

The Seven Seas Tattler Issue 4.12 – May 2021



Good Day members of the Seven Seas Club and welcome to another edition of Tattler. As always, any feedback, contributions and constructive criticism is most welcome and can be sent to jonathanagolding@gmail.com

Our AGM took place late last month. The club heads into a new year with some challenges to face, but the Committee remains confident that we meet and deal with them.

Tattler received feedback from Jorrie Jordaan and Arne Soderlund 's kind words about the quiz evening.

"Good day
Dis altyd lekker om die publikasie te lees. Lots of interesting info.
Just a point of interest, the national flags are upside down.
Ek se maar net
Groete"

Tattler - Well spotted Jorrie! The flags to which he refers are the SA flags used to denote the nationality of sportsmen in the sporting extracts from Wikipedia. The SA flags are indeed upside down. **Your prize is 1 drink for the price of two at the pub!**

Dear Kevin

I attended the Club quiz on Wednesday 07 April and wish to place on record that it was the best organised quiz in terms of preparation, presentation and questions that I have ever experienced personally.

It was so obvious that many hours had gone into the wording and selection of the questions as well as the printing of them plus answer sheets and even colour prints of artwork to identify. The questions were designed to make one think and, in many cases, stimulate the mind to bring memories back. It is interesting to note that no one got more than 55% but all recognised the answers once given – even if they did not know them fully. Thus it was not only a test of knowledge but a wonderful learning opportunity.

Starting at 1900, it was a great social occasion and by 2100 was completed. The only disappointment was the apparent lack of interest from members who really dipped out on a relaxing educational evening as only five members attended! It is so sad that at a time the Club is struggling, so much effort is put in by Jonathan and Euan to promote the Club and its finances with so little support from members in general.

I sincerely hope that it will not be the last quiz evening and that more members will benefit in future. To avoid such a disappointing turn-out, it is suggested that teams be requested to register interest before the date.

Thanks again to Jonathan and Euan for their enthusiasm and excellent presentation.

Kind regards
Arne Soderlund

From the Chair

The last AGM did not paint a very rosy financial state of the Club due to the effects COVID 19. Your committee has initiated some fundraising events in an effort to get the Club back on an even keel.

A great event arranged was the presentation by Zirk Botha on his solo rowing crossing of the South Atlantic from Cape Town to Rio. This event was very interesting, well attended and rewarding to the Club.

The movie night has also been re-activated with a reasonable attendance. Hopefully it will grow from strength to strength.

The Quiz evening has also been resurrected, however the support was poor. Those that did attend thoroughly enjoyed it.

It is important that we support these events to raise necessary funds for the Club and thus avoid raising membership fees and/or bar prices exorbitantly to stay afloat.

Nothing, of course, prevents any member coming forward with ideas that could raise funds for the Club and be enjoyed by the members.

See you at the Club

Birthdays in May

Tattler wishes the following members a fantastic birthday and a very happy year ahead. For fun, note those famous or infamous 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!)

Mr K.C. Welthagen 01 May (**Seakle Greijdanus, Dutch theologian and scholar - 1871**)
Mr I. Wright 02 May (**Dwayne Johnson, American-Canadian wrestler, actor, and producer -1972**)
Prof G J Kruger 10 May (**John Wilkes Booth, American actor, assassin of Abraham Lincoln - 1838**)
Mr A H Collingridge 15 May (**Sejong the Great, Korean king - 1397**)
R Adm D R Faure 16 May (**Henry Fonda, American actor, singer, and producer - 1905**)
R Adm (JG) A Söderlund 17 May (**Edward Jenner, English physician and microbiologist - 1749**)
Capt P S Barnard 20 May (**William Fargo, American businessman and politician, co-founded Wells Fargo and American Express -1818**)
Mr D E Mac Kenzie 21 May (**Jeffrey Dahmer, American serial killer -1960**)
Mr M Salida 23 May (**Denis Compton, English cricketer and sportscaster - 1918**)
Mr M Steytler 24 May (**Jan Smuts, South African lawyer and politician, 2nd Prime Minister of South Africa - 1870**)
Mr S P G Luyt 28 May (**William Pitt the Younger, English lawyer and politician, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom -1759**)
Mr G R Glen 29 May (**John F. Kennedy, American lieutenant and politician, 35th President of the US -1979**)
Capt B R Carter 30 May (**Peter Carl Fabergé, Russian goldsmith and jeweller -1846**)

100 Club Winners for April 2021

Congratulations to these winners

Cdr F Jordaan (Ret) - R 1000.00

Mrs T Wise - R 300.00

Mr T van Zyl - R 300.00

Mr J Caig - R 300.00

New Club shirts - (Submitted by Club Secretary, Euan Smith)

We are very pleased to announce the arrival of our new club shirts.

I am sure that like me, you are coming to the end of the wear left in your white and dark blue shirts which we first had created for our 150th anniversary.

Your committee felt that now was a good time to have some more made so that our members can wear them with pride both in The Club and outside.

This time we have decided to change the colours a little and opted for a **fetching light blue and an elegant black**.

See our Club Manager modelling the new shirt.

We have shirts in all sizes from Small to 5XL but only a limited number in each size so please contact The Club Manager soon to book your new shirts!

All sizes cost just **R250.00** which considering the quality and magnificent embroidery is a very good price!

Snap up yours now to avoid disappointment.



Zirk Botha Presentation

We were first! Our Seven Seas Club hosted a presentation by Zirk Botha, he who solo-rowed the south Atlantic in a record breaking 71 days. (it was actually a little less than that but you will need to listen to Zirk to get those details!)

Committee Member Eddie Noble arranged the presentation that saw some 60 (our Covid maximum) club members and friends enthralled by a great description of the journey itself plus the preparations and aftermath. Inspiring stuff!





