

Hello Shipmates,

I have mentioned naval shipbuilding at Babcock's small yard in Devon before. They are lauded in Ireland as constructors of their new class of Offshore Patrol Vessels. Five star build quality, problem free trials, fit for service, virtually straight off the blocks, extolled in Irish Parliament as 'value for money'!

Surprise, surprise, our noble lords decide that yard must be 'shut down' for lack of further orders. They are able to enact this folly as Government own a lump of its shares, allowing it to block desires of 'on-site working board of directors'.

Meanwhile, 'back at the ranch' - B.A.E. Clyde, not long ago, launched *H.M.S. Forth*, first of five, new type O.P.V's for the R.N. On trials, more than one hundred defects were high-lighted - the



least of which was 'bolt heads fixed with glue', can you believe that?, life rafts that would not deploy; that must mean the crew 'cast off under a death sentence.

B.A.E. accepted a £15 million charge due to 'ongoing quality issues'. Their chief executive Charles Woodward is on record as saying, 'As we start building type 26 frigates, lessons are being learned (*not 'have been learnt'*) from

this, making our maritime business 'Match Fit'.

Where does this 'grand panjandrum' learn such 'horseshit' (word allowed in the Oxford English Dictionary)?

Would you - would the Nation, put building of future 'Trident' in the hands of such people, to misuse, waste, the nation's -our - money?

One learns the M.O.D. has just brought building of future type 31 export frigates to a grinding halt. The fond hope that they finally learn a lesson is dashed on seeing the R.U.S.I. (Royal United Services Institute) report; the top defence 'think tank'. It's about the cash!!! We learn 'Royal Navy and wider maritime abilities' were strangled because operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were funded by the Naval Support Budget. Not a lot of salt water in either of those locations!

U.K. government boasts fifth or sixth largest military budget in the world at £38 billion, after the U.S.A., Russia, China, India and France. No one, it seems, is too concerned about what hardware is forthcoming for that sum. Following B.A.E's. nineteen (19) year development for, a much needed, maritime patrol aircraft Nimrod, all British manufacture, a star in its species, the programme was cancelled after an expenditure of £4 billion.

It is a gross embarrassment to read the U.S. bureau's experts comment on such a performance, referring also to £6.2 billion spent on a pair of, so called, Super Carriers; quote ' never has a

country spent so much to achieve less in modern history'. That overblown title is quietly being modified, if you keep an eye on sections of the 'think tank', which now says they are not intended to be 'traditional aircraft carriers' but rather, a strange animal called an 'airfield option' for the R.A.F. to deploy Britain's 'expeditionary F35 Jet Force.

What a disgrace the R.A.F. have taken over; Fleet Air Arm, for a second time in its history, again, leaving a 'toothless skeleton'.

A fanfare left Blighty's shores with the *Queen Elizabeth* crossing the Atlantic 'guarded' (?) by the Duke Frigate. That frigate was not a 'towed array' version to keep Russian subs. away from gathering 'sound signatures' and 'photos of underwater hull shape, prop size' etc.

What was the frigate guarding? Maybe those 'dim dicks' in the crew who 'drunk and disorderly' were to urinate on cars and people from the club balcony.

One hero thought the scene was a replay of the U.K. market towns, when the club turn out, jobs negotiating with police in a language to make ones ears burn. He tried to push a 'female U.S. police member' about. She 'tazered' him in short order before a paddy wagon ride to the pokey.

Another shed load of goodwill destroyed for the next R.N. vessel to visit Miami My solution would have been to strip them of their uniform, supply address of nearest U.K. consul so they could purchase a fare home at their own expense. The press report of that incident warrants it!

Tatty bye Shipmates.

Disgusted of Newington

