



The Rum Tub or Norrie's Nocturnal and Nautical Natter

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Five Rules to Remember in Life

1. Forgive your enemy but remember the b*****d's name.
2. Money cannot buy happiness but it's more comfortable to cry in a Mercedes than on a bicycle.
3. Help someone when they are in trouble and they will remember you when they are in trouble again.
4. Many people are alive only because its illegal to shoot them.
5. Alcohol does not solve any problems, but then again, neither does milk!

These should assist you with most daily decision choices.

HMS Ulster

Rum Tub

Volume 4,

Issue 6

December 2015

Editorial

By Shipmate Norrie Millen

Hi! Shipmates,



Once again, I am going to play my well-scratched record entitled "I messaged but didn't hear you replying". I did ask by email for all of you to acknowledge my messages. The result? I could count the replies on one hand, or was it two? Is it the way I ask, or something else? Do share the problem you have answering me and I will most certainly rectify it. It is so frustrating sending out emails on updates to website and other Ulster matters and I am left wondering if you are receiving it, or are you no longer interested or what is the reason for your reluctance to respond?

I know I could write a book on my escapades, matter of fact I did years ago entitled "Pings & Things, just for family and with no 'naughty bits' as it was primarily for my mother's sake. Now after many people have read it; I have been egged on to publish it. I have spent last two years editing and improving it and adding in all the 'unmentionables' omitted in my first publication and now I am about to submit it to several publishing house to see if I can get it published.

So as I have said many times before, 'Sharpen up your quills' and write those anecdotes for the newsletter. I can almost sense 'your lamps swinging' as you rack your brains for some really unbeatable 'black cats'!"

I know you have plenty of dits and all of your input will make for an even better newsletter.

The way I see it anyway!

The Festive Season is almost upon us and I hope it will be great for us all.

I wish all our Ulster shipmates and their families a very Happy Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous and Healthy New year.



By the Editor:

I have just been reading a report in the Merchant Navy Association newsletter (MNA) on the recent announcement by Foreign Secretary Phillip Hammond that construction has started on the first major overseas naval base opened by Britain east of Suez since 1971 at the port of Mina Salman in Bahrain. The base is to be known as HMS JUFAIR. *(The name by which it was known when first built in 1935. Space was leased to the US Navy in 1950 and following independence from Britain in 1971 the US Navy took on the base and re-named it Naval Support Activity Bahrain)*

The decision to build the base was taken in December, last year, which will end the UK's reliance on the facilities of the far larger US Navy Fifth Fleet, which continues to be based at the port. It will also eventually provide facilities for the new generation of aircraft carriers. Phillip Hammond said "The beginning of construction at Mina Salman Port marked a 'watershed moment' in the UK's commitment to the region and ensuring stability in the Gulf", he continued, "The presence of the Royal Navy in Bahrain is guaranteed into the future, assuring Britain's sustained presence east of Suez. The new facility which is due for completion in the autumn of 2016 will enable Britain to work with our allies to reinforce stability in the Gulf and beyond"

The new base will support four UK MCMV's (Hunts and Sandown's) as well as visiting destroyers and frigates.

The announcement has provoked fresh criticism from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch who are concerned that human rights abuses continued unabated in Bahrain. Other campaigners are not happy that the base is to be named HMS JUFAIR after the 1930's colonial base, amid suggestions that the UK is "celebrating a legacy of repression"

Mr Hammond admitted that "Bahrain is not perfect by any means" but told BBC news that the ruling family was "taking steps to improve its human rights record" It is also noted that the Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn put down an Early Day Motion in parliament against the new base in February. MNA Newsletter Source: Independent

Britain has had MCMV's based in Bahrain as part of the Standing UK Mine Counter Measures commitment (Operation Kipion) for some few years now where their task has been:

- a) The ability to conduct training and exercises in the region ensures that the Royal Navy retains a "warm water" mine clearance capability.
- b) Regular training and exercising with our allies in the area, including the United States Navy as well as Gulf nations, allows us to promote partnerships through stable and cooperative relationships with those countries.
- c) We help prevent conflict through our presence at sea and our ability to reassure regional powers.
- d) We contribute to the protection of our economy by protecting our trade routes and guard the flow of energy resource to the UK

The Gulf is of considerable strategic importance to the UK, it is important for our economy but the international relationships in this region can be very volatile and nobody can truly predict what the future will bring.

