By Golly – By George

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I was raised on two different farms in Devon England. There were four girls and four boys. Following some bad luck, precipitating a financial crisis, we moved to a smaller farm in 1933. The two eldest brothers went to work as *navvies* on the railroad; two sisters worked at a nearby milk factory; at age fourteen I worked on a nearby pedigree chicken farm. We all pitched in at harvest time and helped with milking after work. Attaining age 16, I was laid off (to be replaced by a younger person), because employers were liable for weekly payments of unemployment insurance. Out of work for a week, I hired on at Forestry. At 17½, I left to work in another milk factory away from home and moved into *digs*. Making a bit more money, I was able to save up to buy my first motorbike as a means of transportation. I could visit home and attend neighbourhood dances. I had been working for about six years when I received my call up at Xmas 1940.

World War II was in progress and conscription was in effect for 20-year-olds. I opted for the Navy, so off to boot camp, then stoker's course, quickly followed by boiler cleaning, and a draft to *HMS* Jupiter. It was about this time the chief's and petty officer's quarters in Devonport barracks received a direct hit. As trainees we were assigned to assist, while at night, I recall fire fighting at a hospital. During daytime we would catnap at stand easy and lunch. As a result of the bombing catastrophe, a large number of

killicks and junior petty officers were promoted to fill positions from casualties of chief and petty officer ranks.

Jupiter went to sea in early May 1941 to help track down the enemy battleship Bismarck. That was my first trip to sea in the Navy. Bismarck was located and dispensed with, but not before HMS Hood (British battleship) was blown up with only three survivors. HMS Jupiter then escorted HMS King George Fifth (KG5 – battleship) to Scapa Flow (Orkney Islands). We went to the arctic via Faroe Islands (Danish) where there was leave for badgemen, killicks, and higher ranks (meaning no one with less than three years of good conduct) were permitted to go ashore. We were in company with HMS Tartar (tribal class) and another destroyer – I forgot its name – on a mission to apprehend a German weather-reporting vessel whose location had been established. Ideally, on sighting, we were to proceed flat out and the first one there was to go alongside. Upon approach, we all had let go a number of *H.E. shells* to scare the daylights out of them so they would abandon ship. Each ship had a boarding party standing by consisting of: upper deck seamen petty officer and engine room artificer who each carried a loaded sidearm; seamen and stokers carried cutlasses. There were about a half dozen cutlasses stowed in a rack above the sickbay door. We took around 50 prisoners back to Scapa. Our previous issue of arctic underwear became redundant, succeeded by tropical gear; complete with pith helmets, like Royal Marine Bandsmen wear for ceremonial events. Entering Liverpool for a boiler clean meant three or four days leave for each watch. There was some confusion with engine telegraph movements, resulting in the ship's bow getting crumpled which added a couple days extension of leave!

Next stop, Ponta Delgada, Azores (Portuguese Islands), for fuel. For a large number of young men, it was their first port of call in a foreign port and their first exposure to that notorious profession we have all heard about. In the Atlantic heading south, we rendezvoused with HMS Edinburgh and passed bags of mail to them by *jackstay transfer*, their first mail in more than a month.

On to Freetown (Sierra Leone) where social activity brought about the necessity of a separate mess for unfortunate ones who fell by the wayside. This mess was known as "Rose Cottage" or "Rotten Mess". A short fuel and provision stop at St. Helena (UK Island in South Atlantic), where Napoleon was exiled came next and on to Cape Town (actually Simonstown), to the South African Naval dockyard. After Cape Town we called at Durban (South Africa) and Mombasa (Kenya). South Africa could not dispose of one of their main crops because of the war. Each mess had buckets full of oranges in mess decks and I am convinced that is what cleared up my pimples permanently.

On to Aden (Yemen), Red Sea, through Suez Canal, to Alexandria (Egypt). While traversing the Suez on my 21st birthday (September 1941), I had my head protruding out of a porthole, gaping at the scenery. One of my messmates, for fun, grabbed my testicles and that is how one of my front teeth broke on a porthole rim.

In the eastern Mediterranean we did a few runs between Haifa (Palestine – now Israel) and Famagusta (Cyprus), exchanging British and Indian *pongos*. Each day we had shore leave: 1200H to 1600H in Haifa, and from 0000H to 0400H in Famagusta (with no shore leave). [I never came to see anything of Cyprus until 55 years later on holiday in 1996.] It was about that time in 1941 when some Italians succeeded in penetrating

Alexandria harbour setting off explosives and sinking HMS Queen Elizabeth (battleship) alongside the jetty. These were early day frogmen.

Jupiter made some bombardment runs around Tobruk (Libya); I recall place names of Bardia, Mersamatruh, and Sal©m. We were dispatched to Singapore ,going back through the Suez, Red Sea – hotter than Hell there – Aden, across the Indian Ocean, to Colombo (Ceylon – now Sri Lanka). During that journey, at economical speed, we were in company with Encounter and Electra. We had inter-mess *draughts* contests and top players from each ship competed. Intership games were an exercise for the *bunting tossers* to pass messages by flags indicating each move decided by representative players, until an overall winner was established. A *sparker* operated the music system that came over messdeck speakers. With those tropical evening sunsets and flat calm seas, Vera Lynn would come across pretty good! The same guy did most of the officer's *dhobiing* constantly ironing shirts and shorts between changing records.

Continuing east from Colombo, we escorted HMS Prince of Wales and Repulse to Singapore, around the end of November/early December 1941. History tells us about Pearl Harbor (Hawaii) in December, bringing USA into the war. Jupiter was dry-docked in Singapore, on tropical routine. It was too hot on board so we ate and slept ashore. We started each day at 0630H, knocked off about 13/1330H for midday meal, and had the rest of the day off. We thought this was great; white sheets and large ceiling fans in the dormitory. It did not last more than three or four days. One morning, our dry-dock was full of water and no Jupiter, but it was around the corner alongside. That day Prince of Wales and Repulse got their *packet*, 10 December it was; shocking beyond belief. We continued to flop around out there as duty destroyer over Xmas 1941.

On 17 January 1942, while patrolling Sunda Strait (Indonesia) our *A.S.D.I.C.* got a *ping*, then lost contact. They were always doing that. Back on target again, with depth charges deployed, up she came, a large Jap sub. [I have learned this was the I-60 sub.] There were green weeds hanging off her sides. Almost immediately, their deck gunners had a round off. It hit our A-twin 4.7 turret between its barrels, killed three of our chaps, and put the gun out of action. I was part of an ammunition party, at action stations and wondered why no one up top was taking ammunition away from the top end of my chute behind the turret. The ammo came up from the magazine through an electric hoist, and was placed by hand in a chute on the forward-upper messdeck. Ammo then slid up an inclined chute by wire cable going up around a deck-head pulley. This cable had a wooden T-handle on its end. When manually pulled, it caused cordite, or a projectile – whichever was up next – to pass through a small elliptical hatch in the deck, ready for the gun crew to pick it up and load it into the gun breach.

