

The Seven Seas Tattler Issue 2.4 - September 2018



From the Chairman

The Navy is currently conducting alongside training in preparation for the visit by the Brazilians, Uruguayans and Indians starting at the end of August to mid-September.

The highlight event of the year is the Club's 150-year celebrations on the 20 October. Organization for the event is progressing well and it is intended to have a potjie competition in the afternoon followed by a dance party in the evening. The meal will be provided by the potjie competitors, so you will have a whole range from which to choose for your meal. Please give us your support for these events.

On the subject of the potjie competition I would to encourage members to participate in this competition. It is hoped that most of the victuals required will be sponsored for the event. Those interested in participating please submit your names to the Club Manager.

See you at the Club!

Naval News Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2018 Concludes

August 4, 2018

The world's largest international maritime exercise concluded August 2nd following more than a month of training events conducted in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California.

Twenty-five nations, 46 surface ships, five submarines, 17 land forces, and more than 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel participated in Rim of the Pacific exercise 2018. This year's RIMPAC iteration marked the 26th in the series that began in 1971 and is now held every two years.

Hosted by U.S. Pacific Fleet, RIMPAC 2018 was led by U.S. Vice Adm. John D. Alexander, commander of the U.S. 3rd Fleet, who served as the combined task force (CTF) commander. Royal Canadian Navy Rear Adm. Bob Auchterlonie served as deputy commander of the CTF, and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Rear Adm. Hideyuki Oban was the vice commander. Fleet Marine Force was led by U.S. Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Mark Hashimoto. Other key leaders of the multinational force included Commodore Pablo Niemann of Armada de Chile, who commanded the maritime component, and Air Commodore Craig Heap of the Royal Australian Air Force, who commanded the air component.

This year's exercise included forces from Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam.

From the Treasurer

We are just about through the month of August and it looks like we are going to reach our sales target of R52 000 for the month. This mainly thanks to some private functions held in the month and to the "Disco for Seniors" held on Saturday the 18th. We are still trying to curtail costs as much as possible and hopefully we will be able to keep our bottom line in the black.

I can report that we ended the month of July with a small surplus, which is remarkable, considering that bar sales for the month were very disappointing. Again, very little expenditure on maintenance and staff overtime helped to keep us afloat. As the weather warms up we are confident that members' support will improve.

Cumulatively, for the 5 months to-date (remember our year starts on 1st March), we have not reached our sales target by a long way. In fact, we are well down on actual sales for the same period last year, which is pretty disappointing. Fortunately, overheads this year have been underspent, which has compensated for the loss of sales and ultimately kept the bottom line in the black (but only just!).

That's all for now.... see you at the Club!

From our Manager

New Members: The Club welcomes the following:

Dr Hentie van Rensburg married to **Sonja** and currently lives in Moreleta Park Pretoria. Hentie is employed with ARMSCOR and is currently the Manager of the Dock Yard in Simon's Town. Hentie has had previous military service with both 1 Parachute Battalion and 44 Parachute Brigade. He is a member of Waterkloof Golf Club and Grasslands Flying Club.

Ensign Wouter Scheepers is married to **Gwendolyn** and lives in Runciman Drive Simon's Town. Wouter is currently serving with the Mine Counter Measures Flotilla onboard the SAS UMZIMKULU.

Mr Roger Farmer is married to **Elizabeth** and lives in Fish Hoek. Roger is now retired and is a member of the M.O.T.H.S. in Fish Hoek.

Mr Kushal Uprety is currently a single gentleman and lives in Bayview Heights Simon's Town. Kushal is an Engineer currently employed with the Institute of Maritime Technology (IMT) in Simon's Town.

Mr Alasdair Ritchie is married to **Marjan** and lives in Kommetjie. Alasdair has had previous military with the S.A. Scottish and is now retired. He is a member of Morningside Country Club.

August 2018 100 Club Winners:

R Adm A.G. Green (ret) – R300

R Adm (JG) A.E. Rudman (ret) – R300

Mr R. Rowe – R300

Mrs I. Porter- R1 000

September Birthdays

We congratulate the following members and hope that they all have joyous birthdays and a wonderful year ahead!

