

HCMS Phoebe

Association

Newsletter

December 2013



Chairman S/m Stuart Bundy pays
reverence to our fallen heroes.

Christmas will soon be upon us, for some it brings good cheer, but for some it reminds us of loved ones no longer with us, for them we hope their memories are full of joy. Every member of the Association, Full, Associated and Honorary receives a Christmas/New Year card from Lil and I, we have been doing that for a few years now and how gratifying you make that by sending us cards, and so many, one wall gets almost covered with cards.

I have one small request to make. Lil saves holiday cards from distant places, if you remember could you send her a card, don't go out of your way to do so. Neither of us is allowed to fly anymore, (NO! Its not because it makes our arms ache)? Its health reasons. We just like to see what we are missing??

Although one place we will never miss is the time we went to Portugal and stayed 2 weeks in Ericiera, on the West Coast, (Atlantic). The whole town smelt like a fish market, (Billingsgate would have smelt sweeter) There was a double row of trees down the centre of the town with bench seating under them, and what looked like an abundant mass of black leaves on the branches that turned out to be Starlings, thousands of them, when they took off they bombarded everyone with their droppings. Eating in the cafes and restaurants was terrible. I ordered Ham, Eggs & Chips, the whole meal tasted like kippers? Even the car we hired smelt fishy, and that broke down on the first day when the clutch went? Someone up there definitely did not like us.

Had a letter from Pincher Martin, sends his regards to everyone, still has his problems, but it seemed to me he was coping a bit better now, well! I hope he is, don't know when we will see him at a reunion again, but I hope it will be soon. Best regards Pincher, 'keep taking the tablets'. My Doc phoned me this morning, seems I am taking too many thyroid tablets, she has cut me down now to 125 Mcg instead of 150, also my diabetes sugar levels were down too low, so three glixacide tablets a day has been cut to two. I thought the idea was to get sugar levels down.? And I was surprised to find I had lost a stone in weight, I thought my waist belt was fitting me better when I moved it up three notches!

Sold my estate car to a neighbour. I bought what is called a Citroen Dispatch Van/with side windows. Looks like a MPV. But it has a lowered floor and a drop down ramp, which means I can drive both our scooters up into the back, I could only get one scooter into the estate, The van belonged to the NHS and was tax exempt, I had a hell of a job taxing it normally. Its ten years old but its only done 63,000 miles, the HDi 2.0 engine at that mileage is still running in. Its got the same engine that was in my estate, and that has done 172,000miles.

Yesterday was Remembrance Sunday, the day we meet shipmates, their wives and friends at our Memorial Stone in the Central Gardens, Bournemouth. Lil and myself would only attend if the weather was going to be kind to us and it was! A lovely sunny morning, cold, but not icy-cold. We set off just after 8am and arrived at our usual parking space about 9.45, HMS Phoebe Ass'n are allowed to park in the Town Hall main car park, but this time there were security men turning us away, however we were allowed in when we said who we were.. S/m Stuart Bundy and Yvonne turned up, we waited there for a short time for S/m Bob Hobbs and family to arrive, but we had to make our way down to the Cenotaph without them. They all turned up later on in time to witness the Towns ceremony, then join us at our Stone. We did not have any Standards this year, ours was in Kent, S/m Derek West who paraded the Standard many times in the south eastern area had been taken very ill and unable to do anything, he could not get out to post the standard to our official bearer, Bob Hobbs in the I of W. The Sea Cadets standard cannot be paraded unless there is an armed guard, and arms cannot be carried in towns or cities, a stupidly ridiculous rule, introduced last January, which I have a good mind to complain about to the MOD. Once the sea cadets and the RM cadets were positioned, the Deputy Mayor and his wife arrived accompanied, I believe, by the Mace Bearer (I apologise if that is wrong) , and were met by our Chairman Stuart who handed them service sheets. I met the Deputy Mayor earlier in the year and found him to be a very nice person who was greatly interested in our Association, I now send him our newsletters. A good crowd had gathered and the Chairman handed out service sheets. Our Padre Ray began the short service, there was a slight hic-cup in the service, when it came time to play the last post, the new music player Bob had bought refused to work, by the time it did? it was unfortunately too late. Three wreaths were laid, first to be laid was our wreath, kindly laid by one of our honorary members Roger Kingstone Sqd/L Rtd, who, with his wife, never misses our remembrance service. Second wreath laid was by the Deputy Mayor for Bournemouth Council, followed by a smart sea cadet. The service went off very well, and at the end I thanked everyone for their being there. Lil and I were pleased when our grandson and his friend turned up before they returned to Cornwall. Our thanks to Padre Ray, shipmates, their wives, and family who attended, without them being there would be no memorial ceremony. Our thanks to to the retired stone mason who makes such a good job of cleaning the stone, and keeps the area tidy. When you look at other memorial stones in the gardens our nicely cleaned stone stand out above them all.

