lady, at this time, is her determination to stop the spectre of 'repeated spurious investigations by 'dishonest lawyers' with no evidence, that nets them thousands of pounds from the legal aid trough when in pursuit of ancient service men on 'their assigned duty'. – Foul, premeditated murders excepted. That the law follows 'average homo sapien conduct' with its percentage of 'crooks and rotten apples' is not news in itself.

Today we learn President Trump is in deep trouble at home for declaration, 'The U.S. military will be getting out of Afghanistan'. His view is not new; five years before being elected he declared 'Afghanistan is a complete waste'

We Brits were being ambushed and killed by the same local lads in the 1800's. Achievements – nil. The count after our latest adventure in that (literally) God forsaken place is 460 Tommies home in body bags. The United States has been there 18 years – their longest ever war – at last count 2,372 doughboys went home in similar manner, plus financial cost, to date, $1 trillion; what could that have done at home? U.N.O. says 32,000 civilians have perished in that ghastly conflict.

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OOPS! Iran caught the R.N. with its breeks round its ankles once again. We, obviously, did not learn one jot from the previous humiliating incident when they captured our pinnace, imprisoned the crew plus a number of unarmed marines. Their man-o-war, another plastic skiff with outboard hung on the transom. A cheap 'end of life' merchantman as 'mother vessel' with a couple of dozen such boats of our own, plus a 50 calibre in the bow would, if manned by trained assassins, (42 commando) be a suitable weighted counter balance. Recall historically those intrepid Italian frogmen based on such a vessel in 'Algeciras' (that place opposite) across the straits in WW2, created absolute mayhem in Gibraltar, then moved up the pond to sink our battleships in Alexandria dockyard. Joined by the other interested party, U.S.A. with similar set up. If saturation is the Iranian guard tactic we have the collective capacity to swamp the Hormuz Strait, plus not getting involved in a major shooting war. (Rule one) do not consult the BBC press hacks, 'plausible deniability' is the name of the game these days; I cite Ukraine, Crimea, islands in the China Sea, even Russian Georgia.

Headless chickens on the commodity floor, as seen on TV, will be 'jacking up fuel prices' give above as reason? We know Russia's massive military expansion is based solely on oil, it has to sell it or they die on their feet. Biggest customer, Angela Merkel, has Germany in thrall to Comrade Putin. Total dependence to keep her lights on, having divested herself of all power-plants, fossil or nuclear. Here we sit in the United Kingdom on a veritable cornucopia – bonanza of natural gas. Technology for safe, clean extraction, with small unobtrusive foot print has been honed by U.S. practitioners.

Dependency on the mid-east in Obama's time, which he confesses gave him sleepless nights, has enjoyed a staggering about turn. In 5 short years the U.S.A. has become a major exporter of energy. Meanwhile, back here in this Sceptered Isle, a mob of Greens (for want of a better term) have us purchasing, by the hundreds of thousands of tons, biomass pelleted wood cut from the forests of Georgia, Alabama, Carolina, then sent here by rail and sea on fossil fuel burners. Up north, Drax power station no longer relies on coal, the mountains of fuel you see were green cover, oxygen generators in the above States of the U.S.A. last month.

Mention of last month here at home, we were threatened – 'Cease using your domestic log burner in the lounge or we all expire by spring '20' All quite like government exhortations 2 years ago to only purchase diesel motor cars and save the planet; now they bend over backwards to penalise you for following their lead. We joke and say, none of that seems like rocket science, well, I ask you to think on this. We, the U.K., have 20 redundant nuclear subs in various ports awaiting scrapping. Their hulls are 'Time Expired', no longer fit for the purpose of 'deep aggressive operations' against the common enemy. But! The reactors can still churn out vast amounts of emission free electricity. We have, in place, the infrastructure for fuelling them, lasting 20 years per fill up. Moored up, hooked up into the vast growing network of cables attached to wind turbine farms out in estuaries, their cooling requirements on tap and free and gratis, the distribution network in situ already seems manna from heaven. Chinese, Japanese, E.D.F. France could be told to up stakes and sling their hooks for holding the U.K. to ransom with their mega schemes that look increasingly unattainable whilst gobbling shed-loads of cash.

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Ah! You will say, when writing back with verbal lashing 'It ain't that easy'! J.F.K. used similar words when committing his nation to visit the moon, and then added, 'We have the will and the people'. How exciting it was when they did it (in 8 years). Back at the ranch London's much trumpeted Cross Rail still blunders on (twelve years) later, grossly over time and budget, a norm for the U.K. civil engineering projects, hogtied by health and safety executive and unions who owe no allegiance to Great Britain Inc.

Enough to make one weep into his milky coffee – sorry – Barista created Cappuccino, over-priced and no tax paid (in U.K.)

P.S. Late news, Minister Mordaunt has been 'let go'; will anyone last long enough to purchase two dozen plastic speed boats in an attractive camo khaki scheme for '42 commando'? When your face goes blue, hold your breath no longer.

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The iron ship **'Leyland Brothers'**, 2291 tons, is the subject of **Brian Turner's,** our in-house artist, latest oil painting up for raffle this year at the reunion. Built 1886 by Oswald Mordaunt and Co. of Southampton the ship was registered at Liverpool in 1912.

Those regular attendees at the reunion will know there is always a keen wish to possess one of Brian's paintings and some have been more fortunate than others. Let's leave it at that!

Considering the estimated value of Brian's art these paintings are worth several hundred pounds in the open market and it's thanks to Brian's generosity the Association's funds should swell considerably once again.

NAVY MATTERS

NAVY 'WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP OUT EU FISHERMEN IF THERE'S NO DEAL'

By DANIEL MARTIN POLICY EDITOR FOR THE DAILY MAIL

Navy 'won't be able to keep out EU fishermen if there's No Deal' due to a shortage of ships, warns leaked report. Britain might be unable to stop fishermen from the EU entering British waters after a No Deal Brexit.

An email mistakenly sent by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs shows the **ROYAL NAVY HAS JUST 12 VESSELS TO MONITOR OUR TERRITORIAL WATERS.** It reveals there is a 'lot of uncertainty' at the heart of government over how effectively Britain will be able to police its waters if we leave without an agreement

The information was released in error by Defra after a journalist asked about the No Deal readiness for the fishing industry. It admits there is a risk of 'reputational damage' to Defra.