F.R. Nunes	2 nd September
J.S. Coetzer	3 rd September
H.J.M van Aswegen	9 th September
D.G. Viljoen	10 th September
R.W. Sproul	14 th September
I.K. Egan-Fowler	18 th September
T.K. Toplis	18 th September
G.C. Hammond	19 th September
B. Ireton	21 st September
A.H.H. Pool	21 st September
R.B. Gardner	22 nd September
A. Grose	24 th September
B.P. Hanson	30 th September

Club Activities

Happy Hour and 100 Club Draw. The next Happy Hour and 100 Club Draw will take place in the Club on Tuesday the 11th of September 2018 from 17h00 to 18h00. Normal attendance prizes will be up for grabs. Boerewors Rolls will be for sale in the Club. The second Happy Hour for September 2018 will take place in the Club on Tuesday the 25th from 17h00 to 18h00.

Club Movie Night. The next Club Movie Night is scheduled for Wednesday the 12th of September, details to follow.

Wake for the Late Geoff Palmer

Members of the Seven Seas Club are advised that there will be a Wake for the late Geoff Palmer in the Club on Sunday the 2nd of September 2018 at 14h30. Members and friends of Geoff are invited to attend this celebration of his life.

Tattler announces new Club Shirts

The club has acquired new golf shirts to commemorate our 150 years. There are white shirts and navy blue ones in a variety of sizes (S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL, XXXXL) resplendent with the special '150 badge'.

The shirts are now on sale at the club for a mere R160. We encourage all members to purchase one of each.

Greatest War Ship ever?



The USS Constitution, or "Old Ironsides," as she is affectionately known, first hit the seas as one of the first six frigates in the newly formed US Navy of 1797.

The Constitution had both 30 24-pound cannons and also speed. Not only was it technologically sound for its time, but it was also simply unparalleled and undefeated in battle.

Famously, in 1812, the Constitution fought against the HMS Guerriere, whose guns could not pierce the heavily armoured sides of the Constitution.

The Constitution is still commissioned by the Navy today, considered the oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world, and the only currently commissioned US Navy ship to have sunk an enemy vessel. It is in every way worthy of the title "greatest warship of all time."

From our Web master, Euen Smith

As we are all considering our history, that of the club and in general over the last 150 years I thought a couple of words about the origins of the Internet might stimulate the thought processes of the readers of The Tattler. It is interesting to note the military and secrecy aspects of the beginnings of what has now become valued as a tool for universal distribution of knowledge and information.

The history of the Internet begins with the development of electronic computers in the 1950s. Initial concepts of wide area networking originated in several computer science laboratories in the USA, United Kingdom, and France. The US Department of Defence awarded contracts as early as the 1960s, including for the development of the ARPANET project. This was a project to build an advanced communications network that could survive the loss of some of its components and carry on working. It was run by the US military and was funded in part by reallocation of funds from the ballistic missile program in the USA. The first message was sent over the ARPANET in 1969 from a laboratory at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to the second network node at Stanford Research Institute (SRI). Packet switching networks such as the NPL network, ARPANET, Tymnet, Merit Network, CYCLADES, and Telenet, were developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s using a variety of communications protocols. Donald Davies first demonstrated packet switching in 1967 at the National Physics Laboratory (NPL) in the UK, which became a testbed for UK research for almost two decades. The ARPANET project led to the development of protocols for internetworking, in which multiple separate networks could be joined into a network of networks. It starts to sound familiar! The Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) was developed in the 1970s and became the standard networking protocol on the ARPANET. In the early 1980s the NSF funded the establishment for national supercomputing centres at several universities, and provided interconnectivity in 1986 with the NSFNET project, which also created network access to the supercomputer sites in the United States from research and education organizations. Commercial Internet service providers (ISPs) began to emerge in the very late 1980s. The ARPANET was decommissioned in 1990. Limited private connections to parts of the Internet by officially commercial entities emerged in several American cities by late 1989 and 1990, and the NSFNET was decommissioned in 1995, removing the last restrictions on the use of the Internet to carry commercial traffic.

In the 1980s, research at CERN in Switzerland by British computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee resulted in the World Wide Web, linking hypertext documents into an information system, accessible from any node on the network. Since the mid-1990s, the Internet has had a revolutionary impact on culture, commerce, and technology, including the rise of near-instant communication by electronic mail, instant messaging, voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone calls, two-way interactive video calls, and the World Wide Web with its discussion forums, blogs, social networking, and online shopping sites. The research and education community continue to develop and use advanced networks such as JANET in the United Kingdom and Internet2 in the United States. Increasing amounts of data are transmitted at higher and higher speeds over fiber optic networks operating at 1-Gbit/s, 10-Gbit/s, or more. The Internet's takeover of the global communication landscape was almost instant in historical terms: it only communicated 1% of the information flowing through two-way telecommunications networks in the year 1993, already 51% by 2000, and more than 97% of the telecommunicated information by 2007. Eleven years after that the Internet continues to grow, driven by ever greater amounts of online information, commerce, entertainment, and today the phenomenon that is social networking. Who knows where it will go next!

