

THE SEAMASTER



1955

The
OFFICIAL JOURNAL
OF THE
TORPEDO AND ANTI-SUBMARINE
INSTRUCTORS' ASSOCIATION
(1955)

Headquarters :
H.M.S. Vernon - - Portsmouth

AUG 1955

THE TORPEDO AND ANTI-SUBMARINE

INSTRUCTORS ASSOCIATION (1955)

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The Official Journal of the Association Founded in 1955.

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Chairman	C.P.O. C.F. Firbank
Vice-Chairman	P.O. R. Taylor
Treasurer	C.P.O. V. Connor
Secretary	P.O. R. Wraith
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Committeeman	P.O. R. Kinard
Editor	P.O. A. Latus

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Headquarters: H.M.S. Vernon, Portsmouth.

Secretariat Review

Dear Members,

This is the first magazine that has been published on your new machine, and as the Chairman states, the first magazine for some time. Now that the printing machine is "in it's stride," it is hoped, (and I can see no reason why not) to produce the the magazine in good time in future. We may even manage to produce the "Seamaster" every other month - who knows?. Still, at the moment, that is just a thought. What I would like though, is for any member who thinks that he may have an article that we can publish, to send it. No doubt you will all have some comments to make on the quality of the magazine - Well, let's have them, whether they are complimentary or not. I realise that the standard hardly approaches any of the "glossy" magazines, But then Rome was'nt built in a day either. At least, it is an improvement on previous magazines and therefore a step in the right direction. In time, I envisage a first rate magazine, with the advertisements (for which we have tenders about to go out) offsetting the cost of laying out the magazine professionally

Personally, I think the Offset - Litho. Machine has great potential and it will be an asset to the Association.

The reason why I have included the minutes of the last A.G.M. in this edition, is because I think that it throws the most light on the affairs of the Association and will bring those not present at the meeting, up to date, using a minimum of space.

Don't forget then, let me know your views.

A.E.Latus.
Editor.

Dear Member.

No rule books have been issued during the past two years, or more, due to the Association rules being out of date in the present membership books. So none have been issued. Membership Cards will be reprinted and every member will be sent one within the next two months.

Difficulty has been experienced, to date, with members' addressess. It is therefore requested that all those members changing their address, inform the Association on doing so. This will enable us to get their mail to them in the shortest possible time.

Vernon Warmfire will be commencing on Families Day, Wednesday, 11th. August. and it is hoped that our 1964 collection of £146. will be topped.

Advertising in the magazine. If you know of a firm who wish to advertise, please contact the Association Office with the particulars.

R. W. Wraith.
Hon. Sec.

VICE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

It was with regret that Ladies night was cancelled. There were in fact a grand total of only 43 people going. This would have meant a subsidy of about 30/- per head.

The Annual Dinner will be held at the Rock Gardens on the 18th November, 1965. This is the TENTH year of the Association so lets have a good turn out at the dinner.

We had a good outing this year. It is already time to start thinking about the next one. Any ideas?!!

The job of Vice Chairman can be made easier if he knows the sort of social functions you would like, so please let him know.

This is my last letter as Vice Chairman, and I would like to say thank you to all who have helped and supported me during the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years that I have been in office.

R.G. TAYLOR
Vice Chairman

Dear Members,

The last minute cancellation of the 'Ladies Night' is yet another sign of the lack of interest of this Association in Social Matters. Of all serving members within Vernon there were only 44 names for attendance at the Dance. This number includes wives and friends. At the same time the committee are besieged by inquiries of 'When is the Club going to be opened?' How! One might ask can support be expected for the intended Club when there is such a lack of it for the Annual Ladies Night Out. Well, spare a moment and think about it.

As the retiring Editor failed to produce the Easter issue of the Seamaster before the Association purchased the Rotaprint Machine, the current Editor decided to print this edition on it. The committee trust you will be pleased with the result. A private 'job' has already been done by the machine and was highly successful. It is hoped to increase the Association income before long.

The Vice-Chairman's report will cover the Social events to date so I will make no comment on those, but I will point out that Rear Admiral T. Maxwell the Director General of Naval Training has accepted an invitation to be Guest of Honour at the Annual Dinner and Dance on the 18th November at the Rock Pavilion Gardens, Southsea. So once more on behalf of your Association I ask that you will make every possible attempt to attend and try to inform the Secretary that you will be there.

Remember, "It is so easy to criticise, but so much harder to do it yourself".

C.F. Firbank

At the time of going to press the Audit report has not yet been received. It will be included in the next "Seamaster".

into use when the present stockpile of covers have been exhausted. Any comments?.

The logo is a black and white emblem. At the top is a crown containing three sailing ships. Below the crown is a banner with the text "T.A.S.I.'s ASSOCIATION". In the center is an eagle with its wings spread, holding a bomb in its talons. Below the eagle is a submarine on the water, with a lightning bolt striking it. The entire scene is framed by a laurel wreath. At the bottom is a dark rectangular box with the year "1955" in white.

(1955)

**Headquarters :
H.M.S. Vernon - - Portsmouth**

A PORTRAIT

Sometimes, as we walk through the corridors of Creasy West building, we must glance at the portrait which hangs opposite the West end stairway on the first floor. The lined gaunt face which stares back may not strike many of us as being of any importance now, but in that man rests the early history of the T.A.S. Branch.

