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NEWSLETTER



HMS Cutlass Fast Patrol Boat underway

In this edition of the Newsletter we have an important good news announcement about our progress in pursuing the Trust's aim of establishing a permanent exhibition. This is explained in the Chairman's Letter and in an article about our exhibition plans. It is very early days for this Project but we hope to keep our supporters well informed on our progress through the Newsletter. In addition, we have a particularly broad range of news items. Our two main articles focus on Coastal Forces activity post World War II. We have an article on the Royal Navy's Fast Patrol Boats (FPBs) which operated from the early 1960s and into the 1980s in an extremely useful training role. Three of our current Trustees served in command of an FPB, including our chairman, and the article is accompanied by a speech he gave at a dinner in The Hornet Services Sailing Club the evening before the last Remembrance Sunday, recalling some of his experiences in command. Another article, Operation Jungle, tells of little known Coastal Forces clandestine activities during the Cold War, involving the use of captured German E-Boats and supported by German naval expertise. A lack of space in this edition prevents us including an article on one of our Allied Navies, but this will be continued in future Newsletters. We have continued to include an article on a prominent Coastal Forces veteran, this time the late Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles DSC OBE GM. It was the brave young people in Coastal Forces who made this Branch of the Service such a success and we hope that it is of these people that you wish to read. Additionally, we have included details of how our supporters may help the Trust through the use of a legacy. We very much welcome feedback from our readers and we will, of course, consider any contributions for publication.

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

I am delighted to report to our many supporters that very positive progress has made by the Trust towards achieving its aim of establishing a permanent Exhibition for the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces. Since mid-summer last year our Director and some Trustees had worked on an application for financial support from the Governments LIBOR Funds, in support of our plans for an Exhibition. The LIBOR Fund (London Inter-Bank Offered Rate) are those funds which the Government gathered by fining the banks for financial mismanagement. We were therefore delighted when the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his Autumn Statement that CFHT had been granted £925,000 towards its project. That funding will be received by the Trust at the start of the 2017-18 financial year.

Developing the Exhibition will be a very collaborative project, undertaken in partnership with the National Museum of the Royal Navy and the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust. This is explained a little further in a short article included in this Newsletter and you will be kept well informed of our progress. Although such a sizeable award would indicate that the Trust is now financially very viable I must stress that

the grant comes with strict terms of governance and is wholly related to well defined work on the Project. The running costs of the Trust are not included in the Grant and we must continue to seek your support to help us with our running costs, without which none of this progress would be possible. To this end you will find an Appeal enclosed with the Newsletter and, importantly, information on how the Trust can be helped through legacies. A small number of legacies left to the Trust over the years have been extremely helpful in keeping us afloat. I would particularly like to thank the family of the late Charles and Betty Milner, well known to many of you, from whom we have been left a most generous Legacy on the recent death of Betty.

The Exhibition project and our focus on financial support are by no means the limit of our activity and I hope that this Newsletter gives you an insight to our busy scene. Our partners in the Exhibition Project are also players in various other activities which help in supporting the remaining heritage craft and which all have the important aim of preserving and publicising our Coastal Forces history. It is a great pleasure and privilege to work with them.

BOATS ROUNDUP



Medusa and MTB 102 in company

Medusa (HDML 1387) Medusa has another busy year planned including a visit to France and the Channel Islands over the D Day period. She featured in a programme on the History Channel called “Combat Ships, ships that saved D Day” and will appear in a major film called “Dunkirk” along with MTB102 to be released in July.

Please visit www.hmsmedusa.org.uk for detailed information.

MTB 102 After a busy programme in 2016 MTB 102 was slipped in November for her winter maintenance and is now afloat ready to tackle a whole range of events this year. MTB 102 also features in the film “Dunkirk”, mentioned above and she will be revisiting France again this year.

See www.mtb102.com for programme details.

MTB 219

I am sure readers will hear more about MTB 219 in the coming months. MTB 219 is owned by “Military Boats”, the organisation established by Paul Childs and family. They have expended considerable effort to restore this World War II boat

but now feel that they can continue no longer and have put the boat up for sale. This is a very historic boat which took part in the action to attack the German battleships and cruisers in what was known as the “Channel Dash”, in addition to other major actions. All associated with naval heritage are looking closely at the future of the boat and supporters will be kept up-to-date on the outcome through the Newsletter.



ABOVE MTB 218, identical boat to MTB 219

BELOW MTB 219



THE EXHIBITION PROJECT

The Chairman in his letter has given you news of the substantial financial support provided by the Government which is allowing us to now move forward with our Coastal Forces Exhibition Project. This will involve the restoration and preparation of a suitable building for use as our Exhibition and that is to be the old mine store, on the site of the previous Naval Armament Depot at Priddy's Hard at Gosport. This building was well built and seems to be in excellent condition, well suited to housing up to two Coastal Forces craft and the Exhibition. Additionally, the Priddy's Hard site already has the award winning Explosion Museum, which exhibits the wide range of naval ammunition and weaponry which were stored in and distributed from the depot to naval ships. Our

Exhibition on this site will in many ways complement the Explosion Museum whose contents and weapons displays have much synergy with the Coastal Forces activity. The Coastal Forces Project will be undertaken in three Phases, two of which are covered by the Government Libor funding already granted; Phase 1 will be the restoration of the building and Phase 2 will be the establishment of the Coastal Forces Exhibition within the building. A third Phase, which will be pursued by the National Museum of the Royal Navy, will complete the Project to the highest Museum standards and establish its operations as a visitor attraction along with the Explosion Museum. The Coastal Forces project will be part of an exciting and imaginative re-development of the whole of

