

HMS Phoebe Association Newsletter

April 2008



Good day to you all, we start this newsletter with a heartening bit of news, after a long, long spell in hospital Jim Pounder is retutning home, he does not have the use of his legs so is bed ridden for the time being, but at least will be home with his family. We his health will improve as the days go by, Good luck Jim from us all.

Unfortunately I am the bearer of sad news as well. In the last newsletter I said that Jack Summerfield had resigned because of his health. I am sorry to say Jack crossed the bar suddenly on the 21st January, the funeral was on the 8th February.

Now for the reunion, we are hoping for more members to book in for the May event. It is a bank holiday so there is no rush to get off on the Sunday, make it a long weekend. For us to get these reunion weekends at reduced rates we need more members to attend, as it is; the number attending is dwindling, it may come the time when we will have to think of joining in with another association, we don't relish that happening and I hope it never does, but we need a increase in attendance. Next year we are at Eastbourne, we hope, going to a place we have not visited before, will see an increase in numbers.

In the last newsletter I made a mistake regarding the coach trip, it will be on the Saturday and will be going to Warwick and Stratford on Avon. The coach will leave about 10am, it will stop at Warwick to let anyone get off who wants to visit the castle. It will then carry on to Stratford, on returning it will make a pick-up at Warwick. There is quite a lot to see and do in Stratford. I will look for some entertainment for Sunday evening. Remember that this is the month when you complete your reservation, you have paid £25pp as a deposit now we want the remainder which is **£84 pp** for 3 nights, send it to the treasurer and make payable to the HMS Phoebe Association, and not the hotel.

ALL PAYMENTS MUST BE IN BY THE 23rd April.

Treasurer: Mrs L Pavely - 3 Bridge Close - Didcot - OX11 8DU

Please phone me, 01235 211501, to reserve coach seats .

The AFPG (Armed Forces Pension Group) are holding a rally and a march on Parliament on Thursday 3rd April. It is in aid of ex armed forces who did less than 22 years and therefore did not receive a pension.

Unbeknown to them these service men and women all had money deducted weekly from their pay for the pension fund. From March 1975 all branches of the armed forces will receive a pension if they serve for five years or more. An **Early Day Motion** is an expression of MPs wishes- what they would like to see take place. EDMs are rarely debated but show the strength of support a proposition has.

EDM 102, launched last November by Colin Chapman MP says:

"This house believes that all ex-servicemen and women should be treated equally in the payment of pensions, regardless of when they served in Her Majesty's armed forces".

So far this year only 70 MPs have signed up, last year over 200 MPs signed. - **ask your MP to sign EDM 102 now!**

More info on line at < WWW.afpg.info >

There must be thousands of ex service men that this relates to, I cannot see any government agreeing to pay a pension, but maybe a one off payment could be forthcoming, but don't bet on it!

Lil and I went to the Federation of Naval Ships Associations reunion at Seaton on the Sth Devon coast. It was a holiday camp consisting of chalets, a indoor pool complex and various other buildings. Coaches were laid on to Exeter on Saturday and Honiton on Sunday. We decided to go on the Honiton trip. This was to the RBL Club who made us quite welcome for a lunch-time session. There was entertainment every night at the camp with the inevitable bingo to start with, followed by the camps resident band and show boys & girls who gave three very good performances. Evening meals were not great, most ate from the excellent salad bar. House beers, wines and spir-its were 50p each from 7pm. But only a cheap make of white rum was 50p, dark rum was normal price. (I had my own). It was an enjoyable weekend, and we will go again.

Some small associations use the facilities for their ships reunions, which is a good idea if an association gets too small.

Unfortunately I lost my digital camera during the weekend.

I apologise for black lines and smudges appearing on some of the pages in past newsletters, it was due to the photo-copier requiring a service. I have now had it serviced so hopefully it will be ok for another two years?

I am very short of material, if anyone has anything that would do to put into the newsletter let me have it, I have had a couple of promises but not yet received anything, so here is something to help fill the space??

E-Mails: When forwarding an email, just before you hit the send button, highlight all the names and addresses that the email contains and hit the delete key, now send it. Another thing you can do when you are sending or forwarding emails to lots of addresses is to put just one address on the To: line and all the other addresses on the Bcc: line. The emails will arrive at each address individually. Hackers are not really interested in what you are sending, it is the email addresses they are after, they make money selling them to spammers.

