

GUARDIAN ENSIGN



The Federation of Naval Associations Newsletter

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I've just returned from yet another fantastic Reunion weekend, held at the Hallmark Hotel Midland, Derby.

Our thanks go to Shirley Winn and IOW Tours for arranging this year's Reunion and AGM; even the weather was superb!

On Saturday we enjoyed a trip to the National Memorial Arboretum, including a ride on the land train. The NMA is certainly a place you could never tire of visiting.



Our next Reunion will be at the Suncliff Hotel, Bournemouth, on 17-20 May 2019. The cost for a 3 night/4 day package is £214, and for a 2 night/3 day package £164. Once again IOW Tours will be organising this event for us. Come and join us in the sunshine!

We are all aware that none of us are getting any younger, and many of our comrades are 'crossing the bar'. As a consequence many associations inevitably disappear. If you are aware of any Ship or Branch Association that is declining due to falling numbers, encourage their members to join the FNA. The annual Reunion is a chance for members to meet with like-minded people, and reminisce over a pint or two.

I hope you all enjoy reading 'Just Another Day' by Arthur Beer, I know I did. It's much more interesting when you hear a story from someone who was there. I'm sure many of you have memories of your navy days, which we would love to hear about and include in the GE; we all love a good yarn. Don't worry, the writing doesn't have to be perfect, we'll sort it out for you!

Cliff

Reunion 2018



Reunion 2018



Just Another Day

by Arthur Beer

18 November 1960 - I was a Leading Mechanical Engineer on Submarine 'Thule' and we were at Harbour Stations at Portland Harbour, about to go to sea for the day, exercising with various ships of the Royal Navy and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. We slip and proceed at 0800 and head out of harbour to our diving area about five miles south of Portland Bill. While the crew are still at Harbour Stations the First Lieutenant orders, "Open up for diving". This is done by the whole crew to make sure that all the correct valves are open and all the valves and hatches that should be shut are shut, in other words the boat is safe to dive. Note, valves and hatches are always 'shut' not closed. You 'close up' for action stations, not 'shut up'.



Submarine 'Thule' was a 'T' Class submarine, built at Devonport Dockyard and commissioned in 1944. She saw service in the Far East until the end of the war, under the command of Lieutenant Alistair Mars, and sank a Japanese submarine in the Straits of Malacca. She was 275 feet long, displaced

1,090 tons surfaced and 1,575 tons dived. Speed 15 knots surfaced and 9 knots submerged. She carried 17 torpedoes and had 6 tubes forward and 1 aft, with 2 external tubes over the engine room. Her crew consisted of 5 Officers and 56 Senior and Junior ratings. Our Captain was Lieutenant Thompson.

Exercising off Portland is what submariners call 'mickey-mousing', diving to between 100 and 200 feet, letting the Frigates and Destroyers try to find us on their sonar. Boring is not the word for it; trundling up and down listening to the 'pings' and waiting for tot time to come. We keep watch diving, and as it is generally quiet, keep the boat clean and maintain any machinery that needs it. If any surface ships are detected, i.e. the Weymouth to Jersey ferry

or any passing tankers, the Captain may decide to 'attack' them. This means that the Attack Team closes up and we go to periscope depth, about 48 feet, and do a dummy attack on whatever is there.



This particular day, the old man decided to attack the Royal Fleet Auxiliary 'Black Ranger'. Nothing special about that. I was off watch and in the Stokers Mess, in the after end, talking to the Engineers Storekeeper. Suddenly the

boat rolled over 90 degrees and general opinion was that we had hit the bottom of the English Channel. On looking at the depth gauge I realised that we were still at periscope depth, so something must have hit us. The Control Room immediately piped 'Diving Stations'. My Diving Station was in the engine room and when I got there the watch-keeper, a Canadian Leading Engineer said, "It went over the top". The engine room hatch was leaking slightly so I went into the control room and reported this to the Officer of the Watch. He then piped, "Shut all watertight doors" and, being by the engine room door, I shut it instantly, only to realise that I had shut myself out of an escape compartment, not the wisest of moves in the circumstances. However, after the chaos in the control room had died down, it became apparent that we had been hit just aft of the conning tower by the 'Black Ranger', which we had been attacking. It was alleged that the Sonar Operator had given the range of the 'Black Ranger' as 2,000 yards, but it transpired that he had added a nought and the range was in fact 200 yards. When the Captain ordered "Periscope Depth" to have a look, the tanker was right on top of us. I hope the Captain was wearing his brown underpants!

