

H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

A MAGAZINE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

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CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION, ROBIN SMITH

CONTENTS

Andy's Musings	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Navy Matters	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Letters to the Editor	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Nozzers Go West	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
A Naval Career	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Photo Album	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Luxury Cruise Appeal	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Reunion Reminder	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Slops	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Crossed the Bar	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
People Searching for People	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>



Superb - Defending Britain Since 1710



ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

Seeing those portly veterans gather aboard Fred Olsen's Cruise Liner, Boudicca, to visit 'the beach' in Normandy was sobering. They had survived that ghastly melee and, I suspect, like all old soldiers, most will have faded away by the next anniversary. A double



take is required when you learn of French civilian plight; 15,000 died and 100,000 injured. A further 20,000 died during Normandy fighting between 6th June and mid-August. Caen bombed to powder when Montgomery failed, big time, to meet his own time forecast. With such carnage I'm forced to wonder what was worth celebrating by those costal dwellers. The region's rebuild dragged on for 20 years or more.

All brought about by a solitary politician who, reportedly, possessed only one bullock! I've told you, in the past, those politicians are odd coves.

In the past I have moaned about sub-standard (to me) 'portrait sculpture' produced in the U.K. since WW2. With ease I could drive you, in a few minutes, to three half-size examples, a total



Orde Charles Wingate DSO

let down of the subjects. Artists' impressions of proposed commonwealth memorial to be built near 'Overlord Beach', with a 'larger than life' group looks like a tour de force. I would love to see it completed; donations keep rolling in, so feel it won't drag on for long.

How does one explain the lack of a memorial of any sort/kind to the 'forgotten 14th army' on their 75th anniversary of what the National Army Museum in Chelsea, rated, in 2013, Britain's Greatest Battle - that for Kohima and Imphal. It is ranked above such as Waterloo, Alamein, 'D' Day even. 80,000 Japanese crossed the Chindwin, forced the allies to retreat nearly 1000 miles before the stand at those locations, the gateway to India. Nepalese plus African regiments took part, the latter hardly known about. Following fierce attacks every night for 2½ months, the Japanese General ordered 'the only



retreat in Japanese military history; death toll for the allies 16,000 - for the Jap invader 30,000.

I am 'surprised' to learn a monument on the famous Red Hill is due construction, following detail planning of scheme originating, and will be completely funded, by Japan. They record it as their hardest land battle of WW2 - anywhere!

The Chindits of Orde Wingate's command were the glaring example of that time on how to take fight to an enemy, killed in a plane crash, hated by the blimps of Whitehall as much for success, as being a junior. I feel Wingate has direct relevance in today's endless mid-east mess of war that drags on without resolution; a guerrilla campaign of the west's choosing. If the Iranians have two dozen plastic 6-man skiffs, with a ton of explosive in their bows, roaming the Hormuz Straits, to kill our mega vessels costing billions, it's time we fought 'like with like'. A much expanded S.B.S. is an excellent start point; highly trained, they have 'murderous intent' each morning on toast, are ever hot to trot.

Ukraine to Myanmar, open war with its 'set piece', battles are now avoided as national policy. Mega ships have evolved into a monstrous liability, not only because they drain national coffers, but who wants to risk one against this generation of hypersonic rockets on a remote colonised island. The Admirals hate sparky two-ring Captains on small vessels with freedom of action - here and now.

Junior Officer Wingate and his 'brown jobs' with their Dakotas keep the 'ball of opportunity' rolling and dealt a shock reversal to the sons of the 'Carnation Kingdom'. TV news showed Olsen's *Boudicca* slip Portsmouth, passing, tied up just below the old signal tower, the R.N's latest Super Carrier - sans catapults- arrestor wires - barriers - landing sight, or 'heavier than air' machines, each of which will cost \$42.200 per flying hour, double that of an F16. The plan fit of F35s are beaten most of the time in exercises against F16s

Test pilots report F35 is substantially inferior to 40 year old F15s in exercise battles. Reported as the most expensive weapon system in history, at \$1.5 trillion and running, exceeding the G.D.P. of its main opponent Russia.

The U.K. has \$2.5 billion invested in its development, but it's only money - yours - ha-ha!

Super Hornets, the war load of current U.S. Super Carriers can be got for a sheet of 'green shield stamps'. In comparison they outperform any opposition you can think up. I'd better apologise to those minus any interest in aircraft, or cash.

Appalling performance by our 'procurement agency' defies description, and I ever ponder how they get away with it; whilst in corridors of power they drone on about vital transgender questions before foisting it upon junior school pupils.

Back to *Boudicca*, whose guise once was Beagle Class destroyer, laid down in 1930, commissioned in my Y.O.B. 1931. A tradition-style greyhound of the seas, served the Empire long and



hard until 13th June 1945. On a resupply convoy to the Normandy beach head she was caught 12 miles off Portland Bill by torpedo bombers and cut in two. Recently discovered at 60 meters divers brought up her bell, now in the diving shop in Portland marina. To me the 6th of June is also Peter Tasker's birthday; I think he would be 90.



Another old comrade, our late chairman and instigator of Superb Association, the late Fred Kinsey, on about three occasions, to my knowledge, made a plea for the organisation that wished to preserve a 'tank landing craft'. Response was lukewarm, to say the least. Of the few examples remaining from those countless hundreds, none could be acquired.

I would love, in the fantasy world, to be able to get Fred on the phone and say, 'What do you think about this apple?'

D-DAY CRAFT'S FUTURE HOME

Here is a first look at an historic war vessel's proposed new home, on the seafront at Portsmouth on the south coast of England. For it has been revealed that plans to permanently display a 200-foot-long D-Day Landing Craft Tank (LCT) on Southsea Beach are secure. The National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) bid to conserve and move LCT 7074 has been backed by a £4.7 million National Lottery grant, awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). LCT 7074 is the sole surviving vessel of her type that took part in the June, 1944 D-Day invasion. Just short of a million pounds from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) previously enabled the NMRN to rescue LCT 7074 from East Float Dock, Birkenhead where she had actually sunk following a chequered post-war career **involving conversion to a floating nightclub**. Successfully moved back to Portsmouth, LCT 7074 will take pride of place outside the "D-Day Story" attraction and be open to visitors from 2020



How do you make an old L.S.T. into a night club? In Birkenhead perhaps you supplied your own hand grenades.