Our Standard was on parade again for the 'Channel Dash' parade, this time at Ramsgate. S/m Derek West, standard bearer for the event writes:

War veterans joined local dignitaries for a ceremony at sea to honour the Channel Dash heroes. The Mayors of all three Thanet towns, as well as Second World War Survivors, laid wreaths in the English Channel to honour those who died in the 1942 incident. They were the pilots and gunners of the six Swordfish biplanes who attacked three German warships attempting to return to German bases by "dashing" up the Channel.

Four ships attended the ceremony - the minesweeper HMS Ledbury, Ramsgate's own Dunkirk veteran 'Sundowner', a Thames pilot ship and the Royal Navy Patrol Boat HMS Raider.

As the boats left, they were saluted by the standards flown from the west pier of the harbour, including one paraded by five-year-old Stephen Stanford, the Channel Dash Association's youngest member.

(See cover Photo).

The following extract is from the diary of S/m Howard Butler who joined the Phoebe at Barrow in Furness in July 1953, when the ship returned from Brooklyn after undergoing her second major torpedo repairs.
(Received from George Butler, brother of Howard).

HMS Phoebe July 14th 1943, at Barrow in Furness.

August 2nd left for Scapa Flow. August 3rd arrived at Scapa.

Saturday 14th August sailed with Home Fleet and the King.

Sunday 15th HM the King & Queen embarked for Thuro, N Ireland.

Wednesday 18th went to sea to meet up with American Squadron.

Arrived back in Scapa on 19th.

Left Scapa Flow August 31st arrived Plymouth September 2nd.

September 3rd Covering force for raid on French coast, at 'Action Stations' for 9 hours arrived back on Sept 4th.

Sept 5th, went within 2 miles of French coast, steamed along coast for 2 1/2 Hours looking for German convoys, no results! At action stations all night, no sleep, arrived back Sept 6th very tired, had just one all-night sleep in ten.

Sept 6th sailed for East Coast of France, steamed along it, then West Coast for a distance of 5 miles, saw raid by our bombers, still very tired, little sleep during day.

Arrived back 7th September, little excitement, had an all-night sleep for a change! September 8th again sailed for coast of France, steamed east to west, expected action as Jerry sent up flares, but no action.

Arrived back a.m. September 9th. Everyone very tired, ready to fall asleep anywhere. A good sleep at night.

All day in harbour, left at night September 10th.

French Coast again, arrived in very bright moonlight, expected action of all sorts, coast quite visible, Jerry signalled from shore with a light but nothing happened, up all night as usual, very tired.

Sept 11th stayed in harbour

Sept 12th, expecting to go out again tonight.

Left Plymouth for Gibraltar September 28th, arrived October 1st.

Left Gib for Algiers October 3rd. Arrived Algiers Oct 4th..

Oct 5th left for Malta arriving on 6th.

7th Oct left for Sicilian coast, arrived Augusta same day between Syracuse and Catania. October 8th left Augusta for Naples, arrived on 9th exactly one week after Jerry got out, we are now just 22 miles from the front line, we can hear the guns etc very plainly. Expect to do some bombardment to assist the 5th Army's progress. Vesuvius 1 mile away, flames and smoke seen clearly.

Left Naples for Alexandria on October 11th and arrived on 13th Oct.

Left on Oct 14th to do patrols off the island of L'Eros, at sea for 2 1/2 days,

On the night of 15th had great excitement, first, had a short engagement with two M. L's who fired at us then us at them, after a time they turned out to be our own, they did not answer our challenge, one was sunk and one damaged. Some time after that we were attacked by Junkers 88s, their bombs only just missing us, the AA gun fire kept them off of us, I was rather scared but soon bucked up and was ready for more. We passed Crete and Rhodes fairly close, the Germans fired at the M.T.B's that were with us and challenged us from shore with lights. We were at action stations for 2 1/2 days, we left the gun only once for a meal, and had very little sleep, arrived back in Alex on October 16th.

