

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

A MAGAZINE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

FEBRUARY, 2018

Nº 15



OUR SWORDS WE BARE  
OUR SPIRITS DARE

CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION IS ROBIN SMITH

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**Superb - Defending Britain Since 1710**

# ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

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Greetings Shipmates,

Late '47 when I joined *Shotley Annexe*, a few *Arethusa* boys were amongst us. Their 'common bond' was always evident and leaves me wondering who is still amongst us. *Arethusa's* time as a haven for boys is an important part of our heritage.

Medway's local newspapers never carried a whisper of her return to Europe where she was built at Blom & Voss yard in Hamburg. Mid-July heavy lift ship *Combi Dock 3* departed New York Seaport Museum collection with *Peking*, minus yards, strapped to its back; a four-masted barque built in 1911.



Sold to Shaftsbury homes in 1932, to be renamed *Arethusa*, the boys' training ship, moored at Upnor opposite *Thunderbolt Pier* on the river Medway. She served that purpose until about 1970 before sale to the above named collection in 1974, and towed across the Atlantic.

Fast forward to 2015, she had been put up for disposal, but was saved from breaking by the German government who purchased it for 120 million Euros. Large parts of the tax payers protested loudly about that, but by now I would think it's tied up in Hamburg and will be retuned, restored in German fashion. I do hope those 'Ari boys' who are around visit that splendid city for a nostalgic trip back down the mess decks.

I'm thinking two eclipses took place last month. The first took Sky Watchers of the United States by visual storm on its transit Pacific to Atlantic, mostly in clear skies, an awesome sight. One quakes to wonder what medieval man would weave into that event.

Reading accounts of the War Graves Commission, their vast reach to small obscure plots from wars long forgotten, in places a tongue twister to pronounce, and their dirt poor tenders in those places. At least one government-supported undertaking seems to be devoid of graft, and earn? are worth?, their corn!!!

My thoughts wandered to the United States, which I've been fortunate to visit widely over the years. Always very conscious of the history I have visited grave plots, large and small, Confederate and Union, casualties of the Civil War and War of Independence. Never to my recollection found one for Brits who died in the latter. Both insane conflicts dedicated to slaughter of folks with the exact same gene pool.

When Cornwallis put up his hands I feel it was a realisation the French Fleet was anchoring in Carolina with an abundance of stores and men, things he no longer had; a blessing in



disguise, ending the killing. The French of course eager to join anyone anti-English, even the Scots, with their so called Auld Alliance.

I did wander into one remote churchyard, cannot remember the location, that had a fair swathe of Hanoverian dead interred; King George's ancestral locals!! Historically speaking Yorktown was a French victory, much aided by the siege going on at Gibraltar, where they, and the Spanish absorbed a large chunk of England's capacity to wage war for three long years. No one doubted our eventual defeat there, ask any Royal Marine who won.

Am conscious of Henry Ford's words 'history is how you tell it', and the desire to demolish statues in the U.S. south. It is open record that Robert E Lee agonised over which side to support in that blood bath and held the view, widely known, that 'slavery was an institution morally and politically evil in any country'. Had the south been victor he doubted slavery would survive for more than 20 years. Alas, end of that war was did not end subjugation.

Went off at a tangent then but experience tells me you will forgive me.

Harking back to mention of the French Fleet's arrival in the U.S. at that time, a celebration in Brest last month commemorated that event between those allies with a mini fleet review. Super carrier *George Bush* attended.

Our worth in the pecking order brings me to what I'm certain is the second eclipse, of much interest to me, it being eclipse of our Royal Navy. That eclipse glaringly obvious when M.O.D. included in Fleet Equipment List. 14 in number, P2000 Archer Class, plastic cadet training boats, unarmed, un-armable and 30 years old. M.O.D listed them as patrol Ships.



I include a photo, taken by Shipmate Turner, of one such boat when it visited his home town of Whitehaven recently; Showing the flag. If a brace of fishing boats had been in at the same time the nation's Patrol Ship would be virtually invisible. What fruitful contact can such a boat have in any locality, U.K. or near continent?

The publication entitled U.K. Forces Equipment and Formations 2017 claims a navy of 73 vessels. This really is cloud cuckoo land. Fleet Auxiliaries are lumped in with the plastic patrol ships. That makes 23 in simple arithmetic of nil fighting value. When the *merde* hits the fan of the six type 45 D's, 2 are reported tied up at Pompey as Stores Spares Source.

3 L.P.D's are on the list, one is for sale *Ocean*, one is laid up near derelict. All types across the Noble First Lord's fleet follow a similar script. Remember when the first Super Carrier had an initial operating capability of 2018? Public pressure stopped second of class being offered for sale. That could clew up as a bad move as No. 1 has



insufficient crew of the right specialities and no aircraft for the foreseeable future.

On current form declarations are either deliberate lies for a gullible proletariat or uninformed comment by the 'nation's elected' and their grandiose assistants, consultants on vast salaries, bonused annually for lack of performance or coherent direction.

Defence minister Sir Whatsisname Fallon, booted and suited, on high podium in B.A.E.'s Clyde shipyard last month declared first new vessel to be named *Glasgow*. He speaks of TYPE 26 so called Global Frigate! Steel scheduled to start cutting shortly !

Initially announced a class of 13, then cut to 8, now down to an order of 3. When they will join the fleet is in the clouds, smoke and mirrors will be utilised extensively... All those involved still aver frigates will become cheaper following Global sales. To you computer boys check world 's 'war ship' building; who's doing what, their budget price, delivery dates, crucially specification.

We lag behind Singapore, Spain, Columbia - yes, Columbia! Hardly a group of industrial colossi.

In some parts of the world 'cow pats' are high value fuel to keep the yurt flies burning. Military types in the U.K. know it as 'bull shit' M.O.D.'s super abundance of that commodity would propel our 76 ship fleet round Mars and back once a quarter.

We would, of course, switch to Auto there being an engineer shortage. We are totally eclipsed - by our near neighbour who tradition ever told us is our traditional enemy - France. At this very time that navy is cross decking a proper 'strike squadron' with U.S. magnificent *George Bush*.

Escorts for that task group provided by France include Airborne Maritime Patrol, hunter killer nuke subs., A.A. Frigates and destroyers. When we cannot attend a commonwealth nations historic fleet review I contend R.N. as known to us is eclipsed - totally and absolutely.

