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AHOY SHIPMATE

RNA Torbay Newsletter

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In this issue

Editorial	1
Chairmans Corner.....	2
A real master & commander.....	3
America's new missile submarines	4-5
Boudreaux, the smoothest-talking Cajun	5
Rose first black police woman.....	6
Royal Navy's new super carriers...	7-8
The loss of HMS Barham.....	9-10
Festive Lunch Pictures.....	11
Nicknames	12

Children Are Quick

Teacher: Why are you late?

Student: Class started before I got here.

Teacher: John, why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor?

John: You told me to do it without using tables.

Teacher: Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile'?

Glenn: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L'

Teacher: No, that's wrong

Glenn: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

Teacher: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

Donald: H I J K L M N O.

Teacher: What are you talking about?

Donald: Yesterday you said it's H to O.

Teacher: George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it. Now, Louie, do you know why his father didn't punish him?

Louis: Because George still had the axe in his hand....

Teacher: Clyde, your composition on 'My Dog' is exactly the same as your brother's.. Did you copy his?

Clyde: No, sir. It's the same dog.

Teacher: Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

Harold: A teacher

Editorial

By Shipmate Norrie Millen

Hi! Shipmates,

Well now 76 and still right side of the grass. Sadly still have my chest infection and picked up a tummy bug (virus) just before Christmas which is lingering on. Talk about Montezuma's revenge; on occasions that is an understatement!

2018 and into another year, hard to believe that this year I and other Ulster crew will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of our commissioning, doesn't time fly when you are enjoying yourself?

Where did all those years go? Which reminds me, I started a few years ago to publish shipmate's profiles, their Royal Navy history. So Shipmates, dust off the old grey cells and send in your submissions. Ideally, if possible, accompanied by a picture at start and end of your RN career.

As many of you already know, I have stepped down from the committee. Being 'on the square' and working my way up, I am to be installed as the Worshipful Master of my masonic lodge on March 10th. This will leave me little time for anything else. Kind of sad in some ways, it will be the first time in 34 years that I have not served on an RNA Committee in some capacity; President, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Membership and Welfare Officer, not to mention Master-at-Arms. Yes, we had one in Southern Ontario Branch; responsible for marching on and off our four colours at every meeting and taking charge of various parades we were involved in, both in Canada and the United States.

I do need your submissions; I feel sure that majority of you have many interesting anecdotes during your naval careers. Some sad, some funny and some hilarious, which are still memorable on occasions. There must be that moment when something triggers that memory in your old grey cells and which brings a smile to your face. So send them in, I would prefer to publish these type of articles over stuff I 'fish for' on the Internet and articles I 'poach' from other newsletters.

The way I see it anyway!





Chairman's Corner

By Shipmate John Soanes

A note for your diary - In order not to clash with the Submariner's Reunion this year, I have booked Saturday 27th October at the Redcliffe Hotel for our 2018 Trafalgar Dinner. The cost per person will be £28.00 which includes the usual four course dinner followed by Coffee and Mints and Rum or Port for the toasts.

Another reminder - This year commemorates the 100th Anniversary of the Raid on Zeebrugge during which Lieutenant Commander Arthur Leyland Harrison was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

Torbay RNA will be holding a Service on Sunday 22nd April, during which a wreath will be laid at the Harrison Memorial on Roundham Head Paignton.

Our Branch Chaplain S/M Paul Lomas has kindly agreed to prepare and conduct the service.

In addition to playing Rugby for RFU Twickenham and England, Harrison also played for United Services Portsmouth RFC.

To commemorate the 100th Anniversary United Services Portsmouth RFC are organising a Commemorative Dinner in April to which they wish to invite known descendants of Harrison VC. I have passed details of the four family members who I was successful in tracing back in the year 2000 when we initially erected the Memorial.

They are looking forward to receiving an invitation.

I have forwarded a photograph of the new Memorial which they will include on the front cover of the menu.

S/M Peter (Guy) Fawkes our frequent Caribbean tourist has very kindly donated to the Branch a large bottle of Mount Gay XO Reserve Cask Barbados Rum. I am sure we will find a special use for it, If not, we may have to drink it!