We left Alex on October 18th to bombard a small island (Kalimnos) held by the Germans. We arrived at 1A.M. did the bombardment and was attacked by dive-bombers, and shelled by enemy shore batteries, we sustained slight damage, action stations lasted for 22hours with just a short break for food and a drink, no sleep, so very tired and nerves frayed. We called into a Turkish bay to re-fuel two destroyers, we hoped to get back to Alex sometime on the October 20th, gun fire from us was one terrific roar all the time. Bombs fell very close to the ship, I was shaken up by the blast but stuck to the gun missing bomb splinters by inches, although we are all more than dead tired we still have to put up a good show if necessary.

Lets get back to Alex and get some sleep, we hope?.

October 20th-22nd, remained in harbour for rest, everyone ordered to go

ashore by the Captain for relaxation of nerves, ready for the next job?

October 23rd, Set sail for another bombardment, received orders during the night to cancel it and do patrols off Rhodes. Called in at Cyprus to re-fuel then returned to Alex on Oct 25th.

October 26th. Sailed from Alex escorting 4 destroyers with troops and supplies for L'Eros. Oct 28th Back to Alex for Fuel.

1st November left Alex with 4 more destroyers, a large number of troops and supplies for L'Eros. Stopped at Cyprus for fuel. Phoebe is the only cruiser left in the Eastern Med Fleet 4or 5 cruisers have been hit by bombs, some sunk, all were doing the same job we were doing, so far we have been very lucky!

November 10th. Have not had time to keep up with much in the past week, we have escorted dozens of destroyers loaded with troops and supplies for L'Eros. Nov 20th. Going back to Alex, we are being shadowed by enemy aircraft, attack is likely, but we have arrived back safely, no more attacks.

Nov 24th. Out again from Alex with French destroyers as partners in Aegean.

P.M. we are nine miles from German held Rhodes and Crete, within easy reach of enemy planes, so far we have not been attacked, got back safely to Alex on Nov 28th.

December 16th. Sailed for Cyprus, arrived 17th, left on the 20th, went to Haifa, arrived 21st left 23rd back to Alex on 24th.

Dec 27th. Started off again for the same patrols. During night just off Crete looking for enemy shipping and one enemy Carrier, saw nothing at all, got back on 28th Dec and started off again on the same patrols but turned back after 12 hours steaming, the reason being that it would have been suicide carrying on as Jerry would go all out to get us after our navy getting the Scharnhorst and Desenhouser.

December 30th. Left Alex for Naples with a large number of Commando's on board, hoping to arrive there on January 1st. Arrived as hoped.

Jan 2nd Left Naples for Malta. Arrived Jan 3rd.

Jan 5th. Went into Dry-Dock.

Jan 8th. Out of Dry-Dock.

Jan 13th. It looks as though something big is coming off soon. An unusual

number of big ships are still in Malta. Jan 21st. Don't look so bad now, most of the big ships have gone.

Jan 22nd. Set sail for Naples but half-way there got recall to Malta, don't know why.

Jan 27th. Still in Malta, have had several air attacks but no bombs.

Jan 28th. Left for Naples. Arrived 29th.

Jan 30th. Left Naples early morning for the place where the new landing in Italy has taken place, Anzio. We arrived a few hours after the landing and steamed along the coast where German troops concentrated.

Destroyers shelled troops as we waited to fire at any large target, we stayed all there day. We steamed away from land at night, but returned the next day.

Jan 31st. Left at night, steamed all along the Italian coast and bombarded enemy troops and machine gun nests. Enemy shore batteries opened fire on us, they were very close indeed but we did not get hit. It is most surprising to find there is little interference from enemy aircraft. We fire 123 shells at Jerry, reports of the bombardment were very good, we got a German division on the run. German troops and convoys can be seen quite plainly from the ship.

February 1st. Still chasing around here, did another bombardment today, target was a German Command post, we got a direct hit on it, good shooting. Coastal Batteries opened up on us again but we got clear, we had about a dozen air raid alarms but aircraft did not come close enough, we could see them bombing our troops. WE are not getting much time to ourselves, we are lucky if we get ten minutes for our meals, we usually get disturbed when unidentified aircraft are around and we have to close up at action stations. I have not had my clothes off for five days, there just is not time, although I have managed to have a wash twice and still very little sleep. The cruiser HMS Spartan was sunk here two days ago, we can still see her bottoms up, lots of bits and pieces floating about including some bodies, there are several ships on fire.

