

The Seven Seas Tattler Issue 1.11 - April 2018



Greetings all Club Members.

Tattler trusts you will find this April edition of interest. As always, comments are welcome (jonathanagolding@gmail.com)

Kindly diarise the Club AGM - 20th April (17h00)

Chairman's Report

Drakensberg is currently doing a cargo run to Durban, returning sometime this week.

Protea is conducting deep dive training in False Bay.

Spioenkop will be conducting weapons acceptance in the coming weeks.

From the webmaster

Please have a look at our new graphical reciprocity pages on the club's website. You can search for clubs that we have reciprocity with wherever your destination is in the world.

April Birthdays

We take this opportunity of wishing all of the following the happiest of birthdays and a wonderful year ahead. (We apologise for any we may have missed - it means that your birthday is not on the database - please provide details for an update!)

1 April Cdr R D Stone (Ret)	12 April Mr M J Smith-Chandler
4 April Capt G B Kretschmer	22 April Capt A J Forrest (Ret)
6 April Mr S D Neville	22 April Mr R Wilson
8 April R Adm (JG) P E Bitzker (Ret)	25 April Mr T J Murray
12 April Cdr S Hlatshwayo	30 April Mrs J R W Dart

Club Manager's Report

100 Club Winners March 2018

R300 Capt P. Barnard (Ret)
R300 Mr P. Dines
R300 Mr T Wilkenson
R1000 Mr G. Patterson

New Members

We welcome the following:

Planks van Aswegen, married to Patricia and lives in Harbour Heights Close, Simon's Town. Planks had a long and distinguished career in the SA Navy serving in many SA Navy ships at sea and shore establishments. Planks eventually retired as a Base Master at Arms in Simon's Town.

Simon Lang, married to Victoria and lives in Seaforth, Simon's Town. Simon is a retired Major of the British Army who served with the British Military Advisory Training Team in South Africa (BMATT) in 2000.

Seven Seas Club Happy Hour and 100 Club Draw

The next Happy Hour and 100 Club Draw is on Tuesday the 10th of April 2018 from 17h00 to 18h00.

Seven Seas Club AGM

The Seven Seas Club AGM will take place in the Club on Friday the 20th April 2018 at 17h00. Members are reminded that their 2018/19 subscriptions need to be paid prior to the meeting in order to secure a vote at the AGM.

From the Treasurer

As predicted last month, financial results for February were pretty sad, with bar sales well down and profitability in the red. For unknown reasons, member support has suddenly declined in the last two months and we sincerely hope this is not an indication of what lies ahead.

February, being the last month of our financial year, we have now finalised our results for the year.

All in all, not too shabby! We ended the year with sales marginally below budget, but with a net surplus of R11 980, which was in excess of budget. This surplus could have been considerably higher if it had not been for the unexpected costs incurred to refurbish our downstairs premises for our new tenants and if sales had been better in January and February.

So ... another good year for the Club.

However, not to spoil the good achievements, the outlook for this next year (i.e.2018/2019), does not look too promising. Membership is declining, so naturally are subscriptions and if the poor support over the last two months continues, the Club is going to take a knock. We can't have this, so your committee as well as you the members are going to have to pull out all stops to get the show on the road again. There are plans afoot and members will be advised in due course.

Regarding the Club's Membership Database, this I have handed over to the Club Manager, Glen Marlow. He will be monitoring all aspects of membership and will in future be responsible for hounding delinquent members, who have forgotten to pay their subs. Thanks Glen!

...'till next time!

Spotlight on Chris Moon

This month Tattler sheds some light on club member Chris Moon. This well written piece comes directly from Chris and I hope you will find it as interesting as Tattler does!

Family

Born at The Booth (Oranjezicht) on 18th June 1944 to Leslie and Ora Moon. Grew up in the city bowl (Tamboerskloof) and educated at SACS as were my younger brothers David & Peter (deceased).

As a youngster, I was always interested in ships and shipping and spent a lot of time crawling around them in Table Bay Harbour - tug rides were always a bonus! Scouting was another interest as was school rugby, athletics, angling and was also a drummer in the school cadet band! From school, I joined the Naval Gymnasium at Saldanha in 1962 as an Ordinary Seaman and was drafted to Gordon's Bay for officer qualifying training which resulted in selection as a direct entry midshipman in the SAN, signing on in January 1963.

Career

After a year's midshipman training mainly in SAS TRANSVAAL and SAS PIETERMARITZBURG, I was commissioned as an Ensign in Dec 1963. The other highlight of that year was membership to the Seven Seas Club which was "mandatory" in those times! We were "frog marched" into the club by our "Snots nurse" and the rest became history, albeit somewhat vague at times!