After about 1½ hours it was decided the sub was finished. A lot of ammo was expended, including all four torpedoes, which had not hit anything. I think all four torpedoes were fired at once by a screw-up. We picked up three Jap survivors, a couple of them badly burnt, but one had a hole in his side with some entrails protruding. I think he was the one who died on board Jupiter. Later that evening all fatal casualties were committed to the deep, presided over by our captain. I was on watch below, in the boiler room then, but that was the only burial at sea I have ever been connected with in wartime. Shortly thereafter, a sale of effects was held in the seamen’s mess, for our three fallen shipmates’ belongings, with the coxswain as auctioneer. Items were bid for in excess of their value in tribute to those chaps and their next-of-kin, who subsequently received the

funds. It was a sorrowful situation that we had to accept. Think what it must have been like for their bereaved.

It was to be more than a month before we were in action again. During that time, we made several runs back and forth. We participated in evacuating Singapore, crossing the equator every second or third day. Our "crossing the line" ceremony had taken place off Africa's West Coast, six months earlier. I remember nearly drowning at the hands of callous *bears* in that ritual.

One day in Batavia (now called Jakarta), where we were operating from, I was learning to be motorboat stoker. We were sent over to HMS Exeter to fetch a gallon jar of sulphuric acid for topping up our emergency transmitter's batteries. We were not allowed to use Exeter's regular gangway because they were expecting their captain back at any time. We had to go around to the other side to have the jar lowered by rope. The jar had no customary wickerwork protection. It exploded when it accidentally struck the ship's side and spilled the *neat* acid contents all over us. I was tempted to jump overboard, but we had been warned there was to be positively no swimming. We all scrambled up the *jacobs ladder*. Once on their quarterdeck, we were hustled off to sickbay to be washed off. That is where I passed out on the floor. While unconscious acid dribbled down my side which left me with *keloid* scars. I was given a shot of morphine and had a drugged sleep on a camp cot on deck. When I came to, a Jap air raid was in progress and Exeter sustained a few shrapnel holes.

That evening we were returned to Jupiter sickbay. I was clad in only a sheet from Exeter, until a signal requested its return. Our doctor came aboard late that night and allowed me to return to the stoker's mess, so I could get my own underwear, and retire to

my own *mick*. The senior stoker petty officer, who was acting-chief-stoker, said I was not to keep watch in the boiler room with those wounds, but to be in an ammunition party.

In any case, within a day or two, we proceeded to sea at action stations, into the *Battle of the Java Sea*. After the forward turret incident in January, it was replaced by a single barrel (there were no spare twin mountings), at the Dutch navy yard in Surabaya (Indonesia). The Battle of the Java Sea is not all that well documented, partly I think, as it was (until then), the largest naval defeat in history. The allied fleet of British, American, Dutch, and Australian participants were all sunk, except a couple of Yank *four stackers*.

It was 27 February 1942, when we went into battle. There was some gunfire from afternoon to early evening. Electra was sunk by shellfire about 1830H with about fifty-odd (52 I believe) survivors on or clinging to their *pussers whaler*. They were picked up during the night by US sub S-38, which had surfaced – by chance – right where they were. Those survivors were subsequently dropped off in Surabaya a couple of days later. Around 2130H, a loud explosion occurred, creating a large hole on the starboard side of Jupiter's engine room, close to the after boiler room bulkhead. Before I realised the seriousness of the situation, the port motorboat was jammed to its gunwales with people. The whaler on the starboard side had pulled away full of people, including one dying casualty, who I later learned, was buried ashore. I went over the side, down a scrambling net, and onto a *carley float*; there were 10 of us on it.

We joined up with another carley float holding about the same number of people and the ship's *skiff* containing three or four killicks, as we pulled away from the sinking

ship. During that night the killicks decided we were holding them back and cast us off. They disappeared towards were we figured the coast was. Left on our two carley floats we continued to paddle in the same direction. Next day, the chaps on the other raft became discouraged about making it to shore [as we all did]. It did not seem as though we were making any headway, so they reckoned on being picked up. We parted company with them and continued paddling, although we could barely see the coast. At night, the odd light was visible. At one point, during daylight, each of us had a *hard-tack biscuit* and a drink of water that was in the raft. During that day a Catalina aircraft flew low, nearby. We realized we had been spotted when a crew member at its tail end waved to us. This raised our hopes of rescue, until we (aircraft crew and ourselves) realized the waves were too high. We still had visions of a rescue craft coming for us. Nothing happened and we never stopped paddling!

On into the second night adrift, I was using my steel helmet as a paddle since there were only six paddles. During 1st March predawn, with 30 or more hours afloat, we staggered onto a beach and pulled our carley float up past high waterline, incase we needed it later. The men on the other raft became Jap prisoners and suffered three-and-a-half years of starvation and cruelty. I met a couple of them in Devonport barracks after the war. By now, our party of survivors on the beach was very tired and not sure where we were. I sat down by a bank at the edge of some vegetation to catnap when some black spiders started crawling on me. I quickly jumped up and shuffled around. I fell asleep standing, momentarily, and awoke with my face against the stubbly beard of Rattler Morgan, who presumably, was in the same predicament from exhaustion and fatigue.

Those few moments must have been beneficial, because it was a long time before we had the opportunity to look at the back of our eyelids.

After daybreak, a couple of *Brewster Buffaloes* flew past. One of them climbed steeply emitting smoke. It did a rollover as its pilot baled out and descended by parachute. The plane crashed in a rice paddy and its pilot landed shortly afterwards. I never met him, but he did meet up with the same Dutch army people who helped us get away. We remained for a time on the beach and had another hard-tack biscuit with water from our flagon.

A Dutch army officer came and guided us to the nearby roadway. He piled seven or eight chaps into his jeep and took them to a nearby farm-like place; they were using it as a base. I followed on top of a native donkey cart, loaded with some kind of vegetation, which I now think may have been sugar cane. I made sure I kept the load balanced, so the shafts of the cart did not put too much weight on the donkey's back, yet not too far back to lift the donkey off its feet. We were now all together again in this small cluster of buildings, hanging around its yard, when the Dutch officer decided to take half a dozen – plus the airman who had baled out – into his jeep. That left four of us to use *push-bikes*. He drove off with his human load, promising to return for us as we pedalled in the same direction. We became aware Japs were landing five or six miles up the coast, so it did not matter much that one of our bikes had a flat tire and mine had a loose cotter pin in its pedal crank. Just as we thought the officer had abandoned us, he turned up. With a machete in hand, all the wheel spokes were smashed before heaving those bikes into the jungle ditch. We came to some more army-type vehicles and men, in a tree covered area.

