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Ahoy Shipmate

RNA Torbay Newsletter

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ADULT

A person who has stopped growing at both ends.

BEAUTY PARLOR

A place where women curl up and dye

CHICKENS

The only animals you eat before they are born and after they are dead

COMMITTEE

A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

DUST

Mud with the juice squeezed out.

EGOTIST

Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation

HANDKERCHIEF

Cold Storage

INFLATION

Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

MOSQUITO

An insect that makes you like flies better.

RAISIN

A grape with a sunburn.

SECRET

Something you tell to one person at a time.

SKELETON

A bunch of bones with the person scraped off.

TOOTHACHE

The pain that drives you to extraction.

TOMORROW

One of the greatest labour-saving devices of today.

WRINKLES

Something other people have, similar to my character lines.

Editorial

By Shipmate Norrie Millen

Hi! Shipmates,

Well I certainly rubbed a few of you up the wrong way with my last editorial. I know the majority of you agree with my sentiments on this dreaded Covid-19 situation, sadly a few didn't and thought I was totally out of order. Be that as it may we are all entitled to our personal opinions and I am not going to offer any apologies for mine.

The few that objected to my views stated that they thought the government were doing an amazing job controlling the virus situation. Don't know why but all of a sudden an ostrich comes to mind!

What about these new restrictions that will start on a certain day or time. What on earth is wrong with "Immediate Effect"? Other countries that controlled the situation way better than UK brought measures into force with immediate effect, they did not pontificate, setting up dates way in the future. This action resulted in they had minimal cases and even less deaths than the horrendous high number of deaths in the UK.

People who have lost loved ones and who could not even say goodbye or on lot of cases attend their loved ones funerals have marched on London. They are demanding a judicial inquiry into the way the government have mishandled the situation and feel many more people would have survived Covid-19 and death had the government shut the country down immediately like New Zealand did.

But as I always say: we are still here to complain about it. They say a matelot (and ex matelots) are not happy unless they are 'dripping'

I hope, pray and trust that you all stay on the right side of the grass and have no need for your wooden overcoats just yet. The navy didn't kill us and neither will this if we follow the rules

The way I see it anyway!

IF YOU HAD TO SACRIFICE ONE BRANCH OF THE ARMED FORCES TO DEFEAT COVID-19, WHICH ONE WOULD IT BE? AND WHY THE AIR FORCE?

Chairman's Corner

By Shipmate John Soanes



Dear Shipmates,

On a personal note, I continue to "Plough on", I have good days and bad days, sometimes painful, sometimes not. Ann and I both remain optimistic and hope for the best trying to enjoy life. As the saying goes; "Keep taking the tablets and plough on"

I have been doing quite a bit of reading recently especially about modern methods of minesweeping where everything is done remotely, no more towing large quantities of wires and ironmongery and was reminded of the old fashioned methods we used for many years.

This poem well describes the art!

SWEEPING GETS TEDIOUS DON'T IT?

The funnels on fire,
My screws are bent,
I've parted a wire,
My floats! I've lent.
The Fodens smoking quite a lot,
My flaming winch is now red hot,

Not ours the fighters glow,
The glory and the praise,
Unnoticed to and fro,
We pass our dangerous ways,

We sift the drifting sea.
nd blindly grope beneath,
Obscure and toilsome we,
The fishermen of death,

