



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 8, MAY 2011



ML 1939 Fairmile B 112ft

Having announced a new Trust Chairman in the last Newsletter, this Issue brings news of a change of Director. Readers will recall that Trevor Robotham came out of retirement after the untimely illness of David Harris, so it will come as no surprise that he has finally decided to hang up his boots. He has completed a further two – very busy – years which has brought his total service to the Trust to almost 15 years. It has been a remarkable and fruitful contribution. He was relieved on March 1st by Commander Rupert Head RN, whose past career can be seen within later pages. The Trustees are also very pleased to welcome William Dreyer to their number, the son of the late Commander Christopher Dreyer DSO DSC RN, of CFVA and MTB 102 fame.

It is pleasing to report that the launch of the DVD “A History of the Royal Navy’s Coastal Forces” has gone well and the film has had a most favourable reception from all CF aficionados both at home and overseas. Nevertheless, the Trustees now ask that all members of the Trust continue to give this DVD a ‘fair wind’ whenever and wherever they can. There is no doubt that, if readers of this Newsletter could manage to sell just one extra copy each (perhaps to a friend), then the sales momentum will be successfully maintained. Good luck.

Enclosed within this Issue is a new Supporters’ Form drawing attention to the need for more regular financial support for the activities of the Trust. There seems to be some confusion as to whether support for the Trust is separate from support for this Newsletter. In fact there is no separate subscription for the Newsletter, which is financed from general funds. So, as long as supporters are regularly making donations to the Trust, then they are helping both to keep the Newsletter alive *and* to achieve the principle aim of keeping CF heritage safe with a permanent place within the new museum at Portsmouth. At present only around half of Newsletter recipients regularly give money to the Trust; without more supporters the Newsletter itself could be jeopardized. By far the easiest way to support the Trust is to set up a bank standing order by completing the enclosed Form. The Trustees do not ask for a set subscription – only for a contribution which can be sensibly afforded.

BELOW *HDML 1939 Fairmile 72ft*



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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

We say goodbye to our Director, Captain Trevor Robotham. Trevor has been closely involved with the Trust for nearly 15 years and I know that everyone would want me to express our thanks and appreciation for his unstinting support, unquenchable enthusiasm and deep commitment to the heritage of Coastal Forces. It is largely due to his efforts and achievements that he hands over with the Trust in such a healthy state. We wish him well.

In his place, we welcome Commander Rupert Head as our new Director. He comes to us after 38 years in the RN, followed by 3 years with the Mary Rose Trust, and with strong family ties to Coastal Forces. He is also an accomplished artist, of marine subjects in particular.

I am delighted to tell you that the Trust has been invited to become affiliated to the National Museum of the Royal Navy. This reflects our status as a serious historic organisation ready to take its rightful place within the Twentieth Century museum development.

In spite of all your marvellous support, your Trust's financial position is finely balanced. If each of our supporters could, over the next 12 months, introduce just one new member, our future would be assured. I thank you for your past support – and your future introductions!

TREVOR ROBOTHAM

After almost 15 years as Director, Captain Trevor Robotham feels the time has come to spend more time with his family and on his personal affairs. After a distinguished 38 year career in the RN, Trevor joined the CFHT in 1997, almost immediately after retiring. With the Trust then in its infancy, he worked closely with Dr Campbell McMurray of the Royal Naval Museum and established a firm foundation of administration and activities in order to ensure not only that the Trust's objectives were achievable, but that Coastal Forces would secure a clear identity within the future Museum development.

Weathering the disappointments of losing Gunboat Yard and the disastrous fire which destroyed the almost restored MTB 60, Trevor sought other avenues to take the Trust

forward; in particular maintaining close links with the CFVA, organizing the annual Remembrance Service at Hornet, masterminding the programme of dedicating memorial plaques at all the major CF base ports of WW2, and helping to produce a historical documentary DVD.

Fully supported by his wife Pamela, he accepted an ever-increasing workload without losing the warm personal touch which they both offered to anyone involved. The Trustees are greatly indebted to Trevor for his outstanding dedication to the cause of the memory of Coastal Forces, and are very pleased that his knowledge and experience will remain available to the Trust.

Euan Strathcona and Derrick Holden Brown

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

FROM THE OLD.....

After 15 years of total involvement, it is with great sadness I am handing over to Rupert Head. But I feel the Trust is now in good health and will remain in safe and very suitably experienced hands, ready to grasp the opportunities ahead, both within and without the National Museum of the Royal Navy. Supporters should be confident we will remain a clear individual presence to tell the story of Coastal Forces to all the visitors who come to Portsmouth.

I am pleased to feel we have achieved much over the years and I thank everyone who has supported me in my various tasks. I shall continue to be engaged in the Trust's activities and, like you, will be pleased to support our new Director whenever and wherever he needs it.

Captain Trevor Robotham



.....TO THE NEW.....

I am acutely aware that I have a hard act to follow but, just like Trevor Robotham, I feel the same passion for Coastal Forces and a deep interest in their remarkable history. Whilst the Training Commander at HMS *King Alfred*, my grandfather was responsible for the training of most of the young RNVN officers who served in Coastal Forces in WW2, and my father served in Dog Boats running out of Lowestoft. So I feel very much at home and will do my best in Trevor's footsteps. I do not underestimate the challenges ahead in keeping alive the CF story, not least because it is a story worth telling – and re-telling.

