The Seven Seas Tattler Issue 4.11 – April 2021

Greetings fellow members of the Seven Seas Club. This month the club will hold its annual general meeting, make available some lovely new club shirts and hold its first quiz since lockdown, regulations permitting of course.

We hope and trust that our members are looking after themselves and their loved ones during these difficult times. At the AGM, you will be presented with all the clubs financial information. We continue to face challenging times and the committee will seek out opportunities to entertain you and look for your support.

As always, any feedback is most welcome and can be sent to jonathanagolding@gmail.com

From the Chair

As we head towards Easter, we hope that the pandemic will not worsen and that there will be no tightening of lockdown. But, if you are not going away, pop down to the club at some time. Our AGM is due to be held on 16 April. You will receive the official notice shortly.
Enjoy the read including the article on former naval officer Zirk Botha.

See you at the club

Kevin

From the Treasurer's Abacus

The end of the financial year is upon us – while I do not wish to pre-empt what is to be reported at the AGM, I offer this quick little peek at the pre-audit results for the year.

We closed the 2020-2021 fin year with an operating deficit of just over R36,000. This is nothing short of incredible as, in doing so, the Club bettered the budget approved at the last AGM. (You will recall that this budget was drawn up prior to the onset of the Covid-19 lockdowns) Should you wish to get the details of how we managed this incredible feat, please be present at the AGM on the 16th April.

The year end results are with the auditors and the first draft of their audit report is due before the end of March (i.e. before you read this) At the time of writing this article, the auditors had already confirmed telephonically that the audit had not produced any negative findings.

Remember too that the AGM will deliberate over the budget for the current year (2021-2022) and decisions will be made regarding the mandate for subscriptions to be given to the committee for the following (2022-2023) fin year.

As always, do not forget that only members in good standing may participate in the AGM – so please ensure that you have settled your membership account before then.

Look forward to seeing you in the Club and at the AGM!

Birthdays in April

Tattler wishes the following members an extremely happy birthday. May the year ahead be very kind to you! For fun, note those with whom you share a birthday.

(If you are celebrating a birthday but your name is not present this is because our database lacks this data! Please accept our apologies and let us know your birthday!)

100 Club Winners for March 2021
Congratulations to these winners
Planks van Aswegen R 1000.00
Colin Black R 300.00
Rhoda Moore R 300.00

Cdr R D Stone 01 Apr - **Stephen Fleming, cricketer, New Zealand left-handed Test batsman (1973)**
Capt G B Kretschner 04 Apr - **Anthony Perkins, born in New York City, actor (1952)**
Mr S D Neville 06 Apr - **Ian Paisley, North Ireland, clergyman and MP (1926)**
Mr M J Smith-Chandler 12 Apr - **David Letterman, born in Indianapolis, Indiana, comedian (1947)**
Capt R L N Erleigh 17 Apr - **Robin Knox-Johnson, yachtsman (1939)**
Capt A J Forrest 22 Apr – **Jack Nicholson, born in New Jersey, actor (1937)**
Mr R Wilson 22 Apr – **Kingsley Amis, English novelist (1922)**
Mrs J R W Dart 30 Apr – **Ian Healy, cricket wicket-keeper, Australian (1954)**

Navy News

Royal Navy Sharpens it's skills in key Gulf exercise

Courtesy of Royal Navy News - 16 March 2021

A dozen warships – three of them British – mustered off the coast of Oman for the host's action-packed annual naval workout.

Khunjar Hadd – Arabic for *sharp dagger* – is the principal test of the Royal Navy of Oman and its ability to work with its allies in the region above, on and beneath the waves. Britain, the USA and France accepted the invite for the 26th iteration of the exercise which featured most aspects of 21st Century naval warfare from gunnery serials and formation sailing manoeuvres to pulse-raising exercises with French Air Force and Royal Air Force of Oman fast jets.

Flying the flag for the UK were frigate HMS Montrose, minehunter HMS Chiddingfold and support ship RFA Cardigan Bay – all based in Bahrain – working alongside ships from the host nation, plus US Navy and US Coast Guard.

For Montrose, the highlight of the eight days of Sharp Dagger was her participation in the air defence exercise. The Type 23 frigate excelled in demonstrating her capability by providing air defence as part of the task group against fast jets - French Rafales, Omani Typhoons and Hawks. In a real world scenario, the frigate's Sea Ceptor missile system provides cover over more than 750 square miles of ocean (roughly the size of Oxfordshire), the weapon striking incoming hostile threats at three times the speed of sound.

Other activity above the waves included extensive training with Omani and US Navy helicopters – Super Lynx and Seahawks (the naval version of the Blackhawk) – board and search exercises and some live gunnery, plus some impressive seamanship manoeuvring the 12 participating ships into formation.

Beneath the waves, HMS Chiddingfold and her mother ship Cardigan Bay focused on the mine 'threat' – bread and butter to both, but the presence of major warships such as Montrose and the US Navy cruiser USS Port Royal and fast jets added several extra, exciting dimensions to their regular training.

HMS Montrose

"The exercise was a fantastic show of highly coordinated, collaborative force across a range of disciplines – many of which are rarely encountered on a mine countermeasures vessel and therefore we relish the chance to practise them," said Sub Lieutenant Andrew Bonham, Chiddingfold's navigator, aged 26 from Glasgow.

The Royal Navy's mine-hunting force is celebrating 15 years continuously on operations in the Gulf, expanding from two ships initially to five today (four minehunters, one command ship). Embarked on the latter, RFA Cardigan Bay, were the staff of the Commander UK Mine Countermeasures Force, who direct and support all British mine warfare exercises and operations in the Gulf region and regularly support our allies. "We're here to improve our ability to work with the US, French, and Omanis – and we've proven this capability," explained Lieutenant Commander Max Wilmot, chief-of-staff.

Seahawk helicopter lands on guided-missile cruiser USS Port Royal (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Theoren Neal)

"These exercises also provide reassurance that the motorways of the sea are safe for personnel and merchant vessels to transit and allow us to conduct valuable defence engagement with our international partners."

HMS Chiddingfold searched ten miles of sea lanes for mines, found two dummy variants and dealt with. She also 'rafted up' with Cardigan Bay – came alongside at sea – to take on fuel and stores.

