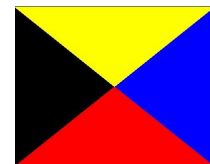




YEARS YOUNG

AHOY SHIPMATE

RNA Torbay Newsletter



Volume 4

Issue 5

September 2015

In this issue

Editorial.....	1
Chairman's Corner.....	2
What happened in 1945.....	3-7
The Tamar Bridge.....	7-8
The Funnies page	8
USS Recruit.....	9-11
The real field gun story Part II.....	11-12

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.

Life is beauty, admire it.

Life is a dream, realize it.

Life is a challenge, meet it.

Life is a duty, complete it.

Life is a game, play it.

Life is a promise, fulfil it.

Life is sorrow, overcome it.

Life is a song, sing it.

Life is a struggle, accept it.

Life is a tragedy, confront it.

Life is an adventure, dare it.

Life is luck, make it.

Life is life, fight for it."

Mother Teresa

Editorial

By Shipmate Norrie Millen

Hi! Shipmates,



When I was just four years old, local matelots and ex matelots decided to form a Branch of the RNOCA, the forerunner of the present day RNA. I at that time had never met my father as the Japanese in Singapore had captured him; my mother narrowly escaping, heavily impregnated with child (me). She managed to 'hang on to me' until we reached Mount Abu in Rajpatana, where I was duly 'hatched' at the BMH Hill Sanatorium.

Repatriated back to UK at the ripe age of six months, I did 10,000 miles at seas on the troopship RMS Britannic. I was baptised in India, again at sea on the Britannic and once again in Capetown, my mother making absolutely sure that if we were torpedoed, I would be well blessed. Crossing the line at the early age I guess the sea was already in my blood.



Sharing cramped messdecks, socialising together, talking the unique 'navy talk' and runs ashore on mass; it was only natural that the matelots of yesteryear would want to continue this camaraderie in civil life; hence organisations like the Royal Naval Old Comrades Association becoming a place this social activity and friendship could continue on.



You may well remember many of the times when someone in the mess told a silly/dirty/humorous joke and that jogged the memories of many of us to recall other jokes, until sometimes we laughed that much it hurt. They were good times, happy times, sometimes-sad times but the memories will always stay with us. Sadly, today's modern matelot will never experience these times in the same way. That is Britain's new Navy for you!

The way I see it anyway!





Chairman's Corner

By Shipmate John Soanes

By the time this newsletter is circulated during our branch meeting on 24th September, we will be within a couple of days of the 70th anniversary of the Branch.

As you know, the branch was initially formed as the Royal Naval Old Comrades Association (RNOCA), on the 26th September 1945.

Another very significant event happened on that same day, General Douglas MacArthur Head of the Allied occupation of Japan met with Emperor Hirohito, and this was the first meeting of the two since the official surrender of Japan in August.

Only two days earlier on the 24th, Emperor Hirohito says he was opposed to war and blames General Tojo for the raid on Pearl Harbour. History records that when US troops arrived at General Tojo's house to arrest him, he locked himself in and attempted to shoot himself in the heart, he missed and the bullet entered his stomach.

He was taken to a US hospital where his injuries were treated; following which he was fitted with new dentures. It is recorded the phrase "Remember Pearl Harbour" had been secretly drilled into his teeth in Morse code.

That very same day, an Allied landing party headed into mainland China to facilitate surrender terms and the disarming of Japanese troops. It was unclear if there would be resistance so the US staged a full on invasion force to make sure things went smoothly which they did.

Also on the same day Lt. Colonel Peter Dewey a US Army officer with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was head of a seven-man team sent to Vietnam to search for missing US pilots and to gather information on the situation of the country after the Japanese surrender. He had already arranged the repatriation of over a thousand allied soldiers including 245 Americans when on the 26th he was mistakenly identified as a French soldier and fatally wounded in an attack by local

Vietnamese soldiers who were rebelling against the return to French rule. Thereby becoming the very first US serviceman to be killed in Indo China, which later, during further wars, including the infamous Vietnam War claimed nearly 59,000 US deaths.

A nephew of Dewey was subsequently killed during the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre.

It is hoped that we will all enjoy an excellent evening at the Redcliffe Hotel on 24th October, when we hold our annual dinner to commemorate The Battle of Trafalgar and our 70th anniversary.

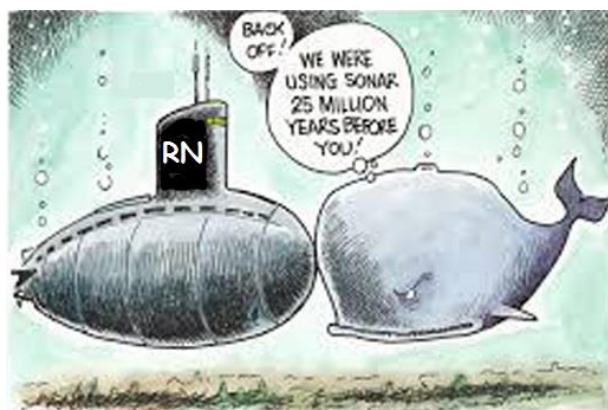
Also please do your best to attend our 70th Anniversary Commemoration Service on Sunday 18th October at St. Pauls Church, Paignton. It is understood the Mayor Gordon Oliver may well attend.

