

# ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Greetings Shipmates,            March 2018.

**I**t is a rare month that passes without the R.A.F. Public Relations Department getting an advantageous article for their service in one or other parts of the media; there is no doubting their pre-eminence for it. Army, alas, only seems to figure when a maimed soul has been abandoned to become a suicide statistic.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the Royal Navy allowed a highly dangerous event, conducted in the heart of the City of London, to pass the nation by, reporting only on an inside column of a Sunday paper. I thought it warranted saturation coverage in all aspects of the media.

What the hell were all those Admirals doing to let such an opportunity pass? Portsmouth Clearance Divers removed an 1100lb. unexploded bomb from a Royal dock. It could only have been a decent catapult shot from the edge of City Airport single runway.

The two 'lower deck' divers, Waller and Bonato, had a splendid picture, all 'geared up', inside the Sunday Times. Sunken deep in silt U.X.B. was evidently a manual struggle to get a pair of strops around. Whether the lift was tidal or crane, and other details, were not forthcoming.

It was blown just down river at Shoeburyness, easily heard from my home, way over here near Sittingbourne. I forget the number of U.X.B's assumed to be still buried in the metropolis, but first blitz attempt at seventy six continuous days we know, from experience, had a surprising number, many hundreds!

On record the Pompey divers had 304 call-outs for ordinance in various places, of various sorts, during 2017 (that's to shout about, because no one got scratched)!

Normal fodder on every front page, large and black, was of thespians anxious to get on the 'casting couch' and become celebrities. I am sure, when a brand new adolescent, I was aware said 'couch' was a normal tool in 'Tinsel town' stepping stone to celebrity-hood, method of elevation.

The common Mantra that 'any publicity is good publicity' makes me feel all those 'strident feminists' must have been abysmally stupid. I am certain, as schoolgirls in the locker room, they discussed the best way to cool unwanted ardour was a sharp knee in the danglies, or elbow in the eye, then threaten publicity if not offered a fair chance.

Apologies for that rant, it may have brought on by those aforementioned Admirals not getting our sort on the front pages.

An important question being haggled about at Westminster, but rarely reported, is our nuclear missile subs.. A vocal minority in that place is hell bent on getting them scrapped. Surprise, surprise, they appear to be those who were on the 'Czech and Soviet spy' network payroll. At a reported ten grand a visit, it was worth them taking their hols. in East Germany or Cuba, to pick up the cash.

For better or worse I am pro-Polaris, and feel those who wish its costs to be removed from M.O.D. Naval and put back into the Treasury Reserve are right! It being a political tool of government.

Change to this current system was enacted by deposed Chancellor Osborne, Dave Cameron and deputy toe-rag Clegg. The results; plans and aspirations for the navy wrecked absolutely, as it goes down in a whirlpool of debt.

Proposed new class of 'trident boats' are now commonly to be known as Dreadnoughts. Artists' impressions show they have adapted current U-boat practise of combining 'planes and rudder' in an X shape. In place of steam turbine drive to propeller they will / are proposed to / use permanent magnet motors and 'shaft less' drive, that 'sounds good' - 'literally', 'no gears = no noise'...

But, oh, oh, a version of that method drives the six D's all tied up at Pompey, plus the pair of 'Super Carriers'. One would hope de-bugging has been major priority before scheduled time on station at - 2028. I can understand the lengthy gestation period for such a cutting edge vessel and the gargantuan cost. A report had 'first design' a really radical hull form, with propulsors embedded in ducts with lots of other mould-breaking innovation, all, alas, sunk by mega costs. Current proposal will tip the scales at 17,200 tons, my addled memory thinks that that approaches 'Superb x 2'. Only 12 Polaris tubes will be fitted in place of previous 16, provision made for torpedo and improved tomahawk ejection..

The growth in displacement said to be required for 'male and female' separate messes and ablution blocks - and a gym!

The Rolls Royce PW3 reactor, (development of PW2) said to be 'quieter, simpler to maintain and good for an unrefuelled 30 years', that must make early era stokers leap for joy.

As with the carriers at Rosyth, that needed massive civil works to enlarge their building dock, so with the new subs. at Barrow. Our solitary builder B.A.E. report 'trade unions' have agreed new working practises to help automation 'reduce building time'. How decent of them to assist the nation like that. 2028 is hardly round the corner.

Talk of build time highlights the serious problem to be coped with by end users of our war vessels. We know technology advances at such a pace these days that cutting edge, 'when planned' means 'obsolescence when commissioned' ten to fifteen years later. Our nation, with only one naval constructor of warships seem condemned to 'catch up' at every launch, regardless of type. Cost of keeping Trident without itemising how it's split up is published at £2.5 billion per year. It includes missile build at Aldermaston and refurbishments as required.

'This is less than spent on the N.H.S. Service IN A SINGLE WEEK.

Tatty Bye the Noo

Keep taking the pills!