I got a ride in a truck's passenger seat, which had gasoline, barbed wire, and three or four young boys in back. (I think one of them may have been the driver's boy.) We crossed a bridge and saw a biplane flying around. It was a Jap reconnaissance plane and he flew towards us with machine gun firing. Some bullets went into the back of our truck. I could smell gasoline and heard a boy whimpering. We crossed the bridge and there was a kind of front line camp with a large cauldron of rice cooking. The driver was comforting the young boy who had a bullet hole in his collarbone area. The man pinched the wound with thumb and forefinger trying to stop the bleeding. I have often wondered what became of them. An army bus, like a school bus, showed up to take us into Surabaya. On the way, one of our chaps, Joe Henderson, showed signs of sunstroke. He became delirious calling his wife's name, Flo, and we stopped to have him looked at by a doctor at a good-sized house. He said Joe had better stay and get some rest. I have wondered what became of him also.

On arrival at Surabaya, anyone with medical problems or injuries was given an opportunity to see a doctor. I had sulphuric acid burns (which did not seem too bothersome) and a case of *dhobi rash* around my genital area. Sitting astride that carley float, where the rope fastened around the top, had aggravated mine. Dutch medical staff who were quite familiar with this condition, promptly slapped some goldish-yellow salve on, and it cleared up in a couple of days.

Our little party gathered at a place we had been before, on shore leave. It was utilized as a recreational facility for allied servicemen. We were given fried eggs and some clothing. I got a shirt and pair of trousers (well used) which was an improvement over what I was wearing. I do not know who arranged our travel, but we were taken to a

train station, where we boarded. Eventually we steamed out of Surabaya, travelling overnight and through part of the next day, to Tjilatjap (now called Cilacap) with a bit of sleep. Those train seats were wooden slats, like park benches.

On arrival at Tjilatjap we met up with survivors of HMS Electra, who had possibly been on the same train. (They had been picked up the first night of battle – 27 February – by US sub S-38 and disembarked at Surabaya.) One of Electra's survivors was a gunnery-type officer with an injured leg, but he could still hobble along. He got us all mustered. The captain of a Straits Steamship Company coaster which was lying alongside accompanied him. Engine room types were asked to step forward and go aboard the ship, called "General Verspyk", and its captain indicated that if we could crew he would aim to take us somewhere more peaceful. There were a few natives loading coal up the gangway, tipping big baskets of coal into coal bunkers. "General Verspyk" had a Scotch marine boiler, Howden Patent coal feed, and a triple expansion reciprocating steam engine. Coal had to be brought in from bunkers by wheelbarrow and shovelled up into a funnel-type hopper, with a chain-type feed, and into the boiler furnace. *Clinkers* were scraped out from its furnace, cooled, and shovelled into cylindrical containers. These were hauled up on deck by a hand-cranked mechanism and disposed of over the side after dark.

There was a submarine scare at one point during our ten-day journey to Fremantle (Australia). It was said a torpedo had passed beneath us. One of Electra's survivors was a navy cook who did wonderfully well, with help from a very capable lady. She was among the raggle-taggle of passengers. Most were escapees and a good number were Air Force. An army chap was a medic. I think he was Aussie. He had a good supply of

M&B in a valise with a Red Cross emblem on it. The only utensil I had was a small spoon, property of Straits Steamship Company. Our cook had a good supply of dehydrated meat pellets. I do not know what other provisions were available. There seemed to be quite a few tins of condensed milk, which is mostly what kept me going on that journey.

It would have been about 10 March 1942, when we reached Fremantle (Australia) and all Navy-types were transported to Aussie Naval base *HMAS* Leeuwin. I clearly recall an army or airforce character that had managed to scoff a military motorbike and several of his cohorts helped him unload it onto the jetty. We had a jolly good supper in the barracks that day and I was impressed that butter was on our table to "help yourself". Butter on Jupiter was heavily rationed and what little we did have was almost invariably melted. We met up with some other Jupiter's, including a couple of those killick stokers who had cast us adrift. It was an extreme sense of discipline that held me back from physically attacking the one who spoke to me, who was surprised to see we had made it. I still know his name and as far as I know, he still resides in Ivybridge (Devon). I never ever want to see him again. There is no forgive and forget about it! The next stop was 110th Australian General Hospital at Hollywood (between Fremantle and Perth), where I spent a month healing my acid burns. There were various other burn cases in that ward. One American had been swimming in burning oil after his ship was attacked at Darwin (Australia). Another was an Aussie army cook who fell into a large container of boiling soup while painting in the cookhouse. Another Aussie soldier's face and chest was burnt when he had inadvertently removed the radiator cap of his over-heated vehicle. Another chap was badly sunburnt from 9 days on a raft in the Indian Ocean after his vessel sunk.

He came from a hamlet just 9 miles from our family farm in Devonshire. The evening of my arrival at hospital, some journalists, one who was with London Daily Telegraph, briefly interviewed me. My name appeared in his report on the front page of the Telegraph. That was my parent's first indication that I was alive after receiving the dreaded telegram from Admiralty, that their son was posted "missing presumed killed in action."

The local stationmaster at Lapford would be one of the first to get a newspaper off the pile, as they were dropped off at each station on the North Devon branch line of the Southern Railway. He was a bit podgy and took it upon himself to huff and puff his way up across the meadow to our family farm to show the article to my parents. The prayer meeting planned at Gospel Hall became a Thanksgiving on that occasion. Of course, the entire village was aware I was missing presumed killed, since our local Post Office received all telegrams. Word-of-mouth spread more rapidly than any media source. My parents then received a telegram from me (in a day or two) indicating I was safe in Australia. The other Devon chap and I enjoyed *up homers* at Subiaco, with older expatriate *pommies* on Hammersley Road. They had a son in RAAF that we never met and a daughter about our age who we did meet. (Ahem!)

On discharge from hospital, the Navy sent us by jeep to convalesce at a remote seaside dwelling. We did very little except assigned chores, like gather wood to keep an outdoor fire going. Drinking water was obtained by hand from a crude well and was somewhat brackish, so it was well boiled on this outdoor fire before use. There was an outhouse to be taken care of also. Some chaps were obliged to occupy a couple of tents that had wooden floors. These chaps were not allowed to use the privy because they

were *C.D.A. cases*. *Crabs* and other communicable diseases necessitated their using individual crockery, cutlery, and going into the bush with a shovel to perform natural functions. Snakes that got under the wooden tent floors were referred to as whistling snakes because of a whistling sound they made at night. There were bobtail lizards present, measuring maybe 9 to 10 inches long with jaws powerful enough that you could swing them on a stick once they clamped their jaws on it. Over the dwelling's mantelpiece was a long python skin, which was found in the vicinity.