I wonder if those in the UK who oppose the building of this base ever consider how the fuel for their vehicles and other commodities get to them, and how the presence of RN ships and others stop those who wish to destabilise the world by for example blocking the Hormuz Straits?



DEALING WITH COLD CALLS

Ask them if they are real or just one of the voices in your head

Ask them to spell their name. Then ask them to spell the name of their company.

Then ask them where the company is located. Then ask them to spell the company's location.

Tell them to talk very S-L-O-W-L-Y,

Because you want to write down every single word.

If they are phoning from a kitchen company, tell them you live in a squat.

If they say they are not selling anything, tell them that is a pity as you are in the mood for buying.

If they give you their name - 'Hi, I'm Sharon' - say, 'Oh, Sharon how are you?' as though they are a long-lost friend.

Tell them you are busy at the moment and could you have their home phone number to call them back later

Things Only A Sailor Will Understand

Submitted by Shipmate Mike Seaward

- 1) ..The smell and sound of the ship as you return from leave and open the AX hatch.
- 2) ..Going down the mess, after being at Specials for three hours in the blazing sun, to find the fridge open and a cold Red Death waiting for you
- 3) ..The joy of an all-night in at sea.
- 4) ..Stowing the forward spring on a reel, down the half deck
- 5) ..The buzz of a dark ops room, at 0600 hrs, on a Thursday morning down Portland.
- 6) ..Walking into The Albany, on payday, on a Friday at 1230 hrs, knowing the next twelve hours are going to be emotional.
- 7) ..A torch in the eyes at 0330 hrs, and the awful words "Three thirty shippers, time to get up"
- 8) ..'Pegging in' the night before sailing for six months.
- 9) ..The chilled out atmosphere on a bridge at night, and in the Ops Room, the ghostly hissing of TG HF and ships talking from hundreds of miles away
- 10) The cold wind and howl of machinery as you close up on the Alaskan Highway* at 0100 hrs for a RAS
- 11) The smell of an STP, Anti Flash hood, fresh laundry from the dhobi shack, FX POS Locker, and a mess with thirty types of aftershave, as the boys prep to go ashore
- 12) How to make twenty year old deck tiles gleam like a mirror, and watch a leaking salt water hose get dragged across them two hours later
- 13) ..How great *'The ship is in position. Double up and secure'* sounds.
- 14) ..How rubbish *'Leave. Leave for the S&S Department from now until 0745 hrs. Both watches of the Ops Department, muster on the flight deck'* sounds.
- 15) ..Going down the ladder into your first mess on your first sea draft.
- 16) ..Beer chits
- 17) ..First pint of the day in The Donkeys' Flip Flop
- 18) ..How to go from sailor watching Blind Date and eating pizza in mess, to sailor in firefighting suit testing BA, in three minutes
- 19) ..Spuds cooked in margarine
- 20) ..Standing in a queue of blokes in towels, in the passageway outside the showers, and trying to shave with one hand, and not disappear across the compartment as the ship hits a big goffer
- 21) ..A Sunday Roast, down the Gulf, alongside in Dubai, with failed air conditioning!
- 22) ..Store ship, with a queue of 366 Lorries on the jetty, and the conveyors are all OPDEF. In addition, it is raining. And you were in Jo's until 0200 hrs. Deep joy.....
- 23) ..Falling asleep down 3P mess, listening to the active sonars of ships nearby, the creaking of the ship, muffled TV from the mess square, snoring.....