I wish you all an easy, relaxed summer and remember not to sweat the small stuff.

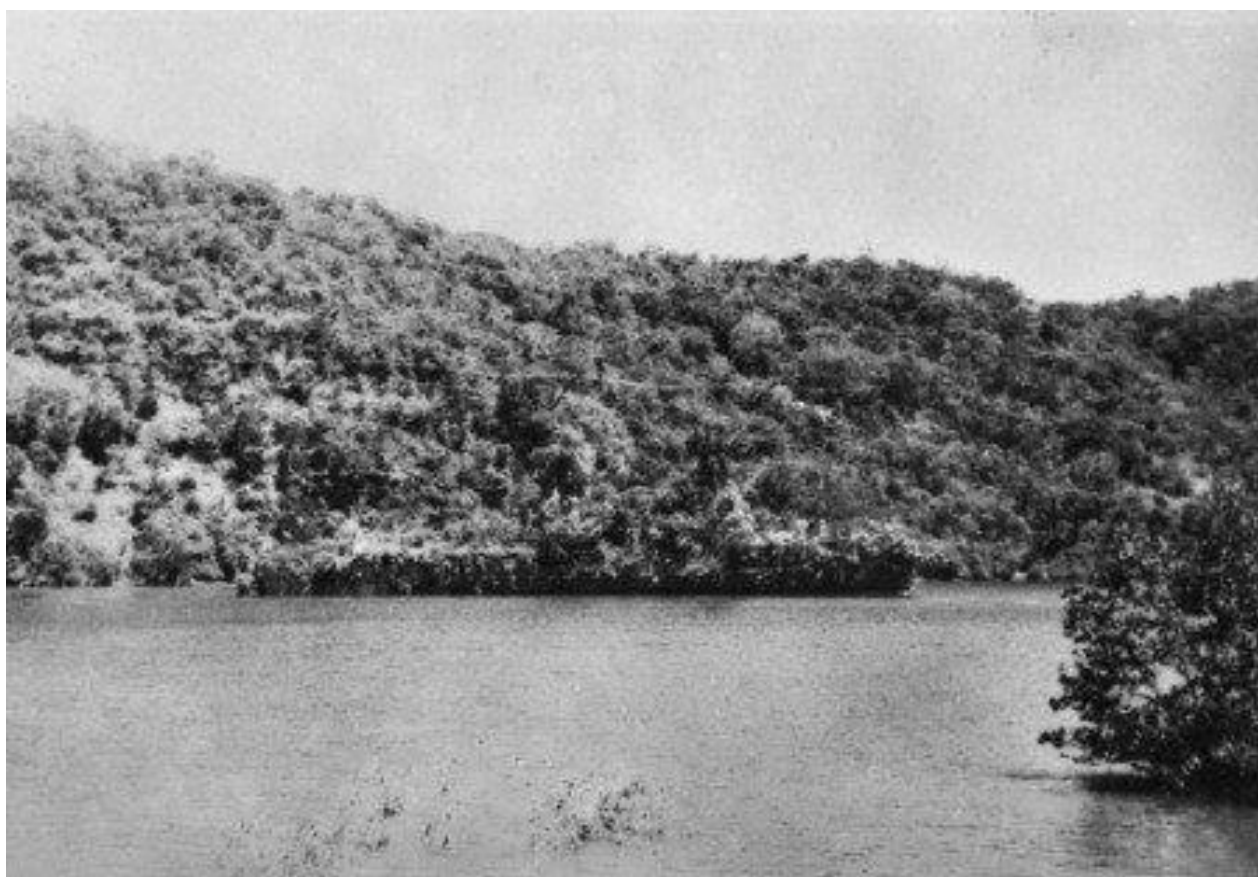
Tatty bye the noo,



NAVY MATTERS

DUTCH WARSHIP PRETENDED TO BE AN ISLAND

Sometimes in life, the bloke with the drunken, so-crazy-it-just-might-work ideas hits one out of the park and saves the day. This is clearly what happened in 1942 aboard the *HNLMS Abraham Crijnssen*, the last Dutch warship standing after the **Battle of the Java Sea**.



Originally planning to escape to Australia with three other warships, the then-stranded minesweeper had to make the voyage alone and unprotected. The slow-moving vessel could only get up to about 15 knots and had very few guns, boasting only a single 3-inch gun and two Oerlikon 20 mm canons — making it a sitting duck for the Japanese bombers that circled above.

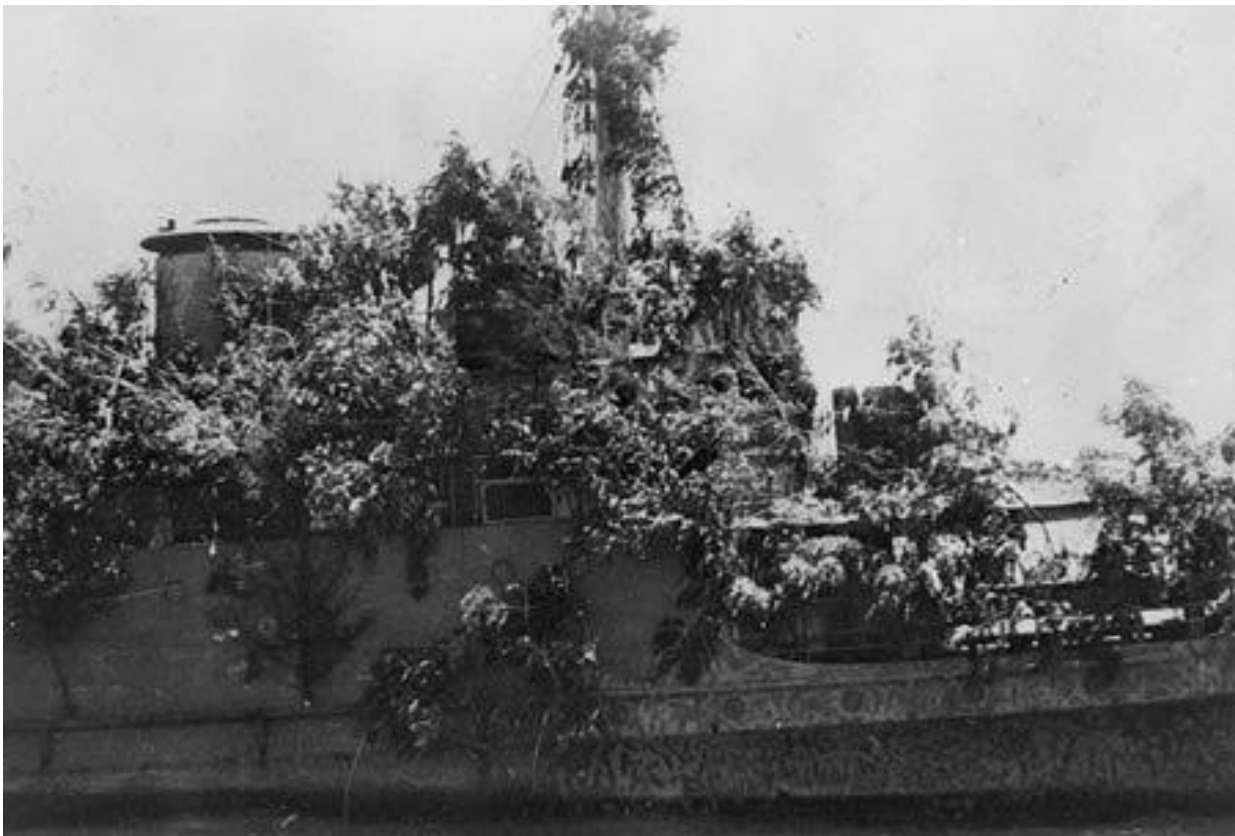
You can almost hear crazy-idea guy anticipating his shipmates' reluctance: "Now mates, just hear me out..." But lucky for him, the *Abraham Crijnssen* was strapped for time, resources and alternative means of escape, automatically making the island idea the best idea. Now it was time to put the plan into action.