The Building



The interior of the Old Mine Store which is destined to be the home of the Coastal Forces Exhibition

Explosion



The existing Explosion Museum to which the future Coastal Forces Exhibition will be adjacent"

the Priddy's Hard site, which will produce both leisure and residential facilities. Visitors to the Historic Dockyard at Portsmouth will have the option of visiting Priddy's Hard by water-bus, in the same way that visits are now made across the harbour to the Submarine Museum at Fort Blockhouse. The successful completion of our project will only be achieved with our Trust working closely with two essential partners. Firstly, The Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust (PNBPT), the landlord for all the buildings and real-estate released by the Ministry of Defence in the Heritage Dockyard and associated sites in the Portsmouth Harbour area. PNBPT manages the buildings for their own use in heritage activity or use by others. They will be our partners for the restoration of the building and its preparation for use as a museum. Our second partner is, of course, the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN), with which our Trust resides and is affiliated. The NMRN are the professional organisation with all the skills and experienced staff necessary to produce a state-of-the-art, modern, first class Exhibition of Coastal Forces history.

In addition to CFHT receiving its Libor Grant the Property Trust (PNBPT) also had success with a Libor application which is related to Coastal Forces activity. In many respects this represents a double success for our Trust. The funding will enable completion of the restoration of three of the boats owned by the Property Trust, namely the World War I steam cutter *Falmouth*, the World War II *MGB 81*, which will be fully re-engined, and *Foxtrot 8* a landing craft formally onboard *HMS Fearless* in the Falklands War. These vessels will be added to and displayed with the Property Trust's Memorial Fleet which it is intended will

replicate the RAF's Memorial Flight and be available for commemorative events in the UK and abroad. The Grant will also provide funding for the development of the jetty facilities to berth the Memorial Fleet.

A final element of this Grant is for funding the building of a sea-going replica of *Coastal Motor Boat (CMB) 4*. This is the CMB in which Lieutenant Agar attacked and sank the Bolshevik cruiser *Olga* in Kronstadt Harbour in 1919, which resulted in his award of the Victoria Cross. The original *CMB 4* remains with the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. The work to replicate the CMB will be undertaken by students of the International Boat Building Training College, located in Boathouse 4 in the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. It is hoped that the replica CMB will be completed and launched by the anniversary of the Kronstadt event in 1919 and that it will complement a Centenary Exhibition of the event planned by the NMRN. The Coastal Forces Heritage Trust remains totally committed to supporting this activity.



Veterans onboard MGB 81

EVENTS IN NEWS

**COMMEMORATION OF DARTMOUTH PLAQUE**

On Remembrance Sunday a very special event took place at Kingswear (Dartmouth) with the unveiling of a memorial plaque to the 23rd MTB Flotilla of the Forces Navales Francaises Libres, the Free French Navy. The event was supported by senior French naval officers and families of the World War II French crew members. The MTB flotilla operated from Kingswear with distinction from January 1943 to September 1944 and was heavily involved in clandestine operations. Its wartime presence is remembered with great fondness by the residents of Kingswear. The memorial plaque, which sits alongside the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust's own plaque, was unveiled by Admiral Benoit Lugan, Commanding Officer of L'Ecole Navale (Naval Academy) Brest. The Admiral sailed into Dartmouth in one of two French sailing ships, *L' Etoile*, a beautiful topsail schooner that was built in 1931 alongside her sister ship, *La Belle Poule*. The unveiling ceremony was led by The Reverend John Gay and CFHT was represented by World War II veteran Sub-Lieutenant Teddy Cranmer RNVR with other resident members of the Trust.

ABOVE LEFT *Admiral Benoit Lugan unveiling the plaque commemorating the Free French 23rd MTB Flotilla*

ABOVE RIGHT *FS Etoile – French sailing ship*

BELOW *The French plaque alongside the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces commemorative plaque.*

**HORNET SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE**

The annual Coastal Forces Remembrance Service at the Coastal Forces Memorial at the Hornet Services Sailing Club, Gosport, continues in strength as it has done for 54 years. The service is on the Royal Navy's register of official events over Remembrance weekend and therefore is blessed with the support of a naval contingent from *HMS Sultan*. What gives this event a great sense of occasion is the presence of representatives of those Allied countries who served alongside the Royal Navy in World War II. Countries who are represented in laying

Coastal Forces veterans, from the left, George Chandler DSM, Sir Derrick Holden-Brown and Reg Ellis.





FAR LEFT *The Remembrance Service*

LEFT *Veteran Peter Bickmore with ratings from HMS Sultan*

BELOW *HRH The Princess Royal unveils the plaque commemorating her visit along with Peter Goodship Esq., Chief Executive of The Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust*

wreaths include Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, France, The Netherlands, Poland, Norway and the United States of America, along with veterans and other service organisations. The occasion also serves as a reunion of veterans and veteran's families who may not necessarily see each other throughout the year.

WESTMINSTER FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE

Coastal Forces has, for many years, had representation at the Remembrance Service held in Westminster Abbey on the Thursday before Remembrance Sunday each year. The Service is attended by members of the Royal Family, normally HRH Prince Philip and HRH Prince Harry on recent occasions. The event is an opportunity for branches of all three Armed Service to be united in a service of remembrance. Many have a garden plot allocated for the occasion outside the Abbey where remembrance crosses can be placed in memory of individuals or organisations. Coastal Forces have had such a plot for many years and the event continues to have veteran support, albeit by just one or two stalwarts as age affects our veteran community.