"The exercise was extremely useful for the mine warfare department," said Lieutenant Jason Rogers, Chiddingfold's 35-year-old Operations Officer from Southampton. "The crew worked hard to maintain their skills throughout the execution of the entire exercise."

Featured Naval Hero – Eric Robertson

Tattler - the following caught my attention . He served through four wars!

Eric Robinson, VC from Gallaher Cigarette Cards	
Born	16 May 1882 Greenwich, Kent
Died	20 August 1965 (aged 83) Gosport, Hampshire
Allegiance	United Kingdom
Service/branch	Royal Navy
Years of service	1897–1933 1939–1942
Rank	Rear Admiral
Commands held	HMS *M21*
Battles/wars	Boxer Rebellion First World War *-Gallipoli Campaign* *-Naval operations in the Dardanelles* Russian Civil War Second World War *-Battle of the Atlantic*
Awards	Victoria Cross Officer of the Order of the British Empire Mentioned in Despatches (2) Order of the Nile, Fourth Class (Egypt) Knight, Order of St Anna (Russia) Order of the Sacred Treasure (Japan) Knight, Legion of Honour (France) Croix de Guerre (France) King Haakon VII Freedom Cross (Norway)
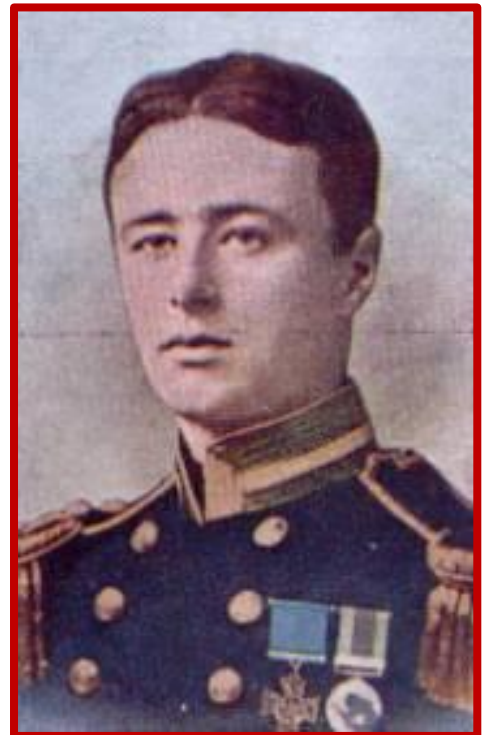
Rear Admiral Eric Gascoigne Robinson VC, OBE (16 May 1882 – 20 August 1965) was a Royal Navy officer and an English recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. He earned his award by going ashore and single-handedly destroying a Turkish naval gun battery while a lieutenant commander with the fleet stationed off the Dardanelles during the Gallipoli campaign in the First World War.

After these exploits, he was badly wounded on the front line on the Gallipoli Peninsula, but recovered and served continuously for the remainder of the war and into the Russian Civil War. In 1939 aged 57, he again volunteered for military service and spent three more years at sea,

commanding convoys during the Battle of the Atlantic. During his lengthy career, Robinson remained a highly regarded officer who had served through four wars.

Featured Battleship – USS Washington (BB-56)
From: Wikipedia

Tattler - What makes a ship lucky? We found the following : "A good example is the battleship USS Washington which managed to fight the entire Pacific war and never lose a man to hostile action. During the war she fought in almost every major battle and took on (and destroyed) the Japanese battleship Kirishima off Guadalcanal. She had a pretty amazing war record, and to do it without losing a single sailor to the enemy". Important note - We have however had difficulty establishing the veracity of this claim!

USS Washington (BB-56) was the second and final member of the North Carolina class of fast battleships, the first vessel of the type built for the United States Navy. Built under the Washington Treaty system, North Carolina's design was limited in displacement and armament, though the United States used a clause in the Second London Naval Treaty to increase the main battery from the original armament of nine 14 in (356 mm) guns to nine 16 in (406 mm) guns.

The ship was laid down in 1938 and completed in May 1941, while the United States was still neutral during World War II. Her initial career was spent training along the East Coast of the United States until after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, bringing the United States into the war.

USS Washington (BB-56)

Washington was initially deployed to Britain to reinforce the Home Fleet, which was tasked with protecting convoys carrying supplies to the Soviet Union. She saw no action during this period, as the German fleet remained in port, and Washington was recalled to the US in July 1942 to be refitted and transferred to the Pacific. Immediately sent to the south Pacific to reinforce Allied units fighting the Guadalcanal campaign, the ship became the flagship of Rear Admiral Willis Lee.

She saw action at the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on the night of 14–15 November in company with the battleship USS South Dakota and four destroyers. After South Dakota inadvertently drew heavy Japanese fire by sailing too closely to Admiral Nobutake Kondō's squadron, Washington took advantage of the Japanese preoccupation with South Dakota to inflict fatal damage on the Japanese battleship Kirishima and the destroyer Ayanami, while avoiding damage herself. Washington's attack disrupted Kondō's planned bombardment of U.S. Marine positions on Guadalcanal and forced the remaining Japanese ships to withdraw.

From 1943 onward, she was primarily occupied with screening the fast carrier task force, though she also occasionally shelled Japanese positions in support of the various amphibious assaults. During this period, Washington participated in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands campaign in late 1943 and early 1944, the Mariana and Palau Islands campaign in mid-1944, and the Philippines campaign in late 1944 and early 1945.

Operations to capture Iwo Jima and Okinawa followed in 1945, and during the later stages of the Battle of Okinawa, Washington was detached to undergo an overhaul, though by the time it was completed, Japan had surrendered, ending the war. Washington then moved to the east coast of the US, where she was refitted to serve as a troop transport as part of Operation Magic Carpet and then carrying a group of over 1,600 soldiers home from Britain. She was thereafter decommissioned in 1947 and assigned to the Atlantic Reserve Fleet, where she remained until 1960 when she was stricken from the naval register and sold for scrap the next year.

Animals in War – Cats in the trenches
From: Wikipedia

Tattler - We did dogs and also touched on elephants, dolphins and pigs. Now, how about cats?

A gunner with the regimental cat in a trench. Cambrin, France, February 6th, 1918. [IWM]

Cats in the Trenches

An estimated 500,000 cats served in World War I.
"In the trenches of the Western front there were serious problems with rats," says Ben Mercer of Ancestry.com3.