The email reads: 'We expect the journalist to take a largely critical tone for his piece, and to paint the picture of the UK not being in a strong position to sufficiently enforce our waters if we do leave the EU without a deal.

'While our public position on this wider issue is already clear, in that post-Brexit we will be an independent coastal state with control of our waters, both policy and the Ministry of Defence have indicated we are not on an overly strong footing.

'At this stage, there is a lot of uncertainty about the sufficiency of enforcement in a No Deal because we have 12 vessels that need to monitor a space three times the size of the surface area of the UK.

'While the number of vessels is an MoD area, the knock-on impact of this could have reputational damage for Defra and our ability to protect fisheries so we need to provide a strong line to rebut this.'

Last month France's agriculture minister Didier Guillaume warned Britain about trying to stop French fishermen entering its waters if there is No Deal. He said: 'I will keep telling Britain our fishermen must be allowed to keep fishing in its waters.'

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NO MORE BREAD-AND-WATER PUNISHMENT

Two weeks after he took over as commander of the *USS Shiloh* in June 2015, US Navy captain Adam M. Aycock punished a sailor for breaking curfew with an arcane sentence: three days in the brig while subsisting on nothing but bread and water.

Aycock would go on to use that punishment so frequently that his ship was nicknamed the USS Bread and Water. Sailors feared Aycock's wrath, which could be incurred by the slightest of infractions, according to a ship survey taken during Aycock's tenure and later cited by the Navy Times. "The most absurd charges are used to send sailors to the brig and put them on bread and water," one sailor wrote in the survey. "The poor treatment of this command's sailors has led to more than one sailor changing their career plans and choosing to leave the Navy rather than stay in and deal with any more of this garbage."

Now, beginning 1st January 2019, bread and water—or "cake and wine," as it is known among sailors—will no longer be among the options for a captain disciplining his crew. An updated Uniform Code of Military Justice, passed by Congress in 2016 and based on recommendations from an independent Department of Defence review board in 2013, will take effect New Year's Day. Among the many changes, most of them minor procedural tweaks are an explicit prohibition against putting those who misbehave on the bread and water diet.

Militaries the world over have a unique set of rules that include offenses that wouldn't be considered violations in the civilian world, Steed explained. "Disobeying a lawful command" would be one example, he said. Punishment for such a thing in most countries' navies might include restriction of privileges, or some such, "but do not include starving a sailor even for three days."

US Navy sailors on the bread-and-water regimen are permitted to eat as much bread and drink as much water as they like, three times a day, according to the Navy's brig regulations (which can be found at the bottom of this post). No prisoner on bread and water/diminished rations "shall be compelled to perform strenuous physical activity," although they are allowed to "participate in an hour of stretching and minimal exercise in his/her cell."

Brig rules also typically allow sailors "religious and literary materials…to utilize during authorized reading periods."

Two US Navy secretaries have called for abolishing the practice of feeding sailors nothing but bread and water, first in 1882 and again in 1921. Still, some see it as a vital component in any good military disciplinarian's toolbox.

"It's not that bad—that's why I like it," Capt. Kevin Eyer, a former Navy commander and bread-and-water proponent who regularly ordered it as punishment for minor misconduct violations, told the Times. "It sounds medieval, and that is sort of the point,. Sometimes you just need to scare a kid. We want them to succeed, but you need to give them a kick in the pants."

Corporal punishment, which includes kicking, is no longer allowed onboard US Navy vessels, nor is flogging, which Congress banned in 1862.

(They really don't know they're born these days do they! EDITOR**)**

When NASA first started sending up astronauts it was discovered that ballpoint pens would not work in zero gravity. So NASA spent a decade and $12 million developing a pen that writes in zero gravity, upside down, underwater, on almost any surface including glass and at temperatures from below freezing to 300c. The Russians used a pencil.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Nice one Brian, as usual. Keep up the good work. **Ray Lambert**

Hi Brian
Just a note to say hello and thank you again for the Superb magazine.
I am finally doing quite well from a health standpoint. All my doctors, 5, have me on a 6 month visit if necessary. My main problem is the loss of balance due antibiotic killing off 80% of my balance on the right side of my head, and 20% on the left side.
I had 3 months of physical therapy which helped a lot, but I am now considered disabled and now have a disabled parking permit which is very nice.
I am now learning how to live with the problem and use a walker and cane when I feel I have a risk for falling and I am back into my routine as best as can be expected. I have a small gym so to speak in my garage with a treadmill and a weight training machine called Bowflex that I have used for about 20 years. About an hour a day, 3 times a week for my maintenance does me fine if I keep at it. A downer for sure is that I am not supposed to have alcohol. I will work on that.
Your article on Pusser's rum reminded me of my honor of being honorary rum bosun on the Superb many years ago. We have Pusser's rum in the local liquor stores here and I have enjoyed a couple of bottles over the past few years. All is well, and full steam ahead.
Please extend my good wishes to the other readers of the magazine. **George Messmer**

(For those who weren't on the Luxury Cruise, George was a USN Ship's Photographer who supplied many photos of the Superb's crew on a Guantanamo Bay U.S. Navy welcome Bonanza in 1954. There are several of his photos on the Association's website (which you should be able to see by clicking HERE) and his original letter is re-produced below)

Brian. Thought you might be interested in this cutting from the local Paper *(Medway Messenger – July, 18)*. Our poor old NAAFI Club !! Demolition has started in earnest and when I saw this in the paper I paid a visit to the Hotel just to be sure that it would not affect our reunion.
All is well on that front, and parking for cars, I am told, will not be affected in any way.
The order for the cap, badges and sweatshirts has been placed and our usual lady singer is all set to attend so we are looking forward to a nice turnout. **Robin Smith (Chairman)**
(To read the newspaper article please click HERE).