How's this for coincidence?

One of my Ton Class members by the name of Russ Briercliffe related this tale of coincidence to me a few years ago and thought Torbay members may be interested.

"One Sunday. on the toss of a coin, my wife and I decided to visit a 'mammoth' antiques & collector's fair' at Donnington Park Motor Racing Circuit.

It was the first time we had ever been to such an event, there were about 200 stalls and after about two hours, we had reached the last row of stalls when something caught my attention. It was an old matelot's cap with the tally 'HMS Belfast', However, when I picked it up and turned it over I couldn't believe my eyes ... there was my name 'Russ' written twice inside in my handwriting. I remembered it well as, since there was no one else on HMS Gavinton with the same name, I hadn't bothered to add my surname. Needless to say, I bought the cap at a cost of £10, and was told by the stallholder that he had bought it in Hertfordshire several years ago. How it got there we'll probably never know!"

John.

**SUNDAY 22ND APRIL 2018 – WREATH LAYING AT HARRISON
MEMORIAL ON ROUNDHAM HEAD PAIGNTON**

**SATURDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2018 – ANNUAL TRAFALGAR
DINNER – PRICE £28.00 PP.**

A REAL MASTER & COMMANDER ñ ADMIRAL COCHRANE

Submitted by Bob Styants – Engineroom Association

Thomas Cochrane was born 1775 near Hamilton, the son of Archibald Cochrane 9th. Earl of Dundonald.

Against his father's wishes he should join the army, he joined the navy as a midshipman in 1793.

He soon became notorious for insubordination and was court martialled (although acquitted) for thumbing his nose at the 1st. lieutenant of Lord Keith's flagship "Barfleur" while serving in the Mediterranean.

As a junior officer his first command was the brig "Speedy" in which he made his name by capturing a much more powerfully armed Spanish frigate "El Gamo" in 1801.

He was known as an attacking commander. Napoleon called him "Le Loup Des Mers" The Wolf of the Seas.

With "Speedy" "Pallas" and "Imperieuse" Cochrane established himself as a master of coastal warfare, attacking shore installations and capturing ships in enemy harbours.

Apart from insubordinate, he was mercurial and somewhat dodgy. His foes dreaded him; his men adored him; but his political overlords regarded him as impossibly rebellious.

Although his naval career was going well, his real interest was in parliament which he entered in 1806 in a corrupt election in which he had paid bribes, though he had no need to do this in consequent elections.



His vigorous campaign for political corruption in the navy, won him many enemies.

In 1814 he was convicted of being involved in the "Great Stock Exchange Fraud". He had bought and sold stock on a rumour of Napoleon's death and was sentenced to a year in jail, fined and sentenced to stand in the pillory. He was ejected from parliament; stripped of his knighthood and dismissed from the navy.

His constituents showed their belief in him, immediately re-electing him, but in 1817 he accepted a commission in the Chilean navy. A second remarkable career followed.

By beating Spanish forces in brilliant actions between 1819-1822 he secured independence from Spain for Chile and Peru.

He was next offered command of the Brazilian navy, which he led in the war of independence against Portugal before being made an admiral in the Greek navy.

He returned to Britain 1831 to inherit his father's title and was reinstated in the Royal Navy as a Rear Admiral the following year.

He was a proponent of steam propulsion and urged the adoption of screw propellers in warships.

He is held in honour in Chile, and of their five warships which have borne his name since 1879, the most recent is the frigate "Almirante Cochrane" which entered service in 2006.



I went to the zoo yesterday and there was a baguette in a cage!
I asked the zookeeper "Why is it there"?
He said "It's bread in captivity"!

America's New Nuclear Missile Submarines Might Have a Problem

From the Internet

The U.S. Government concerns about the Columbia-class ballistic

The new boomer, which must become operational by 2031, will feature a host of new technologies that are supposed to increase the vessels' survivability into the foreseeable future. However, as the GAO notes, many of those features are unproven and no prototypes have been built or tested.