"As you can imagine, wherever you have food, and unfortunately decaying bodies, there were rats and it was the cat's job to keep them at bay," he says.

Aside from doing rodent patrol, WWI cats also detected gas. This was, after all, the first war that saw the large-scale use of chemical warfare.

Pitouchi

One cat saved a soldier's life in a more dramatic fashion. Pitouchi had been born in the trenches. His mother had been killed when he was a kitten, and he'd been adopted by a Belgian soldier, Lt. Lekeux.

Lekeux was hiding in a shell hole, sketching the enemy's artillery works. A German soldier on patrol spotted him and called out to his comrades.

Spooked by the sound, Pitouchi "jumped out of the hole onto a piece of timber," writes Susan Bulanda in her book *Soldiers in Fur and Feathers*. The Germans "fired two shots at Pitouchi. However, as frightened as he was, Pitouchi was not hit, and he jumped back into the hole with his beloved Lekeux."

The Germans, figuring they'd made a mistake, laughed it off and went on their way. Lekeux returned to camp with the vital drawings completed and Pitouchi on his shoulder.

Cats Used as Early Warning System for Bombs

Although today's military uses sniffer dogs to sniff out explosives, cats have their own built-in bomb detectors. Whether they are simply attuned to changes in atmospheric pressure or they have a sixth sense, some cats are particularly good at knowing when a bomb is about to hit.

During World War II, families soon learned to follow their cats into bomb or air-raid shelters, saving many lives. Among the most famous cats was one appropriately named Bomber. This cat could distinguish between the sounds made by RAF and German aircraft from a surprising distance. When Bomber headed for shelter, his family followed, making him a feline early warning system.

Although today, most military cats are mascots, they still play an important part in keeping morale high.

Weird Naval Traditions and their Meanings
By: Harold C Hutchison

How many "Shellbacks", "Golden Shellbacks", "Emerald Shellbacks" or plain old "Red Noses" do we know?

Perhaps the most well-known is the "Order of the Shellback," given to those sailors who have crossed the equator. The "Crossing the Line" ceremony has been portrayed both in the PBS documentary series "Carrier," as well as being the plot point for an episode of "JAG" in the 1990s. But there is more than one kind of shellback.

If you cross the equator at the International Date Line (about 900 miles east of Nauru), you become a "Golden Shellback" (since those who cross the International Date Line are called Golden Dragons).

If you cross the equator at the Prime Meridian (a position about 460 miles to the west of Sao Tome and Principe), you become an "Emerald Shellback."

Oh, and in case you are wondering, crossing the Antarctic Circle makes you a "Red Nose."

Tattler – wondering whether these are universal terms or just American naval ones?

A recent Navy Times article notes that the crew of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Ross (DDG 71) joined the "Order of the Blue Nose" — a distinction reserved for ships and crew that crossing the Arctic Circle.

Feature – Egyptian Navy and An interesting Naval Battle (The war against the Sea Peoples)
Source: Wikipedia

The Egyptian Navy - *(Flag and Ensign)*

Tattler - Whilst ancient Egypt had a navy as far back as 1800BC, their modern navy was founded in 1800.

The Egyptian Navy (Arabic: القوات البحرية المصرية Quwwāt el-Bahriat el-Miṣriyya, lit. 'Egyptian Navy Forces'), also known as the Egyptian Naval Force, is the maritime branch of the Egyptian Armed Forces.

It is the largest navy in the Middle East and Africa, and is the sixth largest in the world measured by the number of vessels. The navy's missions include protection of more than 2,000 kilometers of coastline of the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, defense of approaches to the Suez Canal, and support for army operations.

The majority of the modern Egyptian Navy was created with the help of the Soviet Union in the 1960s. The navy received ships in the 1980s from China and other, western, sources. In 1989, the Egyptian Navy had 18,000 personnel as well as 2,000 personnel in the Coast Guard. By 2014 this had grown to some 32500 with 245 vessels.

History

Egypt has had a navy since Ancient Egyptian times. The Ancient Egyptian Navy was a vital part of the military of ancient Egypt, helping to transport troops along the Nile River and fighting many battles such as the Battle of the Delta against the Sea Peoples. The Ancient Egyptian Navy imported many of their ships from countries such as the Kingdom of Cyprus. Several Ancient Egyptian solar ships are still present today.

In the early 1800s, Egypt under Muhammad Ali Pasha developed a modern European-style army and navy. After intervening in the Greek War of Independence at Ottoman Turkey's request, the Egyptian navy was destroyed in 1827 at the Battle of Navarino by the fleets of Great Britain, France and Russia. With the Egyptian army in Greece then isolated, Muhammad Ali made terms with the British and withdrew a year later.

A replacement fleet was built for the First Egyptian-Ottoman War in 1831, and landed troops at Jaffa in support of the main Egyptian army marching into Syria. In the Second Egyptian–Ottoman War in 1839, following Egyptian victory in the Battle of Nezib, the Ottoman fleet sailed to Alexandria and defected to the Egyptian side. However, these victories provoked decisive European intervention to support the Turks, and while Muhammad Ali's dynasty continued to reign, Egypt ended up being transformed into a British protectorate until being granted independence in 1921.

The Egyptian navy was only peripherally involved in the series of conflicts with Israel. On 22 October 1948, the Egyptian sloop El Amir Farouq was sunk in the Mediterranean Sea off Gaza by a motor explosive boat of the Israeli Navy during the Israeli naval campaign in Operation Yoav as part of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

During the Suez Crisis, Egypt dispatched the Ibrahim el Awal, an ex-British Hunt class destroyer, to Haifa with the aim of shelling the city's coastal oil installations. On 31 October 1956, the Ibrahim el Awal reached Haifa and began bombarding the city but was driven off by a French warship and then pursued by the Israeli destroyers INS Eilat and INS Yaffo which, with the help of the Israeli Air Force, captured the ship. Egyptian destroyers and torpedo boats engaged larger British vessels in a move aimed at frustrating the amphibious operations of the British and French.