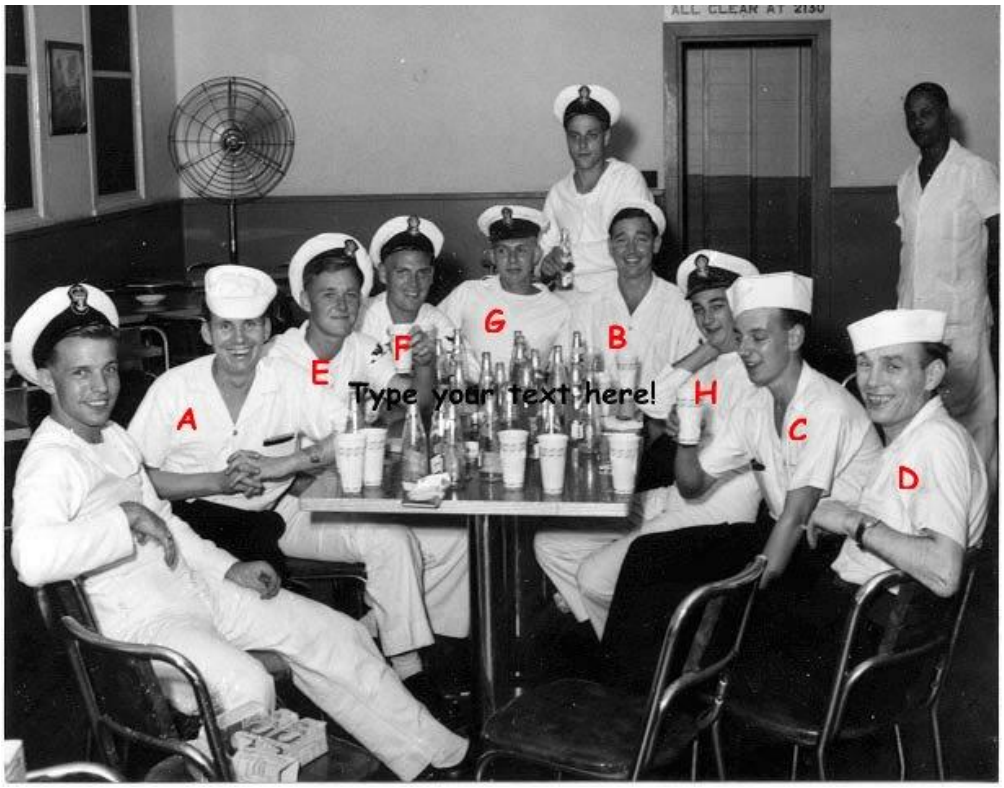
GEORGE'S LETTER

"I spent two days aboard the HMS Superb, and had the honor of being designated "Honorary Rum Bosun" on the second day. The occasion took place in the Petty Officers' Quarters. I made a number of friends, although I had a tough time handling my photo assignment after having many sips of the British neat rum. It was also, as I recall, the Queen's birthday and double rations were passed out.

In the Petty Officer's quarters, the rum was given out straight. The day before, I had lunch in the regular mess hall and the rum ration was mixed with water. I handled that one OK.

My shipmates and I decided to have a party for the HMS Superb's Petty Officers and one evening we all met at the Gitmo Navy Petty Officers Club. Well I will tell you "WE HAD A PARTY"! I remember all of us standing shoulder to shoulder singing "Jesus Wants Me For A Sunbeam ..... I won't finish the first line.

This was all accompanied by drinking scotch with beer chasers. Wow! As usually is the case, over the years time erases most of our memories and names get forgotten. However I do have a number of photos taken at the party (by someone who stayed sober, and it wasn't me). I also have a mimeograph copy of the Gunnery Exercise Order No. 7/54, given to me by the Superb's Gunnery Office when I got on board. It is old and faded and I was not able to get a clear copy when I scanned it".



A - PO Blacksmith Geveaux Ross
B - O/A Pike
C - PO Electrician Danahar
D - PO Cook "Pincher" Martin
E - William Slogh USN
F - Larry Arnold USN
G- George Messmer USN
H - Glen Dulaney USN

Photo of George in a reflexive mood !

NOZZERS GO WEST
Part 3

Towards the end of the afternoon of the second day they became Ship's Company with their Joining Routines completed and they began the process of settling into their new home and wondering how long they would be expected to stay. This time there was no Chief to welcome or guide them but they were old hands now and perfectly capable of looking after themselves. They were ready for the world whichever part of it they might find themselves in next.

To start with their world was a pretty small world and the very next day it got even smaller with the appearance of Cyril Jury, their POGI from *Ganges*. Unbeknown to the boys, both Cyril and Geoff Leverett, their other instructor, had left *Ganges* when they did.

It was dinner time. Nothing changed; just like Ganges, the navy at Chatham were not over generous with their meals and hunger demanded their attention. Ginger raced up the stairs to his mess eager to collect his meal ticket from his locker; the bugle call had sounded and it was time for dinner. The others must have heard the call to *secure* but they appeared to be in no hurry and were standing around in a group in the middle of the mess. Then he spotted Cyril Jury among them.

Cyril, being a Gunnery Instructor, had been drafted to *Pembroke* to take up his new duties in the Gunnery School. Somehow he had learned of their arrival and had put himself out, in his own time, to come and greet his erstwhile pupils. He really was a very nice man. He had been proud of them when he had been their instructor and that affection was even more evident now that the formal side could be dispensed with.

"Oh hello sir," Ginger said. There was excitement in his voice. He was pleased to see his old instructor. "It's very good to see you again sir".

"Hello there, Lambert. Still racing about in a hurry I see", the POGI replied. His face showed he was as pleased to see the boys as they were to see him.

"I wasn't sure that we would meet again, sir" Ginger told him, "It really is good to see you again, isn't it boys?" The gathered congregation all nodded their agreement.

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"Yes, you said that already and I get the picture", Jury said with a grin. "And you can drop that '*Sir*' bit now, Petty Officer or PO will do the trick".

Without that "Them and Us" *Ganges* mentality to contend with they could see that Jury was a Real Gent. He never was too different from how he was conducting himself now but *Ganges* conditioning had them pigeonhole all instructors into the "nasty-and-not-to-be-trusted" file. It was the way of the world; the small, enclosed, cut-off world of isolated Ganges, plus, of course, he had to retain an element of aloofness then, so as not to encourage any familiarity.

They stood chatting happily for a few minutes with someone recalling an incident that brought forth laughter but dinner was calling and they bade their friend and former instructor farewell and headed for the Dining Hall.

Jury remained just as smart as ever, both in cleanliness and bearing. His suit was brushed and pressed and his shirt and cap cover gleamed white. Unlike the next person they encountered.

After the dinner break he appeared. A little man, whose features reminded Ginger of a ferret. He was an Able Seaman from *Anson*, the Seaman's Block.