The first time that many of us saw that portrait must have been during our induction into the branch at "Osprey", when it hung in the "Walker Memorial Room", and it was at this school of knowledge that the young Lieutenant Walker took his first steps in his chosen field as an Anti-Submarine specialist. The year was 1921 and the branch was in its infancy and needed strong forward looking men and "Osprey" was lucky indeed to find such an able Officer as he.

The young Walker had made his mark as a Cadet in Dartmouth by becoming King's Medalist and his further training period in H.M.S. Cornwall had provided even more proof that here was a young man to be reckoned with. It was with an already established reputation for hard work and play that the newly promoted Midshipman Walker presented himself aboard the battleship "Ajax" in June, 1914.

Despite the war, the general training of the Midshipmen continued and Walker was able to show signs of promise in all that he attempted.

Following his promotion to Sub-Lieutenant, Walker now received his first experience of "small ships" and served in "Mermaid" and the destroyer "Sarpedon" and it was in this ship that his life-long interest in A/S was born.

Frederick John Walker was not to be left for long in his destroyer and his next move, which followed his marriage to Miss Eileen Stobart in 1918, was to another battleship. This time it was to "Valiant", as a Lieutenant for watch-keeping duties. The strict discipline and social life, that was so much a part of a battleship's routine in peacetime, did not appeal to him at all and it was not long before he was trying all methods to be transferred back to destroyers once more. One way of leaving the ship would be to go to a Specialist School and a year after volunteering

for an Anti-Submarine course, he was appointed H.M.S. Osprey and now began his long association with the branch.

Never one to hold his own council, Lieutenant Walker would ardently argue any point with which he did not agree and he soon became known for his forthright opinions in the field of A/S Tactics. However, he did well on his courses and was generally well liked by the men as well as by his brother officers.

There now followed a period of four years ashore during which Walker worked hard and played hard and among his sporting interests included rugger, swimming and boxing, but it was as a hockey player that he really shone. He played for the Dorset County XI and was picked to play for the West of England and only another sea-going appointment stopped this.

The years between 1925 and 1930 were spent as a Lt. Cdr. in "big ships" as the Fleet Anti-Submarine Officer and this period of his service only appears to have been highlighted in the boxing ring when Walker became the Middle-Weight Champion of the Mediterranean Fleet.

The normal waiting time in the zone for promotion was almost over when Walker received his "Brass Hat" and a Command of his own. This ship was the "Shikari" and as she was fitted with all of the latest A/S devices she was ideal from his point of view. This was not to last for long, unfortunately, and it was Commander Walker's next appointment which gave him his first adverse report.

The "Falmouth" was the yacht of the C-in-C, Far East and if any job was unsuitable for Walker, this was it. He was altogether too outspoken and really hated the social commitments which go with such a Command as this and so it was not surprising that reports to this effect reached the Admiralty in London. Nevertheless, it did not seem to have a marked effect because his next appointment was to the "Valiant" as Commander, but even in this he could not readily settle down and once more the trouble appears to have been his dislike for "big ship" routine.

In 1937 an appointment more to his liking came along

and this was as Commander of "Osprey". Here was worthwhile work to be done. Something on which Walker could expend his boundless energy. Even here. However, all was not well. Not enough people in high office felt the urgent need for good Anti-Submarine work and much of Commander Walker's time was spent in trying to convince the authorities that the U-Boat would be a key menace in time of war.

The outbreak of war in 1939 found Commander Walker in the post of Staff Officer (Operations) at Dover. This was at least Anti-Submarine work but a small ship command would have been much preferred by this Commander who had now been passed over for any promotion to Captain.

The U-Boat menace was really showing itself by September 1940 and it was at this time that Walker was appointed to H.M.S. Stork and became Senior Officer of the 36th Escort Group. Here was something that he understood. Work which was to Walker's liking. This Group, whose Officers were mainly newly entered from the R.N.V.R., had to be welded into a fighting team. A short work-up and into the fray. They were not yet a team, but at least everyone of that company knew what was required and they had a most industrious and diligent leader.

As the long days at sea in war passed quickly by, so the 36th Escort Group became more closely knit into a team and finally, under Commander Walker's expert guidance, an attack on a Submarine could be undertaken with a minimum of orders and each man in the team knew exactly what was to be done. Walker's plan of campaign against the Submarine was to attack immediately contact was gained and to hold the Submarine until it was destroyed, and it was he who first saw the value of Hunter/Killer Groups to seek out the U-Boats, but few shared his enthusiasm. There were not enough ships available to provide escorts for the convoys, without having to withdraw some of them for an experiment which might not prove fruitful. A great many of his ideas did not receive official approval but this did not deter Walker from carrying them out and one feels that

and some of the tactics used in that time of peril are the basis of those in use today. It was probably Walker's insistence, above all else, which brought about the fullest use of aircraft in A/S work and most of his tactical ideas seem to have borne fruit.

A well earned reward came in July 1942 when Walker was at last promoted to Captain and in October of that year he was back behind a desk once more, this time as Captain (D) in Liverpool, and again the steady flow of requests for a sea appointment commenced.

It was not until the end of March 1943 that the long awaited appointment arrived. This time it was as Senior Officer of the newly formed 2nd Support Group and the ship, of course, was H.M.S. Starling. Walker's instructions were to seek and destroy the enemy submarines and on April 28th his ships became the Hunter/Killer Group which he had always advocated. This group saw more action and sank more submarines than any other and this was undoubtedly due to the leadership of Johnny Walker. Patrol followed patrol and each brought further success and soon the Group became famous. Its tactics were followed by other Groups and these became the standard methods of attack and the policies so long recommended by Captain Walker were no longer frowned upon by his superiors. They were successful, and that to Walker was their own reward.