But when the great ships go,
to battle through the gloom,
Our hearts beat high to know,
We cleared their path of doom

~~~~~

## Lieutenant-Commander Ian Normand, one of the first men to fly at more than 1,000 mph – obituary

He flew fighter-bombers in the Korean War, and over the course of his career handled 124 different types of aircraft

Lieutenant-Commander Ian Normand, who has died aged 92, flew fighter-bombers in the Korean War, and as a naval aero-engineer and test pilot

was one of the first men to fly at more than 1,000 mph.



Lt. Ian Normand in the cockpit of his Hawker Sea Fury

Normand was flying the Seafire Mark 47e, the ultimate and definitive version of the famous Spitfire, at the Navy's Operational Flying School when the Korean War broke out. He progressed to the Hawker Sea Fury, the last propeller-driven fighter-bomber in the Navy and one of the fastest production single reciprocating engine aircraft ever built. In it he learnt aerial combat, bombing and deck landing in the carrier Triumph in the English Channel.

He joined 804 Naval Air Squadron in the carrier Glory when she was on her third patrol off Korea. There, the Fleet Air Arm had reached pitch perfection: each pilot sometimes flew three and even four sorties a day, serviceability was extremely high, and aircraft landed and took off at half-minute intervals.

Normand was rated as an exceptional pilot, and when Glory was relieved after two more patrols, he was one of the pilots selected to take his experience to the carrier Ocean and 802 Naval Air Squadron. Between March and November 1952 he flew 150 sorties over North Korea against bridges, tanks, and artillery positions.

On April 22, on his afternoon sortie, Normand lost power but nursed his aircraft to a safe landing on an offshore island: one of the Navy's highly skilled aero-engineers, he professionally noted "fuel starvation" in his flying logbook.

Patrick Ian Normand always claimed that he was born in prison: in fact, he was born on July 13 1927 at Fort House, Johannesburg, where his father was governor of prisons for the Transvaal. Normand Snr had ridden with the Matabeleland Mounted Police on the Jameson Raid of 1896 and had been awarded the DSO at the Siege of Ladysmith, but when he was forced out of office by the Afrikaner government of South Africa, the family returned to Scotland.

/...continued on page 12

## Journal of Terry Membery

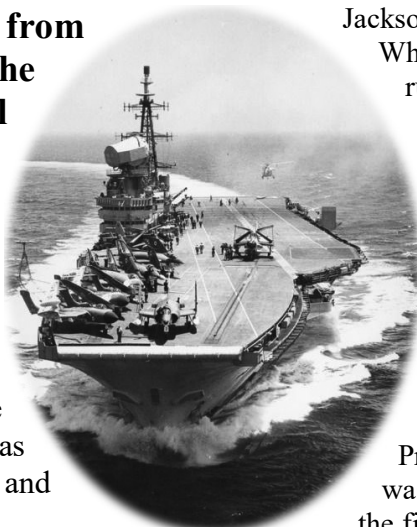
Life in the RN from 1967 -1993 – Part Two

*Submitted by Shipmate Terry Membery*

Continued from Part One - After leaving HMS Ark Royal I joined HMS Hermes.

### Hermes 17-1-1978 to 12-6-1980.

**Hermes was in service from 1959-1984. Initially, she was a traditional Aircraft Carrier of Centaur class. Hermes initially operated a Supermarine Scimitars, Sea Vixen, and Fairy Gannets.** In 1966 she was offered to the Australian Navy, the offer was turned down due to operating and manpower costs.



Mid 1960s a decision was made to phase out Fixed Wing Carriers, HMS Hermes was slated to become a Commando Carrier. She duly went into Devonport Dockyard to remove catapults and arrestor gear.

Whilst onboard HMS Hermes I was employed in B unit Engine room to gain my Unit Watchkeeping certificate which I completed on the 6 June 1979.

When I was not watchkeeping I was employed in the Air Conditioning Section. Shortly passing my UWC the Chief in charge of the section went on draft without relief so I was made up Acting CPO to run the section. The section was quite a large one as you can imagine with Various Air Conditioning, Plants with one, in particular, a gas turbine-powered AC plant. It was very temperamental with all of its intricacies of starting up.

We use to start it weekly until we headed west to the States then it was required all the time. So much so, that when the officers had a cocktail

party onboard I or one of my staff who could start the Air Conditioning plant had to remain on board in case it tripped and had to be restarted soonest (which happened quite regularly). We spent quite a bit of time in the States, Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville and Norfolk to name a few.

Whilst in Jacksonville I captained the ships rugby team against a local rugby team the venue was the Gator Bowl in front of 62,000 people who were watching an NFL match after our game. After leaving HMS Hermes I joined Royal Arthur.

### HMS Royal Arthur 12-6-1980 to 17-7-1980

On joining Royal Arthur (for a Senior Rates Leadership Course) I was made President of the course the reason being I was the only Chief on the course. One of the first things I instigated for our course was a run around the barracks at 0600 every weekday (a good job of about 3 miles fully booted and spurred) I would be lucky to do 1 mile now with my knees. One of the good things about Royal Arthur in June was the weather it was excellent which when we came to the Brecon Beacons near to the end of the course it was made much easier. I left Royal Arthur fitter and a little bit lighter in my pocket (one of the traits of RN life is work hard and play hard). After leaving Royal Arthur I joined HMS Defiance gas change team.

### **HMS Hermes**



### **HMS Royal Arthur The Cliff & Chasm Run A brutal gruelling challenge that reduced the toughest to tears**

another team on Diesel Engines. A very interesting job, later on, I would examine the turbines (combustion chamber and blading checking to see if there was damage if so we would change the complete engine). Although

### HMS Defiance 20-7-1980 to 18-2-82

Whilst on the team we visited quite a few places, Malta, Gibraltar, Halifax Nova Scotia, Bermuda and Northern Ireland for 6 weeks to help

supposedly a shore job I spent 3/4 of my time outside the UK. We nearly always flew club class and stayed in good hotels, so as jobs go not too bad. I left HMS Defiance to join HMS Sultan.

#### HMS Sultan 19-2-1982 to 18-7-1982

I joined HMS Sultan for the gas and refrigeration course. Back to playing snooker in the evening and travelling back and forwards to Torquay at the weekend. I nearly had a pierhead draft to Ascension Island to assist vessels that were going to the Falklands but it didn't materialise. I left HMS Sultan 18-7-1982 to join HMS Defiance.

#### HMS Defiance 19-7-1982 to 6-9-1982

I was supposed to join HMS Arrow but it was put back to the 7-9-1982.

Most of the time at HMS Defiance was taken up with leave owed me. I left HMS Defiance 6-9-1982 to join HMS Arrow.

#### HMS Arrow 7-9-1982 to 17-6-1985.

By the 1980s HMS Arrow was suffering from cracking in her hull. Much of this had first arisen during the Falklands conflict when engineers were obliged to weld steel plates and girders to parts of the ship where cracks were opening up in the aluminium superstructure. On return from the conflict, she was taken into refit to carry out this work and repair damage sustained during the Falklands War.