On farm wages *

Paddy McCoy, an elderly Irish farmer, received a letter from the Department for Work & Pensions stating that they suspected he was not paying his employees the statutory minimum wage and they would send an inspector to interview them.

On the appointed day, the inspector turned up.

"Tell me about your staff," he asked Paddy.

"Well," said Paddy, "there's the farm hand, I pay him €240 a week, and he has a free cottage. Then there's the housekeeper. She gets €190 a week, along with free board and lodging. There's also the half-wit. He works a 16 hour day, does 90% of the work, earns about €25 a week along with a bottle of whisky and, as a special treat, occasionally gets to sleep with my wife."

"That's disgraceful" said the inspector, "I need to interview the half-wit."

"That'll be me then," said Paddy

This month Tattler looks at a remarkable person in navy history – our "Lady in White"

Perla Siedle Gibson



Perla Siedle Gibson was a South African soprano and artist who became internationally celebrated during the Second World War as the Lady in White, when she sang troopships in and out of Durban harbour.

Gibson was born in Durban in 1888, the daughter of Otto Siedle, a prominent local shipping agent, businessman and musician of German extraction. In the early twentieth century she studied music and art in Europe and the US, and gave recitals in London and New York. Her youngest brother was Jack Siedle, the South African Test cricketer.

During World War 2 Durban was an extremely busy waystation for convoys of ships en route to the fronts in North Africa and the Far East. Gibson became famous among thousands of Allied troops when she serenaded them as their ships passed in and out.

One account of the origin for Gibson's custom was that it arose when she was seeing off a young Irish seaman her family had entertained the day before. As his ship was departing he was said to

have called across the water asking her to sing something Irish, and Gibson responded with a rendition of "When Irish Eyes are Smiling". She decided to sing to every ship connected with the war which entered or left the harbour. Over the following years she went on to sing to more than 5,000 ships and a total of about a quarter of a million Allied servicemen. Clad in white with a red hat, she would stand at a spot at the mouth of Durban Bay where ships entering and leaving the harbour pass quite close, and sing patriotic and sentimental songs through a megaphone from a torpedoed ship, which grateful British soldiers had given her.

Soldiers' talk led to the fame of the Lady in White spreading around the world. A British army newspaper called Parade, dated 3 March 1945, described Gibson as a highlight of troops' visits to Durban:

As the crowded ships passed into the harbour, men lining the landward rails saw a woman, dressed in white, singing powerfully through a megaphone such songs as "There'll Always be an England!" and "Land of Hope and Glory." A well-known local figure, she would drive down from her home on the Berea as soon as she could see that the ships were moving in.

Gibson was married to Air Sergeant Jack Gibson, who served in Italy, and had two sons and a daughter in the military. She had sung all their ships goodbye as they left for the war. She even sang on the day she received news that her son Roy had been killed in the fighting in Italy.

She died in 1971, shortly before her 83rd birthday. The year later a bronze plaque donated by men of the Royal Navy was erected to her memory on Durban's North Pier on the spot where she used to sing. In 1995 Queen Elizabeth II unveiled a statue of Gibson near the Ocean Terminal in Durban harbour.

The statue of Perla Gibson was re-located to the Port Natal / Durban Maritime Museum on 27 September 2016.



And given that this edition is being prepared during women's month, another lady is featured

Betty Quinn, the youngest recipient of the George Medal

Today we have a heart-warming story of a forgotten heroine of World War 2 which carries with it a South African twist.

1941: Betty Quinn, 17, the youngest recipient of the George Medal, at the Investiture Ceremony at Buckingham Palace, London. She saved seven people from a bombed air raid shelter while serving as an ARP Warden in Coventry during WW2.