Our Chairman Kevin Wise formally thanked Zirk for his generosity in entertaining us, free of charge, for a great evening. I believe that Zirk has commented that he wanted to "give back to our club". Tattler would like to thank Zirk for a fantastic contribution.



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Navy News

Shooting down a Hypersonic Missile

Source: *Sputnik Military*

Pentagon Will Attempt Hypersonic Missile Shoot-down Using US Navy's SM-6 Missile

Russia and China both have multiple hypersonic weapon systems in use or advanced development, while the US has none. The seemingly unstoppable weapons travel faster than Mach 5, or roughly 3,800 miles per hour.

A Senior Pentagon official told lawmakers on Wednesday that the Missile Defense Agency is preparing a test in which a Standard Missile (SM)-6 will attempt to shoot down a mock hypersonic missile later this year. The ultra-fast weapons are notoriously hard to track and harder to down.



US Navy Photo

Director of Defense Research and Engineering for Research and Technology Barbara McQuiston told a Senate defence committee on Wednesday that the MDA and US Navy had already seen promising signs the advanced SM-6 missile could shoot down “an advanced manoeuvring threat-representative target” – a capability they intend to test later this year and continue developing into 2024.

“We are also working with the Missile Defense Agency to accelerate a comprehensive layered defeat capability against adversary tactical hypersonic weapons including kinetic defence in the terminal and glide phases of flight, as well as left-of-launch strike of missile launch complexes,” McQuiston further said.

Left-of-launch refers to sabotaging missile programs during their development or even individual missiles on their launch sites to prevent them from being fielded or used. It can also include pre-emptive strikes. As *The War Zone* noted, “advanced manoeuvring threat” is Pentagon lingo for a hypersonic boost glide vehicle, the unpowered ultra-maneuvrable device that nimbly delivers the warhead to its target after being accelerated beyond Mach 5 by a rocket engine.

Hypersonic weapons are notoriously hard to spot and track. The existing Space-Based Infrared System the Pentagon uses to pinpoint ballistic missile launches works by spotting the intense heat from their rocket engines, which stands out against the background heat from the Earth.

However, hypersonic missiles don't use their rocket engines for nearly as long as ballistic missiles, giving the satellites less time to figure out their trajectory before the engine cuts off and the unpowered glide vehicle “goes cold,” disappearing from infrared view. To fill this dangerous hole in US defences, the Space Force has contracted for a new generation of wide- and medium-field-of-view satellites.

It's possible the radars on US anti-ballistic missile systems, like the Patriot and THAAD, could also track hypersonic weapons. However, it's one thing to spot a hypersonic missile - it's wholly another to shoot one down. Sergei Surovikin, commander of the Russian Aerospace Forces, has said the forthcoming S-500 Prometheus air defence system will be able to shoot down hypersonic weapons and noted that “a certain amount of tweaking” would allow S-400 Triumf and 9K37 Buk missile systems to do so as well.

To build an anti-hypersonic missile, though, one has to build another hypersonic missile first, and the US' record on this front leaves much to be desired. Earlier this month, the delayed and much-anticipated first test-firing of the AGM-183A Air-Launched Rapid Response Weapon (ARRW) didn't happen after the missile failed to separate from its parent aircraft. It would have been the US' first hypersonic weapons test.

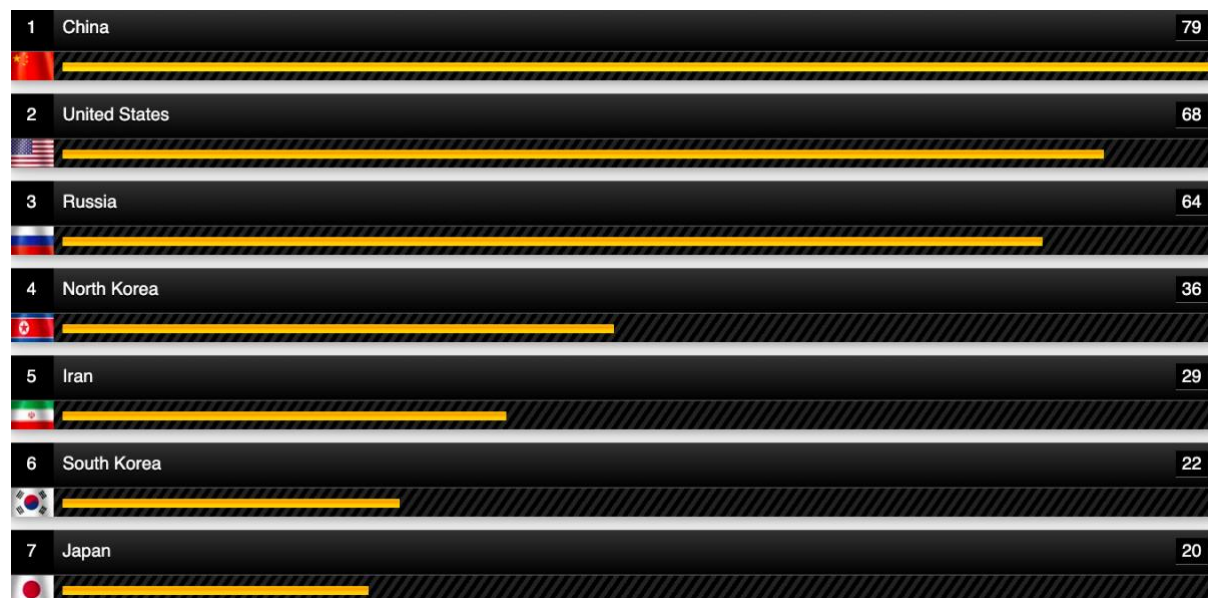
Meanwhile, Russia and China already have several hypersonic missiles in service or advanced stages of development. The present versions of the SM-6 in use have a top speed of roughly 3,500 miles per hour, but according to The War Zone, the Block IB missiles are getting a substantial engine upgrade that could push them into hypersonic speed.