Commander Rupert Head



SUPPORTERS' CORNER & FEEDBACK

FANCY A TRIP TO VIS IN MAY?

Some readers will already know that this is the final year the CFVA will be remembering their fallen colleagues from the WW2 campaign in the Adriatic. But this year will also be special because it is the 200th anniversary of the famous British Naval Battle of Lissa. Led by the British Ambassador, both of these occasions will be celebrated during the week commencing 16 May. In addition to the Services at the various WW2 Memorials, the Ambassador's team, including a senior serving Royal Marine officer and the Defence Attaché, will host a series of other events including: a photographic exhibition entitled "British & Croatian Allied Forces in the Service of Peace"; Pictures and Memorabilia of both the victory in 1811 and the World War Two story; two evening Receptions where talks on the two campaigns will be given, and an event staged by the children of Vis.

It is not too late to join up. So anyone interested in going to Vis should contact Miles Robinson **as soon as possible**. He will be glad to help you arrange flights and accommodation. Prices start from about £425 per person for 7 days, flights and transfers inc, (Gatwick or Stansted). You can reach him on **01273 271501** or Miles@WalkingHolidaysVis.com

RAY TRIGGS

As a tremendous supporter of all things to do with coastal forces heritage, readers will be interested to know that Ray's ashes were spread in the Solent from *Medusa* (ex HDML 1387), at the request of family and friends.

CFVA LUNCHEON 7 OCTOBER 2010

Gathering once again at the Cooden Beach Hotel at Bexhill for what was expected to be the final (23rd) re-union luncheon attended by 31 veterans and their families, the occasion was enjoyed so much that it has been decided to hold just one more get-together. Chaired by the out-going CFHT Director, Captain Trevor Robotham accompanied by his wife Pamela, and including the Deputy Mayor and two previous Mayors (Pam Brown and Maureen Charlesworth) among their guests, everyone appreciated the menu chosen by Dorothy Berrecloth and the raffle organized by Colin Clark.

Reg Ellis

REACTIONS TO THE DVD

As already noted, initial sales have gone well, so it is now essential for everyone to press on with giving as much publicity to this initiative as they can. To help, here are some verbatim recommendations which have come direct to members of the Trust from some satisfied customers:

From an 85-year-old Gurkha veteran:

"I thoroughly enjoyed your film. I thought it was well made and a subject well worth recording for posterity. I watched it in two sittings and didn't doze off once!"

From the son of a veteran:

"It was a wonderful surprise and a real delight to receive the video of the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces History. It is very moving to now have a visual record of so much that I could only imagine from the various accounts of what went on. What terrible times, and what bravery, but sadly too what huge questions as to whether humanity has learnt anything in the years since."

Thank you so much I enclose a cheque, and hope that the balance can make something in the way of a donation to the work of the CFHT."

From Al Ross, American co-author of *Allied Coastal Forces of WW2*:

"I received a copy of A History of the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces a couple of days ago and have been surfing through it. It is, in my humble opinion, so far superior to the crap the various TV channels put out, it's amazing. It's a relatively typical format – contemporary video and photos integrated with monologues by former CF types (Len Reynolds for one). I've never seen the vast majority of the photos and videos used. There are shots of Canadian Power Boat Company boats, BPB, Vosper, Dogs and Bs, CMBs etc. There's a fairly extensive section on S-Boote, as well. There are a few of the usual incongruities (the oft-used shot of USS Stewart blowing up, US 77' Elcos instead of the RN version etc) but, for me, the overall quality of this production far

offsets the screwups. If you're a CF fan, this is money well spent."

From a sailing friend:

"I write as Iain (a blind sailor) is spending Xmas with us and is very interested in WW2 military history, so I put your video on. It is very long, but we thoroughly enjoyed it, Iain gaining great pleasure from the saga, even though only able to hear the commentary. I am moved to thank you!"

From an 86-year-old veteran:

"Many, many thanks for the truly wonderful disc; I sat enthralled yesterday afternoon and now look forward to the next time I can spend four hours glued to my telly watching it all again. With grateful thanks."

From a friend:

"Many thanks for the loan of the DVD. I enjoyed it so much I have sent for my own copy!"

NOTICE BOARD

CFHT AND 1ST PATROL BOAT SQUADRON

Later in this Issue, readers will see that a link has now been established between the Trust and today's patrol boats of the Royal Navy. Beginning with one of their CO's attending the CFOA dinner last November, some veterans and trustees were invited to take a trip to sea, when the whole squadron of 14 boats were exercising in the Portsmouth area in mid-April. The Trustees see this link as a welcome development which they will seek to maintain.

CONTACTS SOUGHT

Ken Nicholson (0115 849 3188) wants to contact a shipmate Bob 'Dinger' Bell, EA 4th class, a native of Billingham.

Karen Stone of 52 Dunsmore Avenue, Rugby CV22 5HD would love to hear from any shipmates of her late father, F.J. Shirley, who served in boats based at Alexandria in 1942 and later in Sicily (MTB 57).

CFHT WEBSITE

Difficulties logging on now seem to be a thing of the past, but please note the correct address is now www.coastal-forces.org.uk

CFOA DINNER 2010

The largest attendance so far (39), dined in the ex-Hornet Wardroom on Saturday 13th November last, joined by guests Dominic Tweddle (Director of the National Museum of the Royal Navy), Alan Watson (Chairman, *Medusa* Trust) and Lt Conor O'Neill RN (CO HMS *Tracker*) plus many newcomers, in particular veterans from the '60s, '70s and '80s.