The Group was still operating in July 1944, but the long hours spent on the Bridge and the weight of responsibility and decision were now taking their toll. During a short spell in Liverpool between patrols Captain Walker complained of giddiness and humming noises in his head and was admitted into R.N. Hospital Seaforth, and at 0200 on Sunday 9th July, 1944 this fine leader passed away.

All ranks, from Ordinary Seaman to C-in-C, felt the impact of his death. All grieved over the loss of an outstanding Officer and friend and many hundreds paid homage to this gallant man at the service held in Liverpool Cathedral. Admiral Sir Max Horton read a Solemn Acknowledgement that clearly indicated the

esteem in which Captain Walker was held. Shops and offices all over the city were closed as the cortage marched to Liverpool Docks and here the body was taken aboard the destroyer "Hesperus" and the body of Captain Walker was committed to the seas he knew so well. This Officer, who was reported to lack powers of leadership, had changed almost every concept of A/S Warfare and had done it successfully with his gallant direction of the operations. This man, who had even considered giving up his Naval career, had with his brilliant, if somewhat unorthodox methods, laid the groundwork for much of the tactics in use today and had won him no less than four D.S.O's and had been created a Companion of the Order of the Bath. This, for a man who lacked certain qualities according to the pre-war Navy, was not a bad record and one feels that there is still much to be gained from the inspiration accorded us all by his example. When next you are walking through the corridors of Creasy West look at the portrait hanging there and reflect on the glory which this gentleman, Captain Frederick John Walker, C.B., D.S.O.***, R.N., has brought to this the T.A.S. Branch and remember with pride the Officers and men who so ably served with him.

R.C.Loftus.

NEW ADDITIONS

P.O. and Mrs. Akehurst.....A Girl, December, 8lb. 12oz.

P.O. and Mrs. Herbert.....A Boy, January,

P.O. and Mrs. Carver.....A Boy, March, 7lb. 9oz.

The article "A BONE TO GNAW" in a previous edition of the 'Seamaster' was quite a meaty one but I would like to challenge the writers theory.

In the first part I whole heartedly agree with him in that the Senior Rates should be somewhat super efficient as they have a wealth of experience behind them, but the system by which a man reaches the highest rank on the lower deck is not necessarily the fairest if we follow his suggestions.

First let us examine a few facts. What are the duties of a Seaman C.P.O. at sea today? If he does not hold an instructors Rate, he is the Buffer or some such equivalent. We all know what his duties are.

Secondly, the Seaman P.O. His duties vary slightly from Messdecks to Boats or Captain of a Part of Ship. What happens if the Buffer falls sick, even the Coxswain could be included? Who fills the vacancy? The Seaman P.O. Why? Because to become a Seaman P.O. he had to be recommended, pass an examination and satisfy a selection board that he is capable of carrying out the duties expected of him.

To reach the rank of C.P.O. he goes on a waiting list and is periodically recommended by his Commanding Officer who surely can assess whether or not he has the capability to carry out the duties of a Buffer, such as evolutions and running the husbandry side of a ship. This knowledge is only gained by experience anyway.

In short the duties of a Seaman C.P.O. can be confidently carried out by any efficient and experienced Seaman P.O.

The writer suggests introducing a competitive system for promotion by examination. What form would this take? I would say that all subjects are covered by selection and examination for P.O. and as the saying goes "The proof of the pudding is in the eating". If the pudding goes sour then we throw it away.

The writer also mentions a Standard Committee to tour the fleet but I don't think Commanding Officers would take kindly to this scheme.

His idea of periodical re-examination is not really fair to any Senior Rating who has worked hard and proved himself, re-examination is for "Slackers" not "Slaves".

The handicap at present is the "Long Wait" and even following the writers suggestions, would this be shortened by very much?

So, gentlemen, you have my views. Any others? I think that there is still some meat left.

A. Hovenden.

T.A.S.I.'s ????

The name, or initials T.A.S.I. have been in force now since 1947 when the T.A.S. branch was formed and divorced from our Electrical friends.

No longer does one see in Walker Wing, the old familiar plaque, I.A/S, but now in deference to the word Sonar it is simply called I/S (Instructional Sonar) Section.

What of our initials now? Will we be T.S.I.'s? The newly formed Weapons/Radio branch take pride in telling us that they are the technical minded and we are just doers or users. Within the next few years, mining and minesweeping will also go to our contemporaries in the Diving branch. Where does this leave us?

My own opinion is just this, Gunnery Instructors will not be called G.I.'s very much longer, but revert to the state where, in about 1898, they had a course in torpedoes and included them in their weapons when onboard ships.

After all this, we are left with one subject, SONAR. Having thought about this very objectively, I cannot see, even with A.D.A. the Sonar being purely automatic for quite some time yet and I think, therefore, that within the next ten years, we will still need comparatively large numbers of Sonar Operators, and therefore Instructors.

However, the Sonarman of a few years hence will be of a much higher category, both mentally and academically because he will have to, among other things, know how to programme a computer, not just be familiar with Ray tracings and A.S.W.E.P.S. but know everything there is to know about them. Bathythermographs will be a more intricate scientific instrument and vastly different to what they are now. Add to this of course that he will still have to be fully conversant with all types of breakdowns, alas, all too frequent today, and I hope that the picture to emerge will be a highly competent, skilled technological marvel.