Our £ two trillion debt alone, plus production rate per man 40% below that of French yards - this from international records 'sets the seal'. However, we are 'gung-ho' on diversity in its myriad forms.

I used to think a 'transgender' was like a shaft in a gear box. Following the Admiral's speech last month all is abundantly clear. What's called the 'demographic revolution' indicates Anglo-Saxon types will soon be the minority due to birth rates, US - 1.5 per pair, THEM - 4 to 6, so they will be at liberty to 'Blow Nellie Up' very soon.

Imagine all that effort beneath the duvet to achieve Nelson's demise.

Don't take it all too seriously.

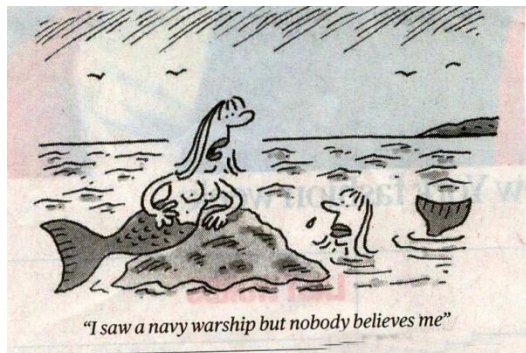
The sudden resignation of Sir Whatsisname Fallon as Defence Secretary for 'inappropriate behaviour' - alleged - with a female on his staff had me hope a new appointee would be R.N. friendly. Alas, the new face, Gavin Williamson, young, inexperienced in lifemanship or the services, has consistently voted, as a back bencher, against strengthening the Military Covenant.

In 2011 he opposed a 'binding Military Covenant' set out in law. His disdain for the



service will do nothing to halt the published decline in morale brought about by 'short manning', 'under equipment'. His opening speech confirms the fact; his 'red dispatch box' contains only bullshit.

A legitimate question, 'does it matter anymore?' One learns the R.N. stopped teaching its own history to new officers a generation ago. Collins English dictionary has "A generation" as 'approx. 35 years'. The course for 'new entry officers' is only 6 months.



In late 1946 the snot-nosed son of a pleb took 12 months to get the gist of things, becoming a 'Boy First Class', well versed in his trade history, and an overriding urge to do violence to the Queens' enemies.

Is the lack of marination in our nautical culture the reason R.N.'s higher echelons consistently fail to fight their corner?

In particular the R.A.F. leads them by the nose. They (the R.A.F.) are currently pushing for the committed order of R.N. jump jets to be curtailed in favour of the land-based variant for the R.A.F. The over-priced 'super carriers' look a very good deal if compared with the R.A.F. Typhoon programme.

It stands at (deep breath) £90 billion with  $\frac{1}{4}$  operational at a time. To cite only the most recent full-blown war, Falkland Islanders would be conducting business in Spanish if R.N. had had no jump jets providing air cover, shooting down enemy aircraft - the later thing not done by R.A.F. planes since WW2. Check it out.

'Does it matter?' - the yellow press reported.

'Vigilants' (nuke sub) Captain and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant had been; 'Removed without prejudice' - cannot imagine what kind of sanction that is. Possibly the chronic shortage of 'nuke captains' makes firing him a foolish move.

The five officers who threatened to resign over their superiors' 'love affairs' must be on thin ice, it sounds 'slightly mutinous'. The ultimate crime must be the crewman of that vessel who hired a working girl, sometimes called a harlot. While she was getting dressed he stole back her fee.

These events took place at the 'Polaris' depot in King's Bay, Georgia, U.S.A. I feel the 'officer story' will wane. Stealing from the working girl will live in local history and taint the relationships when the next sub. visits for its renewals.

'Does it matter anymore?' - if shame is brought upon the R.N. by Class A drug-fuelled parties in nuclear submarines, or sexual peccadilloes exercised in wardroom cots, patently obvious to the great unwashed further down the tube. 'Asdic Cabinet' (sorry) 'Sonar Suite' reporting rogue pings, find, following close analysis, it was the twang of knicker elastic the other side of the wardroom curtain. I wonder if the oxygen-rich atmosphere is exacerbating the situation that could be alleviated by injection of a little more Co2.



Relaxed dress code in boats account for what 'Herr Sigmund Freud' categorises as 'Nipple Fixation', a malady sweeping the decks unchecked. Did 'our noble lords' at M.O.D. think their rules could thwart 'Mother Nature' and her 'built in at birth' - prime reason for our being - the urge to procreate. Mankind's rules prove puny defence, even behind steel water-tight doors, with six clips on.

As one with an interest in ship design I feel the headlong drive for equality, diversity, et al must pose a major problem. Gender specific 'spaces' for ablutions, sleeping etc. puts pressure on size. If the drive continues, transgenders are next with strident demands for recognition and 'own space'. What about the poor lesbians, homosexuals? Soon Buddhists and Episcopalians, Scientologists plus those who revere 'stone heads on Easter island' will need - be entitled to - 'own space'! Design for all and sundry will become insurmountable and there lies termination of vessels with the prefix H.M.S - 'lack of loo room kills off Royal Navy'.

I declare the subject closed, lest our readers of delicate nature take umbrage where none is intended. With hand on heart I say 'vive la difference'.

Whilst on the subject of service shortages, I wondered how the supposed head count reduction at M.O.D. was going. Published to be reduced from 57,050 down 30% to 41,000. It transpires they have hired a further 630 bodies, what their disciplines are is not stated.

The mooted loss of a further 1,000 Royal Marines at next defence review is not hard to explain.

This may come back and bite us in the arse before many moons.

U.S.S. Ponce about to be retired by U.S. Navy, with a deal to sell her Argentina, is expected soon. This able landing platform dock can put down 800 fully armed troops, carries 6 large helicopters, plus 2000 tons of stores.

Barack Obama always referred to the Falklands as Malvinas in his public speeches, his aide says he regarded the 'special relationship' as a joke - so do I - that does not mean I am anti U.S. I have filial connections and friends whose interest in my family is humbling.

Anyway, the long-term plan seems obvious, I would suggest the next Parish council meeting in Port Stanley concentrates on the purchase of land-based mobile Exocets.

A French purchase simply because the U.K. 'do not have such a useful item on the market' or on our own ships! China and Russia have such a deterrent on the world market, supersonic in China's case. What they term their 'carrier buster'. Marketed with vigour and much, much cheaper, Falklands are not without options, perhaps a straight swap for berthing rights. Council meetings could become the highlight of the month.

