

# H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

A MAGAZINE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

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**CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION, ROBIN SMITH**

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Superb - Defending Britain Since 1710





## ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

The much trumpeted (Integrated Defence & Security review) a step change promised by newly elected government with two classes of frigate about to start rolling off the slipways has come to nought, deferred for 1 year? Surprise! Surprise! Culprit is, of course, Covid; Covid 19. All things that fail to cut the mustard in 2020 is Covid's fault, reduced trains, ditto bus service, crucially my medical centre, even the mighty N.H.S..

Today's paper says their P.R. department works harder than the doctor population to keep their myth 'healthy'. I know it has many fans in the Association, how many examples are needed to dispel the delusion. To heap praise on abject failure is now the 'British Way'.

I was in a lane, in Berengave, a stone's throw from our chairman's door, last week; also my camera was not in the car to record this prime example of the 'British Way'. A Highway Maintenance van pulled up, a lady alighted, opened the back door, took out a plastic shopping bag - carrier bag. She carried it and its contents to the opposite lane and upended it into a hole. I could see it was cold-lay tarmac, which was then subject to a twenty second dance, to compact and smooth, level'ish. Honest truth. Sequel! I am certain in this very wet weather, hydraulic shock will evacuate the hole before twilight. Try a stab at costs, infrastructure, vehicle, operator, health & safety risk assessment and so on, ad nauseam.

I was tempted to travel to a north London destination of some importance, to me, some days ago. I researched road works, plus the congestion charge, plus vehicle emission charge, plus availability of parking, plus about four hours cost of that; one realizes the motorist is a cash cow to Metropolis mayor, Sadiq Khan. More cycle lanes are being rushed in. The result; motoring chaos; you can only be Mr Mayor's enemy. Why any tourist would contemplate a visit to our capital, also known as 'rip off Londonistan', must have deep pockets.

Check this on your electronics, (T.F.L.). The Transport for London employs 500 bodies on over £100,000 per annum. A recently retired T.F.L. chief earned £508,301 - last year his department faces bankruptcy - but paid himself £133,586 bonus, that's £641,887 - before the pension and employment package. How we have the gall to call Venezuela corrupt, while public servants gorge on the teat of tax payers cash to that extent.

Action for Today - shun the Metropolis, visit, instead, the village of Lesser Snot Fester for a red carpet welcome, parking free, first glass of swill on the Mayoress - book early, there's



going to be a rush. (Now! Prepare to tack)

Another P.R. Department, as expected, gave Battle of Britain day their full attention again this year, saving us from a Nazi beach landing.

I take nothing from the R.A.F. for execution of their campaign against Herman the German, or the semi-trained boys who 'flew for their lives', and ours. But it is fanciful to keep claiming 'fighter command' was all that prevented the realm from being occupied; grossly inaccurate in fact. Fleet Air Arm battles, off Norway, set the seal for that.

**IT WAS A DISASTER FOR THE KRIEGSMARINE GNEISENAU  
TORPEDOED BY SUBMARINE CLYDE, JUNE 20TH;  
SCHARNHORST BY DESTROYER ACASTA, JUNE 8TH 1940.**

**NEITHER WAS REPAIRED IN TIME FOR ANY CHANNEL ADVENTURES DURING THE  
BATTLE OF BRITAIN.**

Royal Navy assets in home waters; approximately 50 -- 'five oh' destroyers plus several cruisers between Plymouth and the Thames Estuary. They would find several hundred modified motor barges from France their very own turkey shoot. The German navy never regained a surface punch following the R.N. destroyer fights in fjords at that time - That is beyond dispute. Add to that the R.N. once again, rescued British and French troops from mainland Norway, minus Air Force cover.

There was not a lot at Dieppe. In Crete the R.N. did it again with absolutely zero air cover, at monstrous cost in destroyers and sailors. Do not forget the R.N. was also involved in its biggest and longest fight at this time; the Battle of the Atlantic, ongoing every single day of the war. It was conducted minus R.A.F. support for the first three years. The Royal Navy never abandoned our soldiers when in need. Admiral Cunningham, when questioned about the cost of Crete replied: 'It takes two years to build a destroyer; it takes two hundred years to build a tradition'



**Where are his sort up at M.O.D. today, banging the R.N. drum?**

The R.A.F. had a 'strategic purpose' at that time, to quote Air Marshal Harris: 'To let Germany reap the whirlwind'. From the evidence he did just that, very well.

I feel from that time the R.A.F. 'strategic purpose' is a limp wrist, to my untutored mind. The R.A.F. during the Libyan debacle with operating space hired from Italian civil airfield, tanking out to Libya seemed absurd in the knowledge P.M.

Cameron had just sold all the superb F.A.A. assets for scrap value to the U.S. Marines (still to this day front line planes for them) on U.S.S. America. What an accolade for that private venture by De Havilland and Rolls Royce. The *Shar* sea harrier heavier-than-air-machine extraordinary. It burnished the reputation of our proper Air Arm in its Falkland swan song.

The R.A.F.'s strategic purpose in that war was attempt to 'grandstand' with use of fifteen tankers to get one bomber from Ascension to Stanley to get one dumb bomb on its runway, then a fault forced it to land in Chile.

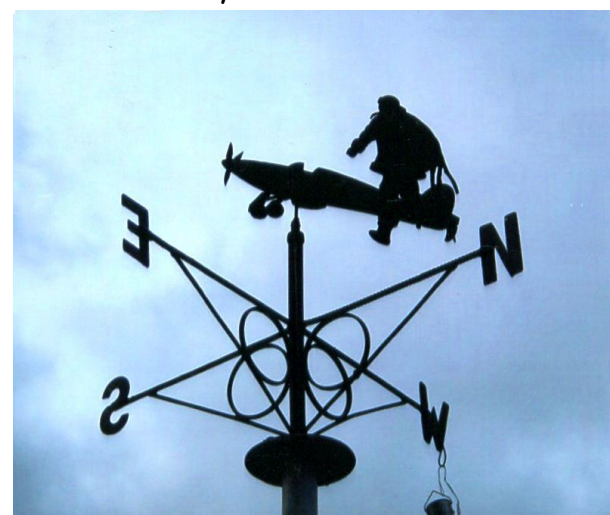
Cannot help feeling the cost of that one bomb tanked so far would have paid for the *Shar*, sold by Cameron. I see in my mind's eye that evocative aerial picture of them



lined up at Davis Monthan air base in Tucson, a few minutes car ride incidentally from my late brother's home, my mentor and role model ... A few minutes the other way he was killed at work in the copper mine. I apologise for giving him a mention, but we were in the location.

Now the treasury has denied the Queen's Navee its rightful ships, we may as well get Mayor Khan of London to make overtures to the mayor of Magnitogorsk with a view of twinning their cities. An opportunity to kill two birds with one stone here, while furlough money is rolling off our presses, backed by nothing but fresh hot air, we could run off a few million roubles; Vodka money don't you know.

Do not take my rants about the R.A.F. out of context; I am a fan in parts. On the 50th



anniversary of the Battle of Britain a very detailed specially bound, limited edition book of the air war was compiled. H.M.Q. got a copy as did the P.M plus a mere handful of notables. Each paragraph was headed by a lovely silhouette relevant to that event. In an aircraft magazine a few of these were shown, one in particular took my fancy, so I copied it up to a size or two. I transferred it to a sheet of 1/8" brass plate, drilled and filed to make end result as shown in photo. A plane person will recognise the Hurricane and pilot

in his 40's kit, he's told the wind in my back garden those past 20 odd years; perhaps another manifestation of the Steptoe in my soul.

Still with R.A.F. I learn from a TV biography on Barnes Wallace, the bouncing bomb was a pure naval requirement-programme, pooh-poohed by R.A.F. for first years of research and development funded out of the R.N budget, as a grand waste of bomber time. After Taranto the R.N. could see its potential for rolling its way into busy harbours.

I was in the large Tesco hereabouts to peruse the Christmas card section. In just two years the 'equality works' have had the first part of that title removed from the shelves. I am not a 'bible thumping zealot' by a mile but, as an Anglo-Saxon Englishman who ever ticked the Christian box when a questionnaire asked that multi-answer question, I am grossly embarrassed by what a gutless crew are now in charge of our direction when that simple basic tradition can be eradicated in approximately twenty-four months.

There is rejoicing in the base of Anglican Church goers, that Archbishop Welby has taken a three month Sabbatical. He abdicated his duties over what is the cornerstone of Christianity; that duty was to me and mine. This head of the Church of England will still be able to pick up his three hundred quid a day cash from the House of Lords. I imagine him flouncing in, in his highly embroidered ankle-length frock to sit on his front bench dictating my life's direction. That is a tradition I expect him to hang onto with clenched teeth.