We were quite lucky, having a navy cook doing *stoppers*. He cooked main meals on a cast-iron stove on site. About twice a week, a jeep would arrive with fresh cases to replace any cured ones and provisions including some coal. Occasionally our cook could coax his stove to be hot enough to bake and once did steaks on the stovetop. I think a senior naval medical officer, who would have made a payday out of his arrangement, owned the place. Although sorely tempted, it was unsafe to swim, as Australian waters are notorious for sharks. We had to be content to paddle around close to shore.

Time came when it was my turn to join the returning vehicle to HMAS Leeuwin barracks. I remember passing an area where the stench from sheep was overpowering. Within a few days of more up homers, there appeared a large vessel offshore, the troopship Queen Elizabeth. There was only one Q.E. liner in those days. A stoker with an *A.W.K.,* would have been required to serve in their Australian Navy for two years or duration, whichever came first. As I had no qualification, I was put on Q.E. for passage. My parents were notified I was on HMS Queen Elizabeth. That was the ship sunk alongside in Alexandria by Italian frogmen; so much for Admiralty efficiency or lack thereof. (A year later I received a number of letters that were redirected to HMS Q.E. in

error.) A rather uneventful journey to Simonstown followed. I was assigned the position of tennis deck lookout, with a water cooled Vickers machine gun. I had 5 minutes instruction from a *D.E.M.S. rating* on how to operate and fire off a few rounds.

At Simonstown, we few ratings taking passage transferred to a Norwegian vessel "Bergensfiord." She had arrived full of enemy prisoners from the North African desert campaign. Those prisoners were put on Q.E. to North America (Canada, I believe) and "Bergensfiord" zigzagged at 17 knots all the way to Glasgow (Scotland). This time I was detailed as a lookout, watch-keeping on a *wing/monkey bridge*. Eventually I went home from Devonport barracks on 14 days survivor's leave.

Following survivor's leave I was posted to Combined Ops and once in Devonport barracks, I was accommodated in a wooden hut on the parade ground, complete with underground air raid shelters. During a nighttime air raid, an *incendiary bomb* landed in a hammock and we quickly dragged it outside before the hut caught fire. My Combined Ops posting started out at Hayling Island (near Portsmouth), at a former Billy Butlins holiday camp; except it was no holiday. A couple weeks later I was posted to Roseneath (Scotland), where they used *Nissen huts*. There was a separate washroom hut. I remember noting with surprise that the boiler was automatic and did not require a watch keeper stoker.

Next was Town Camp at Inveraray (on Loch Fyne, Argyll). There was a Canadian camp up the road called Quebec Camp where I was sent to their sickbay to have an ingrown toenail seen to. There was also a small camp accommodating Canadian soldiers at the head of an inlet. Inveraray Castle was eventually taken over by Yanks. We did a lot of practice landings and boat handling, day and night, for about six months.

It rained quite incessantly. Then we moved to Southampton (southern England) en route to Dartmouth, RN College, Brittania.

We boarded a ship called "Ettrick" at Southampton that had landing craft on its *davits*. We thought for sure this was it and anticipated a raid or invasion of enemy territory. At an early morning hour we loaded our kitbags and hammocks in these landing craft. Later that forenoon we realised we were off the mouth of the River Dart (Devon). We entered harbour from the open sea and offloaded our bags onto the jetty. We moved to *RN* College, Brittania, at Dartmouth. Instead of slinging hammocks in these Combined Ops bases, we had two-tier angle iron bunks, on which to spread them.

The night before our arrival the Luftwaffe had paid a visit and delivered an unexploded bomb to a part of the College. We were having *dinner* when a killick seaman came to the end of the table. He had a coil of rope around his shoulders and said, "I want four volunteers: you, you, and you." That included me being in another wrong place! He led us through some corridors to a room where this big bomb lay. A Royal Naval Officer in battle dress was there. He had defused it, but no one thought to tell us. We put rope around the tail fin portion, dragged it along, up a few steps, out through a doorway, and down the roadway. A lorry was waiting with its engine ticking over and a couple of inclined planks up to its back. We rolled the bomb up the planks, tied it down with rope, and the lorry took off. We thought for sure it would go off at any second; not realizing it was *safe*. That bomb was mounted at Brittania's main entrance for a number of years with a plaque indicating it had been "Presented by A. Hitler." It has since been relegated to an insignificant site at the rear of the building and painted with the same white paint as the kerbstones.

At that time Naval Cadets had been evacuated to a safer location around Manchester (Merseyside). We were referred to by the local populace as *Luis Boys*. We did a good deal of practice landings, a lot of it by night, nearby at Slapton Sands (Devon). The entire populace (six villages) were evacuated and their properties expropriated to facilitate exercises leading up to D-day.

With 10 months at Dartmouth I became fairly proficient around the mechanical aspect of various minor landing craft; I was elevated from stoker driver to stoker mechanic; somewhat of a Mr. Fix-it. It was part of my job to get broken engines working. Some craft would be swamped on the beach; their engines would be removed, salvaged, and replaced afterwards. All sorts of damaged propellers, rudders, ramp doors, bilge pumps, and batteries had to be fixed. The Americans became prolific on the scene and most of the Royal Navy chaps moved on.

I was posted with others to Burnham-on-Crouch (Essex). We occupied the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club and operated our landing craft in that area. There was a Royal Marine Camp nearby. Canadian and other soldiers were encamped in surrounding marshes. It was here that my hook came from our administrative jungle and I was promoted to killick stoker. This meant I was soon to proceed to Devonport barracks for leading stoker's course. At Corinthian Yacht Club, we had a quartermaster who owned his own trumpet. He would play a bar of Boogey-Woogey music instead of regulation *wakey-wakey*. That seemed to have a positive psychological effect. I became quite fond of dehydrated meat, which was reconstituted and made into excellent shepherd's pie.

It was time to proceed to Devonport barracks and my killick stoker's course. This was a basic requirement to qualify for petty officer roster. I had signed on for short

service: seven years active and five years reserve. There were several categories for service, but basically either *H.O.* or active service. As it turned out, I did well in this course and passed to become a mechanician candidate. This made me eligible for the fitter machinist course to become mechanician. The catch was one had to be in a position to give the Navy a minimum of 4 years service as a tradesman once they completed a course. The implication was to sign on for extra service time; therefore, I had to complete 12 years. In many cases men had to complete 22 years even though they only had six or 7 years in. For example, if they were *12-year men* with an excess of 8 years completed (including 1½-year course), they had to sign on for pension (which may have been 15 years away). I decided to sign on to complete 12 years. I was then promoted to mechanician candidate with temporary-acting-petty-officer rank. I was still in sailor's bell-bottom and broad blue collar uniform, but with petty officer's *crossed hooks* on my sleeve. On completion of my course, having passed all trades test and academic attainment, we could change to *fore and aft rig*. My trades test and academics were consistent with artificers. We were now eligible for posting to E.R.A. billets, although in segregated messing on cruisers or bigger ships.

