



The Rum Tub or Norrie's Nocturnal and Nautical Natter

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Paraprosdokians

The first time I heard about Paraprosdokians, I liked them. Paraprosdokians are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected and is frequently humorous.

(Winston Churchill loved them).

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you ... but it's still on my list.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. We never really grow up -- we only learn how to act in public.
6. War does not determine who is right, only who is left.
7. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
8. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

HMS Ulster

Rum Tub

Volume 6,

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Editorial

By Shipmate Norrie Millen

Hi! Shipmates,

The times I was told by retirees when I was still working, that they had never been so busy and did not know where they found the times to do things when they still worked. I took this with a 'pinch of salt' not really fully believing them.

Now I do believe and fully understand. There does not seem to be enough hours in the day or days in the week to get everything I want done. Mind you, that is my own silly fault, as I have never learned to 'sit on my hands' when someone calls for a volunteer or some help.

Nothing like a reunion, swapping anecdotes and memories. Meeting Ulster crews every year I always thoroughly enjoy. However if you have that special one off get together it is most certainly different and very enjoyable.

For about two years I had been trying to organise a reunion for Class of '57 Westlawn Secondary Modern in Teignmouth; which I attended prior to joining the Andrew. Without any contact information, it proved quite a challenge, but through others made contact with 20 of original class who indicated they would like to attend.

The date set was Saturday August 19 and was held at Teignmouth Rugby Club. I had been suffering a very severe chest infection and doctor was considering putting me into hospital. I explained the situation and she relented and prescribed extra strong antibiotic and more steroids. In reality, I should never have attended, being so ill, but after 60 years not seeing majority of attendees I felt I had to go.

About 48% of the class had already "Crossed the bar" so 20 seemed like a good number. Eleven people actually showed up; two I was not expecting and six who stated they would definitely attend, failed to show up. One lady, who I have been in frequent contact with over the years came all the way from Calgary Alberta, others who lived in town chose not to travel the half mile or so from their homes to the club!

Sharing our memories of all the water that had passed under our various bridges was enjoyable and very interesting. One couple, who I had been best man for in 1963, had been married happily all those years, others like myself not so lucky. My first deserted me having cleaned out bank account and I lost second and third to cancer.

Make the most of life, enjoy every moment of it, you never can tell what lies around the bend – Carpe Diem!

The way I see it anyway!



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LIKE IT'S YOUR LAST.

One day, you'll get it right.

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Norrie's Natter



As I related in the last issue; Shipmates of RNA Torbay have been raising funds to refurbish the

Lieutenant Commander Arthur Harrison VC memorial, which they had erected as a millennium project.

September 10th was the day selected to dedicate the new memorial. The rain pelted down all day and with extremely high and dangerous winds, the gazebo rigging party (including me) almost took off and blown over the cliff nearby. However despite being a miserably day, the ceremony went off with an hitch. About 45 people bravely showed to witness the ceremony.



As in all organizations, 1% of members did 99% of the work. The three volunteers beside myself had a devil of time rigging the gazebo and I had thought before leaving home, to take some 'frapping lines along. I wish I had now, we were almost airborne several times.

What rubbed salt into the wound was on completion of ceremony everyone (including one of my volunteers) disappeared and left three of us, to unrig the gazebo, and carry it and all the folding chairs back to our cars. I was not a happy camper! I know matelots are always 'dripping

The reception in the RAFA club, now called 'Rafflesö was excellent. The chairman who is also manager of hotel across the road provided the buffet, plenty of it and enough for seconds, noticed some 'doggy bagsö going around too. The Chairman of the RNA's wife donated a superb cake for the occasion, which was enjoyed by all.



To see larger and more picture go to:

http://www.candoo.com/ulsternorrie/rna_torbay/ahm.html

The local Torquay high school have different houses. One is dedicated to memory of Lieutenant Commander Harrison and so called the Harrison House.

The picture below from L-R: Branch President Terry Mambery with grandson, Head girl of Harrison House and Chairman John Soanes.

Shipmate John was the driving force for the memorial project and it was his idea to have the memorial refurbished in time for centenary of the death of Lieutenant Commander Harrison memorial in April of 2018.



**Recently, I was diagnosed with A.A.A.D.D. –
Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder.**

This is how it manifests:

I decide to water my garden.
As I turn on the hose in the driveway,
I look over at my car and decide it needs washing.
As I start toward the garage,
I notice mail on the porch table that
I brought up from the mail box earlier.
I decide to go through the mail before I wash the car.

I lay my car keys on the table,
put the junk mail in the garbage
can under the table,
and notice that the can is full.
So, I decide to put the bills back
on the table and take out the garbage first.