We will cope, of course, we always have done, but for all the younger members of our branch I would say this: If you see yourself as a future S.I. (Sonar Instructor) start now. G.C.E. in Mathematics and Science will almost certainly be a necessity and the rewards will most certainly match your status.

Much has been said about our Association title, T.A.S.I. Association (1955), and I suspect that before I leave the service we will have changed this too (dare I predict?) Sonar Instructors Association (1968). The wheel will then have turned full circle and we will be back to the end of 1964 when the Electricians took the old T.G.M. (Torpedo Gunners Mate). Association and the T.A.S.I.'s took the old S.D.I. (Submarine Detector Instructor) Association.

W.G. Lissamer C.P.O.

Editors Note:- How about the new title of Sonar Supervisor, or are the initials to melodramatic.

" WANT A HOBBY "

The first of a series of articles on Home Made wines.

Winemaking is a reasonably cheap and very rewarding hobby.

It will provide many happy and interesting hours and the following series is designed to "whet your appetite".

First of all you will need a few basic items, but do not, at the outset buy a lot of expensive equipment.; it is better to start making wine with what you have - you probably have in the kitchen some of the essentials - and then to acquire the rest by stages as the necessity arises. For a start you will need some kind of boiler, and if you can lay your hands on one that will hold 3 - 5 gallons it will be ideal. Failing that, you can make do with a one or one and a half gallon saucepan. (if you can pinch one off the missus)

Avoid containers of iron, brass and copper, which may be affected by acid and impart hazes and flavours to your wine. Use only metal containers of aluminium or unchipped enamelware. You will also need a large crock in which to do your soaking, again, one of 3 - 5 gallons is ideal. Tall cylindrical crocks are most convenient, since they take up less floor space and are easier to cover. You probably have a polythene bucket already, which are excellent for winemaking.

You will also need one - gallon fermenting jars. The ones with "ear" handles can be bought for a few shillings, and corks to fit can be got for a few pence. The next thing that you require is a Fermenting Trap, one for each fermenting jar. These only cost a shilling.

A supply of wine bottles can be collected during the fermenting period, but do NOT use squash or sauce bottles. It is also false economy to use old corks, which may infect your wine, always use new corks and soak them in a sterilising fluid before use. A large polythene funnel is most useful, as is a nylon sieve and a supply of muslin for straining purposes. Do not forget to obtain also a supply of Campden tablets (Ordinary fruit preserving tablets), which have many uses in winemaking and a rubber tube for siphoning the wine off the yeast deposit. A colander, scales, wooden spoon and measuring jugs you will already have in your kitchen.

These are the bare essentials but enough to make a good wine.

Two examples of cheap, easy to make wines are -

CARROT WINE:- Ingredients.

6lbs. carrots	1lb. wheat
1 gallon water	Yeast
4lbs. sugar	2 lemons
1 tablespoon raisins	2 oranges

Method:

Wash the carrots well but do not peel. Put into the water and bring to the boil; then simmer gently until carrots are very tender. Use the carrots for food, and strain the water. Make up to one gallon. In a bowl put the sugar, sliced oranges and lemons and pour over the hot liquid. Stir until sugar is dissolved, and then stand until lukewarm. Then add the chopped raisins and wheat and sprinkle a level teaspoonful of granulated yeast on top. Leave to ferment, closely covered, for 15 days, stirring daily. Then skin, strain and put into fermenting jar. Fit trap and leave until it is clear and stable. Then bottle. The wine is better if kept for almost a year but great strength of character is needed to do this. Enjoyable after 4 or 5 months.

TEA WINE:- Ingredients.

4 pints tea (the leavings in the pot)	2 lemons
1 1/4 lbs. sugar	Yeast

Method:

The "key" to the recipe is; 5oz sugar to the pint of tea. Save the leavings from the teapot daily until you have accumulated four pints. It should be noted that this should not be strong tea but rather the weaker tea one obtains from the second pot. When you have the half gallon, bring it to the boil in a one gallon saucepan, add the sugar, and boil just long enough to ensure the sugar is thoroughly dissolved. Pour into a crock (polythene bucket), add the juice of the lemons, half a teaspoon of yeast nutrient and, when cool a pinch of dried yeast. Keep closely covered in a warm place. When the first vigorous ferment is over, stir, transfer to a fermenting jar, and fit trap. When it begins to clear siphon off into bottles.

MORNING DEPARTURE

The 1st Battle Squadron moored in the Grand Harbour of Malta prior to World War II, was always an impressive sight.

The soft sheen of the light grey enamel paint formed a lustrous background to the scintillating brasswork and well scrubbed woodwork and canvas in every battle ship. One could always see the brown skinned, white clad sailors silently moving about their tasks on the snow white decks.

Such men were fiercely proud of their ships whether it be the "Revenge", "Ramillies" or sister ships, or the Flagship of the Med. Fleet, the "Queen Elizabeth".

As you can well imagine, the competitive spirit was intense, and every action taken by any ship was critically viewed by the others present.

But it is also true to say that when the two and a half year commission was nearing its end the impending departure from Malta and the Med. Fleet was tinged with sadness. This too, was coupled with the determination that the final drills etc. carried out by the ship would be of the highest order of perfection in the matter of efficiency. Commanding Officers would congratulate their Ships Companies when safely out of Harbour, with the unmistakeable attitude towards the distant Fleet of "That showed 'em....".