"Additional development and testing are required to demonstrate the maturity of several Columbia class submarine technologies that are critical to performance, including the Integrated Power System, nuclear reactor, common missile compartment, and propulsor and related coordinated stern technologies," the GAO report reads.

"As a result, it is unknown at this point whether they will work as expected, be delayed, or cost more than planned. Any unexpected delays could postpone the deployment of the lead submarine past the 2031 deadline."

The GAO also accuses the Navy of misrepresenting the risks and the level of technological maturity of key components of the new submarine. Many of the boat's systems such as the integrated power system—which uses a permanent magnet motor rather than gears to turn the drive shaft—have not been prototyped or tested under operationally representative conditions.

"The Navy underrepresented the program's technology risks in its 2015 Technology Readiness Assessment (TRA) when it did not identify these technologies as critical," the report reads.

"Development of these technologies is key to meeting cost, schedule, and performance requirements.... Not identifying these technologies as critical means Congress may not have had the full picture of the technology risks and their potential effect on cost,

Accountability Office is raising technological maturity of the missile submarine.

schedule, and performance goals as increasing financial commitments were made."

The GAO report notes that the Navy is not required to provide the Congress with progress reports on Columbia's development until 2020, but added reporting would help staffers get a better grip on the technological risks of this vital program.

"The Navy is not required to provide Congress with an update on the program's progress, including its technology development efforts, until fiscal year 2020—when \$8.7 billion for lead ship construction will have already been authorized," the report reads.

"Periodic reporting on technology development efforts in the interim could provide decision makers assurances about the remaining technical risks as the Navy asks for increasing levels of funding."

The GAO report was not entirely critical. The agency praised the Navy's decision to complete most of the submarine's design prior to starting construction but took aim at the service's decision to begin design work before several crucial technologies have sufficiently matured.

"The Navy intends to complete much of the submarine's overall design prior to starting construction to reduce the risk of cost and schedule growth," the GAO notes.

"However, the Navy recently awarded a contract for detail design while critical technologies remain unproven—a practice not in line with best practices that has led to cost growth and schedule delays on other programs."



Designing the submarine without fully understanding the end state of technologies such as the permanent magnet

motor could lead to delays in building the new SSBNs.

“Proceeding into detail design and construction with immature technologies can lead to design instability and cause construction delays,” the report reads.

“The Navy plans to accelerate construction of the lead submarine to compensate for an aggressive schedule, which may lead to future delays if the technologies are not fully mature before construction starts, planned for 2021.”

Given that the Columbia-class is vital to maintaining the nation's strategic nuclear deterrent, the prospect of delays and technological challenges on the new SSBNs is concerning. It is not clear how the service intends to address the GAO's concerns, but in a letter to the agency, the Pentagon disagreed with the assessment—noting that reaching such a high technology readiness level is not practical for shipbuilding.

Time will tell if the GAO or the Pentagon is correct, but historically, the agency has proven to be right more often than not.



Boudreaux

Boudreaux, the smoothest-talking Cajun in the Louisiana National Guard, got called up to active duty. Boudreaux's first assignment was in a military induction centre.

Because he was a good talker, they assigned him the duty of advising new recruits about government benefits, especially the GI insurance to which they were entitled.

The officer in charge soon noticed that Boudreaux was getting a 99% sign-up rate for the more expensive supplemental form of GI insurance. This was remarkable, because it cost these low-income recruits \$30.00 per month for the higher coverage, compared to what the government was already providing at no charge.

The officer decided he'd sit in the back of the room at the next briefing and observe Boudreaux's sales pitch.

Boudreaux stood up before the latest group of inductees and said, "If you has da normal GI insurans an' you goes to Afghanistan an' gets youself killed, da govment' pays you benefishery \$20,000.

If you takes out da suppmental insurans, which cost you only t'irty dollars a munt, den da government' gots ta pay you benefishery \$400,000!

Now, Boudreaux concluded, "Which bunch you tink da governmentögonna send ta Afghanistan first?"