But then I think,
since I'm going to be near the mailbox
when I take out the garbage anyway,
I may as well pay the bills first.
I take my cheque book off the table,
and see that there is only one cheque left.
My extra cheques are in my desk in the study,
so I go inside the house to my desk where
I find the can of Pepsi I'd been drinking.

I'm going to look for my cheques,
but first I need to push the Pepsi aside
so that I don't accidentally knock it over.
The Pepsi is getting warm, and I decide to
put it in the refrigerator to keep it cold.
As I head toward the kitchen with the Pepsi,
a vase of flowers on the counter
catches my eye—they need water.

I put the Pepsi on the counter and
discover my reading glasses that
I've been searching for all morning.
I decide I better put them back on my desk,
but first I'm going to water the flowers.
I set the glasses back down on the counter,
fill a container with water and suddenly
spot the TV remote.
Someone left it on the kitchen table.

I realize that tonight when we go to watch TV,
I'll be looking for the remote,
but I won't remember that it's on the kitchen table,
so I decide to put it back in the den where it belongs,
but first I'll water the flowers.
I pour some water in the flowers,
but quite a bit of it spills on the floor.
So, I set the remote back on the table,
get some towels and wipe up the spill.
Then, I head down the hall trying to
remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day:
the car isn't washed
the bills aren't paid
there is a warm can of Pepsi sitting on the counter
the flowers don't have enough water,
there is still only 1 cheque in my cheque book,
I can't find the remote,
I can't find my glasses,
and I don't remember what I did
with the car keys.
Then, when I try to figure out why
nothing got done today,

I'm really baffled because I know
I was busy all the damn day,
and I'm really tired.
I realize this is a serious problem,
and I'll try to get some help for it,
but first I'll check my e-mail....
Do me a favour.
Forward this message to everyone you know,
because I don't remember who the hell I've sent it to.

Abandoned "River Rockets" of the Soviet Union

Some of them could exceed 60 Knots! and
seat 300 passengers and crew!

Imagine seeing one of these coming around
the river-bend at you!

The Raketas or Rockets were the first
commercially-produced hydrofoil riverboats
built in the Soviet Union.



And like other
mechanical
leviathans to come
out of Russia
during the Cold
War era, these
rusting relics are
truly impressive
to behold.

When first launched in
1957, the rocket riverboats
offered an exciting glimpse into the future.

When first launched in 1957, the rocket
riverboats offered an exciting glimpse into the
future.

Continued on page 8

Lt. Cdr. Harrison's Grandmother's brother was:

Submitted by Shipmate John Soanes

CAPTAIN ARTHUR CONOLLY b.

1807 of The 6th Bengal Native Light Cavalry, was beheaded by Russians as a SPY in June 1842.

For nearly a century the two most powerful nations on earth - Victorian Britain and Tsarist Russia continuously struggled to out manoeuvre each other in



Water Colour of Arthur Conolly
which is hanging in National Gallery

Central Asia.

Originally, the frontiers of Russia and British India lay some 2000 miles apart, by the end, the gap had shrunk in places to less than 20 miles.

As the Russians pushed forward their frontiers, the British became convinced that they would not halt until India, the richest of all Imperial prizes was theirs.

Soon the Tsar's empire was expanding at some 55 sq. miles a day as one by one the Khanates and caravan towns of the Old Silk Road fell to the fast riding Cossacks.

To the young officers and others on either side who were chosen to play the 'Great Game', it was the stuff of dreams. Here was the chance to escape the monotony of garrison life, and perhaps win promotion, glory or even a place in Imperial history books.

It was their task to fill in the blanks of the staff maps, discover possible invasion:

routes, gather political intelligence, befriend powerful Khans, and report on the movements of the other side.

News was forever coming in of the overthrow of Asian rulers, the storming of embassies, inglorious retreats from Afghanistan, and fierce fighting in the Caucasus.



Arthur Conolly in
Afghan disguise

Extract from Peter Hopkirk's book **'The Great Game'**

On a June morning in 1842, in the Central Asian town of Bokhara, two ragged figures could be seen kneeling in the dust in the great square before the Emir's palace. Their arms were tied behind their backs, and they were in a pitiful condition. Filthy and half starved, their bodies covered with sores, their hair and beards and

clothes alive with lice.

Not far away were two freshly dug graves. Looking on in silence was a small crowd of Bokharans. Normal executions attracted little attention in this remote, and still Medieval caravan town, for under the Emir's vicious and despotic rule they were all too frequent. But this one was different. The two men kneeling in the blazing midday sun at the executioner's feet were British officers.

For months they had been kept by the Emir in a dark stinking pit beneath a mud built citadel, with rats and other vermin as their sole companions.