Loss of Argentina's sub with all hands is a sobering event. At least ten 'navies' gathered to aid the search, alas to no avail. How sad to know such cooperation needs catastrophe of this magnitude to talk to each other, to share their cutting edge sounding equipment on a cause directly opposite to their intended use. I read, yesterday, the search is much scaled back with

three navies persisting with the search - Argentina, Brazil and Britain. I will them to succeed.

A sunbeam in this gloom is an uplifting tale the night after that ghastly fire that consumed Grenfell Tower, as told by a 747 airline pilot, taxiing his aircraft to the runway for the return flight from Washington D.C. to London.

About to change controller frequencies when controller transmitted; 'Just before you go, we know London is going through a tough time at the moment. We want you to know that we are praying for you all, God speed for a safe flight home and God bless the Queen'.

A display of humanity on a 'business air traffic frequency' heard for miles around is most humbling and touching.

A double welcome home to our web masters Libby and Brian. A message from 'High Commissioner' of Gondwana land' reports they were paragons of virtue, leaving 'our association name' enhanced and in high repute. OLD SAILORS know how to conduct themselves!!

Tatty Bye the noo, Shipmates, and a Happy New Year.

Andy Brierley



**ANDY - RE YOUR COMMENT ON GENDER SPECIFIC PLACES - THE NAVY MANAGED BEFORE !**



### **Cross-Dressing Sailors Hannah Snell**

Women were excluded from joining the Royal Navy until the introduction of uniformed women's services in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But this didn't stop some women going undercover. Hannah Snell (1723-1792) served for four and a half years in the Royal Marines as a man named 'James Gray'. She dressed in men's clothing and managed to hide her true identity, even when she was badly wounded during the siege of Pondicherry in 1748. When she returned to Britain she revealed her true identity and became a celebrity, appearing on the London stage dressed in her uniform.

Unusually, her military career was officially recognised and she was granted a pension by the Royal Chelsea Hospital.



## Brazil Is Reportedly Buying the Royal Navy's Only Helicopter Carrier On the Cheap

The United Kingdom has reportedly finalized the sale of the helicopter carrier *HMS Ocean* to Brazil for less than a third of what it originally spent to build the ship. The Brazilian Navy looks to be the big winner in the deal, which effectively ends the possibility of the Royal Navy having any interim aircraft carrier capability, no matter how limited, until *HMS Queen Elizabeth* enters operational service.

On January 2, 2018, U.K. Defence Journal reported that Brazilian Defence Minister Raul Jungmann had confirmed the purchase in December 2017. Brazil will pay almost \$115 million for *Ocean*, but it is unclear if that cost will include any refit or refurbishment of the ship or if the government in Brasilia will have to come up with the entire amount at once. The United Kingdom still has yet to officially decommission the ship, which it expects to do this year, but the first rumours of the sale appeared in March 2017.



HMS *Ocean* moored in Greenwich, London in support of the 2012 Summer Olympics

The head of the Brazilian Navy, Admiral Eduardo Leal Ferreira, previously described the price tag as "convenient," Brazilian journalist Roberto Lopes told U.K. Defence Journal. Brazil will send personnel to train on the ship in the United Kingdom prior to its delivery and the first four Brazilian

officers will reportedly arrive before the end of January 2018.

It is not entirely clear how Brazil plans to integrate the ship into her existing naval forces. In February 2017, the country's navy finally retired its sole conventional takeoff and landing aircraft carrier, the *São Paulo*, after five nearly five years of attempts to return it to service.



*Ocean* would not be able to accommodate the fixed wing aircraft that had flown from that ship, such as the modernized AF1 Skyhawks, though. According to Roberto Lopes, the Brazilian Navy is already planning on re-naming its new ship something other than *São*

*Paulo* in order to keep that moniker free for a more capable future carrier.

Instead, the ex-British ship could become the new *Minas Gerais*. The last Brazilian ship of that name was an upgraded World War II-era *Colossus*-class light aircraft carrier that the country had purchased from the United Kingdom in 1956 and which served until *São Paulo's* arrival in 2001.



The Brazilian aircraft carrier *São Paulo*, in the foreground, sails with the USS *Ronald Reagan* in 2004 during a training exercise.

But even without a compliment of fixed wing aircraft, though, the *Ocean* could provide important capabilities for Brazil at home and abroad.

The country's Navy could fly any of its existing Super Cougar and Super Puma transport helicopters, the former of which have

light attack and will gain anti-ship capabilities, or Super Lynx and Seahawk anti-submarine helicopters from the ship's deck. As such it could serve as a sub-hunting platform or in a broader sea control function, as well as being able to support humanitarian assistance operations in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

With the ability to carry small landing craft to get personnel and vehicles ashore even in the absence of established port facilities, it could also potentially support interventions or disaster relief operations throughout Latin America, the Caribbean, and even further abroad. As of 2018, Brazil was already an active contributor to nine different international peacekeeping operations and had been part of more than 50 such missions since the end of World War II.

Throughout her service with the Royal Navy, *Ocean* has already demonstrated her capabilities to perform this wide array of tasks, most recently arriving in the Caribbean to provide aid to British possessions after Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

These diverse capabilities in times of both war and peace have made helicopter carriers and amphibious assault type ships with similar flight decks increasingly popular around the world, especially among countries looking to expand their ability to project power and influence beyond their borders. On top of their more practical functions, this category of ships are often major symbols of national prestige and *Ocean* herself is presently the Royal Navy's flagship.

If nothing else Brazil gains a very flexible ship, which only entered Royal Navy service in 1993.



The ship is less robust than other similar vessels, as it was made to commercial standards

and could need significant overhaul before joining the Brazilian Navy. However, between 2013 and 2014, the United Kingdom put *Ocean* through significant refit that cost nearly \$90 million.

The vessel originally cost less than \$200 million - but more than \$390 million today - meaning that Brazil will get the ship at less than a third of its original price tag. Admiral Ferreira's assessment that the purchase would be "convenient" would seem to be generous to the British.

Of course, as we already noted, it's not clear whether or not this includes any refit or if the ship will require new equipment after delivery. According to U.K. Defence Journal and Janes, the Brazilian Navy already expressed an interest in buying *Ocean* without its Phalanx Close-In Weapon System (CIWS) self-protection systems, which it does not otherwise operate on any other ship.