A Submariner on the helm during a surface passage through the Bay of Biscay in very heavy seas was being taken to task for the whole duration of his watch by a very irate officer of the watch on the bridge.

Nearing the end of the watch the officer screamed down the voice pipe "WHAT BLOODY IDIOT IS AT THE END OF THE VOICE PIPE?"

The rating in a very calm and collective voice replied

"WHICH END SIR?"



COURTS CONSIDER NAVY v WHALE SAFETY

What happened in 1945 and beyond?

By Shipmate Norrie Millen and information submitted by Shipmate Ken Dustan

So what happened in 1945? Apart from the end of the war the Torbay RNOAC was founded. 70 years ago and the Branch has now reached it Platinum anniversary.

Many shipmates have come and gone since, some through losing interest. Some resignations for a variety of reasons, but mostly ñCrossing the barò. We try to remember all those who have passed before us in our prayers and especially on Remembrance Day. In other parts of the United Kingdom, and especially in Canada all those shipmates that were lost during and after the war are remembered at ñThe Battle of Atlanticò commemoration which is celebrated on the first Sunday in May, sadly few seemed to have heard of the Battle of Atlantic in these climes.

On Remembrance Day and indeed The Battle of Atlantic shipmates are remembered and we would say a nautical version of "In Flanders Fields", which I am sure you all know is a war poem in the form of a rondeau, written during the First World War by Canadian physician Major John McCrae. He was inspired to write it on May 3, 1915, after presiding over the funeral of friend and fellow soldier Alexis Helmer, who died in the Second Battle of Ypres. According to legend, fellow soldiers retrieved the poem after McCrae, initially dissatisfied with his work, discarded it. "In Flanders Fields" was first published on December 8 of that year in the London-based magazine *Punch*.

However back to my nautical version of that famous poem, which is entitled ñOn all the Oceansò

On all the oceans white caps flow,
They have no crosses row on row,
For those who sleep beneath the sea,
They sleep in peace; our country's free
No stone ever marks a sailor's grave
When he's taken by the sea,
No name ever written on the wave
No flower from you or me.
He comes to lie, not in the soil,
But the sea that he adored,
And feared, and fought and toiled so hard,
For those upon the shore.
And the wind and tide and seabirds cry
As hard as you and me,
For those we love who come to lie
At rest, beneath the sea.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

There are a few different version, to last few lines, however no one seems to know who first penned the words.

How about the Royal Navy in 1945? Vastly different from today's fleet for sure. However, let's dwell a pause of two marching paces and have a quick look back to 1939.

In 1939, the heart of the Royal Navy was its centuries old traditions and 200,000 officers and men including the Royal Marines and Reserves. At the very top as professional head was the First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound.

Royal Navy Warship Strength

The Royal Navy, still the largest in the world in September 1939, included:

- 15 ...**Battleships & battlecruisers**, of which only two were post-World War 1. Five 'King George V' class battleships were building.
- 7**Aircraft carriers**. One was new and five of the planned six fleet carriers were under construction. There were no escort carriers.
- 66 ...**Cruisers**, mainly post-World War 1 with some older ships converted for AA duties. Including cruiser-minelayers, 23 new ones had been laid down.
- 184 **Destroyers** of all types. Over half were modern, with 15 of the old 'V' and 'W' classes modified as escorts. Under construction or on order were 32 fleet destroyers and 20 escort types of the 'Hunt' class.
- 60 ...**Submarines**, mainly modern with nine building.
- 45 ...**Escort and patrol** vessels with nine building, and the first 56 'Flower' class corvettes on order to add to the converted 'V' and 'W's' and 'Hunts'. However, there were few fast, long-endurance convoy escorts.

A vast and powerful navy for sure, but moving on to 1945 a vastly different picture.

As the war progressed, the Royal and Dominion Navies expanded rapidly with large construction programmes, particularly escort carriers, destroyers, corvettes, frigates, submarines, landing ships and craft.

By mid-1944, 800,000 officers and men and 73,000 WRNS were in uniform.

Vastly improved radars and anti-submarine weapons had been introduced, and the tactics to use them effectively, honed to a fine pitch.

Ship-borne and land-based aircraft became vital in the life and death struggle against the U-boat, the only concern Prime Minister Winston Churchill retained throughout six years of war.

Huge combined operations landings took place with air superiority usually assured.



Although not defeated, magnetic, then acoustic and finally pressure mines were kept under control.

Perhaps of greatest single significance, the 'Ultra' operation against the German Enigma codes allowed the Allies to penetrate to the very heart of German and Axis planning and operations.

In short, in a war that started with Polish cavalry and ended with the Anglo-US atomic bomb, the Royal and Commonwealth Navies faced new and continuing threats and learnt to deal with them technically, operationally and above all, successfully.

However, there was a price to be paid:

British Naval Casualties, not including RAF and Army personnel killed in related circumstances, Coastal Command, Defensively-Equipped Merchant Ships (DEMS) etc.