The crew went ashore to nearby islands and cut down as many trees as they could lug back onto the deck. Then the timber was arranged to look like a jungle canopy, covering as much square footage as possible. Any leftover parts of the ship were painted to look like rocks and cliff faces — these guys weren't messing around.

Now, a camouflaged ship in deep trouble is better than a completely exposed ship. But there was still the problem of the Japanese noticing a mysterious moving island and wondering what would happen if they shot at it. Because of this, the crew figured the best means of convincing the Axis powers that they were an island was to truly be an island: by not moving at all during daylight hours.

While the sun was up they would anchor the ship near other islands, then cover as much ocean as they could once night fell — praying the Japanese wouldn't notice a disappearing and reappearing island amongst the nearly 18,000 existing islands in Indonesia. And, as luck would have it, they didn't.



The *Crijnsen* managed to go undetected by Japanese planes and avoid the destroyer that sank the other Dutch warships, surviving the eight-day journey to Australia and reuniting with Allied forces.



NEW VETERANS ID CARDS ROLLED OUT TO SERVICE LEAVERS

A new ID card for armed forces veterans, which will help them access specialist support and services, has started to be issued to service leavers.



From February, this year, any personnel who have left the military since December 2018 will automatically be given one of the new ID cards, which will allow them to maintain a tangible link to their career in the forces.

The cards allow veterans to easily verify their service to the NHS, their local authority, and charities, helping them to access support and

services where needed.

All other veterans will be able to apply for a new ID card by the end of this year, to mark their time in the armed forces.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said: We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the ex-forces community, and we are working hard to ensure they receive the support they deserve.

These new cards celebrate the great commitment and dedication of those who have served this country, and I hope they can provide a further link to ex-personnel and the incredible community around them.

Veterans UK - which manages pensions and compensation payments for the armed forces - local authorities, service charities, NHS and GPs will also benefit from the change, as they will not have to conduct time-consuming checks to identify individual veterans.

The new ID card is one of three that are available to service leavers. Personnel leaving the armed forces are also able to keep their military IDs, known as the MOD Form 90, allowing them to maintain their emotional connection with their service. Additionally, veterans can access a range of discounts through the Defence Discount Service, the official MOD-



endorsed service for the armed forces.

Last year saw the launch of the Strategy for our Veterans, published jointly by the UK, Welsh and Scottish Governments, which sets out the key areas of support for those who have left the armed forces. The consultation closes this Thursday (21st February).

All relevant Government departments have a responsibility to ensure that the military community is treated fairly, and not disadvantaged by their service, as part of the Armed Forces Covenant. The new ID cards will ensure the process of validating service is as straightforward as possible, so that ex-forces personnel can access support for issues related to their service quickly, where needed.

The cards will complement the NHS' commitment to providing specialist health support for veterans in every part of the health service, enabling ex-service personnel in England, Scotland and Wales to access treatment where they have been affected by their service. Last year, NHS England announced that dedicated mental healthcare services are up and running in every part of the country, backed by £10 million of investment, with increasing numbers of GPs and hospitals becoming 'Veteran Aware', in order to fully address the needs of those who have served.

Any veteran in need of support can contact the Veterans' Gateway - the 24 hour service which signposts ex-forces personnel to the wide range of support available to them, including housing and financial advice, career guidance, and medical care from the NHS. Since being set up in 2017, the Veterans' Gateway has already received over 20,000 contacts, advising ex-forces personnel and their families.

If Jealousy had a face



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR





NOZZERS GO WEST

By Ray Lambert

Ray has kindly given his permission to serialise his 3rd naval book entitled "Nozzers Go West" which tells of the exploits of Ginger and his oppos on breaking out of the *Ganges* chrysalis and metamorphosing into some of Britain's finest.

He says that he will still accept your money should you wish to buy his complete works at the modest prices shown in the "Slops" section elsewhere in this magazine.

Part 1

A reflection on the delights of Her Majesty's Shore Establishment

They had been on draft like real sailors; they had been to sea like real sailors and they had even been abroad like real sailors. *Ganges* was behind them now. They had worked part-of-ship like real sailors; they had taken part in dropping anchor and berthing alongside like real sailors; they had been ashore like real sailors.

But now, having left their first real ship, *HMS Implacable*, after nine weeks of working like real sailors, they were herded into *HMS Pembroke*; the Chatham port shore base and reverted strictly to boys once more.

Their bubble burst; the euphoria vanished. They were back to almost where they had started. Their newly found status of salt-encrusted veterans ready to take their place in the fleet - any fleet - was wiped away. It was almost as if their metaphoric *Time Served Board* had been wiped clean and they were boys again.