Russia also has one of the few radars capable of tracking a hypersonic weapon. The Rezonans-N very high frequency radar is reportedly capable of detecting hypersonic glide vehicles up to 372 miles away, according to the Barents Observer. It is a modified version of the Rezonans ballistic missile tracking radar, which is specialized for tracking objects up to 20 times the speed of sound. Roughly half a dozen Rezonans-N radars have been installed on Russia's northern coast between the Kola Peninsula and Novaya Zemlya in the last two years, but none are believed to be operational yet. That said, if any missile in the US arsenal could take down a hypersonic weapon, it would be the SM-6.

Notoriously versatile, what was originally designed as an air defence missile has been adapted to anti-ballistic missile duties and can even hit surface targets. Another missile in the SM family, the SM-3, was even used to shoot down a satellite in 2008. In November, the US Army announced it was adapting the SM-6 into a ground-launched version to cover mid-range strike needs. Source: Sputnik Military.

Submarine Fleet Strength by Country (2021)

Source: Global Fire Power



8	India	17
9	Turkey	12
10	Colombia	11
11	Greece	11
12	United Kingdom	11
13	France	10
14	Pakistan	9
15	Algeria	8
16	Egypt	8
17	Italy	8
18	Australia	6
19	Brazil	6
20	Germany	6
21	Norway	6
22	Vietnam	6
23	Indonesia	5
24	Israel	5
25	Peru	5
26	Sweden	5
27	Azerbaijan	4
28	Canada	4
29	Chile	4
30	Netherlands	4

31	Taiwan	4
32	Poland	3
33	South Africa	3
34	Argentina	2
35	Bangladesh	2
36	Ecuador	2
37	Malaysia	2
38	Portugal	2
39	Spain	2
40	Venezuela	2
41	Myanmar	1

Unmanned Systems, Passive Sensors Help USS John Finn Bullseye Target With SM-6

Source: Sam LaGrone USNI/ April 26, 2021

Using a blend of information from unmanned and manned ships and aircraft, a guided-missile destroyer launched an anti-surface missile from over-the-horizon to hit a target more than 250 miles away without using active sensors as part of the Unmanned Integrated Battle Problem 21, Navy officials said on Monday.

The target was equipped with a small radar reflector and a repeater that put out an electromagnetic signal. The signal from the repeater was detectable by sensors on the un-crewed aircraft and manned and unmanned surface vessels, said Carrier Strike Group 3 commander Rear Adm. James Aiken during a Monday call with reporters.

The information was relayed to USS *John Finn* (DDG-113), which used the blended targeting data to fire a Standard Missile-6 to hit the target more than 200 miles away and beyond the range of its powerful radar.



A Raytheon SM-6 launched from an Aegis guided-missile destroyer. US Navy Photo

“It was really complex... We teamed manned and unmanned vessels together. We also used the fusing capability that we’re doing some experimentation on. It was totally passive where we didn’t have active sensors on target,” Aiken said.

“We also look for space as well to actually identify the target and then once we found the target, we were able to track it because of the [electromagnetic signal] that was coming off the target, develop lines of bearing, then launched the missile.”

The anti-surface missile shot of the SM-6 is a proof of concept of how the Navy could augment its very powerful but very detectable targeting radars with a blended network of passive sensors that could share targeting data without alerting the target. The test also shows how the lethal radius of a surface-launched missile could expand well beyond a ship’s radar range, which is limited by the curvature of the Earth.

“This was an important step in moving the ball down the field to getting unmanned plugged into that targeting solution,” U.S. Pacific Fleet Maritime Headquarters director Rear Adm. Robert Gaucher told reporters.

Driving much of the Navy’s thinking in how it develops its future surface fleet, both manned and unmanned, is the development of Chinese anti-ship missiles that are designed to threaten U.S. surface ships in areas close to the Chinese mainland like the South China Sea.

“They’re pouring a lot of money in the ability to basically rim their coast in the South China Sea with anti-ship missile capability,” Vice Adm. Jeffrey Trussler, the deputy chief of naval operations for information warfare (OPNAV N2/N6), said in January. “They’re probably aimed and specifically developed towards the United States Navy.”

The danger of Chinese DF-21 or DF-26 anti-ship ballistic missiles finding ships from active sensors has given the Navy pause in how it’s going to develop its own future surface combatants and driven the service to consider so-called attritable unmanned systems with passive sensors that don’t give away their location to an enemy.

A passive multi-static sensor scheme, like the one demonstrated in the SM-6 shot, that would fuse several sources into a single targeting solution would better protect the surface fleet from threats like anti-ship ballistic missiles than using a single ship with a powerful active sensor. The SM-6 shot was one of three vignettes in the battle problem that was the Navy’s largest exercise to date blending manned and unmanned. Other scenarios included using unmanned systems for anti-submarine warfare and information surveillance and reconnaissance.

The goal of the battle problem was to test the capability with fleet sailors and better inform how the service could use the systems in the future. “We need to move things into the hands of sailors and then let sailors use their ingenuity,” Aiken said last week. Sailors, “just don’t sit quietly. They’re able to contribute, they’re able to apply these types of systems into capabilities.”

Featured Hero – “Lofty” - A South African Korean War hero.....killed in the Vietnam War

From: Wikipedia

Tattler came across this rather interesting bit of history. "Lofty" Lance was a lad from the Western Cape.

Lofty Lance was born in the Western Cape, South Africa on 29th April 1928. After his schooling his career followed a rather convoluted route, the adventurous life loomed large and he initially joined the Navy and trained on the S.A.T.S General Botha (Cadet 1305) joining the ranks of many 'Botha Boys' who would later advance prestigious careers in the military, he then joined his 'first' Air Force – The South African Air Force as a fighter pilot.



He lost his life serving in Vietnam and he is remembered in the Aussie War Memorial .