My career followed the normal junior officer appointments at sea, mainly in minesweepers and a couple of years as a Divisional Officer at the Naval Gymnasium, Saldanha. On completion of Lt's Q course in 1968 and with promotion to Lt in 1969, I was appointed Navigator and HCO (helicopter control officer) in SAS SIMON VAN DER STEL which was a wonderful step into the bigger ship environment. Apart from the Captain, the entire wardroom lived on board at one stage. Some hectic socializing occurred but the ship performed well professionally and good contacts were made with SAAF personnel when two Wasp helicopters were embarked. A particularly grueling voyage to Gough Island in the middle of winter to assist in locating missing meteorologists reminded the bridge watch keepers of what it must have been like on the Russian convoys in an open bridge ship.

After a short spell on the staff at the Military Academy in 1970, I was extracted to prepare for attending a RN Nav Course which introduced me to SAS TAFELBERG as a bridge watch keeper for a few months. By August I was living on the "married patch" at HMS DRYAD in the countryside outside Portsmouth and very much in studying mode.

Back in Simon's Town I joined the newly re-fitted SAS PRESIDENT STEYN in July '71 as HCO to later take over from the then Lt Cdr Bill Leith as navigator. I was hardly unpacked when the ship sailed for Europe to return with the new SAS/m EMILY HOBHOUSE. We managed to do some flag showing but the diminishing choice of destinations were becoming evident. On the return voyage we encountered a tragedy in Luanda when the ship's Wasp crashed during trials with no survivors.

The following year (1972) saw us off to France again to escort SAS/m JOHANNA VAN DER MERWE's return home. Some of the pubs in Toulon and Cadiz felt like home from home!

The remainder of my time in the good ship PRESIDENT STEYN involved us in regular exercises with RN ships, our submarines and the occasional nuclear boat transiting to and from the Far East with the Suez Canal closed. Demands on the ship and her crew were generally met with success i.e. apart from the Fleet Regatta where we were sadly never able to wrest the rooster from PK!

Another wintry trip to Gough Island to embark a meteorologist with medical challenges was reasonable, bearing in mind watchkeeping in an enclosed bridge!

My frigate days came to an end in Jan '74 when I followed the way of most ND's as payback time for the overseas course and was re-appointed as OiC at the Radar School in Durban. Getting there was aboard a coaster, MV CAROLINE. We loaded the family limo (Beetle) and the well-known Staffie (Buffer) aboard and I stood watches to earn my keep. The voyage was uneventful but on arrival in a steamy Durban, Buffer expressed his disgust at his new environment by cocking his leg on the binnacle before disembarking.

My then wife and newly acquired daughter arrived by SAA and we established a home in a "potluck" quarter on Salisbury Island which holds many pleasant memories. De Vries, Donkin, Retief and Vorster were names that contributed richly to the Sunday braai! A subsidized quarter at Anstey's Beach later became home and a son was added to the nominal roll!

Early 1976 saw a return to Simon's Town and re-habitation of our home in Tokai. The appointment was SOND at NHQ - the last before Naval Headquarters was moved to Pretoria. While the rest of NHQ was transferred to Pretoria in 1977, I had the good fortune of promotion to Cdr and appointed in command (my first) of SAS PRETORIA. She was a recent conversion of a Mirrlees CMS (Coastal Minesweeper) to a PMS (Patrol Minesweeper).

My next command was SAS EAST LONDON (1978) where I started as a bridge watch keeper. The mentorship that I received from the then OC, Lt Gim Niewoudt, stood me in good stead not only in handling a Napier Deltic CMS but also the general enthusiasm in matters minesweeping and as heading up a squadron of 4 minesweepers as the then MS147. Expertise under the watchful eye of another mentor, the late then Capt Charles Sanderoff, resulted in fairly advanced exercises off major ports. The odd cry over the radio of "Doggo, doggo, doggo" during a team sweep tended to concentrate one's mind! We did however successfully advance to three ship team sweeps with turns! Rivalry between ships was generally intense but also enjoyable.

Reality returned early in 1979 when I exchanged the pleasure of command at sea to attend the senior Naval Command and Staff Course. A rude awakening which lasted for an incarceration of six months but luckily my efforts paid off. On completion of the Staff Course, I was appointed temporarily in command of the SAS A331 which was in fact the old polar supply ship RSA. The space and comfort of the little ship re-lit a desire to serve in the merchant navy someday. However, the words of my late father who served in the MN until his death, remained in the back of my mind....."If you want to go to sea and still expect to have a home life, join the SA Navy "my boy"!