On the night of 31 October 1956 in the northern Red Sea, the British light cruiser HMS Newfoundland challenged and engaged the Egyptian frigate Domiat, eventually sinking it in a brief gun battle. The Egyptian warship was then sunk by escorting destroyer HMS Diana, with 69 surviving Egyptian sailors rescued.

The Egyptian Navy's blockade of Israeli ships in the Strait of Tiran that were headed toward the Israeli port of Eilat was one of the main causes of the Six-Day Warin 1967. During the war, the Israeli Navy landed six combat divers from the Shayetet 13 naval commando unit to infiltrate Alexandria harbor. The divers sank an Egyptian minesweeper before being taken prisoner. Both Egyptian and Israeli warships made movements at sea to intimidate the other side throughout the war, but did not engage each other. However, Israeli warships and aircraft did hunt for Egyptian submarines throughout the war.

In October 1967, a few months after the cease-fire, the Egyptian Navy was the first navy in history to sink a ship using anti-ship missiles, when an Egyptian Komar-class fast-attack craft sank the

Israeli destroyer INS Eilat with two direct hits. This was a milestone of modern naval warfare, and for the first time anti-ship missiles showed their potential, sinking the destroyer 17 km off Port Said.

On the night of 15–16 November 1969, Egyptian Navy frogmen attacked the port of Eilat and caused severe damages to the armed transport ship Bat Yam. On 5–6 February 1970, the frogmen attacked the Israeli landing ships at the same port and same piers causing severe damages to the landing ship Bait Shivaa and transport armed ship Hydroma. On 8 March 1970, the frogmen attacked the Israeli oil drill Keting at the port of Abidjan in Ivory Coast believing that Israel had bought this oil drill from the Netherlands for the purposes of oil exploration in the Suez Gulf.

In the Yom Kippur War, Egypt blocked commercial traffic to Eilat in the Gulf of Aqaba by laying mines; it also attempted to blockade Israeli ports on the Mediterranean. The navy also used the coastal artillery to the east of Port Fouad to support the Egyptian Army in order to prepare for the assault on the Suez Canal. In the Battle of Baltim, three Egyptian Osa-class missile boats were sunk.

Present fleet

The Egyptian Navy is structured into two different fleets, one for the Mediterranean sea and the other for the Red Sea. This in a context where the safety of shipping in the Red Sea is becoming increasingly important.

Submarine fleet

Egypt has 4 type 209 German submarines and also operates 4 Romeo class Chinese submarines which have been modernized by US to be able to carry Harpoon missiles.

Amphibious fleet

The first Mistral helicopter carrier named after late President Gamal Abdel-Nasser arrived in Alexandria in June 2016.

On 16 September 2016, the Egyptian Navy Commander, Admiral Osama Rabie, raised the Egyptian flag on board of the BPC-210 Mistral Class amphibious assault ship (BPC/LHD). Russia and Egypt had signed a deal for Egypt's purchase of 50 Ka-52 Alligator attack helicopters from Russia. The purchase includes the variant of the Ka-52 Katran, which specifically designed for the Mistrals that Russia had intended to acquire.

Two Egyptian navy amphibious landing craft in 2009

Surface fleet

Only those escorts capable of operating troop-lift helicopters (Kaman SH-2G Seasprite) are shown. It must, though, be accepted that all surface ships can launch and recover the rubber assault craft known to be used by the army's commando groups. Additionally the two, 1,702 ton Jianghu I class FFGs and the two, 1,479 ton Descubierta class FFGs can supply naval gunfire support.

Patrol forces

The Egyptian Navy has a potent fleet of fast attack craft, many fitted with missile systems. These and the navy-manned vessels of the Coast Guard, would be deployed in support of amphibious landings and certainly in their prevention.
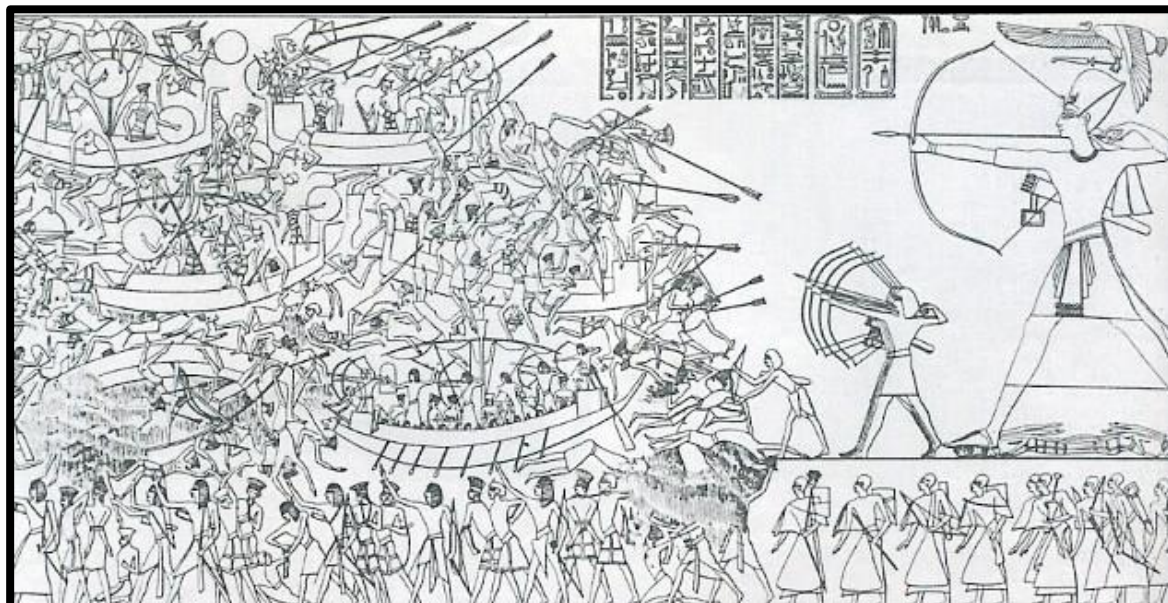
El Fateh Gowind corvette takes part in Medusa 6 exercise between Egypt, Greece and Cyprus

FREMM multipurpose frigate Tahya Misr during "Zat Al-Sawari" naval maneuver concluded in 2016.