ROYAL VISIT

On 20 March HRH The Princess Royal visited the Heritage Dockyard in her capacity as Commodore-in-Chief Portsmouth. She commemorated the re-developed Middle Slip Jetty, now named "The Princess Royal Jetty", which is to be the home of the new 65,000 tonne *Queen Elizabeth* class aircraft carriers. During her visit she also viewed Boathouse No 4 and unveiled a plaque commemorating her visit. The boathouse has been completely restored by a transformation costing £5.7 million

and has reverted to its former use as a centre for boat restoration. A number of heritage craft along with the ongoing work of the students of the International Boatbuilding College, resident in the boathouse, are on display for visitors. Five short films depicting Coastal Forces operations and prominent veterans, with which CFHT collaborated, are also available to visitors. The visit was hosted by the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust with representatives of the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust in attendance. This representation included our Chairman, along with Trustees Antony Hichens, whose father Robert Hichens is featured in one of the Coastal Films and Rodney Agar whose uncle, Augustus Agar VC, is also featured by film.



Coastal Forces veteran George Chandler DSM reminds Prince Philip about his Honorary Membership of the Coastal Forces Veterans Association



The Coastal Forces plot at Westminster Abbey

FAST PATROL BOATS (FPBs)



The three Fast Patrol Boats, HMS Scimitar, Sabre and Cutlass underway

Three of our Trustees, including our chairman, commanded Fast Patrol Boats (FPBs), also known and used as Fast Training Boats (FTBs). It therefore seems wholly appropriate to include an article about the boats and the valuable contribution which they made in their post war role.

THE BOATS

In the late 1960s the Royal Navy ordered three FPBs, the first being *HMS Scimitar* built by Vosper Thornycroft Limited and handed over to the service in July 1970. She was followed by *HMS Cutlass* and *HMS Sabre*, both also built by Vosper Thornycroft at their Portchester shipyard. These boats, also known in service as Fast Training Boats, were the first Coastal Forces craft ordered for the Royal Navy since *HMS Brave Borderer* and *HMS Brave Swordsman*, which were also built by Vosper more than ten years previously. The *Braves* were built to joint Admiralty-Vosper designs as the basis of further gas-turbine fast patrol boats for export to a number of countries. The *Scimitar* class which followed had a hull form basically similar to the *Braves*, but with the bow drawn-out to a longer overhang forward, with the aim of further improving sea-keeping characteristics and giving a softer ride in a seaway. The boats were 100 foot in length and with a 26 foot 7 inch beam. Mechanically actuated transom flaps were fitted for trim adjustment making the hull design capable of being driven at over 40 knots on two engines and over 50 knots if the third gas turbine was ever fitted. The main propulsion was well-tried Rolls-Royce Proteus gas turbines, developed to a brake horsepower of 4250 at 11750 rev/min for high speed activity. Additionally, for cruising and manoeuvring the boats had Foden diesel engines developing 323 bhp, each fitted to the two shafts. The boats were of wood construction with aluminium alloy superstructure, particularly in those parts of the deck close to

the gas turbine exhausts. The type of construction represented the fully developed form of the Vosper laminated timber structure for Fast Patrol Boats of the highest speeds. There was accommodation for the Commanding Officer, one additional Officer, three Senior Ratings and seven Junior Ratings. The superstructure was largely taken up with a spacious operations room with chart table, radar displays and navigational instruments. The boat was commanded from an open bridge, with spring seats, steering and engine controls and communications facilities.

They were used by the Royal Navy principally in a training role and they proved to be a valuable asset for high speed attacks on ships being worked-up under Flag Officer Sea Training at the former operational base at Portland. The boats ran for slightly over ten years, providing not only a valuable input to naval training but also providing a unique opportunity for giving young officers early command in their careers. *HMS Sabre* lost her bow in a collision with the breakwater at Alderney in July 1980 and by 1983 all three boats had been decommissioned.

THE EXPERIENCE

The following is an edited version of the speech given by the Chairman of the Trust at the Hornet Dinner on the Saturday before Remembrance Sunday 2016 and relates to his time in command of *HMS Scimitar*.

“In 1971 I was the navigating officer of *HMS Salisbury*, a unit of the Far East Fleet. One day I received a letter from the appointer, telling me I was nominated to be Flag Lieutenant to Admiral Sir Horace Law, Commander in Chief, at Portsmouth. Shock and horror! I appealed to my Captain to help me get this changed. Don't be silly he said. Despondent I resigned myself to my fate. A couple of months later another letter arrived, addressed in green ink. It was from Sir Horace. It read:



HMS Scimitar courtesy of H Flicker

Dear Haddacks,

Your name was sent to me as a prospective Flag Lieutenant. I am letting you know that I have decided to appoint my Godson, Mark Le Fanu as he is thinking of leaving the Navy and I am going to change his mind. I know you will be disappointed so by way of compensation I have arranged for you to command an FPB.

Yours sincerely, Horace Law God bless Horace Law!!
What a guy!

My FPB or more precisely FTB – was to be *HMS Scimitar* – the first of class.

The Fast Training Boat staff requirement had been raised in the aftermath of the 1967 sinking of the Israeli destroyer *Eilat* (Former *HMS Zealous*) by a Styx missile fired by a small Egyptian *Komar* class FPB. This asymmetrical event rocked current thinking about the capability and utility of coastal forces and was a wake-up call to Western Navies that they had to learn to combat this new type of threat. The decision was taken to build 3 boats, capable of simulating missile armed FPBs, to train NATO navies in countering this threat. They would be assigned to Flag Officer Sea Training and based at Portland.