Food for thought

The liquid inside young coconuts can be used as a substitute for **Blood Plasma**.

No piece of paper can be folded in half more than seven (7) times.

Donkeys kill more people annually Than plane crashes or shark attacks

You burn more calories sleeping than you do watching television.

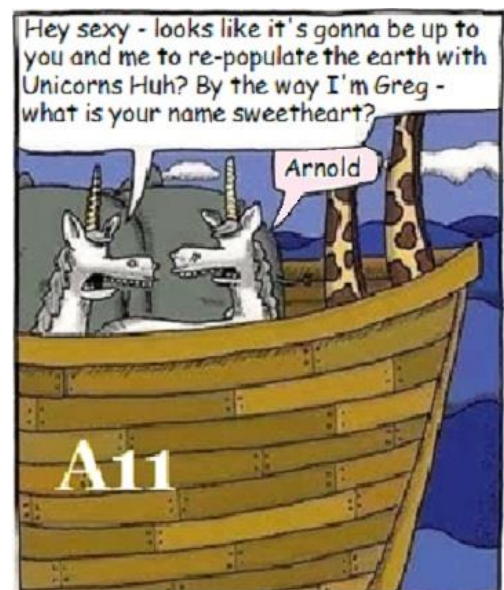
Oak trees do NOT produce acorns until they are fifty (50) years of age or older.

The first product to have a bar code was Wrigley's gum.

The King of Hearts is the only King without a moustache

American Airlines saved \$40,000 in 1987 by eliminating one (1) olive from each salad served in first-class.

Venus is the only planet that rotates clockwise.



Rose Fortune

Rose Fortune (March 13, 1774 ñ February 20, 1864) was a Canadian woman who came to Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, with the Black Loyalists, where she became a successful businesswoman and the first female police officer in Canada.

Life and career

Rose Fortune was born into slavery in Philadelphia, PA, March 13, 1774, her family subsequently being relocated to Virginia by the Devones family. Escaping slavery during the American Revolution the family was relocated to Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, as part of the Black Loyalist migration, when she was 10 years old. In 1825, she started her own business, carting luggage between the ferry docks and nearby homes and hotels. She became entrusted with safeguarding property and maintaining order on the wharves and warehouses of Annapolis Royal, acting as the town's waterfront police officer.

Rose Fortune died on February 20, 1864, in the small house she owned at the engineer's lot near Fort Anne. The business she founded was continued by her grandson-in-law Albert Lewis as the Lewis Transfer Company and continued for several generations, remaining in business until 1980. Rose Fortune was buried in Annapolis Royal

in the Garrison Cemetery. Her grave is unmarked, but a plaque in the Petite Parc on the Annapolis Royal waterfront commemorates her life and contribution to Nova Scotian history.

Legacy

Her direct descendant was Daurene Lewis, who was elected Mayor of Annapolis Royal in 1984, being the first African-Canadian woman to attain that position. In May 2015, the name M/V Fundy Rose was given to the ferry that crosses the Bay of Fundy to New Brunswick.

FORTUNE, a play inspired by the life of Rose Fortune, written by playwright George Cameron Grant, has been performed through the US and Maritimes. In 2013, Grant, on a Candlelight Graveyard tour led by Annapolis Royal historian Alan Melanson, was guided to the final, unmarked resting place of Rose Fortune. A year later, the play **FORTUNE** was finished, a year after that, the new Digby ferry bore her name, and a Rose Fortune Memorial, sculpted by noted artist Brad Hall, was dedicated in Annapolis Royal's Garrison Cemetery, Canada Day, July 1, 2017.

The Government of Canada named a new ferry party after Rose. The ferry MV Fundy Rose, commissioned in 2015 to operate between Digby, Nova Scotia and Saint John, New Brunswick, was named for the Bay of Fundy and Rose Fortune



The Royal Navy's New Carriers Might Not Be 'Supercarriers' (But They Can Kill)

From the National Interest Magazine the writer is Ben Ho Wan Beng

Ben Ho Wan Beng is a Senior Analyst with the Military Studies Programme at Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, and he has a master's degree in strategic studies from the same institution.