24) .Cruel Sea Night, with a few tins in a dark mess. Not enough seats, so you get to sit on the deck, whilst your living room moves around and creaks and groans and the floor vibrates as the screws come out the water

23) .Walking out the yard for the last time, and not realising you'll always be Jack, just in different rig.

***Alaskan Highway** navalese for a pathway on outside of Aircraft Carrier Island. Only one British carrier had one and that was HMS Hermes



THE CALF PATH

One day through the primeval wood
A calf walked home as good calves should,
But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail as all calves do.
Since then three hundred years have fled,
And I infer the calf is dead.
But still he left behind his trail,
And thereby hangs a moral tale.
The trail was taken up next day,
By a lone dog that passed that way.
And then a wise bell wether* sheep,
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,
And drew the flock behind him too,
As all good bell wethers do.
And from that day o'er hill and glade.
Through these old woods a path was made,
And many men wound in and out,
And dodged and turned and bent about.
And uttered words of righteous wrath,
Because twas such a crooked path.
But still they followed....do not laugh
The first migrations of that calf.
This forest path became a lane,
That bent and turned and turned again.
The crooked path became a road,
Where many a horse with its load.
Toiled on beneath the burning sun.
And travelled some three miles in one.
And thus a century and a half,
They trod the footsteps of that calf,
The years passed on in swift fleet,
The road became a village street,
And this, before men were aware,

A city's crowded thoroughfare.
And soon the central street was this,
Of a renowned metropolis.
And men two centuries and a half
Trod in the footsteps of that calf.
A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead,
For men are prone to go it blind,
Along the calf paths of the mind,
And work away from sun to sun,
To do what other men have done.
They follow in the beaten track
And out and in and forth and back.
And still their devious course pursue,
Too keep that path as others do.
They keep that path a sacred groove,
Along which all their lives they move
But how the wise old gods would laugh
Who saw that first primeval calf

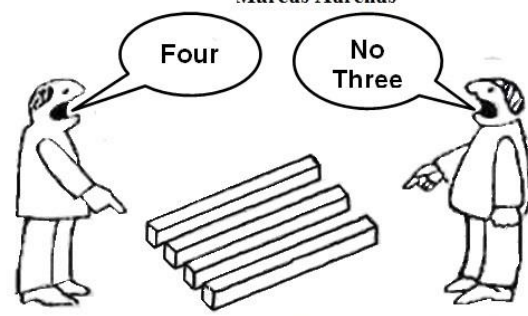
*** Bell wether: Castrated Ram who leads the flock.**



"YOUR CALL IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US,
SO PLEASE CONTINUE TO HOLD."

**"Everything we hear is an opinion,
not a fact.
Everything we see is a perspective,
not the truth."**

Marcus Aurelius



The Real Field Gun Story Part III

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

Kimberly

The last two episodes covered the build up to and the start of the 2nd Boer War and the progress of The 1st Naval brigade, which ended up acting as the anti-siege artillery inside the town of Ladysmith

However, another naval brigade had been landed a few weeks before at Simonstown and their journey into action was as tortuous as the other brigades were swift.

This brigade, under the command of the Commander of *HMS Powerful* comprised of 25 Officers, 53 Bluejackets and 290 NCO's and men of the Royal Marine Light Artillery, equipped with long 12's

They entrained and set off from Simonstown with the initial destination known only to their CO. They headed Northwards, across the Great Karoo desert, preceded by a small loco to warn of ambush and damage to the track. They headed for Naaupoort, which was rapidly becoming a large stores depot, guarded by half a battalion of the Berkshire Regt., they then proceeded on to Stormberg Junction, which was about 50 miles from the border with the Orange Free State, on the 23rd of October. They set up camp and proceeded to fortify their positions as an attack was considered likely. The order of the day was to remain booted at all times and there was a daily stand-to at 4 am. The position was on a plateau surrounded by rocky kopjes and the temperature soared during the day and dropped to near freezing at night.