When our turn came to go, everyone was a trifle sad. All except "Blackie". Blackie was of course our ships Blacksmith who rarely appeared on the upper deck and then only on his way to the buoy to secure or let go the ship when entering or leaving harbour. His idea of heaven was simply and always, to get back to U.K.

The great day finally arrived, and by 7 a.m. the ships were ready. All boats in and awnings down. Gangways up and in, main derricks secured. Everything done with smooth precision. A few minutes later the Royal Marine Guard and band paraded on deck resplendant in No.1 uniforms. A bugle call echoed across the still waters of the harbour and all hands doubled smartly to "Stations for leaving harbour".

All the eyes, telescopes and binoculars of the Fleet (and it WAS a Fleet in those days) were searchingly turned upon us.

The permissive order to proceed signal hung limply from the Flagships starboard yardarm. From our mast billowed an outsize in Paying Off Pendants. On the top of our "B" Turret, a giant cockerel was displayed surrounded by the Fleet Championship Trophies for Boxing, Soccer, Water Polo, Gunnery and Sailing. We were indeed "The Cock of the Fleet" about to make our grand departure in our usual highly efficient manner.

As 7 bells rang out, the flags fluttered down, the Commander bellowed through his megaphone "Let go". Eyes on all the ships and the windows and packed doorways of the waterfront lodging houses, looked expectantly at us.

With one crisp blow of his hammer, Blackie knocked the slip clear and the foc'slemen began running in the wire. Suddenly the slip rope jammed. Nimbly Blackie swung onto the buoy and deftly freed the erring wire.

In a matter of seconds all hands were in straight lines of gleaming white No.6 suits and the bugle shrilled out in salute as we began to pass the first of the long line of ships. The water astern frothed and leapt as we slowly and majestically got under way. Salutes were exchanged as we passed each ship in turn. On the quarterdeck gangway of the Flagship, the Captain stood taking the salute.

Suddenly he started making urgent signals in the direction of our stern. The men on our quarterdeck looked astern, first inboard and then out board. A shudder of horror seemed to ripple through the ship.

In the distance, on the now rapidly receding buoy was a frantically gesticulating, overalled figure. We had left Blackie on the buoy

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I did not find out what happened to Blackie till about 3 years later, when I ran into him by accident.

He reached U.K. two and a half years later!

Carl Hayman.

Friday 13th February, 1942 was a grim day.

On the Island of Singapore the situation was very tense. Imperial Japanese army troops were advancing towards the city itself. Their Air Force were bombing harbour installations and A.A. gun positions in addition to the front line activities. The R.A.F. had no means of hitting back, so apart from the heroic efforts of the Royal Artillery anti-aircraft batteries, the Japanese aircraft were unopposed.

Across the harbour hung large black clouds of smoke from 'go downs' along the harbour front, rubber burning by the ton. Also from the Island of Paulo Samba came smoke of the destroyed oil storage tanks.

Sometime during the forenoon of this day the decision to evacuate the remaining personnel of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force was made. This decision was followed by urgent activity on the parts of 'Rear Admiral Malaya' and C-in-C, Far East Air Force with their respective staffs.

To begin with the remaining Officers and ratings of their two services had to be allocated some means of sea transport. This term 'sea transport' is appropriate as at this time only 5 'Fairmyle' launches, the Grasshopper and Keddah, 2 water boats, a small coaling boat and several sailing yachts appeared to be left. There were of course odd native boats of various descriptions.

At mid-day the staff cars of R.A. Malaya entered the Keppel harbour gates, the occupants were surprised to see people suddenly dashing in all directions, and were even more amazed to see explosions appear several yards in front of the leading car. All brakes on, the occupants sat nervously waiting. For what? None would say. They of course realised they had run smack into a bombing attack on the A.A. battery near by. It seemed incredible that when the smoke had cleared away, the cars were still whole and not one of them injured. Luckily the pattern dropped was of the 50lb. anti-personnel type. These bombs had a small lethal radius.

Proceeding to the jetties, the ratings in the cars unloaded the stores and the small bags, and embarked them aboard M. L. 310.

M.L. 310 at this time was commanded by Lt. Bull, R.N.N.Z.N.V.R. He had one other officer, namely Sub-Lt. Henderson, R.A.N.V.R. The coxwain was a Leading Seaman; the total "ships company", officers and men numbered 15.

Having stowed all stores and baggage, the cars were driven back to Fort Canning, which was at this time the British Army Headquarters.

At about 1800 the Admiral, Rear Admiral Spooner, R.N. gave orders for officers to embark onboard their boats. The Admiral with Commander Frampton departed from the Fort Canning for M.L. 310 at about 2000. Arriving onboard the Admiral met Air Vice Marshall Pullford, R.A.F. (C-in-C. Far East Air Force), who, with his adjutant, had just arrived. The M.L. was ready to proceed but the admiral delayed sailing until he had received a message from the G.O.C. Malaya.

It was well past 2130 before the G.O.C.'s message arrived. He was Captain Stonier of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, A.D.C. to General Percival. The message resulted in the M.L. slipping about 2300 with the total now 44 Officers and Ratings, and "Charlie" the Chinese cook. This number was made up in the following manner. 15 M.L.'s crew, Admiral, S.O.O. and Staff of 11, A.V.M. his adjutant and Staff of 4, and 12 other ranks of various units. Also a Sub. Lt. R.N. and a temporary Warrent Officer R.N.