I joined the chief stoker's and mechanician's mess on my first ship as a mech., HMS Devonshire. It was a county class cruiser with five or six mechanicians and a similar number of chief stokers. Adjacent was the E.R.A.'s mess with 15 or 20 E.R.A.'s ranging from H.O.'s to a couple of quite senior chief E.R.A.'s. They had to take their places at the mess table in order of seniority. HMS Devonshire was where I attained my boiler room ticket (there were eight boilers – 80,000 odd horsepower), and engine room watch keeper ticket. Next was the steering system ticket and *torsion meter ticket*. As I

recall, that ship was hard graft for me. We still managed to play hard and I was on the winning whaler's crew of engine room chiefs and petty officers.

Our ship's boats, while in foreign ports would normally be secured to the *boom*. Three or four wire ropes were suspended from the boom each having an eye at the lower ends and were about four or five feet from the surface of the water for smaller craft to be secured by a painter. In addition, there would be a *rope ladder* for personnel to either climb up, down, to, or from the boats. Whether you are climbing up or down a swinging rope ladder from a boom, it is difficult enough. You should try it while carrying your toolbox. Most artificers or mechs. had a bag for their universal tools when attending a sick motorboat engine, but I had a small wooden box. One day while going down the rope ladder, I was dangling my toolbox in one hand and manipulating my way down, when the lid flew open and my tools went into the sea. I obtained a bag after that since there was no provision for claims of accidental tool loss. There went a fortnight's pay.

Another time on Devonshire, the engine room chief and petty officer's racing whalers' crew had been away on a training pull before breakfast. I had released my waist belt buckle and while climbing up the rope ladder from the whaler to the boom my undone belt fell in the sea; a sailor's waist belt incorporates a small money purse. It was lost with what was left of my fortnight's spending money. That was at Oscarshamn (Sweden).

The previous week we had been to Stockholm and had entertained the King of Sweden and other VIP's. The ship's crew were extremely well received. Our primary goal on Devonshire was sea training for officer cadets and we did some interesting cruises including West Indies, Scandinavia, and Mediterranean. These cadets would be

working in coveralls down in the stoke hold or store rooms during daytime, then cleanup and be on duty on the quarterdeck during evenings, acting as duty officers. Almost all future Royal Navy Admirals came through that routine.

On one occasion, Devonshire was in West Indies when there was unrest in British Honduras and Guatemala. At Kingston (Jamaica) we embarked supplies (for support of any possible action) which included barbed wire, ammunition, and even a lorry. Then a number of soldiers came aboard and we proceeded at high speed. On that trip, the turbine in the aft engine room had stripped its third and fourth stage blading, but it was operational at reduced power. On the same trip, there was a main gear case explosion in the port engine of the forward engine room. Again, we proceeded at reduced power. We later worked in watches around the clock. The technical details are too complicated to describe here, suffice it to say, Devonshire never did full power afterwards, and continued to proceed on training cruises until *paid off*. By now I was promoted to mechanician-first-class and wore *CPO* cap badge and trade badge on the lapels, as well as chief's three brass buttons on jacket sleeves. A diesel course at Chatham (Kent) followed.

My next draft was HMS Sparrow, a *frigate*, with saturated steam turbines, operating out of Bermuda, on the West Indies station. During the work-up phase at Portland there was an incident involving depth charge deployment. A depth charge was fired with its hold-down strap still attached. Therefore, the charge just toppled over the side, blew up underneath our stern, jolting Sparrow's stern upwards. Shortly thereafter, it was noted that the *cedarvalls* oil-packed stern *glands* were losing heavy mineral oil, from its system into the bilge. It was decided to stop in Plymouth (en route to Bermuda), to

take on more barrels of heavy mineral oil to replenish further leakage. Upon examination, it was revealed that shock had caused the sealing flange to be forced away from its mating surface, thus causing an oil leak. This was rectified immediately, with no further problem in this transatlantic journey.

Sparrow subsequently made extensive cruises to East, West, and South America, as well as West Indies. Places and events were too numerous to be related here. One incident worthy of note, was on South America's West Coast, Sparrow was stopped at the latitude and longitude of the *Battle of Coronel*. A wreath was cast on the sea in tribute to British sailors lost in the sinking of the cruisers Good Hope and Monmouth, by the German cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau on 1st November 1914. Our admiralty decided to phase out the Bermuda dockyard to save money, so that cut our time down to 1½ years instead of the anticipated 2½ or 3 years. We departed for *Guzz* in spring 1951 with a sea going target in tow all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, to Devonport, via a fuel stop in Azores, only to be scrapped. One has to wonder at such bewildering Admiralty decisions. By this time, I was within striking distance of finishing my 12 years service and thinking my next posting would be my last. [How wrong I was!]

A draft to stoker's training base HMS Raleigh at Torpoint (across the Tamar River from Devonport) was not hard to take. I was employed as an instructor with another mechanician where we managed *Jack's hard lump shop*. Trainee stokers were introduced to basic fitting and hand tool usage, such as hammer and chisel, hacksaw and file. Some disused ship's machinery was acquired, which I set up for instructional purposes. The recruits could see a boiler with stop valves etc., a steam turbine opened up to view the insides, and various other opened pieces of equipment.

The Korean War in progress, our government decided military personnel were to be retained for service beyond their expiry date. A sailor's *demob* date was determined according to manning situations of individual branches. Consequently, instead of being posted for demob center and discharge I was drafted back to sea to the battle class destroyer St. James. This ship was deployed to Ireland, Mediterranean, and finally to the 1953 Coronation Review at Spithead (Isle of Wight, near Portsmouth). There was a sabotage incident at departure, when the main cables to the steering motors were severed. The culprit knew there would be no current through those cables until shortly before departure. It was a simple matter however, to install emergency cables. Our only delay was waiting for an investigation team to come aboard. They came with us, interviewing crew members, but I never did hear what became of it. Returning from Royal Review, St. James paid off into reserve. All machinery was opened up, treated with a special preservative spray, subsequently cocooned, and its humidity controlled. I went with other chaps who were going on discharge. A naval officer met with each of us to shake hands and say, "thank you for your services."

At the demob center (I think it was at Worthing) we could choose civilian attire (which was quite good really), including cufflinks and *trilby hat*. There was a requirement for engineering types in *RCN*, and after some consideration, I decided to sign on for a five-year hitch. I went to Ennismore Gardens (London) for an interview with a liaison staff member who was a senior engineering officer. Twelve years experience in marine engineering was just what was required. It took 3 months to sell my house in Devonport, so I hired on as a fitter in the dockyard, with a gang comprising of former naval mechanicians.