A huge price to pay for freedom

ROYAL NAVY LOSSES

	Killed	Missing	Wounded
Royal Navy	50,758	820	14,663
WRNS	102		22
Merchant Navy	30,248	lost enemy action	

ROYAL NAVY Warship types	Strength 1939	Comm. to Aug 1945	TOTAL IN SERVICE	TOTAL LOSSES
Capital ships	15	5	20	5
Carriers	7	58	65	10
Cruisers	66	35	101	34
Destroyers	184	277	461	153
Submarines	60	178	238	76
TOTALS	332	553	885	278

Moving onto today's fleet

Class	Ship	Pen.	Comm.	Displacement	Type	Base
Ocean	Ocean	L12	1998	21,500	LPD	D
Albion	Albion	L14	2003	19,560	ATD	D
Class	Bulwark	L15	2004	19,560	ATD	D

Class	Ship	Pen.	Comm.	Displacement	Type	Base
Daring or Type 45	<i>Daring</i>	D32	2009	8,500 tonnes	GMD	P
	<i>Dauntless</i>	D33	2010	8,500 tonnes	GMD	P
	<i>Diamond</i>	D34	2011	8,500 tonnes	GMD	P
	<i>Dragon</i>	D35	2012	8,500 tonnes	GMD	P
	<i>Defender</i>	D36	2013	8,500 tonnes	GMD	P
	<i>Duncan</i>	D37	2013	8,500 tonnes	GMD	P
Type 23 or Duke-class	<i>Argyll</i>	F231	1991	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	D
	<i>Lancaster</i>	F229	1992	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	P
	<i>Iron Duke</i>	F234	1993	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	P
	<i>Monmouth</i>	F235	1993	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	D
	<i>Montrose</i>	F236	1994	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	D
	<i>Westminster</i>	F237	1994	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	P
	<i>Northumberland</i>	F238	1994	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	D
	<i>Richmond</i>	F239	1995	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	P
	<i>Somerset</i>	F82	1996	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	D
	<i>Sutherland</i>	F81	1997	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	D
	<i>Kent</i>	F78	2000	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	P
	<i>Portland</i>	F79	2001	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	D
	<i>St Albans</i>	F83	2002	4,900 tonnes	Frigate	P

The Type 23 frigates will be replaced by the Global Combat Ship starting 2022

Survey

Class	Ship	Pen.	Comm.	Displacement	Type	Base
<i>Scott</i>	<i>Scott</i>	H131	1997	13,500 tonnes	Ocean survey	D
<i>Echo-class</i>	<i>Echo</i>	H87	2003	3,740 tonnes	Multi-purpose survey	D
	<i>Enterprise</i>	H88	2003	3,740 tonnes	Multi-purpose survey	D
<i>Gleaner</i>	<i>Gleaner</i>	H86	1983	22 tonnes	Coastal survey	D
<i>Protector</i>	<i>Protector</i>	A173	2011	5,000 tonnes	Icebreaker & survey	P



Ocean



Albion



Bulwark



Daring



Dauntless



Diamond



Argyll



Lancaster



Iron Duke



Vanguard



Astute



Torbay

Mine countermeasures

Class	Ship	Pen.	Comm.	Displacement	Type	Base
Hunt Class	<i>Ledbury</i>	M30	1981	750 tonnes	MH	P
	<i>Cattistock</i>	M31	1982	750 tonnes	MH	P
	<i>Brocklesby</i>	M33	1983	750 tonnes	MH	P
	<i>Middleton</i>	M34	1984	750 tonnes	MH	P
	<i>Chiddingfold</i>	M37	1984	750 tonnes	MH	P
	<i>Atherstone</i>	M38	1987	750 tonnes	MH	P
	<i>Hurworth</i>	M39	1985	750 tonnes	MH	P
	<i>Quorn</i>	M41	1989	750 tonnes	MH	P
Sandown Class	<i>Penzance</i>	M106	1998	600 tonnes	MH	CL
	<i>Pembroke</i>	M107	1998	600 tonnes	MH	CL
	<i>Grimsby</i>	M108	1999	600 tonnes	MH	CL
	<i>Bangor</i>	M109	2000	600 tonnes	MH	CL
	<i>Ramsey</i>	M110	2000	600 tonnes	MH	CL
	<i>Blyth</i>	M111	2001	600 tonnes	MH	CL
	<i>Shoreham</i>	M112	2001	600 tonnes	MH	CL

In addition to the above vessels, the now decommissioned HMS *Brecon* (Hunt-class) and HMS *Cromer* (Sandown-class) act as training ships, located at the shore establishment HMS *Raleigh* and the Britannia Royal Naval College, respectively.