Dominic Tweddle outlined his vision for the future of the museum and the role in it for a CF exhibition. Conor O'Neill gave a resumé of the activities of the 1st Patrol Boat Squadron and told us of the Guy Hudson Trust, set up by a distinguished WW2 officer for the educational benefit of Naval and Royal Marine officers at Oxford University. Hudson was one of the pioneers of big ship radar directing CF boats onto their targets after D Day.

As usual, the Hornet staff provided us with an excellent meal, as well as coping with their regular members. This year's dinner will be on Saturday 12th November and we hope to increase the number of younger officers attending, as well as welcoming more sons of former members.

Of course the main reason for our gathering is the Hornet Remembrance Service on the following day. Wreaths are laid by representatives from many Allied Navies. The RN and the Sea Cadets provide the Guard under the watchful eye of Lt Charlie Nunn and this year a Bugler will sound the Last Post. Please make a note of 12th November in your diary NOW and let me know the name and address of anyone who you may wish to be invited to attend.

John Deeker

THE EGG-SHELL by Rudyard Kipling

Most people recall Rudyard Kipling for his great stories about the animals and jungles of India and Afghanistan, or perhaps for his famous poems about the lives of soldiers in far-off foreign parts. But in fact he was also very close to the Navy and the sea for much of his life and wrote many maritime articles and poems. As a young boy he lived in the Southsea home of a retired sea captain and often visited the dockyard with his landlord. Later in life, after returning home from India, he sailed to South Africa in the company of Commander Edward Bayly, who became a great friend and his host on a number of subsequent visits to Royal Navy ships in the late 1890s. The friendship was to result in many articles, stories and poems about the sea and the Navy. So much so that he became one of that select band of literary men who have had warships named after them; in his case the J&K class destroyer HMS *Kipling*, launched in 1939 by his daughter and sunk only three years later off Crete.

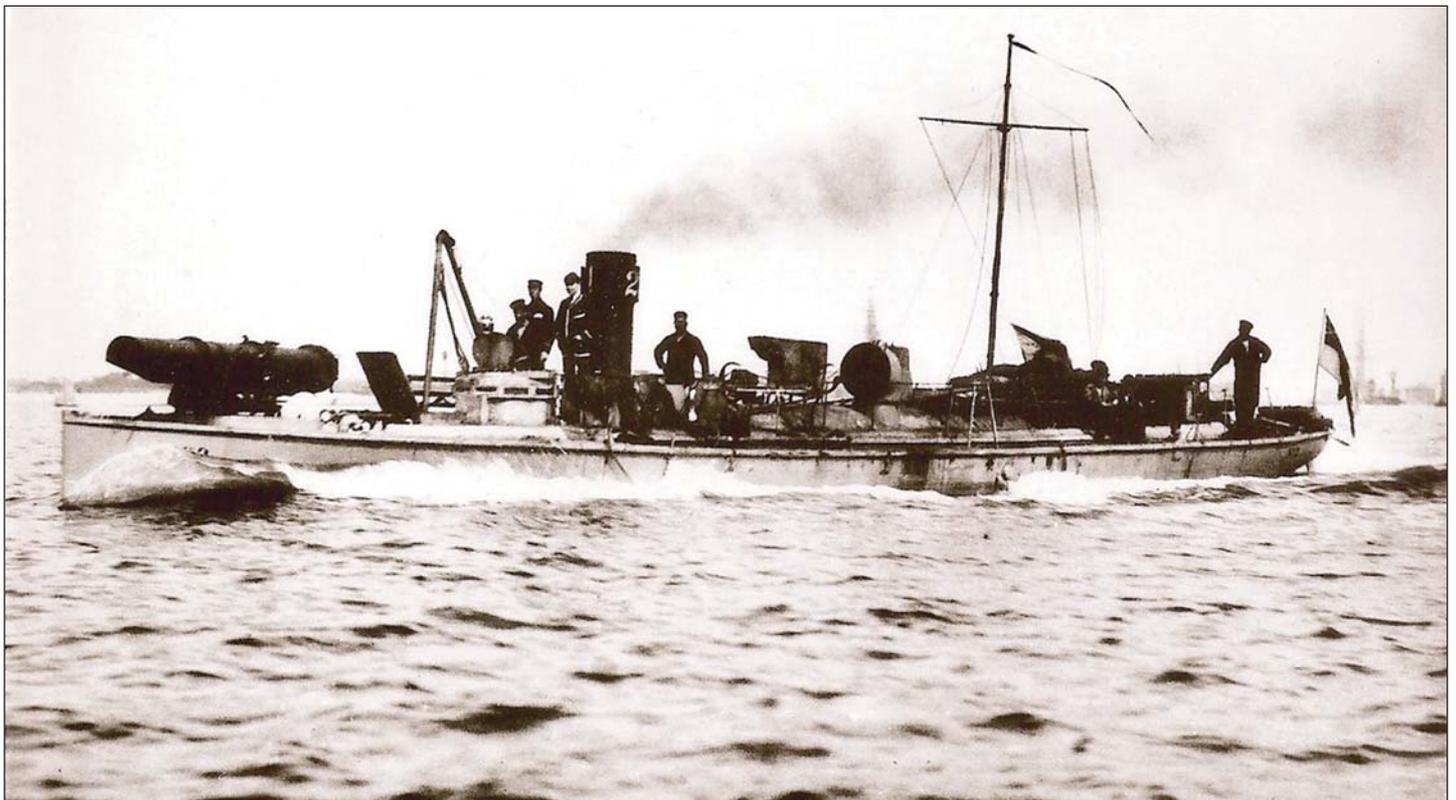
Some naval people think this poem told of the event which features later on in this Newsletter. In fact it was written much earlier, in 1904 (and added to in 1912), and mixes the exploits of the early torpedo boats with the old superstition; that if the shell of a boiled egg is left empty and unbroken, then a witch can sail in it and wreak havoc on sailors.