Thrown a bit last week to read *God had, in fact, died*; all newsprint headlines in large black letters reported it. Several referred to the body as a Saint. The general public consider train spotters, say, a very weird set of anoraks; or airplanes enthusiasts who haunt every chain link fence round any runway with their cameras and notebooks. The first group mentioned, who lost their *God/Saint* are the ultimate freaks whose grasp of reality so often leave one amazed. The object of adoration, operated in what they call 'the beautiful game'. Beauty is, indeed, in the eye of the beholder, but this had me fooled - perhaps an easy exercise.....

I struggle to name another pastime - sport - so unsportsmanlike, with sly attempts to break ankles prevalent; feigned sleights (fouls) with writhing on the ground, attempting to gain an unfair advantage. Constant triumphalism, yucky to observe in a culture where the winner I was taught was magnanimous. Crowds who attend will fight a team from the next town with all possible venom that can be mustered. Recall the Monty Python sketch, *Gob of the Month*, glitterati of the game clearing throats to pollute the pitch with their discards on full TV coverage. Cash flows into turnstiles like the Amazon's output; graft and corruption as ever its close companion. Have I failed to mention the *God* in question is a small portly South American, Argentinean; drug-addled, in need of a brace of working girls every few days. All openly reported; a saintly role model indeed.

Relax Shipmates, it's only my musing. Please, no bomb threats from footie pundits, accept my humble apologies, I did not set out to offend as I do recognise it to be a recognised religion, paramount to all other things.



AirCraFt Carrier  
INS Viraat (ex HMS Hermes)  
off the coast of Surat

It is now cut and dried, dear old *Hermes* then *Viraat*, Indian Navy has failed to attract a preservation scheme in either nation. Her life of fifty-five years embraces her spell as Falkland's Flag Ship, peak of her warship life. She is upon the beach at Alang in the province of Gujarat, India right now; no doubt the torch has made enormous inroads. Four

million Stirling was paid by the Shipbreakers Trade Organisation. For two sovereign states to get such character use and pedigree from a 1944 build Centaur class light flat top has been real value for money surely. I just revel in the fact a Private Venture aircraft, propeller less, capable of vertical flight was conceived and built in Britain. Provided the ultimate in strike planes for both states when the merde hit the fan, and vessel was in her dotage. That would have been pure science fiction in 1944. Here is a lovely tail piece; she was laid down as HMS Elephant; had a ship of that name ever graced the fleet in history?

Sad to see, as Brexit meanders towards a conclusion, it could be acrimonious; who in their right mind would ask a politician to settle such thorny questions? They are, after all, our N.A.T.O. ally, cannot think of stronger glue than that to stay friends, with Mr. Putin just up the road. An E.U. threat to cut off - top up access to European gas pipe lines and electricity if their negotiators fail to get 'what they want' is extreme and vicious to my mind. I feel the situation can be laid at our own door when Rolls Royce has begged for business these many years for their small nuclear reactors. Self-sufficiency and an easy goal over the years, wasted by braying, unemployable fraudsters at Westminster. Last fortnight's revelation on size of that fraud, by members and informed cronies, swamp rational thought.

Another ramble through my grey matter with the thought 'enough is enough', for any old piece of stuff so feel I should now go and stand on the naughty step for vilifying my peers; they are brass-necked so will make no difference.

I do hope Christmas was a relaxing family time for y'all, and ready for the fray in twenty-one.

Fare thee all well,

Keep wearing the muzzle.



## 2020 REALLY was the YEAR OF THE RAT



1. We were all in hiding
  2. We only went out for food
  3. We stored food to eat later
  4. When people came too close we ran away
  5. 2021 is the year of the OX (otherwise known as a bullock)
- the plural of which almost describes my feelings for 2020

# The battle for Britain was won by the many ... not just The Few

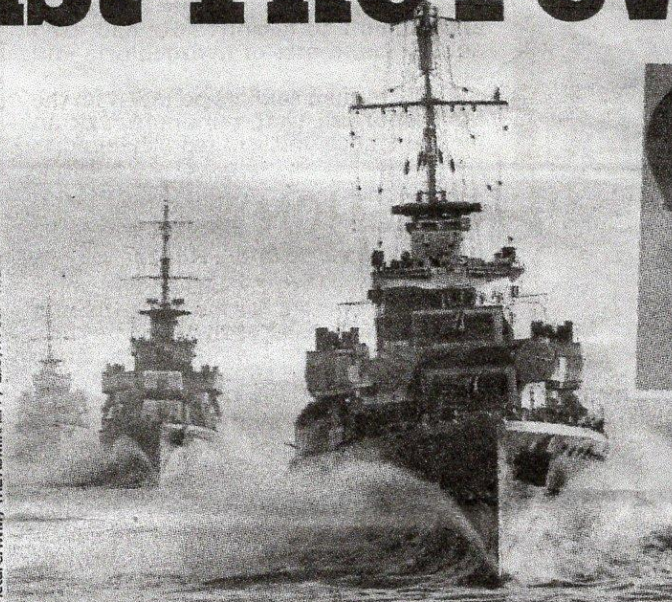
LEO MCKINSTRY'S article about the RAF's World War II aircraft is the stuff of Boy's Own derring-do, but it propagates a myth that needs debunking (Mail). Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader said: 'The Battle of Britain was the lot of us, not just the RAF.' Indeed, perhaps it should be the Battle for Britain and the many, not the Battle of Britain and The Few. Sir Max Hastings has described the Royal Navy as our best fighting service in World War II. Hitler's invasion plan was flawed and, while command of the air mattered, command of the sea was the critical issue. In effect, the strategic objective of the Battle of Britain was to ensure the barrier to invasion imposed by the Royal Navy could not be breached. The Royal Navy fought the Axis Powers from day one of the war to VJ Day; no other Armed Service was in action for the whole war. The so-called Phoney War of 1939 was not phoney for British sailors. Indeed, a U-boat torpedoed SS Athenia on day one and September 3 is commemorated annually as Merchant Navy Day. There are 2,936 pilots and ground crew named on the Battle of Britain memorial on London's Victoria Embankment. The Fleet Air Arm's 804 Naval Air Squadron and 808 NAS, and other naval and Royal Marines aviators, flew alongside the RAF; not all were RAF flyers as claimed on the RAF website. The aerial battle over the skies of England lasted for three and a half months in 1940, but the war continued for five more years. Britain stood alone in 1940 and Churchill rightly praised The Few, encouraging the nation for the struggles to come. Churchill said the

Picture: IWM / THE ADMIRALTY / CROWN COPYRIGHT

'U-boat peril' concerned him most and the convoy system and the Royal Navy's development of anti-submarine warfare tactics laid the foundation for ultimate victory. Without food, supplies and arms arriving by merchant ship, Britain would have been sunk. Naval aviation was key to victory and naval aircraft such as the Fairey Swordfish biplane in frontline service and the Grumman Martlet and Hellcat should be revered like the Hurricane, Lancaster and Spitfire. The celebrated naval aviator and test pilot, Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown CBE DSC AFC RN, survived the sinking of the escort carrier HMS Audacity in the North Atlantic in December 1941 and,

as the castaway on the 3,000th edition of Desert Island Discs, his response about flying from aircraft carriers is worth listening to. The aircrew in their flying machines were part of a team effort of Allied sailors and marines, soldiers, airmen and civilians who contributed to victory. RAF planes helped win the war, but it is revisionist history to claim they won it.

*Rear Admiral Jeremy Larken DSO,  
Commodore Steve Auty RN,  
Captain Martin Reed RD,  
Commander Mike Evans RN, Commander  
Paul Fisher RN, Commander Sharkey  
Ward DSC AFC RN, Lieutenant Colonel  
Ian Berchem RE, Lieutenant Commander  
Lester May RN, London NW1.*



**On patrol:  
Royal Navy  
ships in 1943.  
Inset: Pilot  
Captain Eric  
'Winkle'  
Brown**



# ADRIFT IN THE BAY OF BISCAY

By Flying Officer Leslie Holmes of Coastal Command

*Afloat in a rubber dinghy for 17hrs on a stormy sea was the thrilling but unpleasant experience of Flying Officer JL Holmes, of Cheadle Stoke on Trent.*

**W**e had been on patrol for just over 3hrs. The first indication of trouble came from the Captain. He commented that oil was flowing over the wing from the port outer engine. This may not have been serious but needed watching. As the leak increased rapidly a course was set for the nearest land, 200miles away. I prepared a message for base saying we were returning due to engine trouble.



Things happened quickly now. Without further warning the oil pressure suddenly collapsed and the engine raced madly for a few moments. The faulty engine was switched off to prevent fire. It soon became plain that we were rapidly losing height and all our efforts to prevent this such as jettisoning our bomb load proved futile. The captain gave the order 'Dinghy, dinghy, prepare for ditching!' The drill was carried out immediately.

As the wireless operator sent an SOS I worked out the position of the aircraft so this could be added to the distress signal to give a good chance of being picked up. As the other members of the crew took up their ditching stations the SOS and our position were sent out again and again, and to our relief acknowledged by our base. As there was nothing else we could do the wireless operator and I took up our emergency positions and braced ourselves for the crash.