The war against the Sea Peoples – The Battle in the Delta

This war is perhaps the most famous Egyptian war heavily involving the naval strength of the empire, and it is the first to ever be well documented. During the reign of Rameses III which was in 1182 BC to 1151 BC, a new threat arose to challenge the Egyptians in a different way than what they were used to. A new people called the Sea Peoples were arriving in the Levantine region and destroying its cities.

Already the once mighty Hittites were destroyed by these people of mysterious origin and it soon became obvious that Egypt with all of its wealth would be next.

Rameses III prepared a mighty fleet and planned to repulse the Sea Peoples in the Nile.

In the relief inscribed in the Temple of Medinat Habu, Rameses states, "I prepared the river-mouth like a strong wall with warships, galleys, and light craft. They were completely equipped both fore and aft with brave fighters carrying their weapons, and infantry of all the pick of Egypt."

In that relief, it portrays the enemy with their tall ships all falling into the Nile and pierced by the arrows that were being fired from the Egyptian ships. At the same time, Rameses claims that he lured the enemy close to the Nile shore where he unleashed upon them hundreds of thousands of arrows. The Egyptians on their fast and nimble riverine crafts won against the maritime vessels of the Sea People, who are depicted by the Egyptians as ill equipped for ranged combat.

Pirates – 12 of History's most notorious

Compiled by Colette Patience

April Feature – Mediterranean Pirates

In the first 3 editions of Tattler 2021, we wrote about notorious pirates operating during what is known as the so-called Golden Age of Piracy (1650-1730 CE) and the War on Piracy operating predominantly in the Americas and the Caribbean. This month, Tattler, features the Egyptian Navy as well as the Egyptian battle against the Sea Peoples. It is fitting then for us to explore the history of the ancient prates of the Mediterranean. A good story with many familiar names.

The pirates of the Golden Age of Piracy have little in common with the ancient pirates of the Mediterranean. The Golden Age pirates largely acted independently purely for their own self-interest and profit. The ancient pirates were often crews providing a service (most notably the capture, transport, and sale of people as slaves) for governments or military contingents acting in the interests of their own government.

Piracy is first mentioned in the Egyptian records during the reign of the pharaoh Akhenaten (1353-1336 BC) and was still being practiced in the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages (c. 476-1500 AD). The pirates of the Golden Age of the 17th and 18th centuries AD were nothing new. They were following in what was, by then, an ancient tradition.

The Earliest Pirates - Sea Peoples & Tyrrhenians

Pirates are mentioned in a collection of correspondence between various rulers of the Near East and Egyptian pharaohs of the New Kingdom. The most famous pirates were the Sea Peoples who destroyed whole regions and toppled empires between c. 1276-1178 BC. What is known about them has been interpreted from the inscriptions of the Egyptian pharaohs of the New Kingdom who defeated them: Ramesses II (The Great, r. 1279-1213 BC), his son and successor Merenptah (r. 1213-1203 BC), and Ramesses III (r. 1186-1155 BC).

The Sea Peoples were a coalition of different nations, not a single ethnic group or nationality. Historians are not all in agreement as to who they were nor where they came from. Ramesses II, Merenptah, and Ramesses III all report the same sort of experience in dealing with them, however. They came from the sea and struck quickly, causing massive destruction, and were defeated with some effort. Egyptian inscriptions famously exaggerate the challenges in overcoming their enemies but the reports on the Sea Peoples seem to match similar accounts from other nations.

Ramesses II notes how the Sea Peoples were conquering the known world and it was only through great effort that he stopped them from taking Egypt. They were finally defeated by Ramesses III in 1178 BC and, after that, disappear from historical record. It is possible, of course, that they never disappeared but are recorded later under different names.

The Illyrians & Queen Teuta

Another people who were regularly identified with piracy were the Illyrians. King Agron (r. 250-231 BC) of Illyria (on the Balkan Peninsula) pursued an expansionist policy during his reign, focusing especially on a strong navy which could control his coast. Illyria was a kingdom of many different tribes, but Agron's, became the most powerful and, under his leadership, they dominated the others. Agron conquered the powerful Aetolians in 231 BC and was so proud of himself he is said to have consumed too much wine during the celebration afterwards and died within a few days. The throne went to his second wife Teuta.

Teuta continued Agron's policies but with a significant difference: she let the fleet loose in the Adriatic Sea as pirates who were free to plunder any non-Illyrian vessels they met. Many of these ships were Roman and the ports of islands such as Pharos were regular stops for Roman merchants. Teuta's pirates were everywhere in the Adriatic, making trade almost impossible as they continued raiding ships and taking cargo. Rome finally intervened by sending a fleet and an

army to defeat her military in the First Illyrian War (229-228 BC). Heavy restrictions were then placed on Teuta's reign and navy but, instead of complying, she stepped down.

The Romans then raised Demetrius to power, thinking he would be a loyal client king, but as soon as Rome's attention was directed elsewhere, he rebuilt the fleet and released his pirates onto the seas once more. After his defeat and death, his successor pursued the exact same policy, which resulted in Rome conquering Illyria, ending the reign of the Illyrian pirates.

Cilician Pirates

The Illyrian pirates had followed a code established earlier by Greek pirates of not attacking their own people or region. The Greek pirate Dionysus (5th century BC) was notorious for seizing any ship he encountered but left Greek vessels alone. The Cilician pirates observed no such policy for the simple reason that they were not all from Cilicia (modern Turkey). The Cilician pirates were made up of many different nationalities and their only bond was that they used Cilicia as their base of operations. Cilicia's coves and harbours were perfect for concealment, whether in preparation for an attack on a passing vessel or hiding from the authorities, and the region was also timber-rich, which made it an excellent resource for shipbuilding and repair. The Cilician pirates established a network throughout the region for supplies and intermediaries to sell their goods.

The empires in the region became more concerned with their own power than the region as a whole, and by 140 BC, civil wars and other unrest made piracy very easy as no one was paying any attention. In addition, they relied on the pirates for the slaves they needed.