The guns crews were working with mules for the first time and these animals certainly lived up to their reputation! They endlessly practiced in-spanning and out-spanning and changing position, but after two weeks the lack of action began to have an effect on

morale. Then they were told to move again as General Buller wanted them to move back down the line to Queenstown.

They reached their new camp on the 2nd of November and had a warm reception from the local population. This arrival coincided with the date the Boers encircled Ladysmith. Their stay lasted just over a week and then Buller ordered them to entrain for East London, where they were to hand over their precious guns to the Royal Artillery. The men were very disappointed by this as they had come ashore to fight the Boers but so far had completed a 1,000 mile, four week journey and achieved nothing.

Rumours were rife; some thought they were to re-join their ships. Then it was all change again. They learned that they were to be reinforced by the addition of a landing party from *HMS Doris* to form a larger brigade and, as soon as they had reformed they were to entrain the same day to join an army column under Lord Methuen, for the relief of Kimberly; which was also under siege. For this task, they were equipped with four long 12's, the hastily converted ship's guns that had proved so successful in the field. The trains headed north and, after a few mishaps on the line, which caused them to unload and shift onto a relief train, they arrived at Balmont and here after the battle. A *Times* correspondent climbed to the top of the Kopje and wrote "The hill-top was almost dripping with blood; not a boulder escaped its splash of crimson, and the innumerable splinters and chips in the ironstone blocks indicated the terrific nature of our fire"

After casualty replacements arrived, the column advanced to the Modder River. Here again the Boers had managed to fool the British as to their whereabouts and numbers and as they advanced to the river over flat

open ground they got a mauling from carefully prepared position by a three mile line of 9,000 Boers who held their fire until the range was down to 300 yards. In this carnage, the naval brigade came under fire from Boer artillery, which was not spotted. Although they did manage to knock out the enemy's Maxim guns for a while.

The British found themselves out in the open and unable to advance because of the river, and unable to retire without incurring even greater casualties and so lay out under a scorching sun in 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Four naval 12 pounders were ordered forward to try to throw the Boer off range but they came under heavy fire and were ordered back again before the crews were wiped out. When night fell, the trapped troops were pulled back but next morning it was found that the Boers had again melted away.

By the 9th of February, the force had been built up again and two more naval 4.7's were added. Whilst the naval guns were engaging the Boers at the Magersfontein defences South of Kimberley, a large cavalry force, 4,000 strong swept away to the left of the railway line and round the edge of the Boer lines and on into Kimberley.

At this, the Boers hastily left their defences and most of their supply wagons and fell back Eastwards towards Bloemfontein.

There then followed an epic chase in which the naval brigade struggled to move their wagon and guns through the fine red dust and heat of desert country following a line of abandoned Boer wagons, dead oxen and discarded equipment as the Boers withdrew deeper into their territory.

To be continued next issue.

THINGS TO CONFUSE US SENIORS



I DON'T EXERCISE!
It makes my coffee spill.



www.cafepress.com/GeezerShop



AT MY AGE...
Happy Hour is a NAP!!

Viet Cong Commandos Sank an American Aircraft Carrier?

U.S. salvage crews raised the ship in 17 days

It was shortly after midnight

when two Viet Cong commandos emerged from a sewer tunnel that emptied into Saigon Port, each man carrying nearly 90 pounds of high explosives and the components needed to make two time bombs.

Their target was the largest American ship in port, USNS *Card*. An escort carrier that saw distinguished service as a submarine-hunter in the North Atlantic during World War II, during the early morning hours of May 2, 1964, *Card* was part of U.S. Military Sealift Command.

The ship supported an escalating military commitment of the South Vietnamese government that occurred well before the Tonkin Gulf Incident. Since 1961, *Card* had transported both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters to the beleaguered nation as well as the U.S. pilots and support crews need to operate them.

The commandos swam toward *Card*, where they spent about an hour in the water attaching the charges just above the waterline near the bilge and the engine compartment on the ship's starboard side. They set the timers and quickly swam away.