When I joined the ship the atmosphere was very subdued as one could imagine. 90% of the people onboard served on her during the war, but as the ship's company changed the mood changed as well. As the ship was finishing repairs and systems we're getting ready for trials. One incident which happened on the 13th of May; involved the CO 2 bottle stowage. As you can imagine the stowage for CO 2 bottles was quite large and stored numerous bottles of co2. Before the reinstatement, the stowage was being used by the dockyard mates coming on board, for tools spares and change of clothes.

According to the Ships Company and after the inquiry, the night shift had installed all the CO 2 bottles. On entering the SCC (Ships Control Centre) the CO2 alarm was emitting from the

spaces and CO2 storage. I proceeded to the CO2 stowage along with a colleague. After forcing our way into the bottle storage space we found a dockyard fitter slumped and unconscious behind the door. Through lack of space, we manhandled the fitter through the escape panel dragging him clearly and I commenced resuscitation. A short period after a second discharge occurred whilst still carrying out resuscitation we moved the fitter into the hangar awaiting medical expertise to arrive from HMS Drake. Medical expertise arrived quickly but sadly, the fitter died of asphyxiation. The very tragic incident which after the inquiry could have been avoided but alas hindsight is a wonderful thing. Rees Marshall and I we're awarded a C in C commendation for our actions but it didn't help the young wife and her 2 children when we were asked to attend the funeral.



**HMS Arrow**

After leaving Devonport Dockyard after our refit, our first port of call was Portland work up. FOST staff were very keen after the incidents during the Falkland War to ensure that every emergency was catered for. We passed Work up with flying colours then back to Devonport for leave. Our first deployment was to be Falklands guard ship leaving Devonport in October and not returning till June although we didn't know it at the time.

Back then there was a ship preparing to go one on the station and one returning. We were on station December through to March. We spent some well-earned recuperation in South Georgia. Luckily our time down there was the summer months, not winter. On leaving the Falklands area in March it was Admiralty intention for us to return to Devonport; then one goodwill visit, leave, then West Indies Guardship.

Instead, our programme changed to going to Ft Lauderdale having the families flown out for 10 days. Two things I can remember about the trip were; after a party on board in the mess, a colleague and myself were invited to spend three days with the US coastguard. They we're part of the drug enforcement team patrolling the inland waterways for drug running. A tanker came to the Florida coastline anchored and the police/coastguard with intelligence would be waiting.

This particular incident, three Vessels left the tanker at high speed so we picked a vessel to chase and we were off.

Eighty knots; the rest I can't print but it was hair-raising also strictly confidential.

More than a hundred Custom service, Coastguard and local police boats patrol the coast under the coordination of the radar control centre in Miami. The

custom service estimates that more than 75% of the nation's cocaine enters through Florida. Some come in by aeroplane but the most enters by small boats from the Bahamas or tankers. High-speed catamarans and the preferred choice of the smugglers the cigarette boat (go fast boat due to shape and not easily found by radar) both vessels are capable of eighty knots+.

After leaving Fort Lauderdale we carried on patrolling the Caribbean Sea. We anchored off St Lucia for a banyan. It was up to the Chief's Mess to organise the event. Everything was transported ashore. Food, Ale, BBQ etc. the entire day was a huge success and went down very well with the ship's company. Idyllic location, weather perfect, what could go wrong? It was then time to clean the beach and ferry everything back to the ship. However a few of the Chiefs had too much of the local juice supplied by the local bar. I was lucky; I was on coke for the entire day due to me having the morning watch. But for most of the remainder of Chiefs, they wouldn't be able to walk a straight line. We toured the Caribbean for a couple of months with stops in the Bahamas, Jamaica, Grenada and Keywest after that it was back to Devonport. I left HMS Arrow on the 27 June 1985.



**HMS Mentor**



**HMS Manley, Millbrook & Mentor**



### HMS Defiance 28th-June-1985 To 14th-July-1986

Joining HMS Defiance again, I was attached to the change team organising inspections and changing gas turbines all over the world (bags packed will travel)

### HMS Mentor 15th July-1986 to 6th November-1988

HMS Mentor was in a squadron of three vessels (Manley, Millbrook and Mentor. They were attached to Raleigh for seamanship training. During the winter months we headed for Fowey, Mevagissey or Polperro, summer months Dartmouth, Torquay or Brixham. During the day we exercised the trainees in RAS Anchoring safety boat drill and for fighting fires. At night we would stay ashore in a Band B, except for the people who were duty who stayed onboard. The vessels we're ex-fleet tenders who were not very good sea boats.

Whilst onboard Mentor I took my Charge Chiefs exam passing 22 March 1988. Whilst in Torquay, I was able to have dining in night tied up alongside Haldon Pier with Wendy and two friends. The food was excellent and Wine, Port and Beer washed it down. We also managed to get up to London tying up alongside HMS Belfast. We ended up staying 7 days due to the weather and when we eventually left however it wasn't too good even then. So much so that we had to take shelter in Shoreham; the weather was so bad it was a force 8 in the channel. We eventually arrived back in Devonport two weeks late. I left HMS Mentor 6th November 1988 to join HMS Defiance.

**HMS Defiance 7th -11-1988 to 8th -1-1989**

Back to HMS Defiance, made i/c of the Change team. Only 1 trip away, HMS Malabar Bermuda. We had to change 3 engines two Tyne's and one Olympus for HMS Brilliant. Don't know if any of you are familiar with Bermuda; but the International Airport is on Long bird Island and the Royal Naval Dockyard is the other extremity by Kings Wharf with a causeway to navigate and numerous small bridges. As you can imagine getting 4 big chacons from the airport to the dockyard took some planning. The task was carried out at night to avoid disruption to the local people. To get the equipment out from the UK it took 2 C130's from RAF Brize Norton four days due to weather and distance. While we were waiting for the new engines to arrive, we removed the old engines and waited for the new ones to arrive. Once the new engines we're on the dockside we fitted and trialled them. Within 48 hrs the ship left and we waited for flights back to the UK. I left HMS Defiance on the 8-1-89.