*A Mr Whitehead invented the torpedo.
A little Blue Devil is a naval officer!*

*The wind took off with the sunset—
The fog came up with the tide,
When the Witch of the North took an egg-shell
With a little Blue Devil inside.
Sink' she said, or 'swim,' she said
'It's all you will get from me.
And that is the finish of him' she said.
And the Egg-shell went to sea.*

*The wind fell dead with the midnight—
The fog shut down like a sheet,
When the Witch of the North heard the Egg-shell
Feeling by hand for a fleet.
'Get' she said, 'or you're gone,' she said,
But the little Blue Devil said 'No!
'The sights are just coming on,' he said,
And he let the Whitehead go.*

*The wind got up with the morning—
And the fog blew off with the rain,
When the Witch of the North saw the Egg-shell
And the little Blue Devil again.
'Did you swim?' she said. 'Did you sink?' she said,
And the little Blue Devil replied:
'For myself I swam, but I think,' he said,
'There's somebody sinking outside.'*



An early torpedo boat

MEMORIAL PLAQUES

FALMOUTH 19/6/10



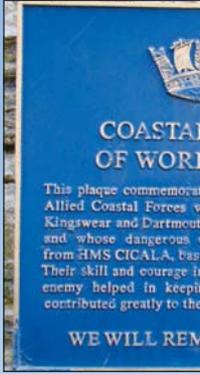
On Discovery Quay beside the Maritime Museum

DOVER 10/7/10



On the Lord Warden Hotel

DARTMOUTH



On the Kingswear and Dartmouth

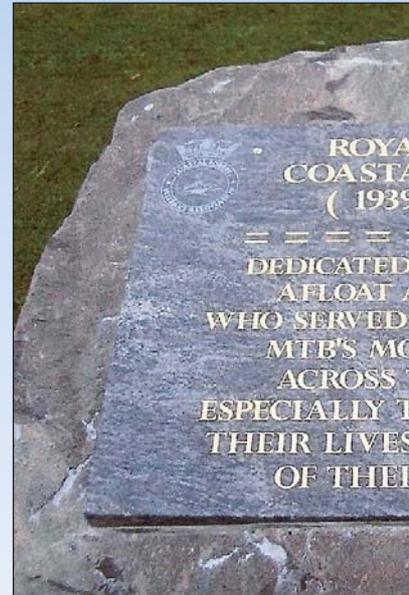
NEWHAVEN 28/11/09



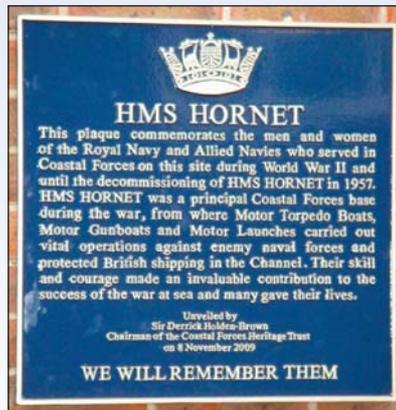
In old gun emplacement at Newhaven Fort

As reported in the last Issue, this programme has now been completed. In some ways it began with the fine initiative of the CFVA in dedicating 'The Rock of the Sea' at the National Memorial Arboretum to all those who served in CF from 1939 to 1957. Subsequently, the Trustees of the CFHT decided it would be appropriate, right, and proper to place memorials at each of the major CF bases of WW2.

Without the ready participation of Local Authorities, the very hard work of the Trust's Director,