The two men - **Colonel Charles STODDART** and **Captain Arthur CONOLLY** were about to face death together, 4000 miles from home, at a spot where today foreign tourists step down from their Russian buses, unaware of what happened there. STODDART and CONOLLY were paying the price of engaging in a highly dangerous game -The Great Game, as it became known to those who risked their necks playing it. Ironically it was

Conolly .himself who had first coined the phrase, although it was Kipling who was to immortalise it many years later in his novel **KIM**.

The first of two men to die on that June morning while his friend looked on, was

Stoddart. He had been sent to Bokhara by the East India Company to try to forge an alliance with the Emir against the Russians, whose advance into Central Asia was giving rise to fears about their future intentions. But things went badly wrong. When Conolly, who had volunteered to try to obtain his brother officer's freedom, reached Bokhara, he too had ended up in the Emir's grim dungeon. Moments after Stoddart's beheading, Conolly was also dispatched, and today the two men's remains lie, together with the Emir's many other victims, in a grisly and long forgotten graveyard somewhere beneath the square.

In 1834 Arthur CONOLLY had published in two volumes - Journey to the North of India, Overland from England, Through Russia, Persia and Afghanistan.



I MIGHT WAKE UP EARLY
AND GO RUNNING. I ALSO MIGHT
WAKE UP AND WIN THE LOTTERY.
THE ODDS ARE ABOUT THE SAME.

Children writing about the ocean

The next time you take an oceanography course, you will be totally prepared!

- 1) **This is a picture of an octopus. It has eight testicles. (Kelly, age 6)**
- 2) **Oysters' balls are called pearls. (Jerry, age 6)**
- 3) **If you are surrounded by ocean, you are an island. If you don't have ocean all round you, you are incontinent. (Mike, age 7)**
- 4) **Sharks are ugly and mean, and have big teeth, just like Emily Richardson. She's not my friend any more. (Kylie, age 6)**
- 5) **A dolphin breaths through an asshole on the top of its head. (Billy, age 8)**
- 6) **My uncle goes out in his boat with 2 other men and a woman and comes back with crabs. (Millie, age 6)**
- 7) **When ships had sails, they used to use the trade winds to cross the ocean. Sometimes when the wind didn't blow the sailors would whistle to make the wind come. My brother said they would have been better off eating beans. (William, age 7)**
- 8) **Mermaids live in the ocean. I like mermaids. They are beautiful and I like their shiny tails, but how on earth do mermaids get pregnant? Like really? (Helen, age 6)**
- 9) **I'm not going to write about the ocean. My baby brother is always crying, my Dad keeps yelling at my Mom, and my big sister has just got pregnant, so I can't think what to write. (Amy, age 6)**
- 10) **Some fish are dangerous. Jellyfish can sting. Electric eels can give you a shock. They have to live in caves under the sea where I think they have to plug themselves in to chargers. (Christopher, age 7)**
- 11) **When you go swimming in the ocean, it is very cold, and it makes my willy small. (Kevin, age 6)**
- 12) **Divers have to be safe when they go under the water. Divers can't go down alone, so they have to go down on each other. (Becky, age 8)**
- 13) **The ocean is made up of water and fish. Why the fish don't drown I don't know. (Bobby, age 6)**
- 14) **My dad was a sailor on the ocean. He knows all about the ocean. What he doesn't know is why he quit being a sailor and married my mom. (James, age 7)**

If you didn't smile at one of these, you need to find a better sense of humour

1950's version of an E-Mail

Long ago and far away,
in a land that time forgot,
Before the days of Dylan,
or the dawn of Camelot.
There lived a race of innocents,
and they were you and me,

For Ike was in the White House
in that land where we were born,
where navels were for oranges,
and Peyton Place was porn

We longed for love and romance,
and waited for our Prince,
Eddie Fisher married Liz,
and no one's seen him since.

We danced to 'Little Darlin','
and sang to 'Stagger Lee'
And cried for Buddy Holly
in the Land That Made Me, Me.

Only girls wore earrings then,
and 3 was one too many,
And only boys wore flat-top cuts,
except for Jean McKinney.

And only in our wildest dreams
did we expect to see
A boy named George with Lipstick,
in the Land That Made Me, Me.

We fell for Frankie Avalon,
Annette was oh, so nice,
And when they made a movie,
they never made it twice.

We didn't have a Star Trek Five,
or Psycho Two and Three,
or Rocky-Rambo Twenty
in the Land That Made Me, Me.

Miss Kitty had a heart of gold,
and Chester had a limp, And Reagan was a
Democrat whose co-star was a chimp.

We had a Mr. Wizard, but not a Mr. T,
And Oprah couldn't talk yet,
in the Land That Made Me, Me.