As the M.L. got under way and headed South a general feeling of relief was felt. During the waiting period alongside Laburnum Steps most of the ratings had begun to wonder if they were ever going to escape from the Island. Thus nerves were very keyed up, by the time the order to slip was given. Had any person onboard known of the malestrom they would be pitched into within the next few days, they would have stayed in Singapore to suffer less hardships. During the first half hours passage most of the personnel stayed on deck to watch the burning Islands,

the large oil storage on the island of Samba was burning fiercely, lighting up the area for miles.

It was now that a series of incidents occurred. The steering chain broke: The engines were stopped for some twenty minutes whilst repairs were effected. During this time the launch drifted South West, and within a few minutes of her getting under way again she went aground. Everyone was ordered aft and when this failed, the seamen jettisoned the three pounder ammunition and then the barrel of the three pounder itself. But the M.L. was bows onto a shelf in a rapidly ebbing tide.

When it was realised that nothing other than a tow would move the M.L. the order was given to relax.

At 0530 the skiff was launched and a kedge shipped into it. The Sub-Lt. got his fingers pinched between the side of the M.L. and the rubbing stake of the skiff. The injury was very severe and of course painful. He was brought on board and given attention this was in the main, 'a very stiff tot'.

As soon as the skiff was hoisted inboard the M.L. got under way, the time now about 0630.

At 0830 the M.L. dropped anchor in the lee of a neighbouring island. A party went ashore to buy fresh food, these were led by the Wing Commander who had lived in Malaya for many years and spoke several dialects of Malayan and Javanese.

During the day the remainder of the party spent a lazy time, some resting and some swimming over the side. The injured officer spent a miserable day as his injury was causing him great pain.

As the sun set, anchor was weighed and the M.L. headed towards Banka Straits.

Dawn on Sunday 15th showed a group of seven islands on the port bow. By 0800 the M.L. was in the shelter of the most western pair, and anchor was dropped again.

It is time to mention now that the Admirals General Evacuation Orders directed all vessels (there were 54 in all, of which only 5 escaped the patrol net), to shelter during daylight and proceed only at night. And of course 'Radio Silence'.

By this time the Admiral was greatly concerned at the condition of the Sub-Lt. So at about 1000 the Admiral ordered the telegraphist to raise Palembang radio

and ask for medical assistance on arrival. When no reply was forthcoming, an attempt was made to raise Batavia! Again no reply!

Thus at noon a conference was held on the Bridge between the Senior Officers R.N. and R.A.F. and the fateful decision was made to sail at 1400.

As the anchor was being weighed a boat with two Javanese came alongside. One of the natives held up a letter which he was requesting be delivered to the address in Batavia. Unfortunately the Admiral was not in the mood to favour this request. It was unfortunate. As if the Javanese had been questioned, a lot of danger might have been averted; this will become apparent as the narrative proceeds.

The M.L. was once again soon under weigh, and stood out of the islands.

Twenty minutes later several mastheads were sighted, and shortly after the hulls of a cruiser and four destroyers were plain to see with the naked eye. To everyone's astonishment they were Japanese. It had been hoped the ships would be Dutch. Several of the 'Navy Types' hoped that the small M.L. had not yet been seen and they might even yet escape. But the answer came within seconds, when a shell passed overhead. The launch turned and headed back towards the islands at full speed. Two destroyers were seen to be heading at speed towards the launch. Within five minutes from the first sighting of the warships, a squadron of Javanese aircraft were observed flying towards the launch.

With the exception of the Captain, lookout and Browning guns crew, all personnel took shelter below deck. Not that this would be of much use, but at least they were out of the way.

Only one of the aircraft made any attempt at machine gunning, but it was not a very accurate run and as the launch was firing back and the destroyers were closing with their gun fire direction improving, the aircraft broke off and rejoined the squadron.

By this time it was apparent that the Japanese had picked up the W/T transmission and were on the lookout, with aircraft at the ready. From Palembang!

Fortunately at this time the islands made a back-ground to the launch from the destroyers resulting in a break in shelling. As soon as the launch rounded the first point of the nearest island the destroyers were lost to sight. The Admiral informed everyone that as soon as the launch was close enough inshore everyone except the launches crew were to jump over the side and take cover in small groups on the island.

A small channel was seen separating the beach from a shoal of rocks and the launch headed through. A hundred yards off shore even whilst weigh was on the passengers dropped over and scrambled ashore, and within two minutes 28 men had vanished from sight. The 29th passenger, the Wing Commander had remained behind as he said he spoke Japanese and would interpret for the Captain of the launch. The decision made by the Admiral was not callous as one might think, but a calculated one. The crew remaining were not to disclose that either the Admiral or the Air Vice Marshall had been onboard. These officers would be a great capture to the Imperial Japanese Navy.

The destroyers on arrival a few minutes later sent a boarding party over and having searched for any arms or papers, smashed the feed pipes of the engines and wrecked the W/T equipment.

The Captain was then informed that the crew would be taken prisoners, but would be left on the island until later. (Much later it turned out). Meanwhile the others were hiding in various points of the island, mainly where they could keep the warships in view. And there they remained until the following dawn not knowing the true position. They observed the withdrawal of the destroyer but only one or two could see the launch and not knowing if a guard had been left, they kept to their individual hiding places.