As soon as my house sold, I sailed for St. John (New Brunswick) with wife and infant son in tow and a guaranteed job. We were on Empress of France from Liverpool U.K. to St. John New Brunswick. From there, we crossed by ferry to Digby and on to Halifax by train where we stayed at Carleton Hotel. (It was purchased many years later by Atlantic Chiefs and Petty Officers Association.) We obtained an apartment to rent at Lakefront (Maynards Lake, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia) and I was duly posted to leadership course at Cornwallis base to become canadianised.

Then came my draft to *HMCS* Algonquin. Our first port of call was Devonport where I had left only earlier that year. I spent 2½ years on Algonquin, mostly under that great skipper "Spike" Hennesey (who later retired as Admiral). One voyage was so rough, the top half of the mast broke off. On another, we held a beard-growing contest. One time Algonquin was on exercises with frigates and somehow HMCS Buckingham collided with our stern and peeled off the steel plating, with our number 224 firmly wrapped around her bow, like a license plate. We went into Bermuda where wire cable and canvas were rigged as a temporary stern, covering the tiller flat. The numbers 223.9 were painted on it by some dibby-dab humourist. With steering gear unharmed and functional (although water was up over the *rams*), the motors and Hele-Shaw pumps were safely above water. We sailed back to Halifax and up St. Lawrence River to Davie Shipyard at Lévis (across from Québec City) for refit. That was a fairly pleasant experience although it was away from home and family.

Following refit, it seemed as though we were never in home port. It came as a relief to be posted to HMCS Cape Breton which was then permanently alongside as a training facility for artificer apprentices. HMCS Cape Scott was tied up next alongside

and both ship's workshops and classrooms were used for training, until construction of Technical Artificers Training Establishment at Esquimalt was completed. Apprentices had been allowed to dismantle and reassemble a lot of these ships' machinery for experience. It was obvious a lot of it was put back together upside down or inside out in the process. We found this out when it was decided to deploy Cape Breton to the West Coast. I became a member of the steaming party involved in scrambling to get everything operational which was duly accomplished. We steamed her around to Esquimalt where she operated for many years afterwards. The West Coasters refused to take over at first. We spent a few days and evenings (after supper), getting rid of years of accumulated junk by chucking it over the side and into a couple of *gash barges*. We heavily sprayed insecticide to kill off millions of East Coast cockroaches. About two-thirds of our crew then had their choice of how to get back to Halifax on *T.R.O.*; not so for watch-keeping E.R.A.'s.

There was a diesel *Bangor* class vessel called "Brockville" that was brought out of reserve and made operational for the journey back through Panama to Halifax. We carried out necessary preparations, which included putting a fan in the engine room ventilation for passage through the tropics. We proceeded via Manzanilla (Mexico) and Panama Canal. At Manzanilla, our sickbay *tiffy* proclaimed the shore water unfit to replenish our [fresh] water supply. When we reached Panama our water had become brownish from being in ship's tanks since leaving Esquimalt. We could still make tea out of it and with a supply of pop and beer, we survived all right. Heading up towards Halifax we encountered a hurricane around Bermuda and proved the seaworthiness of those Bangor class vessels as well as the men who sailed them. Shortly after arrival in

Halifax, "Brockville" paid off and it must have been the shortest commission of any Royal Canadian Navy vessel. I never did understand the politics of that episode.

Most of us checked into Stadacoma barracks and almost immediately, I received a *pier head jump* to HMCS Swansea, a frigate. That would have been early November 1958. After approximately 3 months, I realized this was counting as shore time, while the guy on compassion grounds, was being credited with sea time. I could not see any point to this and requested to join Swansea to count the sea time on my record. Engineering drafting was a bit of a joke those days. The other guy was back on board in no time and I was drafted to a sister ship (frigate) Lanark. *Knee action turbines* propelled these vessels. We [engineers] seemed to be forever adjusting bearings – particularly on the odd weekend we came into harbour – so there was virtually no home life.

I have inadvertently omitted a period here in the early 1960's when both "Lanark" and "Cayuga" spent separate summer periods on the "Great-Lakes" – Up the seaway all the way to Thunder Bay, "Head-of-the-Lakes" (formerly the two cities of Fort-William and Port-Arthur) – almost two-thousand miles inland from Halifax and families. The purpose was the training of Naval Reservists from the various "Divisions". It meant being away from home port from May to September, back in time to go on N.A.T.O. exercises in European waters until late December. The journey traversing the various locks of the St. Lawrence Seaway was interesting although quite boring at times. The reservists were referred to as "shads", as their period of active-duty on board ship lasted only two weeks, then they would be replaced by another lot. "Shad flies" are a species of moth with a brief life-span of only a couple of days, prevalent in those parts. The ships decks would be covered by morning with shad-flies, which were swept overboard before breakfast by the sailors.

Reservists would be required to serve their two weeks "active", and return to their civilian occupation the rest of the year, attending drills and other instructions during evenings and week-ends, being rewarded by a regular sum of money as a "retainer". During summer inland, Canada can become very warm, frequently in the 30s°C. On one occasion the ship visited Bay City in Michigan U.S.A. and we were given a brewery tour. The first bus was quickly filled, and by the time it returned fro the remainder the tour was over, but there was still time to join in the "hospitality". Everywhere we went the natives were very friendly and hospitable. I remember coming in to Kingston on Lake Ontario, it had been extremely tough, comparable to almost anything experienced on the Atlantic Ocean.

That evening I encountered a former (pre-war) peace-time work-mate at the milk-factory at TOTNES in the U.K. He had served in the British Armed Forces in WW2, and had subsequently emigrated with his family to Kingston where he became employed at a local dairy operation. He was also part-time bar-tender in the Officers mess of the Reserve-base there.

SMALL WORLD

Many operations were known as chequers. We would be at sea for monthly periods, looking for Russian submarines, coming into harbour to avoid paying crews extra, after a month at sea, outside Canada. A weekend in harbour was taken up with making good any defects, so outings with wife and kids were rare. That is life in the real Navy! I began to despair of ever spending quality time with my family so requested off Lanark in hopes of changing that situation. To give credit where due, my request was given favourable consideration.

I was posted to HMCS Cayuga, a tribal class destroyer, undergoing refit at Halifax Shipyards. This provided a temporary respite, greatly appreciated. Inevitably, the machinery was brought back to life and usual seagoing operations resumed. An act of sabotage occurred and *RCMP* were brought in, but no one was charged. The prime suspect was rewarded with a permanent shore draft to his home province. Here again, I find difficulty understanding any philosophy applied. Cayuga paid off and was relegated to reserve in the Black Squadron, located across harbour at Shearwater (a Naval Air Station near Dartmouth, Nova Scotia).

Next, I became an instructor at Stadacoma barracks engineering school. After about a year a cry went out for submarine volunteers. Apparently, RCN had dozens of people spread around Royal Navy subs for years, training for when we got our own boats. (Submarines are referred to as boats.) When the first boat, Ojibwa, was approaching completion, they somehow wound up back in general service. As a result I became part of our submarine service. That was in 1965.