The quickest procurement path was to go for a development of the Brave class hull and machinery. The Navy inevitably turned to Vosper's for a solution. The result was a boat loosely based on the Brave design, though slightly larger and fitted for but not with weapons, apart from a couple of machine guns. Propulsion was two proteus gas turbines with space to fit a third if there was ever a requirement to retrofit armament, be it guns, torpedoes or missiles. Two Foden diesels provided manoeuvring capability as the gas turbines only drove ahead. This fit gave the boats a top speed of around 40 knots. Complement was two Officers, a Chief Tiff as engineer, a Petty Officer as Coxswain and about eight others including an Electrician, a Sparks, a Radar Plotter, a couple of Stokers and a couple of Seamen.

Accommodation was surprisingly comfortable. A relatively spacious cabin for the captain, a wardroom whose sofa arrangements could convert to four bunks, a small senior rates mess and a forward mess deck for the lads. The galley had a range and oven but in harbour we generally lived ashore – and away from Portland we could draw subsistence to live ashore but usually lived on board.

We had to drive from an open bridge that could be very wet indeed so eventually we hit on the idea of wearing aircrew goon suits, especially in winter. At speed in any kind of head sea we slammed heavily so had to limit access to the forward spaces when underway. Trim tabs helped us optimise the boats performance and were a particular godsend running at speed down sea. Below the bridge was the plot or ops room where we had an excellent navigational radar which was our principal navigation aid supplemented by a Decca – we never took a visual fix – and we could vary our own radar signature to



HMS Sabre

simulate different size threats through hoisting variously shaped reflectors. Behind the plot was a small Wireless Transmission Office and the Machinery Control Room where the Chief Tiff was lord. We had a reasonable UHF and HF radio fit that enabled us to try a spot of spoofing and jamming from time to time. There was talk of equipping us with kit to simulate soviet fire control radars but that never materialised in my time. The centre piece of each week was the FOST Thursday war. We would usually deploy away from Portland the night before to wherever would enable us to approach the blue forces coming down sea. Torquay or Poole were favourites.

Sailing in the early morning we would attempt to stealthily approach the work up ships to a missile launch position, sometimes announcing our missile launch on the tactical radio circuit. We would then close at high speed to simulate torpedo attack, firing green grenades and laying a smoke screen through which to disengage. Smoke was easily generated by spraying fuel into the jet pipe exhausts. I cannot begin to tell you what fun this all was, rushing from ship to ship to beat it up. Not very tactical but hugely enjoyable.

Another frequent serial was didtacs, otherwise known as death in the dark. Missile armed helos would attempt to detect and engage a fast moving FTB in the dark by operating in pairs, one to drop flares and one to shoot. The flare dropper would attempt to silhouette the FTB for the missile shooter to engage. This tactic could usually be confounded by turning 90 degrees towards the flare line and passing through it. Consequently didtacs did not last long in the helicopter tactical manual!

One day I was sent for by FOST and told that I was to have the Prince of Wales assigned to the boat for a week. He duly joined and bunked in the wardroom with the First Lieutenant. The first night we sailed round to Poole, berthed at the Town Quay and headed across to the Antelope Hotel for supper. HRH's protection officer was waiting, having reconnoitred the area, and accompanied myself, the Prince and my practical joking XO to the restaurant. Afterwards I settled the bill for us all and walking back to the ship the police officer sidled up and slipped a fiver into my hand. HRH's contribution he said. It's

true. Royals don't carry money! Back on board I began to write up my night order book – we were sailing at the crack for the Thursday war – when I saw the Prince in natty jim jams go into the officer's heads, holding what looked like a large Horses Neck. A bit concerned I popped into the Wardroom. XO, why has HRH taken a Horses Neck to the heads? Well sir, he said, I told him that to conserve water we normally brush our teeth in HNs!

Life was not all FOST serials. We undertook a huge variety of different tasks. Start boat for the Cowes-Torquay power boat race, (we came 5th) and high speed Royal Barge for Princess Anne's visit to the Channel Islands, rushing through the reefs and rocks at max speed with the St Peter Port lifeboat coxswains at the helm. *Scimitar* rode shotgun on *Cutlass* who had HRH embarked and as we approached Masseline Harbour, Sark, at full chat we shut down gas a couple of cables out – but *Cutlass* left it late and her diesels didn't catch. She plowed alongside in a welter of fenders, splinters and curses with an unamused Princess Royal and Dame of Sark looking on.

We led the river procession for the Queen's opening of the new London Bridge, – at a sedate 8 knots – and went up the canals to Brussels in company with the Portland MCM squadron to mark UK's accession to the Common Market. "Fanfare for Europe it was called – how ironic now.

We even had short refit – in Haslar Gunboat Yard of course!

Sometimes we received visiting vessels at Portland to temporarily augment our red force numbers. One such was *Tenacity*, a Vospers private venture FPB had been bought into RN service in 1972 for use in fishery protection. She was big, 220 tons and 144 ft long. Even this hull size could not cope with the North Sea, Irish Sea and Western Approaches in winter. She lasted just a few years before being sold on. We had a week with the BH7 hovercraft attached. We found her to be a very limited vessel whose advance and transfer when turning made her too unmanoeuvrable for safe close quarters work. Berthing at Torquay for an overnight before the Thursday War she used her huge airscrew to push her alongside and capsized a fleet of optimists sailing in the harbour! She too, was quickly disposed of.

The Destroyers *Rapid* and *Cavalier* had a race in the Clyde for the title of fastest ship. *Cavalier* won by a whisker. A few months later *Rapid* appeared at Portland and I challenged her to a race from off Grove Point to a few miles south of the Bill. She obliged – Despite a hiccup in flashing the gas turbines my about to be easy win was somewhat tarnished when *Rapid* entered the Portland Race and I had to quickly slow down. She re-overtook – jeering!