GOSPORT 8/11/09



On the building next to site of the Coastal Forces Memorial

FELIXSTOWE 13/6/09



On the seafront close to Marine Museum

RAMSGATE



On wall of the Sail Loft at the harbour

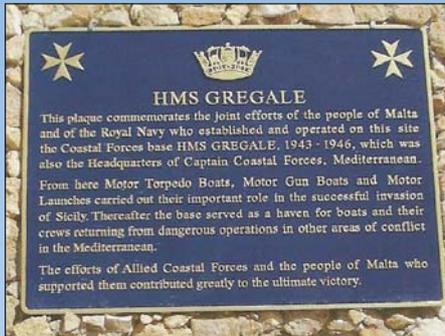
PLAQUES – A SUMMARY

10/12/06



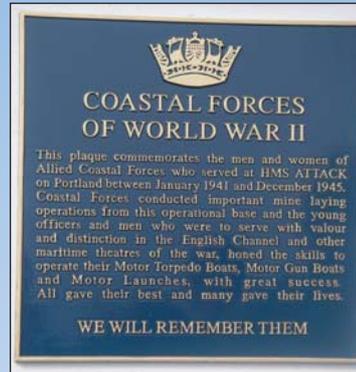
swear slipway
part ferry

MALTA 29/9/07



On the wall below the WW2
CF Base HQ at Ta'X Biex

PORTLAND 7/10/07

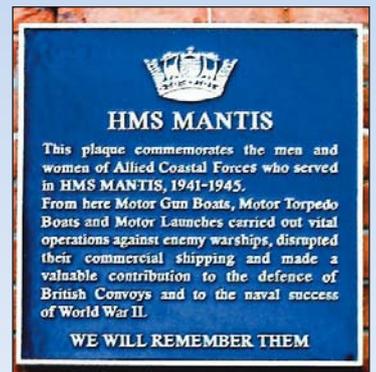


On the Coast Watch Station
on Portland Bill



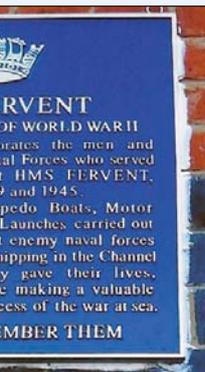
Trevor Robotham, and the willing participation of many veterans, including local members of the British Legion and RN Association, the dedications could not have been accomplished. Thanks are due to them all, not forgetting the individual inputs from 'regulars' like Lt Charlie Nunn, veteran George Chandler and the Rev Grahame Berridge. This summary is provided in part to thank them all but, of equal importance, to place this considerable achievement on the record.

LOWESTOFT 20/7/08



On the Seamen's Bethel

30/5/09



Seamen's Chapel beside
harbour

WEYMOUTH 11/11/08



On the coastal promenade
at Newton's Cove

GREAT YARMOUTH 6/9/08



In the Town Hall

MAKING HISORY

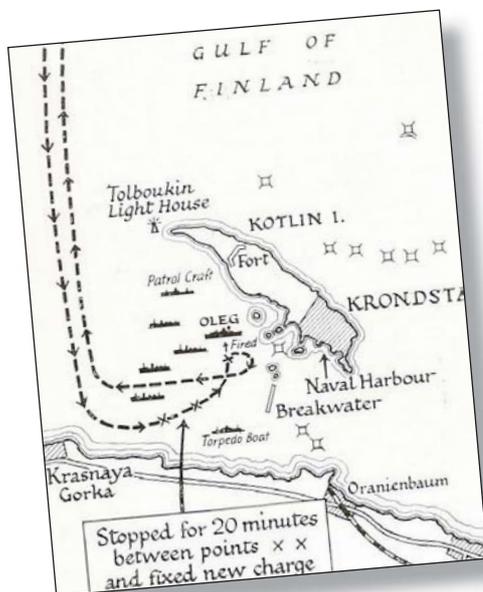
AUGUSTUS AGAR'S VC

Two years after the Bolshevic revolution in 1917, Great Britain had deployed a squadron of light cruisers and destroyers to the Gulf of Finland. Under the command of the redoubtable Admiral Sir Walter Cowan, its task was to give support to the Czarist 'White' Russian cause and also comply with British treaty obligations to secure neutrality for the Baltic States and Finland .

In a very fluid situation intelligence was scarce, both for Admiral Cowan and the Government back home, so in February 1919 the Admiralty agreed to lend two 40ft Coastal Motor Boats from Osea Island to the Secret Service, at the request of its chief, Captain Mansfield Cumming, RN (known as 'C'), to run couriers in and out of Petrograd by sea . The boats, placed under the command of Lt Augustus Agar RN, were shipped in great haste and secrecy to the Baltic in the guise of private yachts, with their crews wearing civilian clothes.

CMB No's 4 and 7 set up base at Terrioki in neutral Finland, just outside the Russian frontier and 35 miles from the entrance to Petrograd . In May, under cover of darkness, they started their clandestine runs in and out of Russia with couriers for 'C', their shallow draft and high speed enabling them to pass over the minefields and breakwaters that protected the line of forts surrounding Petrograd and Krondstat. When June came however, lack of darkness during the 'white nights' period prevented these runs for the next 2 or 3 months.

Just like others in the CMB Service , Augustus Agar was imbued with the offensive spirit and, before leaving for the Baltic, had requested that two torpedoes be shipped with the stores in the oiler carrying the boats to Finland. This simple act of foresight was the key to two spectacular raids carried out by the Royal Navy on the Russian Fleet just a few months later .