It is possible that Brazil could strip the short-range Simbad-RC surface-to-air missile systems, electronic support measures systems, and other equipment from the now decommissioned *São Paulo*. Simbad-RC, a twin launcher for the Mistral infrared-homing missile, would not offer a capability similar to that of CIWS, though, meaning the Brazilians might need to invest in additional defensive arrangements.

Whatever happens, the loss of *Ocean* will be significant for the Royal Navy, leaving it without an operational carrier capability of any kind as it waits for HMS *Queen Elizabeth* to reach initial operational capability. The United Kingdom doesn't expect this to happen until at least 2021, in part due to slow pace of getting the F-35B Joint Strike Fighter into service. As such, the country's new supercarrier will go to sea for her first patrol with at least some of her air wing made up of U.S. Marine Corps F-35Bs.

The U.K. Ministry of Defence doesn't expect the ship to reach full operational capability with British F-35Bs until 2023, while her sister HMS *Prince of Wales* looks set to spend most of her time in port in reserve. The supercarrier could deploy early if absolutely necessary, but would almost certainly have to do so without any fixed wing aircraft, greatly limiting its ability to provide local air defence or strike capabilities.

In the meantime, the Royal Navy is also considering retiring its last two major amphibious warfare ships in order to free up both funds and personnel to man those carriers while it otherwise struggles to keep its dwindling surface fleet ready for actual operations. In December 2017, thanks to a confluence of factors, all but one of the Royal Navy's destroyers and frigates were pierside.



As such, in the event of any future contingencies or disasters, such as Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and without HMS *Albion* and HMS *Bulwark*, the United Kingdom will have to rely entirely on ships the quasi-military Royal Fleet Auxiliary, primarily the three *Bay*-class landing ships, for amphibious support. These smaller ships are significantly less capable

The *Bay*-class landing ship RFA Cardigan Bay, which could soon be one of the United Kingdom's only amphibious ships.

than *Ocean* both in terms of flight and well deck space.

It's not clear when the United Kingdom's economic situation might improve. The U.K. government has already faced severe budget cuts as it heads toward its departure from the European Union, commonly known as the British Exit or Brexit.

In addition to a contracting domestic economy in response to the decision, the country's leaders are struggling with the prospect of having to negotiate a slew new international trade deals independent of the regional bloc. There has even been talk of attempting to raise funds for a new royal yacht to aid in doing so, but through a national lottery scheme since there is no actual funding available for such a project.

If there is any silver lining to be had in the sale of *Ocean* for the Royal Navy, it might be that the ship's CIWS and any other defensive systems might find their way on to *Queen Elizabeth*, which appears to be almost comically under-protected. The older helicopter carrier, which displaces approximately 22,000 tons, has three CIWS, along with four 30mm cannons to help beat back small boats and similar close-in threats.

The new supercarrier, more than three times larger, has exactly the same number of both of these self-defence systems at present.

What seems clear is that Brazil is getting the base ship at an absolute steal and that the Royal Navy is still years away from having another operational aircraft carrier.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Brian, re. RM cadets and bus at Chatham, (November 2017 Magazine)

I was on ELP (Electric Light Party) in the barracks that night and got called out to attend with my hand barrow.

On board were 3 mains floodlights, 2 battery operated floodlights, rolls of cable and a large quantity of light bulbs. My usual job was just to replace light bulbs in offices and messes. I arrived at the scene some 20 minutes after the accident and was told to supply floodlighting.

As you can imagine the scene was horrendous with bodies and blood everywhere, Both the battery floodlights didn't work (flat batteries), and there being no electrical socket in the vicinity, I laid out the cable to try and reach the Barracks Guard House, but even with the 3 rolls joined together I was still some 10 yards short.

Fortunately by the time I returned to the scene fire engines were there with their own floodlights.

As I remember the dockyard matey in charge of the stores was given a bollocking for the uncharged floodlights and I was never called for the inquest although told to stand by.

A very sad occasion to be involved in. Look forward to the newsletter, you do a grand job.

Yours Tony Hackett

Margaret (Peggy) Cloherty, the daughter of the late James "Mickey" Thornton, writes that her father was a Stoker on HMS Superb in 1946. He had served throughout the War and was on Arctic Convoys and was part of British Fleet in the Pacific.

In 1946 he was assigned to HMS Superb. He is in Bert Hall's video as "Mickey Thornton". He was Irish so he often got the nickname of Mick, Paddy or Mickey. Unfortunately my Dad died in 1979 of a heart attack. He was 61 years of age. He was a great Dad and I and my brother still miss his gentle presence. It was a lovely surprise to see him in the Bert Hall video. Thank you to the Hall family for posting that. Thank you for a great website.

[To see Bert Hall's Video click here](#)

# REMINISCING THE LUXURY CRUISE

by Neville Howes

I joined the R.N. 16th March 1954 *H.M.S. Ganges* as a Boy Seaman 2<sup>nd</sup> class.

On 23rd March 1955 I was drafted to *H.M.S. Pembroke*, (Chatham barracks) Now Boy 1<sup>st</sup> class.

Then on 12th April twelve of us went by rail to Liverpool to board the liner *RENO-DEL-PASIFICO* for Bermuda (via 2 stops in France and 1 in Spain) where we joined *H.M.S. Superb*.

On board our daily routine was:

Called 05.30 (lash up and stow). Yes, hammocks.

06.00 muster on 14 deck to scrub, wash and polish.

07.00 hands to breakfast.

09.00 muster on well deck. What for? Scrub, wash and polish for an hour, then instructions on everything concerning to the ship.

11.30 Up Spirits, lime juice for us boys.

12.00 Hands to dinner.

14.00 We boys, 2 hours school work.

16.00 Day over.

While in *Ganges*, sailing had taken to be my favourite pastime and I was able to carry it on for a while on the *Superb*. Where in the world could there be a better location? With whaler and crew of four, we were off two or three times a week and once or twice over most weekends.

It came to the point where I was asked to take the Vice Admiral of the fleet's children and carer for a sailing picnic; could I refuse!

Shortly after this we were asked to help out at a fete to be held in the grounds of Bermuda House. Two days later *Superb* sailed for the Panama Canal via a stop in Kingston, Jamaica for fuel.



After going through the locks, entering the fresh water lakes, the skipper put up to full power to see what speed the ship would do in fresh water, a speed of over 35 knots, but had to slow down as the bow wave was washing over the small islands.