Another addition to the Wynberg Mil maternity section statistics occurred in 1980 when Louise (now in Brisbane, Australia) was born. I remained ashore at MS Base until 1982 when I was appointed in command of what was later known as SAS UMKOMAAS - a grand little Voith-propelled vessel which made any mediocre ship handler look like a wizard!

After a year as OC and senior officer of a 4-ship squadron of mine hunters and with my return to bachelorhood, I was dispatched to the Joint Command HQ of the SADF in the SO1 Navy post in 1983. I had the privilege of serving under some seriously impressive senior officers and life in the old Union Hotel in Pretoria was equally enjoyable.

After a very valuable year in the Ops Room at SADFHQ, I was promoted to Captain and appointed to SAS TAFELBERG as OC in 1984. She was in the throes of a major re-build which resulted in a versatile log sup ship after just over a year in Dockyard hands - a great credit to their capability in those days!

With a wonderful crew the ship developed into a very capable platform which was the highlight of my seagoing career.

In 1987 I handed over command to a valued friend, the late Eric Green, and moved underground to the Command Ops job at Silvermine where we were kept busy until the demise of Naval Command West.

Early retirement followed in April 1990 when I joined the ranks of some very loyal members who were retrenched. I finally satisfied my desire of going to sea in the merchant navy when I joined the fishery patrol vessel CUSTOS as master in August 1990. She wasn't exactly the TAFELBERG but I saw it as a stepping stone to moving up the "corporate ladder" in the fishery research ship/polar supply ship field. I did relieve as master in the fishery research ships AFRICANA and ALGOA which I found extremely interesting.

Another desire to become a tug master never materialized as I was offered a civilian post as a navigation instructor at the Maritime Warfare School where I clocked in on 1 Feb 1993 and remained until hitting PSAP retirement age of 65 in June 2009. I slotted into my new role of "Mr Chips" surprisingly easily. Students from the navies of Nigeria, Ghana, Namibia and Kenya added to the locals and hopefully my enjoyment of what we were achieving, was also shared by those subjected to the basics of naval navigation from us crusty old sea dogs which included captains Buchanan, Spengler, De Wet and Cdr Blackie Swart!

During my time at the Warfare School and in my capacity as reserve officer, I became harbour pilot at Simon's Town, did an ice navigation course with the Argentinian Navy and twice sailed to Antarctica in SAS OUTENIQUA.

Unpleasant Experiences

Adverse weather in a small ship always demanded a degree of forethought, but there were two occasions aboard OUTENIQUA "down south" that put the wind up me!

The first, as ice conning officer with SA AGULHAS in company when she came to a halt in the pack. We passed close to relieve the pressure and continued until our progress stopped. AGULHAS remained astern of us while we attempted a "back and ram". This is done at maximum engine power which is reduced once astern momentum is achieved in preparation for the next ram. On this occasion there was a problem with the pump supplying oil pressure to the pitch of the propeller blades. In case of failure, pitch goes to maximum astern and with AGULHAS lying directly astern, the potential of a calamity was obvious. Fortunately, in what felt like an eternity, the main engine was crash stopped and with reducing astern momentum, my old friend, the late Capt Bob Pieters SAN (Rtd), got some ahead movement out of the AGULHAS and we missed one another by about 50 meters - too close for comfort!

The second occasion where I seriously felt uncomfortable occurred when the ship was laying weather buoys and homeward bound from the Southern Ocean. With a huge storm on the go, the bow was taking it green and the crests of the swells were passing at bridge level which was at 30m plus! The thought of abandoning ship should something have gone wrong in those conditions was too ghastly to contemplate!

Retirement

A number of events occurs in 2009. First my Mom passed away and then my three children ALL got married. Dee was very much a part of my life but to avoid "Four Weddings and a Funeral", we delayed our respective returns to matrimonial bliss until 2010!

In 2011 our little family was completed with the arrival of our "daughter" Ella - a beautiful Pitbull! I am also the proud grandfather of 6 grandchildren (2 girls and 4 boys).

The Club

Having been a member since 1963, the Club was very much part of the scene of the officer corps and wardroom life. Birthdays, bachelor parties, wakes, birthday draws, Christmas draw, film nights and many other events were either instigated, celebrated or concluded there!

I find it sad though, that as a retired officer visiting the Club, I can't engage with a serving officer as to what's going on in the organization, especially after the privilege of being involved with so many junior officers under training who are now in senior posts but unobtrusive in occasionally socializing with their "forefathers". I wish more support was forthcoming from these serving officers, many of whom have had the good fortune of visiting many more destinations and interaction with other navies than we did. Thank goodness for the loyal locals who support the Club and the tireless team that manage to keep it afloat!