He wore a blue suit and they could see that he had one badge on his left arm. He was not the sort of man to lead by example. His skin appeared to be a funny tone of grey, he had long straggly mousey-coloured hair and he certainly didn't enthuse confidence. Why had they picked him to look after boys was anyone's guess. It seemed that the boys were smarter than him in appearance and, if first impressions were anything to go by, they also knew a lot more than he did.

"I'm your new Boys Instructor", he told them.

Even his voce had that underdog quality about it but it appeared that his new-found authority had given him a confidence boost; he was a repressed ego-merchant. No doubt he revelled in his new status and would love to give orders. He tested the waters a couple of times but with some trepidation and ensuring that he wasn't likely to be overheard first.

"You're supposed to call me Sir, really". He enlightened them in his new authority voice. Then adding almost as a confidence, "But I don't think you need to do that when we're alone", when it dawned on him that they had no intention of doing anything of the kind whether they were alone or not. PO Jury had put them wise on that one and no ferret-faced AB was about to be called sir, whatever his thoughts on the subject might be.

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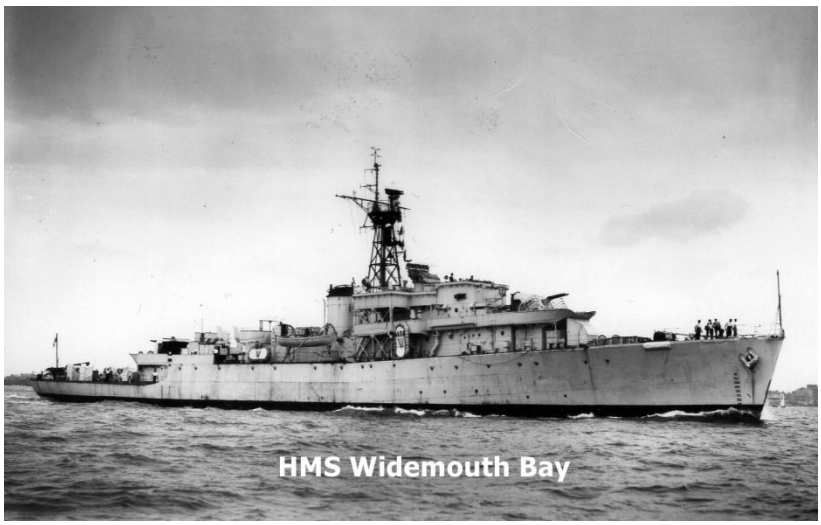
Later in the day half a dozen of them were sitting in the canteen, which was alongside the parade ground, when a call came over the Tannoy informing him he was wanted at the Main Gate. He got up and left. They never saw him again.

FROM ZERO TO HERO

By Malcolm Milham

I remember as a schoolboy reading all about the **Yangtse Incident**, ***HMS Amethyst*** and of course Commander Kerans, then going to the pictures and watching the newsreels of it all. Once again Andy Brierley has given my memory a nudge, of my revisiting another part of the story and how he was available to carry out the deeds he was credited with.


HMS Widemouth Bay

When I left ***Ganges*** my first real ship was the Frigate ***HMS Widemouth Bay*** (WB), based up in Rosyth, Leader of the 4th Training Squadron and her Captain was George Pound DSC RN, who had been the Commander of *Superb* recently, this was in 1952.

Earlier in her life WB was destined to serve in the Far East as part of Task Group 112, the Fleet Train of the British Pacific Fleet and I became aware she had been the 'Chummy Ship' of *Amethyst*. Built as an Escort Ship she was not that fast only making 19 Knots at her best.

Many years after I left both her and the Andrew I was reading my '*Ganges*' magazine and came across an advert for a WB Association, which was just getting started, so I joined as one does. We had some brilliant reunions up at Leamington Spa and the Lamp swinging was great, because the vast majority of the Association members had been HO Ratings, had only had one ship, WB, and had served something like 5 years in her, both during WW2 and the couple of years after. The Association produced an excellent magazine called 'The Talbot', it's a dog, and was the centre of the ships badge. In one edition I realised that Commander Kerans, then a Lt Cdr had been the Captain of WB having joined her in Japanese waters in January 1947. And thereby hung an unusual tale.

Lt Cdr Kerans was not a popular skipper and he and the Jimmy (ex lower deck) hated one another, as Kerans was ex Public School. Their loathing of one another was passed on to the crew who suffered from both of their bad tempers. Although not the 'Canteen' boat of the Flotilla, WB got all the gash jobs and spent many extra days at sea, all from Kerans volunteering to do things. Eventually WB left the Far Flung and came into the Med,

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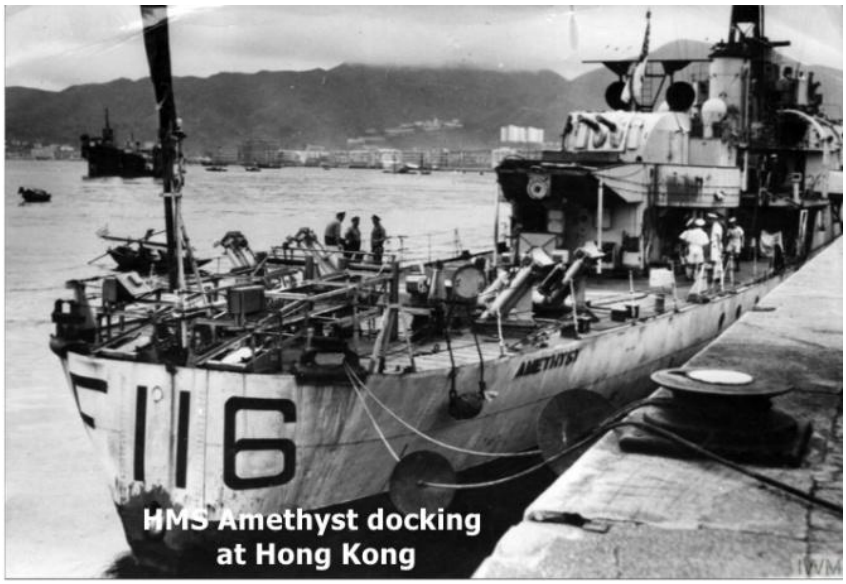
immediately going onto the Lavant Patrol, intercepting illegal immigrants heading for Palestine. After a long period on this job she was alive with rats and she was sent to Malta to be de-ratted.