A few hours later we entered more locks which put the ship down in the Pacific, where we turned north for our

Locked In !



first port of call on the west coast of the U.S.A.

San Diego, before which we exercised with the U.S.N. Pacific fleet, showing how to shoot down an air-born target. A few days later we entered harbour to one heck of a welcome: three bands, a large group of cheer leaders, a beauty queen from every state and the siren from hundreds of ships in the bay.

The following day we went into dry dock, a screw had been damaged. There she sat on her keel, only two gangways and some cables connected us to shore, not one support. Look, no hands!!! This is a small world, while in San Diego I met the first owners of the house my family were living in Tonbridge, Kent.

A few days later we were on our way again, this time for San Francisco where, once again, the reception was second to none. As the Super-B went under the Golden Gate Bridge and past the isle of Alcatraz to berth alongside the main road, hundreds of boats, of all shapes and sizes surrounded us.

A few more days of sightseeing and being shown how to live, even in those times one could go out all night, wining, dining, cinema or whatever you wanted. After clean ship in the mornings and, being a boy seaman, being back on board by 21.30, the time was all ours. After another week of pleasure the Super-B was on her way again. The local paper had a full page photo of us going under the Golden Gate. Head line: ~~HEARTBREAK SHIP LEAVES SAN FRANCISCO.~~



Once again heading north and many miles upriver, and washing sightseers with our bow wave. According to the local papers the people took it all in fun. We berthed in Portland, Oregon, to another rapturous welcome and another week of sightseeing, and other pleasures. Then on to Seattle; needless to say, the same as the other ports of call.

On to Vancouver, yes, Canada; what a welcome; what's new? What a place! What a time we had!

Alongside at Portland, Oregon

Then to Victoria Island, a R.C. Navy port, and to welcome us here was a sister ship R.S.N. Ontario. Apart from the ensign she looked the same on the outside, but inside was wide open spaces. The day before we sailed I received a letter from home telling me that the post master general of Vancouver was a relation. Happy days.

We have now turned south for Acapulco, Mexico. Being a long journey we got well ahead of time and anchored off the beach at Long Beach, but were not able to go ashore. However, my luck turned. A signal had been received asking if we had a boat to put into a sailing regatta that was starting shortly. I was ordered, as if I needed to be!, to ready the whaler to sail. After being given instructions off we went into the wild blue yonder. There we were, in an odd looking boat, compared to those we were sailing against, all those posh looking pleasure and racing craft. So what! I'm not proud, I'm having fun. The wind was very light but we had a lot of sail area for the size of boat so we made good headway compared to most other craft. We could see most craft

going in under power but a few others, like us enjoyed a day out, and we managed to cross the finish line, which not many did.

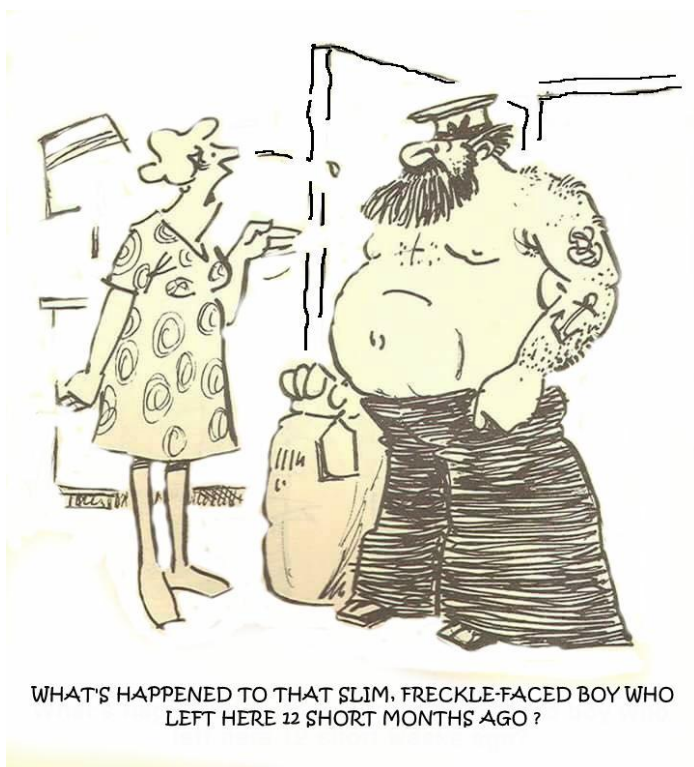
On getting back on board we were told to get into No. 1's and get ready to be taken over to the sailing club. Over we went with five officers, including the captain, to what turned out to be a prize giving. We had come first in class, third overall and other awards. However, they did not want to give us the cups as they would not see them again. Instead we were awarded \$1500. As you may have guessed, this went into the ship's canteen fund. My head was too big for me to get my cap on for weeks.

The following morning it was up anchor and, once again, on our way to Acapulco where, once again, it was a rapturous welcome, to say the least. The following morning two coach loads of us were taken through the mountains to Mexico City to put on a parade to a ceremonial wreath laying after which, time was our own. We stayed the night in an army barracks, the following day returning to the *Superb*. After another four days of sightseeing we set sail for the Panama Canal stopping at Panama City long enough for each watch to have four hours ashore. Three of us got a taxi to take us sightseeing. We saw things that, even today, you would not see in the U.K.. I will say no more!

Through the Canal into the Atlantic, heading home via a brief stop at Jamaica and Bermuda, before heading home to dear old Chatham, and to pay off. WHAT A PLEASURE CRUISE.

After being in *H.M.S Pembroke* for a time I was on draft to *H.M.S. Dryad* for an R.P.3. At this time I was not yet 18 and, I believe that I was the first ever to be conscripted. I spent the rest of my naval career on submarines.

As you may realise by now, I loved life in the R.N. and am proud of it. The ONLY regret I have in my 79 years of life is having to come out of the R.N., and that was because of my wife's ill health.



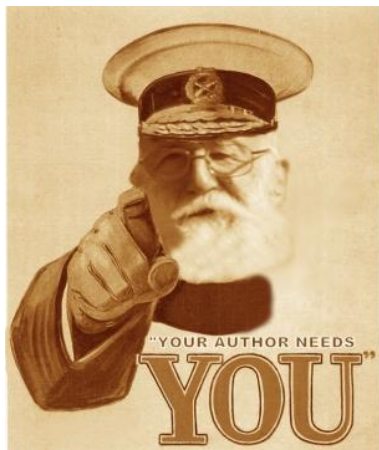


# SCRAN BAG (FREE ADVERTISING)

This section contains adverts from members. If you decide to purchase an item from them please note you deal directly with the member selling.