The island that the party had landed upon was approximately one mile at its widest point. It lay almost North and South with the Southern point facing the Banka Straits, which was a distance of about sixty miles away. The island had two small bays, one on the West side, and one on the East. The Eastern one was the bay where the M.L. had made its approach, and now lay.

Towards the Northern end of the island was a hill rising some two hundred feet, whilst at the other end was another about one hundred and twenty feet high.

Monday morning dawned and the remaining personnel in the undergrowth were called out from their refuge, and told to muster down on the Eastern beach.

As they arrived in their two's and three's they noticed that laying back from the beach were a number of Attap Huts in various states of disrepair. Appetising smells permeated the air around the largest hut. This then became the focal point of the gathering, as the smells made the newcomers aware of their hunger. A rough greeting was exchanged between them and the crew of the M.L. A snack of sausage and beans backed up with ships biscuits was quickly devoured and enjoyed.

Soon after the Admiral ordered the ratings to fall in for his address. The party sorted themselves out and assembled into an orderly parade. Royal Navy on the left, Army on the right and the Royal Air Force in the middle. The Admiral then started his speech which was his appreciation of the situation the party were now in. The Admiral had not spoken for more than two minutes when the engines of an aircraft were heard. Looking up a Jap twin engine bomber was seen heading directly at the island, in fact straight towards the party. They needed little encouragement to scatter and dive for cover. Machine gun fire was heard as the aircraft passed over and it was seen to be banking steeply and turning back. A second run was made with more machine gun fire, this time the people who had a reasonable view saw that the aircraft was firing at the M.L. The aircraft made a full circuit of the launch and followed up with a circuit of the island. Satisfied with his 'brave show of force' the aircraft then flew away to the West.

After an hours wait the Admirals Coxswain was sent to round up the party. Whilst engaged on this task the Petty Officer was surprised to see a Javanese approaching him down a path from the northern hill.

(To be continued)

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING 1965.

The meeting was opened at 1338 by the Chairman C.P.O. Lissamer in the presence of 37 members and a full Committee, with the exception of the Secretary who was absent on duty at Portland. The Chairman welcomed the members attending from outlying Establishments and Ships.

ITEM 1 Minutes Of Last Monthly Meeting

In the absence of the Secretary, the Chairman read the minutes. Proposed by P.O. Akehurst and seconded by P.O. Watson that these be accepted. Carried.

ITEM 2 Chairmans Address

The Chairman opened his address by thanking all Members for their support over the past year and also gave his thanks to the Committee who have all worked hard to make the year a successful one. He went on to say that the Association appeared to be on an upward trend and hoped that this would continue in the future. The Chairman said that he was pleased at the way in which the younger Members had been giving their support to the Association and said that just because they were only just qualified did not mean that they had nothing to offer. All were full Members of the Association and each had a voice in the proceedings and running of it. C.P.O. Lissamer said that the Annual Dinner, held in October last, had been very good but that not many of the serving T.A.S.I.'s had attended. This had also been the case with the Ladies Night. He hoped that this would be remedied this year and that a majority of Members would support these functions.

Nothing had yet been heard of the Annual Cricket match versus the Hendon Police, said the Chairman, but there was still plenty of time before the season started and it was hoped that this would be a well attended game. While the Chairman was on the subject of Dinners, he said that he would like to suggest that the Guest of Honour for this year's Dinner should be Rear Admiral M.N. Giles, M.P. as he had been the intended Guest for last year, but had been unable to attend. It was then proposed by C.P.O. Lissamer and seconded by C.P.O. Curtis that the Guest

of Honour for this years Annual Dinner be Rear Admiral M.C. Giles. Carried.

ITEM 3 Vice-Chairmans Address

P.O. Taylor, the Vice-Chairman, spoke first about the Annual Outing which is well in hand and will this year be to the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough. The two proposed dates at the moment are the 18th or 25th June and this was at present being arranged with the P.R.O. of Farnborough. The arrangements to hold a Social Evening following the Outing were also in hand with the Committee of the R.A.E. Social Club and all seemed to auger well for a good day out. It was then stated by the Vice-Chairman that some members of the Farnborough team would be invited to visit Vernon at some convenient time prior to the outing in the same way as had been the Hendon Police last year. The Vice-Chairman then went on to tell Members of an offer for tickets to see a T.V. Show recorded at Southampton Studios. He said that several dates had been offered and that the Association had asked for 36 or 42 tickets for the show on either the 9th or 16th March. He said that as soon as the tickets were available then a list would go out for those wishing to attend.

ITEM 4 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, C.P.O. Connor, stated that the copies of the last three audits and also the Books were available to any Member wishing to scrutinise them. He then gave some figures as a guide to the Association's finances. (The full financial report is contained elsewhere in this Journal).

ITEM 5 Election Results

There being only one candidate for the office of Chairman, C.P.O. Lissamer having withdrawn, C.P.O. Firbank was declared the new Chairman of the T.A.S.I.'s Association for the year 1965.

There was only one nominee for the post of Editor and so this position will be filled by P.O. Latus.

The result of the Postal Ballot and Ballot held at the Meeting showed the Secretary for 1965 to be P.O. A.W. Brown.

These Members were declared duly elected.

ITEM 6 New Commonwealth T.A.S.I.'s

After much discussion it was proposed by C.P.O. Ashton, seconded by P.O. Bailey, that all Commonwealth T.A.S.I.'s become Full Members of the T.A.S.I.'s Association on application to the Secretary.
For: 31; Against: 7; Abstained: 4. Carried by vote.

