

TON Talk

Newsletter of the TON Class Association

Edition 220



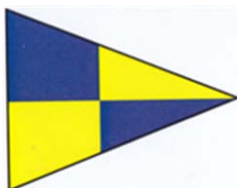
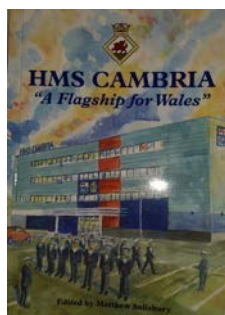
February 2023



Torrey Canyon 55th Anniversary

TON Class Association

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TCA Membership
£15 per annum
£150 Life Membership

Front Cover :
Torrey Canyon

www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk

Founder: Jack Worth MBE

Editorial

TCA Facebook Page TCA has regained control of the FB page and it has become a Private Closed User Group, with access limited to TCA Members and Associates. BZ to Ian Barden, the new Systems Administrator – see page 12 for details.

On Line Joining The TCA website now has a significant enhancement to its facilities. Please visit the Membership Page of the website and encourage friends who may not yet be members to join us.

TCA Memorial Bench Seat We have been advised that our bench seat at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire is sadly in need of some TLC. Does anyone live near enough to give it a quick fettling ? BUT, before you rush off with your wire brush and Ronseal, we have to obtain permission from the Arboretum staff to carry out some minor maintenance. Names of Volunteers to Editor Peter please, so we can go through the right channels.

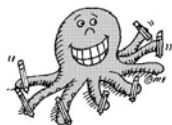
Atomic Tests Medal Veterans who took part in the UK's nuclear testing programme will receive a new medal after years of campaigning.

About 22,000 people will be eligible for the Nuclear Test Medal, introduced to mark 70 years since the first test. Downing Street said the honour commemorates contributions by members of the armed forces, scientists and local employees from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Kiribati. "It is long-overdue recognition of the risks they faced in service and the lasting consequences their families suffer."

Those who worked under UK command during tests between 1952 and 1967 will be able to apply for the medal. It can also be awarded posthumously to veterans' families. Downing Street said the first awards will be made in 2023. It is NOT yet clear how to apply.

A Fatal Hacking Attack has destroyed the website of the Derbyshire Submariners Association, whose Secretary, Terry Hall, is a TCA member. The attack has also compromised the e-addresses of several hundred members, who, like TCA's, are scattered across the globe. It is to be hoped that their newsletter the *Trade Journal* may be resurrected in due course, or we may be deprived of dits from their Politically Incorrect page. There is a lesson for TCA here. We retain the services of a professional web design and maintenance company to protect our website with multiple levels of back up and proactive anti-hacking detection and neutralisation. Such security comes at a modest, but worthwhile, cost.

E-addresses of TCA Members are NOT held on our website.



Deadline for April's edition is 20 March

pjd

Chairman's Corner

Happy New Year to all TCA members and friends!

Having completed over 3 years in the Maritime Operations Centre I'm now working as well as living in Scotland as the Chief of Staff to the Naval Regional Commander, Scotland & Northern Ireland, Brigadier Andy Muddiman ADC RM, and as his Deputy NRC. A rare personal milestone was achieved on 3rd January, earning the 3rd Clasp to the LSGC, marking 45 years continuous regular service.

The new assignment is one principally of Defence Engagement throughout Scotland and Northern Ireland, the NRC being the public face of the Royal Navy, with its mission to promote Defence's support to the Union in Scotland.

Operational activity abounds north of the border where located is HMNB Clyde and its resident nuclear strategic and hunter-killer submarines, and the 1st MCM Squadron consisting of legacy Sandown class minehunters and the novel autonomous offboard MCM systems.

Activity in the high north and the arctic is a central strategy for the UK and NATO and on their way points north, Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG1, think 'STANAVFORLANT'), including HMS PORTLAND, visited Dundee, where I represented NRC and encountered the local Marine Manager, who just happens to be a former TON CO in the South African Navy and who is going to join our Association. On that note, It is heartening that in this edition of TON Talk we have ELEVEN new members - the highest number for several years! The new Application Form appears to be working well and at least two new members have joined using the on-line option.

Regrettably twelve names in 'Crossed the Bar' is also the highest in some years; nevertheless, we remain a very active and strong Association. BZ to Membership Secretary Dennis Cook for keeping track of all the changes.

Looking ahead, we have the Committee Meeting in Portsmouth on Saturday 11th March, then our Reunion in Torquay 13-15th October.

Booking form for the Reunion will be in April's TON Talk, and on our website.

Best wishes to you all,

Bob Hawkins MBE

TCA Who's Who

President

Rear Admiral R John Lippiett CB. CBE. DL

Chairman

Commander Bob Hawkins MBE RN

A serving officer, so contact via Secretary only

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COMING EVENTS

February 2023	Mon 6 19.30	ZOOM Conference for Committee
March 2023	Sat 11 11.00	TCA Committee Meeting Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth All members welcome.
September	Sun 17 15.00	Dedication of Fittleton Memorial St Mary's Church, Fittleton, near Salisbury
October 2023	Sat 14	TCA AGM & Reunion Carlton Hotel, Torquay <i>Booking Form in April's edition of TON Talk</i>

Torrey Canyon Oil Spill

This article originally appeared in TON Talk Edition 41, March 1963, as a joint effort between Jack Worth and Pancho Brett. This updated version was reprinted in TON Talk Edition 175, August 2015 and is reproduced again to mark the 55th anniversary of the disaster. Members who have joined TCA recently may not be aware of the involvement of TONs in the attempts to deal with the oil spill, which remains the largest ecological disaster to have affected the British Isles – yet.

*As a result of the Torrey Canyon incident a lot of Health and Safety regulations and safe working practices, plus specialised equipment, including floating booms, scoops and better absorbent chemicals have been developed. There have also been advances in design of VLCCs, navigation and crew training. But there is never room for complacency at sea, as has been demonstrated by continuing oil spills in many parts of the world in recent years ... **Editor***

The tanker Torrey Canyon, had been built in USA in 1959 with a load capacity of 60,000 tons but during the oil boom of the 1960's had been extended in Japan to 120,000 tons capacity. She was owned by Barracuda Tanker Corporation, a subsidiary of the Union Oil Company of California, and registered in Liberia but chartered to British Petroleum, sailing with an Italian crew. She was 974.4 feet long, 125.4 feet beam and 68.7 feet draught, making her one of the largest supertankers in the world at that time. She cruised at 17 knots on a single steam turbine and took about one minute to turn through 20 degrees and five miles to stop.

She left the Kuwait National Petroleum Company refinery at Mina al-Ahmadi on 19th February 1967 laden with 100,000 tons of crude oil (approximately 730,000 barrels) and reached the Canary Islands on 14th March 14, where the Master was ordered to reach Milford Haven by 23.00 on 18th March in order to catch the tide, otherwise it would be nearly a week before the next tide high enough for the ship to enter harbour.

The tanker had the LORAN radio navigational aid, but not the more accurate Decca Navigator, nor did she have a full outfit of up to date charts. Her master, Pastrengo Rugiati, had commanded ships since 1952 and had been in Torrey Canyon for a year. He planned a route from the Canaries that should have taken Torrey Canyon five miles to the west of the Scilly Isles. At noon on 17th March, he checked his position and confirmed that the ship was on track. He left instructions that night to wake him at 06.00, expecting to have the Scillies on radar off the starboard bow by that time.

Instead, the next morning the Scillies appeared off the port bow. During the night, strong currents had pushed Torrey Canyon to the north and east. Also, while the captain slept, the chief officer altered course from 018 to 012. Upon awakening, Rugiati ordered a return to his original course of 018. By now, Torrey Canyon's course placed the Seven Stones in its path. The captain then decided to take the ship through a deep channel between the Scillies and the Seven Stones, so he made slight adjustments to course, eventually to 000 and left the ship on autopilot.