A regular event was a committal at sea – known irreverently as an ASHEX. A family who wished a veteran's ashes to be scattered at sea would bring the casket or urn on board, we would embark the Base Padre and proceed well out into Weymouth Bay. A short service would be held and the casket tipped into the sea from under a union flag. There would be a

piping party and all the trimmings. One occasion we did one of these and as the family were being led below for a sustaining snifter I saw the XO gesticulating at me. The casket was floating! With the family safely below I proceeded to try to run down the casket to get it to sink – eventually it did without further embarrassment.

One day I was sent for by the FOST Staff Officer Operations and told that we were to undertake a classified mission and that I was to go to Gosport for briefing. (see note below) Berthing *Scimitar* in the Naval Base I put on plain clothes and took the Gosport Ferry across. I got into a taxi and gave the address. You one of them spies then? the cabby asked.

Our mission was to pick up a person off a beach in the Channel Islands and bring him back. It was all very 'ill met by moonlight'. No one was allowed to speak to the person and we were to minimise those who saw him. Paddling our gemini into the beach in the early hours and doing the pre-briefed recognition drill, the XO and coxswain met the guy and we embarked him. He was put into my cabin, given a hot drink and the door was shut. We bounced our way across a choppy Channel back to Dolphin and disembarked a very sickly MI6 agent – I hope he passed his course!

All good things come to end and after a couple of years I handed command to Andrew Gordon Lennox (now CFHT Trustee) and reported to Dryad for PWO course number 3. From the sublime to the cor-blimey.

So, what did twenty-four months or so of small ship command do for me? I think it was pretty transformational in terms of professional self-confidence. As a young officer serving in destroyers and frigates I had always felt I had done a reasonable job – but someone else was always at your back. Command – even of a small vessel with twelve men – gives one a wholly different perspective as I am sure the young COs here today will attest. The self-confidence I gained in *Scimitar* carried me forward to early frigate command, big ship command and task force command – and it all began with rejection as a Flag Lieutenant!



HMS Sabre crew

I was 25 and relatively experienced when I had *Scimitar*. How much more impressive is the performance of those young men in World War II, some just 20 or 21, who came from civilian life to man Coastal Forces vessels – and to take them into combat and win. That giving officers an early taste of Command is a good thing is unarguable – but the opportunities in a shrinking Navy of predominantly large ships are now very few. I wish, in the same way that Fishery Protection was

a contracted task undertaken by the RN for DEFRA, the Home Office would contract sea border protection and perhaps the operations of Customs and Excise cutters to the RN. This would give us a rationale to procure a number of suitable patrol craft and greatly widen the opportunities for young officers. If only.”

Vice Admiral Sir Paul Haddacks KCB

OPERATION JUNGLE

By the end of the Second World War two branches of the Royal Navy had brought clandestine operations down to a pretty fine art; they were the Submarine Service and Coastal Forces. Both had become expert in landing and extracting small parties of men and materials in and out of enemy territory in countries as far apart as Norway and Burma, even including some in the Mediterranean. So when peace came in 1945, the tools were available to meet a new requirement. Such a requirement soon appeared as a result of the Cold War which gradually developed between the USSR and their former Allies in the West. The Soviets were keen to extend their influence in Poland and the Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, where populations were split in their loyalties. The British Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, saw an ideal opportunity for intelligence gathering in respect of Soviet intentions and Operation Jungle was instigated.

Operation Jungle was a programme run by MI6 through the early years of the Cold War, from 1948 to 1955, for the clandestine insertion of intelligence and resistance agents into Poland and the Baltic states. The agents were mostly Polish, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian exiles who had

been trained in the UK and Sweden and were to link up with the anti-Soviet resistance in the occupied states. The naval operations of the program were carried out by the Royal Navy with the use of German crew members of the “German Mine Sweeping Administration”, thus giving the British Government an option of evading responsibility. In the late 1940s MI6 established a special centre in Chelsea to train the agents and thus marking the commencement of Operation Jungle. The operation was led by Henry Carr, Director of the Northern European Department of MI6. Many of those involved in the Estonian group had served in the German SS forces during Estonia’s occupation by Nazi Germany. Because the Soviets had been harrying the fishing fleets in the Baltic area, the agents were transported under the cover of the “British Baltic Fishery Protection Service” (BBFPS), a cover organisation launched from British-occupied Germany and run from London via the RN post-war base at Kiel. It was formed as a credible cover story, given the harassment of West German fishermen by the Soviets. The flotilla was using converted former World War II E-boats. Commander Anthony Courtney had earlier been struck by the potential capabilities of former E-boat hulls, and Lieutenant-Commander John Harvey-Jones (post his naval service to be Chief Executive of ICI) of the Naval Intelligence Division was put in charge of the project. He discovered that the Royal Navy still had two E-boats, P5230 and P5208 and these were sent to *HMS Hornet*.

At *HMS Hornet* one of the boats, P5230, was modified to reduce its weight and increase its power. In continuance to deny responsibility, a former German E-boat Lieutenant Hans-Helmut Klose, was put in command, with a mixed German and British crew. The German crew came from the “German Mine Sweeping Administration” and were recruited specifically for their familiarity with the E-boat. Agents were inserted into Saaremaa, Estonia, Užava and Ventspils, Latvia, Palanga, Lithuania, and Ustka, Poland, all typically via Bornholm, Denmark where the final radio signal was given from London for the boats to enter the territorial waters claimed by the USSR.