Betty Quinn, a St. John Ambulance cadet, was awarded the George Medal for her bravery on 14 November 1940 during the heaviest night of the Coventry Blitz. She was giving first aid at an ARP post when a shower of incendiary bombs fell in the district: "Without waiting for assistance she ran outside. AA batteries were putting up a heavy barrage and shrapnel was falling all round. Bombs began to fall and a man was injured by one. Miss Quinn assisted him to a private shelter. A report came in of an Anderson shelter receiving a direct hit and although bombs were still falling, Miss Quinn ran there and commenced digging in the crater with a spade. She assisted to dig out seven persons who had been trapped and then attended to their injuries. She stayed until all had been removed by ambulance, although shells were bursting overhead most of the time. She then returned to the post and carried on with her duties."

Betty Quinn was tracked down in 2005 for an invite to attend the unveiling of the Women of WW2 Memorial, next to the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London. Betty was living in Cape Town, South Africa where she had been living for 63 years, a direct result of what happened in 1940. Following her fame which spread throughout the Empire after her award, she received a marriage proposal from a South African, which was obviously too good to refuse.

In 1940, during the height of The Blitz there was a strong desire to reward the many acts of civilian courage. The existing awards open to civilians were not judged suitable to meet the new situation, therefore it was decided that the George Medal would be instituted to recognise both civilian gallantry in the face of enemy action and brave deeds more generally.



Major Naval Battles - The Battle of Actium, September 2, 31 BC



At the Battle of Actium, off the western coast of Greece, Roman leader Octavian wins a decisive victory against the forces of Roman Mark Antony and Cleopatra, queen of Egypt. Before their forces suffered final defeat, Antony and Cleopatra broke through the enemy lines and fled to Egypt, where they would commit suicide the following year.

With the assassination of Roman dictator Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., Rome fell into civil war. To end the fighting, a coalition—the Second Triumvirate—was formed by three of the strongest belligerents. The triumvirate was made up of Octavian, Caesar’s great-nephew and chosen heir; Mark Antony, a powerful general; and Lepidus, a Roman statesman. The empire was divided among the three, and Antony took up the administration of the eastern provinces. Upon arriving in Asia Minor, he summoned Queen Cleopatra to answer charges that she had aided his enemies. Cleopatra, ruler of Egypt since 51 B.C., had once been Julius Caesar’s lover and had borne him a child, who she named Caesarion, meaning “little Caesar.”

Cleopatra sought to seduce Antony as she had Caesar before him, and in 41 B.C. arrived at Tarsus on a magnificent river barge, dressed as Venus, the Roman goddess of love. Successful in her efforts, Antony returned with her to Alexandria, where they spent the winter in debauchery. In 40 B.C., Antony returned to Rome and married Octavian’s sister Octavia in an effort to mend his increasingly strained relationship with Octavian. The triumvirate, however, continued to deteriorate. In 37 B.C. Antony separated from Octavia and travelled to the East, arranging for Cleopatra to join him in Syria. In their time apart, Cleopatra had borne him twins, a son and a daughter. According to Octavian’s propagandists, the lovers were then married, which violated the Roman law restricting Romans from marrying foreigners.

Antony’s disastrous military campaign against Parthia in 36 B.C. further reduced his prestige, but in 34 B.C. he was more successful against Armenia. To celebrate the victory, he staged a triumphal procession through the streets of Alexandria, in which Antony and Cleopatra sat on golden thrones, and their children were given imposing royal titles. Many in Rome, spurred on by Octavian, interpreted the spectacle as a sign that Antony intended to deliver the Roman Empire into alien hands.

After several more years of tension and propaganda attacks, Octavian declared war against Cleopatra, and therefore Antony, in 31 B.C. Enemies of Octavian rallied to Antony’s side, but Octavian’s brilliant military commanders gained early successes against his forces. On September 2, 31 B.C., their fleets clashed at Actium in Greece. After heavy fighting, Cleopatra broke from the engagement and set course for Egypt with 60 of her ships. Antony then broke through the enemy line and followed her. The disheartened fleet that remained surrendered to Octavian. One week later, Antony’s land forces surrendered.

Although they had suffered a decisive defeat, it was nearly a year before Octavian reached Alexandria and again defeated Antony. In the aftermath of the battle, Cleopatra took refuge in the

mausoleum she had had built for herself. Antony, informed that Cleopatra was dead, stabbed himself with his sword. Before he died, another messenger arrived, saying Cleopatra still lived. Antony was carried to Cleopatra's retreat, where he died after bidding her to make her peace with Octavian. When the triumphant Roman arrived, she attempted to seduce him, but he resisted her charms. Rather than fall under Octavian's domination, Cleopatra committed suicide on August 30, 31B.C., possibly by means of an asp, a poisonous Egyptian serpent and symbol of divine royalty. Octavian then executed Cleopatra's son, Caesarion, annexed Egypt into the Roman Empire, and used Cleopatra's treasure to pay off his veterans. In 27 B.C., Octavian became Augustus, the first and arguably most successful of all Roman emperors. He ruled a peaceful, prosperous, and expanding Roman Empire until his death in 14 A.D. at the age of 75.