The charges exploded. Five civilian crewmen on board *Card* died, the explosion tore a huge hole in the engine-room compartment and a proud ship that had survived German U-boat attacks was on her way to the bottom—the last aircraft carrier in U.S.



military history to date sunk by enemy action.

The sinking of the *Card* was stunning victory for the Viet Cong, yet little remembered today. It

illustrated how vulnerable naval vessels can be even when faced with a low-tech enemy—and how difficult maintaining port security can be in a war with no real front.

But it also demonstrated how resilient American naval forces are. In 17 days, salvage crews raised *Card* out of nearly 50 feet of water, and six months later the ship returned to service for another six years.

Not surprisingly, North Vietnam celebrated the sinking of *Card*, considering it a propaganda victory of the first rank. The U.S. government refused to even acknowledge the vessel's sinking, telling the public the carrier had only been damaged.

The North Vietnamese government even commemorated the event by portraying the operation on a 1964 postage stamp.

Naval vessels often have a mystique about them—they look formidable, bristle with weapons and aircraft, and have the ability to project a nation's power anywhere on the planet.

In particular, aircraft carriers are the symbol of a nation possessing great power and status.

But they are vulnerable to attack. For example, there are reasons why even aircraft carriers have numerous escort vessels—destroyers, guided-missile cruisers, even submarines to protect a carrier as well as engage the enemy.

We shouldn't be too surprised when an enemy takes out a naval vessel in



combat, even if it is a commando with a time bomb, James Holmes, a naval historian and analyst who teaches at the U.S. Naval War College, told War Is Boring.

"We shouldn't get carried away with thinking of warships as 'castles of steel,' or latter-day dreadnoughts, or whatever," Holmes said. "A castle is a fortification whose walls can take enormous punishment, whereas most modern warships have thin sides—the nuclear-powered carrier being an honourable exception. So a guy with a charge can do a lot of damage."

Holmes said the sinking of *Card* "provided a preview" of the attack on the USS *Cole* in 2000, a textbook case of a low-tech assault taking out a prime example of U.S. naval might.

Right—damage to USS *Cole* after an Al Qaeda attack in 2000. At top: USNS *Card* while in service with the U.S. Navy as an aircraft transport vessel. U.S. Navy photos

Al Qaeda operatives mounted a suicide attack against *Cole*, a guided-missile destroyer, using a small boat packed with explosives that targeted the American ship while she was docked in Aden harbor. The blast tore a huge hole in the vessel, killing 17 sailors and injuring 39—the deadliest attack on a U.S. Navy ship in recent history.

The blast from the explosion reached *Cole's* galley, killing and wounding many there as sailors were lining up for lunch. Investigators later said they did not consider the timing of the attack a coincidence.

Fifty years ago, penetrating harbor security was a major concern as well for the perpetrators of the attack on *Card*.

Lam Son Nao, 79, the leader of the Viet Cong commandos, was a maintenance worker at the port at the time of the attack. He used his job as cover while he gathered intelligence, hid explosives and planned the mission.

Despite patrol boats filled with

harbor police, Nao and his companion were able to mount their operation because of careful planning and the corruption of Saigon law enforcement.

"For the *Card* mission, my fellow operative and I pretended to be fishermen," Nao said in an April 22 interview with Vietnamese News Service. "When our boat reached Nha Rong Wharf, the police chased us to the bank of the Thu Thiem Peninsula. To avoid having my boat inspected, we pushed the boat to a swamp, so that the police boat could not reach it."

Nao told the harbor police that he wanted to shop at a market on a nearby island, offering to share part of the clothing and radios he planned to buy there. Then, he gave the police a generous bribe and they let Nao go his way.

The aftermath of the attack on the *Card* rallied American rescue and salvage crews to deal with a severe crisis. The American brass and Pres. Lyndon Johnson wanted to keep the results of the attack as quiet as possible.