Rome sent an envoy to look into the piracy problem in 140 BC who reported back that immediate action should be taken against the pirates, but this suggestion was ignored as Rome had other concerns it found more pressing. By 103 BC, however, the pirates had overstepped their bounds too many times in harassing or capturing Roman vessels and so Marcus Antonius (l. 143-87 BC, grandfather of Mark Antony) was sent on a campaign and conquered the area of Cilicia. Between 78-74 BC, the Romans campaigned in the region but were not successful in stopping or even slowing the pirates' activities. In 75 BC, the Cilician pirates kidnapped a young Julius Caesar (l. 100-44 BC) when he was on his way to study in Rhodes, and in 70 BC the pirates were paid by the rebel Spartacus (l. c. 111-71 BC) to transport him and his army to Sicily; they took the money but never showed up as agreed, thus dooming Spartacus' rebellion.

By 67 BC, the Cilician pirates were embroiled in an ongoing war with Rome. At this stage though, they were facing the formidable Roman general Pompey the Great (l. c. 106-48 BC) who made the pirate problem a priority. He divided the Mediterranean into 13 districts, assigning a fleet and commander to each, and when one district was cleared of pirates, that fleet joined efforts in another. By this process, Pompey steadily killed and captured the pirates until he defeated the last of them at the Battle of Coracesium in 67 BC, just off the coast of Cilicia. Instead of executing the pirates (by beheading or crucifixion), he relocated them to the lowlands of Cilicia, where they assimilated with the rest of the population and became productive members of society.

Piracy & Rome

After resolving the piracy problem in a mere 89 days, Pompey went on to win wars. This did not mean the pirates were taken care of for good. Piracy continued as a viable way to make a living

because it offered the possibility of upward mobility and far more profit than farming, fishing, or fighting for someone else. The Cilician pirates who had not been relocated – or perhaps even some who had – most likely regrouped before Pompey had even left the region.

In the civil war between Pompey and Caesar (49-45 BC), piracy was employed by both sides. Pompey's own son, was a pirate and commanded his own fleet, seeking revenge on Caesar after his father's assassination in 48 BC. After Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC, his nephew Octavian and Mark Antony hunted down the assassins and then, following Antony's involvement with Cleopatra VII of Egypt (l. c. 69-30 BC), fought with each other. Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra's navy at Actium in 31 BC and shortly afterwards became the first Roman emperor.

The empire required even more slaves than the Roman Republic had and so the Cilician pirates went right back to work. Rome had no reason to interfere with them now because they were essentially sub-contractors supplying Rome with slaves. A Cilician port became the administrative centre for the slave trade in the Mediterranean and generated enormous wealth.

Byzantine & Arab Piracy

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD, the Eastern Byzantine Empire retained control of the Mediterranean and the slave trade until the rise of Islam in the early 7th century AD. Islam forbade the enslavement of Muslims by Muslims and yet the Arabs relied on slave labour as much as the Byzantines did. In the early stage of the spread of Islam (c. 610-750 AD), non-Muslims who were not killed or converted were sold into slavery. As Islam spread across North Africa and into the Mediterranean, the Arab fleets attacked coastal towns, sacking and burning them, and leaving with a quantity of their citizens for the slave markets. The city of Side (the infamous port in Cilicia), fell to the Muslim raiders at some point in the 7th century AD, and by 700 AD they had taken Cilicia entirely from the Byzantines.

The slave trade remained the strongest incentive for piracy and Muslim slave ships prowled the Mediterranean as the Cilicians had before. Crete, under Muslim control as the Emirate of Crete since the 820's AD, was again a haven for pirates who justified their actions as Islamic jihad.

The slave trade steadily declined in the Byzantine Empire after the 7th century AD as it came to be viewed as morally wrong but slaves were still kept by the Byzantines and were supplied by Arab traders and pirates.

European Christian nations also actively engaged in piracy and the slave trade, in spite of the Byzantine condemnation of both. In 1192 AD, the Byzantine emperor Isaac II Angelos (l. 1156-1204 AD) complained to the State of Genoa that their pirates had robbed Byzantine ships of substantial goods. Angelos demanded Genoa reimburse the Byzantine merchants for their loss or he would hold the Genoese citizens living in his capital of Constantinople responsible and force them to pay. Angelos' threat does not seem to have had any effect on Genoa or its pirates who continued on as they had before.

Conclusion

Piracy continued in the Mediterranean after the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 AD and the rise of the Ottoman Empire. Already by 1198 AD, Muslim piracy and slave trading had become a

serious enough issue that the monastic order of the Trinitarians had been founded to ransom European Christians from slavery in the Far East.

The Berber pirates of North Africa were the primary agents who would expand their sphere of operations under the privateer Kemal Reis (l. c. 1451-1511 AD) who established the Barbary pirates as a significant menace. Reis was so effective in taking European Christian ships and crews for slaves that he was made an admiral of the Ottoman Empire.

The Barbary pirates kidnapped and sold over 1 million European Christians into slavery between the time of their establishment under Kemal Reis and c. 1830 AD when their central base of operations in Algiers was taken by France. Even this date does not mark the end of piracy in the Mediterranean, however, as it would continue throughout the 19th century AD, on a smaller scale.

Editorial

South African Zirk Botha sets world record for solo row in epic transatlantic crossing
Senior Reporter for Times Live, Bobby Jordan

Tattler - At the time we reported on Grant Blakeway's triumph (*his solo row across the Atlantic Ocean in the 2020 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge*), in last month's Tattler, Zirk Botha was completing something equally epic!

The 59-year-old former naval officer completed his solo transatlantic ocean crossing on his boat "Ratel" from Cape Town to Brazil in just 71 days, rowing a total distance of 7 200km.

A 59-year old South African who spent 70 days rowing himself across the Atlantic says he spent much of the time daydreaming about the future. Ex-merchant navy officer Zirk Botha believes his mind and not his muscles was most important in helping him set a new world record for an unassisted Cape to Rio row.

When the going got tough – such as the violent storm that lasted two and a half days – Botha simply strapped himself into his cupboard-sized cabin in the bow of his rowing boat and daydreamed about his children."

He set world records as the first South African to row the south transatlantic route and unsupported by any safety craft, as well as for the fastest row from Cape to Rio.

A similar route was previously completed by South African duo, Wayne Robertson and Braam Malherbe, in 92 days, in 2017. Brazilian, Amyr Klink crossed the South Atlantic solo in 1984, on a slightly different 3700 nm route rowing from Namibia to Bahia over 100 days.

On his row, Botha had to deal with the multiple challenges of wild seas, sleep deprivation, isolation and the risk of encountering ships.