We had our share of heroes,
we never thought they'd go,
At least not Bobby Darin,
or Marilyn Monroe.
For youth was still eternal, and life was yet to be,
And Elvis was forever
in the Land That Made Me, Me.

We'd never seen the rock band that was Grateful
to be Dead, and Airplanes weren't named
Jefferson , and Zeppelins were not Led

And Beatles lived in gardens then,
and Monkees lived in trees,
Madonna was Mary in the Land
That Made Me, Me.

We'd never heard of microwaves,
or telephones in cars,
And babies might be bottle-fed,
but they were not grown in jars.

And pumping iron got wrinkles out,
and 'gay' meant fancy-free,
and dorms were never co-Ed
in the Land That Made Me, Me.

We hadn't seen enough of jets
to talk about the lag,
And microchips were what was left
at the bottom of the bag.

And hardware was a box of nails,
and bytes came from a flea,
and rocket ships were fiction
in the Land That Made Me, Me.

T-Birds came with portholes,
and side shows came with freaks,
and bathing suits came big enough
to cover both your cheeks.

And Coke came just in bottles,
and skirts below the knee,
And Castro came to power
near the Land That Made Me, Me.

We had no Crest with Fluoride,
we had no Hill Street Blues,
we had no patterned pantyhose
or Lipton herbal tea or prime-time ads
for those dysfunctions
in the Land That Made Me, Me.

There were no golden arches,
no Perrier to chill,
And fish were not called Wanda,
and cats were not called Bill

And middle-aged was 35
and old was forty-three,
And ancient were our parents
in the Land That Made Me, Me.

But all things have a season,
or so we've heard them say,
And now instead of Maybelline
we swear by Retin-A. T
hey send us invitations to join AARP,
We've come a long way, baby,
from the Land That Made Me, Me.

So now we face a brave new world
in slightly larger jeans,
And wonder why they're using smaller print
in magazines.

And we tell our children's children
of the way it used to be,
Long ago and far away
in the Land That Made Me, Me.

If you didn't grow up in the fifties,
You missed the greatest time in history,
Hope you enjoyed this read as much as I did.
If so, give this ode to someone
who will appreciate these memories...

The Black Hole Of Calcutta.

Submitted by Bob Styants Engineerroom Association

By the end of the seventeenth century effective power in the Mogul Empire had fallen into the hands of the Nawabs, or provincial governors, while the French and British were building up their competing commercial empires.

The "Black Hole of Calcutta" refers to an incident during "The Seven Years War." 1756-1763.

The British had built Fort William to protect the British East India Company's trade in the city of Calcutta, Bengal: the fort was strengthened while preparing for battle with the French.

The new Nawab of Bengal, Siraj ud-Daulah who succeeded his grandfather in the capital Murshidabad 1756 while he was in his twenties, rightly felt concern that the fortification marked the British East India Company's encroachment upon Indian sovereignty.

He ordered both French and British to immediately stop building the fortifications.

The French at Chandernagore complied: the British ignored the command, fearing the war with France would catch them unprepared.

Siraj gathered his large army of 30,000 foot soldiers, 20,000 horsemen, 400 trained elephants, and eighty pieces of cannon, with Europeans hired to train the Indians, and marched on Calcutta.

He advanced unopposed, finding the approach to the city unfortified.

As the Indian force advanced, the British fell into confusion.

The garrison commander organised an escape, and left a token force under the command of John Zephaniah Holwell, a one-time military surgeon and top East India Company civil servant (collecting taxes etc.)

Desertions by allied troops, mainly Dutch made even that temporary defence untenable: their evacuation from the fort by ship fell into disorganization and Siraj laid siege to the fort.

The British, including many civilians fought bravely for three days before the fort fell.

Siraj ud-Daulah took captive the few that remained, putting them into the brig at Fort William for the night.

The brig, which was intended to house two or three prisoners, was eighteen feet long, fourteen feet ten inches wide, with two tiny windows, was called the "Black Hole" by the British and the name stuck after the events of the night had passed.

June 20th, 1756, proved a sweltering night, forty three of the sixty four prisoners perished from heat exhaustion and suffocation.

Apparently the soldiers acted without orders confining so many in so small a space, and Siraj ud-Daulah when he awoke next morning ordered the door opened.

The corpses were thrown into a ditch, Holwell and three others were sent as prisoners to Murshidabad.

Vengeance was swift, Robert Clive marched on Calcutta and set siege to Fort William, which was also bombarded by an accompanying fleet of warships under Admiral Charles Watson.

The fort fell to the British January 1757. and the rest of the prisoners were released.

In February, with an army of a mere 3,000 men, Clive routed Siraj's army of 50,000 men, with their cannon and war elephants at Plassy.

