

Hello Shipmates,

I read with interest that the Royal Marines are testing new team structures and ways of operating - to act as 'true commandos' wreaking havoc behind enemy lines; these words were written following the 40 Commando trip to the jungle terrain of Australia. The report said they are embracing a 'command first' initiative with new technology, new tactics to outwit the enemy. These gentlemen, suitably imbued with malicious intent, sound just the fellows needed in a dozen 'go fast skiffs' to replace one D class destroyer, plus two Duke class frigates in the Straits of Hormuz.

Thanks only due to their officer corps, the Royals have fended off the higher echelons of the army, who bent over backwards in two defense reviews, to have them disbanded or amalgamated. Fortunately their major protracted effort can go down as a 'battle lost'. My respect for Tommy Atkins is boundless - but - a clutch of their 'Whitehall Warriors' badly need a spell in the jungle with 40 Commando.

Egg on my face again with the recent moan about matelots never being seen in 'uniform proper' in public. The Navy News carried a full page and a half on L.G.B.T. and adherents 'properly booted and spurred' in their parade through the metropolis, greeted by tumultuous applause when, conducting



the Gay Pride March. What (L.G.) spells out I understand but the (B.T. +) has me fooled at present; sounds like the broadband advertisement put in your face at every TV interlude.

The march was organized to celebrate their freedom, and given official sanction by the presence of Rear Admiral Jim Higham; that cache of spare Admirals does come in handy.

The allied subject of gender equality in the military was given prominence on the award of an M.B.E. to the R.E.M.E. Captain who transitioned from male to female. 'She' was cited as a 'trailblazer role model' to increasing numbers, so deserving of the gong.

The complexity of life in uniform figured in reasons females could not crew submarines, because macerators on loo pedestals could not cope with sanitary towels, TRUE; a back up in the bog, with a month's patrol yet to elapse, would really have the crew up the fabled creek. My, improper thought that it was to prevent an outbreak of hanky-panky behind the wardroom curtain; if only life were so simple.

I have close experience of only one 'gay' person whilst in the mob; the one and only Steward on *H.M.S Gorregan*. His broad preferences were generally known, with detailed peccadilloes not known, neither of which were paraded or flaunted. He was as smart as a new pin, small in stature, excellent company in our small band of shipmates, and handsome to boot. Ashore in those pokey

little places where we sat on the bottom at low tide he was an asset; local ladies, in our age status orbit, found him a magnet.

Fair to say, in basic, I must have been similar, preference for young ladies most apparent; any odd peccadilloes kept secret. Being self conscious, to a degree, ego helped by standing amongst the worldly.

Thoughts on sexual matters are now of a 'purely academic nature'. RELIEF, when pushing on towards ninety years, comes from having the urge to PROCREATE like a demented chimp, 'Get to hell off your back!' Oh! the freedom - if someone organises a march I may put my name down, sigh of blessed relief leaving one's mind free to contemplate fried tomatoes on a couple of crisp hot hash browns.

I wonder if the royal Navy will follow show biz. example with a section, commonly named, The Pink Mafia in news print. One is led to conclude their influence is significant, certainly not ignored. Be aware these random rambles vilify no one or their preferences.

I would be a turnip head not to recognize them and give thought to them, in a profession I once chose as an adolescent.



Mentioned a 'new short missile' a couple of letters ago named Martlet; suitable for use in small boats etc. Official reports now wax lyrical about its trial.

The actual trials; a vessel entering and leaving harbour with its various trial mounts uncovered, flaunted even, was one suggestion, it proving such a light, handy, cheapish, lethal and fault-free tool; issue to ship can be immediate for the kind of asymmetrical warfare gaining preference today.

See the picture of it fixed to our

common 30 mm cannon mounting; range is as much again as the 30 mm; missiles near instant pace of one and a half times the speed of sound, sensors tracking targets at 5 kilometer range.



The M.O.D. could earn a Gold Star with make and mend as a sweetener for a 'close in-weapon system' that really does what it says on the tin.

If that sounds hawkish - I ask, are you exasperated being constantly crapped upon by seagulls?

Thought that got a bit out of hand half way through.

Have you an opinion on the subject?