**Toronto skyline with CN Tower**  
(at the time tallest building in the world) & Skydome [bright white crescent to the left of the tower]

**HMS Sultan 9-1-89 to19-2-89**

I joined HMS Sultan for Charge course confirmation. One of the highlights was to see drafty in person. Bermuda married accompanied sprang to mind; but after having a discussion with Wendy and the Children's education I chose a ship build in Barrow, a type 23 Frigate. The only proviso was I went back down the Falklands as i/c NP2010. The deal was set in stone (Ha! Ha! Never promise anything to drafty.)

**HMS Raleigh 20-2-89 to11-12-89**

This was my second time at HMS Raleigh. First time was in 1968 as a mechanic; then some 21 years later, Engineering Officer, Jupiter Point.

I enjoyed Jupiter Point immensely; days we're spent sailing training Raleigh trainees. Whilst at Jupiter Point I had the opportunity for a

trip to the Channel Islands; where I passed my coastal RYA ticket. Summer Ball was a grand occasion. Wendy and friends came down from Torquay; we stayed the night in Torpoint. A very good meal, great entertainment and excellent company. I left HMS Raleigh 11th December 1989.

**NP2010 12-Dec-1989 to 14th - April-1990**

So here I was back down to the Falklands but this time by a civilian aircraft from Brize Norton, with a refuelling stop at Ascension Islands. We stayed, ate and slept on Stenna Seaspread and worked on the vessel that was Guardship. Off duty was spent in the mess at Mount Pleasant or the lake dinghy sailing. Whilst down there I managed to get a trip to South Georgia and West Falkland.

To digress for the nature lovers: There are five main types of Penguins in the Falklands they are:

|                      |                                              |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| King Penguin:        | Orange Yellow necks.                         |
| Magellanic:          | Live in burrows                              |
| Gentoo. :            | They have a white bar across their forehead. |
| Macarini:            | Funky crest yellow.                          |
| Southern Rockhopper: | Spiky hair                                   |

Whilst in West Falkland, I managed to see them all.

I left the Falkland arena on 14th April 1990

**HMS Defiance 15th -April-1990 to 4th - May - 1990**

I joined HMS *Defiance* for leave.

I mentioned before in this article, never promise drafty anything; I thought I would have learnt by now having been in the RN for some considerable time. I was promised a ship in build, but with a policy change by the Admiralty only 1 W/O or Charge Chief of different specialization so I couldn't have a ship in build. So it was HMS Cumberland.



**HMS Cumberland**

**HMS Cumberland 9th May 1990 to 1st June 1992**

I joined HMS Cumberland in New York. I left the UK a couple of days before Cumberland was due into the berth in New York. My hotel was on East 42nd Street; very nice, very close to all the amenities. Three days later the ship arrived in New York and I took over from the Warrant Officer.

We were in New York for a further 5 days; essentially it was a goodwill visit. On leaving New York we headed for Halifax in Nova Scotia.

I left the ship there to go to Toronto. I was advanced liaison party as our families and friends we're flying out from the UK to join us. I understand Shipmate Norrie Millen (a member of the local RNA in Toronto) joined Cumberland in Montreal as a reward for organising a lot of 'grippos' in Toronto and surrounding areas. He had appeared twice on local CFRB Radio show, "Calling All Britons"; hosted by Ray Sonin, appealing for people to invite the crews of *Cumberland*, *Glasgow* and *Brave* out for parties and sporting events.

The hospitality of the local people was amazing. We spent a couple of days with Martha who we met at a liaison meeting. We also stayed in Katty's Guest House, which we had booked from the UK, where also we were well looked after. The owners and Martha came to our social night onboard prior to leaving. The WO & CPOS mess of Cumberland also hosted a party for RNA Southern Ontario Branch.

There were plenty of attractions to see and visit whilst we were alongside in Toronto. Niagara Falls, CN Tower restaurant, Skydome (home to the Toronto Blue Jays Baseball Team), Eaton Centre to name but a few. We thoroughly enjoyed the time in Toronto, but alas it was soon time to leave. I understand that originally the Cumberland was to proceed up the lakes to Chicago; however, unbeknown to me; as the ship was travelling up the Saint Lawrence Seaway, the ship was out of position in the channel and damaged a shaft. Therefore when we left Toronto to go back to the UK we had to limp back on one shaft.



Niagara Falls - Canada to the right, USA to the left and Goat Island



View from CN Tower down into the Skydome and Lakeshore Blvd with Lake Ontario in background.

I left by sea Wendy and our friends left by Air. On our arrival back to Devonport it was straight into dry dock for repairs. On completion of repairs and sea trials, it was off to Portland for workup in preparation for (you guessed it Falklands Guard ship). We were at the station from December 90 to April 91. Having been to the Falklands on numerous

occasions; I flew down from Ascension Islands to act as liaison officer to ensure the logistics we're in place for the ships arrival. The four months went very quickly; weather was warm and we visited South Georgia. We left the Falklands in April destination Valparaiso, Chile where we stayed for 7 days. We continued up the coast to the Panama Canal, my first time of actually going through it. We then called into Jamaica before reaching Fort Lauderdale where we had a weeks rest and recuperation.

On leaving Fort Lauderdale it was a quick trip back to Devonport for leave; stopping just once at the Azores for fuel. The rest of the time on Cumberland was spent in the Mediterranean, eventually leaving her on the 1st June 1992. Prior to leaving her, I was asked again if I would like a married accompanied draft but declined. I left Cumberland for HMS Drake release.

#### HMS Drake 1st June 1992 to 30th June 1992

After over 26 years in the RN, I had no regrets; some very good times; some not so good times.

However, I met some very interesting people and visited some amazing places.

Would I join in the present climate £60,000 plus now? **Not a chance!** "Roll on me time boys roll on me time, this is my last ship on the Grey Funnel Line!"



End of my time and article

# Britain And The Bomb

*From the Internet, by James Wharton & submitted by Shipmate Kevin Maguire*

## The UK's history with nuclear weapons explained.

On August 6, 1945, the United States detonated a bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima unleashing devastation the likes of which had never been seen before.

It was the Atomic Bomb.

Three days later, 300 miles to the south west of the bombing site, the US repeated its action, this time over the city of Nagasaki. The combined result of just those two bombs brought the Empire of Japan to its knees and the Second World War to an end.