After initial training at HMS Dolphin (submarine base in U.K.), my first boat was H.M.Submarine Cachalot operating mostly out of Devonport. She only had one

operational engine; another was scheduled for replacement. One night I was duty E.R.A. in wintertime with snow and ice about. A young lad slipped and fell off the depot ship's accommodation ladder. His head must have landed on the ballast tank because he died in hospital that night. On another occasion alongside, an "outside wrecker" and "tankie" had been cleaning and treating the sanitary tank and had removed a toilet to put a hose down. The hose was connected to a hydrant on dockside which they omitted to disconnect at quitting time. Around 0200H, the "trot sentry" doing rounds found water on the control room deck. The hose leading into the sanitary tank had been turned on by some scallywag causing Cachalot to assume a slight list to port. It proved worthy to have frequent (and regular) night visits to ensure the vessel was not sunk by morning.

Time came around for the engine replacement operation. This meant the pressure hull required an aperture, cut to size, to facilitate removal of the defective engine. Installation of its replacement was an unusual event, but not unprecedented. That boat must have been jinxed because after the original engine was removed and the new one installed, the soft patch (as it was known) had to be replaced using a specialized welding routine. This seemed to take many days and late nights. Early one morning (around 0400H) the trot sentry found the engine room smouldering. When the fire department arrived, the entire engine room was ablaze, and for a second time, the boat would have been lost right there. It was possible however to control and eventually extinguish the fire, mainly through the aperture in the hull that was not completely closed. The whole *donk shop* was a terrible mess. Shortly after, I was posted back to Halifax to join our Canadian sub Ojibwa. I am not aware what became of Cachalot but assume it would be written off.

Ojibwa had recently transitted the Atlantic Ocean submerged in *snort* mode and was a bit of a showpiece around the East Coast following a succession of cruddy RN *A-Boats* on loan. We did a lot of sea time on there. The standard practice was to sail on Sundays to be on station halfway to Bermuda, for when the fleet came looking for us on antisubmarine exercises. We were a familiar sight around Bermuda, Puerto Rico, and a few other Godforsaken places around the Caribbean and north Atlantic.

We endured usual ho-hum stuff associated with submarine activities except for a couple incidents. Once, a *flexible* sprung a leak at 600 feet. Ojibwa was brought to a shallower depth to reduce water pressure coming into the engine room. The defective segment was blanked off and subsequently repaired with Aero-quip, which at the time was unheard of in RN subs.

Another incident happened to me personally. I was going through a bad patch on the marital scene and was not sleeping sufficiently. (When does one ever get enough sleep on a submarine, except during ultra quiet routine!) I passed out one day from exhaustion. After performing ablutions I turned sideways to reach a towel and there was this kind of crick in my left side. I did not feel too good and went to lie down for a moment on the mess cushions. It quickly became obvious to those present that I was unconscious, although I quickly came around. The first thing doc did was to stop my *tot*, which was the very thing I needed most of all. The next development pleased everyone, except the skipper, who was a bit of a tyrant. Doc insisted I be hospitalized, which meant bringing the boat alongside in Halifax; we were only about 50 miles offshore at the time. With toilet gear in hand, I walked over the brow to the waiting ambulance where a

stretcher was on the ground. I was required to lie down on the stretcher, which seemed a bit daft to me, but that is how it had to be according to the medics

At Naval Hospital, I slept day and night for four days, except awakening for meals. The diagnosis was a muscular spasm. There seemed to be no ill effects and I was released to rejoin the boat. Ojibwa had made headlines (before my time) in a British tabloid, the Daily Mirror, indicating some discontent onboard. The story adversely implicated its skipper and one day he came to the chief's and petty officer's mess to let us know he suspected the story had emanated from that source. He clearly expressed his displeasure. Nevertheless, boat and crew turned out to be normal, happy, excellent, and dedicated. One stoker played guitar and sang humourous songs. I can even recall certain chief and petty officers bursting into song, to the surprise of some officers and other ranks.

By virtue of my branch qualifications and time in service, my chief E.R.A. rate was promulgated. It was decided I should revert to general service, whereupon I was appointed to HMCS Assiniboine as chief of engineering. This was to be my last seagoing appointment. The turnover from my predecessor included the journey to Montréal, representing the federal government, to participate in the opening ceremonies of Expo '67. A couple years of *NATO* duties at home and abroad, then to my terminal posting ashore at Halifax.

I was installed behind a desk at Maritime Command Headquarters, inheriting the exalted title of *SOA & A* Never before having held a desk job, it was difficult to say the least. I received a Suggestion Award for a proposal resulting in a considerable reduction of paperwork, in the submission and progression of A & A proposals. The monetary

award of $65 was taxable, but satisfaction of its inception was the greater reward. My cohorts at South Street Headquarters arranged a super retirement luncheon at Windsor Park chief's mess to conclude my service career that spanned 30 years; so into retirement in December 1970.

During many of those years of eternal watch-keeping and foolish exercises, I had frequently promised myself that when retirement came I would stay in bed every day until 1000H and did just that throughout rehab leave. Then reality came when my income suddenly decreased to pension level. With dependants to support, I was not able to survive. I signed on at the employment bureau. Almost immediately I was hired as a fitter at Dartmouth slips, a subsidiary of Halifax Shipyards Ltd. It was not much of a job for a retired chief, but I felt responsibility and stress would be bad for a person's health and I had no desire to be in charge of anything at that stage. In coveralls and hard hat, any Navy guys coming off dockyard duty craft never recognized me. I continued to frequent the chief and petty officer's mess (being a life member) and attended their social events from time to time.

One snowy Saturday evening I went to get some fish and chips near my home and sensed, I was about to be attacked. I promptly landed a swift punch to the side of my assailant's head, causing him to spin around and fall to the ground. As I proclaimed there was more where that one came from, he got up and darted behind a nearby residence. When I came to wield knife and fork at the supper table, I realised my sore thumb was fractured. A visit to downtown medical center for an x-ray confirmed the diagnosis, necessitating a cast.

On Monday morning, I was obliged to phone the shipyard to terminate my employment. Then, one day at home, with a king-sized cast on my forearm, there was a call from a former navy friend who was aware I was now retired from naval service. Apparently, his boss was desperate for someone with engineering expertise to look after mechanical maintenance at Scotia Square, which was owned and operated by Halifax Developments Ltd. I was hired over the telephone (regardless of the cast) to start Monday. The idea was to become familiar with the equipment and building layout during my healing process. It was not long before a belt or two or a pump gland needed adjustment and I found myself getting into the nuts-and-bolts despite the cast. The cast gradually became dirty on its outside and smelly inside, so I persuaded one of the shift operators to assist me with its disposal. There was some stiffness at first and I soaked that hand in really hot water. I never was in contact with that doctor; he must think I still have it on!