‘A sole survivor and a ship’s crest’; the South African Navy’s first loss – HMSAS Southern Floe



Tattler briefly looks at the role South African minesweepers performed during WW2. I know that Preston Barnard's dad as well as my own served on these small craft in the "Med".

Much effort by various associations in South Africa is put to remembering the Mendi and the President Kruger, however little regard is given to the SA Navy's losses in World War 2. Odd considering that during WW2 the most significant number of South Africans were lost at sea, yet scant regard is put to this epoch of the South African Naval sacrifice by way of remembrance and parades.

In all South Africa lost four ships in World War 2, all of them minesweepers, so let's look at the flotilla of South African Navy minesweepers (converted whalers) during World War 2, and the loss of the HMSAS Southern Floe, the first of these four minesweepers to be lost.

A number of whalers were converted to anti-submarine roles and commissioned into the South African Navy for service, they were part of the South African Seaward Defence Force anti-submarine flotilla.

Some of them were sent to the Mediterranean and based at Alexandria, Egypt – the HMSAS Southern Floe, the HMSAS Southern Sea and their sister ship the HMSAS Southern Maid – which is seen in this rare featured photograph in Alexandria Harbour in Egypt (In the foreground is the South African Navy's HMSAS Protea, a Flower-class corvette).

In 1941 – the HMSAS Southern Floe (Lt J E Lewis) and HMSAS Southern Sea arrived at Tobruk on 31 January 1941 to take over patrol duties from two of their two sister ships.

Although submarines were not a threat in the first six months of the Western Desert campaign, numerous floating mines pointed to the existence of extensive moored mine fields. Except for the sweeping of the narrow coastal traffic route and harbour entrances at this stage there had not yet been time to locate these fields with any accuracy, much less to clear them. The main duty of the two Southernns was alternately to patrol the nearest section of the swept channel and to escort shipping along it. The port at that time was subject to air raids, littered with sunken wrecks and possibly active ground-mines. On patrol, the duties were complicated by sandstorms that strong off-shore winds extended for many miles out to sea, resulting in low visibility, heavy cross-seas, and much discomfort to personnel. To these conditions were added the menace of the mine fields on one side and an ill-defined and unlighted coast on the other.

HMSAS Southern Floe T26

On the morning of 11 February Southern Sea arrived at the patrol rendezvous, two miles east of Tobruk, but found no sign of Southern Floe. This was reported but caused no concern at first; it had blown hard enough all night for the ship to find herself far from her station at dawn. However, that evening, a passing destroyer picked up one man clinging to some wreckage – all that remained of Southern Floe and her company.

This sole survivor was Leading Stoker C J Jones, RNVR (SA), lent from HMS Gloucester to fill a vacancy just before Southern Floe sailed from Alexandria. The HMS Gloucester had a large contingent of South African Naval Force on it and was to be lost later in the war.

Jones was almost insensible after 14 hours in the water, but afterwards stated that he had been in the stokehold when, at about 04:00 there had been a heavy explosion and the ship had filled rapidly. In the darkness, he had found his way into the flooded engine-room and struggled out through the skylight as the ship sank. He had seen a few other persons in the water at that time and later had done his best to support a wounded man. In the absence of other evidence there is little doubt that a mine, either floating or moored, was the cause.

The loss of the ship, although but a trivial incident in a world war, came as a sudden and grievous blow to the flotilla and to the SDF. The ships had spent a barely one month on the station and at home few were aware that they had arrived and had been in action. The casualties were the first naval losses suffered by the South African Seaward Defence Force and the sense of loss in the service was profound.

Mick, from Dublin , appeared on 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire' and towards the end of the program had already won 500,000 euros.

"You've done very well so far," said Chris Tarrant, the show's presenter, "but for a million euros you've only got one life-line left, phone a friend. Everything is riding on this question. Will you go for it?"

"Sure," said Mick. "I'll have a go!"

"Which of the following birds does NOT build its own nest? a) Sparrow b) Thrush, c) Magpie, d) Cuckoo?"