The actual touch down on the sea was carried out remarkably well, particularly as there was a ratty heavy swell running at the time. We felt a slight warning impact as the tail hit first and just had time to brace ourselves for the final crash as the nose buried itself in the water. There was a violent shock accompanied by a splintering sound as the nose was torn away and a wave of seawater and petrol swept through the aircraft.

A moment later we were all on our feet and climbing through open roof hatches on to the wing of the aircraft, passing up the emergency equipment for the dinghy. The aircraft was floating on an even keel although heavy seas were breaking over her and we managed to salvage equipment we needed. It was disconcerting to find that the dinghy had not come out of the wing

according to plan, but a few moments' work with an axe on the part of the Flight Engineer soon got over that and with great relief we all piled into the dinghy as it floated free.

Apart from a wetting, the whole crew of eight were safely aboard, the only casualty a sprained ankle sustained by one of the gunners who had been thrown from his place at the time of the crash.

As we cut the line and floated away from our rather pathetic looking aircraft we were all in pretty high spirits, probably from relief at finding we were all safe. We soon realised however, that this adventure might not be so funny after all. A rubber dinghy is very far removed from a luxury liner and with eight men on board, and equipment, it soon proved shockingly cramped. The first hour was almost exclusively occupied in sorting out our legs and arriving at something like a comfortable position. Everyone was very polite at first but as the sea began to make its presence felt a greenish silence crept over the company, punctuated by sounds that reminded one of an Isle of Man steamer in happier days. It is very difficult to be seasick with dignity. Still as everyone was literally in the same boat it didn't really matter very much.

Several aircraft passed overhead but although we fired off distress signals they failed to see us and as daylight faded we realised that we would certainly have to spend at least one night under these conditions. By this time the wind had risen and the swell was reaching uncomfortably large proportions and heavy squalls of rain did not do anything to improve the situation. The dinghy shipped quite a lot of water and we were forced to take turns at baling out. As we lost several balers in the early stages we had to use cups from our thermos flasks. By constant use these did the trick and kept the water down reasonably.

During the night the wireless operator developed an attack of malaria, and this put him out of action for some hours.

Just before dawn, about twelve hours after we had taken to the dinghy, the engineer thought he could see a ship. We all sat up and began to take notice but eventually decided that he had mistaken one of the many large wave crests for a ship in the bad light. Just in case he had been right we fired off another red light and resigned ourselves to another spell of waiting and hoping. About a quarter hour later we suddenly heard the sound of an aircraft overhead and as we searched the sky for any sign of it a series of *Very lights*<sup>1</sup> were fired off from overhead and to our amazement, lit up by the glow, we sighted a large vessel about a mile away. We wasted no time but fired off a succession of distress signals and to our relief saw that the vessel, which we could now see was a British cruiser, was heading straight towards us. As she

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<sup>1</sup> Invented by E W Very 19<sup>th</sup> Century U.S. naval ordnance officer



slowed down and commenced to circle us our spirits rose with a bound and we all felt that in a few minutes a comfortable bed and a hot meal would be within our reach. After she had circled us steadily for an hour we began to realise that patience was still going to be required. It seemed that she was waiting for something smaller to arrive to pick us up. At last, 17 hours after we had boarded the dinghy, the Captain called us up on a megaphone and said that he would take us on board.

Even then our troubles were not quite over. The sea was far too rough for a boat to be lowered and as the cruiser manoeuvred carefully alongside a huge wave picked us up and swept us straight past the ship, right out of reach of the lines that had been thrown to us.

Once again the ship slowly circled and moved into position and once again an unwelcome interruption upset all our plans. Just as we were within about 200 yards of safety, 'action stations' was sounded on board the cruiser and to our horror we saw six low flying enemy fighters sweeping around us in a wide circle. The cruiser's turrets moved into position and with a tremendous roar her full armament, including six inch guns, blazed into action. The Fokker pilots evidently didn't like this and soon disappeared into the distance. The third attempt at rescue succeeded. As we drifted alongside the cruiser we paddled with everything that we could find. Ropes were thrown to us and we were dragged to the ship's side. A net was lowered over the side and as we climbed stiffly out of the dinghy, members of the ship's crew came down the side to meet us and helped us reach the deck.

Five minutes later we were all snugly in bed complete with hot water bottles and a very welcome cup of hot tea in the ship's sick bay. Once more the RAF had cause to say 'Thank God we've got a Navy...'

***This is the story told by my father of his rescue from the Bay of Biscay in 1943 (Ruth Hollins, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire)***

#### RAF REPORT

21/08/1943 58 Sqn Halifax II BB279 Coded Q Op: A/S Patrol, RAF Homsley South. Took off at 13:15 hrs

S/L A T Brock

F/O V H Buswell RCAF

P/O J L Holmes

Sgt W L Clare

P/O S Carlisle

F/Sgt W H Cockburn

F/Sgt W T Gibbs

F/L S W Lambourne

Ditched in North Sea in position 4900N 0812W after engine failure at 16:35 hrs. The crew was sighted in their dinghy by a Leigh Light Wellington when they fired flares. They were all picked up the next morning by a cruiser. The only injury from the ditching was F/L Lambourne who had twisted his ankle but on rescue P/O Carlisle was taken to hospital after suffering from malaria.

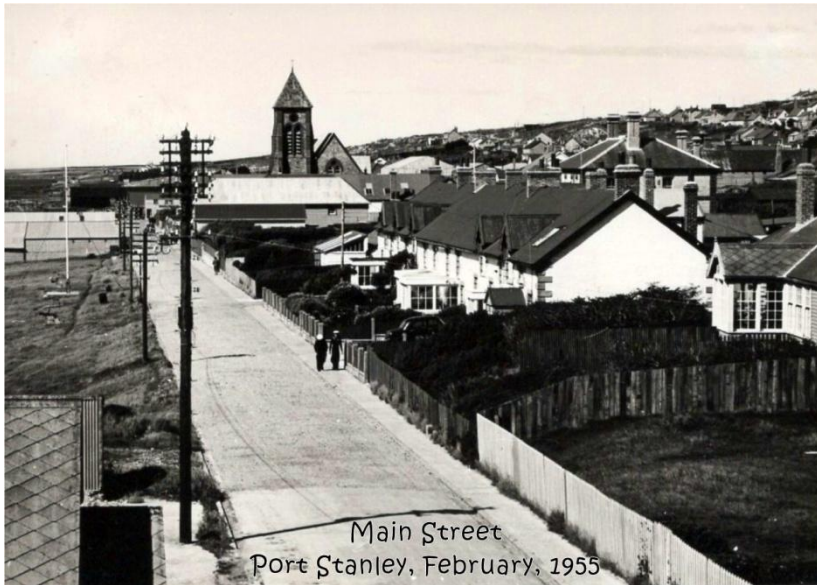


# NOZZERS GO WEST Part 19



*Port Stanley was the destination and they steamed out of the Straits and then north-east through the uninviting, grey, cold and miserable waters of the South Atlantic. At those latitudes, they learned, there was not much to choose between the grey cold and uninviting waters of the South Pacific or the South Atlantic. Both were rough, both were cold and both looked decidedly uninviting and neither had anything remotely romantic about them, unlike the tropics that they had left behind.*

**T**hey came to a stop and dropped anchor off Port Stanley at 0800 on Sunday. It didn't take long to take in the first sight of the place, it could nearly all be seen from the upper deck. In the main, the town consisted of one road that ran parallel to the water's edge, with a few houses dotted along its length. The bulk of the buildings were clustered to the right hand of end of town. There were hardly any people to be seen. But what there was plenty of were sheep up on the hills behind the road, and penguins.



Nevertheless, Ginger was not backward when it came to going ashore. They had endured a bit of rough weather and a trip to *terra firma* felt like a good idea, even if it did mean wearing an overcoat. It was a good move anyway because straight after dinner, visitors began arriving by the boatload and the boats were kept busy ferrying people ashore and returning loaded up with visitors. But what they hadn't taken into account was that Sunday was not the best day to visit the town because most of the town had had come to visit

them. By contrast with the thousands that visited the ship in Valparaiso, the total bag from the Falklands netted 168.

Port Stanley was the biggest town on the islands; it was a town of sorts although the locals had undoubtedly called it a town out of loyalty and to lend a bit of prestige to the place. It had been a naval port of sorts more or less since the turn of the century and a whaling station before that, although there was little sign of either left. As a naval port, it must have more a stopping-off point than a dockyard because there was no sign of a dockside crane or anything else associated with docking and repair of ships.