Patrol

Class	Ship	Pen.	Comm.	Displacement	Type	Base
River class	<i>Mersey</i>	P283	2003	1,700 tonnes	OPV	P
	<i>Severn</i>	P282	2003	1,700 tonnes	OPV	P
	<i>Tyne</i>	P281	2003	1,700 tonnes	OPV	P
	<i>Clyde</i>	P257	2007	2,000 tonnes	OPV	P
P2000 or Archer-class	<i>Archer</i>	P264	1985	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Biter</i>	P270	1986	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Smiter</i>	P272	1988	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Pursuer</i>	P273	1988	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Blazer</i>	P279	1988	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Dasher</i>	P280	1988	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Puncher</i>	P291	1988	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Charger</i>	P292	1988	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Ranger</i>	P293	1988	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Trumpeter</i>	P294	1988	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Express</i>	P163	1988	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Example</i>	P165	1985	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Explorer</i>	P164	1986	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Exploit</i>	P167	1988	54 tonnes	PBoat	URNU
	<i>Tracker</i>	P274	1998	54 tonnes	PBoat	CL
	<i>Raider</i>	P275	1998	54 tonnes	PBoat	CL
	<i>Scimitar</i>	P284	2003	24 tonnes	PBoat	Gibraltar
	<i>Sabre</i>	P285	2003	24 tonnes	PBoat	Gibraltar

Classic ships

Class	Ship	Pen.No.	Comm.	Displacement	Type	Base
<i>Type 82</i>	<i>Bristol</i>	D23	1973	7,100 tonnes	GMD	P
<i>Victory</i>	<i>Victory</i>		1778	3,556 tonnes	1 st rate	P

Ships under construction

The following vessels (in red table) are at various stages of construction in or have been confirmed with shipyards around the UK, and will join the Royal Navy in the near future.

Further off, there is the Successor submarine which will replace the UK's *Vanguard-class*, nuclear deterrent submarines, with the first due in service by 2028.

Preparatory and design work has begun on the Type 26 frigate, which will replace the UK's Type 23 frigates, with the first ship due in service by 2022.

A preliminary look into replacing the mine countermeasures vessels with a single, versatile class including both mine countermeasures and hydrography/survey roles is also being undertaken.

Class	Ship	Penn. No.	Builder	Displacement	Type	Base	Comm.
<i>Queen Elizabeth Class</i>	<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	R08	BAE Systems, Rosyth	65,000 tonnes	AC	P	2017
	<i>Prince of Wales</i>	R09	BAE Systems, Rosyth	65,000 tonnes	AC	P	2019
<i>River-class batch II</i>	<i>Forth</i>		BAE Systems, Glasgow	2000 tonnes	OPV	P	2017
	<i>Medway</i>		BAE Systems, Glasgow	2000 tonnes	OPV	P	2017/8
	<i>Trent</i>		BAE Systems, Glasgow	2000 tonnes	OPV	P	2018
	<i>Artful</i>	S121	BAE Systems, Barrow	7400 tonnes	SSN	CI	2015
<i>Astute Class</i>	<i>Audacious</i>	S122	BAE Systems, Barrow	7400 tonnes	SSN	CI	2018
	<i>Anson</i>	S123	BAE Systems, Barrow	7400 tonnes	SSN	CI	2020
	<i>Agamemnon</i>	S124	BAE Systems, Barrow	7400 tonnes	SSN	CI	2023
	<i>Ajax</i>	S125	BAE Systems, Barrow	7400 tonnes	SSN	CI	2024

So to sum up as to why the RNOAC and later RNA were so strong, vibrant and well supported back in the 40s and onwards, there were hundreds of ships and many thousands of men seeking that comradeship they had enjoyed in the navy. Now so few ships and personnel who seem to have little or no interest in socializing in large groups nor wanting to join military associations. They are more affluent, independent and financially better off and advised; so see no need to join us and enjoy the camaraderie. I met a few ex matelots at my lodge the other night, visitors from another town, who literally scoffed when I suggested paying the RNA a visit soon. They were ex submariners, but I doubt they had seen much service as they looked to be in the mid-twenties.

Major Milestones

They sadly has been no Branch history recorded as such and majority of earlier members have ñCrossed the Barò, so I have attempted to pencil some events in and with the kind assistance of

John Soanes have managed to put captions to some old Branch photographs.

In 1995 the Branch celebrated its 50th anniversary and laid up the old Branch Standard and dedicating a new one which is still in use today

The Torbay shipmates continue to enjoy that comradeship and some key events celebrated by the Branch was the 50th anniversary of the Branch in **1995**. This article will have many gaps, but I have done my best to fill in some of them, by taking some information from old Branch (ñDo You Hear Thereò) newsletters.

In 1997 Shipmate Peter Brown retired as Branch Hon. Secretary after I believe eleven years in the ñhot seatò and wearing out his quill! He was relieved by Grant Ness (RIP).

Peter's great contribution to the branch was recognized by the presentation of an engraved goblet at the March meeting, which he promised to commission with something suitable! (I wonder if he did?)

1997 saw the Branch move to a new venue, the Trecarn hotel.



June 1998 the Branch supported the Normandy Veterans D Day Commemoration on Beacon Quay. It was a dull day, however the rain stayed away and everything went well, the whole event rounded off with tea, wads and "messdeck rounds cake", (Chairman George had to attend mismusters for his cake), provided by the WRVS from a replica field kitchen, and we were well represented.



A very special thanks are due to Pat Hayward for her grand efforts in obtaining funding for Shipmate David Cartwrights new chair. This is currently being fitted out and undergoing harbour trials and should shortly be fully operational.