There was not a plumber on staff but there were hundreds of toilets in those high-rise office towers. Invariably I would do a rush job repairing a few flush-o-meters at day's end on my way to the parking lot. The head honcho was a wartime convoy commodore who I got along with on first name basis, a mutual respect. My straw boss was a retired chief stoker. The charge hand electrician was a retired navy chief. One of the shift operators was a retired engineering petty officer. A retired chief looked after the Trade Mart complex and heading all the cleaners was a retired chief. So I felt quite at home there for about 6 or 7 years.

During the 1970's, I was visiting Ontario as frequently as possible to see my son in the Mounties (RCMP). My daughter had also moved to Ontario, working as a

laboratory technician. Both my children had been educated for several years in England where their mother had been resident. I decided to quit Nova Scotia and move to Ontario in 1978.

I soon obtained employment at York University, Toronto, as a millwright. Work there was a piece of cake. There were five millwrights, about the same number of electricians, carpenters, plumbers, control mechanics, a couple of locksmiths, steeplejacks, and so on. The next five or six years was permeated with excellent camaraderie. It was my first exposure to unionized work environments; I can not say I hold entirely with union tactics, but it seemed to work okay there. My workmates got together to hold a wonderful party in honour of my retirement. The science department's machine shop foreman was a talented impromptu pianist and WWII Royal Navy *matelot*. We rendered many a raucous song on that ocassion. I retired [from there] a year early at age 64. There was no university pension plan in effect back then, but I had a considerable accumulation of sick credits, for which half pay was due on termination. Most guys called in sick on Fridays or Mondays and received full pay.

Money I derived was used to finance my trip around the world where I visited many places that I never managed to go while in naval service. That included Taj Mahal in India, Thailand temples, a bit of China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Since then I have visited Egypt's pyramids and tombs, the former Yugoslavia, and travelled right across Russia and back. I did a couple of motoring tours of continental Europe, Switzerland's Alps, and Italy's Leaning Tower of Pisa. Back home again in North America, to cap it all, I rode my touring motorcycle across Canada and USA from coast to coast at age 75. Australia and South Africa were revisited in 1997.

Due to their political circumstances, I have omitted visiting South America. It will remain that my personal relationships will have to be the subject of another story. It has been a great life. My greatest hope now is to be around for a little while longer and to be forever grateful for each dawn of another day.

GLOSSARY

12-year men: men that have signed on for 12 years of naval service.

A.S.D.I.C.: Anti Submarine Detection Investigation Committee

A.W.K.: Auxiliary Watch-keeping ticket

A-Boats: submarine class; all names in this sub class started with the letter “A”.

Bangor: class of minesweeper/escort vessel

bears: older hands

boom: a heavy wooden pole – like a telephone pole – from the ship’s deck was swung out and secured at a 90° angle to the ship’s side.

bunting tossers: signalmen

C.D.A. cases: Caught Disease Ashore cases

CPO: Chief Petty Officer

carley float: a raft with copper segments, covered in canvas with rope fastened around the top where a person’s buttocks would sit astride; holds up to 12 persons.

cedarvalls gland: a protective collar on propeller shafts preventing ingress of seawater.

clinkers: ash and partially fused residues from a coal-fired furnace.

crabs: pubic lice

crossed hooks: the petty officer rank badge consists of two crossed anchors.

D.E.M.S. rating: Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships sailor.

davits: crane-like device for suspending/lowering boats.

demob: demobilization/retirement; discharge of service.

dhobi rash: similar to modern jock itch; quite common in the tropics and aboard ship, due to inadequate rinsing of underwear and scarcity of fresh water.

dhobiing: act of doing laundry

digs: lodging

dinner: sailor's term for lunch

donk shop: submarine engine room

draughts: British term for euchre

E.R.A.: Engine Room Artificer

flexible: part of the generator cooling system in a submarine.

fore and aft rig: peaked cap with collar and tie

four stackers: four funnels

frigates: warships smaller than a destroyer, but larger than a corvette.

gash barges: garbage lighter/barge

Guzz: mess deck term for Devonport

H.E. shells: High Explosive shells

HMAS: Her Majesty's Australian Ship

HMCS: Her Majesty's Canadian Ship

HMS: Her Majesty's Ship

H.O.: Hostilities Only

hard-tack biscuit: a kind of hard saltless biscuit that was an emergency ration stored aboard ship and on life boats and carley floats. In a Newfoundland dish (brews) still made today.

incendiary bomb: designed to start fires

Jack's hard lump shop: consisted of a hunk of square steel stock about 1½ inches by 2½ inches long. It had to be reduced in size to 1 inch square by 2 inches long and fitted accurately into a cast-iron block with a 1 inch square hole through it. Its degree of accuracy determined the recruit's mark.

jackstay transfer: a cable suspended between ships steaming in parallel with a pulley

system used to transfer men and materials while still proceeding at identical speeds.

jacobs ladder: collapsible ladder made with chains, wooden steps, and a rope through the center of all the steps

keloid scars: permanent, thickened, raised scars, resulting from my acid burns.

killicks: leading hands/stoker/seaman/cook.

knee action turbines: saturated steam reciprocating engines (up-and-downers)

lorry: British term for truck

Luis Boys: after Lord Luis Mountbatten who was then head of Combined Operations

M & B: a brand name for the cure all before penicillin.

Matelot: sailor (french)

mick: hammock

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

navvies: labourers

Nissen huts: semicircular cross section structures of corrugated steel.

packet: unpleasant experience usually resulting in being sunk.

paid off: reverted to reserve status

painter: a boat's securing rope

pier head jump: sudden and unexpected posting to a ship under sailing orders.

ping: detected a submarine

pommies: English immigrants

push-bikes: British term for bicycles

pussers whaler: a multipurpose naval boat

RAAF: Royal Australian Air Force

RCMP: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCN: Royal Canadian Navy

RN College: Royal Naval College

rams: hydraulically or pneumatically operated pistons.

rope ladder: a ladder comprised of rope swung down from the ship's boom to another boat below; metal eyes on the lower end are used to fasten the ladder to the lower boat for usage; similar to a jacobs ladder, but not as sturdy.

SOA & A: Staff Officer Alteration and Additions

safe: disarm a bomb

sparkers: wireless operators

stoppers: stoppage of leave

T.R.O.: Travel Route Order

tiffy: the sick berth attendant (also engine room artificer)

torsion meter: determining shaft horsepower at any given speed

tot: daily issue of 2½ ounces of dark rum (150 proof) discontinued in 1970.

trilby: (British) a man's soft felt hat with an indented crown (usually seen on men's heads in the old movies)

up homers: an invitation to stay in a private home; meals, bed, etc provided along with sightseeing and/or other available activities.

wakey-wakey: reveille/wake up call

wing/monkey bridge: an exposed extension to the midship's command position