Normal routine for this was to be tied up to two buoys in Senglea Creek, the crew to spend the weekend in Fort Ricasoly and spend the time sleeping sunbathing and swimming. As the WB crew arrived in the fort they spotted the fort's crew leaving for a nice LWE; Kerans had decided the crew of WB would carry out all the duties. After a sullen weekend, on Sunday afternoon orders came in for the crew to return to WB and clean up the ship, including getting rid of all the dead rats which had been left by the Dockyard Mateys. Arriving ashore in the creek it was decided that the killer gas had not all dispersed so the crew had to wait on shore, oh dear! There's plenty of bars in Senglea.

Later that afternoon the ship was declared OK for the crew to return - if they could be found. The Buffer did the rounds of the bars and rounded up a few and got them back onboard, then went after more; it appeared he was the only authority on the ship.

Nobody wanted to work and on the Buffers return tempers started to flare. Trying to get things moving, he gave a direct order which did not go down too well and somebody grabbed him and flung him off the gangway into the creek. At which point another crew member decided he needed a slash and did so from the top of the gangway ladder. Whist this was going on Jimmy appeared ashore and with difficulty managed to get back aboard.

Ashore, a fair sized crowd had collected to witness these events, but the problem for the crew was that the Admiral Superintendent of the Dockyard had his house and garden directly overlooking the creek. Furthermore he was hosting a garden party at that very moment. His daughter and a couple of friends were looking over the wall and called daddy to have a look at the fun below. A signal was sent to the ship and was ignored, Jimmy not knowing this was trying to restore order and nearly ended up in the creek as well as the Buffer.



HMS Amethyst docking at Hong Kong

Next morning further signals were sent and satisfactory explanations were not accepted, the Captain was

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summoned to the C. in C.'s office. On his return he ordered all involved to be charged with MUTINY. Before any of this could happen a Board of Enquiry was set up and several of the crew ordered to give evidence. The mutiny charges were not proceeded with.

Then the Board of Evidence verdict was made known; 1 Stoker was sentenced to 90 days DQ's and dismissed the service. Both the Captain and Jimmy were dismissed from the ship and in Jimmy's case cashiered, with Kerans facing a Court Marshall. The crew remained onboard but those 'Possibly Involved' were drafted from her and scattered throughout various places and ships.

Kerans remained in the service, but was from now on Banished to Naval Obscurity as an Attaché in the British Embassy in Nanking. Which happens to be well up the River Yangtse, hence when *Amethyst* got herself into trouble and with her Captain dead, the only naval officer available with a captains ticket was in Nanking.

So - From Zero to Hero !

A woman and her 12-year-old son were riding in a taxi through Mayfair in London. It was raining and all the prostitutes were standing under awnings."Mum," said the boy, "what are all those women doing?""They're waiting for their husbands to get off work," she replied.

The taxi driver turns around and says, "Come on missus, why don't you tell him the truth? They're hookers, boy! They have sex with men for money".

The little boy's eyes get wide and he says, "Is that true Mum?" His mother, glaring hard at the driver, answers "Yes."After a few minutes the kid asks, "Mum, if those women have babies, what happens to them?" She said, "Most of them become taxi drivers."

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THE DESTRUCTION OF FALMOUTH

On October 8, 1775, a British naval squadron of four ships, led by the lightly armed vessel ***Canceaux***, sailed from Boston Harbour. The squadron's commander, Lieutenant Henry Mowat, had orders from Admiral Samuel Graves, to "chastise" a number of coastal settlements north of Boston. Ten towns were identified as appropriate targets with one in particular, the village of Machias far up the Maine coast, specifically mentioned for retribution. Several months earlier the inhabitants of Machias had seized two British vessels, the sloop ***Margaretta*** and schooner *Diligent*, killing the commander of the former and imprisoning the commander of the latter as well as the crews of both ships. Admiral Graves was determined to punish Machias and the other coastal towns north of Boston and instructed Lieutenant Mowat, "to go to all or to as many of the … named Places as you can, and make the most vigorous Efforts to burn the Towns, and destroy the Shipping in the Harbours.

Lieutenant Mowat was given discretion on how to execute his orders and he selected Falmouth (modern day Portland, Maine) as the first, and it turned out, only town to bear the brunt of his squadron's wrath. It was a surprising and ironic choice, for five months earlier in May Falmouth's leaders had come to Lieutenant Mowat's aid and secured his release after he was seized by a party of local militia while ashore in Falmouth. Mowat's release was conditioned on his agreement to return to Falmouth the next day, an agreement the

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lieutenant failed to honor. Instead, Mowat sailed out of Falmouth harbour and headed to Boston where he likely brewed over his brief detention in Falmouth.

Apparently bent on revenge, Lieutenant Mowat returned to Falmouth five months later (on October 16, 1775), with a squadron of ships. He immediately provoked the ire of the townspeople by firing on a small schooner in the harbour that refused to heave to. The

> Notwithstanding the discharge of several muskets and two cannon [from Mowat's ships, the schooner] escaped in safety to the town. The populace, which was gazing by hundreds, was immediately thrown into furious agitation by this incident, and vowed revenge with the utmost menace and caution. The Committee, composed of tradesmen and persons of no property, prompted only for a flaming zeal for the liberty of their country, were not less enraged at this hostile appearance and … ordered the company of guards to … secure the cattle, intimidate the Tories and observe the motions of the enemy.

Reverend Jacob Bailey witnessed the incident and recalled that,

With the British squadron anchored in Falmouth harbour, the townsfolk endured an anxious evening and became more troubled the next day when they observed the squadron position itself as if to bombard the town. Reverend Bailey recalled,

> The whole fleet stood directly up the river, and formed in line of battle before the town. We now plainly discovered one ship of twenty guns, one of sixteen, a large schooner of fourteen, a bomb sloop and two other armed vessels.

Bailey exaggerated the naval ordinance arrayed against Falmouth aboard Mowat's squadron (no doubt due in part to the excitement of the moment). Many of Falmouth's residents were confused by the hostile movement of the flotilla because they believed that Lieutenant Mowat held Falmouth in high regard for rescuing him in May.5 They soon learned otherwise when Mowat sent an officer ashore with a dire warning to the townspeople. Reverend Bailey recalled

> [The officer] landed at the lower end of King Street, amid a prodigious assembly of people, which curiosity and expectation had drawn together from every quarter. Some of the multitude appeared in arms, who united with the rest to convey the officer with uncommon parade and ceremony along the street to the Town House. His entrance was immediately followed by a confused mixture, which filled the apartment with noise and tumult.