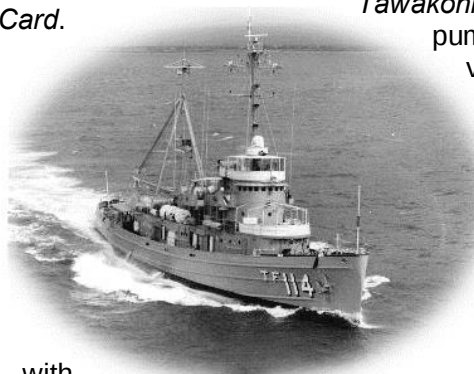
USNS *Card* in Saigon Port after the attack. U.S. Navy photo

However, raising *Card* would be a major salvage operation.

Five Navy divers investigated damage to *Card*. One said he found the remains of a U.S.-made demolitions pack evidence that the Viet Cong might have used stolen American military munitions.

In the meantime, the Navy sent the salvage vessel USS *Reclaimer* and the tug USS *Tawakoni* to Saigon Port to begin pumping water out of the sunken vessel. Despite poor diving conditions and numerous equipment malfunctions, salvage crews raised *Card* in a little more than two weeks.

Soon, both *Reclaimer*



and *Tawakoni* towed *Card* out of Saigon harbour on their way to the U.S. Navy port of Subic Bay in The Philippines for repairs.

Naval vessels are very flexible ships capable of recuperating from serious battle damage. Apparently, *Card* was no exception ships are often re-purposed in the U.S. Navy and enjoy long lives in service, Holmes said.

The carrier *Midway* went from being a World War II carrier to a modern supercarrier over the course of her life, which reached into the 1990s, he said. That philosophy deliberately build ships to allow for easy changes and upgrades over a long life is making a comeback.

Even *Cole* survived her attackers. After 14 months of repair, *Cole* departed dry-dock on April 19, 2002, and returned to her homeport of Norfolk, Virginia.

The ship deployed again in 2003. *Cole* remains in operation with the Sixth Fleet. *Card* decommissioned in 1970.

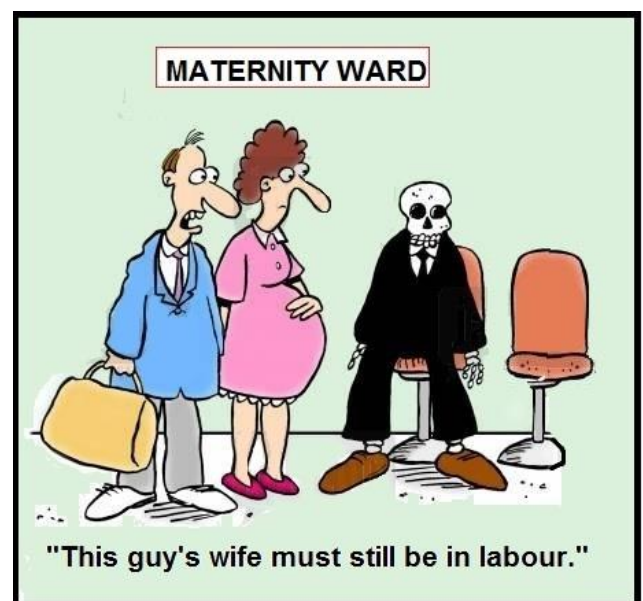


What is wrong with these two pictures?



THANK YOU FOR TAKING
ALL THE EATING UTENSILS
HOME TO WASH THEM
YOU CAN BRING THEM ALL
BACK NOW!

PICK THE BONES OUT OF THESE!



0800 hours December 7th 1941
Signal to US Naval Fleet:
Air raid on Pearl Harbour This is not a drill

The surprise was complete. The attacking planes came in two waves; the first hit its target at 7:53 AM, the second at 8:55. By 9:55 it was all over. By 13:00 the carriers that launched the planes from 274 miles off the coast of Oahu were heading back to Japan. Behind them they left chaos, 2,403 dead, 188 destroyed planes and a crippled Pacific Fleet that included 8 damaged or destroyed battleships. In one stroke the Japanese action silenced the debate that had divided Americans ever since the German defeat of France left England alone in the fight against the Nazi terror.