2017 was proclaimed to be the Year of the Royal Navy (RN) as it welcomed several new ships to the fleet. It was, however, an annus horribilis of sorts for the British naval service as it came under fire on a litany of issues such as manpower woes and the controversial Queen Elizabeth (QE) supercarrier project.

The RN reached a milestone when HMS *Queen Elizabeth* began sea trials in June, and media outlets, both British

and international, have been closely tracking the ship since then. Local media was literally baying for blood after a leak was discovered on the *Queen Elizabeth* last

month, and this was

but the latest episode of a mountain being made out of a molehill vis-à-vis the 65,000-ton, £3.1

billion platform—the largest and costliest platform ever built for the British armed forces. That being said, various commentators have also decried the vessel's utility, but their arguments largely do not stand up to scrutiny as they do not consider a number of operational nuances.

A longstanding criticism of the carrier in this regard is that it would have few, if any, fighters embarked on it. Critics point to the current travails of the F-35B—the aircraft that will fly off the QE's flight decks in time to come—to bolster their claim that the carriers will deploy with very limited airpower. One prominent British defense journalist wrote that these ships would face the humiliating prospect of having very few aircraft flying from them, adding that they are designed to carry 36 joint strike aircraft—F-35s, known as the Lightning II—but are unlikely to carry more than 12.

It is pretty much early days to make such an argument as HMS *Queen Elizabeth* as well as

her as-yet uncompleted sister HMS *Prince of Wales* are expected to attain initial and full carrier strike capability only during the 2020s. Indeed, Britain has already taken delivery of fourteen F-35Bs with more to be procured in the coming years. Whitehall wants to buy forty-eight Lightnings for carrier service, and even if this figure could not be fully attained due to fiscal constraints, any shortfall in the flat-top's aircraft complement

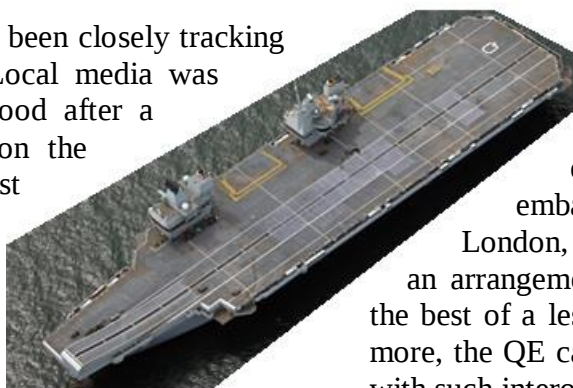
could be mitigated by the deployment of United States Marine Corps F-35Bs on the ship. To be sure, this eventuality might be a tad embarrassing politically for

London, but it is undeniable that such an arrangement with America would make the best of a less than ideal situation. What is more, the QE carrier was designed specifically with such interoperability in mind.

Limited Self-Defence Capabilities

Another charge levelled at the QEs is that they are highly vulnerable to challenges such as modern submarines and antiship cruise missiles during hostilities. In this regard, the British flat-top does not have a large-enough fighter complement as mentioned above, as well as a capable airborne early warning (AEW) platform like the American E-2D Hawkeye to protect itself against enemy threats, critics maintain. In addition, the QE lacks an adequate point-defense system, and this is compounded by the notion that the British carrier would sail with inadequate escorts because of the small size of the RN's surface combatant force.

To be sure, these criticisms are valid *per se* and have merit if the Queen Elizabeth carrier force were to be operating on its own in a combat scenario à la the 1982 Falklands campaign. They, however, fail to consider the fact that the British force is unlikely to operate in isolation in most circumstances—its combat deployment



would invariably be as part of a U.S.-led coalition given the current geostrategic environment

They, however, fail to consider the fact that the British force is unlikely to operate in isolation.