The cluster of houses out to the right, as they looked toward the land, included the island's hotel and the Governor's Residence complete with flagpole and flag outside. Naturally the



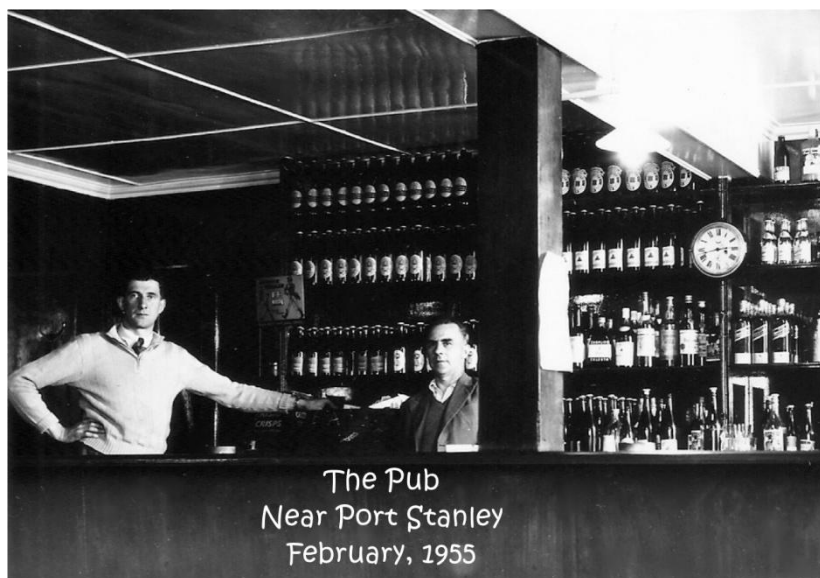
officers and senior rates congregated in the hotel and the boys cluttering up the place was frowned upon.

Opposite side of the road to the small landing jetty, a road led off up a fairly steep hill. There was a sheepskin factory on the corner. As one of the locals had suggested they would find a place for a beer or two up that hill which appeared to be the direction to head in. If they were not wanted in the hotel they would find their own place.

After puffing their way to the top, they found the road petered out just over the brow of the hill and were confronted with open fields in front of them.. A few voiced their concerns as to whether they'd been sent on a wild goose chase looking for a pub up there and if this was some sort of Islander's 'in-joke' that was played on unsuspecting strangers. However, as there was a track they decided to venture a little further and their exploring doggedness paid dividends soon after when they spotted a small single storey place, not much bigger than a shack, in the valley ahead. The place, made mostly out of corrugated iron sheets, had lights on and, as there was nothing else as far as the eye could see on those barren hills, they agreed that it must be the place.

It was indeed the place and very welcoming it turned out to be. It was a far better deal altogether than the hotel in 'town'. There were a few others from the ship there already and the staff seemed pleased to see them as they entered.

Ginger stepped up to the bar and ordered beers for himself and his companions, eager to get the lubrication flowing.



"We've just walked what seems like miles over the hills to get here", he told the barman as he was being served. He thought that maybe they had walked the long way round and was prepared to accept ridicule when they enlightened him that their walk had been in vain. But no laughter was forthcoming.

"Yes, it is a bit of a step or two", came the reply.

"A brisk walk to keep us warm", Ginger told him with a laugh. 'It's bloody freezing out there'.

"Freezing. What are you talking about? It's not cold; it's a lovely day today. It's the warmest day we've had for three years".

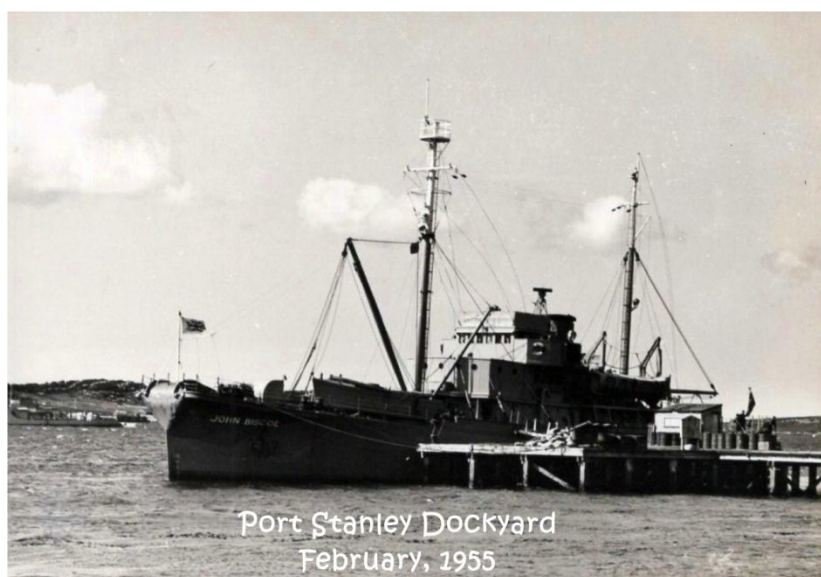
That summed it up. That was the Falkland Islands. Apart from sheep and penguins there was

nothing to talk about. Highlight of that man's day was to be able to talk about the weather and to boast that it was the warmest day they'd had in three years.

There was very little to do in Port Stanley and, unless looking at hills and sheep was their thing, very little to see either. One thing that did catch the eye however was a small church about half way between the landing jetty and the hotel. The church, which was just on the side of the road and facing the sea, had a large arch in front of it. That arch was quite tall and had four spans, one from each corner that culminated in a point in the centre of the topmost point. Upon closer scrutiny and with advice from locals, it turned out to be a whale jawbone and undoubtedly a relic from the Island's whaling days. The word spread quickly about the arch being the jawbone of a whale and it became almost a shrine as 'pilgrims' from the ship clamoured for photographs.

There was a souvenir shop and although it had been payday a couple of days earlier, Ginger was learning. He was holding onto his money as far as it was practical to do so, for a decent run ashore in a warmer climate. He wasn't sure where their next port of call would be but they were not likely to head any further south, it had to be north and to somewhere warmer.

After the PX store in Guantanamo Bay naval base and the street traders of Kingston, a Falkland Islands souvenir store was not altogether memorable - although maybe it was memorable but for the wrong reasons. Nevertheless Ginger couldn't resist a visit. Gift shops, toy shops, souvenir shops all took him back to his school days when he would stand and stare in the toyshop windows of Norwich. He hadn't wanted anything even way back then but there was something magical about such places and he just loved to look. He bought his mum a musical box in the shape of a Swiss chalet. It had nothing to do with the Falklands and was probably not even made there but he knew his mother would like it plus, he felt that he had done something that would show he hadn't forgotten her and she would have 'something from abroad' to show



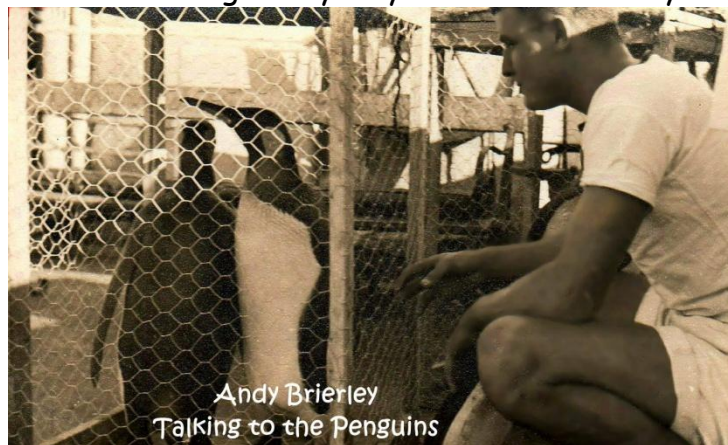
her friends. That fragile wooden chalet took up precious space in his not over generously spaced locker where he hoped it would remain intact until he arrived home and could hand it over. That chalet music box didn't really sum up the traditional 'present from the Falklands' but his mother wouldn't know what the Falklands looked like or that, other than as an ornament, it had no use.

Unlike another Falklands souvenir that the islanders were keen to foist upon them: sheepskins.

The factory opposite the landing jetty turned out sheepskins by the hundred. Every time the boat came into the landing jetty someone from the factory, or shop, whatever it was, would appear as if by magic to extol the advantages of having 'the finest sheepskin you'll ever find anywhere in the world and from our own reared sheep'.

They were very cheap and, for that reason alone, many found their way back onboard. As, in fact, did their previous owners who augmented the ship's meat ration a treat, with the galley staff displaying their culinary skills on all manner of dishes, providing they were mutton based.

Other passengers who managed to hitch a ride from the Falklands were some penguins that were destined for a zoo in Florida. But unlike their erstwhile playmates, the sheep, they were alive when they came aboard. Although they may not have felt very alive being transported in wood and wire netting



Andy Brierley  
Talking to the Penguins

boxes, not much bigger than they were and with no room to move around. Or when it was ordered that they were to be hosed down every hour, with sea water from the fire hydrant. Being King Penguins, maybe they expected royal treatment but that courtesy was not forthcoming and their dignity was insulted even further when they were forced the only fish that was available on board - herrings in tomato sauce.

They had left the Falklands on Thursday afternoon, which meant another weekend at sea and by this time everyone on board knew what that entailed. This time they had an extra burden of sea exercises with a couple of frigates, **Veryan Bay** and **Burghead Bay**, to help pass the time. By now it was fairly plain that their agenda was geared up to make sure the weekends, wherever possible, would be at sea and being at sea, just prior to entering harbour, any harbour, meant frantic cleaning, painting and polishing, which had to be fitted in around those exercises.