It is with great regret and a tearful eye that I report the passing into still waters of a shipmate and friend, Peter Pope. Anyone attending reunions may remember the tall quiet black haired fellow from Kent and his wife Edna. Although Peter never served aboard either of the Phoebe's he was a Royal Navy veteran who requested to become an Associated Member. He attended most of our reunions except when he was ill. Peter suffered a relapse of the cancer he'd had and never recovered. Peter and Edna would often attend the meetings we held in Thanet each year, they will be sorely missed.

Shipmate Roy Talbot has had a bout of illness, he has got over it now although I think it has left him a bit weakened, his wife Gwen has also been in hospital to have a hip replacement, we hope you are doing well Gwen keep up the exercises?? My left knee had half a knee replacement in 06 its giving me a bit of trouble now, I think the ligament is getting caught up somewhere, so its off to the Docs to try and get a x-ray organised??. S/m Bob Hobbs is also ahving his replacement knee operated on.

2014 Reunion: Some of the regular attendees have not booked in yet, we hope they will do so soon. We do not have a very big turnout as yet, but there is still five more months to go, cut off date is around 23rd April, so there is plenty of time to get your room booked. Its only a £10pp deposit. And don't forget the coach trip to Bristol, its only £3 per person, Lots to do and see in Bristol. Also the savings club is running, why not send a bit each month to pay towards your reunion booking.

We have more Beanie hats on order they should arrive soon. We have only ordered a dozen, six of each crest, they should soon get sold, be ideal for the coming cold weather, and our crests on the front do a bit of advertising for the Association. Order now, we can order more if required. Price TBC.

For all you computer addicts, if, like me, you have downloaded a limited free security supplier such as Adaware, AVG etc you could still, like me, get a virus that crashes your PC completely. I had to restore mine to factory settings, losing all I had on the computer and start again. I found out that Microsoft has a entirely **free anti virus** download, and its not a limited edition like the other so called free ones. To down load it; enter in your browser: **Microsoft Essential Securities** This will open a page with the download available from various sources, choose one to download from, or seek Microsoft's own download, I did, and so far I have had no interference and my computer seems to work faster.(Google Chrome, Firefox & Safari are faster browsers than Internet Explorer, try them).

What is a Matelot:-

A Matelot is not born?...He is made out of leftovers. God built the world and the animals and then recycled the gash to create this dastardly weapon. He took the left-over roar of the lion, the howl of the hyena, the clumsiness of the ox, the stubbornness of the mule, the slyness of the fox, the wildness of the bull and the pride of a peacock then added the filthy evil mind of the devil to satisfy his weird sense of humour.

A Matelot evolved into a crude combination of John Dillinger, Errol Flynn, Beau Brummel and Rudolph Valentino: a swashbuckling, beer-swilling, love-maker.