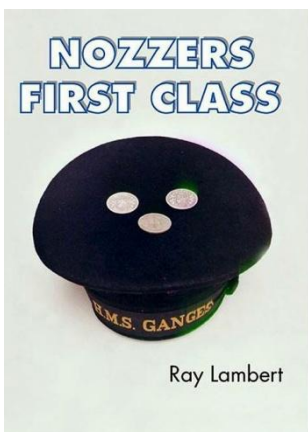
If you have something to say about this section or advertise an article please email Brian at [hmssuperb2u@sfr.fr](mailto:hmssuperb2u@sfr.fr)

## Ray Lambert



Has some of his books for sale which may remind you of how it was when we had wooden ships and iron men (well almost!)

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.



Ray Lambert

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# SOCCER IN GIB - 1954

By Shipmate Malcolm Milham

**T**hese photos are of our Football Supporters Group, our team was well supported, although I played for the Rugby team, I was the Hooker. This occasion was the Kings Cup, Home Fleet V Med Fleet at Gibraltar spring 1954, the cruiser in background is HMS Glasgow, Flagship of Lord Mountbatten who was C-in-C Med at the time.



We had put on a good chuck up for the Home Team, then the C-in-C appeared and we took the hint and left, in an orderly manner.





## HAVE YOU A STORY TO TELL ?

We'd love to print your story so why not put pen to paper

It doesn't need to be a novel -  
just some of your memories  
which will eventually be lost  
forever unless told now

Several members  
have sent in their own  
& they are available to read  
on our website



# JOTTINGS OF A VERY ORDINARY SEAMAN

by Ray Lambert

'We're off to Cyprus' they said. 'There are medals in it,' they said, so off we sailed, just across the way from Malta - not that we had any choice in the matter. We were told that it was a six week tour, patrolling up and down the north coast.



We were based in Karenina although I never got to get into the 'Glass Hotel' and mostly our brief was to chug up and down just off the coast to stop invaders from slipping across from Turkey.

The very day we arrived on station they called a six week cease fire, so there was no need for our services anyway but - being the navy we still had to do the run to and fro but without being on the lookout for interlopers. So relaxed was our 'guarding' duties that most days we tied up at the jetty just below the Glass Hotel and enjoyed a good run in Nicosia.

Nicosia had a big square in the centre of town with bars and other places of entertainment all around the perimeter and with the open space of the square, there was nothing to fall over or trip up on whilst suffering from temporary night time sunstroke!

I had heard of a bar called *La Pip* or something very similar and I was determined to find the place although it was reputed to be the HQ, or meeting place for the Terrorists who were causing havoc. I knew which street the bar was on but the side streets were blocked off with rolls of barbed wire. I found a way through without getting caught on the barbs although I was not so lucky with getting caught by the shore patrol inside the out-of-bounds area. The patrol was in a jeep, army and RAF personnel but I don't recall if there was a navy presence as well.

My 'green-coat' that I had been weaving threads toward for years, had come on a treat by this time and when they accosted me I just couldn't remember seeing any rolls of wire across the streets 'I must have wandered up a side street', I told them. My honest face did the trick and they gave me a ride back to the main square.

They told me they had probably saved my life by getting me out of there and, naturally, I thanked them profusely. As soon as they had driven away, I was back down there again, after all I knew the way this time and it was unlikely they would drive up the same street again so soon. They did!



Once again my honest, angelic face saved the day although I don't remember what yarn I spun them the second time. It worked though because, once again they dropped me off back in the square.....and this time I felt it prudent to stay there!

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# WHY I LIKE THE NAVY!

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**I LIKE** standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe, the ship beneath me feeling like a living thing as her turbines drive her through the sea.

**I LIKE** the sounds of the navy the piercing trill of the boatswains call the syncopated clanger of the ship's bell, the harsh squawk of the main broadcast Tannoy and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

**I LIKE** navy vessels, nervous darting destroyers, plodding fleet auxiliaries, sleek submarines, purposeful mine hunters and steady solid carriers.

**I LIKE** the proud names of County Class ships; Cornwall, Kent, Cumberland, London and Sussex

**I LIKE** the tempo of a navy band blaring through the upper deck speakers as we pull away from the tanker after refuelling at sea.

**I LIKE** the pipe "liberty men fall in" and the spicy scent of a foreign port.

**I LIKE** sailors, men from all parts of the land, from city and country alike and all walks of life, I trust and depend on them as they trust and depend on me for professional competence, comradeship and courage, in a word they are shipmates.

**I LIKE** the surge of adventure in my heart when the word is passed "special sea duty men close up".

**I LIKE** the infectious thrill of sighting home again, the waving hands of welcome from family and friends, the work is hard and dangerous, the going rough at times, the parting from loved ones painful but the companionship of robust navy laughter, the all for one and one for all philosophy of the sea is ever present.

**I LIKE** the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ships work, the rum ration, watching flying fish flit across the wave tops as sunset gives way to night.

**I LIKE** the feel of the navy in darkness the masthead lights, the red and green navigation lights and the stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of the ships wake.

**I LIKE** drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that tell me that my ship is alive and well and that my shipmates are on watch and will keep me safe.

**I LIKE** quiet middle watches with the aroma of kai on a winter's night.

**I LIKE** the bow slicing through the mirror calm of the sea and the frolicking of



dolphins as they dart in and out of the bow wave.

**I LIKE** watching the track disappearing back towards the horizon knowing that it will be gone in a short time and being aware of the fact that we were not the first or will not be the last to leave our mark on the water.

**I LIKE** the foaming phosphorescence at night, dancing from the wake of the screws as they constantly push tons of water astern of the ship, carrying us to our next exciting rendezvous.

**I LIKE** hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze grey shapes racing at full speed keeps all hands on a razor edge of alertness.

**I LIKE** the sudden electricity of "action stations" followed by the hurried clamour of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors and hatches as the ship transforms herself from the peaceful workplace to a weapon of war ready for anything.

**I LIKE** the sight of space age equipment manned by youngsters clad in No8's and sound powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognise.

**I LIKE** the traditions of the navy and the men who made them and the heroism of the men who sailed in the ships of yesteryear.