The British officer stunned the gathering with a shocking proclamation from Lieutenant Mowat:

> After so many premeditated Attacks on the legal Prerogatives of the best of Sovereigns; After the repeated Instances [of] Britain's long forbearance of the Rod of Correction; and the Merciful and Paternal extension of her Hands to embrace you, again and again, have been regarded as vain and nugatory And in place of a dutiful and grateful return to your King and Parent state; you have been guilty of the most unpardonable Rebellion … Having it in orders to execute a just Punishment on the Town of Falmouth … I warn you to remove without delay the Human Species out of the said town; for which purpose I give you the time of two hours.

Lieutenant Mowat gave the residents of Falmouth just two hours to evacuate the town and avoid imminent bombardment. Reverend Bailey described the reaction of the townspeople to Mowat's proclamation:

> It is impossible to describe the amazement which prevailed upon reading this alarming declaration: a frightful consternation ran through the assembly, every heart was seized with terror, every countenance changed colour, and a profound silence ensured for several moments. During the astonishment which had seized the multitude, I quitted the apartment of justice and became a spectator on what passed in the street, where nothing occurred but scenes of tumult, confusion, and bustle.

A small committee was hastily formed to appeal to Lieutenant Mowat and he agreed to delay the bombardment until the next morning if the townspeople delivered up their arms. A handful of weapons were delivered in the evening as a gesture of good will. This prompted Lieutenant Mowat to proclaim,

If the town would surrender their cannon and musketry, and give hostages for their future good behaviour, he would delay the execution of his orders till he could represent their situation to the Admiral, and intercede for their final deliverance.

Panic swept through Falmouth on the evening of October 17, as residents scrambled to save what possessions they could from the impending bombardment. At the same time, militia from surrounding communities arrived and added to the confusion. It appears that in all the chaos little consideration was given to Lieutenant Mowat's demand that the town's cannon and muskets, along with a few hostages, be delivered to him by 9:00 a.m. As a result, the committee returned to Mowat at 8:30 a.m. the next morning to inform him that,

> To their … astonishment, they found that no part of the Inhabitants [had] assembled in the morning, [to hand over their muskets] and that the whole town was then in the greatest confusion, with many women and children still remaining in it.

Mowat allowed the 9:00 a.m. deadline to pass to allow stragglers in the town flee inland and commenced the bombardment at 9:40 a.m. Reverend Bailey described the destruction:

> The cannon began to roar with incessant and tremendous fury … In a few minutes the whole town was involved in smoke and combustion. About a thousand men in arms attended this scene of devastation, besides a prodigious number of both sexes, without attempting any repulsion. The bombardment continued from half after nine till sunset, during which all the lower end and middle of the town was reduced to a heap of rubbish. Several houses in the back street and in the upper part, together with the church shared the same fate. The front of the Meeting house was torn to pieces by the bursting of a bomb, and the buildings which were left standing had their glass windows broken, and both walls and apartments terribly shattered. In a word about three quarters of the town was consumed and between two and three hundred families who twenty four hours before enjoyed in tranquillity their commodious habitations, were now in many instances destitute of a hut for themselves and families, and as a tedious winter was approaching they had before them a most gloomy and distressing prospect.

The bombardment lasted until nightfall, after which the British squadron, low on ammunition, sailed out of Falmouth harbour with two captured vessels. Eleven other boats were destroyed in the harbour.12

The once proud community of Falmouth was left a smouldering ruin. The 3,800 inhabitants were left to face the approaching winter shelterless.13 British landing parties added to the destruction of the town by coming ashore with torches to set fires where the shells failed to do so. Despite the presence of hundreds of armed militia, no effective opposition was offered against Mowat's landing parties or the bombardment. This became a point of criticism from those outside of Falmouth who believed that inhabitants got what they deserved for their timid response to Mowat. Daniel Tucker, an inhabitant of Falmouth and a witness to the destruction, defended the town from such criticism:

Many people have blamed the inhabitants of Falmouth for not defending the town against so small a force: but the truth is it was not in their power, for there was not a single cannon mounted in town at that time, and there was a great scarcity of powder.

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"It's a pity about your dodgy eyes, lad.
You would have made a super frogman."

A NAVAL CAREER PART 4 (OF 4)

By Jim Hirst

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This story were found on the BBC World War II website and Contributed by fireblade-sue subject John Malcolm ("Jim") Hirst and Contributed on: 01 January 2006

NORTHERN WATERS AND DUTIES NEW

After a most enjoyable leave, partly spent in Northants, I was posted to *HMML 155*. This was one of the boats fitted with an impressive radar tower bearing a PPI 660 radar which had been used to fix position as they led in one of the landing craft columns to Normandy beaches. I joined the boat up the Thames at Isleworth, where high technology gear had been added to help with accurate navigation (QH2, taut wire measuring gear, echo sounder etc.) to enable us to position and supervise German Fleet Minesweepers to be employed clearing up their mine barrage in the Mid-north Sea. Together with *ML 154* (similarly fitted) we were to operate from a base in Cuxhaven but work out of Flekkefjord, Norway. To enable the boat to get up to Isleworth the radar tower had to be removed at Hay's Wharf were it was restored on our return down the Thames.

We enjoyed the trip down river and especially having Tower Bridge raised just for us to pass. After a day or two in Sheerness, we left in quite dense fog and placing faith in the magic of radar to hop from buoy to buoy, passed through much shipping but saw nothing until we successfully picked up the breakwater at Ijmuiden, The Netherlands.

What a difference our new toys made to confidence at night or in fog, as compared with hours peering into nothingness through night glasses! Bad weather gave us an opportunity to spend a day or two in Den Helder, where we had a chance to see the desperate shortages that were still being suffered. Another break in the island of Borkum proved interesting because the N.O.I.C. (naval officer in charge) seemed almost to be running a harem of German code-breaking WRNS equivalents. The daily codes that we had religiously used were regularly broken by mid-day but they remained puzzled by the `RT slang' that we had been so heavily warned against using and "Who is this darling Clementine?" On to Cuxhaven where fishing was just beginning again. This was not too damaged but Hamburg and Heligoland were wrecked.