They had been boys on board the *Implac*, of course, but apart from having to return from shore leave at 1930 and living in the specially designated boys' mess, they had looked upon themselves as men. They had worked as men doing men's work. They had worked alongside men without question or any feeling of "them and us". They had left *Ganges* with their heads held high to take their places in the fleet and now, a short nine weeks later, they were back to being treated as boys again and subjected to barracks routine.





Main Gate Chatham Dockyard, circa 1955

They'd had a good time on *Implacable*. The routine for boys was almost certainly a bit disciplined but after *Ganges* they found it a walk in the park. Ginger, in particular, had had a comparatively easy time of it all. He had been given quiet number after quiet number and they had kept him away from the hustle and bustle of everyday ship's activity for the bulk of his time aboard. Coming the "Old Salt" had been his undoing a couple of times but he had worked out the art of becoming the *Grey Man in a Green Coat* and it had worked well for him, when he allowed it to.

Now that they were in *Pembroke* he resolved to continue to be the man in the background once again. After all no one in the barracks knew him so it was up to him to keep it that way. Letting his mouth run away with him in the past had got him nowhere and had ended up with him receiving three cuts for insubordination, on the *Implacable*.

Their new home was to be at the far end of *Hawke Block* and up on the second floor. *Hawke* was the last one of a row of identical blocks that stood at right angles to, and facing, the main road; it was the furthest one from the main gate. It was ironic that their new home was to be *Hawke* - home from home. They had spent a year of their lives in *Hawke Division* at *Ganges*.

Next to *Hawke* was *Duncan Block* where, on the second floor, they found all the different stages and windows needed for their Joining Routine. Wooden partition walls had been erected, leaving a wide passage up the middle. The partitions had windows cut out at



intervals and everyone was obliged to file in and receive cards, rubber stamps and various bits of paper, from Regulating Staff seated inside, that were required for one's stay in barracks; as they progressed up one side and back down the other. In between the two blocks was a brick built staircase that led up to the second and top floors of both buildings, *Hawke* and *Duncan*, via a covered walkway that spanned in both directions.

The Barrack Guard had their assembly point and office in the centre section of *Hawke*, on the ground floor. Their sleeping quarters were directly above. A large bathroom completed the ground floor. The bathroom was at the end nearest the road. It had a concrete floor and large double doors that were always open. The boys were obliged to use that bathroom. It was cold even in the middle of summer and always open to passers-by. There were two full sized steel baths set on the concrete floor at one end and they were a luxury. They had not seen, or used, a bath in the eighteen months since joining up.

The navy was not big on baths, their fort  was showers; showers didn't take up as much room, particularly aboard ships, where space was at a premium. It was lovely luxuriating in a bath topped right up with as much hot water as they wanted; even slopping over on to the floor didn't matter. The only fly in the ointment was the fact that they had to dry off and get dressed with the wind blowing through those ever open doors before emerging.



Next to *Duncan* was *Grenville* then *Anson Block*, which housed the Seaman's Accommodation on the second and third floor levels, with the Administration Section on the ground floor.



More importantly, at least as far as the boys were concerned, *Anson Block* also contained the galley and dining hall.

There were more blocks continuing down toward the main gate; one contained the Chief Petty Officer's mess and one accommodated the Petty Officers. The last block on that side was the wardroom - the officer's mess - and directly opposite the main gate, at the very bottom, was St George's church. Although as soon as the galley and dining hall had been located those remaining blocks held no interest for Ginger and the boys. The inner man was important and the remainder could wait.

It was August, August the third to be exact, and the weather was warm which was just as well really. Because one of their first tasks, as part of their joining routine, was to strip naked and shuffle slowly forward towards a portable x-ray machine that was installed on the ground level floor of Duncan. As they were waiting, naked in line for their turn at the machine, the file led past a table to their right where the grinning sick bay staff looked only too happy to shove a needle in an exposed arm.

Ginger thought it rather strange when the Chief in charge walked along the line of naked boys and ordered them to place their right arm on their hip. That manoeuvre looked to be courting trouble; a line of boys mincing slowly forward with their hands on their hips but as they, in turn, drew level with the "needle table" the reason became clear, as the Sick Berth javelin team sprung into action with the proffered-up arm - an easy target.

The joining routine took two days to complete. They were each given a white card which was divided into about a dozen squares; each square had the name of a different department printed on it. Everyone had to fill in that card with the appropriate stamps before the Joining Routine was accomplished. The idea of the stamps was to ensure each of them had been completely processed. It made sense. Particularly their Station Card - that was an identity card to cover them for their stay however long that might be.

They wouldn't be going anywhere without a Station card.

(More of this next time)



"I think it is something to do with his religion, sir."

A NAVAL CAREER PART 2 (OF 4)

By Jim Hirst

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

HMS ML557

My first real officer responsibility was to collect the crew from Devonport and get them to Looe (the coxswain was helpful) to await the arrival of the CO (Ty.Lt. J. Waugh RNVR) to commission the boat. The copper-sheathed, 112 ft. hull of ML557, built by Curtis at Looe, Cornwall showed that we were bound for warmer waters. When we were



Pictured HMS MV1334 (no available photo of 557)

equipped with charts, a cancelled chart of Dar es Salaam, now Tanzania was supplied as wrapper, being intentionally 'careless' started a lovely messdeck 'buzz'.

I cannot remember whether we completed trials from Looe or from Fowey where I remember we spent a day or two before departing for Coastal Forces Base Brixham. However, foul weather caused us to be detached from a convoy and directed to enter

Dartmouth. The CO asked for course and speed for Dart Buoy (my first bit of navigation that mattered), the night was pitch black and blowing hard but within a minute of stopping at my expected arrival at the buoy (to await the brief lighting of the boom gate) there was a gentle thud under the bow but nothing seen until next morning, when telltale red and white paint scuffing from the buoy was seen forrard. Beginners luck and a degree of accuracy I have never equalled.

On Christmas morning, our most clueless rating put a short burst from one of the bridge Vickers K guns somewhere into Kingswear. We anxiously awaited the complaints. There being none, we left as soon as possible for Brixham, where trials were completed successfully, apart from a rather stropky Gunnery Officer (who would brook no interference) and sent the barrel of an Oerlikon sailing overboard because he had not checked that it had been rotated to lock it! In Plymouth, awaiting the assembly of the 31st ML Flotilla, we were kept busy patrolling the anti-submarine 'loop defences'.