Ex German E Boats, then P5230 and P5208
alongside at HMS Hornet

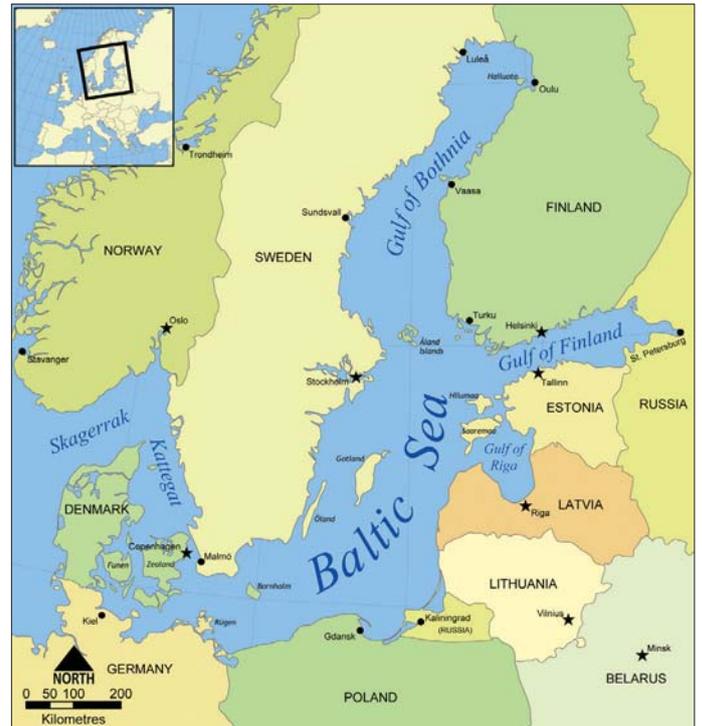


German E-Boat S204 (P5230) surrendering at Felixstowe

The operation evolved into a number of phases. The first transport of agents occurred in May 1949, with six agents boarding the boat at Kiel, then under Lieutenant Klose's command with his German crew. The British Officers on board, Lieutenant Commanders Harvey-Jones and Shaw, took initial command of the operations but handed this over to Swedish Officers on arrival at Simrishamn, Southern Sweden. The German crew then proceeded via the cover of Öland Island, then east to Palanga, north of Klaipeda, arriving within 300 metres of the coast, where the six agents disembarked in a rubber dingy and made their way to shore. The boat returned to Gosport, after picking up the British Officers at Simrishamn and refueling at Broom. Following the success of the initial operation, MI6 followed up with several more improvised landings via rubber dingy. Two agents were landed at Ventspils on 1 November 1949; three agents landed south of Ventspils on April 12, 1950 and two agents in December at Polanda. In late 1950, British Naval Intelligence and MI6 created a more permanent organisation with Lieutenant Klose hiring a crew of 14 German sailors and basing the boat at Hamburg-Finkenwerder. The operations then evolved with a secondary task of visual and electronic reconnaissance of the Baltic coast from Saaremaa in Estonia to Rügen in East Germany. For this purpose the boat was re-fitted with additional fuel tanks for extended range and an extensive antenna suite with American equipment for COMINT (Communication Intelligence) and ELINT (Electronic Intelligence). During this phase, four landings were performed between 1951 and 1952 with 16 agents inserted and five agents retrieved.

In August 1952, the second E-boat was put into service as a refuelling and supply vessel and consort for the SIGINT (Signal Intelligence) operations, under the command of Lieutenant E. G. Müller, a former German naval executive officer who served under Klose during the war. Eight Polish agents were inserted during this period using sea-borne balloons.

During the period 1954-55, three new German-built motorboats of the *Silbermöwe* class replaced the old E-boats. They were christened *Silvergull* (German name *Silbermöwe*, commanded by H. H. Klose, *Stormgull* (German name



Baltic sea map

Sturmmöwe, commanded by E. G. Müller) and *Wild Swan* (German name *Wildschwan*, commanded by D. Ehrhardt). They were built at the Lürssen dockyard in Bremen-Vegesack for the West German Border Police, but under the pretense that the boats exceeded the speed allowed by the treaty of Potsdam, French and British authorities confiscated the vessels for Klose's missions. In February 1955, during a SIGINT mission from Brusterort to Libau, a naval incident took place with a Soviet patrol boat. Ehrhardt's *Wild Swan* was fired on by the Soviet vessel, but the German boat slipped away at top speed after a 15-minute engagement. Otherwise, they operated with a large degree of freedom.

Overall, the operation was severely compromised by Soviet counter-intelligence, primarily through information provided by the British "Cambridge Five", Kim Philby and the Soviet agent



Silbermöwe class boats at Kiel

George Blake. In the extensive Soviet counter-operation the NKVD/KGB captured or killed nearly every one of the 42 Baltic agents inserted into the field. Many of them were turned as double agents who infiltrated and significantly weakened the Baltic resistance. One of the agents sent to Estonia and captured by the KGB, Mart Männik, wrote an autobiography *A Tangled Web A British Spy in Estonia*, which was published after his death and has been translated into English. The book gives an account of his experiences throughout and after the unsuccessful operation. MI6 suspended the operation in 1955 due to the increasing loss of agents and suspicions that the operation was compromised. The last mission was a landing on Saaremaa in April 1955. While the overall operation is regarded as a fiasco, Klose's missions are considered successful, as far as the SIGINT and the naval aspects of his incursions are concerned. The motorboats were handed over to the new German Navy in 1956.