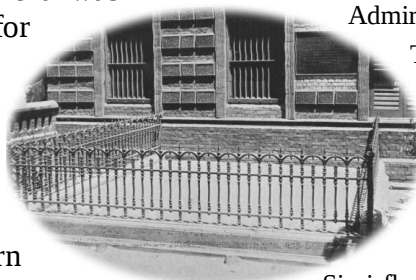
Siraj fled to Murshidabad, where he was killed by his own people and his body thrown into the river.

The "Black Hole of Calcutta" Clive continued over the next eleven years until 1766, to set up the British East India Company in firm control of much of India.

had given him the entrée to set Great Britain on the path to ruling India until 1947.

Holwell erected a tablet on the site of the "Black Hole" to commemorate the victims. It was stolen at some point before 1822.

Lord Curzon, the new Viceroy, in 1899 noticing that nothing marked the spot, commissioned a new monument, and in 1901 placed an



obelisk at the corner of Dalhousie Square, the reputed site of the "Black Hole"

At the apex of the Indian independence movement, the presence of the monument in Calcutta became a nationalist issue; as a result it was removed from Dalhousie Square July 1940 and placed in the graveyard of St. John's church, where it remains to this day. The "Black Hole" itself has long been taken down and no traces of it remain today

River Rockets Continued from page 3

The mere fact that they remained in production until the early 1970s reflects the popularity of the design.

The brainchild of Soviet design legend Rostislav Alexeyev, whose contribution to high-speed shipbuilding has been compared to the pioneering work of Andrei Tupolev in aviation and Sergei Korolev in space flight, Raketa boats' use of hydrofoil technology allowed their hulls to be lifted out the water to reduce drag and increase speed.

The prototype model, Raketa-1, was built at Krasnoye Sormovo Factory No. 112 in one of the oldest and most storied shipbuilders of the Soviet Union in the Sormovsky District of Nizhny Novgorod, Russia's fifth largest city.

The vessel was launched into the Volga River on August 25, 1957 on a 260 mile journey that took just seven hours. Later Raketa designs, like the Meteor and Kometa, were larger and faster, majestic icons that skimmed the surface of the Volga. So popular were the Raketas that the term remains part of the Russian vernacular, applied to other riverboat and hydrofoil designs long after Alexeyev's famous invention has ceased to be manufactured.

But like many other fine examples of Soviet engineering, the social and political upheaval that gripped the collapsing USSR as the Cold War came to a close consigned many

impressive vessels to the scrapyard, or, in this case, a boneyard of abandoned Raketas.

These forlorn hulks that once plied the mighty Volga and other Soviet river systems are quietly corroding away amid a collection of abandoned ships and neglected buildings. Among the wrecks were several mothballed Meteors, whose appearance evoked a sense of retro-futuristic nostalgia for the post-war decades.

These examples of what Messy Nessy terms "river rockets" are understood to be located near the *closed town* of Zaozyorsk in Murmansk Oblast, a cluster of rundown modernist structures and decaying shipyards crisscrossed by rusting railway tracks, which was built back in 1958 as a northern base for Russia's nuclear submarine fleet.

However, like many other impressive vessels mothballed in run-down shipyards across Russia, it seems fair to say that these old Soviet river rockets have likely graced the waters for the final time.

"Stormbringer" is arguably the most beautiful river vessel ever produced!

Futuristic, romantic, surging into the future! **"Burevestnik"** (Stormbringer) was a masterpiece of industrial design, and was an incredible treat to ride on, or simply observe it roaring along pristine Russian waterways:

As it ran on *turboshaft-gas-turbine* type engine) was used along the Volga river during 1964-1979:

You could hear her coming for miles!

The mighty "Burevestnik" sported two IL-18 airplane engines on its sides... It was used on Kuibyshev-Ulyanov-Kazan-Gorky lines on the Volga river; the only surviving ship was dismantled for scrap in 1993; such a shame!

There was also 1962 **"Sputnik"** (the Satellite): similarly imposing, powerful vessel (4x850hp engines), capable of taking almost 300 passengers! **"Vikhr"** (the Whirlwind) was its seagoing version.

Continued on page 12 column 2.



High speed vessel "Burevestnik" (also called "gazo-turbokhod",



The Mystery Surrounding The Loss Of HMS "Glorious" 1940, And The 100 Years Secrecy Act On Findings Until 2040.

Submitted by Bob Styant Engineerroom Association

‘Glorious’ was a light battle cruiser in WW1. decommissioned 1918 and re-built as an aircraft carrier 1920.

Saw service in the Mediterranean until 1939, then the Indian Ocean hunting the German cruiser *Grac* *Spee*

Recalled to the Home Fleet 1940 to provide air cover for British forces landing in Norway: returning as necessary to Scapa Flow to refuel.