By 08.48 the officer on watch could see rocks of Seven Stones awash near the ship and Rugiati ordered hard to port but there was confusion as to whether the vessel was in manual steering or automatic pilot. Full astern had no effect. Torrey Canyon hit

Pollard's Rock at full speed. Initially it was estimated that the collision had ripped open six of her 18 cargo tanks. Others would later rupture when she broke her back in the weeks that followed. Several attempts to float the vessel off the reef proved unsuccessful, and an explosion of vapour in the engine room killed a member of the Dutch salvage team. By that time the oil slick extended 35 x 20 miles just 12 miles from the Cornish coast.



She spilled 100,000 tons of crude oil into the sea, about 14,000 tons of which ended up on the beaches of Cornwall and more drifted on to the north coast of Brittany. When ship began to break up, the focus became clean up and containment of the resulting oil spill. Detergent was deployed on a large scale by Cornwall fire brigade and attending Royal Navy vessels in an attempt to disperse the oil. 19 ships and over 5000 people: troops, police and members of the public, became involved in the clean up.

Prime Minister Harold Wilson held an impromptu cabinet meeting at the Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose and, acting upon advice from a panel of scientists, decided to set fire to the vessel and surrounding oil slick.

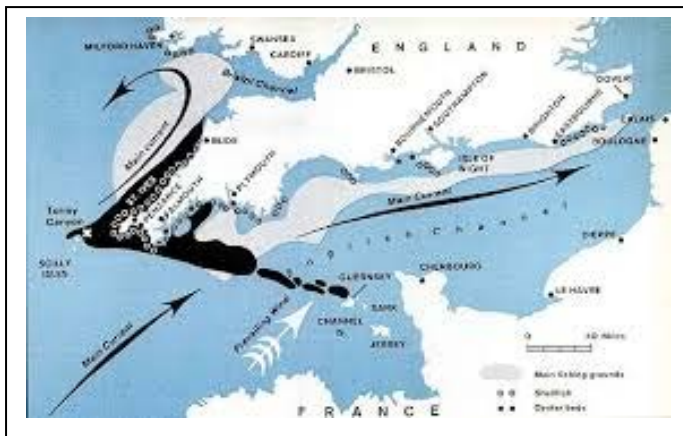
On 28th March 1967, Fleet Air Arm Buccaneer aircraft from Lossiemouth dropped forty-two 1,000-lb bombs on the ship. Hunter jets from RAF Chivenor followed up by adding drop tanks of aviation fuel to make the oil blaze. However, exceptionally high tides put the fire out and it took further bombing runs over three days by Sea Vixens from the Yeovilton and Buccaneers from Brawdy, as well as more RAF Hunters with liquified petroleum jelly to ignite the oil. In total 160 1000-pound bombs, 11,000 gallons of kerosene, 3,000 gallons of petrol jelly and 16 rockets were dropped. The accuracy and effectiveness of this tactic were later questioned. Attempts to use foam booms to contain the oil slick were ineffectual because of the high sea state. Torrey Canyon finally sank on 21st April and the wreck now lies at a depth of 30 metres.



Pancho's Memoir ...

These notes were taken from the LALESTON's Report of Proceedings, with some of my own personal memories woven in. Our C.O. was Lt. Cdr. R.S.C Robinson, a TCA member now sadly Crossed the Bar. He was a Diving Officer hence the appointment to LALESTON on her conversion to the minehunter role. He was a rum character; ex-lower deck, Ganges around 1936. He knew every trick in the book. The steward once overheard him say to the Jimmy (Nigel Essenhigh, later First Sea Lord) " What is said in the wardroom at Stand Easy is known forward at Tot Time."

At 21.00 on March 29th LALESTON sailed from Portsmouth in company with BELTON to join the fight with the oil slick, which was being coordinated on site by PELLEW. Traces of oil were sighted on Thursday 30th March and LALESTON was detailed to search for and report the position of heavily contaminated areas. An oil slick 350 x 80 yards and some 8-10 inches thick was soon located. Spraying with detergent commenced at 09.35 and it soon became apparent that in dealing with concentrations of this density, the practice of proceeding at slow speed through the oil, while spraying resulted in an inadequate deposit of detergent to achieve any appreciable degree of emulsification and further, that only the leeward spraying boom was effective.



The method finally adopted was to stop the ship upwind of a slick and to drift through the oil, spraying to leeward and agitating the oil with firemain hoses. This method was effective in spreading sufficient detergent to emulsify the oil and when followed by steaming at high speed through the treated area, created a marked degree of dispersal.

To add to the misery, at one stage the ship had a complete failure of electrical power and, while wallowing in the greasy swell, the Senior Officer of the Task Unit in PELLEW closed and bellowed "What are you doing" ? Lt Cdr Robinson responded in such salty terms that he was subsequently required to wait upon the Senior Officer with sword and medals ...

LALESTON berthed at St Peter Port at 17.45 where the naval surgeon and agent examined those affected members of the ship's company. He diagnosed acute pharyngitis, with exposure to the detergent spray as a contributory factor.

This information was passed to CinC Portsmouth and to the Commander of the Task Unit with a request to the latter that a rest day be advanced to allow the ship's company time to recover. Those members of the Ship's company not affected had to deal with a heavy workload. Permission to advance the rest day was granted and LALESTON remained in harbour on 5th April but she was required to shift berth at 09.00, 12.00 and again at 19.00 to facilitate movements of merchant shipping. These movements were achieved by utilising all available non-seamen ratings. The medical officer visited the ship during the day and treatment was continued. On Thursday 6th April, on medical advice, we remained in harbour and, since the health of the ship's company was much

improved, opportunity was taken to clean ship. All detergent was discharged and decks thoroughly washed down to remove contamination.

Four young Sea Scouts visited the ship to say how grateful they were and, indeed the people of Guernsey to the Royal Navy for preventing the pollution of their beaches. In return they wished to assist us in cleaning the ship. They were quite adamant in their desire for reciprocal aid, so were employed on some of the less unpleasant but nevertheless essential tasks. This spontaneous gesture by a group of young people was very much appreciated and left a good impression with all onboard.

On Friday 7th April the Medical Officer considered that adequate recovery had been made by those previously affected and the ship sailed at 09.35, berthing alongside DUFTON at maintenance jetty, VERNON at 17.45. Subsequent reviews of events concluded that the particular method chosen to disperse the oil was highly effective but presented a health hazard to the ship's company. The ship being stopped permitted a high concentration of detergent to develop in a fine spray and, although adequate precautions had been taken to obviate the caustic effect of detergent on hands and in eyes, account had not been taken of the risks of inhaling detergent vapour. The task was terminated at 16.00 and LALESTON was detached to St Peter Port, Guernsey, berthing on HIGHBURTON at 20.35. The empty detergent drums were offloaded into the PAS vessel Thomas Grant and embarkation of a fresh supply of 3,000 gallons of detergent was completed at 23.30.

The crew complained about the stench of crude oil, the smell of which had crept into every nook and cranny, even though the ventilation system had been shut down; kit, bedding and even the food and rum, smelled and tasted of crude. By the time the crew has bathed and dhokeyed, the crew was too exhausted to do anything but sleep. LALESTON sailed at 05.30 on Friday 31st March and carried out a search for oil contamination while on passage to the contaminated area.

A further dispersal operation commenced at 10.15, using the method described above and was continued to good effect until 12.45 when we closed PELLEW to transfer empty detergent drums. During this manoeuvre a steering failure occurred due to the blower unit of a generator seizing and superficial damage was suffered to the port rubbing strake and hull. Spraying operations continued until 16.00 when LALESTON returned to St Peter Port, arriving at 20.00, where she berthed on Thomas Grant to replenish with detergent, completing at 22.15. The seized blower was beyond repair on board and a signal was sent requesting a replacement by air freight.

Sunday 1st April had been allocated as a rest day in harbour once provisions, water and ten tons of fuel had been embarked. Leave was granted from 12.00. By this time, many of the ship's company were complaining of sore throats and headaches. Some thought that there might be a flu epidemic on board but others suspected that the problems might be caused by inhalation of detergent spray. This did not prevent a good run ashore, where the locals treated us well. By Sunday 2nd April warning for a full gale was in force and ships were instructed to remain in harbour. At 08.00 on Monday, LALESTON sailed to her designated area, where she carried out spraying and dispersal operations until 16.00. returning to St Peter Port at 18.20, fresh supplies of detergent were embarked and completed by 19.30.