1999 i July: Chairman George Hedges, after some four commendable years much appreciated, by the branch, became "Chairman. Retired" George handed over command to Chairman John Soanes. (Still going strong after 16 years)

Ted Hemmings who has served this branch as Treasurer, in which office he has given sterling service since the groat was legal tender, (a long time anyway), will at the end of this year hang up his abacus and become "Ted Retired Treasurer".



Trafalgar Dinner was held in November no venues available in October (pays to book well ahead).

Shipmate John Soanes commended on his hard work on the VC memorial. Grant Ness liaised with the council to arrange the plot for the memorial.

An "Open Evening" was held to aid recruitment and a good chance to "swing the lamp" and Shipmate John Soanes to show pictures of all his ships!



2000 i Dedication of Lt.Cdr Arthur Harrison VC memorial at Roundham Head.



2001 Peter Brown entertained members with a tale or two as young man (Seemly he was young once) in China.

A Branch visit was made to Brixham Coast Guard Station.

2002 - Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II S/M Bob Dennet (RIP) elected Vice Chairman.

2002/2003 i RNA Torbay host No. 4 Area Quarterly meeting First Armed Forces Day on Torre Abbey Meadows, which RNA Torbay turned in full force, picture on following page.

Trafalgar Dinner at the Trecarn Hotel. Guest of honour Captain Wreford-Brown DSO RN (Who knew?)

RNA Torbay instituted a presentation to be awarded every year to Torbay Sea Cadet most improved for the year. An ex CERA Harold Love had left Branch a small legacy, hence the Sea Cadet Award being named Harold Love Memorial Trophy, it was presented for first time to Sea Cadet Liam Croft at units annual inspection

Branch relocates to new HQ i RAFA Club in Scarborough Road.

Sadly, any Branch history seems to have stopped there. No further issues until Danny Daniel (RIP) produce random glossy newsletters; sadly, I have no access to any copies. Such a pity we never thought to ask Danny Daniel, Bob & Margaret Dennet or Mike Runham about these things before they all "Crossed the bar".

I will endeavour to remember to leave RNA Scrapbook out at meetings for members to "caste their beady eyes over" far too many newspaper cuttings and photographs to include in newsletter.

Pictures on this page: **Top** David Cartwright in new wheel chair **Picture 2** i Roundham Head Memorial Dedication **Picture 3**: John cuts cake at reception at the Trecarn Hotel after Memorial dedication. **Picture 4**: Taken at Chelston Manor? hotel in Torquay on occasion when Torbay hosted a No.4 Area Quarterly meeting about 2002/3



As a future idea for a project, if anyone has any interesting, milestones I can add to my records for years 2004- 2009 it would be much appreciated. Shipmate John Soanes and I are going to have a purge (kit muster) on all RNA items on upper deck and sort things out. Below are a few more of the pictures I scanned in for newsletter.

Pictures on this page: **Top** First Arm Forces Day Parade (What year?)
Picture 2 First presentation of Harold Love memorial Trophy to Liam Croft. Grant Ness (RIP) & Peter Fawkes with Lady Mayoress
Picture 3: RNA Stall at Babbacombe Downs.
Picture 4: D-Day commemoration at Beacon Quay. Gentleman in middle an American serviceman who attended every year. L-R: John Soanes, ?, Danny Daniel, Fred Nowell. Peter Fawkes and RMA ?



The TamarBridge

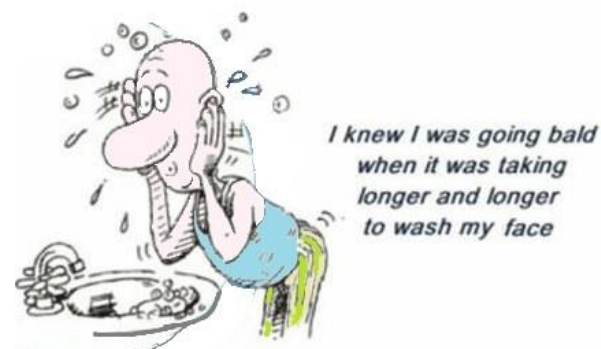
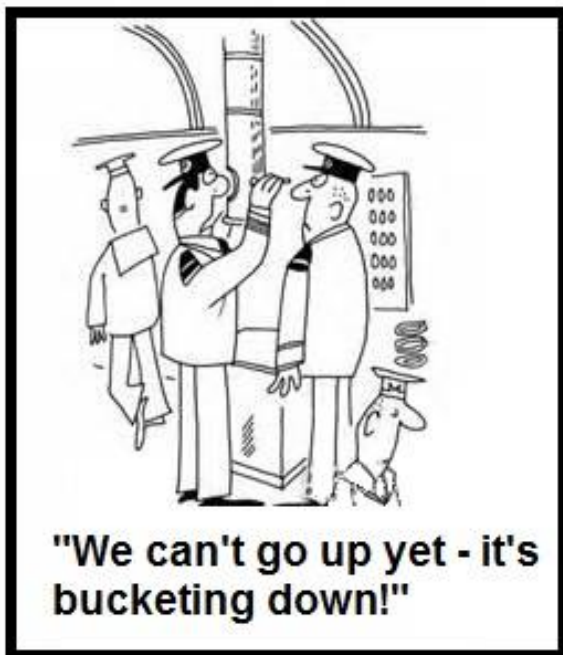
I once looked out from the Tamar Bridge at the Warships down below,
 Ships of the modern Navy with names I do not know.
 And as I stood and gazed at them on the water far below,
 I saw a fleet of phantom ships and men of long ago.
 The Rodney and the Nelson, 'the Valiant, Ramillies, Repulse,
 Renown and Malaya', coming home from foreign seas.
 I saw Revenge and Warspite, ill-fated Royal Oak,
 So many ships, their names made faint by shell and fire and smoke"