These sorties eventually proved futile due to the superior strength of the German forces and the British were ordered to withdraw from Norway.

On its last mission Hurricanes of 46 Squadron successfully landed on *Glorious* without arrester hooks: never before attempted: this was done by placing 7 kilo bags of sand at the rear of the aircraft, allowing full brakes to be applied immediately on landing.

(Anyone that served in aircraft carriers will find that interesting)

During a previous mission, the captain of *Glorious* who had been a submarine commander Guy D’Oyle Hughes, had ordered air commander J.B. Heath to attack certain enemy shore positions in Norway: he refused on the basis the targets were ill defined, and his aircraft were not suitable for the mission.

Not taking this well, the captain placed Heath under house arrest at Scapa Flow awaiting court martial.

Two convoys finally left Norway: *Glorious* in company with *Ark Royal*: Vice Admiral *Nutty* Sir Lionel Wells, (1884-1965) the



escort destroyers *Acasta* and *Ardent* the other sailing separately to Scapa Flow was HMS *Devonshire* V/Admiral John Cunningham, carrying the Norwegian Royal family, members of parliament and gold bullion.

Early on 8th June, *Glorious* asked permission from Wells to proceed independently, quoting the reason lack of fuel.

Permission was granted and with *Ardent* and *Acasta* she parted from the convoy.

Glorious was not flying any air cover, usually done to give visibility over a wide area, and no crew in the crow’s nest on a calm clear day.

These factors proved to be the undoing of all three ships later in the day.

Smoke was seen from *Glorious* by the two German battleships *Gneisenau* and *Sharnhorst*.

Soon within range and with superior fire power a fierce two hour battle raged.

Both destroyers scored hits on *Sharnhorst*, but all three British ships were sunk.

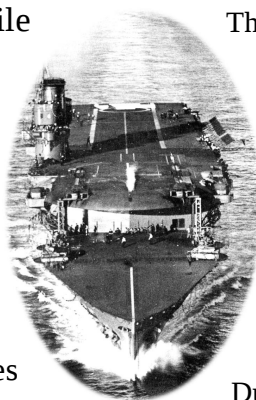
Due to their exposed position the German ships did not stop to pick up survivors, but headed for Trondheim for repairs.

Glorious sent two distress signals, a signalman in *Devonshire* said on oath he did not receive them.

The admiral said they were garbled so he took no notice to investigate them or pass on warning that enemy ships were in the vicinity. No action was taken to rescue the 900 men left to freeze to death in the water, but he immediately ordered zigzagging and sped from the area

Did he receive the message, but had orders to save the royal family and its much needed gold bullion?

We will never know because *Devonshire*’s logs went missing: 38 men from *Glorious* and one from *Acasta* were picked up by the Norwegian SS *Borgun* after three days in the water, 41 men in all, one died on reaching land: a total of 1,531 men lost their lives.



Fitzgerald: When A Big Ocean Gets Small

By Captain Kevin Eyer, U.S. Navy (Retired)

A ship going faster uses more fuel than in convoy: the Admiralty stuck with the story that lack of fuel was the reason

Why did Admiral Wells give permission: he was never asked, although he lived until 1965

Was the reason Guy d'Orly Hughes wanted to get back for the court martial of Air Commander Heath: who at his hearing was exonerated.

Relatives of those who died still want answers now; not in 2040 It is a big ocean. Until you have been far into it, it is really hard to appreciate just how big. Bringing a ship back from Japan to Hawaii, I once went ten days without seeing another ship, either by eye or radar. That is a long time to be alone in the world, especially if you are moving in a straight line and at good speed.

On the other hand, you would be surprised at how crowded the ocean can get in certain places. The Strait of Malacca, for instance, divides the island of Sumatra from Malaysia. Not only is Singapore at the southern end one of the great maritime ports of the world but most of the shipping moving between Asia and Africa, the Middle East, and Europe, travels through this increasingly narrow, 600 mile-long passage. Every year, 100,000 ships transit this strait. By the way, these confined waters are infested with pirates and literally thousands of fishing boats. While a chart may make the strait seem wide, the passable channel for big ships is only a couple of miles wide.

Challenging By Day, Frightening at Night

Tokyo Bay or ōTokyo Wanō is like that. Yes, the area where the USS *Fitzgerald* (DDG-62) collision took place is more wide open than the Wan itself, but just like the approaches to Norfolk or Boston or Los Angeles, dozens of ships are approaching at any time, all heading for a very narrow entrance channel, all on tight schedules. Think of it as a funnel, necking down to the shipping channel

which goes into the port. Outside the shipping channel, which has strict rules, the mouth of the funnel is the

Wild West for ships coming and going. It can be challenging during the day, but at night it can be frightening.