LEFT *A chart of the action.*



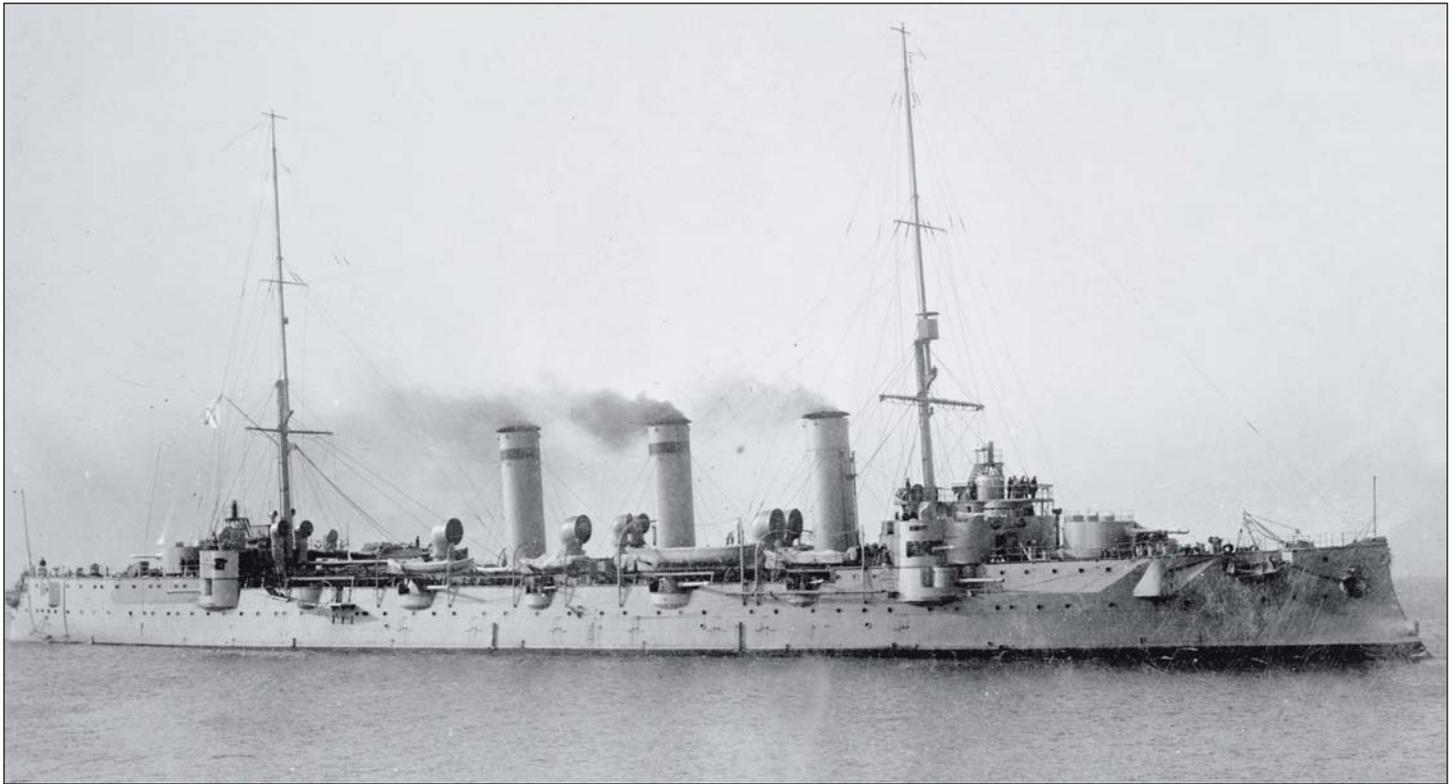
ABOVE *(from left to right) Hampsheir, Agar and Beeley*

Although the Admiralty had forbidden use of the CMB's other than for secret intelligence duties, when the courier runs ceased Agar was persuaded to have a crack at the Russian battleships bombarding the White Russian fortress of Kasnaya Gorka across the Finnish Gulf. In danger of disregarding the explicit Admiralty signals, and one from 'C', he lobbied Admiral Cowan for permission but, although the Admiral said he couldn't order him to make the attack, he said he would support him if he did so, as long as the sortie was under the white ensign and the crews wore uniform. He also knew success would relieve the pressure on his own cruiser force, which possibly the Admiralty had not appreciated.

So on the night of 16 June the two CMB's No's 4 and 7 (Sub-Lt Sindall RNVR) set out on the 30 mile sortie to attack the armoured cruiser 'Oleg', which had just replaced the bombarding battleships, and was now screened by 4 destroyers. However, on the way out No7 hit an underwater object which broke its propeller shaft and she had to be towed back to base by No 4.

In spite of this setback, the following night Agar decided to set out again – alone. Apart from the hazard of floating mines, any breakdown courted capture and almost certain death as the Bolsheviks had already executed their officers. The operation is described in his original diary unearthed recently in the Imperial War Museum:

"Started off at 10.30 pm in No 4 and rounded Tolboukin Lt Ho .Very heavy sea running the whole time and spray coming over making it very hard to see. We then turned down to the South shore going at slow speed to slip through the patrol boats and destroyers unobserved and got ready to attack when Hampsheir (No 1) darted up and shouted to me to turn round as the charge had been accidentally fired. Switched the helm round and examined the torpedo found everything OK as side stops were in place so told H. to reload and get ready again. This is the most difficult operation owing to heavy sea and motion of the boat also to the chance that at any moment we may be observed by the enemy's destroyers. H. at last did it – splendid work – and reported everything ready.



ABOVE *The Oleg*

Then turned to the Eastward again , slipped through the line of destroyers and between a T.B. anchored near the S. shore and another destroyer , then turned North and attacked the ‘Oleg’ at anchor. There was a destroyer anchored 300 to 500 yards off her port beam. Fired when about 800 yards off and turned to starboard full speed and started to get out of it. Torpedo hit her just abaft the foremost funnel a great cloud of water much higher than the funnel and some black smoke and she seemed at once to settle by the head. Everybody then opened fire on me. We were going full speed (1125 revs = 25 knots) and shots falling all around us two big shells missed our stern by 5 to 10 yards. Spray and seas coming over drenching us to the skin but we were merry and bright and gave three cheers though we could hardly hear each other !!!