"I haven't got a clue." said Mick, "So I'll use my last lifeline and phone my friend Paddy back home in Dublin ..."

Mick called up his mate, and told him the circumstances and repeated the question to him.

"Fookin hell, Mick!" cried Paddy. "Dat's simple it's a cuckoo."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm fookin sure."

Mick hung up the phone and told Chris, "I'll go with cuckoo as my answer."

"Is that your final answer?" asked Chris.

"Dat it is."

There was a long, long pause and then the presenter screamed, "Cuckoo is the correct answer! Mick, you've won 1 million euros!"

The next night, Mick invited Paddy to their local pub to buy him a drink.

"Tell me, Paddy? How in Heaven's name did you know it was da Cuckoo that doesn't build its own nest?"

"Because he lives in a Fookin clock!"

The Navy and Rum: Dogs, Tankies, Scuttlebutts and Fanny-cups

As a fortified spirit, rum played the role of more than just the mild intoxicator. With only the most rudimentary equipment and medicines available to ship surgeons, rum equally played the role of anaesthetic, antiseptic and antibacterial. In 1722, the Admiralty Board acknowledged the need to improve hygiene aboard navy ships and as such ordered her long-distance vessels to install a small pot still to purify the water stores which were often little more than an incubator for bacteria and disease. Little help it made however as during the Seven Years War of 1754, it was recorded that for every one sailor that died in combat, 80 died of disease or desertion. Already held in such high esteem, rum was also often the cleanest thing to drink aboard ship.

At the famous Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, English hero and Admiral Horatio Nelson took a fatal sniper round to the chest in the closing moments of victory over the French. To preserve his body for the return voyage to England and a state funeral, the ships lead surgeon – Irishman William Beatty – elected to preserve the body in a barrel of French brandy which was lashed to the deck and under guard for the entire journey. While this event has led to many stories of sailors drinking this brandy out of respect for Nelson, it is merely fantastical hearsay despite a good yarn. While the brandy preserved the body in near perfect condition during the long return voyage (and a week-long storm labelled ‘The Storm of the Century’) the ship’s surgeon was greatly criticized for his choice of preserving spirit when common practice dictated using rum.

Grog Tub and imperial measuring cups as used by the ‘Jack Dusty’ to correctly dilute the rum into grog

While civilians commonly enjoyed their rum tot either neat or mixed in a punch, for the navy man it was a compulsory mixture of water and rum from which the term ‘grog’ had evolved. Compulsory though this mixture may have been, the role of the Pusser to acquire, dilute and dispense grog to sailors at the correct alcoholic dosage, was anything but standard. Unsurprisingly, it was not uncommon for the Pusser to be a popular man. As was their want, sailors created a colloquial guide for the different ratios of rum to water:

Nor’wester: ½ water ½ rum

Due North: Pure rum

Due West: Pure water (never happened)

West Nor’west: 1/3 rum 2/3 water

North Nor’west: 2/3 rum 1/3 water

Therefore if a sailor requested of the Pusser for his grog with more ‘Northing’, you can work out what he was asking for. The means in which you imbibed your grog tot divided you into one of three categories; the ‘sippers’, the ‘gulpers’ and the ‘sandy bottoms’ (who emptied their cup in one go). The everyday language of the Royal Navy sailor has inspired a multitude of books to be published in honour of the many colourful limericks, titles and terms common in navy parlance. Regarding the world of grog, unsurprisingly this contributed its fair share to the vernacular:

Rummage: A term used by custom officials when searching for smuggled barrels of rum aboard ship

Jack Dusty: The store’s manager who maintained accounts of all grog issued Tanky: Jack’s assistant

who did the fetching, tanking (filling) and distributing of grog Splice the Mainbrace: An Admiralty gift

of an extra grog ration to all Navy vessels at a time of national pride. Derived from the completion of

a difficult task (such as splicing the mainbrace) which was usually rewarded with an extra serving of

rations. Rum Fanny: A sailor’s personal grog receptacle named after young Fanny Adams who was

murdered and dismembered at the Deptford Victualling Yard in London where mutton was tinned