In conclusion, and taking my late father's advice, I couldn't have made a better career choice than my time in the SA Navy. It wasn't all wine and roses but with the guidance of some serious old sea dogs and a bit of effort, I certainly enjoyed all the stages of my time in uniform.

The great many shipmates that I sailed with and loyal crew members under my command made it all worthwhile. This was almost surpassed by my second career as a Reserve Officer where smashing ice to the greatest effect or being as gentle as possible when maneuvering ships in the confines of Simon's Town harbour gave great satisfaction. A lot of thanks were due to the professionalism of the tug crews, riggers and berthing parties.

And a few final words..... "happy people are always a bonus, while inconsiderate people 'P' me off!

=====

Navy news

Milestone as first F-35B aircraft deploys to warship (Reported 6 March 2018)

An F-35B has landed on the deck of the USS Wasp in a milestone year for the stealth fighter jet.

The US Marine Corps deployed the fifth-generation aircraft for the first time months before the F-35B makes its debut on Britain's future flagship. The jets will provide the aerial punch for HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister Prince of Wales. The older sister is due to travel to the Eastern Seaboard later this year to collect the first of her fighter aircraft.

"Pairing F-35B Lightning II with the Wasp represents one of the most significant leaps in warfighting capability for the Navy-Marine Corps team in our lifetime," said Rear Admiral Brad Cooper, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 7.

The jets were flown by Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 – known as the Green Knights – to the amphibious assault ship operating with the US Navy's 7th Fleet in the Pacific.

Mine Hunt (Reported 7 March 2018)

The waters around Norway's capital are considerably safer a two-week hunt by the crew of HMS Cattistock. Experts from the Portsmouth-based minehunter found more than ten WW2 mines and torpedoes during a concerted search for unexploded wartime bombs with a NATO task group.

Norway was occupied by the Nazis between April 1940 and the war's end, with the RAF making repeated attempts to disrupt shipping between Oslo and Germany – an operation codenamed 'gardening vegetables', with Oslofjord itself also given the cover name 'onions'. Twin-engine Hampden bombers, or four-engine Lancasters and Halifaxes dropped between one and two dozen mines at a time, just one or two seconds apart from a mere 600ft over the fjord.

Around 1,500 British 'A' mines were sown in the fjord and its many inlets – some triggered by a ship's magnetic field, others by the noise vessels made as they passed overhead. While the major sea lanes were cleared in the immediate aftermath of the war, the fjord covers 766 square miles (1,984 square km) with countless lesser inlets, estuaries and the like. In fact, around 100 mines have been discovered by ships and divers and neutralised, but there remains a lot of unexploded ordnance in the fjord. The latest sweep for 'vegetables' in the 'onions patch' was carried out by NATO's Minehunter Group 1 – Cattistock, plus two Norwegian and one German hunter.

"The environmental conditions were incredibly challenging – water temperatures down to freezing, often causing the formation of ice, and air temperatures consistently well below freezing. So, diving operations were unusually demanding," said Leading Diver Karl Atkin. "We often went down to 60 metres in zero visibility and had to identify the mines by touch. The deep dives bring a heavy decompression penalty too – we had to conduct 'stops' at various depths on the way up. When we do, we're motionless in the water column and get very cold very quickly!"

The cold also forced the ship to abandon the last two miles of hunting due to thick sea-ice closing the bay. "There were people walking their dogs on the frozen sea, where we should have been mine hunting!" said Cattistock's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Charlie Wheen.

In all, 27 mines and four torpedoes were found by the NATO group with the Brits accounting for more than one third of the haul.

April in Military History

April 1, 1865 - During the American Civil War, Confederate troops of General George Pickett were defeated and cut off at Five Forks, Virginia. This sealed the fate of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's armies at Petersburg and Richmond and hastened the end of the war

April 1, 1922 - South Africa's first Permanent Force Navy, the SA Naval Service, was established. The first ships, a hydrographic survey vessel renamed HMSAS Protea and two minesweeping trawlers, renamed HMSAS Sonneblom and HMSAS Immortelle, were purchased by South Africa and they were to form the nucleus of the fledgling force.

April (?) 1989 - The Border conflict ended in April 1989 and was followed by comprehensive rationalisation programmes in all arms of the South African Defence Force. The Navy's tiny share of the defence budget had dropped even further, but with the need for new ships now critical. To retain a new ship procurement programme and effect the financial cutbacks, the Navy elected to disband the Marines, some of its shore establishments and retrench 23 percent (2 258) of its personnel.

April 2, 1801 - Admiral Horatio Nelson, aboard HMS Elephant, defiantly ignores orders from his commander-in-chief to withdraw his forces and proceeds to sink the pro French Danish fleet off its home port of Copenhagen.