A Matelot likes girls, rum, beer, fights, uckers, runs ashore, pubs, jokes, long leave and his mates. He hates Officers, rounds, divisions, saluting middies, reggies, joss men, navy scran and his tum in the barrel !! He is brave drinking beer, abusive playing crib, brutal defending his pride and passionate making love. He can start a brawl, create a disaster, offend the law, desert his ship, make you lose your money, your temper and your mind. He can take your sister, your mother, your aunt and, when he is caught, get his Divisional Officer to vouch for his integrity A Matelot is loved by all mothers, sisters, aunts and nieces but hated by all fathers, brothers, uncles and nephews. He has a girl in every port and breaks more hearts and causes more fights than any other and yet, when he is off to sea, he is missed more than any other.

A Matelot is a mean, hard drinking, fast running son-of-a-bitch but, when you are in trouble, he is a strong shoulder to lean on, a pillar of wisdom and a defender of the faith and cause.

He fights for his mates and dies for his country without question or hesitation.

This is a Matelot and I'm so bloody proud to have been one,

*Their blood ran cold with horror,
As they gazed on the awful scene.
Their faces paled in anguish,
And their gills turned faintly green.
For seldom has anyone suffered
As they did that horrible day.
Seldom before have humans,
Beheld such a ghastly display.
There on the deck before them,
The shattered remnants flowed.
As a steady stream of crimson,
Sought its level on Burma road.
They stood in breathless silence,
As if all stricken dumb,
For they had seen the rum bosun,
Drop a fanny full of rum.*

DID YOU KNOW

A Catch 22 situation is a situation from which an individual cannot escape because of rules, regulations, or procedures that an individual has no control over. Creators of the Catch 22 have created arbitrary rules in order to justify and conceal their own abuse of power.

Although a fathom is now a nautical unit of length equal to six feet, it was once defined by an act of Parliament as "the length of a man's arms around the object of his affections." The word derives from the Old English Faethm, which means "embracing arms."

WWII (Naval History).

(OCT.30,1939) The German submarine U-56, commanded by Lieutenant Wilhelm Zahn, found itself bang in the middle of a contingent of the British Home Fleet sailing just west of the Orkney Islands. Leading the contingent was the battleship HMS Rodney followed by the battleships HMS Nelson and HMS Hood, all surrounded by a protective screen of destroyers. Here was the U-56, sitting at periscope depth in an ideal firing position and straight ahead was the Flagship of the Fleet, HMS Nelson. Elated, Zahn fired three torpedoes at the target which was impossible to miss. Two of the torpedoes actually hit the Nelson but did not explode! The U-56 made a quick getaway. Had the torpedoes exploded, the V.I.Ps on board the Nelson would have been in great danger. They had gathered for a conference to determine what action had to be taken after the sinking of the Royal Oak at Scapa flow. The illustrious guests included the C-in-C Home Fleet, Admiral Sir Charles Forbes, the First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Dudley Pound, and Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Winston Churchill!. This heaven sent opportunity caused Admiral Karl Donetz, the German U-boat supremo, to write in his war diary "Without doubt, the torpedo inspectors have fallen down on their job....at least 30% of our torpedoes are duds!" Gunther Prien, hero of Scapa Flow, remarked "How the hell do they expect us to fight with dummy rifles". Without doubt this was a great embarrassment to the German Navy.. 31 U-boat attacks from favourable positions, 4 attacks on the Warspite, 12 attacks on various cruisers, 10 attacks on destroyers and 5 attacks on troop transports...without a single hit!

All torpedoes failed to explode. How lucky we were!

(June 17, 1940) The Cunard White Star passenger liner Lancastria (16,243 tons) is bombed and sunk off St. Nazaire, France. While lying at anchor, five enemy planes dive bombed the ship which sank, taking the lives of nearly 3,000 troops and over 1,000 civilians. The Lancastria had been converted into a troopship and set sail from Liverpool on June 14th. to assist in the evacuation of British troops and refugees. She was about to sail to England after loading on board soldiers and RAF personnel of the British Expeditionary Force, plus hundreds of civilians. Many survivors were picked up by HMS Havelock and other ships. The bomb which actually sank the Lancastria went straight down the funnel and exploded in the engine room. The site of the sinking is now an official War Grave.