"While I had near perfect weather conditions to facilitate a record-breaking crossing, it has been intense, with only two calm days over the whole crossing. The relentless nature of the weather has been physically and mentally draining. I wasn't prepared for that type of challenge," he stated.

He explained that, as a 100% self-sustaining solo rower, he had to deal with all physical, mental and emotional challenges without support or relief. Botha had to navigate 24/7 with no one else to keep a visual lookout for ships or changes in weather conditions while he slept. "When I was not rowing I had to desalinate water, clean the hull and do general boat maintenance, besides laundry, which also impacted on the time I had available to rest."

Tattler salutes and congratulates him on an incredible achievement! We are endeavouring to get Zirk to come to the club to talk about his experience. **More will follow........!**

April 1st approaches

Tattler offers the following:

Though no one knows the exact origin of April Fools' Day, it likely has its roots in Roman history beginning with the festival Hilaria, or from the Medieval Feast of Fools. These were festivals in which the lower class would often dress up and impersonate the kings and queens and not have to worry about getting their heads chopped off, at least for a day. The earliest recording of April Fools' Day is in Canterbury Tales in 1392, so it's been around a little while.

On April 1, 1957, the BBC TV show "Panorama" ran a segment about the Swiss spaghetti harvest enjoying a "bumper year" thanks to mild weather and the elimination of the spaghetti weevil. Many credulous Britons were taken in, and why not? The story was on television -- then a relatively new invention -- and Auntie Beeb would never lie, would it?

In other TV-related jokes, in 1962, the Swedish national network put on a technical expert who told the public that its black-and-white broadcasts could be made color by viewing them through nylon stockings. Many Swedes fell for the hoax. There's no truth to the rumor, however, that some have gotten their revenge by burning a giant goat every year.

In 1994, PC Magazine ran a column about a bill making its way through Congress that would prohibit the use of the internet while intoxicated. Although the name of the contact person was listed as Lirpa Sloof (spell her name backwards), many people took the story seriously. In retrospect, however, perhaps the bill -- fake or not -- wasn't a bad idea.

Richard Branson, the billionaire founder of the Virgin Group, has a well-documented love of April Fools' Day. But in 1989, his annual prank came a day early, on March 31.

That evening, residents outside of London spotted a flying saucer that appeared to land in a nearby field in Surrey. Police officers went to the field to investigate the supposed UFO, and were probably surprised when they actually found one. As they approached the flying saucer, a door opened and a silver-clad figure walked out. The cops promptly ran away.

Little did they know, Branson was hiding out in the UFO behind his silver-clad companion, whose name was Don Cameron. The two of them had taken off in the flying saucer—which was actually a hot-air balloon—and planned to land in Hyde Park on April 1 as a prank. However, changing winds forced them to land a little earlier in Surrey.

50 years ago - April 1971

6 April - "Ping-pong diplomacy" began when the People's Republic of China sent an invitation to the U.S. national table tennis team to visit as the first Americans to be invited to the mainland China since the Communist government had taken over in 1949. For more than 20 years, mainland China had been closed to the U.S. and other Western nations. The American team was in Nagoya, Japan for the world championships at the same time that the People's Republic was participating in the competition for the first time since 1965. Earlier, Glenn Cowan of the U.S. team was befriended by three-time men's world champion Zhuang Zedong of China and the press coverage led to the invitation. Rufford Harrison, the captain of the U.S. team accepted the invitation on behalf of the team the next day.

17 April - Salyut 1 (DOS-1) (Russian: Салют-1) was the first space station launched into low Earth orbit by the Soviet Union on April 19, 1971. The Salyut program followed this with five more successful launches of seven more stations. The final module of the program, Zvezda (DOS-8), became the core of the Russian segment of the International Space Station and remains in orbit.

26 April - U.S. Air Force Majors Thomas B. Estes and Dewain C. Vick set a supersonic flight endurance record, spending 10 hours and 30 minutes in the air in a Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird and traveling in excess of 15,000 miles (24,000 km) (equivalent to halfway around the world) and slowing to subsonic speeds only for refueling. At times, the aircraft exceeded Mach 3. The SR-71 averaged 1,429 miles per hour (2,300 km/h) or Mach 1.86.

100 years ago - Did you know?

April 30 1921 - The U.S. Senate passed the Knox peace resolution, 49 to 23, declaring an end to the state of war with Germany that had started on April 6, 1917 with the entry of the U.S. into World War One.

On November 19, 1919, and again on March 19, 1920, the United States Senate voted against ratifying the Treaty of Versailles, forestalling American participation in the League of Nations. In a speech on April 12, 1921, before a special congressional session, President Harding reconfirmed American opposition to the League of Nations, calling on Congress to pass a peace resolution independent of the League. Senator Philander C. Knox of Pennsylvania introduced a resolution the following day, and it passed the Senate in late April.

Tattler - A late entry and a late exit?

Sport

11 April - US Masters Golf - The 1971 Masters Tournament was the 35th Masters Tournament, held April 8–11 at Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia. Charles Coody won his only major championship, two strokes ahead of runners-up Johnny Miller and Jack Nicklaus

17 April - England v President's Overseas XV - This was a 1971 rugby union match between England and a President's Overseas XV. The match was played to celebrate the centenary of the Rugby Football Union. The President's Overseas XV featured players from Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand and South Africa and was effectively a World XV. The President's Overseas XV won 28-11. *Tattler -* the Invitation 15 was quite some team!