On any given night, ships will mill about, outside the shipping channels, waiting for dawn when they can both use their eyes to help, and meet the pilots who will berth their ships in port. All those huge ships, waiting their appointed time creates a mess. They may drift or they may travel in circles or they

may give themselves a box to stay in while they await first light. Personally, I tried to avoid this mess by slowing my track so that I did not even arrive at the funnel mouth until dawn, but sometimes you do not have a choice, and you spend tense hours trying to avoid other ships, praying for the light.

Imagine you are on the bridge of your ship and you are waiting off Tokyoō or more specifically, Yokosukaō *Fitzgerald* ōs home in Japanō which is right down the coast. There may be moonlight, which is a help, or the sky make be overcast, or there may be no moon, or maybe the moon rose and set earlier, or maybe it will rise and set later. The point is that it can be utterly black at sea. Most people have no idea how black.

What do you see with your eyes off Tokyo? You see on the horizon a universe of lights. Some originating from land, some from ships. Some moving, some not. There are many different coloured lights. Many are engineered to be visible at specific ranges and that may be of some help.

The visibility of a shipōs masthead light, for example, is supposed to be six miles. A sidelight is three miles. But the weather and other atmospheric and physical variables may increase or decrease the visibility. In other words, if you see a shipōs masthead light suddenly appear, you may want to believe, ōOh, that

dude is six miles away for me.ō But, maybe not. You need to worry about all of these lights until you figure each one out. What are they doing? Where are they going? Are they closing me? Which ones should I



Track route of the ACX *Crystal* that collided with USS *Fitzgerald* (Maritime Traffic)

worry about and how soon? The composition of these lights is constantly changing too, as ships come and go. As fishermen appear and disappear. As lights on shore go on and off though the night. In other words, it is a very complex puzzle for even the most experienced mariner.

You decode the puzzle by using your radar and your charts to associate these lights with ships or objects on the beach. Just as your eye is not perfect, neither is a radar. Different radars have different characteristics, and they are each better or worse at varied ranges and in different situations. Some are good in rain, some do not even remotely help in a heavy rain. Every sailor can think of a time that they came across a ship or boat, which in seeming denial of the laws of physics, remained undetected by radar, only to be seen and avoided at the last minute. Ideally, you have several different radars, in concert, as well as the Automatic Identification System (AIS) which tracks the transmission of a discrete identifier by most ships.

Who Is On the Bridge?

While we do not yet know who was figuring this all out on the night of the *Fitzgerald*'s collision, here is how it works at sea in a Navy ship. The commanding officer (CO) is on call 24/7. He or she sleeps in a cabin only a few feet away from the pilot house, where all of this 'figuring' occurs. COs stay up late, and rise early. They do not even want to sleep, because if anything goes wrong, they inevitably and historically are going to be identified as the responsible party. In a congested seaway, the CO will often 'sleep,' if it can be called that, in his chair on the bridge. Often the best team is assigned watch in those most dangerous situations. There are many solutions, but into this mix must be added the possibility that it was a regular watch on the bridge, and the CO, believing the ship was 'in the clear,' had left the bridge and gone to his cabin.

Who is in charge at night when the CO is sleeping or during the day when he or she is doing something else? The captain alone is responsible for 'qualifying' the 'Officers of the Deck' (OODs). These are the young officers or very experienced chief petty officers, who are charged to act in the CO's stead, when he or she is not in the pilot house. These OODs may be salty, or they may

be green as grass. Only the captain can decide when they are ready to stand the watch as OOD. But, you must understand that there is pressure to qualify officers for this watch, for to not qualify a young officer as OOD is a death warrant for that young officer's career. If you are not an OOD, you are of no use to the fleet. Actually, to not qualify an officer can sometimes get a captain the sort of attention that is unwanted, and to not qualify more than one officer, regardless of their capability or capacity, is a recipe for trouble. The expectation is that the captain will train and qualify all the officers assigned under his or her command. Not to do so will cause some to think that the problem lies with the captain, and not the quality of the officers who fail to qualify.

There are, however, some unfortunate 'solutions.' The worst thing a captain can do is to wait until just before an officer transfers and qualify him or her, effectively passing on the problem to the next ship. Or another poor action is to qualify an officer as OOD, but never have him or her to stand the watch. Sadly, not every OOD is a good and able one.

Normally a captain qualifies all officers in due course, and then relies upon a system of checks and balances and back-ups and structure to protect the ship until they grow fully into the job. It is a big deal to be an OOD, entrusted with a billion dollar ship and the lives of several hundred crew.