(July 3, 1940) In one of the saddest episodes of the war, the French battleship Bretagne was sunk by British warships, which included the Hood, Ark Royal and Valiant. The refusal by Vichy France to hand over their battleships to Britain, rather than fall into the hands of the German Navy, resulted in the attack at the French naval base at Mers-el-Kabir, near Oran, North Africa. Hit by 15-inch salvos from a range of 14,000 yards, the Bretagne exploded and capsized with the loss of 977 men. Many died clinging to the life-saving nets as the ship rolled over. Another ship, the Strasbourg, was badly damaged and sank with a loss of 135 men. The Dunkerque lost 210 men. The British attack on Mers-el-Kabir took the lives of 47 officers, 190 petty officers and 1,054 ratings, a total of 1,282. This action caused great bitterness in France, many French pilots volunteering to bomb Gibraltar, which they did on the night of 24/25 September, 1940, dropping 200 tons of bombs on the British fortress. The French World War 1 air ace, Colonel Rene Fonck, had organized some two hundred Vichy French pilots who were prepared to join Germany in the fight against Britain.

I filled up this space with oddments; and thought keeping them Naval was the best way.

Roy

World War 2 Facts (USA):-

The first German serviceman killed in the war was killed by the Japanese (in China, 1937).

The first American serviceman killed was by the Russians (in Finland 1940).

The highest ranking American killed was Lt. Gen. Lesley McNair, killed by the US Army Air Corps.

12,000 heavy bombers were shot down in WWII. There were 433 Medals of Honour awarded during WWII, 219 of them were given after the recipient's death. From 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945 in Europe the Allies had 200,000 dead and 550,000 wounded. The youngest US serviceman was 12 year old Calvin Graham, USN. He was wounded in combat and given a Dishonorable Discharge for lying about his age. (His benefits were later restored by act of Congress). At the time of Pearl Harbor, the top US Navy command was called CINCUS (pronounced "sink us")? Germany lost 110 Division Commanders in combat. 84 German Generals were executed by Hitler. 40,000 men served on U-Boats during World War 2; 30,000 never returned. More US servicemen died in the Air Corps than the Marine Corps. While completing the required 30 missions, chances of being killed was 71%. Not that bombers were helpless. A B-17 carried 4 tons of bombs and 1.5 tons of machine gun ammo.

The US 8th Air Force shot down 6,098 fighter planes, 1 for every 12,700 shots fired. It was a common practice on fighter planes to load every 5th round with a tracer round to aid in aiming. That was a mistake. The tracers had different ballistics so (at long range) if your tracers were hitting the target, 80% of your bullets were missing. A number of air crewmen died of farts. climbing to 20,000 ft. in an un-pressurized aircraft causes intestinal gas to expand 300%!

The Russians destroyed over 500 German aircraft by ramming them in midair (they also sometimes cleared minefields by marching over them). "It takes a brave man not to be a hero in the Red Army". - Joseph Stalin. The US Army had more ships than the US Navy. When the US Army landed in North Africa, equipment brought ashore included 3 complete Coca Cola bottling plants.

The Graf Spee never sank, the scuttling attempt failed and the ship was bought by the British, on board was Germany's newest radar system.

Following a massive naval bombardment, 35,000 US and Canadian troops stormed ashore at Kiska. 21 troops were killed in the fire-fight. It would have been worse if there had been Japanese on the island?

The only nation that Germany declared war on was the USA. During the Japanese attack on Hong Kong, British officers objected to Canadian infantrymen taking up positions in the officer's mess, as no enlisted men were allowed!

Among the first "Germans" captured at Normandy were several Koreans. They had been forced to fight for the Japanese Army until they were captured by the Russians and forced to fight for the Russian Army until they were captured by the Germans and forced to fight for the German Army until they were captured by the US Army.



**Remembrance Sunday
Bournemouth
November 10th, 2013.**

**Shipmates,
The Deputy Mayor,
TS Phoebe Sea Cadets Corp,
Family, Friends
& passers by gather for the
HMS Phoebe Memorial
Service conducted by
Padre Ray Merrick
We Will Remember Them**