Who, then, are Britain's likely adversaries in the coming years? Russia? American involvement check. How about Middle East rogue states like Iran? American involvement check. Operations against extremist groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria would invariably be led by Washington as well. While Britain did fight on its own during Operation Corporate, it is safe to say that a second Falklands War is unlikely to break out within the next several years given the current vicissitudes of the Argentine armed forces.

In the abovementioned scenarios, the QE carrier group is likely to operate together with its American counterpart, and the capabilities the latter provide would mitigate the shortcomings of the British force. For instance, the limited area air defence of the QE carrier group would be alleviated by the presence of the presence of U.S. Aegis-equipped platforms. Ditto the Hawkeyes of the American carrier strike group (CSG) for the limited AEW coverage provided by the British flat-tops's Merlin helicopters.

Utility as a "Light" Carrier

All that being said, any QE vessel operating with American CSGs would likely assume a secondary role – that of the light carrier – given its relatively limited capabilities, in a throwback to the Second World War. In the period 1943–45, Independence-class light carriers and their larger Essex-class cousins made up the Fast Carrier Task Force that was so decisive in shaping the outcome of the central Pacific campaign. The Independences – with a small complement of slightly over thirty aircraft, including some two dozen fighters – were usually tasked to provide for the prosaic tasks of combat air patrol and antisubmarine warfare, leaving the more glamorous duties of attacking Japanese warships and land bases to the "heavies".

This disposition of assets could be replicated in a joint American-British carrier force. As a matter of fact, the two navies have undertaken to work closely on future carrier operations, and a joint entity comprising flat-tops from both sides would be highly beneficial given the synergy such an arrangement would bring about. For instance, the Queen Elizabeth flat-top, with its relatively short-ranged F-35Bs, could assume a key role as fleet air defender à la the Independences, leaving the U.S. supercarrier with more aircraft to project force against the enemy. Indeed, such a deployment would dovetail with the rather practical "fleet-unit" logic that James Holmes of the U.S. Naval War College (USNWC) wrote about in *The National Interest* last month.

While assuming mainly defensive duties would arguably not befit a 65,000-ton platform, the reality is carriers with ski-jump flight decks like the Queen Elizabeths are largely suited for such roles in more demanding operating environments as I argued in a recent *Naval War College Review* article. It is therefore perhaps time to recognize them as that and not compare them unfairly to their much more capable Nimitz-class cousins in the U.S. Navy.

All in all, while the QE flat-tops may not be the hapless white elephants in combat as several military commentators have made them out to be, neither are they in the "supercarrier" league even though they are only slightly smaller than America's first true supercarriers of the Forrestal class. Robert Rubel, formerly a USNWC academic, wrote that a key doctrinal role for the aircraft carrier is that of a "geopolitical chess piece," and that is arguably what the United Kingdom's Queen Elizabeth-class flat-tops are most suited for – to serve as highly effective tools of twenty-first-century gunboat diplomacy and not so much as first-class war fighters.

Indeed, UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson's statement last summer that the QEs will conduct freedom-of-navigation exercises in the South China Sea smacks not only of rising British interest in the Asia-Pacific region, but arguably also of a Britannia striving to find her place in the sun in an increasingly multipolar world. And what better platform to achieve this than a phallic 65,000-ton aircraft carrier?

THE LOSS OF HMS 'BARHAM'

and the peculiar incident that followed.

Submitted by Bob StyantsEngineerom Association

The battleship 'Barham' with HMS 'Queen Elizabeth' and 'Valiant' escorted by a screen of eight destroyers left Alexandria 24th. November 1941 to cover operations against two enemy convoys making for Benghazi.

The next day 25th. November, Kapitun Leutnant Von Tiesenhausen U-331 was patrolling near Alexandria when his hydrophone operator reported sounds of heavy screws; through the periscope he identified 'Barham' Queen Elizabeth and Valiant' with their screen of destroyers.

Three times the U-boat came within sonar range, identified and reported to senior officers who dismissed it as probably shoals of fish.

Taking advantage of this U-331 eased its way under the outlying destroyers and from 1200 yards fired four torpedoes at the middle battleship in line.