But this time it looked as if they were about to get a change of routine. Maybe their newly appointed commodore, who had acquired the name of '*Fearless Freddy*' due to his knack of being able to find a storm, gale or hurricane at the drop of a hat and then steer them into the middle of it, had seen the errors of his ways and realised they would like a leisurely weekend with nothing to do, when the Tannoy sounded forth at dinnertime on Saturday with ...'Make and Mend!'

The instant jubilations were cut prematurely short when that call was followed by another.

'Stand fast seamen. Both watches of seamen paint iron decks.'

They should have known better.

But maybe all was not to be doom and gloom when, on Sunday as the church service ended, the ship stopped. The climate had changed quite a lot over the past couple of days and another day would have helped the temperature rise even more. Maybe he had a heart after all, or a twinge of conscience and was about to allow them a Sunday swim over the side. But no such luck was forthcoming. His injection of religion hadn't reached the humanity level, as almost at once the Tannoy crackled into life.

'Both watches of seamen turn to. Wash off the ship's side.'

*For those in peril on the sea, never was more apt.*

The next morning at 0930 and looking as if she'd just come straight from the builder's yard, all gleaming and shining brightly, HMS Superb entered Montevideo.





# THE RN ECHO-CLASS SURVEY VESSELS



*HMS Echo and HMS Enterprise are the Royal Navy's hydrographic oceanographic survey vessels (SVHO). Designed to survey both coastal and ocean waters, they have also proved flexible and adaptable to a variety of other roles. Here we look at the history, design and service life of these two ships.*

## BACKGROUND

In 1997 the Royal Navy's hydrographic ships were repainted from white with buff funnels to 'Pusser's grey' this reflected their increasing integration with warfare and utilisation for missions beyond surveying. Amphibious warfare and, in particular, submarine operations need support with high-definition bathymetry and atmospheric data, sometimes in near real-time and new ships enabled by modern data processing and communications technology would provide this. With ever-decreasing hull numbers, and declining manpower strength, the RN wanted its next-generation survey vessels to have a small crew and designed from the outset for other roles. The ships would need to basic self-defence capability and facilities to act as mine warfare logistic support and command ships as well as perform Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) missions. While HMS Scott is optimised for specialist oceanography, the SVHOs have a greater all-round capability, designed mainly for hydrographic survey in the littorals and continental shelf.

In the mid-1990s the RN planned to replace its two remaining coastal survey vessels, HMS Bulldog and Beagle, and the newer HMS Roebuck, with three modern vessels that could conduct both ocean and coastal survey work. It was not until June 2000 that it was confirmed that two ships had been ordered from prime contractor, Vosper Thornycroft. The £130 million project included 25 years of through-life support and the construction of both ships which was sub-contracted to Appledore Shipbuilders in North Devon.

The hulls of both ships were constructed side by side in Appledore's undercover dry dock and the lead ship HMS Echo was floated out into the river on the 2 March 2002, followed a few weeks later by Enterprise on 27 April. Echo was supposed to be completed by August but technical problems at the shipyard and issues with the new azipod propulsion delayed the programme. HMS Enterprise was accepted into service ahead of HMS Echo in September 2003 but her working azipods were removed in Portsmouth. They were donated to Echo in October 2003 so as to speed up her entry into service. HMS Echo formally commissioned on 7 March 2003 but was laid up temporarily in Falmouth awaiting a solution to her propulsion defects. HMS Enterprise was cold-moved to Plymouth, commissioning on 17th October while her crew trained alongside awaiting delivery of new pods.



*Last of the RN conventional survey ships. HMS Roebuck - Just outside Umm Qasr, on the Az Zubayr River (Iraq war, March 2003). Roebuck was originally due to be replaced by HMS Echo but it was decided to extend her time in service until 2014. In the event, she was sold to Bangladesh in 2010 as the MoD searched for savings to fund the war in Afghanistan.*

## PODS

Azipod propulsion was pioneered by ABB in Finland and by the late 1990s, the technology had matured to the stage that they were being fitted to a number of merchant vessels. In simple terms, the DC propulsor motor, directly attached to the propeller is hung from a pod below the stern of the ship. The pod is rotated to achieve steering and electrical power to the pod can be supplied from a generator cited anywhere within the vessel. This has many advantages over conventional shaftline propulsion arrangements. The principle benefits are fuel efficiency, vastly increased manoeuvrability, reduced vibration, simplification of machinery layout and

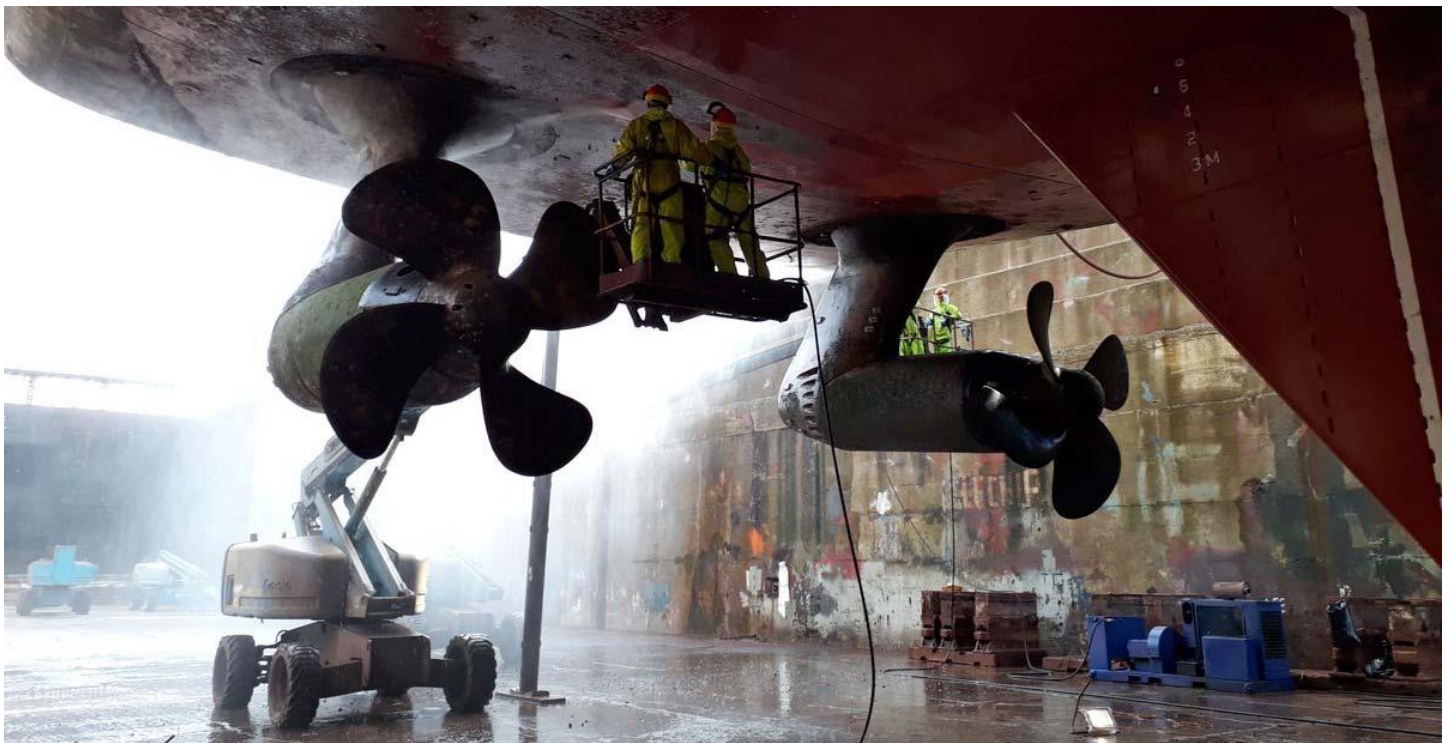
elimination of shafts and rudders. Azipods were initially selected for one of the early iterations the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft designs but later eliminated when they were found not to meet naval shock resistance standards.

Like the Type 45 destroyers, although a less high profile example, the RN took a modest risk by selecting an innovative propulsion solution for the Echo class ships. Unfortunately, the compact Azipods initially fitted to HMS Echo failed. One of their disadvantages is that unlike internal engines, they require expensive dry docking to remove them. ABB eventually paid compensation to the MoD but in the long run, the Integrated Electric Propulsion (IEP) and azipods have proved to be reliable and efficient, ideally suited to the work of the SVHOs.

In combination with the bow thruster, the azipods can rotate the ship on its own axis through 360°. In combination with the ship's dynamic positioning system (DPS), the ship can maintain a stationary position over a particular spot to facilitate surveying operations such as taking seabed samples. Using the differential GPS fit, the ship can achieve a positional accuracy of 20cm while maintaining 6-8 knots. The azipods also considerably simplify berthing; making them the most manoeuvrable ships in the RN, besides the Sandown class minehunters.