And some I see to harbour. Come as though thro' glasses dark,
 The Barham and the Glorious, the Eagle and the Ark,
 And then there comes the greatest, the mighty warship Hood,
 Dark and grey and wraithlike from the spot on which I stood.
 From the cruel North Atlantic, from the Med and Java Sea,
 The big ships and the little ships returned for me to see;
 There's the "Glow-worm in the Harding, the Devonshire and Kent,
 The Cossack and Courageous, the Suffolk and Ardent.

But mercifully hidden are the men and
 stilled their cries,
 Now I can't see very clearly-must be smoke
 that's in my eyes;
 You don't know Shorty Hasset, he won the
 DSM,
 He still fought on when Exeter was burning
 stern to stem.
 Where now, Dodger Long and Lofty, where
 now the Boys and Men?
 They are, lost and gone forever- will we see
 the like again?
 I thought I saw them mustering on deck for
 daily prayer and heard "For those in Peril"
 rise on the evening air.

Then darker grew the picture as the lowering
 night came on,
 I looked down from the lefty bridge but all
 those ships had gone,
 Those mighty ships had vanished; gone
 those simple men,
 We'll surely never ever see the like of them
 again.



ODOURS

A while ago a new supermarket opened in Topeka, KS.

It has an automatic water mister to keep the salad fresh. Just before it goes on, you hear the sound of distant thunder and the smell of fresh rain.

When you pass the milk cases, you hear cows mooing and you experience the scent of freshly mown hay.

In the meat department there is the aroma of charcoal grilled steaks with onions.

When you approach the egg case, you hear hens cluck and cackle, and the air is filled with the pleasing aroma of bacon and eggs frying.

The bread department features the tantalizing smell of fresh baked bread and cookies.

(I don't buy toilet paper there anymore.)

A minister was completing a temperance sermon. With great emphasis he said,

'If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river.'

With even greater emphasis, he said, 'And if I had All the wine in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river.'

And then finally, shaking his fist in the air, he said, 'And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river.'

Sermon complete, he sat down...

The song leader stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, nearly laughing, 'For our closing song, Let us sing Hymn #365, 'Shall We Gather at the River.'

YOUNG AT HEART
 Slightly older
 in other places.

I DON'T THINK ABOUT DYING.
 It's the last thing I want to do.

USS Recruit

TDE-1 USS *Recruit* was a landlocked dummy US Navy training ship. Built to scale, she was roughly $\frac{2}{3}$ the size of a WWII era Dealey Class Destroyer Escort she was based upon (thus the "TDE" - Training Destroyer Escort) and when completed, she was 225 long with a 24 foot 4 inch beam, and sported a 41-foot mast.

USS *Recruit* was commissioned on 27 July 1949.

USS *Recruit* was purpose-built as a training facility and considered a commissioned vessel - and traditional Navy shipboard procedures were observed just like all other Navy vessels. She was also known (affectionately and otherwise) as USS *Neversail**.

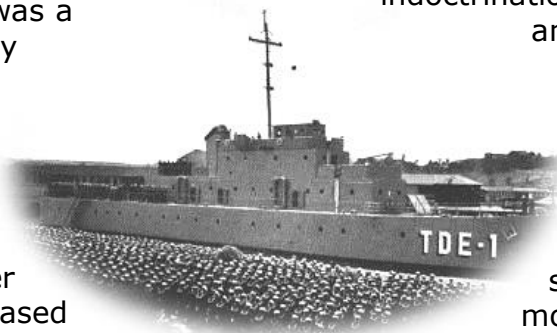
During her construction, NTC's seamanship division sailors supervised the rigging with standard Navy fittings obtained from salvaged and mothballed ships. USS *Recruit* was built of a wooden frame covered with sheet metal, with four "decks" used for training.

USS *Recruit* served as a school for all recruits going through basic seamanship

indoctrination. The ship's deck was an exact replica of what a Sailor could expect in the fleet. The *Recruit* had cleats, chocks and mooring lines and operated as any standard Navy ship - this was for most recruits their first "request permission to come aboard". On board, sailors learned marlin spike seamanship, ground tackle operation, cargo booms, deck fittings, lift boat handling and signal equipment.

Recruits were put through traditional shipboard drills and they learned to use all the standard ship deck and bridge gear like that found on all naval vessels, including lifelines, accommodation ladders, signal halyards, searchlights, the engine order telegraph and the helm (the exception being for engine-related practices, as there was no engine, boilers or screws). In addition to the regular classrooms, a company of recruits would stay on board from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. each night to stand watch as if aboard an operational ship.

Training recruits is hard work, and USS *Recruit* started showing her "miles", so in 1954, USS *Recruit* went into a 3-month "dry-dock" for an overhaul and minor repairs.