Steamed WNW for about 10 miles as if going back to Biorko, this to delude the Bolshies that we were a submarine, then fire suddenly ceased, as I suppose they could no longer see us. So we wended our way home NE to Terrioki. Sindall and Piper met us at the oiler, they said they had been on the lookout tower and had seen the explosion and gunfire afterwards – many welcomes from these good lads and I went up to Broadbent sent off the telegrams to ‘C’ and Scale and then to the villa to hot cocoa and bed. Time again 3.30 am and felt like dropping down – What a life ! wonder what the Bolshies are doing and hope all the decent sailors were taken off by the destroyers. Was so cold when I got back that my wet clothes had to be taken off me. Made a signal to the Admiral to say that I had attacked the ‘Oleg’ and hit her”.

Two days later Agar took his boats back to rejoin the fleet at Biorko and was greeted with all ships manned “.....and they

cheered us all the way up. What a welcome...just our teeny party of six in two boats and the whole British Fleet thousands of sailors cheering like mad. I nearly cried.” Hearing the story over dinner in the flagship, the Admiral subsequently decided not to inform the Admiralty until the sinking could be confirmed. This took place a few days later when Agar was able to fly over the scene of his triumph in a Finnish aircraft, when he could see the hulk of the *Oleg* lying on the bottom. As he said in his memoirs written many years later, he “*experienced a feeling of horror that it was I who was responsible for the fate of this ship and probably the deaths of the men inside her*”. But these feelings were dispelled when he thought of the pounding the citizens ashore had been experiencing during the bombardment of Krasnaya Gorka.

For some time afterwards the Russians gave out that the *Oleg* had been sunk by mine or submarine as they could not accept the destruction of a powerful armoured cruiser by a mere CMB. Eventually a reward of £5,000 was put on Agar’s head. They also believed the attack had increased the risk of exposing their Bolshevik Fleet in what was supposed to be a well defended anchorage, and it is a fact that their ships never again ventured outside the protection of the Kronstadt fortress, in turn relieving the pressure upon Britain’s Baltic Force. In addition to Agar’s award, S/Lt Hampsheir was awarded the DSC and Chief Motor Mechanic Beeley the CGM, for this unique and daring action.

With thanks to Cdr Rodney Agar RN (nephew of the late Capt A. Agar VC DSO RN)

SPECIAL FEATURES

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

As with several other Allied navies, a number of Canadian reservists crossed the Atlantic early on in WW2 to join the RN to fill whatever role was required of them. Some were appointed to Coastal Forces and spent the rest of the war as fully integrated members of the RN serving in both Home and Mediterranean waters. One of these, Lt Anthony Law, formed the first all-Canadian MTB flotilla, the 29th, consisting of eight new 71ft 6in BPB boats. Law had already been CO of one of the boats which had attempted to intercept the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau* and *Prinz Eugen* in 1942 during their successful escape from Brest.

Commissioned in March 1944, the 29th were joined in the work-up base at Holyhead by the Dog Boats of the 65th flotilla, also Canadian manned and commanded by Lt JRH Kirkpatrick.

Ironically, the Mk VI BPB boats of the 29th were designed to carry guns and torpedoes but the latter were removed during work-up and replaced by depth charges to counter an expected threat from 'special' U-Boats. – a threat which never materialized. The tubes were not replaced until after D Day by which time several target opportunities had been missed. But their first action came in late May when, operating from Ramsgate, they intercepted an enemy convoy and successfully engaged the escort whilst a group of British boats completed their torpedo attack.

It proved to be a useful rehearsal for their D Day role when, along with the Dog Boats of the British 55th MTB flotilla, they were chosen to guard the Eastern flank of the assault area, fighting off the enemy ships based in Le Havre, and where they were directed to their targets by the cruiser *Scylla*. It was the start of an exceptionally fierce period of fighting. On their very first night four boats were damaged during an action with six R-boats, one of which they sank. Next night they fell in with two Möwe class torpedo boats, but without torpedoes could only attack with their limited firepower.

Then followed a frantic period of activity as the German resistance became more intense, coastal batteries were increasingly active, air attacks could happen at any time, and the area was thick with mines. Law's own MTB 459 struck a



balk of timber and 460 hit a mine, losing most of her crew. On the night of 4/5 July, 459, 462 and 464 encountered nine E-boats, set one on fire and drove the others straight into the arms of the 55th, only for the latter to return the compliment! In the melee which followed E-boats were seen to be engaging each other until they eventually retired back to Le Havre. Another boat, 463, was lost to a mine but the whole crew saved. By mid-July the flotilla had lost three boats and a third of its crews had been injured and so in August they returned to Portsmouth for refits and combat leave, which came as welcome relief. Meanwhile Lt Kirkpatrick's 65th flotilla, patrolling to the western side of the landing beaches, had seen less action, but had accounted for two merchant ships from a convoy and set one of the escorts ablaze.

Later in the year the 29th were sent to patrol the North Sea, first from Felixstowe and then, in January, from the mobile base at Ostend. On 14 February Law took his boat back to England for repairs to his radar. Sent for by the base CO the next day, he was devastated to be told of the worst disaster in CF history. His flotilla had been virtually wiped out by a petrol explosion and fire in the inner basin at Ostend. Within the space of just seven minutes, seven British and five Canadian boats had been destroyed and sixty lives, including twenty-six from the courageous 29th flotilla, had been lost.

With thanks to David Jefferson

RN COASTAL FORCES TODAY

The CO of HMS *Tracker*, Lt Conor O'Neill, attended the CFOA dinner last November and spoke of the activities of the Navy's current Patrol Boats. 18 patrol boats are in service, all but two being ARCHER class, the others are SCIMITAR class, (but quite different to the previous SCIMITARs which finished operating in the '80s).