Power generation comes from three MAN B&W 6-cylinder RK270 Diesel-Generators with a total power output of 5.4MW, supplemented by a smaller generator, mainly for use in harbour. The PWM (Pulse Width Modulation)-controlled compact azipods are rated at 1.7MW along with the 0.4MW bow thruster. The ship can be controlled by a joystick, traditional helm or automatically via the DPS and integrated navigation system. The VT integrated platform management system (IPMS) controls and monitors power generation, propulsion and auxiliary plant, tank gauging as well as damage control functions and is accessible through workstations around the ship. There are very high levels of automation with the machinery spaces usually unmanned and generation capacity automatically brought on or offline, depending on the ship's speed requirement. The SVHOs are not especially fast, with a maximum speed of around 15 knots, but have a good endurance of around 9,300nm at 12knots.

It is notable how much foreign content was included in the construction of these vessels. The Society of Maritime Industries says that typically 70% of the value of a naval ship contract is in the supply chain, while the construction of the ship itself is only around 30%. Based on a Canadian design, the Echo-class incorporate Finnish azipods, Danish engines and Norwegian sonar systems. Prime contractor Vosper Thornycroft no longer exists, absorbed by BAE Systems (and their Portsmouth facility was subsequently closed). The Appledore yard where they were built closed in 2018. (But in August 2020 it was announced Appledore has been revived once again with a £7M investment from InfraStrata.)



*HMS Enterprise has her bottom cleaned while dry-docked in Falmouth 2018. The azipods actually pull the ship forward, the opposite of conventional shaft line propulsion which push the ship forward through thrust blocks.*

## CORE MISSION

At the heart of the ships is the Integrated Survey System, comprising the Kongsberg Simrad EM1002 Multi-Beam Echo Sounder (MBES) which features a hull-mounted transponder beneath the ship. This is designed for comprehensive and rapid recording of bathymetric and oceanographic data. Additionally, the EM 1002 MBES is optimised for coastal waters down to 1000 meters The EM 3000 MBES is a very high-resolution seabed mapping and inspection system for shallow water. The more basic and EA 400 and EA 500 single beam echo sounders (SBES) are also used to measure depths accurately in shallow waters.

The ship can also deploy off-board sensors from the stern or starboard side. The baltic room has two hydraulic doors that open in the forward starboard side of the ship. A telescopic crane is used to lower payloads over the side of the ship which may include a bottom grab to collect samples from the seabed. To gather accurate data about the water column, sensors such as the conductivity, temperature and depth (CTD) probe, Sound Velocity (SV) Probe or Secchi discs to measure water turbidity (transparency) are lowered vertically. A large hydraulically-raised and lowered A-frame on the quarterdeck is used to deploy instruments towed behind the ship including the undulating oceanographic profiler (UOR) and side scan sonars. A 2-tonne knuckle boom crane is also used to lift static sensors such as tide gauges out of the water or move survey equipment around the quarterdeck.

The modern survey motor boats, SMB Spitfire (HMS Enterprise) and SMB Sapphire (HMS Echo) are designed to operate independently from the ship for short periods, carrying a small group of surveyors for inshore surveys of beaches, ports and estuaries. They can transmit data directly back to the ship for processing.

Skilled hydrographers working on the Echo class ships, equipped with this wide variety of sensors can collect atmospheric, coastal and bathymetric data which can then be rapidly collated and transmitted ashore, potentially for immediate tactical use. More typically, the data is sent to the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) in Taunton for incorporation in globally-respected Admiralty nautical charts or disseminated for scientific use.



*The ships are armed with two Oerlikon 20mm/85 KAA cannons. The gunner is strapped into the GAM-BO1 mounting and manually aims and trains the weapon. These guns have been in service with the RN since the mid-1980s and are basic but adequate for maritime security work. They are supplemented by 3 mini guns and 4 GPMGs for force protection duties.*

The SVHOs were built to Lloyds commercial ship rules and able to operate in a range of extreme climates down to  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Crew accommodation and recreational areas are comfortable, designed for extended periods at sea. All personnel share a double cabin with bunk beds and en-suite facilities, except the CO and XO who have single cabins. The SVHOs use the same 3-watch system used to crew HMS Scott, Protector and the OPVs. The ships' company totals 72, comprising 13 officers, 21 senior rates and 38 junior rates divided into 3 watches. Two of the watches (totalling 48) serve onboard at any one time, working a cycle of 75 days on, 30 days off. This arrangement gives the ships exceptionally high availability, able to remain operational for up to 330 days per year, subject to maintenance requirements. If there is a need to embark additional personnel, there is accommodation for 81 people in total.

Devonport is the home port for the RN's hydrographic ships but their upkeep is done elsewhere and their constant activity sees them spend little time in Plymouth. Maintenance and refits of SVHOs were formerly done by A&P in Falmouth but in October 2018, UK Docks in Middlesborough was awarded a 10-year £150M maintenance contract for HMS Echo, Enterprise and Protector. HMS Enterprise arrived on Teesside for her first 6-week maintenance period in April 2019, followed by HMS Echo in May 2020. At various times, both ships have also undergone upkeep work while on long overseas deployments at dockyards in Gibraltar, Malta and Singapore.

Since entering service both ships have seen been deployed globally including survey work as far afield as the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, the Black Sea, Antarctica and Norway. Both ships have served with EU Operation Sophia rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean, for which HMS Enterprise was awarded the Firmin Sword of peace. In April HMS Echo was deployed to the waters off Australia to join the, ultimately doomed international search for the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH 370. Echo was also employed in an unfamiliar fishery protection role in early 2016. HMS Echo was the first NATO vessel to arrive in the Black Sea in December 2018 after the incident in the Kerch Strait when Russian ships rammed and fired on Ukrainian ships before kidnapping the vessels and their crew. HMS Enterprise had also served in the Black Sea in 2018 as the flagship of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2.

In 2019 HMS Enterprise embarked on a lengthy deployment to the Asia Pacific region which included a transit of the Taiwan Strait in December. Having returned to the Mediterranean, she was deployed at very short notice in August 2020 to assist in Beirut in the wake of the devastating explosion at the port. HMS Echo has been in UK waters, mostly operating from Plymouth since completing maintenance in Middlesborough in July 2020.



*In 2013 HMS Echo was deployed on an 18-month surveying mission covering the Mediterranean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean and the Gulf. Seen here in the Gulf, the spacious quarter-deck can be appreciated.*

The average running costs (personnel, fuel and port visits) for these ships is about £5.5M per year. In 2013 the MoD put their Net Book Value (NBV - calculated by adding the cost of upgrades to the original capital cost and deducting depreciation) at about £25M each. It is clear they have provided the taxpayer with exceptional value for money and continue to be an important part of the surface fleet beyond their surveying function.

When originally completed in 2003, the SVHOs were intended to have a working life of about 25 years, so they could expect to be retired in 2028. This is consistent with the 10-year support contract awarded in 2018 but the MoD has not yet published official Out of Service Dates (OSD) for these vessels. With at least eight more years of service ahead of them, there is not the same urgency as a replacement for HMS Scott, but consideration needs to begin soon about how they will be replaced or extended in service.



# 12 YEARS ON (AND UNDER)

## THE WAVES - Part 6

by Wiggy Bennett

*My eighteen months on the Canadian squadron came round and it was time to go home. We flew first to Montreal, then overnight to somewhere in France. Sometime before we left Halifax the timetable given to us said we would spend 2 nights in France before crossing the channel to Gatwick, this of course I communicated to my wife to enable her to be prepared for my homecoming.*

The timetable was purely fictitious of course! On landing in France we were informed that a flight would leave for Gatwick in about an hours' time and we had to be on it! So, on the second day of my journey home I was boarding a train to London after having sent a telegram to the wife letting her know what was happening. As you can imagine this put the arrangements my wife had made for my homecoming into disarray, I think we had fish and chips instead of a slap up meal!

After a period of leave I returned to Dolphin as spare crew, this meant that I was able to get home most weekends. On going to Canada I had sold the Lambretta scooter to a motorcycle dealer in exchange for a credit note, I now got a Royal Enfield Crusader 350cc motorcycle which enabled me to have transport to get home and back.

December '65 saw me drafted to the **Truncheon** in Chatham Dockyard, undergoing a refit. This was almost as good as the time spent in Birkenhead standing by while the **Sealion** was being built. Somehow **Truncheon** had struck up a relationship with the local police and several events occurred before we sailed from Chatham. The police "borrowed" the local football ground for a friendly game, after which we all retired to the police canteen at the local 'nick' for a party. When that closed it was off to the nearest nightclub to continue the evening. My wife and I were involved in this; it was quite amusing to see policemen and policewomen dancing with their coats on as they were still in uniform but off duty!