Feb 2nd. Still at Anzio. We did two bombardments this morning, one target was a ammunition dump, we destroyed it and several large buildings as well. Second target was shore batteries, we soon wiped out a few.

HMS Dido came to relieve us, we are going back to Naples for a short

rest. I am very pleased I can now give my nerves a rest, which like everyone else is sorely needed. There were seven air raid alarms in the morning, I saw German aircraft machine gunning our shore batteries, two planes were shot down.

Feb 8th. An urgent call from the army, we are off to Anzio again, we do several bombardments and get away just before dusk, we stay near Naples all night, then back to Anzio in the morning of the Feb 9th.

Enemy shore batteries try hard to get us, but so far we have been lucky, we did a few more bombardments of troops and transport then got away under cover of a smoke screen.

Feb 10th. Going back to Naples for ammunition and fuel, this job plays very much on ones nerves, we were at action stations the whole day, no dinner, 1 corn beef sandwich per man, which we only just had time to eat before we were in action again.

Feb 12th. Up to Anzio again for more bombardments, this time it is a small village where there are plenty of Germans so observers report, we will "well and truly" plaster the target. I had a go at a big gun which Jerry has been shelling our troops with, observers report "Fired right down the muzzle", in other words, "a direct hit". Enemy batteries are firing shells at us, they burst very close to our ship at times but no hits. We are away from this place just before dark, stay at sea all night, and back to Anzio in the morning.

Feb 13th. Doing more bombardments and getting a few shells in return, "This is war" and don't we know it! We stand by our guns 10 or 12 hours at a time and dare not leave them, it really is nerve racking, but we carry on, our troops ashore need our help and we must give them all we can. Returning to Naples arriving at night.

Feb 22nd. A few days ago we were all ready for a trip back to Anzio, were going with another cruiser, it was intended that we should take the lead but owing to a breakdown the other ship went before us. We finally got going somewhat later, and this proved to be to our great advantage because the ship that went first in our place was torpedoed and sunk, had

we got away on time it would have been us. Fate plays some funny tricks, the cruiser was HMS Penelope. When we got the news we immediately turned back, full speed for Naples. The U-boat had fired four tin-fish, Penelope sank in 3 minutes, from a crew of 800, 260 survived. This made it 2 cruisers lost on the job.

Feb 26th. Left Naples for Malta, arrived on 27th for a well earned rest and change the guns. Everyone given longer leave than normal to make up for the rest we have not had. We had not had a full nights sleep for a month, the most we had was 4 hours and not always that much.

March 14th. Left Malta, we are going to the Far East, for a go at the Jap's this time. First call on the way will be at Alexandria, arrived March 16th. Left Alex on the 18th, arrived at Port Said 19th, went through Suez Canal, anchored at Port Tewfik for the night.

March 22nd. Sailed back up canal to have boiler repairs.

Arrived at Alex 23rd. April 9th still at Alex. There is a lot of political trouble here among the Greeks, its serious because they refuse to go to sea, this last two nights I have been in a party ready to board a Greek Destroyer, we had rifles and plenty of ammo and were up all night waiting for orders to board., it was the same the second night, we were even going to fire on her with the ships guns, but the order was cancelled.

The Greek communists are causing the trouble, they have refused to go to sea and have kidnapped the Captain of their ship and one from another, they have taken over the Admiralty building ashore and caused many street fights, we have not had any sleep at all for two days and nights as we have to be ready at all times to stop any trouble the b....'s cause.

April 10th. Greek communists intended to capture the C in C's HQ, I went ashore with a party to guard the HQ. Was ready and waiting for them but they did not turn up.

April 18th. Greek situation gets worse, we have 2 of their ships tied up alongside. Greeks have sentries all over the ships with Tommy guns, our boys are not scared. April 22nd. Greek situation has reached a climax.