for distribution to navy vessels. A sailor's disdain for this processed meat mutton fuelled rumours that parts of Fanny made it into the tins. Later, the tins (aka Fanny-cups) were discovered to be perfect for 'catching grog' from the grog tub. Rum Boss: The elected person aboard larger navy vessels who collects grog rations for his allocated mess group. Queens Share: Or simply known as 'Queens'; any leftover grog from the Rum Boss' Fanny-cup after distribution to his mess group. This was usually saved and accrued for a special occasion. Grog Day: The day a young navy sailor comes of age and is allocated his first issue of grog. Barricoe: Pronounced 'breaker'; a small barrel used to transport the correct volume of grog from the spirits room to the grog tub. Scuttlebutt: Also known as the 'Grog Tub'; a half barrel tub used for the mixing and dispensing of grog on deck to sailors. Nelsons Blood: A name given to navy rum after the death of Admiral Nelson at Trafalgar. Nelson was embalmed in a ration barrel of brandy (popularly believed to be rum) until his return to port. Limey: Nickname given to Royal Navy sailors by their American counterparts in reference to their compulsory consumption of citrus aboard all ships in 1867 to prevent scurvy.

The Admiralty finally acknowledged by 1824 that there were perhaps a few to many stories of drunken insubordination and dereliction of duty in their navy. As such the daily tot ration was reduced from the daily $\frac{1}{2}$ a pint of rum to $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pint or 1 gill (1 gill = 4oz US / 100ml UK). To help compensate the sailors for this halving of their rations – and perhaps to subvert potential mutiny – 2 shillings was added to all sailors' monthly wages as well as the addition of coffee and tea to their daily allocation. The serving of grog also became issued only once a day (at noon) instead of twice. Somewhat ironically the rum ration actually increased by around a fifth anyway, due to implementation the same year of the imperial system of measurement which redefined the volume of a gallon. Before King George IV of England standardised the imperial gallon, a gallon of wine or spirits was 231 cubic inches whereas a gallon of beer was 282; so that merchants wouldn't have to pay for the volume taken up by the natural 10% frothy head on beer. Meeting somewhat in the middle, the new standard imperial gallon held 277 cubic inches – good news for Royal Navy sailors.

By 1831, beer was no longer offered as an alternative to the rum ration while wine remained an option as it was believed to hold medicinal benefits. In 1850, the rum ration was cut again to half a gill; with the sugar and meat rations increased to counter-balance this. The first significant blow to navy rum came not from the Admiralty but from increasing pressure from temperance movements back home. In 1875, England reached an all-time high in alcohol consumption per capita due to increased economic prosperity. Pressure from temperance unions was succeeding in influencing politics for the first time and the Admiralty was forced to introduce an age restriction, prohibiting sailors below 20 years old from drinking rum. In compensation, the equivalent cost per tot was added to their wages each year until 'UA' was taken off their station card. The flood gates were now open and the temperance unions were pushing hard for every inch. By 1905, the choice to opt out of your rum ration in favour of the extra half penny a day was instigated. Two years later it was increased to a full penny and by 1919 it was three times that amount. By this time England had already been entrenched in one World War and with conscription swelling the ranks of the Navy once more, navy rum once again becoming a means of reprieve from the burdens of war.

With this rise in the number of Royal Navy sailors also came the need to increase and sustain the supply of the navy rum. A responsibility left to the unsung heroes of the Royal Victoria Victualling Yard, previously the Deptford Victualling Yard. Situated on the Thames in central London, the Royal Victoria Yard was singly responsible for the navy's rum, as it was from here that the Navy tot was blended, matured and shipped. Despite never setting sail, the Royal Victoria Yard didn't escape earning itself a place among Royal Navy legend. Around the start of the 20th century, word of a missing yard worker's dog led to rumours that said hound had somehow fallen into one of the blending vats. The story became so well spread that an order was finally given to drain the accused

vat of its contents in search of the remains of the missing dog. Instead of bones, the workers discovered tens of bottles with string tied around their necks lying at the bottom of the vat.

While not of flesh and blood, 'dog' was already a common name given to a tool used by Scotch distillers. Traditionally a skinny copper pipe sealed at one end and attached to a length of string or chain, dogs were used to drop through the bung hole of a barrel to extract spirit for sampling. By also tying lengths of string to empty glass bottles, a somewhat cunning (albeit thirsty) warehouse employee created their own rudimentary dog for no doubt more than just sampling. With so many bottles at the bottom of the vat, one could count how many times dogs were hastily dropped in fear of discovery. In early Scotch distilleries, the common technique of sliding a whisky filled Dog down your trouser leg and strolling out the front door became known as 'walking the dog'.