The SO of the 31 MLF was Lt Cdr. J Ivester ('Farmer') Lloyd, in civilian life a country sports writer and hunting enthusiast. His first task was to make sure that we arrived in Tobermory for anti-sub work-up training in a fit state to withstand the energy and zeal of the famous Commodore G.O. ("Gas-operated") Stephenson. We survived (having as an 'evolution', festooned Macbraynes Pier for demolition with depth charges) and departed south a bit more shipshape and competent to fit five deck tanks at Milford Haven in preparation for our departure for Gibraltar.

Extract quoting comments from SO 31 MLF and taken from Flag 4: The battle of Coastal Forces in the Mediterranean. By Dudley Pope, (1954) William Kimber, London. p98.

Almost every month small convoys of Coastal Forces craft were leaving the UK, rounding Ushant and crossing the Bay of Biscay on their way to the Mediterranean. Usually they had trawlers acting as navigators and although they mostly managed to get through without any severe brushes with the enemy, the weather was often far from friendly.

A typical convoy left Milford Haven in March.... included boats of the 31st ML Flotilla.... The convoy made its way westward to get clear of the coast of France which was liberally spattered with German air bases.... Crews went into sea routine and cooked meals arrived regularly.... After the convoy turned south it came on to blow, and the bad weather continued for many bitterly cold, sleepless hours. Then an aircraft diving down on the convoy sent the crews to action stations but it proved to be a Sunderland flying boat.... the next afternoon a Focke-Wulf Condor appeared, circled (out of range) and flew off... the next afternoon it appeared at the same time, did its prescribed orbit and departed. ... on the third afternoon... the Condor came in and dropped four bombs... (but missed).

Otherwise our passage to Gibraltar was uneventful apart from one boat being missing one morning, as a result of having to 'extinguish everything' through a serious petrol leak - she finished the trip cold, bored and hungry at the end of the accompanying trawler's sweep wire!

NORTH AFRICA

After shedding the deck tanks at Gib. and restoring the full complement of "Y" gun and depth charges, we left for Mers el Kebir, the French naval port close to Oran and recently occupied after the landings in Algeria, **Operation Torch**. Our main duty was to conduct 3 day, anti-submarine "fruit patrols" often ahead of convoys (or perhaps to delude the enemy that a convoy might pass that way). Probably all that was expected of us was that our constant asdic sweep might reduce the mobility of U Boats by keeping them submerged. I cannot recall any one having a firm 'contact' but we all got very brown and much enjoyed the antics of the flying fish and the dolphins (especially the latter by night once we had learnt that their phosphorescent wakes coming straight at us (torpedo-like) turned forward within yards of the ship's side to play about the bow.)



There were some lighter moments. The following is a quote from Farmer Lloyd on a visit to the port of Mostaghenum made by MLs 555 and 557, extracted from Flag 4: The battle of Coastal Forces in the Mediterranean. By Dudley Pope, (1954) William Kimber, London. p102. " ...where we helped the Americans, who were in charge of the port, out of a difficulty. They had salvaged cargo from a torpedoed British ship, and part of this was a mountain of unmarked cases. The officer in charge complained that this was 'the durndest stuff' and that his sentries 'got real crazy guarding it'. He wished that someone 'would take the goddam stuff away'. After one glance at those cases we agreed to take it all off ... for each case contained two two-gallon jars of army rum (which made us very popular and went under the code name of U235, from the powerful isotope of uranium)." They bartered well for bread and potatoes and provided us with a party or two.

We shared Mers el Kebir with **Force H** (*HMS Nelson, Rodney and Renown*) who were little loved by the locals, as they had been responsible for sinking much of Darlan's Vichy French navy by firing their heavy guns (howitzer-like, with reduced propellant charges) over the mountain to the west of the harbour. To make sure that we did not get too much sleep even when in harbour, we had to spend many nights exploding innumerable 1.5lb blocks of TNT to give any prowling limpeteers a tummy ache. For much of this time, 557's RT call sign was 'Masterman' while *HMS Nelson* had to suffer being 'Little Queen', but was not always amused by the tones of voice that we used. If they really got worried about midget subs, then we were told to drop a 300lb depth charge close by, only to be accused next day of having moved the ashtrays on the Ward-room Table !

MALTA AND SICILY

We matched the army advance eastward through Algeria and into Tunisia, with sundry diversions, eventually reaching Malta in the latter days of the siege. The remaining air raids were among the brightest Ack-Ack 'fireworks displays' that I have seen. We took the opportunity of a bit of much needed overhaul. However our main purpose was then to help assemble, protect and lead landing craft onto the beaches of the "Bark South" Sector of the Sicily landings at Cape Passaro.

To contact the landing craft, once radio silence was broken, we had about fifteen army signallers and their sets crowded around the bridge, wheelhouse and funnel. Once their units were ashore, they left us for the beach. The bombardment was awesome, with the capital ships firing over us at targets well inshore, while we were close alongside the fearsome launches of ripples of rockets from the LCR (Landing Craft Rocket). Daylight brought us the interesting task of acting as 'Trot Boat' to the Admiral and senior soldiers, but by night, we joined the offshore defensive screen inshore of the destroyers (one night was trying because the recognition signals we had were three hours out of phase).



Progress was fast up the east coast of Sicily and (on D+4) we were about the first craft into Augusta and Syracuse. Sometime later we escorted strings of unruly and unseaworthy military 'ducks' (DKWS), swimming across the Straits of Messina to reinforce the landings there on the Toe of Italy. Back in continental Europe at last!. There was some consternation when four fleet destroyers bore down on them at speed from the north, enquiring of us "What ship?". Fortunately they slowed down through the gap we made in the chain, sank none with their wash and departed with the signal "To ML 557 from D4, (Captain of 4th Destroyer Flotilla)... Quack, Quack."


THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

The 31st MLF had a special duty associated with the Salerno landing. This is again described in a lengthy quotation from Farmer Lloyd (in Flag 4: The battle of Coastal Forces in the Mediterranean. By Dudley Pope, (1954) William Kimber, London. p132.

As the campaign in Sicily neared completion the 31st MLF was withdrawn to Malta and then Bizerte where we came under US Navy orders (delivered by Lt. Douglas Fairbanks Jnr.) "We start with Ventotene ...due west of Naples. As you probably know there is to be a big landing in the Gulf of Salerno. Four hours before that comes off we are to stage this little operation of our own. The object is to land a force of (US) Rangers, sixty strong who are to establish a fighter control station on the island. Another thing may interest you - Mussolini is thought to be hiding there!"