Through no fault of ours, our mission was a failure because our ability to navigate with sufficient accuracy to direct the German minesweepers in the middle of the North Sea depended entirely on the sophisticated electronic navigational equipment which we had fitted in Isleworth. QH2 had been the distant position indicating system used by the pathfinders for allied bombers to define German targets accurately, (now replaced by the much more convenient GPS, global positioning system). That need no longer existed and as civilian needs had not yet developed. The day we were due to start was the very day when the air forces chose to close down the chain of land stations.

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Without these, the German Sweepers could be much more accurate than we could hope to be. Nevertheless, we were able to keep ourselves busy with a variety of quite interesting tasks. Among these was the escort of Soviet Navy ships to Bremen and Wilhelmshaven, carrying crews that would (under our escort) take back their share of the German Navy through the Kiel Canal to the Baltic and what would become `behind the curtain'. We also did several trips to the island of Heligoland in the Elbe approaches, to take RAF teams who had the job of assessing the damage our bombs had (or had not) done to the U Boat pens. We also had to show the White Ensign among the German sweepers operating from Flekkefiord in Norway. These were interesting episodes, not least because they took us through the Baltic with opportunities to call at Copenhagen and other Danish ports.

The comparison of quality and morale between the victorious Russians and the defeated Germans was most strikingly in favour of the latter. The former were undisciplined scroungers wanting to pinch anything moveable. The latter were efficient, punctilious about maritime courtesies and went about their dangerous work efficiently. Denmark was nothing like so badly damaged or their populations so starved as were the Dutch and perhaps both were better off than the remaining inhabitants of Hamburg. Once into the Kiel Canal at Brunsbuttelkug the land had only suffered isolated bombing rather than land warfare. After the first trip north, we took the precaution of landing most of our ammunition to make room in the magazines for the products of the Carlsberg and Tuborg Breweries. This ensured us a very favoured reception on arrival back home at our base in Cuxhaven.

The pleasure of the Danes at liberation was also shown when we happened to be the first to show the White Ensign in the northernmost port of Jutland (Fredrikshafen by Skaw). At the time of the Occupation, the local ships chandler had buried all his stock of British spirits, vowing that he would not unearth them or open a bottle until liberated. Although a little late, we were deemed to give him that excuse.

The parties for all were long and furious and the local police were needed to return the crew who had shore leave. Of course this needed to be followed by return hospitality for locals and the judiciary. By midday the next day it was high time to sail to calmer conditions in Norway. I liked both the lands and peoples of Denmark and Norway but did not have very long among them because I had to hand *ML155* over to my successor in Flekkefiord and return to UK via Cuxhaven for `demob'.

As I was lucky enough not to have suffered shipwreck or wounding, I can say that in retrospect I enjoyed my `sailor's life'. I learnt a great deal from the somewhat harsh school of the `lower deck' and a good deal more from the experience and privilege of being in command of some of His Majesty's (tiddler) Ships from the age of 23. By the middle of 1946, I was due to be demobilised and to gain entry to university, finally to research on potato diseases. To my surprise and disappointment this apparently prevented me continuing in the then RNVSR, so I ceased to be a sailor (in all but memory)!

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

These stories were found on the BBC World War II website and Contributed by fireblade-sue subject John Malcolm ("Jim") Hirst and Contributed on: 01 January 2006

Jim Hirst died in January, 1998 aged 76.

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THE PARTY IS FINALLY OVER

for one legendary clubbing destination.

Excalibur Nightclub in the ***King Charles Hotel in Gillingham*** is being demolished to make way for housing.

Over the years it played host to some of the biggest names of the time, from jungle pioneer General Levy to rave heroes The Prodigy. Rap duo Salt-N-Pepa, cult icon Rick Astley and heart throbs Bros also made appearances as the Gillingham venue welcomed revellers from far and wide throughout the 80s and 90s.

LAUNCHED AS THE NAAFI CLUB it became The Regency in 1982 before its final incarnation as Excalibur — which enjoyed a hugely successful run which lasted from 1989 until its close in 1998.

In January an Ultra 90s night was held at the spot to say one last goodbye.

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The Brompton Road site is being razed to make way for a potential development which would see 57 one to three bedroom flats built across a four and five story block with associated car parking.

There would also be extension works on the surviving hotel which will see 25 more bedrooms and conference facilities added on a new floor.

Hotel owner and former club DJ Stephen Degiorgio said they were yet to hear back on planning permission for the project.

He said: "It's quite exciting about the future but it's also very sad to see it all go. It's been part of our family for 40 years now.

"But time moves on and the clubbing industry is not as strong as it once was and everyone needs to keep going."

A decision is expected on the plans — which can be viewed in full **HERE** — before the end of October

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PHOTO ALBUM

On Guard at Guantanamo Bay

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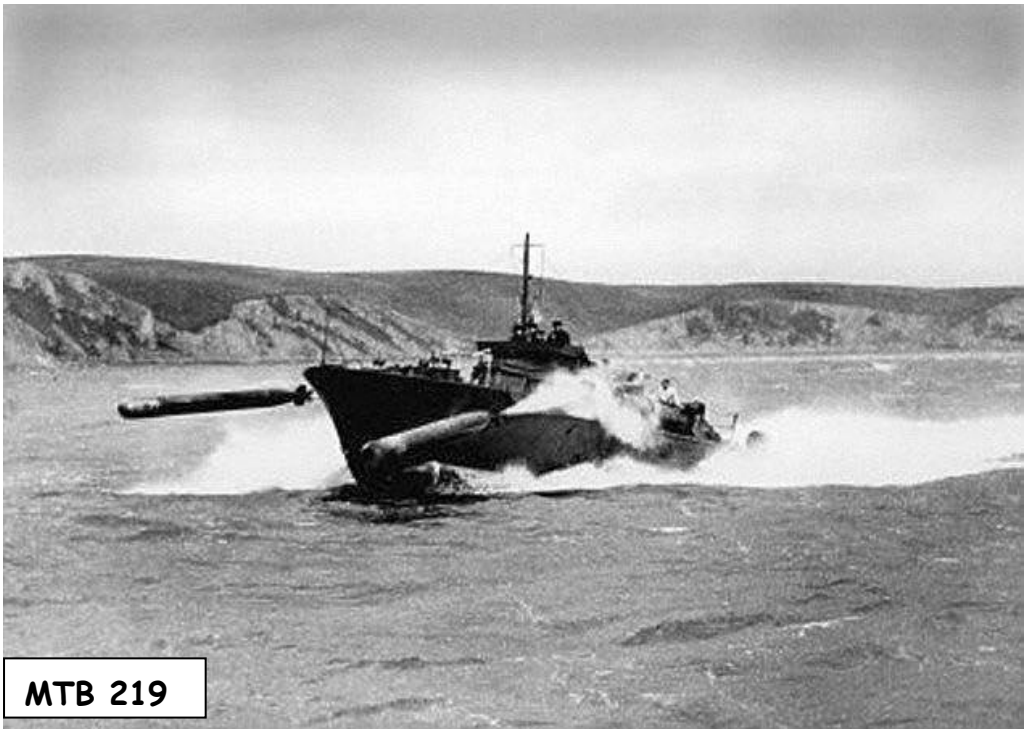