Looking out from the commanding officer's stateroom of USS *Fitzgerald* (DDG-62) after the collision (Courtesy of Scott Norman).

This is the burden of command. A captain puts the lives of several hundred sailors into the hands of a young officer, typically 25 years old and typically green. So what does a captain count on to prevent disaster? The captain has 'standing orders.' These are the rules in his or her ship that everyone (especially the OOD) lives by. These are the unbreakable laws modifiable only in writing by the Captain. One of these laws is, 'Call me

when any ship comes within 10,000 yards (5 miles) of my ship.'

So, all through the night the captain is receiving phone calls when the ship is near land. Typically the report goes like this: 'Sir, this is the Officer of the Deck. I have a contact, broad on the starboard bow at 12,000 yards. He is drifting left to a CPA [closest point of approach] on our port bow, at 6,000 yards, in 20 minutes. My intention is to maintain course and speed.'

When the OOD calls, the captain envisions the situation in his or her head and then either concurs with the recommendations of the OOD or, if necessary, gives instructions. Sometimes, if the OOD is concerned with the situation, the officer will ask the captain to come to the pilot house. Other times, the captain gets a bad feeling and she goes without being asked. A captain has to know the OODs strengths and weaknesses. The COs need to know how to read voices—does the OOD sound settled and confident? Is there a hint of concern? What time is it?

It is in this area where things can and do go wrong. Sometimes, an OOD is afraid to call the captain. Maybe the captain is intimidating. Maybe the OOD, despite the best of intentions, lets a ship get within 10,000 yards before calling. Now the OOD may understand that he or she is in peril of getting rebuked by a captain who cannot possibly understand why the OOD did not understand the meaning of 10,000 yards. Maybe the OOD will lose the captain's trust? Maybe the CO will fire the OOD—which would be painful and humiliating.

Captains must be careful not to get mad or cranky when called. You do not want to make your OODs hesitant to call. It takes a ship going 15 knots only 6 minutes to go 3,000 yards. If your ship and the approaching ship are traveling at 15 knots, the range can decrease by 6,000 yards in 6 minutes. At night, with all the confusion in a busy seaway, the approaching ship can be on you before you know it. And then what?

A Sea of Risks

It is too early to speculate exactly what happened in the *Fitzgerald* that night. One thing, however, is certain. The Navy will leave no stone unturned to determine exactly what happened and why. For the rest of us, the tragedy of the untimely death of young sailors reminds us that driving ships, has always been, and always will be fraught with risk.

Captain Eyer served in seven cruisers, commanding three of them: the *USS Thomas S. Gates* (CG-51), *Shiloh* (CG-67), and *Chancellorsville* (CG-62).

Lead photo courtesy of Scott Norman



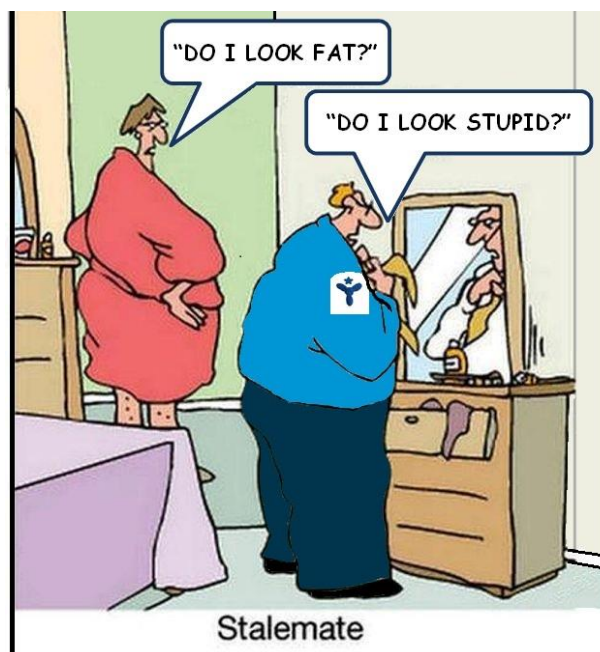
Chaika (the Seagull) was a very distinctively shaped prototype; only one vessel was made, but it served for two years on the riverways:

You can still buy a few of these old girls, a *Raketa* in good condition could set you back an impressive \$300,000 ñ \$400,000.

Sadly one of the "Meteors" was converted into a bar in the city of Kanev, Ukraine



Some are transformed into super-yachts, like this one in Krasnoyarsk



My boss said "Dress for the job you want, not the job you have."

Now I'm sitting in a disciplinary meeting dressed as Batman.

May Day

"Mayday" is the internationally recognized voice radio signal for ships and people in serious trouble at sea. Made official in 1948, it is an anglicizing of the French *m'aidez*, "help me."