On another occasion a party of sailors, junior and senior rates, were invited to the police headquarters at Maidstone, about 7 miles from the Dockyard. To get us there was a fleet of police cars, 2 or 3 being unmarked ones. Imagine the surprise on the locals as we raced through the streets of Chatham with the "blues and twos" going and the cars full of sailors.





All good things have to come to an end. March '66 saw us off to join the 1<sup>st</sup> Submarine squadron based at Dolphin. This was very much a Monday to Friday routine which meant that most weekends were spent at home in Chatham. Most weeks were spent at sea, doing various exercises with ships based in either Portsmouth or Portland. Being in the 1st Submarine Squadron was not all work, during the summer we did a cruise to Norway, Germany and Finland.

In addition to visiting various places in these countries we also spent time exercising with their navies. This cruise lasted 3 months, we returned to Dolphin on Saturday 30th July. This happened to coincided with the World Cup Final, as I was not required for duty I made my way home to Chatham. Not having a key to the front door I knocked and waited for it to be opened. After a short wait it was opened by the wife and I was greeted with the immortal words "Oh, it's you. If you want a cup of tea you'll have to make it yourself, they've just gone into extra time!"

It was now time to make some serious decisions as to what I should do, the 12 years I had signed up for ended in May '67. My options were: stay in submarines; return to surface ships or leave the service. If I stayed in submarines it was certain that sooner or later I would be drafted to a nuclear boat and these spent more time at sea than I was currently doing. Returning to *General Service* (as it was known) did not appeal possibly due to the more rigid routine and discipline. This left leaving the service and trying to make it in the wider world! My decision to leave was made easier due to a rumour I heard that the rum ration was going to be stopped, that could be thought of as a pay cut as rum was a very useful commodity to have in your wallet!

I finally left the *Truncheon* on the 23rd December and went into *Dolphin* and immediately started Christmas leave, two weeks later I joined **Nelson**, the Royal Naval Barracks in Portsmouth.

Now began a very boring 3 and a half months before I would start what was known as terminal leave. I was occasionally required to be a Duty Petty Officer in the evenings; I think I did this about 4 times during my time in the barracks.

Most weekdays were spent reading all the daily papers in the mess, this taught me that all you read in the daily papers is not necessarily the real truth, the reports are written for dramatic effect - one paper would report that several persons were injured, another would state that numerous persons were hurt, some seriously - this would be about the same incident! To help weekdays pass more quickly I decided to go back to school and take some *G.C.E.* examinations, my hopes were that these paper qualifications would help in finding a job. In Chatham



there was an office called Regular Forces Resettlement Bureau and I made myself known to them. An interview was arranged with an electronics company about a mile from where I lived, this went well and I was offered a job.

So, on 15th April 1967 I handed in all my kit, collected £180 gratuity plus my outstanding pay, received a single rail ticket to Chatham and left the Royal Navy. On the 1st May I started work with the electronics company and stayed with them for the next 31 and half years.



# BACK IN 1956 Part 13

## "LAUGHTER AHOY!"

The idea for Superb's Concert Party was originated shortly after commissioning, the object being to get together a show to entertain in E. Africa.

We were fortunate in having on board Lt. Cdr. Chittleburgh, who had previous experience of theatrical production and was, therefore, the obvious choice for our producer. Lt. Cdr. Adams undertook the thankless task of stage manager, whilst Lt. Williams dealt with lighting and sound.

All that remained now was to find suitable material and, most important, the actors.

At an early stage in the proceedings the basis of a group now known as the Harmonica Band was discovered. This band provided one of the most popular features of the show and, in October, there appeared an off-shoot who called themselves 'The Rhythm Rascals'. The band was to be heard playing on its harmonicas, guitars and fabulous zong on most evenings during the passage out to the station and soon became very good.

After our opening at Trincomalee we packed up everything, our props and scenery and went to East Africa. Our first performance was at Mombasa, where we gave three shows to wonderful audiences who really appreciated a live show. We did two evening shows and one children's matinee.

The next performances were given in Dar-es-Salaam, where we played to packed houses on two evenings at the "British legion Club Theatre". One of our performances was broadcast, but unfortunately that show was slightly marred by the fact the curtains became defective during the first half. It was lucky that the comments made by Lt. Williams on the subject were not picked up by the microphone.

From Dar-es-Salaam we sailed away to the Seychelles where we found we were to give a performance in Port Victoria. The only theatre available was a very under-lit one belonging to the church, but after the electrical personnel had burned down the switchboard and half wrecked the power station, the show went off very well. We came back to Trincomalee and for the time of J.E.T and the leave party in Diyatalawa, the Concert Part was forgotten except for those members of the cast who went to Admiralty House to entertain senior officers of the Indian, Pakistan, Ceylon and Royal Navy at a dinner party given by the Commander-in-Chief to celebrate the conclusion of Exercise J.E.T..

The next show was scheduled to be given at Bahrein. All the preliminary work such as tickets, selling programmes and posters had been completed when, at the eleventh hour, Superb was



ordered to sail to Dubai to embark soldiers. As time went on and the soldiers remained on board, it was decided to give a shortened version of Laughter Ahoy in the recreation space. This show was an instantaneous success so we planned to give the Army the whole works. In order to achieve this, a stage was built on the after end of the Quarterdeck and the show was, again, a roaring success.

Our next, and probably our last, performance is to take place on board H.M.S. Albion in front of H.M. the queen in Invergordon on the occasion of Her Majesty's visit to the Home Fleet, and I think everyone connected to the show will agree that it made a fitting and exciting Finale.

### Forgetter Be Forgotten

My forgetter's getting better,  
But my rememberer is broke  
To you that may seem funny  
But, to me, that is no joke

For when I'm 'here' I'm wondering  
If I really should be 'there'  
And, when I try to think it through,  
I haven't got a prayer!

Oft times I walk into a room,  
Say 'what am I here for?'  
I wrack my brain, but all in vain!  
A zero, is my score.

At times I put something away  
Where it is safe, but, Gee!  
The person it is safest from  
Is, generally, me!

When shopping I may see someone,  
Say 'Hi' and have a chat,  
Then, when the person walks away  
I ask myself, 'who the hell was that?'

Yes, my forgetter's getting better  
While my rememberer is broke,  
And it's driving me plumb crazy  
And that isn't any joke.

Anon



# USS TICONDEROGA

The first-in-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Ticonderoga* recently arrived in the Port of Brownsville in Texas where it will be scrapped. The U.S. Navy decommissioned this ship, the first of the service's operational warships to be equipped with the Aegis combat system, in 2004 after just over two decades in service.



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*Ticonderoga* was laid down in 1980 in Ingalls Shipbuilding's yard in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The development of this class of ships had begun in the 1970s using a derivative of the hull form from the existing *Spruance* class guided-missile destroyer. The Navy determined that leveraging the existing design would be cheaper than acquiring an all-new ship design to accommodate the then-new Aegis combat system and the associated AN/SPY-1 radar. These ships were also the first for the Navy to be built in distinct vertical modules that were then linked together, rather than entirely from the hull up, a process also meant to save time and money.

It is worth noting that the decision to use the *Spruance* class hull form as a starting place also



resulted in notably overloaded ships that suffer to this day from persistent cracking in their aluminum superstructures, which is both time-consuming and costly to repair.



With their Spruance DNA, these ships were originally categorized as guided-missile destroyers, rather than cruisers. However, the powerful combination of Aegis and the AN/SPY-1 radars, as well as the addition of other then-state-of-the-art systems into the ship's design, led the Navy to determine it could serve as a flagship for surface action groups and it would become a key air warfare battle management nerve center for Carrier Strike Groups. In turn, the service then decided to re-categorize them as cruisers to reflect their broader capabilities.

The first five Ticonderoga class ships, one of which, the *USS Thomas S. Gates*, was built at Bath Iron Works in Maine, were commissioned between 1983 and 1987. The other three ships in this initial group were the *USS Yorktown*, *USS Vincennes*, and *USS Valley Forge*.

The main armament of these ships consisted of a pair of twin-rail Mk 26 missile launchers and two five-inch guns, one of each at the bow and at the stern, as well as two four-round launchers for Harpoon anti-ship cruise missiles on the fantail. The Mk 26s were capable of firing the Standard Missile-2 (SM-2) surface to air missile and the RUR-5 Anti-Submarine Rocket (ASROC). These cruisers also had deck-mounted torpedo tubes and a pair of Phalanx Close-in Weapon Systems (CIWS).

Starting in 1984, Ingalls and Bath Iron Works began building sub variants of the Ticonderoga class that replaced each of the Mk 26s with a 61-cell Mk 41 Vertical Launch System array, allowing them to employ a much wider array of weapons more reliably and rapidly, including the Tomahawk land-attack cruise missile. These two yards ultimately built 22 more of the cruisers in this much more capable, multi-mission configuration.