By this time almost everyone on board was suffering with sore throats, headaches and common 'flu type symptoms and the Cox'n was running out of codeine. LALESTON left St Peter Port at 06.00 on 4th April to resume spraying with satisfactory results using a 35-ton pump to discharge detergent to very good effect. During the day the crew began to feel progressively worse, with 15 officers and men so badly affected that the captain signalled to NLO Guernsey requesting the attendance of a naval surgeon and agent on arrival.

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The family of Bernie Bristoll (RIP) have kindly sent Christmas wishes to TCA via Dennis Cook.



Dear Dennis,
Wishing you and all members
of the T.C.A Peace at Christmas and
throughout 2023. We thank you for
your, and the T.C.A's, Support when
our Dad, Bernard Bristoll, crossed the
bar. We thank those T.C.A members
who attended Dad's funeral on 23rd
June. Very soon afterwards, our
beloved mum passed away too. It's
been a very sad year for us.
Thank you too for sending the
Ton Talk newsletter, it's much
appreciated.
Wishing you all the very
best, from Victor, Bernie and Maria
Bristoll.

Shavington Remembrance

VMT and BZ to David Bridge who represented TCA at the Remembrance Sunday Service in Shavington, near Nantwich, Cheshire on 13 November 2022. *Pictured right.*

The village had been affiliated with TCA in 1991 and David had been there on that occasion but, as is often happens, the affiliation faded away when the principals on both sides moved away or died. David had been posted to HMS SHAVINGTON in 1956 during his National Service as an ME due to his previous experience as a plumber. At 21 he was the oldest Junior Rate aboard and was known as "Pop"



SHAVINGTON participated in Operation Musketeer, the Suez Canal Campaign in 1956 and six Cyprus patrols up to 1959, plus a deployment to Aden, before being paid off to Reserve in 1969. She was recommissioned in 1974 for service with the Fishery Protection Squadron, being commanded in 1974-76 by Lt John Lippiett, now Rear Admiral and TCA President. Also in FPS at that time was BRONINGTON commanded by the then Lt Charles, Prince of Wales, who consented to become TCA Patron in 1994.



David is pictured above on the right in front of the green standard of the Cubs.

Shavington-cum-Gresty Parish Council, St Mark's Church and Shavington Methodist Church, came together for the annual Parish Remembrance Sunday service.

The service was opened by the Chairman of the Shavington-cum-Gresty Parish Council, Benjamin Gibbs. Rev. Sarah Butcher from Shavington Methodist Church and Rev. Rachael Griffiths from St Mark's then led the hymn and introduced representatives from various village organisations to contribute to the service:

CHRISTMAS MIS-MUSTERS

from the POLITICALLY INCORRECT pages of Derbyshire Submariners Newsletter
Courtesy Terry Hall

Santa Clause has the right idea !

He only visits people once a year. - Victor Borge

Why is Santa Clause so Jolly ?

Because he knows where all the bad girls live !

What does Santa do with fat elves ?

He sends them to the Elf Farm

The Four Stages of Life.

You believe in Santa Claus;

You don't believe in Santa Claus;

You become Santa Claus;

You look like Santa Claus !

Disney's New Film" Scouse White", the UK version of 'Snow White', has been put on hold due to an industrial dispute.

All seven dwarfs: Dealer, Stealer, Mugger, Carjacker, Shoplifter, Drinker and Bludger, have walked off the set after refusing to sing the "Hi Ho !" song.

All seven are insisting that they have no intention of singing "It's off to work we go..."

Due to EU Bureaucracy Father Christmas is forced to have an official from the Aviation Authority check his sleigh to make sure it is airworthy. The official checks out the sleigh on the ground then sits beside Father Christmas for a test flight. Suddenly Santa notices the official has a gun in his waistband and asks; "What's that for, You're not a hijacker, are you ?". The Official shakes his head and said "No, but we have to see how you handle this craft if you lose an engine on take-off !"

Santa was Very Cross. It was Christmas Eve and nothing was going right. The elves were complaining about not getting paid overtime, and their zero hours Christmas contracts. The reindeer had been drinking all afternoon, and the sleigh was broken down. Santa was furious. 'I cannot believe it,' he yells. 'I've got to deliver millions of presents all over the world in just a few hours, all of my reindeer are drunk, the elves are on strike, and I don't even have a Christmas tree. I sent that stupid little angel to find one hours ago ! What am I going to do ?'

Just then, the little angel opens the front door and steps in from the snowy cold night, dragging a huge Christmas tree. "Oi, Fatty !" she says. "Where do you want me to stick this ?" *And that is how the tradition of an angel on top of the Christmas tree came about.*

TCA FACEBOOK PAGE

Ian Barden

I am pleased to advise that, with the cooperation of Rik Furnival, TCA has regained management of the TCA Facebook page and I have taken over as Systems Administrator [i.barden@btinternet.com].

Thanks to Liam Nash and Sam Cook for their assistance with liaison with Facebook and help in arranging a seamless transfer.

With effect from 23 November 2022, the page has been transferred from a Public to Private Group i.e. it now operates as a Closed User Group, with access limited to Full and Associate Members of the TON Class Association, as was Rik's original intention.

In recent years we have noted some unwelcome and irrelevant postings and we now wish to return to our roots of providing a friendly and informal means of communication for those who served in TON vessels and their close friends.

I have specifically not activated 'Post Approval' as I consider that our community is old enough and wise enough to act in a responsible manner and not post anything that might risk the good reputation of TCA, without being 'over monitored'.

All paid up Full and Associate members of the TCA will remain in the group, with no need to take any action to continue to access Text, Pictures, Media, Files etc

Non-members can join TCA as Full members if they have served on a TON or as Associates if they have served on other MCMVs or have an interest in MCM, such as being a relative of someone who served in minesweepers. A Membership Application form can be downloaded from our website www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk or by post from Membership Secretary Dennis Cook, or they can now join On-Line.

In order to register for the TCA Facebook page, go to FB, select Search, and enter Name and TCA Membership Number, to obtain Approval. If you do not recall your Membership number, it can be obtained from Membership Secretary Dennis Cook at d.cook1727@gmail.com

Our new Chairman, Commander Bob Hawkins MBE, is very keen to promote use of the re-born Facebook page. We aim for the page to continue to provide interesting social interaction, with historical chats and ideas, for a long time into the future.

Please register with the revised Facebook page and build up our community, exchanging dits, gossip and photos of the *"Good Old Days"* ...

I would like to thank Rik Furnival for all of his past work in setting the page up in the early days and to assure him that his work remains the baseline and inspiration for the group.

More DONOYOU Dits

THE RETURN OF "ROCKET SOCKS"

Of the many different people I went to sea with one was a PO (Electrical) whose vocabulary seemed to consist of 2 abbreviated phrases namely "OP DEF" (Operational Defect) and "SIT REP" (Situation Report).

Most days he would travel round the ship at pace calling out "Op Def" or "Sit Rep"(and sometimes both!). As a result he became known as "ROCKET SOCKS".

At the end of one deployment the CO carried out the usual "Decommissioning Rounds" of all parts of the ship. He came down to the "Sweep Deck" accompanied by the 1st Lt (with clipboard) and preceded by the Cox'n (with Bosun's Call). After exchanging the usual pleasantries, he asked if there were any defects and I pointed to a broken PNM (Pipe Noise Maker) which was lashed up and tagged ready for collection and disposal. On being asked what was wrong with it I replied (using seamanlike jargon) "Well it's totally f....d Sir".

Happy with my response he and the others moved on to the Generator Spaces where they met "ROCKET SOCKS". He also had a defect to report but could only say it was an "OP DEF". The CO apparently advised him how I had reported my defect saying that was language he understood but all "ROCKET SOCKS" could say it's an "OP DEF".

As the CO moved away "ROCKET SOCKS" called after him "But don't you want a "SIT REP" Sir?