Ever since there has been a constant conversation about the balance between using such awesome destructive power to bring an enemy to yield, and the resulting loss of life.

The two atomic bombings of Japan in August 1945 caused the deaths of 226,000 people, by comparison, the total loss of life during the nine-month bombing campaign by the Luftwaffe – the Blitz – killed 40,000. The atomic bombings lasted two days, the Blitz ran almost nightly for nine months. It is those stark numbers that brought into question the humanity behind the use of such weaponry.

The opposing argument to the use of the bombs in Japan was, and still is, that they swiftly brought an end to the suffering associated with World War Two in the Far East.

The debate around the use of nuclear weapons in Japan in 1945 has continued to this day, and certainly is not the only contentious matter associated with the technology.

### The Immediate Post War Years

Often lost within the pages of nuclear weapon history are the early stages in the United

Kingdom's development and testing of the technology. And, as we will see, it has not always been a period of happy exploration between powers in the west with regards to 'the bomb'.

In the months after the war, the USA stunned Britain by pulling up the draw bridge and ceasing cooperation around the future development of nuclear weapons.

This was known as the 'end of the special relationship.'

Because of this the UK had to embark on its own journey towards nuclear armament. That journey took seven years.

### The 1950s

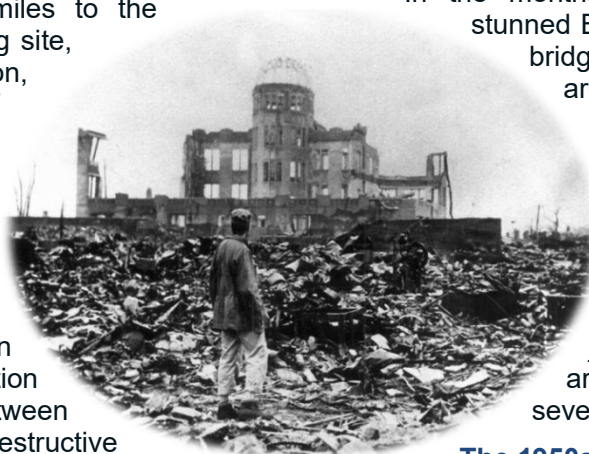
In 1952 Britain was in a position to test a nuclear weapon of its own.

To do this it found a site off the western coast of Australia and an aging Royal Navy ship from WWII.

A bomb, containing plutonium, was placed on board an empty frigate, HMS Plym, and at 23:59 on October 2, 1952, Britain became only the third country to successfully detonate a nuclear weapon. Britain thus became a nuclear superpower, alongside the USA and USSR.

Following the successful detonation of the plutonium bomb on board HMS Plym, then Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered the production of the Blue Danube Bomb – Britain's first nuclear weapon. The initial batch of Blue Danube Bombs, a weapon also known as the Little Boy, was delivered to the Royal Air Force a year later in 1953.

However, Britain did not have the means to deploy the weapons for two further years.



Hiroshima devastation



HMS Plym

That changed when the newly designed V bomber - the Valiant - entered service in 1955.

Britain's nuclear weapons capability thus became live and was the responsibility of the V-Class crews based at Bomber Command, known as the V-Force.

58 Blue Danube bombs were produced and placed with V-Force.

The Blue Danube weighed a hefty 4.5 tonnes and boasted a yield equivalent to that of 10 to 12 kilotons of TNT. But to those pushing the Government on with respect to its nuclear exploration, apparently that was not enough and soon plans were afoot to create a much larger version carrying a yield of around 40 kilotons.

Producing such a weapon would not be straightforward in large part due to the complexity of mining the materials required. It was a matter of cost and like the debate around morality, the argument around cost is another long-standing characteristic of Britain's nuclear history.

Soon after Britain had taken receipt of its first Blue Danube, global bomb tech progressed with the testing of the first thermonuclear weapon by the United States. This, in turn, prompted the Soviets to do the same ... and suddenly Britain's brand-new nuclear arsenal became old fashioned.

Arguments to the contrary of spending millions, even billions, of pounds on nuclear weapons have not been centered upon the notion that to buy them would be a waste, instead the focus has always been on whether the money would be better spent on conventional forces.



**The Vulcan entered service replacing the Valiant aircraft within the V-Force.**  
Credit Crown Copyright

This position came into play and was supported by eminent personalities as the decision over whether to upgrade the UK weapons cache to thermonuclear status was mulled over by parliamentarians in the mid-fifties.

One of those early doubters was First Sea Lord Earl Mountbatten, second cousin to HM The Queen and the Uncle of HRH Prince Philip.

Alongside Field Marshal Gerald Templer, then Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Mountbatten felt that the expenditure required to continue developing weapons greater in destruction than that of the Blue Danube would be far better spent on strengthening

conventional forces such as armour, aircraft and ships.

Lord Mountbatten said:

"The nuclear arms race has no military purpose. Wars cannot be fought with nuclear weapons. Their existence only adds to our perils."

He based his argument on the fact that Britain's nuclear arsenal was, and would always be, small by comparison to those of the USA and Soviet Union and therefore any war that was ever going to come Britain's way would have to be land based because each of those two nations had more than enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world many times over, creating a status quo.

Mountbatten and Templer were hinting at a stalemate that became known as mutually assured destruction (MAD) and it is

this principle that has maintained a world order of peace where the use of nuclear bombs is concerned right through to today.



**An American Atomic Bomb test off Bikini Island in the 1940's Credit: PA**

However, Mountbatten and Templer would lose the argument and Britain would get its thermonuclear weapons. A cabinet report from Churchill's government at the time read:

"If we did not develop megaton weapons we would sacrifice immediately and in perpetuity our position as a first-class power. We would have to rely on the whim of the United States for the effectiveness of the whole basis of our strategy."

This paved the way for Britain to trial bigger, more advanced weapons just a couple of years later.

### WWII

Hiroshima And Nagasaki:  
The Devastation Of The Atomic Bombings

Britain's first H-bomb experiment was conducted on May 15, 1957, at Malden Island, today part of the Kingdom of Kiribati in the Pacific Ocean.

The bomb was dropped from Valiant at a height of 45,000 feet, at the time the highest altitude a thermonuclear bomb had been dropped from in the world.

In the same fashion seen four years earlier, Britain became the third country on the planet to test a thermonuclear weapon. The small island nation, with its limited post-war financial reserves, was doing its best to keep up with the USA and the Soviet Union.

This test was part of Operation Dapple. The period saw further weapon tests in the region, including at neighbouring Christmas Island (called Kiritimati today).