Other forces were to act as decoys to suggest that a landing was to be made north of Naples. Information about Ventotene was meagre and (in the dark) the harbour proved to be minute, the Rangers were landed and accomplished their first task. However, it is probably a blessing that the Germans had removed Benito Mussolini some time earlier, so the local Italian garrison was more willing to surrender than resist. Our opportunity to be famous passed but our tasks were far from complete.

We were soon intended to be based in Naples but, (as air raids were still occurring there) the NOIC (naval officer in charge) told us he did not want our petrol tanker in his harbour - wise man. We went in search of a suitable little harbour and found Porto d'Ischia, on the lovely (then) unspoilt island twin to Capri, but at the extremity of the northern arm of the Gulf of Naples. We were delighted to leave Naples, then in the throes of a typhus epidemic and a mist of DDT applied to everybody and everything. Ischia was heaven in comparison; the harbour fitted Coastal Forces perfectly. It was a circular volcano crater with an entrance to seaward but easily defended and well protected from weather. We were soon beginning to build CF Base Ischia and arrange repair slips. Our own rest and recreation facilities were soon available, with very memorable and very Neapolitan touches being given to music, food and drink.

 We had to make several trips back to Messina to assist the build-up in Italy. Almost all were uneventful and navigation was easy even at night, as then active eruptions were causing fiery lava streaks down the cones of Vesuvius and Stromboli. These often provided

running fixes over about 200 miles. Whether there was any connection with volcanic ash I know not, but I have never seen such vivid electrostatic displays of St Elmo's Fire and the electrostatic charges making the hair stand on end, as on those placid night sailings. One night when we were not in company, the hair stood on end for a different reason. All of a sudden we were exposed to a brilliant light charging at us and rising. At first collision seemed inevitable. Only just in time did we realize that it was an airborne searchlight, mounted in one of Coastal Command's `Leigh Light Wellingtons', which clearly suspected that we were a U Boat in need of bombs or depth charges. Fortunately the two-star Very Cartridge recognition signal got away just in time.

Advance on the land was slowed by the enemy's determined defence of Monte Cassino, so we were often called on to make smoke inshore of *HMS Penelope* if enemy fire got anywhere near her, as she bombarded shore targets. About this time we led the landing craft into the Anzio beachhead and later every other night escorted the two LST (Landing Ship Tank) which daily braved the artillery to land loaded lorries to dash up the beach. Until they emptied, we could lie-off out of artillery range until the night time return to Ischia. The water was shallow enough for us to set off one or two acoustic mines when we put the engines astern but we did not even get splashed!

PART 3 CONTINUES IN THE NEXT EDITION

YOU COULD HEAR A PIN DROP !

Recently in Washington a Canadian admiral was attending a naval conference that included Admirals from the Canadian, U.S., English, Australian and French Navies.

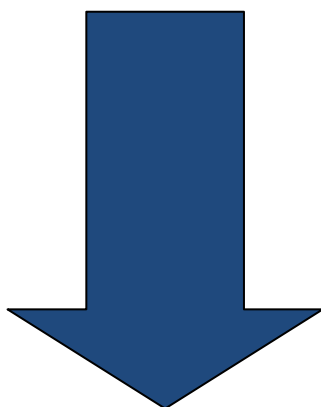
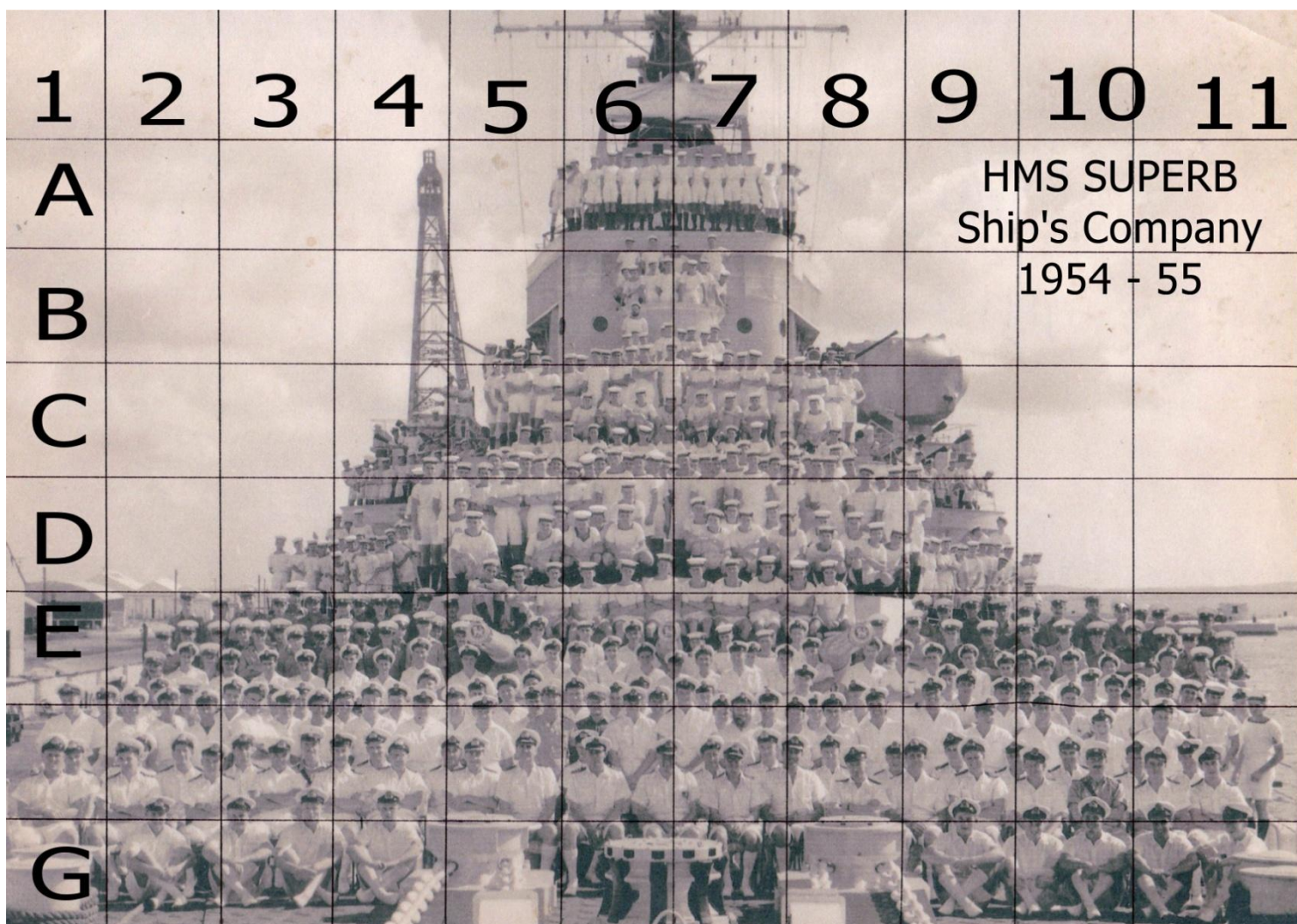
At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large group of officers that included personnel from most of those countries. Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks but a French admiral suddenly complained that, whereas Europeans learn many languages, North Americans generally learn only English.' He then asked, 'Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?'