THE PERILS OF BEING TEETOTAL

Early in my RNR career, one of my fellow AB's was (unusually) teetotal. He was popular and accompanied a few of us on "Runs Ashore" and in the Pubs would drink soft drinks while the rest of us were drinking alcohol.

One night we were returning to the ship through a darkened dockyard (after a heavy session). Most of us were staggering about but one of our number was completely sober and walking in a straight line and he was the one who fell down an uncovered manhole. Fortunately, apart from a few bruises, we pulled him out unhurt.

MCMV NEWS

by Rob Hoole

Operation KIPION MCM

2023 will mark the 17th consecutive year that the UK has maintained a persistent Mine Countermeasures force in the Middle East. Our MCM forces, based at the NSF (Naval Support Facility) at Mina Salman in Bahrain, currently comprise the Hunt class MCMVs MIDDLETON (MCM2 Crew 7) and CHIDDINGFOLD (2/2) plus the Sandown class MCMV BANGOR (1/2), all supported by RFA CARDIGAN BAY. On 3 December, MIDDLETON and BANGOR flew the purple flag to show her support for disabilities and raising awareness on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. BANGOR was among the ships that received gifts from Operation Christmas Box, a charity providing Christmas Boxes full of presents (affectionately known as the 'Square Stocking') to all those in the UK Armed Forces deployed overseas away from their families and loved ones on Christmas Day. In mid-January, she had her anchors removed for their bi-annual certification. In December, CHIDDINGFOLD and BANGOR were based in Doha to patrol the waters around Qatar during the 2022 World Cup with CARDIGAN BAY acting as command ship. On 28 December, CHIDDINGFOLD took a pause from operations to celebrate Christmas in the middle-eastern sun with a traditional dinner on her sweep deck. BANGOR saw in the New Year in Dubai.

HUNT Class

HURWORTH (2/6) has been seen day-running from Portsmouth. In early December, she hosted the RN Candidate Preparation Course and on Christmas Day, she featured in a lengthy 'Christmas Road Test' in the Telegraph, available online at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/cars/features/telegraph-christmas-road-test-hunt-class-mine-countermeasures/>. In January, HURWORTH's CO presented her MEO, WO1 "Flash" Gordon, with his Warrant Officer's scroll. In mid-December, sailors from LEDBURY (2/3) gave a lending hand to the kids at Lee-on-the-Solent infant school's annual Christmas fayre. In early December, Lt Cdr Tom Lindsey superseded Lt Cdr Jonny Campbell as the Commanding Officer of CATTISTOCK (2/8).

SANDOWN Class

PEMBROKE (1/5) has been sea training in Scottish waters, sometimes in company with PENZANCE (1/8). In November, her ship's company participated in the 'Movember' campaign by growing moustaches and raised over £200 towards Prostate UK. On 14 December, her CO and XO served Christmas lunch from the galley under the watchful eye of the Leading Chef. In December, the RNMC (Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity) enabled the whole of PENZANCE's ship's company to enjoy a Christmas dinner ashore prior to departing on Christmas leave.

See the 'Latest News' page of the MCD Officers' Association's new website at www.mcdoa.org for more recent updates and photos.

Marinha Portuguesa Navy Divers detect WW2 Mine

Scuba Dive Detachment Team # 3, aboard *NRP Viana do Castelo*, recently identified an intact World War 2 mine containing about 600 kg of explosives.

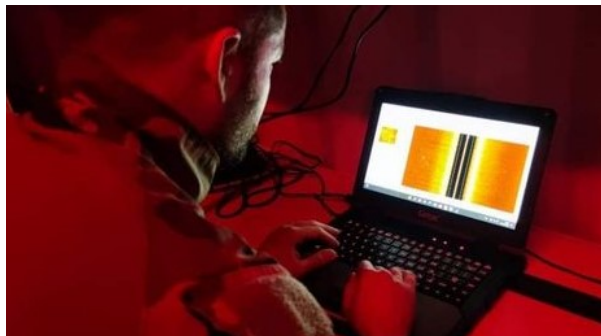
This occurred during the ship's participation in the international exercise "NIRIIS 22".

The ability of the Navy Divers to operate unmanned submarine vehicles, coupled with the knowledge and practice they possess has also revealed an added value to performing in minefields contributing to this discovery in total safety.



The *Viana do Castelo* ocean patrol ship is currently integrating with Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2. The ship is commanded by Capitão de Fragata Sá Granja and has 67 military on board, including a security team made up of Marines, a team from the Dive Detachment #3, a naval medic and a specialist termed Operational Data Management and Analysis Officer. [just like MW / CIS ?]

Source: Geoff Goodwin on TCA Facebook Page 1 December 2022



US Coastguard Sail Training Ship EAGLE

Doug Andrews, Ware

I took these photos in the mid- to late 1950's when EAGLE visited the Pool of London.



The US Coastguard Sail Training Ship EAGLE was in fact, a Second World War reparations prize. She was built by Blohm and Voss in Hamburg in 1936 and started life in the Kriegsmarine as the '*Horst Wessel*'. Hitler actually stepped aboard her just once, but the story has it that he had hob-nails in his footwear which scored the teak deck and did not go down too well.

Horst Wessel was a fanatical member of the youth wing of the infant Nazi party in the early 1930's. He was killed in a street brawl with communist opponents, then "sanctified" by the Reich. A marching song was dedicated to him, which I understand was sung until quite recently at the "officially unapproved" reunions of veterans of the former SS.

The ship regularly participates in gatherings of Tall Ships round the world. On this voyage across the Atlantic, she was accompanied by two US Coastguard Cutters, *Absecon* W 374 and *Yakutat* W389. In my photo they lack the red and blue diagonal stripes on the bows that is a feature of the modern US Coast Guard (see *opposite*).

Having served for virtually seven decades in American hands, EAGLE has recently undergone a thorough restoration which should hopefully see her continuing in her role for another seventy years. She was one of five similar ships of which her sister *Gorch Fock* (a noted modern German poet) is still in service with the German Navy in a Cadet Training role

Certain items dating from her launch are still in use, including the original sextant which still bears the 1940's German eagle.



Editor's Footnote When I was a Cadet at Dartmouth in 1957 we had five well-appointed yachts, one for each Division, far superior to the usual Pusser's issue craft. They too, were similar "war prizes" i.e. Loot.

Known as "Windfalls", there was an additional proficiency test to take them to sea.

In 1958 as part of qualifying as an interpreter, with half a dozen other Midshipmen, instead of summer leave, I did a cruise to the Baltic in the French Navy Cadet Training Squadron (avisos). Among the ports we visited was Flensburg and the German Naval College at Mürwik, where we met some of the sister yachts to the Windfalls.

We got along very well with our German opposite numbers (dare I say somewhat better than the French Aspirants) and were invited to join them sailing in the fjord after Sunday Divisions. Our Fähnrich hosts commented how well we seemed to know our way around THEIR yachts ...

Unlikely though it may appear for 19 year olds, Dartmouth may have given us some sense of diplomacy, because no-one mentioned the Windfalls ...

Welcome to Damien Payton, our 2,500th Member

Damien served as an LRO (G) RNR, based at HMS ESSEX, the “communications outstation” at Southend of HMS PRESIDENT.

He gained seetime experience during 1979-91 aboard HM Ships Lewiston, Alfriston, Kellington, Bildeston Helford, Humber, Arun, Orwell and Itchen.

Following the introduction of the River Class and hull sharing, Damien re-qualified in Mine Warfare and enjoyed life on the sweepdeck.



Damien, (*pictured above on the right*), receives his special Membership Certificate prepared by Membership Secretary Dennis Cook, from TCA Vice Chairman Peter Down.

Damien lives in the charming Suffolk town of Woodbridge on the River Deben. He works as Assistant to the Quartermaster of 23 Regiment. Royal Engineers, the parachute cadre of the Sappers in 16 Air Assault Brigade – a very busy appointment at the Army's Spearpoint Rapid Reaction Force.

His previous experience includes being driver to Admiral Commanding Reserves, which took him all over Britain, He has also worked as a gamekeeper, so has many strings to his bow,

We look forward to seeing Damien at TCA Reunions and to being regaled by more of his fascinating dits.