Approximately three hours later, Japanese planes began a day-long attack on American facilities in the Philippines. Because the islands are located across the International Dateline, the local Philippine time was just after 05.00 on December 8. Farther to the west, the Japanese struck at Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand in a coordinated attempt to use surprise in order to inflict as much damage as quickly as possible to strategic targets. Although stunned by the attack at Pearl Harbour, the Pacific Fleet's aircraft carriers, submarines and, most importantly, its fuel oil storage facilities emerged unscathed. These assets formed the foundation for the American response that led to victory at the Battle of Midway the following June and ultimately to the total destruction of the Japanese Empire four years later.

Aboard the USS Arizona the battleships moored along "Battleship Row" are the primary target of the attack's first wave. Ten minutes after the beginning of the attack a bomb; crashes through the Arizona's ' two armoured decks igniting its magazine.

The explosion rips the ship's sides open like a tin can starting a fire that engulfs the entire ship. Within minutes she sinks to the bottom taking 1,300 lives with her. The sunken ship remains as a memorial to those who sacrificed their lives during the attack.

Marine Corporal B.C. Nightingale was aboard the Arizona that fateful Sunday morning: "At approximately eight o'clock on the morning of December 7, 1941, I was leaving the breakfast table when the ship's siren for air defence sounded. Having no anti-aircraft battle station, I paid little attention to it. Suddenly I heard an explosion. I ran to the port door leading to the quarterdeck and saw a bomb; strike a barge of some sort alongside the Nevada or in that vicinity. The marine colour guard I came in at this point saying we were being attacked. I could distinctly hear machine gun fire. I believe at this point our anti- aircraft battery opened up. "We stood around awaiting orders of some kind. General Quarters sounded and I started for my battle station in secondary aft. As I passed through casement nine I noted the gun was manned and being trained out. The men seemed extremely calm and collected. I reached the boat deck and our anti- aircraft guns were in full action, firing very rapidly. I was about three quarters of the way to the first platform on the mast when it seemed as though a bomb struck our quarterdeck. I could hear shrapnel or fragments whistling past me. As soon as I reached the first platform, I saw Second Lieutenant Simonson lying on his back with blood on his shirtfront. I bent over him and taking him by the shoulders asked if there was anything I could do. He was dead, or so nearly so that speech was impossible. Seeing

there was nothing I could do for the Lieutenant, I continued to my battle station.

"When I arrived in secondary aft I reported to Major Shapley that Mr. Simonson had been hit and there was nothing to be done for him. There was a lot of talking going on and I shouted for silence, which came immediately. I had only been there a short time when a terrible explosion caused the ship to shake violently. I looked at the boat deck and everything seemed aflame forward of the mainmast. I reported to the Major that the ship was aflame, which was rather needless, and after looking about, the Major ordered us to leave. "I was the last man to leave secondary aft because I looked around and there was no one left. I followed the Major down the port side of the tripod mast. The railings, as we ascended, were very hot and as we reached the boat deck I noted that it was torn up and burned. The bodies of the dead were thick, and badly burned men were heading for the quarterdeck, only to fall apparently dead or badly wounded. The Major and I went between No. 3 and No. 4 turret to the starboard side and found

Lieutenant Commander Fuqua ordering the men over the side and assisting the wounded. He seemed exceptionally calm and the Major stopped and they talked for a moment. Charred bodies were everywhere. "I made my way to the quay and started to remove my shoes when I suddenly found myself in the water. I think the concussion of a bomb threw me in. I started swimming for the pipe-line which was about one hundred and fifty feet away. I was about half way when my strength gave out entirely. My shocked condition had sapped my strength and I was about to go under when Major Shapley started to swim by and seeing my distress grasped my shirt and told me to hang to his shoulders while he swam in.