April 2, 1982 - The beginning of the Falkland Islands War as troops from Argentina invaded and occupied the British colony located near the tip of South America. The British retaliated and defeated the Argentineans on June 15, 1982, after ten weeks of combat, with about 1,000 lives lost.

April 2, 1957 - After negotiations between the British and South African governments on the future of the Royal Navy's base at Simon's Town the base was transferred to the Union on 2 April 1957 under the terms of the Simonstown Agreement, and that the Navy would purchase four additional frigates, ten coastal minesweepers and five seaward defence boats from Britain.

April 3, 1948 - President Harry S. Truman signed the European Recovery Program, better known as the Marshall Plan, intended to stop the spread of Communism and restore the economies of European countries devastated by World War II. Over four years, the program distributed \$12 billion to the nations of Western Europe. The program was first proposed by Secretary of State George C. Marshall during a historic speech at Harvard University on June 5, 1947.

April 4, 1949 - Twelve nations signed the treaty creating NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The nations united for common military defense against the threat of expansion by Soviet Russia into Western Europe.

April 6, 1917 - Following a vote by Congress approving a declaration of war, the U.S. entered World War I in Europe.

April 6, 1941 - The invasion of Yugoslavia, also known as the April War or Operation 25, was a German-led attack on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia by the Axis powers which began on 6 April 1941 during World War II. The order for the invasion was put forward in "Führer Directive No. 25", which Adolf Hitler issued on 27 March 1941, following the Yugoslav coup d'état.

April 9, 1865 - After over 500,000 American deaths, the Civil War effectively ended as General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant in the village of Appomattox Court House. The

surrender occurred in the home of Wilmer McLean. Terms of the surrender, written by General Grant, allowed Confederates to keep their horses and return home. Officers were allowed to keep their swords and side arms.

April 10, 1945 - The Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald was liberated by U.S. troops. Located near Weimar in Germany, Buchenwald was established in July 1937 to hold criminals and was one of the first major concentration camps. It later included Jews and homosexuals and was used as a slave labour centre for nearby German companies. Of a total of 238,980 Buchenwald inmates, 56,545 perished. Following its liberation, Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and other top U.S. commanders visited the sub-camp at Ohrdruf. U.S. Troops also forced German civilians from nearby towns into the camp to view the carnage.

April 11, 1970 - Apollo 13 was launched from Cape Kennedy at 2:13 p.m. Fifty-six hours into the flight an oxygen tank exploded in the service module. Astronaut John L. Swigert saw a warning light that accompanied the bang and said, "Houston, we've had a problem here." Swigert, James A. Lovell and Fred W. Haise then transferred into the lunar module, using it as a "lifeboat" and began a perilous return trip to Earth, splashing down safely on April 17th.

April 12, 1961 - Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space. He travelled aboard the Soviet spacecraft Vostok I to an altitude of 187 miles (301 kilometres) above the earth and completed a single orbit in a flight lasting 108 minutes. The spectacular Russian success intensified the already ongoing Space Race between the Russians and Americans. Twenty-three days later, Alan Shepard became the first American in space. This was followed in 1962 by President Kennedy's open call to land an American on the moon before the decade's end.

April 14, 1986 - U.S. warplanes, on orders from President Ronald Reagan, bombed the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi in retaliation for the April 5th terrorist bombing of a discotheque in West Berlin in which two American soldiers were killed. Among the 37 person killed in the air raid was the infant daughter of Muammar Qaddafi, Libya's head of state.

April 16, 1746 - the Jacobite forces of Charles Edward Stuart were decisively defeated by loyalist troops commanded by William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, near Inverness in the Scottish Highlands.

April 17, 1961 - A U.S.-backed attempt to overthrow Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba failed disastrously in what became known as the Bay of Pigs fiasco. About 1,400 anti-Castro exiles invaded the island's southern coast along the Bay of Pigs but were overrun by 20,000 Cuban soldiers and jailed. Trained and guided by the U.S., the exiles had expected support from U.S. military aircraft and help from anti-Castro insurgents on the island. Instead, due to a series of mishaps, they had fended for themselves with no support. The failed invasion heightened Cold War tensions between Cuba's political ally, Soviet Russia, and the fledgling administration of President John F. Kennedy. The following year, the Russians brazenly installed nuclear missiles in Cuba resulting in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

April 18, 1942 - The first air raid on mainland Japan during World War II occurred as General James Doolittle led a squadron of B-25 bombers taking off from the carrier Hornet to bomb Tokyo and three other cities. Damage was minimal, but the raid boosted Allied morale following years of unchecked Japanese military advances.

April 21, 1918 - During World War I, the Red Baron (Manfred von Richtofen) was shot down and killed during the Battle of the Somme. He was credited with 80 kills in less than two years, flying a

red Fokker triplane. British pilots recovered his body and buried him with full military honours.