Prior to the Admiralty taking over the procurement and supply of rum for His Majesties fleet, the role fell to the Pusser and / or Captain, to purchase what rum they could from wherever they could. More often than not it was a cheap, rough, firewater with more in keeping with the spirit's earlier title of 'Kill Devil'. Today we have access to rums well in excess of 10 years of age whose smooth characters closer resemble an old Cognac or Scotch than the rums of old. For the pre 20th century sailor, nothing was smoother or more complex than the Admiralty blend. According to Nelson's Blood: Story of Navy Rum by Cpt. A. J. Pack, the Admiralty blend consisted primarily of British Guiana rum with some Trinidad for lightness and either Cuba, Barbados or Martinique for body, depending on supply and price. These were blended in various vats from 4-32,000 gallons each before being stored in riverside warehouses ready for shipment. Much of the old yard today has been redeveloped into luxury apartments however two former rum warehouses still exist on the riverbank looking over the Thames.

Throughout both the first and second World Wars, the Deptford rum vats were worked almost all day, every day to ensure the Royal Navy received the vast volumes required to sustain their swollen fleet. Only two recorded periods when the yard missed its quota was when merchant shipping was taking heavy losses from German U-Boats attacks in 1941 and when the Royal Victoria Yard got the crap knocked out of it during The Blitz. To help ensure the availability of the vast volumes required for the Pacific and Asian fleets, the Admiralty recruited out of Durban and Natal, aid from the South African National Chemical Syndicate. Initially established to manufacture methylated and rectified spirits for the tanning industry, the Syndicate took to distilling cane spirit in support of the war effort. While the spirit was regarded as rum in title, the unblended, unaged spirit was more similar in taste to that of its methylated cousins. Regardless of this, South Africa continued to supply rum to the Royal Navy as late as 1961 by which time the spirit was now shipped to England where it was matured on British soil for 5 years (known as an 'early landing') for a smoother finish. By the mid-20th century, rum was on the out with many sailors electing extra pay in lieu of their tot. At precisely 6 bells in the afternoon watch on the 31st July 1970, the Royal Navy grog tub was filled for the last time. Admiralty vessels stationed throughout the world staged a final call to "Splice the Yardarm" along with mock funerals on what was coined by the media as Black Tot Day. A chaplain stationed at Royal Navy base HMS Jufair in Bahrain dedicated a sermon to the passing of this navy legend, inscribing into a mock headstone with the words,

"...we therefore commit it's cask to the ground, sip to sip, splashes to splashes, thirst to thirst, in the sure and certain knowledge it will never again be restored to us".

In return for abolition, the funds previously dedicated to the supply of grog were channeled instead into The 'Sailors Fund' (aka Tot Fund), which dedicated an initial £2.7 million into upgrading the amenities and living conditions of the common sailor. With abolition came the loss of a historical

ritual practiced for over 300 years in all corners of the globe touched by the sea. If not for an inspired ex US Marine named Charles Tobias, the recipe for the Admiralty blend would have been lost with it. Thanks to the assistance of brokers E.D & F Man who had supplied the Royal Navy with rum for blending for almost two centuries, the recipe is kept alive inside every bottle of Pusser's brand rum. Further still, for every case of Pusser's sold an additional USD\$2 is donated to the Royal Sailors Fund in salute to their legacy. Over 350 years ago, an Admiral claimed the island of Jamaica for the English crown and unwittingly began a series of events which would give us those two favourites of the Caribbean; rum and pirates. But the relationship between sailors and their daily tot is a tradition to truly define an age of heroes.

A Small Mistake.....

A group of Std. 1's, 2's and 3's, accompanied by two female teachers, went on a field trip to the Greyville Racecourse to learn about thoroughbred race horses and the supporting industry, but mostly to see the horses. When it was time to take the children to the bathroom.

It was decided that the girls would go with one teacher and the boys would go with the other.

The teacher assigned to the boys was waiting outside the men's toilet when one of the boys came out and told her that none of them could reach the urinal.

Having no choice, she went inside, helped the little boys with their pants, and began hoisting them up one by one, holding on to their 'wee-wees' to direct the flow away from their clothes.

As she lifted one, she couldn't help but notice that he was unusually well endowed.

Trying not to show that she was staring the teacher said, 'You must be in standard 3?'

'No ', he replied. 'I'm riding Silver Arrow in the seventh race, but I appreciate your help...

And, to close

Little boy gets home from school and says "Dad, I've got a part in the school play as a man who's been married for 25 years."

His Dad replies "Never mind Son. Maybe next time you'll get a speaking part!!"