14 of these ARCHERS, known as P2000s, are employed as training vessels for the University Training Units (URNU), and form the 1st PBS. Each one is assigned to an URNU with the CO of the boat also being in charge of the unit. The URNUs take students from their catchment universities and provide training in seamanship, navigation and leadership, taking them to sea for weekends in term time and on wider deployments over the Easter and Summer holidays. Students join as RNR Midshipmen, without any permanent commitment on completion, though many do in fact subsequently join the RN or RNR. The organisation is very popular with students and is over-subscribed. (Lt O'Neill runs the Oxford URNU, which includes students from Oxford, Oxford Brookes and Reading Universities).

LEFT *The ship's company of MTB 459*



ABOVE *Raider* (Archer class) and *Sabre* (Scimitar class)

From 2003 to 2010 *Dasher* and *Pursuer* conducted armed security patrols around the Sovereign Base Areas of Cyprus and since returning last year now do much the same work around the RN Base on the Clyde as the Faslane Patrol Boat Squadron. Meanwhile *Scimitar* and *Sabre* form the Gibraltar PBS, with a variety of smaller RIBs attached.

Last Summer 1st PBS boats included visits to the Baltic, Western Isles and the Northern coast of France, with two boats going down to Gib. As CO of the latter unit Lt O'Neill particularly enjoyed reading in the last Newsletter of the 1937

1st MTB Flotilla's passage from Portsmouth to Gib. "We encountered many of the same problems, though without deck tanks our hops were shorter and I didn't cut across the Bay, not having a destroyer to support me. By a strange co-incidence we left Portsmouth on 21 June, a day earlier than the 1937 group, but arrived in Gibraltar seven days later than them!"

Lt O'Neill acknowledges the value of his time in command and feels his students will have benefitted from their time in today's patrol craft, a feeling which will be familiar to all those who have been lucky enough to serve in Coastal Forces – long may that tradition be continued.

With thanks to Lt Conor O'Neill RN

LIFE IN BRIEF

KENNETH LEWIS HEPWORTH LLOYD DSC

Kenneth Lloyd was born in Croydon and joined the RNVR (London Division) in 1939, first training as a Telegraphist before being commissioned. As an Acting Sub Lt he served in MGB 60 based at Felixstowe, and as third hand in ML275, initially at Holyhead and then at HMS *Mosquito*, Alexandria. He was awarded the DSC in November 1942 for his part in the evacuation of Tobruk, while First Lieutenant of ML 1046. In June 1943 he took command of ML356 operating in the Aegean Sea based at Leros and Casteloristo. The boat stayed hidden under nets by day and undertook night operations rescuing personnel from the islands, during which period he was Mentioned in Dispatches and awarded the Greek Cross and Bar. He returned to the UK in late 1944 and commanded ML 924 operating from Leith followed by ML282 at Ramsgate. At the end of the war in Europe he was sent to Copenhagen



and then the German Naval base at Eckenforde, South of Denmark, which had been Admiral Doenitz's HQ. Finally, he supported the move of captured E-Boats from Flensburg to East Germany for transfer to the Russian Navy. Staying in the navy, he was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in 1950 before leaving for a career in Industry.

He worked in the chemical industry for Albright and Wilson, rising to become their Personnel Director. His wife, Diana, had been a Wren at Bletchley Park and they had three sons. Always a great sportsman, he played hockey and cricket for the navy and took a keen interest in sport throughout his life. He maintained an interest in naval activities, being a keen supporter of Coastal Forces reunions and gatherings and through his regular attendance at his local Nautical Club.

IN MEMORIAM

WE SAY FAREWELL TO:

		(CFVA No)		
Gwendoline Barrett	(3038)	G. Hiner	(1826)	
Peggy Bridge		J. Hudson	(2764)	
V. Coates	(88)	W.(F). Knight		
D.N. Davies		K.L.H. Lloyd DSC	(158)	
J. Donaldson	(365)	J.H. Mellalieu	(1189)	
P.N.G. Edge DSC		G. Moss	(3182)	
W. Fenton	(2906)	V.E. Owes	(526)	
F.N. Frenzel DSC	(3341)	N.D. Parker	(1152)	
June Gillam		R.J.W. Perryman AM		
T. Gornall	(2834)	K.A. Rees	(1569)	
M. Harris	(1095)	R.T.W. Rumsey	(1595)	J. Thorn (1332)
D.d'E. Head		Eleanor Mary Scott	(1843)	C.W. Turner (2459)
P.G. Hill	(32)	F.J. Shirley	(2741)	G.A. Walker (554)

!!!STOP PRESS!!!

On Friday 15 April some lucky Trustees and Veterans were the guests of the 1st Patrol Boat Squadron for a day at sea for squadron manoeuvres. Eleven boats showed off their considerable expertise on a beautiful calm day, rounded off with an evening reception aboard HMS *Victory*. Thanks go to our hosts for a memorable and nostalgic day.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

THE COASTAL FORCES HERITAGE TRUST

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Objective of the Trust:

The object of the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust is the advancement of the education of the public in the history of Coastal Forces by restoration and permanent display, for the public benefit, of Coastal Forces craft together with relevant artefacts, records and memorabilia relating to such craft, and those who served therein.