April 24, 1915 - In Asia Minor during World War I, the first modern-era genocide began with the deportation of Armenian leaders from Constantinople and subsequent massacre by Young Turks. In May, deportations of all Armenians and mass murder by Turks began, resulting in the complete elimination of the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire and all of the historic Armenian homelands. Estimates vary from 800,000 to over 2,000,000 Armenians murdered.

April 25, 1915 - In World War I, over 70,000 Australian, New Zealand and British troops met fierce resistance from Turkish forces as they landed at Gallipoli.

April 26, 1937 - During the Spanish Civil War, the ancient town of Guernica was attacked by German warplanes. After destroying the town in a three hour bombing raid, the planes machine-gunned fleeing civilians.

April 27, 1994- On Freedom Day, the SA Navy and the rest of the South African Defence Force (SADF) became part of the new SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and its personnel assisted with South Africa's first democratic election.

April 28, 1789 - On board the British ship Bounty, Fletcher Christian led a mutiny against Captain William Bligh, setting him and 18 loyal crew members adrift in a 23-foot open boat. Bligh survived a 47-day voyage sailing over 3,600 miles before landing on a small island. Christian sailed the Bounty back to Tahiti, eventually settling on Pitcairn Island and burning the ship.

April 30, 1885 - The Natal Naval Volunteers (NNV) was formed in Durban.

April 30, 1945 - In his hideaway bunker in Berlin, Adolf Hitler shoots himself. His wife of 48 hours and former mistress, Eva Braun, took a cyanide capsule. In accordance with Hitler's instructions both bodies were then burnt.

Featured Ship

HMS Hood

HMS Hood (pennant number 51) was the last battlecruiser built for the Royal Navy. Commissioned in 1920, she was named after the 18th-century Admiral Samuel Hood. One of four Admiral-class battlecruisers ordered in mid-1916, Hood had design limitations, though her design was revised after the Battle of Jutland and improved while she was under construction. For this reason, she was the only ship of her class to be completed. Despite the appearance of new and more modern ship designs over time, Hood remained the largest and most powerful warship in the world for twenty years after her commissioning and her prestige was reflected in her nickname "The Mighty Hood".

When war with Germany was declared, Hood was operating in the area around Iceland, and she spent the next several months hunting between Iceland and the Norwegian Sea for German commerce raiders and blockade runners. After a brief overhaul of her propulsion system, she sailed as the flagship of Force H, and participated in the destruction of the French Fleet at Mers-el-Kebir. Relieved as flagship of Force H, Hood was dispatched to Scapa Flow, and operated in the area as a convoy escort and later as a defence against a potential German invasion fleet. In May 1941, she and the battleship Prince of Wales were ordered to intercept the German battleship Bismarck and the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen, which were en route to the Atlantic where they were to attack convoys. On 24 May 1941, early in the Battle of the Denmark Strait, Hood was struck by several German shells, exploded and sank within three minutes, with the loss of all but three of her crew. Due to her perceived invincibility, the loss affected British morale.



Featured Officer

Lambert Jackson Woodburne

Vice-Admiral Lambert Jackson Woodburne DVR SD SM SAN (13 July 1939 – 5 July 2013) was Chief of the South African Navy from 1 July 1990 to 31 August 1992. He is one of only two people to have been awarded the Van Riebeeck Decoration, which he received for Special Forces operations in Tanzania. He was more commonly known by his nickname "Woody".

He completed the Specialist Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Course in the United Kingdom where he came top of the class. On his return to South Africa he became the Officer in Charge of the Naval Diving School in Simon's Town for two years. The Navy Diver of the Course still receives the Woody Woodburne Shield. Woodburne went on to command the mine sweepers SAS Mosselbaai and SAS Johannesburg.

With the establishment of the Submarine Branch, he volunteered for submarines and was chosen as the first commanding officer of SAS Emily Hobhouse (S98) in 1971; a position held until 1974. During the submarine's work-up in France, he was described as one of the "best foreign submariners who ever worked up in France", which earned him the Southern Cross Medal.

In 1972, the SAS Emily Hobhouse landed Special Forces troops led by Commandant Jan Breytenbach near Dar es Salaam as part of a raid on the Tanzanian port. The Special Forces team placed explosives on a bridge, power lines and targets around the town. While making the pickup rendezvous, the submarine snagged a fishing net and sunk the fishing vessel dragging the net. This mission earned Woodburne the Van Riebeeck Decoration.

From 1975 to 1977 he was assigned to the Agosta submarine project. After this he served with the Special Forces (1978–1983) where he attained the rank of Captain. These were "exciting and dangerous years" said Woodburne in an interview after announcing his retirement in August 1992.