Associated to the debate around the morality of using nuclear weapons in anger, is the debate about testing them in the name of science.

Critics of nuclear testing cited the impact on the environment, the health of indigenous people and the consequences to nature as their key reasons for opposing the practice. Much of that

criticism has since been levelled directly at Britain for the decades-long consequences of its weapons testing at places like Christmas and Malden islands in the late fifties and early sixties.

At the time of the testing, Kiribati was still under British colonial rule and perhaps this is another key reason why the nuclear weapons programme of the era is still being pulled into question today.

In a 2015 statement to the United Nations, Ambassador Makurita Baaro, Kiribati's permanent representative to the UN, made a passionate argument that was, at moments, scathing toward the UK about the testing his country had endured

decades earlier.

The statement included the following messages:

"In 1962, my family spent time on our home island with my grandparents in a rural village in one of the outer islands in Kiribati. One evening, not long after sunset, there was a sudden flash of orange light that rushed up into a mushroom cloud high in the sky and then lit up the whole sky, bright orange.

"There was a flurry of birds, most of which fell dead to the ground, and the villagers ran to the church next to my grandparents' home loudly saying, 'Hail Mary.' My father knew what it was. He heard it on the radio in the village. It was the nuclear test on Kiritimati (Christmas Island) which is more than 4,000 kilometres away. Fish died and floated to the surface of the water and we had a feast the next day.

"A year later, I started school for the first time, one of my classmates had no teeth. She never had teeth.

Another boy in the same class had patchy white and brown

skin and was forever teased for this. Both my classmates had something in common; they were born in Kiritimati where their parents were when atmospheric tests were conducted between 1956 and 1962."



**Nuclear protestors in England 1961. To this day, protests continue around the UK's status as a nuclear weapon state. Credit: PA**



**President John F. Kennedy with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in 1963.**

Ambassador Baaro continued:

"Today, our communities still suffer from the long-term impacts of the tests, experiencing higher rates of cancer, particularly thyroid cancer, due to exposure to radiation. In some places, the environment and food sources remain highly contaminated although studies done by those who conducted these tests have cleared these areas and indicated they are safe for us."

### The 1960s

The two men had faced down the possibility of nuclear war with the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile Crisis. JFK also signed off on Britain's purchasing of Polaris. Credit: PA.

The special relationship between the UK and USA was repaired as the 1950s ended.

This rapprochement was prompted primarily by a fear that the USSR was advancing in its weapons development at a faster pace than that of the Western superpowers. The chief reason for this was the successful deployment of Sputnik into orbit around Earth.

Positive consequences of the recommencement of cooperation were quick.

The agreement allowed for the exchanging of nuclear technology, not exclusively limited to weaponry. The USA supplied Britain with nuclear fuel which directly resulted in the building of the UK's first nuclear powered submarine, HMS Dreadnought. In return, Britain briefed the USA on its state of the art propulsion technology, which was implemented into the building of an entire new class of American submarine.

Dreadnought would enjoy a 20-year life with the Royal Navy after its launch by HM the Queen in 1960. It has the charming record of being the first Royal Navy submarine to surface at the North Pole. A feat its crew achieved in 1971.

Added to the agreement of joint exploration in nuclear technologies was a separate memorandum of agreement to share weapons. Chiefly, the deal was about giving Britain access

to American bombs so that its own nuclear weapons reserve did not look so dwarfed by that of the Soviet Union. In exchange, the UK allowed the USA to park its Polaris submarines in Scottish waters.

But the deal was not all it was cracked up to be as the Americans would not simply just hand over US nukes to British personnel.

Instead, the arrangements that were agreed allowed for US nuclear weapons to be stored in locations that both American and British personnel would have access to. The oversight and day-to-day maintenance of the weapons remained in American control. Even the protocols that were designed should the weapons be needed by Britain (assuming the US gave authorisation) provided problems. It was timed at no less than ten minutes to hand the weapons over to British control, and ten minutes when the wrath of nuclear annihilation is closing in is

a terribly long time.

Britain rightly felt that all the barriers equated to America virtually having a veto on UK nuclear weapons policy. And it would not do at all. The American weapons were phased out almost as soon as they had been placed in the joint locations in the UK and Germany.

The 1960s saw the arrival of the Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM), an advancement in nuclear weapons strategy that arrived for Britain in time for the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The Cuban Missile Crisis is sometimes thought of as being an exclusively American and Russian affair, but Royal Air Force personnel at Bomber Command found themselves painstakingly committed to the responsibilities that were heading Britain's way should shots be fired by either side. Targets identified and programmed to be attacked included six cities, more than 40 airfields, several air defence control installations and 20 enemy IRBM launch sites. Britain was not assuming it could sit this one out. And for the first time, thanks to the arrival of IRBMs, Britain could boast having two



**Royal Navy Polaris submarines HMS Resolution, Revenge and Repulse on the River Clyde in July, 1987**



**Nuclear submariners in Polaris missile control on HMS Resolution. Credit: MOD(N)**

methods of delivery: via missile, or via the V-Force.

### Polaris

Polaris equipped submarines were operational for 28 years until being phased out and replaced by Trident in the 1990s.

In the weeks and months after the Cuban Missile Crisis, Britain's nuclear weapons age entered a new era when it secured Polaris. However, it would take a further six years to enter service with the Royal Navy following the brokering of a deal between Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and President John F Kennedy.

Polaris provided Britain with its first submarine based nuclear weapons system.