In years to come when sailors are home from the sea they will still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods, the impossible shimmering mirror calm, and the storm tossed green water surging over the bow, and then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter.

Gone ashore for good they will grow wistful about their navy days, when the seas belonged to them and a new port of call was ever over the horizon, remembering this they will stand taller and say:

I was a sailor once, and numbers will never be the same again:

- Kit: 1's 2's 3's 4's 6's 8's 10's 10A's
- Punishment Number 9's, 10 days stoppage, 7 days cells
- Pusser's Hard
- And can someone explain why are 2 4 6 heavy?

Only a sailor knows...

I was a sailor once and I look back and realise it was not just a job; it was a way of life. A family where shipmates became brothers and part of a team.



I was a sailor once and I still can't forget my Official Number.

When medical science receives my body, as they examine it they will find a tattoo inside my brain with my Official Number and an anchor where my heart is.

I was a sailor once and I Like the navy because even as times change, and the youth takes over from the old seadogs, some things never change:

- The bitching is still the same.
- The old days were always harder
- The recruits were always greener
- Official Numbers were always smaller
- Men of steel and ships of wood
- The goffers were always bigger
- The girls were not as good looking

I recently had the good fortune to attend a naval reunion and sat back and observed that friendships and respect are still as strong and binding as ever.

The ditties are still as interesting - only the tale gets bigger.

If I haven't been there, it doesn't exist - or we blew it off the map.

Only a sailor knows.

I was a sailor once and I know.

I was a sailor once, I was part of the navy and the navy will always be a part of me, that's why I love the navy.





# MEMORIES FROM 1956 (PART 3/4)

(as dictated by Ted Hill) **CONTINUED FROM LAST MONTH**

Ted Hill was a British Stoker and Leading Stoker Mechanic who served aboard *HMS Belfast* in the Far East, 1950-1953; then as Leading Stoker Mechanic aboard *HMS Cockatrice* 1954; a Leading Stoker and Acting Petty Officer Stoker aboard *HMS Tyrian*, Portland Flotilla, 1955; as Acting Petty Officer Stoker aboard *HMS Woolwich*, Reserve Fleet, 1955-1956; and as Petty Officer Stoker aboard *HMS Superb*, Eastern Fleet, 1956-1957

## Dar el Salam (Continued from January Magazine)

I remember the first night ashore in the Railway Club we'd taken a tin of Sobranie Cocktail cigarettes ashore (same as we'd done in Mombasa). The cigarettes were all pastel shades and the ex-pats used to go mad over them and that first night we were asked if we could get some cigarettes. Ok, how many do you want? Oh get us ten thousand. I mean they were all duty free, ever so cheap. So Smithy and I said to these blokes if you come on board tomorrow to visit us, you have the money we'll take you down the canteen we'll order them and you pay for them.



THAT'S 200 BLUE LINERS FOR MY DAUGHTER'S HAND - HOW MANY WILL YOU GIVE ME FOR HER ARMS + LEGS?

So they duly came on board with great big bags and we went down the canteen and they bought thousands of these Sobranie Cocktail cigarettes, I think they emptied the blinking NAAFI canteen. Strangely enough, these two blokes were tobacco farmers. They didn't work for the railways it was just the best club in town and the day we were sailing from Dar el Salam I was piped "P.O. (ME) Hill report to the Quarterdeck to receive a parcel". Well I went down to the Quarterdeck and the Quartermaster was there and I said, "I'm Hill" and he said, "We've had a package delivered for you from ashore".

This package was a sack of tobacco leaves from those bloke's farm and they sent them on board for me. I took the leaves up the mess where there were some older hands and asked them what should we do with them. I used to occasionally roll cigarettes with naval ticklers something like Golden Virginia but hadn't had the actual leaves before. These older hands in the old days used to make their own chewing tobacco and pipe tobacco from leaves and in those days the naval stores used to sell tobacco leaves and some of the older P.O.s in the mess, men



about 40 years old, remembered those days and said we'll make some pricks of tobacco.

What they did was to roll the leaves up, ever so tight, and keep rolling them until they're about an inch to an inch and a half thick and then bind them with cord really tightly so they'd have a small stick. Well, being P.O.s we drew neat rum for our own use and they'd pour some rum in the top of the stick every day, just a drop, and when it matured you could cut a bit off and ruffle it up and use it in a pipe but none of us chewed it. We all tried chewing it but it was bloody horrible.

From Dar el Salam we went to heaven! Over to the Seychelles. We went there because Makarios, the terrorist leader from Cyprus was interned on the main Seychelles' island and the flagship used to visit it every year to show the flag because he was there.

That was a marvellous place as well, the Seychelles, primitive, there was no air field there in the 1950s. Ships used to call every month, they used to run a ship every month from Cape Town up the islands - Madagascar - Seychelles and up to India and people would come from South Africa to the Seychelles, get off the ship, have two weeks there and catch the ship on the way back. They did this to get amongst the women as these holidaymakers were all South African white men and in South Africa they could go to jail for going with a black woman and in the Seychelles there was no such restriction and the women were so available. Lots of them were of French descent. We found a place in the main town where they said there's an ex sailor running a bar and we found it. It was called Sharky's Bar as his name was Ward and he was an ex Canadian sailor who'd been there during the war and after being demobbed and getting his gratuity which was probably a lot more than our people got, being Canadian, he went back and settled there, buying the bar.

He was a big fat bloke with four women. he would say that none of these women were available to customers they're all mine. We used to drink there and again it was so cheap and we'd have a roast duck between us. It was reckoned that the *Superb* ran the island out of ducks while we were there because all the bars seemed to serve up roast duck.

We were there for about a week and the run ashore I remember is that my great friend Smithy and I used to go ashore as we were on the same watch. We went in a bar, not Sharky's bar, it was somewhere else one night and there were officers from the ship in there and we got talking to the Surgeon Lieutenant and the Lieutenant Dentist. Well the Lieutenant Dentist was an Australian who was on loan to the Royal Navy for a spell, and we were chatting away and they'd had a few tots as well and this Australian said, "It was one of the greatest days of my life when they changed the ranks for the Engineering Department because all you



blokes became P.O.(M.E.)s and I could legally called you Pommie bastards" He said, "And I do it at every opportunity" That was real Australian humour.