ITEM 7 Amendment to Rule 13

C.P.O. Curtis stated that it was always difficult to get Members to put their names forward for election to the Committee and the attitude seemed to be that the Committee is doing a good job so why change them. This was not a healthy attitude and new blood was always required. He hoped that new ruling to stop a Member holding a post for more than one year would force other Members to put their names forward. He also said that the names should be forwarded at least three months beforehand in order that a proper Postal Vote might be held. C.P.O. Firbank said that he would like to place an amendment to this proposal in order that the Treasurer might be exempt and able to hold the post for two years if re-elected. This would assist in giving continuity to the affairs of the Association and would be an asset.

The amendment, proposed by C.P.O. Firbank, seconded by P.O. Herbert, that the Treasurer be exempted from the proposed change to Rule 13.
For: 30; Against: 4; Abstained: 3. Carried by vote.
Vote on the motion to Amend Rule 13. Carried.
Rule 13 now reads: The Association shall have a Committee of Officers consisting of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, Editor and two Committeeman. All Officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting and at the September Extra-Ordinary General Meeting by Ballot, and shall hold office until the next General Meeting. The Chairman, Treasurer, Editor and one Committeeman be elected at the Annual General Meeting in February. The Vice-Chairman, Secretary and second Committeeman be elected at the September General Meeting. No Officer of the Association shall be eligible to serve for more than one consecutive term of office with the

exception of the Treasurer who may be elected to serve for one further term at the Annual General Meeting. If an officer shall die, resign or be unable to carry out his duties for any reason such as draft, etc., then the Committee may appoint a Member to fill the vacancy until the next General Meeting when the vacancy will be filled as a result of a majority vote of Members present at that meeting. Any officer may be removed from office by a resolution of a Special General Meeting. In the Absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman will deputise at all times.

ITEM 8 Social Engagements

The Vice-Chairman stated that a Social Evening and Darts Match had been arranged with the Royal Naval Association (Gosport Branch) to take place on Friday 26th, February, 1965. He said that he felt this would be a good evening and all Members were cordially invited, together with their Ladies. He also informed the Members that an invitation had been received from the R.N. and R.M. Gunnery Instructors Association for a Social and Dance to be held on that same evening.

ITEM 9 Sick Fund Payment

The payment of monies to Members who are in hospital was discussed on the floor and it was generally agreed that this was necessary and should be continued. It was also stated by the Chairman that it was essential for Members to let the Secretary know if they were going to hospital. Not so much to claim the benefits but to keep the books up to date and to know the whereabouts of all Members. It was proposed by P.O. Hovenden, seconded by C.P.O. Firbank, that 10/- be paid from the Sick Fund to Members in hospital after one month and that a further sum of 10/- be paid at the end of each fortnight thereafter that a Member remained in hospital. Carried.

ITEM 10 Introduction of New Committee

The newly elected Members of the Committee were introduced and the Chairman, C.P.O. Firbank, replied to the introduction. He pointed out that the Association was now 10 years old, but he hoped that the theme of his term in office would be to look forward and not back. The new Chairman said that it was time for all

the members to take greater interest in the affairs of the Association and to do their bit in assisting with the running of the Committee. He went on to say that he expected to keep to the essential matters at the Monthly Meeting and so reduce the time factor. He thanked the Members for their support and hoped that he would be able to count on it throughout the coming year.

ITEM 11 Club Rules

The Chairman re-introduced this topic by stating that he had received a letter from Commander Johnston regarding the opening of the Club. This letter was read to the floor. It was stated in this letter that the Club would be open to limited membership and that all Serving T.A.S.I.'s would be full Members providing that they were either C.P.O.'s or P.O.'s. This was a decision of the C-in-C. All other Members of the Association would be granted Associate Membership. The letter also said that a set of Rules were to be drawn up for onward passage to the Commander, First Lieutenant and Captain. This had been done and the proposed rules were read to the Meeting. The Chairman stressed that these were seven simple rules to start the Club off and they could be amended as necessary when the Club was opened. It was stated that the Excise Licence had been approved and the only hold up now was in actually obtaining the premises and these were shortly to be vacated. The Chairman stated that a lot of work would be needed to get the premises ready and he hoped that Members who could give their time to help would do so. It was expected that the Club would be ready for its Grand Opening sometime in April.

ITEM 12 Any Other Business

P.O. Akehurst asked about the issuing of Rule Books to newly joined Members. C.P.O. Lissamer stated in reply that the Rule Book was in the process of being amended and they would be issued as soon as this had been done.

P.O. Taylor suggested that the Tote Draw should be extended by sending blocks of tickets to outlying Establishments and even to Foreign Stations, in order that any T.A.S.I. wishing to do so could run a Tote Draw locally. The idea would be for Vernon to supply the tickets and for whoever ran the Draw to send in part of the proceeds.

There being no other business the Chairman declared the Meeting closed.

THE MATELOTS LAMENT.

I must go down to the sea again
To the glorious sea and the sky
So that I may drink to my hearts content
Neat gin and a bottle of rye,
And all I ask is a Make and Mend
And maybe a crate of scotch
A freindly patrol to bring me off
And an oppo to keep my watch.

I must go down to the sea again
With the tall ships running by
And volunteer for a foreign port
Where morals don't apply.
And all I ask is a maiden fair
And a night out on the Peak,
In a quiet spot right out of the way
And fortnightly pay once a week.

(With apologies to the Poet Laureate)

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