Australian War Memorial

Everitt Murray Lance's name is located at panel 6 in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial (as indicated by the poppy on the plan).

LANCE, Everitt Murray

Service Number: O316996

Enlisted: *Not yet discovered*

Last Rank: Flight Lieutenant

Last Unit: No. 9 Squadron (RAAF)

Born: Cape Province, South Africa, 29 April 1928

Home Town: Hughes, Australian Capital Territory

Schooling: *Not yet discovered*

Occupation: RAAF Pilot

Died: Killed in Action (helicopter crash), Long Khanh Province, South Vietnam, 7 June 1971, aged 43 years

Cemetery: Woden (Canberra) Public Cemetery, ACT

Memorials: Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour, Grafton Clarence Valley Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Tattler – a pilot mate serving with him in Korea told this story

“Landing on one wheel he kept the aircraft level as long as possible bleeding off as much speed as possible before the wing dropped, and the aircraft went into the much-expected ground-loop. As the fire engine arrived to pull the pilot out, foam down the aircraft and as the dust settled, the firefighters were surprised to find Lofty as a spectator standing with them. He had long since exited the aircraft whilst it was moving and jumped clear.”

Lofty Lance's SAAF Mustang after one of his crash landings during the Korean War



Featured Ship – SAS Good Hope

From: Wikipedia

Tattler - the father of a friend trained aboard the Good Hope. He tells us she was fondly referred to as the "Bob Hope"

Some good memories, Peter Venter?

SAS Good Hope (pennant number: F432) was one of three Loch-class frigates in the South African Navy (SAN). It was built as HMS Loch Boisdale (K432) for the Royal Navy during World War II, but was transferred to the SAN before completion in 1944 and renamed as HMSAS Good Hope. The ship was assigned to convoy escort duties in 1945, but did not encounter any enemy ships before the end of the war.



It was assigned to ferry troops home from Egypt afterwards and made port visits in Middle Africa in 1948. Upon returning home, Good Hope was placed in reserve until it was converted into a training ship during the mid-1950s and served as the navy's flagship. The ship was again placed in reserve in 1965 and was sold for scrap in 1977. Good Hope's remains were donated for use as an artificial reef and it was scuttled the following year.

Description

Good Hope displaced 1,435 long tons (1,458 t) at standard load and 2,260 long tons (2,300 t) at deep load. The ship had an overall length of 307 feet (93.6 m), a beam of 38 feet 7 inches (11.8 m) and a mean deep draught of 12 feet 4 inches (3.8 m). It was powered by a pair of vertical triple-expansion steam engines, each driving one propeller shaft, using steam provided by two Admiralty three-drum boilers. The engines developed a total of 5,500 indicated horsepower (4,100 kW) which gave a maximum speed of 20 knots (37 km/h; 23 mph). The ship carried 730 long tons (740 t) of fuel oil that gave it a range of 9,500 nautical miles (17,600 km; 10,900 mi) at 12 knots (22 km/h; 14 mph).

Its main armament was a single 4-inch (102 mm) Mk V dual-purpose gun. Its anti-aircraft armament consisted of four 2-pounder (40 mm) Mk VIII "pom-pom" in a quadruple mount and six 20 mm (0.8 in) Oerlikon guns in two twin powered mounts and two single hand-operated mounts.[3] For anti-submarine work, Good Hope was fitted with a pair of triple-barrelled Squid anti-submarine mortars and 15 depth charges delivered by one rail and two throwers. The ship was equipped with Type 144 and 147B ASDIC and a Type 277 surface-search radar. Its crew numbered 114 officers and ratings.

In preparation for her reclassification as a despatch vessel/training ship in 1955, Good Hope's Oerlikons were replaced by a pair of 40 mm (1.6 in) Bofors light AA guns on the Squid deck

forward of the bridge wings and her depth charges and their gear was removed. This allowed the ship's forecastle deck to be extended right aft to add more accommodations and it was covered in teak above the new compartments. Its bridge was enlarged and a new mainmast was added. During her refit in early 1958, Good Hope's main armament was replaced by a twin-gun turret fitted with more powerful four-inch Mk XVI guns. She was refitted in 1961.

Construction and career

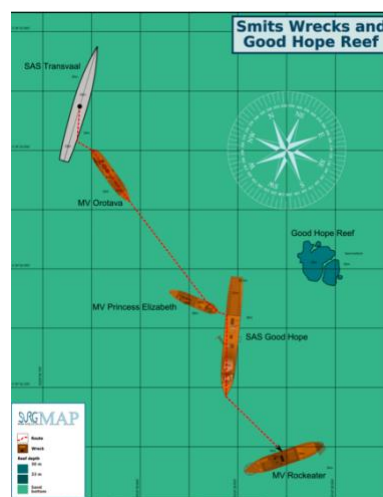
Good Hope was built by Blyth Harbour and Dock Company at their shipyard in Blyth, Northumberland and was laid down on 8 November 1943, launched on 5 July 1944 and commissioned on 9 November 1944. The ship was originally named Loch Boisdale, but was renamed by the South Africans after it was transferred by the British while fitting out. After working up at HMS Western Isles in Tobermory, Mull, it was assigned to the 18th Escort Group of the Western Approaches Command; it was damaged during its first mission and required a month to repair the storm damage.

Good Hope re-joined the 18th Escort Group which was covering convoys between England and France until the German surrender in May. It was then refitted for tropical duties before sailing for South Africa on 6 June 1945 with its sister ship, Natal, with 29 ex-prisoners of war aboard the sisters. They arrived on 30 June, but Good Hope was not sent to the Far East because the Japanese surrendered before it was ready to go.

Good Hope and her sisters Natal and Transvaal repatriated some 700 troops from Egypt between November 1945 and March 1946 and escorted the battleship HMS Vanguard while it was serving as the royal yacht during King George VI's tour of South Africa in 1947. All three sisters toured ports in Portuguese West Africa and the Belgian Congo in August–September 1948. Upon their return, Good Hope was reduced to reserve at Salisbury Island, Durban.