The boat was soon brought under control and there was no serious damage to the hull structure and no major leaks reported. After very carefully checking all systems and making sure there was nothing above, we surfaced. The boat behaved quite normally and I think the crew, generally, breathed a sigh of relief. We were on the surface. When the hatches were open we all realised how close



we had been to a major disaster. The after casing, just above the engine room hatch, had been destroyed. The 'Black Ranger' had hit us, just touching the rear of the conning tower and hitting the casing and starboard external torpedo tube with great force. The Snort Mast was sheared off and to this day still rests in the Channel. If we had been a foot nearer the surface it would have taken the engine room hatch off completely.



The 'Black Ranger' was virtually undamaged. It is reported that, when we surfaced, the Skipper sent a signal to the 'Black Ranger' - "Thules rush in where Rangers fear to tread". We did what was necessary to make the boat safe and made our way, on one engine, back into Portland Harbour. As you can imagine, we had a top brass welcome. There were Admirals and Commodores by the dozen on the jetty, plus the TV and media, to see our sorry sight. The whole crew was very disappointed, 'Thule' was a good boat with a good crew and we all knew that this was about to end. The only injuries were to our pride. When we had tied up the Captain 'Cleared Lower Deck' and addressed all ratings. Firstly, he apologised for endangering our lives and endangering our boat. He asked us not to get involved in any way with the media. It was the day before pay day and he said that he had organised for us to be paid a day early. We were to go ashore and enjoy ourselves, and he would personally destroy any patrol reports that might be placed before him, an invitation that was taken very seriously, as you can imagine.

The outcome was that we took 'Thule' back to Devonport Dockyard where she was repaired. She was scrapped in 1962. The Captain faced a Court Martial and was reprimanded. He was later promoted to Lieutenant Commander and made First Lieutenant of HMS Sea Eagle, a shore base in Northern Ireland. I left the boat in December and was drafted to HMS Sultan, to commence a 2-year Mechanician's course. "Just another day!"



HMNB Clyde

Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde, commonly known throughout the Navy as Faslane, is the Royal Navy's main presence and largest military site in Scotland. It is home to the core of the Submarine Service, including the nation's nuclear deterrent, and the new generation of hunter-killer submarines.



May 2018 was the 50th anniversary of HMS Neptune, the shore establishment which evolved into HM Naval Base Clyde. Although there has been a Royal Navy presence on the Gareloch since the First World War, the Naval Base officially came

into being on May 10, 1968, when HRH The Queen Mother opened HMS Neptune.

Later that same year HMS Resolution conducted the first operational Polaris patrol and by 1969 the UK fully adopted its policy of Continuous At Sea Deterrence (CASD) which remains unbroken to this day. Commodore Mark Gayfer, Naval Base Commander Clyde, said, "To achieve an unbroken chain of continuous deterrent patrols for almost 50 years is a testament to the hard work and determination of generations of submariners, base workers and their families."

During the 1980s the Naval Base became the largest construction site in Europe as a major civil construction programme was launched to accommodate the Trident weapon system. By 1994 the huge project had finished with HMS Vanguard completing the first operational Trident patrol in December that year.

In 1995 the base became home to seven Royal Navy mine hunters which transferred from Rosyth. With their arrival the site changed its name from the Clyde Submarine Base to HM Naval Base Clyde as it is still known today. It is also home to the Royal Navy's new Astute Class of attack submarines, as well as Royal Marines from 43 Commando, and the Flag Officer Sea Training (North) organisation.

Virgin Trains remembers Royal Navy train that served Crewe during the World Wars

Recognising a Royal Naval train which transported soldiers and sailors along the West Coast Main Line, Virgin Trains has unveiled a commemorative plaque on Platform 12 at Crewe Station to mark the centenary of the journeys made on the Jellicoe Express during the First World War.

Named after Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, the commander of the Grand Fleet who led the British forces at the Battle of Jutland in June 1916, the Jellicoe Express carried service personnel to and from the British fleet based at Scapa Flow in Orkney - travelling daily between London Euston and Thurso with a journey time of 21 hours 30 minutes.

Crewe station was one of the few stops on the route where sailors and soldiers could join the train. It also served as a welcome refreshment stop, where over 300 women volunteers worked around the clock to provide refreshments in a canteen on Platform 6. Crewe was able to play a small but significant part in helping thousands of naval personnel travel between London and the North of Scotland during World War One.