Lt Cdr Rebecca Filtness RNR

Rebecca Filtness, wife of our Guest of Honour, Captain David Filtness RN, at our recent Reunion, kindly enquired about the Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal [aka Fried Rice Award] that several of us were wearing. Having regaled her with tales of our derring do when faced with a bowl of hot noodle soup, and leaving out only the steamy side of runs ashore in Nee Soon, we discovered that she was a serving officer in the RNR. We discretely asked for some details and she replied as follows :

It was a pleasure to meet you at the TCA Reunion. Thank you for a wonderful evening. As requested, a few words from me on my naval career to date

I joined the RN as an Observer in 2000 and completed my flying training at RNAS Culdrose with 750NAS and 849NAS. After gaining my 'wings' I joined 849 'A' Flight and embarked in HMS Ark Royal, HMS Illustrious, HMS Ocean, FGS Charles de Gaulle and RFA Fort George carrying our Airborne Surveillance and Control (ASaC) tasks with the Sea King Mark 7, which was the replacement for the Mark 2 'bagger'. I was the first female ab-initio Mark 7 observer.

My flying career ended early and I contemplated a future as a Warfare Officer, completing my navigation training and fleet time in HMS Bangor, before deciding to leave the regular service and become a reservist. I joined HMS Vivid in Plymouth in 2006 as an amphibious warfare officer and enjoyed working closely with the Royal Marines on a number of exercises and deployments on board HMS Ocean and RFA Cardigan Bay.

Unable to resist the temptation to return to full time RN work, I took an FTRS contract in 2008 to join the 'Navy Days' team in Plymouth, and again in 2012 to join 43 Cdo Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines as 2 I/C 'P' Squadron. P Sqn was manned at that time by RN sailors carrying out force protection duties on board RFA and RN ships in the Gulf. Towards the end of my contract I was made O.C. P Squadron, becoming the first female sub-unit commander in a Commando Unit. I was mobilised for the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, and again for an amphibious deployment in HMS Bulwark.

My current role is as part of a head-office team tasked with delivering the Haythornthwaite Review of Armed Forces Incentivisation – we are looking at all aspects of 'the offer' made to service personnel and attempting to re-design the offer to suit the needs of the future Armed Forces out to 2035. I am carrying out this role in a way I could never have imagined when I joined the RN: I work remotely from home, job-sharing with an Army Reserve Major. This allows me to balance the demands of family life with still feeling like I am contributing.

My career in the RN has taken me all over the world, and to places I could never have imagined. I've been to the Arctic Circle, to Antarctica, to the US Naval War College, to Bahrain and to Scapa Flow. I have had terrific opportunities, great adventures, made lifelong friends and received amazing training, and continue to be proud of the RN and the part I play.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my career.

*VMT Ma'am for an encouraging model to put before our granddaughters and a salutary counter to the alarming stories that have recently surfaced about disrespectful treatment of female personnel in the Armed Forces ... **Editor***

Membership Update

To comply more closely with GDPR Data Protection rules, contact details of members are not disclosed in full but friends can obtain them from the Membership Secretary, subject to permission of the member.

NEW MEMBERS – Welcome Aboard

William McBride, CPO WEA RN . Portugal Served on HM Ships MAXTON 1981-84, SHERATON19 87-9 F2510

Kenneth Grieve, JMEM-POMEM (M). RNR. Renfrewshire Scotland. Served on HM Ships CROFTON 1977-79. HODGESTON 1979-84. DOVEY 1985-9 F2511

Jeffrey Connett, ME1 RN Consett Co Durham. Served on HMS SHAVINGTON 1977-79 F2512

David Warner. RO2 (G) RN. Ramsgate Kent. Served on HMS LEWISTON1969-7] F2513

David Shipton LRO (G) RN. Chester Served on HM Ships PENSTON 1965-66, WISTON1967-68, FISKERTON 1969, BRINTON 1974-75 F2514

Ron Smith. A L/STD RN. Melbourne Derbyshire Served on [HMS BRONINGTON 1979-82] F2515

Larry Young, CEA1 - Lt) RN Dunfirmline Fife Served on HM Ships GAVINTON 1975-77, HUBBERSTON, KEDLESTON, UPTON, SOBORTON, Fishery Protection Sqdn 1985-87] F2516

Graham Gallagher. A/B-L/S (MW) RN Portsmouth Served on HM Ships SHOULTON 1978-80, POLLINGTON 1980-81, BRINTON 1981-82, KIRKLISTON 1985-86. IVESTON 1986 F2517

Mike McAuliffe.MEM 1 RN Plymouth Served on HM Ships MAXTON 1978, BRERETON 1979, BRONINGTON 1980-82 F2518

John Beardsley. MEM 2-CMEM (M) RNR. Nailsea North Somerset. Served on HM Ships HODGESTON 1970-77, UPTON 1977-79, VENTURER 1979-84. CARRON 1984-93, CRICHTON 1972, ARUN 1994 F2519

David Coppins, L/S (UW(A) - P/O (MW) RN Port Talbot Served on HMS BRERETON 1972-74,- 1976-79 F2520

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Frank Carroll. To:- Churchtown Southport F0263

Simon Keen To:- Yeovil Somerset F0993

Christopher W Pile. To:- Chidham Chichester. F2065

CHANGED E-Mail ADDRESS

Bob R Barclay, To:- charlesrobert.barclay@gmail.com F1821

LOST CONTACT.

Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary

John Warbuton. Last Known Address Selby North Yorkshire. F2215



Crossed the Bar

CPO Diver Leslie Sharpe RN Portsmouth L 1470

Served on HMS Bossington 1972-74

L/S UW1 Peter Skelton RN Spalding, Lincs F 0453A

Served on HM Ships DARTINGTON 1961-62, HIGHBURTON 1963

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Harris RNR Bristol,

Severn Division RNR, F 0564

Served on HMS Ships HODGESTON 1963-64, UPTON 1977-78

L/S Rodney Hogan RN Ipswich, F 2178

Served on HMS HOUGHTON 1961-62

CPO MEA (P) Albert Pearson RN Newcastle on Tyne, F2060

Served on HM Ships WISTON 1975-76, SHERATON 1976-78

A/B Nigel Rozier RNR

*Not a TCA member but well known and respected in East Anglia RNA.
Stowmarket.*

Served on HM Ships PRESIDENT and KELLINGTON 1970'S

L/S Dave McKenry RN Bembridge Isle of Wight.

Served on HMS PUNCHESTON 1958-60 F0520

Captain John Caughty RN Emsworth Hampshire.

Served on HMS WILKIESTON L0168

CMEM Cyril Keen RN Hemel Hempstead.

*Served on HM Ships ALFRISTON, CROFTON, WARSASH, WESSEX, SOLENT
DIVISION RNR F0813*

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Harris RNR Stapleton Bristol

Served on HM Ships HODGESTON 1963-64 UPTON 1974-78 F0564

A/B Richard Thomas RN Axminster

Served on HM Ships BRINTON 1955-56, UPTON 1956-57 F0511

A/B Sinclair Livingstone RN, RNVR Edinburgh.

*Served on HM Ships KILLIECRANKIE 1948-49, DERRITON 1954,
CLAVERHOUSE 1952-57. F2390*

May They Rest In Peace

HMS CAMBRIA Centenary

HMS CAMBRIA celebrated its 75th Anniversary in 2022.