Still, the Navy made good use of the Ticonderoga and the other four initial cruisers in the class. The *USS Ticonderoga*, as well as her sister ship *USS Vincennes*, took part in the Tanker War sideshow to the Iran-Iraq War in the Persian Gulf in the late 1980s. It was during those operations that *Vincennes* became infamously responsible for the tragic shoot down of Iran Air Flight 655 in 1985. *Ticonderoga* also supported the Persian Gulf War between 1991 and 1992.

After more than a decade of continued service, the Navy decommissioned *Ticonderoga* in 2004. The service also decommissioned *Yorktown* and *Valley Forge* that year. *Vincennes* and *Thomas S. Gates* followed them into mothballs the next year. Retired ships destined for the scrap yard will first go through a process to remove any sensitive equipment, as well as salvage any items that could be reused on other Navy ships.

Of the original five Ticonderoga class cruisers, only the lead ship and the ex-*Yorktown* are still with us, for now. The former *Vincennes* and *Thomas S. Gates* have already been scrapped. The Navy sunk the former *Valley Forge* off the coast of Hawaii as part of a SINKEX in 2006.

The beginning of the end of the ex-Ticonderoga comes as the Navy is again pushing to retire more of its older warships, potentially including some of the remaining cruisers in this class, as part of a new push to modernize and expand the service's fleets. Past attempts to retire Ticonderoga class ships have been met with pushback from members of Congress and it remains to be seen what parts, if any, of this new naval force structure plan will become a reality.

No matter what, the first ship of this class, which ushered in numerous firsts in the U.S. Navy, is now finally at the hands of the scrapper's torch.

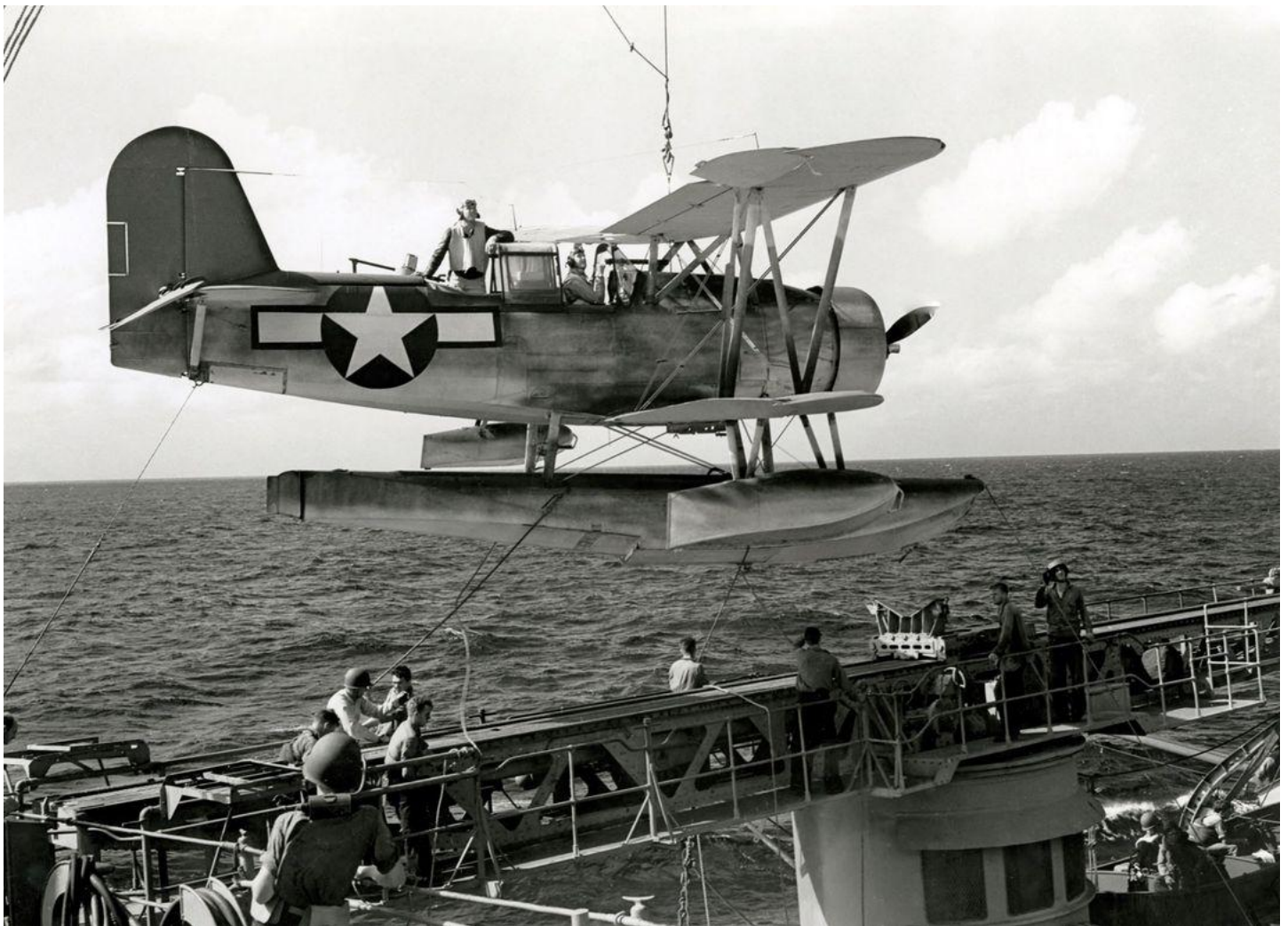


# PHOTO ALBUM



**Left:** A guard standing under the shade of palm trees at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba, 1919

**Below:** Seagull Observation Scout Plane aboard New Orleans Class Heavy Cruiser USS Minneapolis in 1943.







# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Andy Brierley can't remember seeing Ben at the reunions let alone winning a prize

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH 20 NOVEMBER, 2020



Ben Wallace, the Defence Secretary, says he is kept awake at night by the fact that people can learn how to make a bomb by watching a video on-line

# 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.

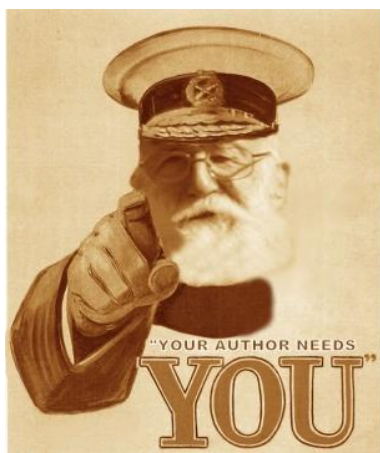
To go there please click [HERE](#)



## Crossed the Bar (Recently Notified)



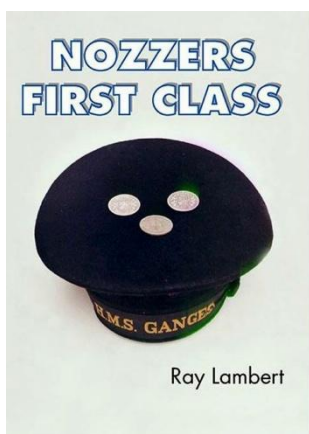
## Journalist & Best Selling Author



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



Ray Lambert

### NOZZERS GO WEST



Ray Lambert



## Something for the Youngsters

### Phil Grimson

#### DOGBREATH the Dragon



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**

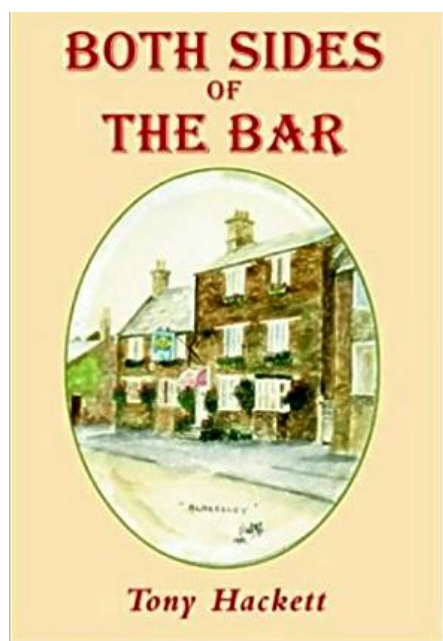
**PRINTED VERSION £13.99 + P&P\***

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**

## Life After the Navy

### Tony Hackett



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 SEARCH 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

A request from Guy Robinson as follows:- My Dad, **Christopher Robinson**, served as a midshipman on HMS Superb when he was around 20 years old, around 1949/50. He speaks fondly of HMS Superb. Does anyone by any chance remember him?

The son of **Jim (James) Johnstone** asks if anyone knew his father - a Royal Marine on the 1954-55 cruise

**Stoker Stephen (Steve) Maddison** (1946-47) and still going strong at 92 asks if anyone remembers him.

**Keith (Danny) Lambert** was a stoker on board the 1954-55 cruise and is looking for old oppos. Hopefully he will join the Association.

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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

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

## ARCHIVED CONTENT

Links to past copies of the Magazine can be obtained from Brian by sending an email message

[CLICK HERE](#)  
to send message

# THE END