MTB 219

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)

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SLOPS

Download Order Form Here

AVAILABLE BY POST & AT THE REUNION IN OCTOBER

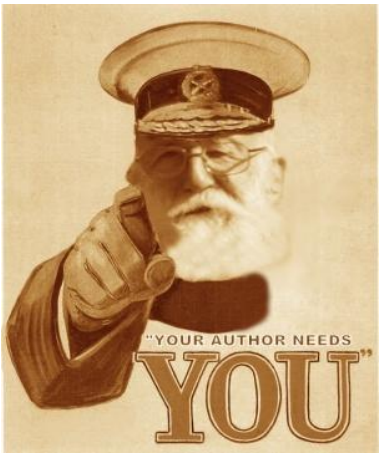
LONG SLEEVED SWEATER EMBLAZONED WITH THE HMS SUPERB LOGO
PRICE £16.80

BASEBALL-TYPE CAP WITH HMS SUPERB CREST
PRICE £11.20

ALL ITEMS CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE AT THE REUNION IN OCTOBER
IF POSTING IS REQUIRED PLEASE ADD EXTRA £3-00 P. & P. FOR SWEATSHIRT AND CAP.
FOR CAP ONLY ADD £1-00 FOR POST & PACKAGING

ORDERS WITH CHEQUES PLEASE TO ROBIN SMITH

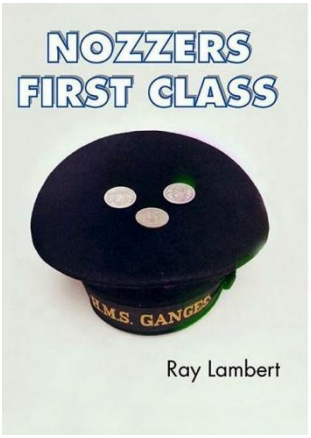
Journalist & Best Selling Author

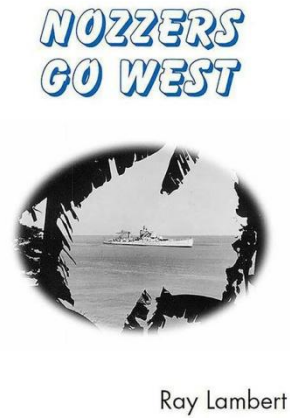


OUR IN-HOUSE **BEST SELLING AUTHOR** IS OFFERING THE FOLLOWING BOOKS AT A SPECIAL PRICE FOR MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

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. Click **HERE** for more information & to contact Ray by email





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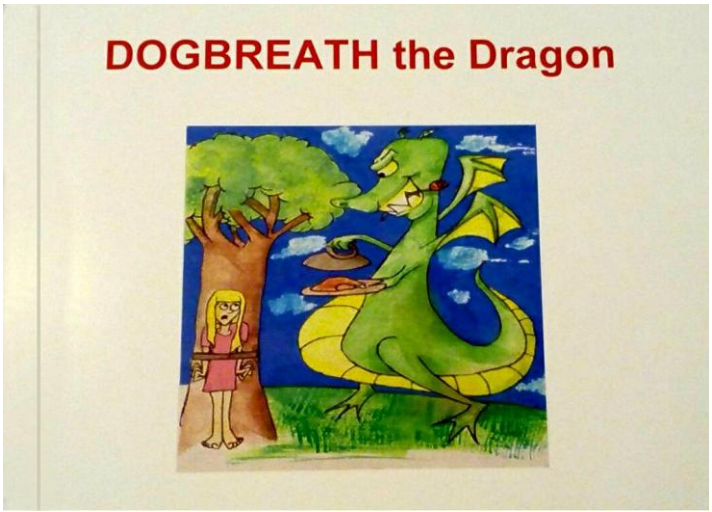
Something for the Youngsters

Phil Grimson



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.

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**

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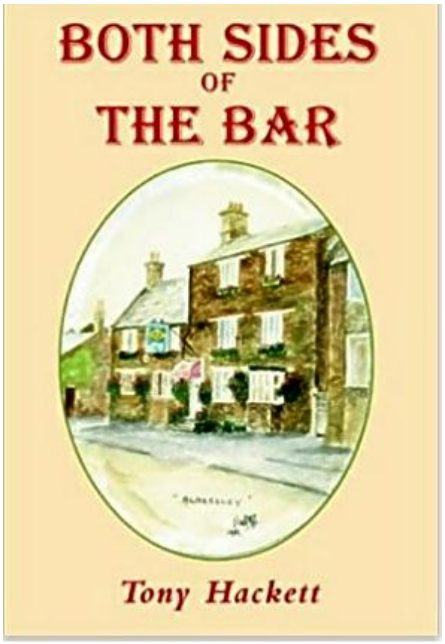
Life After the Navy

Tony Hacket



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

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 months

From previous issues

The following message received from Derek Thompson, via Facebook
Just wondered if any of you gents knew my father **Derrick Thompson (Tommo)** he was a stoker mechanic (E) 1st class on board HMS Superb in 1955/56. He passed away in 2003 aged 72. I myself was in the Andrew and served for 23 yrs. I would be grateful if anyone knew him

Neil Cooper, the son of Terry Willey, writes
"My late father appears to be mentioned in the booklet from the 52-53 tour of West Indies. He's stated as leading electricians mate. His full name was **Terry Keith Willey**. Be great to hear from anyone who knew him"

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 knows of others in that crew

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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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ARCHIVED CONTENT

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

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