Without hesitating, the Canadian Admiral replied 'Maybe it's because the Brits, Canadians, Aussies and Americans arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German.'

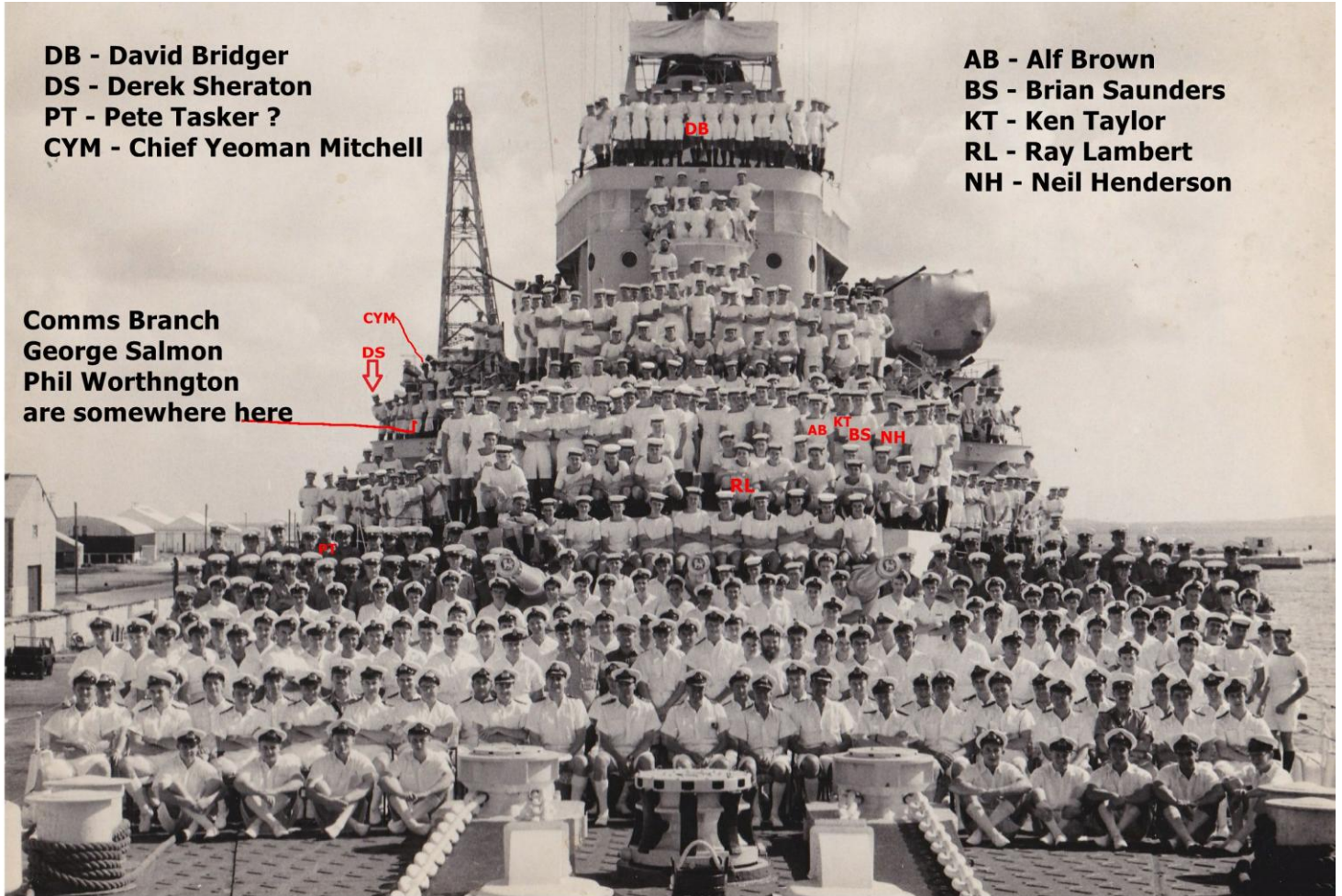


LUXURY CRUISE SHIPMATES

ARE YOU IN THE PHOTO ? I can email you a copy which might be easier on the eye if you like - just let me know.



SO FAR THESE SHIPMATES ARE KNOWN - HAVE A LOOK



IF YOU ARE IN THE PHOTO PLEASE SEND ME THE GRID REFERENCE.