Anyway from the Seychelles we went back to Trincomalee and that was the end of the summer cruise via Madagascar which I remember as a very primitive Arab influenced place with nothing for us there. We'd go ashore and into the shops but there were no bars and places like there was in the Seychelles. The Arab states were dry due probably to their religion and around the Persian Gulf the only place you could get a drink was in Bahrain where they had a military canteen which served drinks to military forces. So we'd go ashore and look at the shops and that was it.



From there we went back to Trincomalee. Something I didn't mention was when we left Trincomalee to go on the East African Cruise the Admiral took his wife with him on board ship. She lived with him in his quarters aft and they had a screen across the quarterdeck and she used to be behind this screen sunning herself I suppose. And I remember it, it was such a long trip from Trincomalee across the Indian Ocean to East Africa because we steamed economically which was on little cruising turbines which only gave about 12 or 14 knots, something like that, very slow, and in the Indian Ocean you have these great long swells so the ship was moving up and down all the

time, pitching they call it, front to back, rather than rolling.

It was such a long trip across the Indian Ocean and because you know that when you're going to get to somewhere like our first port of call which was Mombasa and we were going to get there for 10 o'clock in the morning you could go on deck at say 7 or 8 o'clock and see it in the distance. It's always a nice thing to see the land coming up over the horizon. And the longer you look the bigger it gets.

As we came to the end of the commission which was in early '57 you know, the end of our year out there, we couldn't go home via the Mediterranean as during the Suez Crisis the Egyptians had blocked the Suez Canal, they sank ships in it. So we had to go round South Africa and we stopped in Cape Town for a week on the way and that was a great run ashore.

In Cape Town you go into a great big bay miles long, and just inside is the naval base where we went alongside. Cape Town is at the head of the bay and we used to have to catch the train which seemed to run round the edge of the water going through all the little towns with strange names all the way up to Cape Town. There were hotels on the waterfront, some of them on the sea front actually. There was a district they told us not to go to,



District 6 around the commercial docks, which was extremely, more than rough, you could get murdered in there and lots of sailors did, none from our ship.

We used to go into Cape town, in the hotel bars and ordinary bars. We were also told not to get involved with the South African Police because they were all Boers and they hated the English dating back from the Boer War. And they did hate us you know. Me and old Smithy were invited to a dinner party and there were about half a dozen couples and me and Smithy.

One of the couples were Boers and do you know they would not speak to us although we tried speaking to them but they would not speak back. The other couples were mainly South Africans with a couple who were recent immigrants from England.

We'd been told that if a policeman tells you to stop, you stop and if you don't he'll stop you by whatever means including his revolver!

So we were very wary of the police there. We were told not to talk to women on the street. But one of the blokes did he was a seaman I knew who lived near me. He spoke to a couple of girls. He told me afterwards when he got back to the ship. He said they were as white as he was and the police came along, saw them, grabbed him and arrested him for talking to Cape Coloureds. But he said that they're white and the police said no they're not they're Cape Coloureds and they've got black blood. The only way you could tell, we found out, afterwards was that on the fingernails, the little bit at the top which is whiter than the rest, theirs is brown. The police held their hands and said look they're Cape Coloureds.

This seaman was charged, put in front of a Magistrate and got three months hard labour and we had to leave him there. He said he was in a prison and all the guards were Boers and he was the only English bloke and he said "I spent my three months, every day, with a sledge hammer breaking rocks on a chain gang just like you see on the American films"

When he was released he was brought back to England on a passing ship. So we went back to England without him.

**TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH**



### Have you a photo of the Superb?

We are endeavouring to collect as many photos or newspaper cuttings which relate to members of the crew (that does include YOU) or an image of the ship itself

The reason behind this is to help complete the history of one of the longest serving (by name) British Royal Navy ships

Contact Brian Saunders, if you can help, by email



# CROSSED THE BAR

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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)

Stoker Jack Travers December, 1995



Stoker James "Mickey" Thornton 1979

See letter from his daughter Click [HERE](#)



# PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE

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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

The Granddaughter of John George Travers known as Jack was a Stoker Mechanic thought to be serving on HMS Superb circa 1954. He lived in Gardiner Street, Gillingham about that time. Jack crossed the Bar in December, 1995

Does anyone recall him? If so Sarah, his granddaughter would love to hear from you

See photo above Click [Here](#)

## From previous issues

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 e 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



## PERSONS WHO RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE

Andy **Brierley** (1954) - Derek **Baldry** (1956) - Alf **Brown** (1954) - Bob **Butcher** (1951) - Ron **Clay** (1956-57) - Bill **Cook** (1956) - Jim **Copus** (1954) - Ted **Davy** (1945 Canada) - John **Eccleston** (1956) - Mark **Field** (Son of Charlie **Field** 1946) - Clive **Godley** (1954) - Maureen Taylor (Daughter of Ron **Gray** 1946) - Phil **Grimson** (1953 & 1954) - Tony **Hacket** (1953) - Terry Hall (son of Bert **Hall** 1946) - Alan **Harmer** (1955 - 56) - Joe **Heaton** (1956) - Brian **Hill** (1954) - Emile [Coder] **Keane** (1954 - 55) - Rita Keeler (Wife of Brian **Keeler** 1954) - Charlie **Kingston** (1956) - Sharon Goodall (Daughter of Fred **Kinsey** Co-Founder 1950-52) - Ray **Lambert** (1955) - Don **Lawrence** (1954) - Peter **MacDonald** (1949-51) - Arthur **Maxted** (1951) - George **Messmer** (USN 1954 - USA) - Malcolm **Milham** (1953) - Wendy **Norman** (Wife of David Norman 1956) - Margaret Norgan (Wife of Jim **Norgan** 1946) - Frank **Nunn** (1954) - Dave **Perrin** (1954) - Debbie Richardson (Daughter of Bill **Potticary** (1952) - Brian **Saunders** (1954 - 55 France) - Will Sherwood (Son of Bill **Sherwood** 1954) - Rob **Smith** (1956) - Jeff Stewart (Son of Jim **Stewart** 1947 Australia) - Pete **Tasker** (1954) - Paul Taylor (Son of Ken **Taylor** 1954) - Brian **Turner** (Associate) - John **Voak** - John **Ward** (1953) - Norman **Webber** (1956) - Jon **Willshir** (1953 Thailand)

[Click here to contact Brian Saunders](#) by email

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An **Application Form** can be downloaded [HERE](#)



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### 2017 EDITIONS

January 2018

**THE END**