Nick Jellicoe, grandson of Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, said: "The railways were, in a very real sense, the Navy's vital lines of supply. From every corner of the country, munitions, food and manpower were transported north through its steel arteries. John Jellicoe was the first to acknowledge the tremendous debt that he – and the Navy – owed the men and women who worked these trains in a relentless race against time. And maybe, especially to those who kept the Jellicoe Express running on time, day in, day out."



Crewe RNA Chair (and FNA Treasurer) George Jones, Secretary Sue Brown-Wealls and Standard Bearer David Wealls, Station Manager Heather Hodgkinson, Captain Chris Smith, Leading Rate Stuart Bennett and Warrant Officer First Class Korena James.

credit: Crewe Chronical and leeboswellphotography.com

Military Language Conversion Chart

NAVY	ARMY	AIR FORCE
Bag meal	Rat packs	A la Carte
Canteen	Snack Bar	McHappy Meal
Captain	Colonel	Rupert/James
Cecks/Trolleys	Underwear	Knickers
Chief	WO2	Timothy/Justin
Chop one off	Salute	Wave
Defaulters	Article 15	The naughty step
Deployment/Detachment	Deploy	Huh?
Die for your Country	Die for your Battle Buddy	Die for Air Conditioning
DMS boots	Jump Boots	Ugg Boots
DQs	Put in Confinement	Grounded
EWO	RSM	OIC Cuddles
Galley/Dining Hall	Mess Hall/Mess Tent	Restaurant
Hammered	Pissed	Oops, a little tipsy...
Heads	Latrine	Powder Room
Jack Tar	AJ	RAAFY Chappy
Lid/Cap	Beret/Head Gear	Optional
Limers/Goffa	Cordial/Can of drink	Shirley Temple
Mess/Cabin	Barracks	Self-contained Apartment
Midshipman	Officer Cadet	Debutant
No. 1's	Bus Conductors Uniform	Armani suit
No. 4's/Coveralls	BDUs/DPCUs	Casual Attire
Obstacle Course	Confidence Course	Typing Course
Oouh-Rah!	Hoo-ah!	Hip-Hip Hurray! Jolly Good
Parade Drill/Parade Ground	Drill Practice/Parade Field	What?
Pit	Bunk	Queen bed, electric blanket & duvet
Pussers Cook	Mess Cook	Contract Chef
Pussers Sandals	JC Sandals	Patent Leather Stiletos
RNFT	APFT	Smoko Ping Pong Comps
SBS	SAS	Librarian
Seaman	Private	Bobby/Jimmy
Shipmate/Oppo	Battle Buddy/Digger	Honey/Babe/Pookie
Shore Patrol	MPs	Chaperones
Stores	Q Store	Shopping Mall
Trainers	Athletic shoes	Moccasins
Waste	Take Out	Back on Base for Nuck Night
Wet	Coffee	Vanilla Skim Latte with a biscuit

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



RNE & WEBA - 28 September - 1 October 2018

The AGM & Reunion will take place at the Hallmark Hotel, Preston.

Details can be found on the website: www.rneweba.org.uk/ or contact IOW Tours for a booking form.

Survey Ships Association - 26-29 October 2018

The Survey Ships Association will be holding its twenty-sixth reunion at the Holiday Inn Hull Marina, Castle Street, Hull on the weekend of 26th to 29th October. For information on membership and reunion please send a SAE to: The Secretary SSA, 17 Eliza Mackenzie Court, Lindisfarne Close, Cosham, Portsmouth, PO6 2SB, Email: secretary@surveyships.org.uk, or Telephone 023 9232 4795.

HMS Ganges Association - 12-15 April 2019

The AGM and Reunion will take place at Gunton Hall, Lowestoft on the weekend of 12th to 15th April 2019. For more information contact IOW Tours, 3 New Road, Lake, Sandown, IOW, PO36 9JN. Email: enquiries@iowtours.com or Tel: 01983 405116. For details of membership of the Association please contact Ken Bushnell, Membership Secretary, 7 Rivers Street, Yew Gardens, Waterlooville, PO7 5FR. Tel: 02392 252812 or Email: gangesmemsec@gmail.com

Advertise Here!

If your Association is a member of the FNA why not advertise you next Reunion and/or AGM here. Send details to secretary@f-n-a.org

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