A history of the Welsh RNR establishment in Cardiff has been produced, containing much of general interest including:-

- The loss of HMS FITTLETON
- Deployments to the West Indies and Canada.
- MCM preparations for Operation Corporate.
- Development of EDATS
- Seagoing in HMS WAVENEY
- Mobilisation and deployments after 1994 to the Middle East

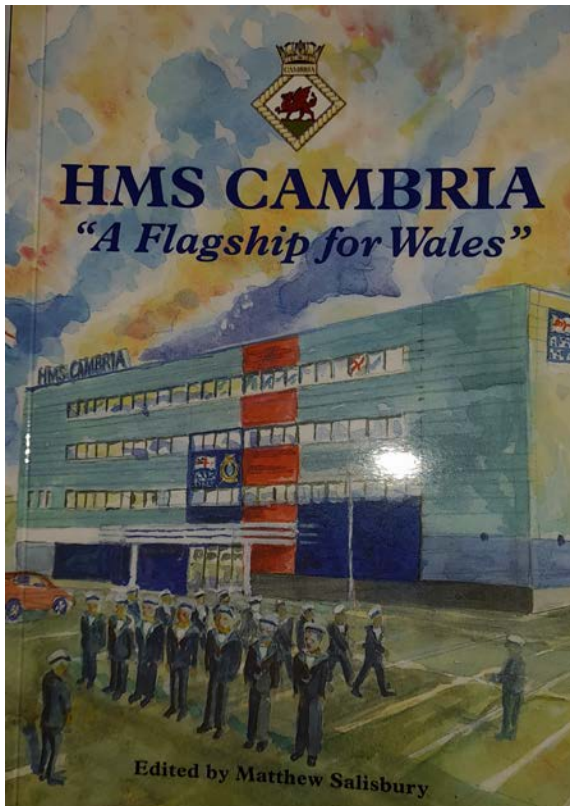
Books are available at £15.00 (plus £3,30 postage from Matthew Salisbury Hon Sec. For further information Please email matthew@cavamh.org.uk



HMS CAMBRIA, Sully, Seen from the sea



Original Building



*Drawings by our own talented Secretary, Matthew Salisbury ... **Editor***

Life in the Fish Squadron

TCA was recently contacted by Dr Johnathan Wise who is writing a book about the RN and the Fishery Protection Squadron and wanted some additional information about the role of TONs. We sent him a copy of that chapter in "Last of the Wooden Walls" and also the following summary of several anecdotes that have appeared in TON Talk.

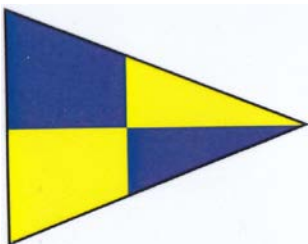
The Fishery Protection Squadron was re-named Overseas Patrol Squadron in 2020. Liaising with the Marine Management Organisation, the Squadron is responsible for patrolling the UK's Extended Fisheries Zone, both at home and around British Overseas Territories.

Cramped accommodation, uncomfortable in rough seas, reputed to roll on wet grass, occasionally dangerous work handling heavy minesweeping equipment on pitching decks or coming under fire from hostile forces, - often exciting but never boring, such was life aboard a TON Class Mine Counter Measures Vessel.

Very much a "Small Ships Navy", boundaries of rank between officers and ratings, if not relaxed, were much less formal than in bigger ships. All members of the ship's company depended upon each other, and this generated mutual feelings of respect and a certain tolerance to get along together. Most sailors were cross-trained to do jobs outside their individual specialisations e.g. seamen could start up a generator, visual signalmen could cover a radio communications watch and all trades, including stokers, electricians and cooks, would share gangway watches and driving the slow motor boat. Variety appeals to young sailors.

This informality and individuality extended to dress, with Submarine Sweaters and overalls favoured in northern climes with rugby shirts on the sweepdeck, to conical Chinese coolie hats to keep off the sun in the tropics. Equipment was often greasy and dirty, so even officers adopted blue shorts and sandals at sea in warmer climes. All members undertook responsibilities above their rank and age; excellent training for subsequent careers, which produced a spirit of "professionalism with Jaunty Informality" to quote the then Prince Charles speaking of his time in command of HMS Bronington in 1967.

Such informality was not always to the liking of Senior Officers of a more traditional mindset in larger ships who were heard to comment upon our "piratical appearance and behaviour".



Nowhere were these attributes more clearly demonstrated than in the Fishery Protection Squadron. These ships retained their primary role of Mine Counter Measures, regularly exercising the crafts of minesweeping or minehunting, depending upon the technology for which they were configured, and frequently winning trophies for these professional skills. Their additional role of policing the fishing grounds was made more complex by the

newly promulgated Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union, which changed the rules about who could catch what, where, when and how.

Anecdotes abound from this private navy, which by its very nature, found its ships operating in unusual circumstances among islets, reefs and often on the edge of diplomatic incidents.

Herewith a selection:

Diplomatic Hospitality versus Prudent Navigation

The Commanding Officer of one Fish TON, patrolling among the Minches off the west coast of Scotland decided to pay a courtesy liaison call upon a very large Russian Factory ship sheltering from bad weather among the islands. The role of a factory ship is to process the catches of several accompanying trawlers, turning their fish into various products ranging from frozen fish for food to ground fishmeal as an agricultural fertiliser. The commercial rationale for factory ships is that they enable the trawlers to stay at sea longer and hence catch more fish and the frozen products are more fresh and save considerable time in handling when the factory returns to its shore base. The by-product of this intense form of fishing is that it depletes fish stock in the area and monopolises the catches.

The tiny minesweeper was dwarfed by the huge factory ship and the heavy swell meant that the C.O. could not board by a ladder, instead the factory ship lowered by its crane, one of the large, smelly, buckets used to transfer the catches from the trawlers and the C.O clambered in, to be hoisted to the deck of the factory ship. He was met by a fearsome bear of a First Mate, who subsequently turned out to be a woman, and conducted to the Captain of the Factory Ship, where he was received with great courtesy and given a tour of the vessel and its fish-processing operations, albeit closely accompanied by the ship's Political Officer, aka Commissar.

Having established that the ship's papers were all in order, the C.O was offered some traditional Russian hospitality, with copious draughts of vodka. An hour or so later, having established an Entente Very Cordiale, the C.O was returned to his minesweeper, via the same smelly bucket, and he decided to resume his patrol.

Passages through the Miches are tortuous and require precise navigation and competent ship handling to avoid the hazards of reefs and rip tides. Luckily the First Lieutenant had met Russians before, so took precautions to ensure that his C.O might avoid any embarrassment of "driving while under the influence".

The C.O gave speed and wheel orders from the bridge, while in the wheelhouse on the deck below, the First Lieutenant with a spare chart, stood next to the helmsman, giving "adjustments" until they reached the safety of the open sea.

Short Notice during Stand Down

TONs could be described as the Panda Cars of the Royal Navy, able to respond at short notice to incidents and often first on the scene before bigger ships with more senior officers would arrive and take charge.

TONs could sail at short notice because their diesel engines could be started in a few minutes, whereas the steam powered frigates and destroyers of that time required several hours to build up steam and warm up the engines. *N.B. modern warships powered by gas turbines can also start at short notice.*

The usual routine in the Fishery Protection Squadron was to patrol for several days or weeks at a time, limited only by how much fuel, fresh water and food could be obtained from ports in the patrol area, then to "Stand Down" i.e. have a period off duty to rest and repair, usually a long weekend break so some sailors could go home on leave.

Small ports, not usually visited by bigger warships, were favoured for Stand Downs. Townsfolk who had usually not seen the Royal Navy since the end of World War 2 and withdrawal of Motor Torpedo Boats and Armed Trawlers of the RN Patrol Service, were delighted to welcome the sailors, none more so than the Licensed Victuallers and young maidens keen for a change of scene.

But life is seldom that simple and even during a Stand Down, ships could be called upon to respond to an incident in their patrol area. This might necessitate a hurried departure and high speed passage of a hundred or more miles. Inevitably some sailors ashore on leave got left behind ...

Two enterprising matelots who had gone ashore for a quiet pint got lucky and found themselves invited home by some accommodating ladies, hence they did not hear the police car patrolling the streets advising sailors to return on board. Next morning when they did wander back to the jetty, they found their ship had departed. Fortunately the police and coastguard were able to accommodate them and lend them the wherewithal to travel to another port where they could be re-united with their ship.

New Tricks

Few RN personnel have a background in the fishing industry, so officers and ratings assigned to the Fishery Protection Squadron have a great deal to learn about their new duties. This includes the various types of fish and their feeding habits, the equipment used by trawlers, drifters and long liners to catch fish, types and dimensions of nets and seemingly ever-changing regulations as the EU seeks to conserve fish stocks and allocate quotas.