Time goes by, and technology progresses. Which can cause some issues – after many years of service, USS *Recruit* ran up against computer technology. In 1967, Navy civilian employees were making a card-index inventory of vessels in the San Diego area and found themselves baffled and bewildered by one particular card, which, when placed through the computer for classification, was continually rejected.

The computer's program had a problem in that the ship was neither afloat nor tied up ashore. It was not in dry dock, nor undergoing repairs or overhauling. It was not in "mothball" and it had no crew! Add to that the fact that the ship had no boilers, engines or screws and these hard-working folks discovered that the programming could not classify USS *Recruit* as a commissioned vessel. Rather than get the computer program modified, USS *Recruit* was decommissioned on 7 March 1967. However, the facility was still used for training of recruits.

Fast-forward a decade or so – in the early 1980's, it was decided that USS *Recruit* again needed renovation and upgrading, in order to reflect a more current look. Therefore, in 1982, she underwent a "yard

period", upgrading her to closely resemble the Oliver Hazard Perry class Guided Missile Fast Frigate – then becoming TFFG-1. At this time, USS *Recruit* was re-commissioned (though I have no notes on how the computer issue was resolved).

More time passed, and Naval Training Center San Diego and Recruit Training Center, San Diego was closed in 1997 by the Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC). Consequently, USS *Recruit* was also decommissioned.

Recruit is included in the Naval Training Centre's listing on the National Register of Historic Places and has gained both National Historic and State Historic designation. The former Naval

Training Center is now Liberty Station, and the *Recruit* sits adjacent to the retail area.

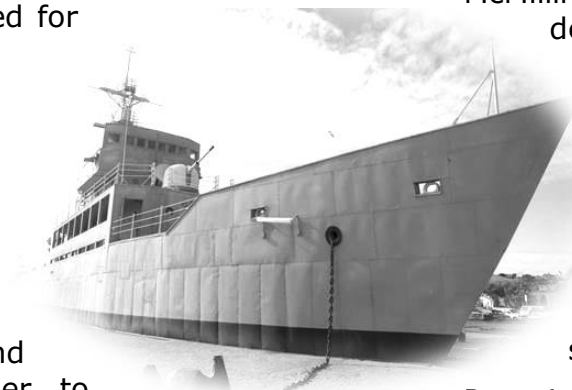
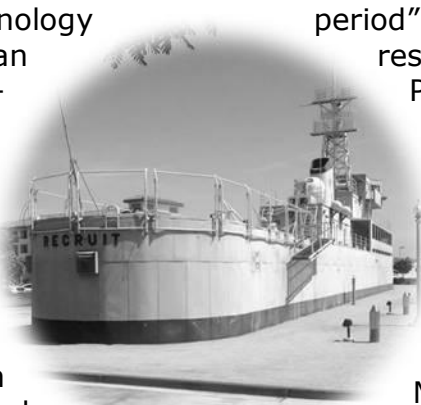
WW1 version

Recruit still stands (though currently unused), with hopes that she will someday become a maritime museum. Recently (2014), Corky

McMillin Cos. – which developed Liberty

Station after the base closed in 1997 – joined forces with the USS Midway Museum and active duty and retired Navy personnel to get the *Recruit* shipshape again.

Recruit seems to be the only surviving example of the Navy's



various landlocked ships – at one time, the Navy also operated two other similar training "vessels":

USS *Commodore*(401B) [also known as R.T.S. *Commodore*] at Naval Training Center Bainbridge, Maryland, which was dismantled in the 1970's when the base was closed.*(The nickname, "USS Neversail, was used to refer to USS *Commodore* as well)

USS *Blue Jacket* at Naval Training Center Orlando, Florida, which was removed in 1990's.

Note of interest TDE-1 / TFFG-1 was actually the third commissioned vessel the Navy had with the name *Recruit* – the second one was an actual sailing vessel – AM-285 USS *Recruit*, an Admiral-class minesweeper built during World War II. Commissioned 8 November 1944, she saw action in the Pacific and was awarded three battle stars. She was decommissioned and placed in reserve in 1946, which allowed the name "*Recruit*" to be used for another commissioned Navy vessel. AM-285 was sold to the Mexican Navy in 1963.

The Real Field Gun Story Part II

Submitted by Ken Jones –HMS Tenby Association – HMS Ulster 1961-63

In the last episode, I described the background and build-up to the 2nd Boer war, and the Navy's arrival at the Cape and the preparations leading up to the landing of the first Naval Brigade.

In this issue, Jack goes into action, not to relieve Ladysmith initially, that would not happen for a further 4 months, but to end up actually providing the counter siege artillery inside the town.