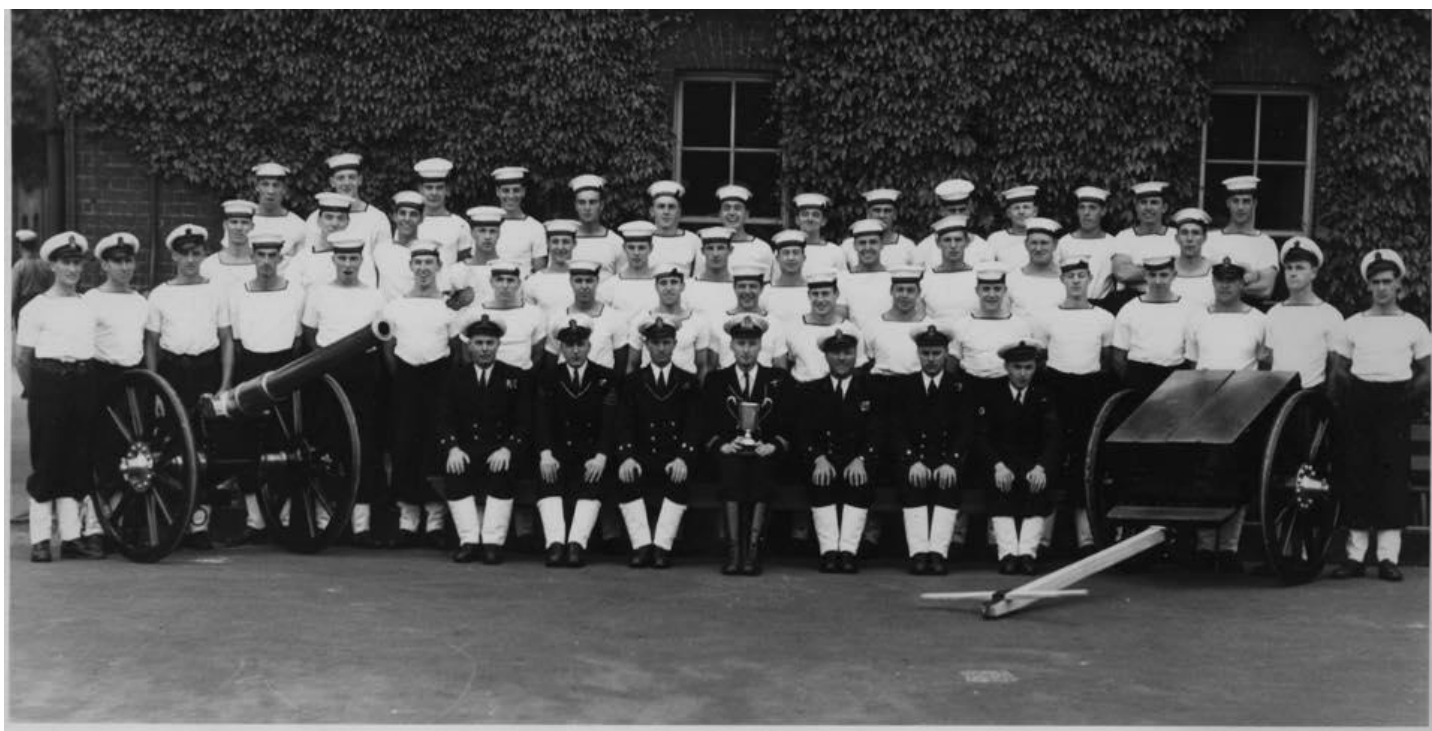


PHOTO ALBUM

100 Years Ago



Royal Naval Unit takes part in the River Thames peace pageant. 1919



1951 Chatham Field Guns Crew, at Earl Court, London. (Royal Tournament)



REUNION REMINDER

THIS YEAR'S REUNION WILL BE HELD OVER THE WEEKEND OF FRIDAY 4TH AND SUNDAY 6TH OCTOBER

Robin will be sending out the Booking Forms later in the year but you can download one here if you would like to book early

To download and print a booking form now click on the badge



**SAME
PRICES AS
LAST YEAR**

The main event i.e. The Dinner is held on the Saturday but it's also important to attend the AGM (which is informal & of short duration!) on the Friday evening if you can

The Hotel goes out of its way to make us comfortable - the cost of the 2 nights includes Dinner, Bed & Breakfast on the Friday and Saturday & Breakfast on Sunday morning. There's plenty of good humour and loads of raffle prizes. Why not give it a whirl?

IF YOU CANNOT MAKE THE WHOLE WEEKEND AND LIVE LOCALLY - COME FOR THE SATURDAY DINNER ONLY



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)



SLOPS

AVAILABLE BY POST & AT THE REUNION IN OCTOBER

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

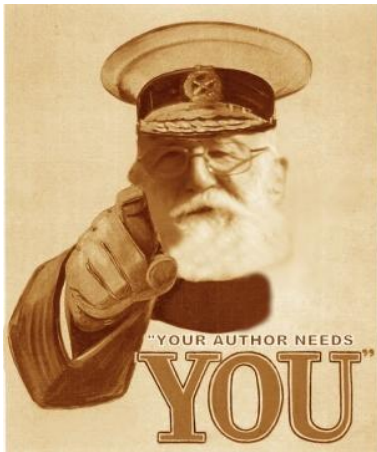
**BASEBALL-TYPE CAP WITH HMS SUPERB CREST
PRICE £11.20**

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



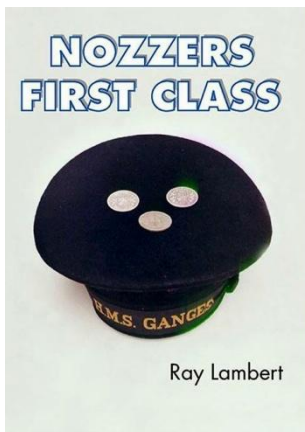
Journalist & Best Selling Author



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



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*

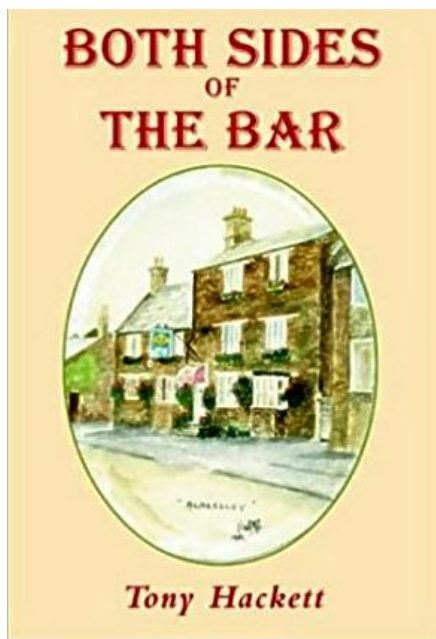
Phil can be contacted by email by clicking on this [LINK](#)

*** 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 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

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"

From previous issues

Derek Baldry (Killick Sparker) would like to contact Ginger Dunne from 1956

Shipmate & member Stoker Clive Godley would like to get in touch with old shipmates

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

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

PLEASE EMAIL ME IF YOU'D LIKE ACCESS TO PREVIOUS YEARS

[December, 2018](#)

[January, 2019](#)

[March, 2019](#)

[April, 2019](#)

[May, 2019](#)

[June, 2019](#)