As part of the programme, from 1969 Britain's nuclear deterrent included four Resolution class submarines each armed with 16 Polaris ballistic missiles. Each of those missiles was able to deliver three thermonuclear warheads.

Polaris submarines were based at Faslane. It provided Britain with at least one submarine on patrol at secret locations around the world, thus the UK had a constant at-sea nuclear deterrent.

Nuclear submariners Polaris missile control on HMS Resolution. Credit: MOD

Polaris remained operational for 28 years and became Britain's sole nuclear deterrent programme after V-Force's phasing out in the 1970s.

During their service, the Polaris submarines Resolution, Renown, Revenge and Repulse conducted 229 consecutive and continuous patrols. The contribution the crews of those submarines had given Britain for all those years was praised by Prime Minister John Major as the last of the submarines was retired. He said:

"Because of these patrols any possible aggressor has known that to attack the UK would provoke a terrible response."

The last submarine of the Polaris era, Repulse, was decommissioned at Faslane on August 28, 1996.

Polaris was replaced by Trident, an upgraded nuclear weapons system that had been secured following many years of purchasing and technology sharing between the UK and USA. It remains the UK's nuclear weapons system to this day.

/...Continued from page 2

Apart from a few years when his mother escaped the bitter weather to convalesce in South Africa, young Normand was educated in Britain.

In 1944, when the Admiralty still enjoyed a vision of immortality and was the only service recruiting permanent career officers, Normand passed the examination for special entry into the Navy. After a spell at the naval college at its wartime home, Eaton Hall, Chester, in 1945 he started studies at the Royal Naval Engineering College at Keyham, Devonport, to specialise as an engineer.

His four-year degree course included several months at sea in the carriers *Illustrious* and *Victorious* where he gained his auxiliary watchkeeping certificate on steam plants, before sub-specialising in aero-engineering. Normand took on his first flight in July 1950 and flew solo after just five hours and 40 minutes' training.

After Korea, from 1953-55 Normand learned to fly in the jet-engined *de Havilland Vampire* and the *Hawker Sea Hawk* and, as a maintenance test pilot, he took delivery of new aircraft from the manufacturer. Then, after a three-month helicopter course, Normand joined the course at the Empire Test Pilot School, Farnborough.

On graduation he worked on armaments and flight testing, then tested catapults and arrestor gear for aircraft carriers, before beginning a study of reheat orifices in supersonic aircraft. Much of this later work was done in the *Fairey Delta 2* which, with its revolutionary drop-nose and swept-back wing, was a forerunner of *Concorde*. Only three years previously, Lieutenant-Commander Peter Twiss had smashed the world air speed record in the *FD2*, and in July 1959 Normand became one of the first half-dozen men to follow Twiss and fly at more than 1,000mph.

Contemporaries regarded Normand's flying skills as "amazing", especially after he demonstrated inverted spins in *Hawker Hunters*.

Other appointments in Normand's 30-year naval career included senior air engineer and maintenance testing at *RNAS Brawdy* in Pembrokeshire and *RNAS Abbotsinch*, Glasgow,



**Lt. Normand in the late 1940's**

and senior air engineer the teaching staff at RNEC Manadon. In 1966 he returned for three years to RAE Farnborough as a tutor at the Empire Test Pilot School, and in 1969-71 he served on exchange at the US Naval Test Pilot School at Patuxent River as head of flight testing.

His final appointment was at Boscombe Down, where he wrote and amended pilots' notes, the essential guides on how to fly each type of aircraft.

Normand was awarded the Air Force Cross in 1970. On leaving the Navy, in 1975-76 Normand worked briefly for Chemring Group – best-known at the time for the manufacture of “chaff”, a defence against radar-guided missile threats to aircraft – where his father-in-law was a non-executive director.

But commercial life did not suit Normand, and he joined the Civil Aviation Authority. He was initially responsible for issuing licences to operators, but in 1980 he became a flight operations inspector. Required to maintain his pilot's licence, he would invite friends and family to join him on flights which were often jaunts to Calais or Le Touquet for lunch, returning with duty-free alcohol, or helicopter flights along the Thames.

When Normand retired from the CAA in 1989 after a 40-year flying career he had flown more than 3,000 accident-free hours in 124 different types of aircraft, both fixed-wing and rotary.

Normand was a keen rough shooter who often developed lasting friendships with farmers and landowners, and an eager gardener who left a succession of married quarters with beautiful gardens. As a glider pilot he gave much time to teaching others, and, until electronics made home servicing impossible, he would never engage a third party to maintain or repair his cars.

In 1951 Ian Normand married Mary Bishop, the elder daughter of Sir Harold Bishop. She died in 2001, and he married Christine Houseley (née Try). He is survived by two sons and two daughters.



## Coronacoaster

*noun:* the ups and downs of a pandemic. One day you're loving your bubble, doing work outs, baking banana bread and going for long walks and the next you're crying, drinking gin for breakfast and missing people you don't even like.

## EVERYDAY COVID CHECK

AT 5PM OPEN A BOTTLE OF WINE, SMELL IT, POUR IT AND TASTE IT, YOU ARE GOOD. CELEBRATE BY FINISHING THE BOTTLE. YOU ARE WELCOME!

# The Last Royal Navy Victoria Cross Winner

Lieutenant Robert Hampton Gray RCNVR

Lieutenant Robert Hampton Gray's final act, sinking the *Amakusa*, earned him the Victoria Cross.



**It is 75 years since the Royal Navy's last Victoria Cross winner.**

During the Second World War, Canadian Lieutenant Robert Hampton Gray was assigned to the Fleet Air Arm and a member of No. 1841 Squadron.

He was based on board **HMS *Formidable***, which had joined the Royal Navy fleet in the Pacific Campaign and was involved in strikes on the Japanese mainland.

On the morning of 9 August 1945, Gray was asked to fly his corsair over Onagawa Wan, a bay off the East Coast of Japan where enemy shipping had been spotted, and seek targets.

He was instructed not to take any unnecessary risks as it was believed that the war with Japan would end soon and the Soviet Unit had attacked Japanese Forces that morning.

On his missions Gray sighted five enemy ships in the harbour and attacked.

Corsairs onboard the deck of HMS *Formidable* off the coast of Japan.

Coming in as low as 50ft and leading the attack, Gray was shot at ferociously, causing one of his 500lb bombs to be blown away.