However, the Admiralty decided to retain this clandestine ability by keeping a small 'Special Service' squadron of boats

in commission, based with the operational squadrons at *HMS Hornet*. The squadron had only two boats which, over the next few years, involved an old E-boat, Camper & Nicholson long boats and a Seaward Defence Boat, with one of them usually being manned by the Royal Marines. Special homing equipment was fitted and the boats were probably the first in the RN to use the new Zodiac rubber dinghies for operational work. Maybe it was no co-incidence that the first Senior Officer had previously served at Kiel and that he remained with the squadron for many years. Duties included training future agents in landing on unfamiliar beaches at dead of night – and subsequent recovery, usually in the Channel Islands. Some personnel who had had wartime experience were kept on for the purpose. Fleet Air Arm pilots were also recovered at the end of their survival courses off the New Forest coast – again at dead of night without lights. When *HMS Hornet* closed in 1957 the facility was maintained for several years afterwards.

PROMINENT VETERANS

REAR ADMIRAL SIR MORGAN MORGAN-GILES, DSO, OBE GM, DL

Morgan Morgan-Giles became prominent within Coastal Forces without having commanded or even served in a Coastal Forces boat. His extraordinary contribution was made in the Adriatic as Senior Naval Officer on the Island of Vis (SNOVIS), off the Croatian coast. How he came to that appointment at a critical time in the war in the Adriatic is, in itself, a fascinating story.

The Germans invaded Yugoslavia in 1941 to find little resistance. The King, Peter II, and his court escaped to Kotor from where they embarked on a British ship for Cairo and eventually onto London as a Government in exile. A retired general called Draza Mihaelovic was left to harness some form of resistance. General Mihaelovic had no help or encouragement from the Allies and it was unsurprising that his resistance was ineffective. However, by 1943 stories were emerging of a resistance group who were effective and they operated under the command of a man called "Tito". Prime Minister Churchill wanted to know what was really happening in Yugoslavia and decided to send a "military ambassador", Fitzroy Maclean, a diplomat before the war and then a brigadier, was sent on the task. Morgan-Morgan Giles was then serving as a lieutenant-commander in

Alexander where he had distinguished himself and been awarded the George Medal for his bravery in recovering survivors in mined waters after the destruction of one of his motor boats. He was well known to Fitzroy Maclean, who wanted him to join his team in the Adriatic, as his naval advisor. The Admiralty said "No he is a Torpedo Officer and we want him home". They questioned why Maclean wanted a naval officer on his team and his response was convincing. He explained that Tito had a large partisan resistance movement and needed large quantities of war material and supplies of all sorts, which could best be transported from Italy and amongst

the islands of the Croatian coast by sea. However Fitzroy Maclean had been promised by Churchill that he could have anyone he wanted for his task and he appealed directly to the Prime Minister, thus overriding the Admiralty. While Fitzroy Maclean then parachuted into Yugoslavia to find Tito, Morgan Giles went to Bari on the east coast of Italy to gather a number of Fairmile B Motor Launches and set up a support organisation.

Meanwhile, Fitzroy Maclean had found Tito in the Yugoslav mountains and the two got on well and soon reached an agreement on the Allied support which was needed. His reports to Churchill resulted in that support being given to Tito at the expense of poor old General Mihaelovic who ceased to receive any



Lieutenant-Commander Morgan Morgan-Giles Royal Navy as SNOVIS

aid. It was while at Bari that Morgan-Giles was involved in the aftermath of the catastrophic air raid on the harbour, which blew-up an ammunition ship and sank 16 others. His gallantry and initiative during this attack resulted in him being awarded the MBE, subsequently to be raised to the OBE. The strategic situation at that time in 1943 was that the Axis forces occupied all of Yugoslavia, Greece and Crete, with Italian forces providing the support for the coastal areas of Yugoslavia and the Germans dominating the mainland. When the Italian armistice came in September 1943 the Partisans took their opportunity of rounding-up the Italian troops and it was said that in a show of contempt for the Italians they just removed their rifles and their trousers. The Partisans then took advantage of taking-up the vacuum that existed in the coastal areas before the Germans had time to move their forces. During this period Morgan Giles "gun running" organization with the use of MLs was being well established. He placed a lieutenant on each of the Islands of Vis, Korcula and Hvar to liaise with the Partisans, with the island of Vis as the centre of operations, and Komiza as its main base. From late 1943 until December 1944 Morgan Giles operated as Senior Naval Officer Vis (SNOVIS), controlling vital supplies coming from Bari by MLs, and acting as liaison between the crews of the Coastal Forces MTBs and MGBs, who were to operate from there, and with the Partisans. The Coastal Forces operations from Vis and their support of the Partisans were many and varied and are covered in other articles. However, some aspects of Morgan Giles input to this scene should be stated. Following the capture of the German Enigma machine and the decoding of German signal traffic, intelligence on German movements in the Adriatic were fed to SNOVIS under the code name of ULTRA. Morgan Giles was thus in a position to direct CF flotillas on German movements and to potential targets, often with great success for Coastal Forces. However, Morgan Giles was not in a position to reveal his source of intelligence and many Coastal Forces Commanding Officers must have thought that he had second sight. Morgan Giles saw Coastal Forces operations at first hand and had a tremendous

LIVES IN BRIEF

ALEXANDER DOUGLAS FEAR DSC

Lieutenant-Commander Alec Fear who has died aged 97 had been in command of ML 346 for just 18 days when he took part in Operation Jubilee, the Allied Raid on Dieppe. On 19 August 1942 Alec Fear was a newly promoted Lieutenant RNVR and his task was to guard the eastern flank of the landings on Yellow Beach, eight miles east of Dieppe, where No 3 Army Commando was to land and destroy a German coastal battery. Just before dawn Fear ran into a strongly



Commander Morgan-Giles with President Tito of Yugoslavia on his visit to London in 1953

appreciation of the bravery of the young men involved, which he expressed often in later life. He was awarded the DSO for his contributions to this campaign and for the success of an amphibious attack on a German base on Lussin Island. His last appointment of the war was with Force W, which was assembled in India to drive the Japanese out of Malaysia. After the war he went on to have a full and very successful naval career, commanding a number of destroyers and his final sea command was *HMS Belfast* for her last commission. He was subsequently to play a leading role in saving the decommissioned ship and establishing her as a visitor attraction on the Thames in London. Retiring by choice as a rear admiral in order to stand for parliament, he became the Member for Winchester, a seat which he held for thirteen years. Morgan-Giles always spoke highly of his time with Coastal Forces and he was a frequent attendee and supporter of their post war events.

Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles DSO, OBE, GM

Edited extracts from, "An Unforgiving Minute" personnel memories by Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan Giles



Alexander Douglas Fear

escorted German convoy, which, though detected by British radar the previous evening, had not been reported. He recalled his horror when the enemy convoy sent-up a flare and he realised that by continuing he would be heading directly towards the German defences. When his Coxswain asked, "What now, skipper?" Fear replied, "My orders are to land No 3 Commando on that beach and that is what I plan to do." Against all odds he destroyed a 200 ton German armed tanker, *Franz*, and his crew boarded the damaged ship before she was fully ablaze, to tear down the enemy ensign. Alex Fear was awarded the DSC for his actions in Operation Jubilee.

MICHAEL MccGWIRE

Commander Michael MccGwire was a Midshipman at the start of the Second World War and was to serve in Coastal Forces. He remained in the service until 1969, then giving-up a promising naval career to become a much respected expert on Cold War geopolitics. At the age of 13 he was sent to Dartmouth where he prospered and won the King's Dirk. His initial service was in the battleship Rodney, in which he took part in Operation Pedestal, the relief of the Siege of Malta, and in the Allied landings in North Africa and Sicily. He joined Coastal Forces in 1944 and was First Lieutenant of MTB 479 of the 30th MTB Flotilla. The nine MTBs of the flotilla sank six German vessels and severely damaged another twelve in operations in the Narrow Seas off the coasts of France, Belgium and Holland. He stayed in contact with his close-knit MTB crew until the end of his life. Post war he served in both the Pacific and off the Palestine coast before being sent by the navy to Cambridge to learn Russian, where one of his classmates was the traitor George Blake. (See Operation Jungle) Further

naval appointments followed before promotion to Commander in 1958. While serving as head of the Soviet Naval Intelligence Section in the Ministry of Defence, an appointment well suited to his academic disposition, he began to see his future as being in other directions. He left the service and then studied International, Politics and Economics at Aberystwyth University. It was while there that he founded the Interstate Journal of International Affairs, wrote a book on the Soviet Navy, spoke at numerous specialist conferences, following which he easily slipped into college life. He became Professor of Maritime and Strategic Studies at Dalhousie University Nova Scotia where he instituted a series of international conferences. A number of prestigious appointments followed during which he accomplished a large number of his publications. MccGwire's view of the Royal Navy was that, "if you didn't know what to do, the navy was an excellent place to do it."



Michael MccGwire

IN MEMORIAM

WE SAY FAREWELL TO:

William R Brightwell	CFVA 326	Edward George Lee	CFVA 2458
Frank Capstick	CFVA 2346	James William Madden	CFVA 1362
William Harold Carey	CFVA 2423	Michael MccGwire	
Ronald Catton	CFVA 3357	Thelma Betty Milner	CFVA 324
Kenneth Deakin	CFVA 1370	Harry Moran	CFVA 3111
Alexander Douglas Fear DSC	CFVA 1781	William L. (Will) Perry	CFVA 2226
Ron Hancock	CFVA 218	Eric Pope	CFVA 1856
John William Harrop	CFVA 1138	William Stoneham	CFV 1946
Audrey Iliffe		Dennis C. Wade	CFVA 2376

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

STOP PRESS

NEW PUBLICATION – “SECRET DUTIES OF A SIGNALS INTERCEPTOR”

A new book has been published on the duties and experiences of a young lady working with the Secret Services at Bletchley Park during World War II. The author, Jenny Naylor, was a Special Duties Wren from 1941 until the end of the war. She also served at Dover and Cromer and had many friends in Coastal Forces. Her fiancé, Eric Cornish, the Senior Officer of MTB 6th Flotilla, was lost in an engagement off Cap Gris Nez in May 1942. The book was published at the end of November 2016 and can be obtained through Pen and Sword.



LEGION D'HONNEUR

Two years ago the French Government announced that all servicemen and women involved in the liberation of France would be presented with its Legion d' honneur. A number of Coastal Forces veterans have recently received the award more than 70 years after their wartime activity. It is known that recipients included Alan Brown, who commanded an MTB in the 63rd Flotilla and was involved in the D Day invasion and Don Redston who served in ML 191 which was part of the force at Utah Beach. There must have been other Coastal Force veterans receiving the award this year and the Editor would like to hear your personal story.

THE CENTENARY OF THE WRNS BRANCH OF THE ROYAL NAVY

To celebrate the Centenary of the WRENS this year we are running a competition to see if anyone has any photographs of WRENS either at sea in Coastal Forces boats during World War II or supporting Coastal Forces activity. Any winners will receive a FREE copy of our DVD “A History of the Royal Navy’s Coastal Forces”.

There will be an article in the November issue describing the major role WRNS played in Coastal Forces bases during the war. Any supporting photographs would be welcome.





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