TONs had a top speed of 15-16 knots, barely adequate to overhaul a fishing vessel that did not wish to be intercepted or inspected and techniques had to be developed to board a suspect vessel, especially in choppy seas. The 14-foot wooden Slow Motor Boat carried by minesweepers soon proved unsuitable for this task and was fortuitously replaced by the Gemini rubber dinghy used by Clearance Divers, itself later improved by

the Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat [RHIB], with a powerful outboard engine; much faster and safer in a seaway.

Boarding a trawler via a ladder was seldom practicable and bringing the sweeper alongside a vessel to be inspected risked fouling its nets and derricks. RN seamen developed a tactic of literally throwing themselves at the trawler's side when their Gemini rose to the crest of a wave and clambering aboard.

Introduction of the Stornophone, a type of water-proofed walkie-talkie with a loudspeaker mounted on a "bridge" on the RHIB, greatly improved communication between the boarding party and their mother ship and a bright stobe light, also mounted on the bridge in the RHIB, assisted locating the dinghy in low visibility.

Some interceptions had to be made at night, which brought additional problems. The 10-inch diameter signal lamps fitted to the sweepers and most Royal Navy vessels are adequate for passing messages by flashing morse code at a range of a couple of miles but they do not throw a beam strong enough to illuminate a target vessel at more than a couple of hundred yards. This problem was overcome by replacing the twin 20mm Oerlikon cannon abaft the funnel of the sweeper by a 20-inch signal projector used by battleships in World Wars 1 and 2 as a search light. Powered by a carbon arc, this light threw a concentrated very bright beam of intense white light that could be focussed and was visible as far as the horizon allowed. It also produced a lot of heat. Lt Cdr Ted Seath recalls illuminating one Belgian trawler at close range on a particularly dark night. "not only did the 'Death Ray' give them the fright of their lives with its dazzling beam, but the heat burned the varnish off their wheel-house !".

Assigning TONs to Fishery Protection duties fortunately coincided with significant improvements in the foul weather clothing issued to seamen working on the upper decks throughout the Royal Navy. Out went the old fashioned and cumbersome oilskin "Mackintoshes" with Sou'Wester hats, to be replaced by "Penguin Suits" comprising plasticky-covered waterproof leggings and a smock incorporating a peaked hood; both garments more comfortable and effective than their predecessors.

N.B The modern Royal Navy has eventually taken advantage of excellent lightweight waterproof clothing developed commercially for ocean yacht racing, so sailors are now even more comfortable and better protected from the elements.

Food is generally of good quality and plentiful throughout the RN, but in TONs it was also usually readily available out of normal meal times for those who had been engaged on arduous duties.

Despite the inconveniences of small ship life, TONs were the favourite ship of most people who served in them. Some managed four, five, or even six commissions of two years each in TONs throughout their naval careers.

How the War Changed One Family

Doug Andrews, Ware, Herts

My family had several members on my mother's side with nautical connections, starting with two uncles, Harry Arthur Seex DYER and Laurence Alexander George Frederick CROOK, both of whom were stewards in the Merchant Navy, early in the 20th century, serving on the banana boats between South America and London. At that time many merchant ships were cargo liners, carrying a dozen or more passengers in addition to four holds full of cargo; hence work for the stewards and more income from the voyage.

I am not sure which one lived in North London, but one of them seems to have brought his 'oppo' home on leave, having been 'signed off' in London Docks, in order to see his girlfriend, who had three other sisters (and one brother). Uncle Harry married Martha Jane on the 9th of May, & Uncle Laurie married Alice on 25th December, both in 1915. My Aunt Kate and Uncle Jack also married that same year. Martha, Alice and Kate were all 'in service,' in the employment of the same family (the head of which owned a linoleum manufacturing business) living in Baker Street, W.1.

Laurence & Alice had three sons - twins, Alec. and Jack, born in Autumn 1917 and a younger brother Frank born in 1922. All three served in the Royal Navy in World War II and all survived it. One of them, I believe it was Alec, volunteered for submarines (extra pay and faster promotion) and he ended the War as a Petty Officer.

I am firmly of the opinion that they all volunteered for the Senior Service, because their father Laurie had a younger brother Reginald Vincent CROOK (Official No. C/J 100457) who was serving on board the destroyer HMS 'Duchess' when war was declared on 3rd September 1939. Unfortunately, on 12th December that year, the battleship HMS 'Barham' collided in thick fog with 'Duchess' nine miles west of the Mull of Kintyre at 04.37 and she sank at 05.03. Casualties included 6 officers & 125 ratings killed, one of whom was Uncle Reggie, who was aged 35. His name is recorded on the Chatham War Memorial.

Cousin Frank wrote to the Ministry of Defence in April 1989 about this incident, and in December 2000 he sent me a copy of their reply, together with four other pages from the official record, including two extracts from the War Diary of Home Command, detailing the defence measures in force around the U.K. at that time.

When war was declared both of the twins enrolled as Special Constables in the Metropolitan Police but both volunteered for the Royal Navy in December 1940.

Regrettably, little is known of the ships on which the brothers served. One twin spent time aboard HMS AJAX, but after the Battle of the River Plate, when she was in the Mediterranean and that Frank trained as an Aircraft Artificer at HMS



CONDOR, the Naval Air Station outside Arbroath, then spent some time on an aircraft carrier in the Far East, later in the war.

During his RN service Frank had somehow acquired a piano accordion, which must have been a challenge given the tight stowage for personal kit on the messdeck of a warship, but he proved to be a popular turn for celebrations and Sods Operas. It returned with him to Civvy Street, where he regaled family parties, wearing an Egyptian Fez, complete with tassel – another wartime souvenir.

Typical matelots; Jack's ship had put into Portsmouth for a boiler clean, so he and some messmates headed up the line to the Big Smoke, where they found a convenient pub until closing time, then made their way to their homes through the blackout. It was well after midnight before Jack started banging on the front door and some time later before his mother opened it in her nightwear, only to exclaim "What the B####y Hell do you want ?" Once welcomed to the bosom of his family, he gave his Mum a surprise by extracting from his serge jumper a golden retriever puppy, obtained over the bar a few hours earlier. His present did not initially go down well, as another mouth to feed during strict wartime rationing, but eventually Alice took to the dog, naming him Jack and saying if the worst happened to her son, at least she would have a lasting memory of him.

Uncle Harry's offspring consisted of one boy and four girls. The first-born, Harry Arthur DYER, who was always known as Arthur, was by 1944 Corporal H. A. Dyer, 6916877, 1st Bn. Rifle Brigade, and he must have landed in France as part of D-Day or shortly thereafter, because he was involved in the dreadful fighting in the Caen area, and tragically lost his life on 25th July, aged just 28. His grave is in the Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, which is within walking distance of what is now known as Pegasus Bridge.

Some years ago, Sylvia & I, on holiday with friends, visited cousin Arthur's grave and the Pegasus Bridge area, even going into the Café Gonville, which was apparently, the very first French property liberated, the day before D-Day, by the paratroopers.

Harry's wife Vera gave birth shortly after his death to a son who she named Alan, who she brought up as a single parent. Alan and his wife subsequently emigrated to Canada.

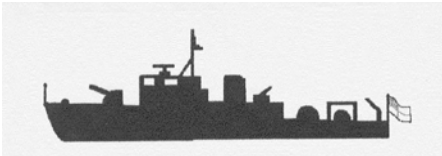
Not to be outdone, my Aunt Kate's second husband Alfred Mitchell, spent some part of the 1st World War as a POW, according to a citation addressed to him from HM King George V which I now have.

So what happened to the twins that were inseparable during pre-war years ?

As soon as they were demobbed, Jack emigrated to what was then Rhodesia, where he married and settled down and Alec went to Australia as a "Ten Pound Pom", where he married a widow with three children. But the pre-war inseparable twins never saw each other again.

All three of the Crook brothers 'crossed the bar' many years ago but It is perhaps understandable that when it came our turn for National Service, my elder brother and I both chose the Royal Navy.