In mid-1954 the ship began conversion into a despatch vessel in Durban and it was recommissioned on 3 June 1955 as the flagship of the South African Navy. Later that year, it conveyed the Governor General of South Africa, Ernest George Jansen, on a goodwill visit to French Madagascar. The following year, it took the navy's Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Hugo Biermann, to Portuguese Mozambique. That same year, a South African Air Force Sikorsky S-55 helicopter landed aboard, the first helicopter deck landing aboard a South African warship. The ship was refitted in Simon's Town in early 1958 and transported Biermann to Portuguese West Africa and the Belgian Congo in August 1959. As part of this trip, it sailed some 70 miles (110 km) up the Congo River to Matadi.

During the early 1960s, Good Hope was assigned fishery protection duties in addition to her normal training tasks. The ship was paid off in September 1965 and was sold for R6,500, together with her sister Transvaal, in 1977. After stripping it of all valuable metals and fittings, Good Hope's hulk was donated to the False Bay Conservation Society for use as an artificial reef. She was scuttled in Smitswinkel Bay on 12 December 1978.



How many nuclear submarines have sunk?

*By: Matt Osborne – Former Nuclear- trained Surface Warfare Officer At United States Navy(USN)(2011-2018)
January 6 2019*

For US submarines, two. The USS Thresher and the USS Scorpion.

USS Thresher went down while performing sea trials. A brazed seawater pipe ruptured and flooded the engine room. The flooding resulted in a reactor scram, which required the main steam stop valves to be shut, securing steam to the main engine.

They attempted to blow the main ballast tanks, but without air dryers, the decompressing air formed ice in the line before sufficient water was evacuated. The emergency propulsion motor was not powerful enough to drive the ship to the surface.

She sank with all 129 crew on board on April 10 1963.



USS Scorpion is more of a mystery. We don't know for sure what caused her demise. She was crossing the Atlantic on her way home. She was found facing east. A few theories exist as to why she sunk. One theory is that a torpedo went active in the tube, and they were trying to trigger the torpedo's anti-circular run feature by turning the ship, which failed. The theory that I think is more plausible is a seawater leak in the battery compartment resulted in an explosion which disabled the ship. Although it doesn't explain the direction the ship faced, it is more consistent with the sonar traces recorded near the Canary Islands.



She sank with 99 crew on board on 22 May 1968.

Pirates – 12 of History’s most notorious

Compiled by Colette Patience / Source – History of Yesterday

May Feature – Ching Shih: A Prostitute Who Became History’s Deadliest Pirate

The Chinese pirate Ching Shih (1775–1844) is considered the greatest pirate in history. She operated during the Qing Dynasty. The Qing Dynasty was the last dynasty of China. The Qing ruled China from 1644 to 1912 before being overthrown by the Republic of China. It is sometimes referred to as the Manchu Dynasty. In the early 1600s, the Manchu people of northern China began to unite against the Ming Dynasty.

When you hear the word “pirates” you end up thinking of fierce men whose life stories have mesmerised us for centuries. Names like Blackbeard, Henry Morgan and Sir Francis Drake whose stories we have told in Tattler. These men were considered to be the most successful pirates of all time.

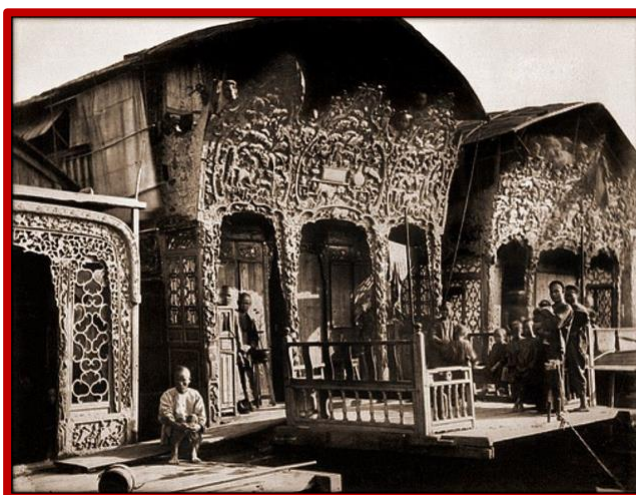
However, the most successful pirate-lord in recorded history was not any of these men. Instead, she was an extraordinary Asian woman who is known today by the name Ching Shih, which simply translates to ‘Ching’s widow’. At the height of her power, she commanded over 800 large ships, 1000 smaller vessels and over 70,000 pirate crew, comprised of both men and women.



An undated image of Ching Shih

Ching Shih’s humble beginnings

Ching Shih was born as Shih Yang, in 1775, in the poverty-ridden society of Guangdong province, in China. At the tender age of thirteen, she was forced into prostitution in order to supplement her family’s income. She worked in one of the floating brothels, also known as flower boats, in the Cantonese port city. These boats would sail along the nearby coast with the customers on board.