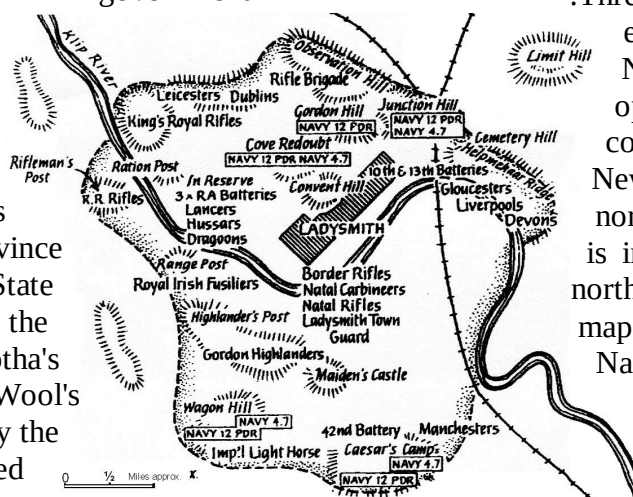
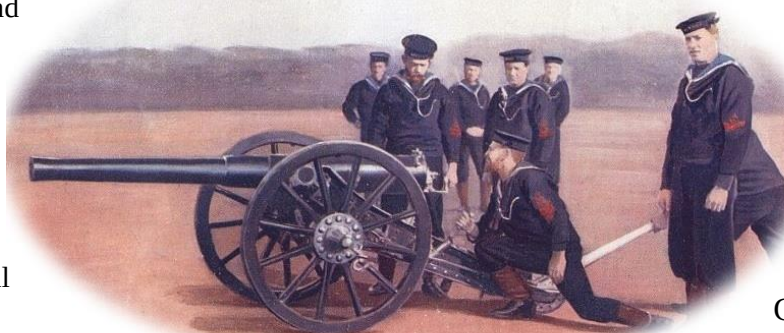
The war started on the 11th of October 1899, when the Transvaal government telegraphed to all Boer positions the single Dutch word for war - Oorlog. At this the waiting Boers rode out in three columns across the border into Natal province from the Orange Free State through passes in the mountain range at Botha's pass, Mol's Neck and Wool's Drift in what was probably the largest body of armed

mounted men that Africa had ever seen. This force consisted of 12,000 men of seven 'commando's, supported by a regular artillery formation consisting of 96 Krupp guns and 2 Creusot 6" (long

toms). Amazingly, they advanced 70 miles into Natal in just a few days without meeting any resistance. It seemed that the British army had been caught completely by surprise and they advanced through a landscape deserted by the scattered settlers who had got wind of their advance

.Three days later they entered the town of Newcastle, their only opposition being the constant, driving rain. Newcastle is only 60 miles north of Ladysmith, which is in turn about 189 miles northwest of Durban (see map above), the capital of Natal province.

Meanwhile, *Powerful* arrived at Durban on



the 28th of October and by 1700 on the next day the embarked naval brigade had disembarked and boarded two trains which were awaiting them, taking their guns and as much stores, ammunition and tentage that could be crammed on. The train journey to Ladysmith took an uncomfortable 24 hours.



Whilst the navy were preparing at the Cape, the army, under General White, made contact with the advancing Boers on the 20th of October just outside Dundee and tried to halt their progress. However, the Boer columns surrounded the force and using their manoeuvrability and the ground to advantage, cut this force to pieces. The outcome of the battle of Dundee was that the British had 161 killed or wounded including their CO, 331 surrendered and a separate column of 4,000 was forced sixty miles back to the safety of Ladysmith. There was even worse to come! On the 29th of October, as the Boers drew nearer to the town General White sent another force out to engage them. As the force advanced in darkness up a steep hill some of the supply train pack mules slipped and fell and the rest bolted, this caused the loss of their artillery and ammunition and when day broke the force found themselves in the open in a valley surrounded by Boer.

The gunners' daily task was to spot the position of, and silence any Boer gun that opened up on the town and, always remembering to conserve their ammunition as no one could be sure how long the siege would last. They became quite adept at this as



time went on. As the Boers used smokeless ammo, it was usually a puff of dust from recoil in dry weather, or differences in the colour of cut greenery disguising the gun as it dried out. Alternatively, even just a shimmer in the air from the heat of a discharge. One army colonel was present at a battery on one such occasion and when he asked how a gun, which had just opened fire, was located, the young midshipman who was doing the spotting replied. 'See that line of trees on the crest of that hill, well there were six yesterday and now there is only five and a gun on the lee side of the hill is using it as his gun target line'. The seamen manned the guns whilst the stokers brought the ammo from a remote protected dump some distance away.

Of course, this applied to the enemy as well and for a while, it seemed that the Boers also possessed the art of spotting the brigades batteries. On the 22nd of December, the Reverend in charge of the Hanoverian mission in Ladysmith was caught crossing the lines and under questioning he confessed to giving away the batteries whereabouts to the Boers.

Having a Fleet Paymaster in the brigade may seem strange but he was a veteran of many land campaigns in the Nile, Burma and Abyssinia and had become used to making the best of things. He managed to obtain books packs of cards and even a football for the lads but his greatest feat was to purchase the towns remaining beer stocks for £30.

On Christmas eve the Boer guns fell silent as they attended church services but, on Christmas morning 2 shells landed within the perimeter but did not explode, they had 'compliments of the season' written on them and were filled with Xmas pudding!

As February neared, food became more of a problem. At the start, it was estimated that there were supplies for 50 days, and they were now nearing the 100-day mark. The relief column, with another naval brigade in support was near but making agonisingly slow progress.

To be continued next issue.