It was approximately 1600 when three torpedoes hit the port side of 'Barham' below the water line: the fourth hit the port 4" magazine causing a fire to spread to the main magazines which began to explode: lighting and communication systems failed causing panic and confusion.

'Barham' was operating correct watertight procedures for cruising but listed too quickly for counter measures to be taken: at an angle of 30 deg. A verbal order was given to abandon ship.

The funnel slipped below the water, a final almighty explosion as

the main magazine blew: she sank in two and a half minutes.

In true naval tradition captain G.C. Cooke went down with his ship together with 861 officers and men: Vice Admiral Pridham Wipple and 396 men survived.

On releasing the torpedoes the bows of U-331 came clear of the water and 'Valiant' turned to ram it: the boat crash dived: the main depth gauge stuck at 250ft. giving a false reading as U-331 plunged to 820Ft. on the forward depth gauge and should have been crushed, but didn't spring a leak.

Back on the surface von Tiesenhausen reported by the 'Enigma' code machine he had torpedoed a battleship but didn't know which one.

Unaware to the Germans that the British had broken the 'Enigma' code, so decided not to announce the loss of 'Barham' until they were ready, and to confuse the enemy intelligence services.

A peculiar situation had occurred, where a psychic medium Helen Duncan, who often while in a trance produced materialisation figures of the deceased members of her audiences produced a figure of a sailor with a 'Barham' cap tally. His mother happened to be in the audience, and she complained to the admiralty wanting to know why she was not informed her son had died; forcing the admiralty to notify all the next of kin and the media before they wanted to.

The intelligence service were paranoid and keeping an eye on Helen Duncan.



In 1944 with plans for the Normandy landings well in advance they thought that she might be able to let slip the details.

For a séance in Portsmouth 19th January 1944 a naval officer bought two tickets and gave one to a policeman who attended in plain clothes.

When Helen went into the trance to produce the ectoplasm, he jumped up, blew his whistle and conducted a raid to try to prove it was all a hoax; trying to grab the figure, it had disappeared.

No white sheets or other controversial apparatus was found.

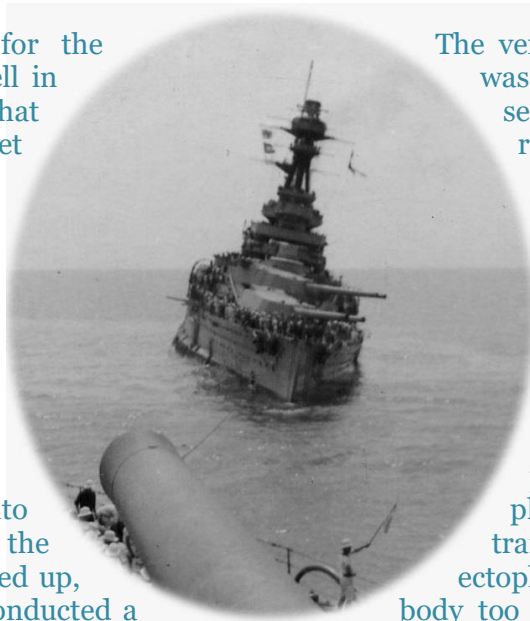
Helen Duncan was arrested and charged under the 'Vagrancy Act'; under normal circumstances if found guilty she would have been fined and released: but the secret service did not want her walking around free.

Remanded and refused bail, she was sent to Holloway prison for four days while wondering what best to charge her with: the 'vagrancy' charge was changed to Conspiracy, which in wartime carried the penalty 'Death by Hanging'.

By this time her case had reached the 'Old Bailey' and the charge was changed yet again to 'Witchcraft' and the act of 1735 dragged out of dusty libraries.

The prosecution thinking a single charge might fail added 'Larceny' accusing her of taking money by false pretences.

The trial in April 1944 lasted seven days: some experts tried many ways to prove Helen a fraud, even to saying she could swallow a substance to regurgitate later to produce a figure: other experts on her behalf proved otherwise.



The verdict after two and a half hours was guilty of fraud and she was sentenced to nine months, being released 22nd September 1945.