Naval C in C has resigned, new one has taken his place and warned all

Greek ships that refusing to obey orders is mutiny and he intends to break it up. Greeks have split into two parties, Loyalists & Rebels, tonight a party of 150 Loyalists are going to board two ships alongside ours, we are preparing dozens of Tommy guns and ammo, we are not taking any part in the boarding as it would cause a political disturbance between British and Greeks everywhere, we are providing a covering fire party on the jetty in case they try to damage our ship, the rather grim boarding started by shooting a sentry on one Greek ship. Everything was a surprise for them. Rebels opened fire after realising what was happening, then the battle started, Tommy guns, rifles and revolvers firing from both sides. I saw several men killed and many wounded, every time a rebel showed his face a dozen or more guns fired at him, only a few rebels surrendered. Firing went on for just over an hour, dozens were taken prisoner, bullets were flying everywhere. Finally the Loyalists got on board and took over the ships, quite a bit of damage had been done by the bullets. Our boys are guarding prisoners and collecting the dead and wounded, all this happened at 2 A.M. in the morning. I was very pleased when everything was over, I have never seen anything like it before. April 4th. Everything is now quiet with the Greeks, order has at last been restored.

May 6th. At last we have left Alexandria. May 7th. Going down Suez Canal to Port Tewfik. May 8th. Left Port Tewfik.

May 11th. Arrived at Aden. We are now in the Tropics, yesterday we dropped a depth charge in the Red Sea to get some fresh fish, we got lots of fish, they were very good.

May 14th. Left Aden for Trincomalee but on fifth day ran short of fuel went to Colombo arrived there May 19th, refuelled and left on 21st.

May 22nd Arrived at Trincomalee, A big Fleet is here as mentioned by Winston Churchill.

June 6th. The Second Front has started, everyone delighted, only wish we were there instead of here. June 9th, Supreme Allied Commander Lord Louis Mountbatten came on board and gave us a talk about the situation out here with the Jap's.

June 12th Left Trinco to bombard Sumatra, June 25th, Bombarded for five

hours, saw a few Jap aircraft, shot 3 down, Arrived back at Trinco 17th.
June 19th. Started off on an operation against the Japanese, it is a five day trip, we have 2 Battleships, 1 Aircraft Carrier, 4 Cruisers and 8 Destroyers as company. The aircraft are going to bomb Jap held islands.
June 21st. Aircraft are now off on their bombing mission, so far we haven't seen anything of the Japs. Aircraft have returned, 1 missing.
Excellent bombing results, now we might see Jap aircraft. We are returning to Trinco. Arrived back without incident. July 14th. Went to Colombo for minor repairs. July 21st. Back to Trinco
July 22nd. Sailed with big fleet on operation against Japs, 23 ships including two aircraft carriers to bombard Sabang, our job was to stay well out and look after the carriers, fleet did all the dirty work and made a good job of it. Destroyers were hit by Jap shore guns. We got away without any trouble but Jap aircraft attempted to attack us with torpedo bombers, our carriers had a go at them and drove them off.
Arrived back safely on July 27th.

August 9th. 1944. I left HMS Phoebe, Drafted to HMS Highflyer.

Howard stayed in the Far East until 20th September 1945, he sailed from Colombo on board HMS Searcher for the long trip to Greenock. Howard is no longer with us, but will be remembered through his diaries.

NB: All you computer addicts beware the "Postcard" virus, it is not a hoax and will clean out your computer if you open it, my advice is to delete it. It is better to be safe than sorry.

Did you Know?: A **light nanosecond** is the distance light can travel in a billionth of a second, it is about 1 foot (about 30 cm). Radar uses this fact to measure how far away something like an airplane is. A radar antenna sends out a short radio pulse and then waits for it to echo off an airplane or other target. While it's waiting, it counts the number of nanoseconds that pass. Radio waves travel at the speed of light, so the number of nanoseconds divided by 2 tells the radar unit how far away the object is!
1 Light Year is 5,865,696,000.000 miles (Looks like my car's milometer).

This is the last time you will be reminded to send your reunion Hotel payment to the Treasurer.

The balance is: £84 per person for 3 nights.

ASAP

Saturday July 5th is Veterans Day at Chatham Historic Dockyard. Lilian and I will be there and so will our standard in the capable hands of S/m Derek West., I am not sure if the venue is free for veterans like it was last year, but I think it will be. There is a payment though if you want to watch the Royal Marines "Beat the Retreat" in the evening, this is usually £6 pp. There are several stalls and a "Up Spirits" stall, also a bar.

The photos on the front cover this month are the Standards saluting ships leaving Ramsgate Harbour on Channel Dash remembrance day. Note the little standard bearer who knew exactly what the standard drill was.