President's Overseas XV

FB **15** Pierre Villepreux, (France)
RW **14** Stephen Knight, (Australia)
OC **13** Jo Maso, (France)
IC **12** Joggie Jansen, (South Africa)
LW **11** Bryan Williams, (New Zealand)
FH **10** Wayne Cottrell, (New Zealand)
SH **9** Dawie de Villiers, (South Africa)
LP **1** Roy Prosser, (Australia)
HK **2** Peter Johnson, (Australia)
TP **3** Hannes Marais, (South Africa)
LL **4** Colin Meads, (New Zealand)
RL **5** Frik du Preez, (South Africa)
BF **6** Greg Davis, (Australia)
OF **7** Ian Kirkpatrick, (New Zealand)
N8 **8** Brian Lochore, (New Zealand) (*captain*)

18 April - F1 Grand Prix of Spain (top 10)

P	Driver	Team	P	Driver	Team
1	Jackie Stewart (GBR)	Tyrrell-Ford	6	Jean-Pierre Beltoise (FRA)	Matra
2	Jacky Ickx (BEL)	Ferrari	7	Francois Cevert (FRA)	Tyrrell-Ford
3	Chris Amon (NZL)	Matra	8	Peter Gethin (GBR)	Brm
4	Pedro Rodriguez (MEX)	Brm	9	Tim Schenken (AUS)	Brabham-Ford
5	Denny Hulme (NZL)	Mclaren-Ford	10	Howden Ganley (NZL)	Brm

26 April - Tennis

Week	Tournament	Champions	Runners-up	Semifinalists	Quarterfinalists
26 Apr	Rawlings Classic Dallas, United States Carpet (i) - 32S/16D	John Newcombe 7–6, 6–4	Arthur Ashe	Tom Okker Marty Riessen	Mark Cox Bob Maud Cliff Drysdale Bob Lutz

Music

Album	Artist
Donny Hathaway	Donny Hathaway
Poems, Prayers & Promises	John Denver
4 Way Street	Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young
Givin' It Back	The Isley Brothers
In the Land of Grey and Pink	Caravan
Overdog	Keef Hartley
17-11-70	Elton John
Maybe Tomorrow	The Jackson 5
Where I'm Coming From	Stevie Wonder
L.A. Woman	The Doors
Hag	Merle Haggard
Sky's the Limit	The Temptations
Sticky Fingers	The Rolling Stones
Smiling Men with Bad Reputations	Mike Heron
Thin Lizzy	Thin Lizzy
Bloodrock 3	Bloodrock
Bring Me Home	Mother Earth
Broken Barricades	Procol Harum
Chase	Chase
Chase	Chase
City of Gold	Pearls Before Swine
The Doobie Brothers	The Doobie Brothers
Elegy	The Nice
Extraction	Gary Wright
Good Taste Is Timeless	The Holy Modal Rounders
How Much More Can She Stand	Conway Twitty
Mirror Man	Captain Beefheart & his Magic Band
Oh! Pleasant Hope	Blue Cheer
Survival	Grand Funk Railroad
Survival of the Fittest Live	Amboy Dukes
Teenage Head	Flamin' Groovies
Thirds	James Gang
War	War
When You're Hot, You're Hot	Jerry Reed

Movies – original release posters for April 1971
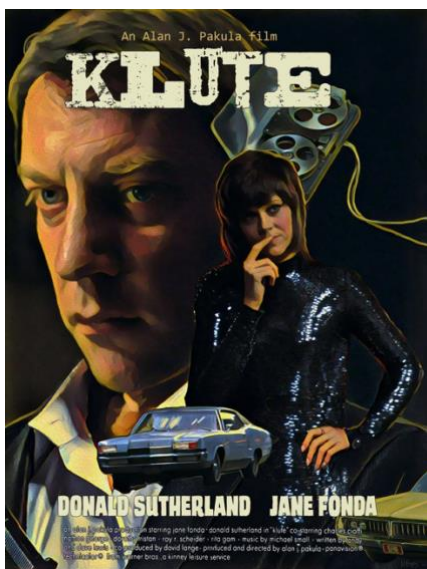
K**lute**

With her Oscar-winning turn in *Klute,* Jane Fonda reinvented herself as a new kind of movie star. Bringing nervy audacity and counterculture style to the role of Bree Daniels—a call girl and aspiring actor who becomes the focal point of a missing-person investigation when detective John Klute (Donald Sutherland) turns up at her door—Fonda made the film her own, putting an independent woman and escort on-screen with a frankness that had not yet been attempted in Hollywood. Suffused with paranoia by the conspiracy-thriller specialist Alan J. Pakula, and lensed by master cinematographer Gordon Willis, *Klute* is a character study thick with dread, capturing the mood of early-1970s New York and the predicament of a woman trying to find her own way on the fringes of society.

Tattler – 50 years later and at the age of 83, Jane Fonda was awarded the Cecil B deMille Award at the 2021 Global Awards in March, in recognition of her life-time achievements. Quite something!

Typical macho man married typical good-looking lady, and after the wedding, he laid down the following rules:
'I'll be home when I want, if I want and at what time I want -- and I don't expect any hassle from you.
I expect a great dinner to be on the table unless I tell you that I won't be home for dinner.
I'll go hunting, fishing, boozing, and card-playing when I want with my old buddies, and don't you give me a hard time about it.
Those are my rules.
Any comments?'
His new bride said:
'No, that's fine with me.
Just understand that there will be sex here at seven o'clock every night...whether you're here or not.'
(DARN SHE'S GOOD!)

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.
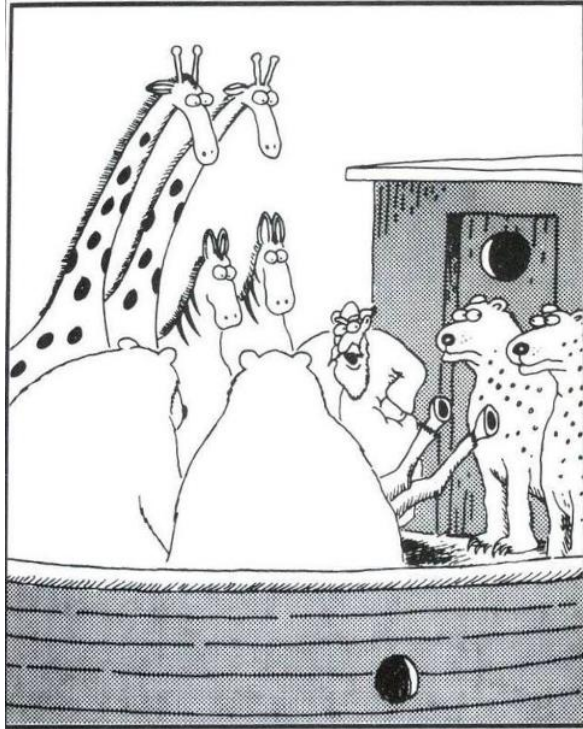
"Well, so much for the unicorns . . . But from now on, all carnivores will be confined to 'C' deck."