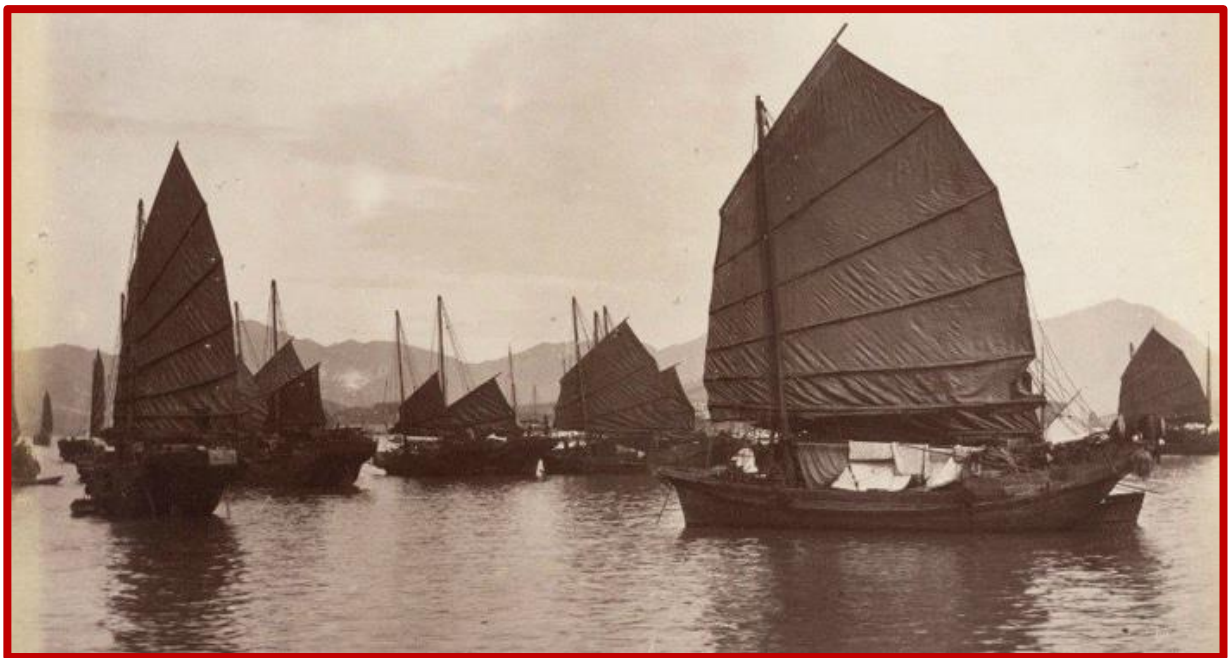
Flower boats in the Canton region of China in 1871

In a short span of time, young Ching Shih had become the talk of the town, due to her striking beauty and poised nature. She attracted several high profile customers, which included courtiers of the royal palace, army commanders, rich merchants and many more. Apart from this, very little is known about her early life, given her humble origins.

In the year 1801, Zheng Yi, a notorious pirate commander of the infamous Red Flag Fleet, arrived in the Cantonese port and was enthralled by her beauty. He visited the floating brothel and met Ching Shih, expressed his feelings and asked her to marry him. Ching Shih agreed to marry him only if “she was granted fifty per cent share of his monetary gains and partial control over his pirate fleet.”

Historians still debate whether drowned in his love for her, Zheng Yi agreed to her conditions and married her or ordered his men to abduct Ching Shih from the brothel, forcibly marrying her. Either way, it was Ching Shih who benefited the most from their union and her encounter with Zheng Yi is often considered to be her stepping stone to greater glory which in turn got her etched into history as one of the most successful pirates in recorded human history.

The “Red Flag Fleet” thrives



A photograph of junks in Canton. Ching Shih commanded around 1,800 of these pirate ships at the peak of her power

Under the joint command of Zheng Yi and Ching Shih, the Red Flag Fleet began to grow and prosper like never before. The fleet grew from 200 ships, at the time of their wedding, to 1800 ships, in the next few months.

Immediately after joining her husband, Ching Shih implemented some strong reforms and constituted a code of laws to be strictly adhered by all the crew. A few of these are included in our story:

- *Pirates who gave unauthorized orders or those who refused to follow orders were executed on the spot without a chance to justify themselves.*
- *All seized goods had to be presented for inspection. If any pirate was found hiding or under-reporting goods, a part of their body was chopped off depending on the scale of the crime.*

- *Loyalty and honesty were greatly appreciated and worthy pirates were rewarded generously, thereby setting an example for the others.*
- *Female captives needed to be treated respectfully. They were segregated based on their looks. The weak, pregnant, and unattractive ones were freed as soon as possible.*
- *The attractive women captives were held back for ransom. The pirates were given the freedom to marry these attractive women under mutual consent.*
- *Infidelity and rape were treated as a serious offence. These offenders were immediately hanged. In the case of consensual pre-marital sex, both the offenders were executed. In a few cases, the man was castrated and the woman was banished from the fleet.*

Apart from these rules, several economic reforms were also sanctioned. She was shrewd in keeping in mind the happiness of the crew as an expression of gratitude towards them. This resulted in many of the pirate groups of the region merging themselves unconditionally under the banner of the Red Flag Fleet, which resulted in it becoming the largest pirate fleet on the face of the planet.

Meanwhile, unable to conceive a future heir, the pirate couple decided to adopt a young fisherman who was in his mid-twenties named Cheung Po, from a nearby coastal village. This meant that Cheung Po became the second in command to Zheng Yi and the most respected crew member after him and Ching Shih. This move puzzled many of the crew members as to why the pirate couple chose to adopt a fully grown man. The reason for this eventually became clear.

Catastrophe strikes

Just six years into their marriage, in 1807, Ching Shih's life took a sudden tragic turn, Zheng Yi passed away in the backdrop of a devastating storm off the coast of Vietnam. Their adopted son Chang Pao was instated as the leading commander of the Red Flag Fleet and the pirate queen Ching Shih's confidant.

Amidst this tragedy, there was an internal rift for power amongst the power-hungry captains of partnering ships. The future of the Red Flag Fleet was in danger. Ching Shih managed to secure command of the fleet and any power-hungry traitors were captured and executed in public to set an example and deter any future possibilities of a coup.

Less than two weeks after the tragic death of her husband the pirate queen announced that she was getting married to her adopted son, the commander of the Red Flag Fleet. It is said that she had shared an illegitimate relationship with him for a very long time, which is also the reason why she was not conceiving from her first marriage. It was under her influence that Zheng Yi had adopted the young fisherman and declared him his lawful heir.