From 1983 to 1985 he was the military attaché in Argentina. In 1986 Commodore Woodburne became Director of Naval Operations, then seven months later Chief of Naval Staff Operations. In January 1989 Rear-Admiral Woodburne moved to the Western Cape as Flag Officer Commanding Naval Command West. On 1 July 1990 he was promoted to Vice-Admiral and appointed as Chief of the South African Navy; a position he held until retirement on 31 August 1992.

The citation for the Van Riebeeck Decoration reads:

"Lieutenant Commander Lambert Woodburne distinguished himself by displaying outstanding leadership, perseverance and devotion to duty in a special task of a delicate and dangerous nature during 1972.

One occasion, during that year, he was placed in command of an extremely sensitive task in the interest of the security of the State, in the execution of which a great deal had to be relied upon his own judgement and initiative and which demanded positive and dynamic leadership from him. He tackled and executed this difficult task with great courage and daring and, with his personal example, inspired the other members of the team that took part in this task. His positive leadership, perseverance in the face of great odds and his outstanding devotion to duty undoubtedly played a decisive role in the successful execution of the task."

South African war Hero

Oswald Reid

Reid was born at Johannesburg, the son of Harry Austin Reid and his wife Alice Gertrude, pioneering founders of the city. He attended the Diocesan College in Cape Town and St John's College in Johannesburg before moving on to Radley College England in April 1910.

Military career

In 1915 he took part in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. He fought alongside soldiers from India. The casualty rate of officers was very high, attrition rates of over 100. Two of his friends were killed. The shelling was terrific, and the Germans had very accurate snipers. Reid was wounded in the head at the 2nd battle of Ypres in April 1915. In his copious correspondence to his Headmaster in St John's College, Johannesburg he explained his motives and experiences. Of the regiment's complement of 30 officers and 1000 men, only 7 officers and 300 men remained after only two months in the theatre of operations. At Ypres they were gassed; and he praised the men who "carry an enormous weight on their packs...their marvellous imperturbability and cheerfulness...They face death as if it was a common occurrence." He took strength from their courage. Having been sent home wounded, he returned to France in September 1915. He was a lieutenant with the 1st battalion, until promoted to captain in December in "one of the finest and oldest of the British Regiments." The British now had trench mortars. But he was wrong to think the war would be won by summer 1916. He had already been wounded a second time at 1st Battle of Arras in April 1915, spending all the months to July 1916 in England. He did not serve in the Somme but was sent to India on the North-West Frontier with 2nd battalion. In December he arrived in Mesopotamia, promoted to Captain and transferred into the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, attached to the 6th Battalion. He was perhaps naïve in his assessment of the Turk as "much more of a sportsman than the Germans..."

For Valour

On 7 March 1917 at the Battle of Diyalah River, Mesopotamia, the men of the King's Own Lancaster Regiment tried to cross the river, but even before the first platoon had crossed were under Turkish cross-fire. The Royal Engineers building the pontoon were killed from 50 yards away across the river by machine-guns and artillery. A second pontoon was attacked by mustard gas killing or wounding all the engineers. In all five attempts were made to cross the river but the positions were dominated by enfilade fire. Dead and wounded bodies were seen floating down the river.

The next night a surprise assault was made, but other pontoons behind were held up as Turkish sentries awoke to the noise. As a result, 100 Lancashire soldiers were left stranded on the north bank of the river, cut off without reinforcements. A much stronger Turkish force attacked all day and all night. With great skill they managed to throw back the grenades thrown into their positions by the Turks. Sometimes at the point of a bayonet they fought back the Turks, time and time again constantly for 30 hours. The one piece of good fortune was the redoubt thrown up by the bend in the river, that offered some shelter. Finally, on the morning of 10 March, a rescue was effected. They found 30 exhausted survivors; bodies piled up around the defensive parapets.

Captain Reid consolidated a small post with the advanced troops on the opposite side of the river to the main body, after his lines of communication had been cut by the sinking of the pontoons. He maintained this position for 30 hours against constant attacks by bombs, machine-guns and rifle fire, with the full knowledge that repeated attempts at relief had failed and that his ammunition was all but exhausted. It was greatly due to his tenacity that the crossing of the river was effected the next

night. During the operations he was wounded.