The other photo is Regent Jean Taylor's dog, which is the mascot of the HMS Phoebe Chapter of the Daughters of the British Empire, their chapter is in Venice, Florida, USA and they do quite a bit of charitable work. Note the ladies HMS Phoebe brooch attached to the dogs collar.

If any member would like a copy of the Association Constitution, I have re-written it to a larger size, making it easier to read, it includes any amendments made since it was first inaugurated. Copies will be sent with the next newsletter following your request for one. Secretary.

There are still a few outstanding subscriptions to come in.

You can check anytime to see if yours are up to date.

Phone 01235 211501

An Email from Pete Walding A/B, aboard 1943/45, now living in Canada, does anyone recall the name and would like to get in touch, phone me.

Roy.

British Speed Trap

Two British traffic patrol officers from North Berwick were involved in an unusual incident while checking for speeding motorists on the A-1 Great North Road.

One of the officers used a hand-held radar device to check the speed of a vehicle approaching over the crest of a hill, and was surprised when the speed was recorded at over 300 mph. Their radar suddenly stopped working and the officers were not able to reset it.

Just then a deafening roar over the treetops revealed that the radar had in fact latched on to a NATO Tornado fighter jet, which was engaged in a low-flying exercise over the Border district, approaching from the North Sea.

Back at police headquarters, the chief constable fired off a stiff complaint to the RAF Liaison office. Back came the reply in true laconic RAF style: "Thank you for your message, which allows us to complete the file on this incident. You may be interested to know that the tactical computer in the Tornado had detected the presence of, and subsequently locked onto, your hostile radar equipment and automatically sent a jamming signal back to it. Furthermore, an air-to-ground missile aboard the fully-armed aircraft had also automatically locked onto your equipment".

"Fortunately, the pilot flying the Tornado recognized the situation for what it was, quickly responded to the missile systems alert status, and was able to override the automated defence system before the missile was launched and your hostile radar installation was destroyed".

"Have a nice day".

Well Done the 'Brylcream Boys' shoot them all down.

IT warning:- Windows 98 is not supported by Microsoft anymore, it is not safe to use on-line because security problems are not being fixed.

WIN A COUNCIL HOUSE

Good morning and welcome to a brand new edition of 'ASYLUM'.

Today's program features another chance to take part in our exciting competition: Hijack an airliner and win a council house!

We've already given away hundreds of millions of pounds and thousands of dream homes, courtesy of our sponsor the British Taxpayer. And don't forget, we're now the fastest growing game on the planet.

Anyone can play, provided they don't already hold a valid British passport, and you only need one word of English: 'ASYLUM'!

Prizes include all-expenses-paid accommodation, cash benefits starting at £180 a week and a chance to earn thousands more begging, mugging and accosting drivers at traffic lights.

This competition is open to everyone buying a ticket or stowing away on one of our partner airlines, ferry companies or Eurostar. No application ever refused reasonable or unreasonable. All you have to do is destroy all your papers and remember the magic password: 'ASYLUM'. Only this week 140 members of the Taliban family from

Afghanistan were flown Goat Class from Kabul to our international gateway at Stansted where local law enforcement officers were on hand to fast-track them to their luxury £200-a-night rooms in the fabulous four star Hilton Hotel. They join tens of thousands of other lucky winners already staying in hotels all over Britain.

Our most popular destinations also include the White Cliffs of Dover and the world famous Toddington Services area In Historic Bedfordshire.

If you still don't understand the rules, don't forget there's no need to phone a friend or ask the audience, just apply for legal aid. Hundreds of lawyers, social workers and counsellors are waiting to help. It won't cost you a penny, so play today; it could change your life forever.

Iraqi terrorists, Afghan dissidents, Albanian gangsters, pro-Pinochet activists, anti-Pinochet activists, Kosovan drug-smugglers, Tamil tigers, bogus Bosnians, Rwandan mass murderers, Somali guerrillas...COME ON DOWN!

Get along to the airport, get along to the lorry park, get along to the ferry terminal.

Don't stop in Germany or France. Go straight to Britain and you are guaranteed to be one of tens of thousands of lucky winners in the softest game on earth.

Roll up, roll up my friends for the game that never ends.

Everyone's a winner, when they play 'ASYLUM'.

If you do not like it here get paid thousands to return home.