The second however he hurled into the coastal defence ship ***Amakusa***, which exploded in the engine room and detonated the magazine.

But as Gray's Corsair passed over the enemy, it was engulfed in flames and corkscrewed into the sea.

From attacks against Hitler's flagship ***Tirpitz*** in the Norwegian fjords to strikes against Japan, Robert Hampton Gray had "consistently shown a brilliant fighting spirit and most inspiring leadership".

His final act, sinking the ***Amakusa***, earned him the Victoria Cross.

It was the final VC of 182 awarded in World War Two and to date, the last earned by the Fleet Air Arm and Royal Navy.



**Corsairs on the deck of HMS Formidable**

## Bish's Bit –The White Friar

*By Shipmate Paul Lomas – Part III*



Well here we go again, as promised.

I am having to get the grey cells working for Singapore, this was a very different experience

than my previous runs ashore in Singers. I had by then become a member of the Royal Navy Christian Union, I had received info from them about various places to find fellowship in various ports of call. Those familiar with Singers know that there is an Aggie Westons, I was made welcome there and met some great people. I did have a foray into Nee Soon (now Yishun) to Johny Gurkhas' the tattooist, and had a tat with my wife's name on it.

The skipper had advised that the ship would be spending the Christmas in Singers and we could at our own expense have families flown out by the RAF. Quite a few of us had arranged accommodation at Aggies, the whole top floor was available for married guys. At this time I was still working as hangar sentry., Then I was rated up to A/LMEM. My DO told me that as the planes would be flown ashore prior to arrival there would be no duty watches and as I had a blue card I could be ashore every night and possibly make and mends. Was I a happy bunny.

Then the chief stoker sent for me, the leading hand on arrestor gear had been rated to A/POMEM and needed to get his boiler ticket so they were a killick short on the flight deck, because they were going to be extremely busy over the Christmas. Yep, I was that rating.

My new DO was not at all sympathetic, I arranged with my opposite number who suggested that he cover my duty watches in singers, if I covered his in Freemantle. Done deal, what I didn't know was that he was going to do a runner

whilst there. Had a great Christmas, wife flew home, we sailed for Aussie. The year 1968

I met some amazing people whilst there, spent a weekend with them. They and their son took me everywhere with them. They even had a family link to an orchard and was quite popular when I came back on board with bags full of Grannie Smith apples fresh from the farm. As you know, they are an acquired taste.

As the newest leading hand I was approached by a young stoker, who was under punishment, stoppage of leave, he had not been ashore for a long time. The MAA said he could go swimming if a killick took him. So that was when this green killick agreed to take Duncan Bannatyne to the local swimming pool. Yes, the Dragon, Duncan Bannatyne, fortunately for me he behaved himself. When I agreed to take him, I didn't know the other killicks had refused, I was his last choice. I was also not aware until I had a pep talk with the MAA if he messed up, it would be my hook on the line.

The weekend before sailing, I was covering his duty watches as we agreed, for my oppo, come Monday, General Booth was not onboard, and we sailed without him. We were all questioned, and none of us knew anything, he had obviously planned well ahead.

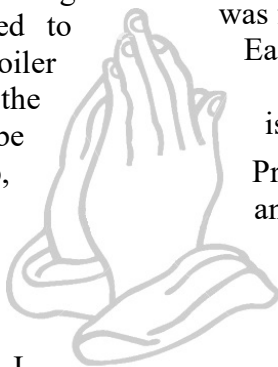
It was nice to see folk that I had made friends with on the dockside as we left harbour, procedure Alpha. God had blessed me and is still blessing me, what adventures were in store for me in Hong Kong.

Before I close I just want to say how thankful I was for Christian Fellowship whilst onboard Eagle, there were quite a few of us.

However on a small ship you can feel isolated and alone.

Praying for you all and for your families and grateful that we are slowly coming out of lockdown.

***The Bish***



## Britain's last surviving World War Two Victoria Cross hero turns 100

*From the Internet by Ben Philip*

Britain's last surviving Victoria Cross holder for air action in World War Two has turned 100.

Flight Lieutenant John Cruickshank, of Aberdeen, earned the honour aged 24 during an attack on a German U-boat.

Despite being badly injured, the pilot and his crew managed to sink the submarine.

The Victoria Cross is the highest recognition for valour that can be awarded to members of the British and Commonwealth Armed Forces.

The incident in question happened on 17 July, 1944.

A Flying Officer at the time, he was piloting a Catalina flying boat, protecting British vessels from German U-boats in the Norwegian Sea.

A member of the crew spotted a vessel ahead of them.

They immediately went on the offensive, and began a bombing run through heavy gun fire.

However, their bombs did not release.

Despite having now lost the element of surprise, he turned the aircraft around and attacked once again.

This time he released the bombs himself and successfully destroyed the submarine.

His navigator was killed and co-pilot seriously injured.

The pilot himself suffered 72 injuries, including serious wounds to his lungs and lower limbs. He refused medical attention, but managed to get

himself, his aircraft and crew back to their base at Sullom Voe in Shetland.

His injuries were so serious that he never returned to operational flying, leaving the RAF in 1946, and resuming a career in banking - rarely speaking of his experiences to anyone.

In 1995, he said of his honour: "I hold this (VC) in trust for all those who flew with the command during the war.

"And of course I also keep in mind all the members of my crew at that time who so magnificently carried out their duties."

In 2008 he said: "You don't get involved in that kind of thing thinking of any decorations or any recognition. It was

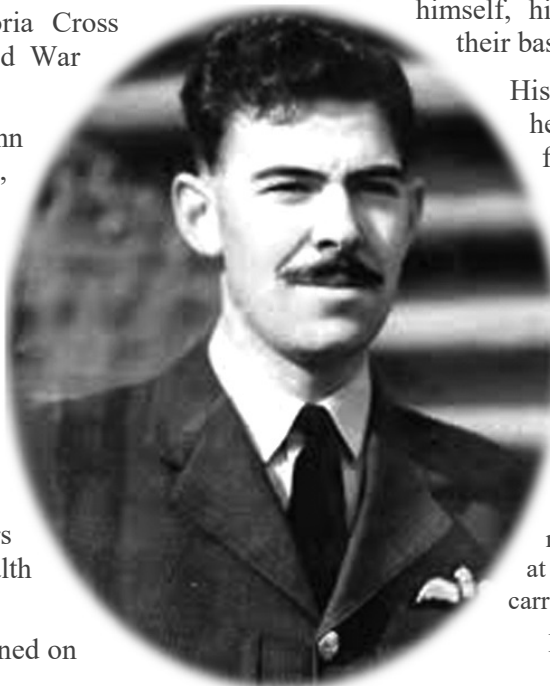


Image © John Cruickshank

regarded as duty."

### 'Others less fortunate'

In 2013, he was given the opportunity to fly in an aircraft similar to the one he piloted during the war.

He said: "It wasn't all my efforts, there were efforts of many others. We were very fortunate. There were others who were less fortunate than I was."



Image © John Cruickshank - The Catalina

He was joined by his friend and former RAF serviceman, Bob Kemp, who said Mr Cruickshank was an example to all aircrew, having displayed leadership of the highest order.

Mr Kemp said: "He's a true gentleman. Quiet, reserved with a great sense of humour. When he tells

one of his stories, he often roars with laughter before he reaches the punchline.

"But he has an amazing memory, and his attention to detail is notable. And for a centenarian, John has much for us to admire."

Such is the modesty of the man, Flt Lt Cruickshank is celebrating his 100th birthday quietly.