Ching Shih's absolute domination

Under the leadership of Ching Shih, the Red Flag Fleet set off to capture new coastal villages and flaunted total control and domination over the South China Sea. British and French colonisers ships were also regularly plundered by the pirates. Not a single ship moved in the South China Sea without the knowledge of Ching Shih's army. Entire coastal towns worked for them, supplying them with food, goods, and other provisions. Ships that wanted to cross the South China Sea were taxed by the pirates. If they refused, they were attacked and plundered immediately.

The Qing Dynasty desperately wanted to put an end to all this. Novice Mandarin navy vessels were sent out to confront the Red Flag Fleet in the South China Sea and destroy them. Just a few hours into the battle, the Mandarin navy was defeated. Ching Shih used this opportunity and announced that the Mandarin crew would not be punished if they joined hands with the Red Flag Fleet. So, just like that, the Mandarin navy was absorbed by the pirates and the Qing dynasty lost a huge part of their navy.

The Qing Emperor of China was enraged to think that a woman was controlling such an enormous amount of the land, sea, resources, and people that belonged to him. So, in an attempt to ink a peace deal with the pirates, the emperor offered an amnesty to all pirates of the Red Flag Fleet, hoping to terminate Ching Shih's reign over the sea.

Meanwhile, the Red Flag Fleet came under the attack from the Portuguese navy. The Portuguese navy had already been defeated twice before. However, this time things were different, they came prepared with superior ships and weapons. This gave the Portuguese an upper hand and the Red Flag Fleet was unable to fight back with an attack of the same intensity.

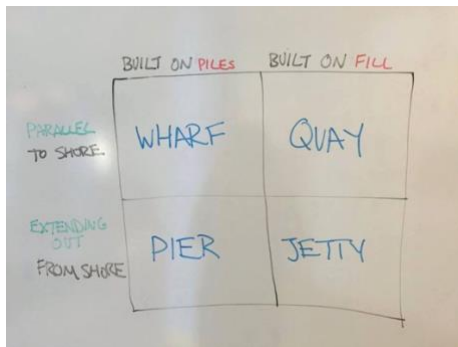
Ching Shih recognised the fact that there was no point in persisting, the Portuguese navy was ruthlessly destroying her fleet. She accepted the amnesty offered by the Chinese emperor. The entire crew of the Red Flag Fleet was forced to surrender. The emperor allowed pirates to take home all the loot that had been accumulated over the years and moreover several pirates were granted jobs within the Chinese bureaucracy. Ching Shih's adopted son and later husband Chang Pao became the captain of Qing's Guangdong navy. In 1813, she welcomed her first child, a son named Cheung Yu Lin, followed by a daughter whose whereabouts have been long lost in history.

In 1822, her second husband lost his life at sea, after which she relocated to Macau along with her children, and opened a gambling house with all the wealth she had acquired at sea. She was also involved in trading salt.

Towards the end of her life, she opened a brothel in Macau, and her story ended in a complete circle from where it all had begun. It's quite ironic that after all the trouble she had caused, she died peacefully in her sleep at the age of sixty-nine in 1844.

Editorial

Tattler found this quite educational!



Did you know?

Tattler found this on Facebook - it is disputed, but makes great reading!

Popeye the Sailor Man really existed.....?

His real name was Frank "Rocky" Fiegel. He was born in 1868 in Poland. He was a retired sailor contracted by Wiebusch's tavern in the city of Chester, Illinois, to clean and maintain order.

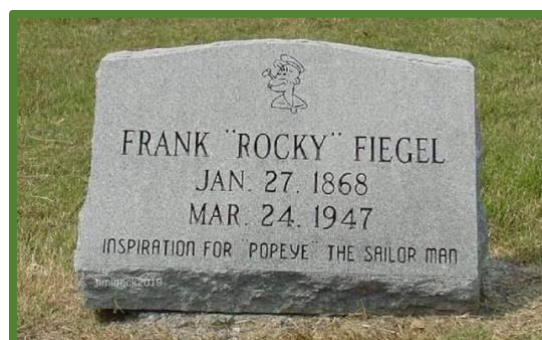
He had a reputation to be always involved in fighting, so he had a deformed eye ("Pop-eye"). He always smoked his pipe, so he spoke only with one side of his mouth.

He loved to be around children. There is no accounting of his imaginary adventures which boasts about the exploits of his physical strength, ensuring he never lost a fight.

The author of Popeye, Elzie Crisler Segar, born in Chester, met Frank when where the young man was to listen to their stories and years later honoured him with the character Popeye the Sailor Man.



Olive Oil also existed, she was Dora Paskel, owner of a grocery store in Chester. She is also described to dress just like Olive Oil. Segar kept in touch with Frank and had always helped him with money. Frank and Popeye also carried some inherent features like courage, chivalry and virility.



50 years ago - May 1971

General

May 5 - The English warship Mary Rose, which had sunk with 385 sailors on July 19, 1545, in the Battle of the Solent, was rediscovered after more than 425 years.

May 8 - Mariner 8 was launched by the United States from Cape Kennedy on a mission to Mars at 8:11 p.m. local time (0111 UTC 9 May), but a malfunction of the Centaur rocket's upper stage caused the launch vehicle to tumble out of control slightly less than five minutes later, before it could reach orbit

May 19 - USSR launches Mars 2, 1st spacecraft to crash land on Mars.