Reid's bravery in defending the position, and isolated bridgehead was vital, and crucial, allowing enough time for reinforcements to cross the river. The manoeuvre allowed General Sir Stanley Maude to outflank the Turks and to effect entry into Baghdad on 11 March 1917. Captain Reid was granted leave that summer 1917 returned to Johannesburg. The town's first winner of the Victoria Cross was given a rapturous welcome, reported a local newspaper. "Thank you all very much. It's all a matter of luck", said Reid in all due modesty - soldierly and professional to the last.[6] Reid left South Africa to return to the regiment on Monday 13 August 1917. He had already been made Acting Major on 10 May. On 31 August 1917 it was announced that the Italian government had awarded him the Silver Medal for Military Valour. In October 1917 he suffered a recurrence of the Rugby injury to a cartilage in the knee and was invalided out. In December the General's Report mentioned him in despatches. He returned home to recover from his injuries.

Medal citation

Captain Oswald Austin Reid King's Liverpool Regiment attached Loyal North Lancashire Regiment.

For most conspicuous bravery in the face of desperate circumstances.

By his dauntless courage and gallant leadership he was able to consolidate a small post with the advanced troops, on the opposite side of a river to the main body, after the lines of communication had been cut by the sinking of pontoons.

He maintained his position for 30 hours against constant attacks by bombs machine guns and shell fire, with the full knowledge that repeated attempts at relief had failed, and that his ammunition was all but exhausted.

It was greatly due to his tenacity that the passage of the river was effected on the following night. During the operations he was wounded.

His Victoria Cross is displayed at the National Museum of Military History in Johannesburg.

A Navy Chief and an Admiral were sitting in the barbershop. They were both just getting finished with their shaves, when the barbers reached for some aftershave to slap on their faces.

The admiral shouted, "Hey, don't put that stuff on me! My wife will think I've been in a whorehouse!"

The chief turned to his barber and said, "Go ahead and put it on. My wife doesn't know what the inside of a whorehouse smells like."

A "great escape" - How do you disguise your ship to escape the enemy?

Simple - make it look like an island!

HNLMS Abraham Crijnsen was a Jan van Amstel-class minesweeper of the Royal Netherlands Navy (RNN). Built during the 1930s, she was based in the Netherlands East Indies when Japan attacked at the end of 1941. Ordered to retreat to Australia, the ship was disguised as a tropical island to avoid detection and was the last Dutch ship to escape from the region. On arriving in Australia in 1942, she was commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) as HMAS Abraham Crijnsen and operated as an anti-submarine escort. Although returned to RNN control in 1943, the ship remained in Australian waters for most of World War II.

The ship was based at Surabaya in the Netherlands East Indies when Japan invaded in 1941. Following the Allied defeats at the Battles of the Java Sea and Sunda Strait in late March 1942, all Allied ships were ordered to withdraw to Australia. Abraham Crijnsen was meant to sail with three other warships but found herself proceeding alone.

To escape detection by Japanese aircraft (which the minesweeper did not have the armament to defend effectively against), the ship was heavily camouflaged with jungle foliage, giving the impression of a small island. Personnel cut down trees and branches from nearby islands and arranged the cuttings to form a jungle canopy covering as much of the ship as possible. Any hull still exposed was painted to resemble rocks and cliffs. To further the illusion, the ship would remain close to shore, anchored and immobile during daylight, and only sail at night.

Americans Jeff & Jim are Siamese twins joined at the hip. They walk into a bar in New York & order a couple of beers. Barman serves them and asks:

"You guys been on vacation yet?"

"We're off to England next week" says Jeff

"We go every year."

Barman says "England's great; the culture, history, the Queen. "

Jeff replies "We don't go for that shit, it's the only chance Jim gets to drive the car."

Paddy took two stuffed dogs to the Antiques Roadshow.

"Ooh," said the presenter. "This is a very rare set produced by the celebrated Johns Brothers taxidermists, who operated in London at the turn of the last century. Do you have any idea what they would fetch if they were in good condition?"

"Sticks", says Paddy.

The Fish Hoek
Marigold

Fully catered accommodation for the young at heart

The Fish Hoek Marigold is a fully catered for residence for the young at heart. This beautiful large family home has been converted to a 9 bedroom en-suite facility for people over the age of 55. The Marigold has hotel style comfort in a beautiful home environment. Most of the bedrooms have their own entrances which allows for independent living all the while enjoying having all your needs catered for.

Services include:

- * Breakfast, Dinner, Tea/Coffee/Snacks
- * Free Wi-Fi
- * Manager/Concierge on site
- * Free DSTV
- * 24 hr Medical response (CMR)
- * All laundry & cleaning
- * The home is fully secured with 24 hr armed response

Large common areas with a beautiful garden. Beach less than 3km away. Croquet and tennis clubs on your doorstep. Shops, library all in walking distance. The perfect place to be able to mix with like-minded people but still have your independence and space.



For more information call Kerry on 021 782 1243 or 083 3216008

That's all folks. Have a great April. May there be an abundance of rain!