"We were perhaps twenty-five feet from the pipe line when the Major's strength gave out and I saw he was floundering, so I loosened my grip on him and told him to make it alone. He stopped and grabbed me by the shirt and refused to let go. I would have drowned but for the Major. We finally reached the beach where a marine directed us to a bomb shelter, where I was given dry clothes and a place to rest."



History of the "Pussers Tot"

A standard naval tot of rum consisted of an eighth of a pint of rum (which was over 50% ABV, and was traditionally named "overproof"). Generally spirits are about 40% in comparison.

Labelling spirits today as overproof or underproof is derived from the early method of treating Jamaica rum in the naval victualling yards before it was issued to the warships. The rum used to arrive in England at 140 degrees overproof after which it was reduced to 95.5 degrees underproof by having water added to it. A small amount of the mixture was poured over some grains of gunpowder and then a magnifying glass was used to ignite it. If the burning alcohol managed to stay alight then it was said to be "proof", and if it did not light then it was underproof. If it exploded then it was overproof. Proof spirit today is legally defined as that which has a specific gravity of 12/13 (92.3 percent) at 51° F, and of course they don't do the gunpowder/magnifying glass test any more.

Once a rating reached the age of twenty he was entitled to draw his tot. Senior Rates were entitled to drink this neat; however Junior Rates had "2 in 1" which meant that it was mixed with two parts water to one part rum. The reason for this was so that the rum could not be stored and saved for another day. The rum was a blend from different countries in the Caribbean, most notably British Guyana, British Virgin Islands and Trinidad.

I recall that the Tot in the Far East was less superior than the rum that was despatched from the Rum barrels held at Clarence Yard, Gosport. UK. If I am correct, the Far East tot was an Australian blend. It smelt like a shitty baby's nappy and if I recall tasted probably the same? To identify the place of origin, the Aussie flagons had an orange seal whereas the Clarence Yard (Gosport, England) flagons had a red seal.

The official reason for stopping the tradition of supplying a tot to ratings was that the Royal Navy had much sophisticated equipment and weaponry onboard and needed sober sailors to operate it.

The official reason for stopping the tradition of supplying a tot to ratings was that the Royal Navy had much sophisticated equipment and weaponry onboard and needed sober sailors to operate it.

It was deemed that the Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers would be allowed their own bars to purchase any spirits or beer. The Junior Rates would be entitled to purchase an extra can of beer, making three cans (Tinnies) of beer a day.

So now bearing that in mind, Senior Rates can now get plastered on spirits and pints whilst lowly Jack Tar has to make do with three "Tinnies"! Obviously the idiot who came to this decision, was obviously under the impression that Senior Rates had no part in the handling of the said "sophisticated weapons and equipment", so were entitled to get plastered!

The only time that Jack might have been under the influence of his Tot, would probably been on his birthday, when he would have had a few "call rounds" (invitation to a sippers or gulpers of another ratings Tot).

1960 Hits Renamed

Some of the artists of the 60's are revising their hits with new lyrics to accommodate aging baby boomers who can remember doing the "Limbo" as if it were yesterday.

They include:

Bobby Darin- Splish, Splash, I Was Havin' A Flash

Herman's Hermits- Mrs. Brown, You've Got a Lovely Walker

Ringo Starr- I Get By With A Little Help From Depends

The Bee Gees- How Can You Mend A Broken Hip?

Roberta Flack- The First Time Ever I Forgot Your Face ?

Johnny Nash- I Can't See Clearly Now

Paul Simon- Fifty Ways To Lose Your Liver

The Commodores- Once, Twice, Three Times To The Bathroom

Procol Harum- A Whiter Shade Of Hair

Leo Sayer - You Make Me Feel Like Napping

The Temptations - Papa's Got A Kidney Stone

Abba--- Denture Queen

Tony Orlando - Knock 3 Times On The Ceiling If You Hear Me Fall

Helen Reddy- I Am Woman; Hear Me Snore

Leslie Gore- It's My Procedure, and I'll Cry If I Want To

And Last, but NOT least:

Willie Nelson --- On the Commode Again

Every day may not be good, but there's something good in every day.