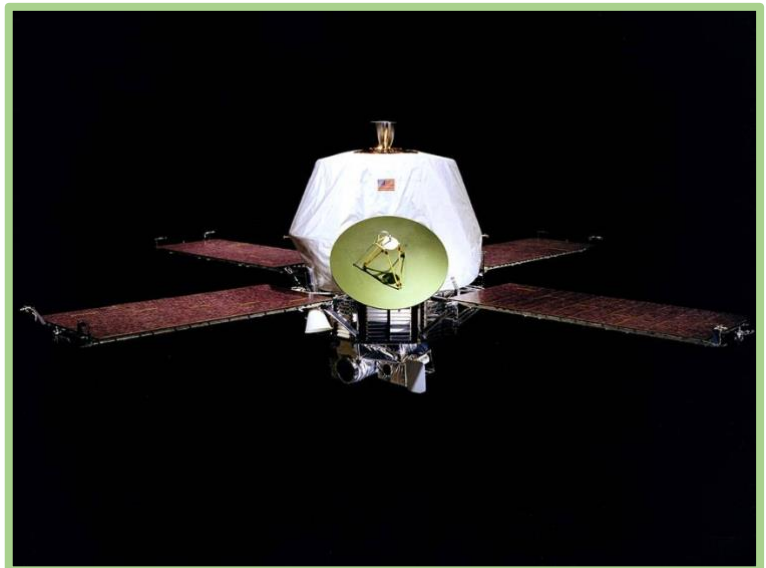
May 26 - Police in mainland Italy exiled 18 reputed leaders of the Italian Mafia to the tiny island of Filicudi, with 270 residents at the time, located 35 miles (56 km) north of the island of Sicily and 13 miles (21 km) from the closest land, the island of Santa Maria Salina. About one-quarter of the residents moved away within days after the accused criminals arrived. By May 31, the remaining residents left in protest, with the exception of the exiles and the police guarding them.

May 30 - Mariner 9 was launched by the U.S. toward Mars at 6:32 p.m. local time from Cape Kennedy, 11 days after the Soviet Union had launched Mars 2. On November 14, it became the first spacecraft from Earth to orbit another planet, when it reached Mars and took photographs, but no attempt to land a probe was made.

Mariner 9 spent 1 year, 4 months ,27 days in orbit.
It cost 137 million USD.
It took 167 days of flying to reach Mars. It transmitted over 7000 images covering 85% of Mars.

Tattler – ever wondered about space junk?

Mariner 9 remains a derelict satellite in Mars orbit. It is expected to remain in orbit until at least 2022, after which the spacecraft is projected to enter the Martian atmosphere and either burn up or crash into the planet's surface.



Sport

May 8 - Arsenal won the FA Cup final in extra time, 2 to 1 over Liverpool at Wembley Stadium, with Charlie George scoring the winning goal in the 21st minute of play after the game was drawn 1 to 1 at the end of 90 minutes.

May 9 - Elizabeth Bonner runs female world record marathon (3:01:42). **Tattler** - current record is 2 hr 14 min 4 sec, achieved by Brigid Kosgei (Kenya).

May 21 - Chelsea win 11th European Cup Winner's Cup against Real Madrid 2-1 in Athens (replay).

May 23 - Jackie Stewart won the 1971 Monaco Grand Prix.

May 29 - Indianapolis 500: Al Unser wins in 3:10:11.545 (253.850 km/h).

Music - Released in May 1971



Tattler – Take a listen to the soulful version of [“Aint no sunshine”](#) by Bill Withers.

Movies



John Wayne (1907 – 1979)
Last film – “The Shootist) in 1976
169 Feature length films
Considered his best film by many - “Big Jake”

100 years ago, in May

May 5 - The Allied Supreme War Council notified Germany of a default on the May 1 payment due for 12 billion gold marks and announced that Germany would have until May 12 to accept a total debt of 135 billion marks (equivalent to £6.75 billion or \$33.75 billion), to be "paid in an indeterminate number of annual “instalments" worth of gold. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George handed the ultimatum, signed by himself and representatives of France, Belgium, Italy and Japan to Germany's Ambassador Friedrich Sthamer.

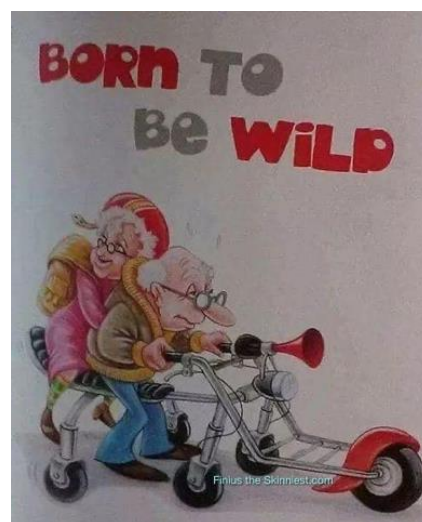
May 11 - Germany sent a note unconditionally accepting the reparation terms described in the ultimatum of May 5. In London, German Ambassador Friedrich Sthamer delivered the note of acceptance to Prime Minister David Lloyd George, stating the German government had resolved "to carry out without reserve or condition its obligations" to guarantee reparations, partially disarm its armed forces and to put accused war criminals on trial in German courts.

Tattler - we have not verified the following story, but it makes great reading!



THE LOVE OF MONEY

Winston Churchill said : "I took the taxi one day and went to the BBC office for an interview ... and when I arrived I asked the driver to wait for me for forty minutes until I got back! But the driver apologized and said 'I can't because I have to go home to listen to Winston Churchill's speech' ... Churchill says he was amazed and delighted with this man's desire to listen to his conversation! So Churchill took ten pounds and gave to the taxi driver without telling the driver who he was. When the driver collected the money he said: "I'll wait hours until you come back, sir! And let Churchill go to hell!"



Women are unique

Husband's Message (by cell phone):

Honey, a car has hit me while out of the office. Paula brought me to the Hospital.

They have been taking tests and doing X-rays.

The blow to my head has been very hard, fortunately it seems that did not cause any serious injury, but I have three broken ribs, a compound fracture in the left leg, and they may have to amputate the right foot.

Wife's Response:

Who is Paula?

Well, that is it for the May edition. We hope you found some articles of interest. A final point is to remind you of the quiz at the club on the 5th. Cheers!