In November 1956 the police raided her séance in Nottingham; strip searched her and took endless flash photos looking for beards, masks and shrouds: nothing was found.

The police in their ignorance had committed the worst possible sin of psychic phenomenon, that a medium in trance must never be touched; the ectoplasm returns to the mediums body too quickly and can cause immense and sometimes fatal damage; and so was the case this time.

A doctor was summoned and found two second degree burns across Helen's stomach.

Very ill, rushed to hospital, she died five weeks later 6th December 1956.

Helen Duncan, born Callander Scotland 25th November 1897.



While working in a bleach factory she discovered her powers as a medium and was much sought after by war widows and used it to supplement her income.

It beggars belief that she could have changed the outcome of the war!

She married a disabled WW1 veteran: had twelve children, of which only six survived.



Festive Lunch Pictures



Nicknames – Part 1

(I will run this article over several issues)

The Royal Navy takes nicknames to an entirely different level. Yes, it has the obvious ones “Ali” Barber, “Mini” Cooper and “Albert” Hall.

But there are dozens which, now, make no sense at all, their meaning having been lost as once common associations were lost in the mists of time.

Few will know the origins of “Snakey” Blake, “Legs” Diamond and “Soapy” Hudson.

Thankfully, the Royal Navy has researched the origins of many of the most common surnames. And you can look up yours below. Surnames are listed first, with nicknames in **bold**, with explanations below, where they exist

Adams **Fanny** - Fanny Adams (Sweet Fanny Adams) was the child victim of a notorious Victorian murder case. Fanny (or Frances) Adams aged nine was murdered at Alton, Hants on 24 April 1867. The murderer (Frederick Baker, a solicitor's clerk, aged 24) cut the body up into pieces, some of which were allegedly found in Deptford Victualling Yard. Baker was tried at Winchester and hanged in December 1867. At about this time tinned mutton was introduced into the Navy and soon acquired the name of Fanny Adams. The tins were subsequently used by sailors as mess gear. The name “fanny” is still the Naval slang for a cooking pot as well as being used in the nickname sense.

Atkins **Tommy** - In 1812 during the Peninsula War in Spain and Portugal when pocket or pay books were first issued to soldiers in the field the Duke of Wellington's Aide-de-Camp had to explain their workings to the troops. He used as his example a new pay book which had just been issued to Private Thomas (Tommy) Atkins of the British Grenadiers. All pay books for years afterwards were called “Tommies” and if you were in receipt of one you were also known as a “Tommy”, giving rise to the nickname for British soldiers. The name Tommy Atkins was later popularised in a Rudyard Kipling poem, with the character becoming synonymous with British soldiers serving in the trenches in WW1.

Austin/Austen **Bunny** - Bunny Austin was the first tennis player to wear shorts at Wimbledon in 1932

Aziz **Fails** - Nickname from the Submarine Service where electrical switches are designed to fail in a safe mode, whatever it may be and on loss of electrics the switch fails either to an open position, or shut, or as it is at the time hence as is.

Bacon **Streaky** - Streaky bacon – cut of bacon
Bailey **Bill** - “Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Back” title of popular music hall song written in 1902

Banks **Gordon** - 1960s/70s Leicester and England goalkeeper

Barber **Ali** - Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves, from the Arabian Nights

Barker **Ronnie** - 1970s/80s comedian

Bates **Basher**

Bell **Daisy**

Bell **Dinger** - Self-evident – to ring or ding a bell

Bennett **Wiggy** - Bennett Gordon Early 20th century playboy with links to journalism. He effectively started the sport of international motor racing through his sponsorship of the Bennett Trophy races from 1900 to 1905. Also presented trophies for powered air racing and long-distance hot-air ballooning, with the international Gordon Bennett balloon race still continuing to this day. Phrase “Gordon Bennett” sometimes used as a mild expletive.

Beresford **Charlie** - Early 20th Century Admiral Lord Charlie Beresford, arch enemy of Admiral Jackie Fisher (see entry for Fisher)

Part 11 Next issue