SLOPS

Stock Items	Price	<i>Please ring Stores before placing order to confirm items are in stock</i>	
TON Talk Binder	£ 7.73	TCA Mug	£ 9.91
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Blackfoot Tie	£ 13.00	TCA Car sticker – Logo 1	£ 1.25
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All prices include P&P (within UK only)

Please make cheques / postal orders payable to TON Class Association

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PO8 8UD Phone: 023 923 65729

e-mail: lawrencej1055@gmail.com

Post Bag

FROM: Kay Annette Bowman

I am trying to find information about my grandad, Peter Alexander Callaghan, who was on HMS Clarbeston in the 1950's/60's.

He died some years ago and the family have no details of the service in the Navy. Does anyone remember him ?

We have pointed Kay towards the website www.gov.uk/get-copy-military-service-records and will also publish her appeal on TCA Website and FB page ... Editor

FROM: William Todhunter

Is it possible for me to obtain a copy of "A Droggie Goes to War" by my late brother, Lt Chris Todhunter? I have only recently discovered this, I hadn't previously been aware of this publication and he hadn't mentioned it.

Sent with pleasure...Editor

**FROM: Lt Cdr (SCC) Cliff Lewis
RNR, Training Manager, Marine
Society and Sea Cadets, London
Area Office, HMS President**

Readers of TON Talk May be interested to know that London Area Sea Cadets are keeping alive the link with the former HMS IVESTON by continuing to award our annual engineering trophy, the Iveston Trophy, to the sea cadet unit in our region doing most to promote marine engineering.

The trophy takes the form of a cased model of HMS IVESTON and was presented this year to the Commanding Officer and Chairman of BRENTWOOD unit by our Area Officer, Cdr James Nisbet RN.

The photo shows the trophy and left to right, Sub Lt Samantha Hayward, Unit CO, Cdr Nisbet and Mr Robert Doyle, Unit Chair of Trustees.



FROM: Mick Hilder, Weymouth

I served in HMS Alderney (Lt Cdr Nobby Clark C/O) between April 1980 & August 1981. We had an incident off Grimsby reported in the Daily Telegraph & the Fishing News.

We inspected French F/V Jean Mermoz & told the skipper we had to take him into Grimsby for further investigation.

He did not wish to comply so he tried to run away to France with the boarding party. There had been successful kidnappings in the past where the boarding party had to return to the UK by ferry! The Jean Mermoz was a side trawler (now scrapped) & whilst trying to get away the live OOW manoeuvres resulted in a glancing blow to Alderney's bow. This damaged Mermoz's after gallows by pushing them inboard & breaking the 'D' link where the trawl warp went through.

I was holding onto the rail around the funnel at the time so Alderney towered over me! Alderney suffered a bit of scratched paint! They know how to build at Hall Russel in Aberdeen! Since he couldn't continue to fish, he agreed to go in but under tow! So Alderney prepared to rig & pass a tow. As Alderney made her approach the French skipper ordered his crew to cut the tow with a blow torch. The boarding officer told us to get off the F/V's foc'sle.

I happened to be the first to the ladder but went down slowly as 1. I wasn't getting warm from the brandished blow torch & 2. I thought that if I rushed there was a danger that someone could slip &

et burnt or injured by falling down the ladder.

After more persuasion from the boarding officer the skipper agreed to go in under his own steam but with the boarding party on the wheel.

Whilst steering I used my schoolboy French to ascertain why the skipper had acted in the way he did. He was keen to return home as he had his son being charged with drug offences & other crimes associated with being a drug addict.

He was praised by the local fish market as he had to land his fish here and the quality was so good.

Whilst guarding the fishing gear I had my picture taken & this was printed front page Fishing News. The Telegraph mentioned that one of the A/Bs' helped by being able to speak French i.e. ME !

I hope that this pull up a bollard tale of heroism will be of use !

*All dits gratefully received ... **Editor***



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On passage from Scarborough ?

On Stand by in the Pacific

Commander David (Spidy) Ince RANR

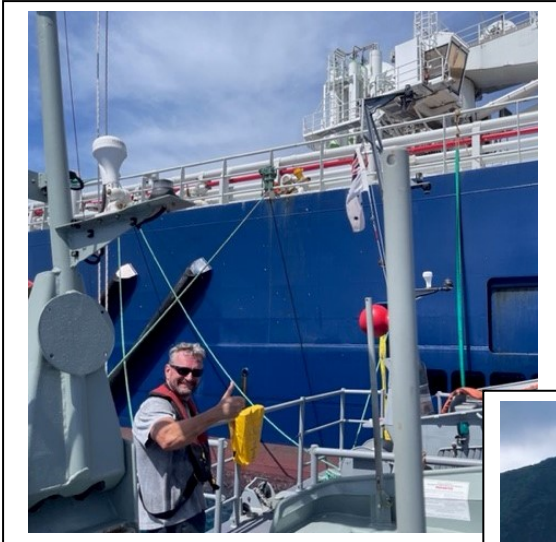
I'm currently deployed in *ADV Reliant* in the Southwest Pacific. See next page for details.

Basically we are on hand as first response in the event of a natural disaster in the islands, but, natural disasters permitting, hope to be back in Brisbane on 3 January.

Xmas in Fiji – no need for jealousy ...

I'm the RAN Liaison Officer onboard. A very hands-on job: great acts of seamanship abound, especially launching and recovering our little landing craft.

I only have only four RAN personnel, as three of *Reliant's* cox'ns are stokers - handy drivers but rubbish at basic seamanship. It's a good caper though, with bags of sea time.



This dit illustrates the frightening power of the internet.

I e-mailed December's TON Talk to Cdr Ince pm on Friday 3 Dec and received his reply from the middle of the ocean, halfway round the globe, before midnight on Sunday. All this, via ordinary civilian communications !

We look forward for more details of this deployment, especially that run ashore in Fiji ... **Editor**



ADV RELIANT – RAN Pacific Support Ship

The Australian Government announced in November 2018 that a large vessel was to be built in Australia to enable the RAN to undertake humanitarian tasks in the Pacific. This formed part of the government's "Pacific step-up" diplomatic initiative, however, without further public debate, a decision was later taken to purchase an existing merchant vessel, as it could be brought into commission and be on task more quickly.

In February 2022, the offshore supply vessel *Horizon Star* was purchased for US\$67 million from Canadian company Horizon Maritime. This ship had been built in Norway, and originally entered service in 2017. The ship underwent maintenance and checks in the Canary Islands, then sailed for Australia in May 2022, as *Australian Defence Vessel (ADV) Reliant*.

The ship displaces approximately 5,600 tons and is 103 metres (338 ft) long and 20 metres (66 ft) wide. She has a large cargo deck equipped with a crane. The ship's bridge, helipad and crew accommodation are all located in her large forward superstructure. The ship can produce thousands of litres of fresh water per day – vital for humanitarian relief.



Reliant is capable of many tasks, including marine survey, delivering heavy equipment, search and rescue training, in addition to disaster relief and recovery.

The ship's initial capabilities have been criticised, as she cannot readily operate landing craft, nor embark a helicopter due to the lack of a hanger or aviation fuel storage and there is no direct connection between the cargo deck and helipad. Some of these limitations may be addressed in an upcoming refit, possibly including fitting the ship with small calibre weapons, however she can only enter deep ports and equipment and stores have to be loaded into the landing craft with the ship's crane.

During her passage to Australia, *Reliant* supported RAN activities in Fiji and patrolled the exclusive economic zones of the Cook Islands and Samoa. As of August 2022, she formed part of the RAN's National Support Squadron. Like the other ships in the squadron, she is crewed by civilian mariners employed by Teekay Shipping Australia; 18 on *Reliant*, plus a single RAN liaison officer. Additional personnel can be embarked when needed for specific tasks. *Reliant* is based in Brisbane and is scheduled to operate in the Pacific for 250 to 300 days annually. The Australian Defence Force will control the ship, with taskings being determined in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. See also MoD's recent purchase of a similar vessel for protection of undersea cables Multi-Role Offshore Surveillance MROS.