

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

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Captain's Log

Boatsteerer's Locker

Chapter 16 of “The Unforgiving Minute”, the personal memoirs of Stowaway Member Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles.

RETURN TO U.K.

In January 1945 I was on leave at home in Devonshire with my Father. My brothers and sister were still away. My brother Michael, as a Royal Engineer, was in charge of a Port Operating Company in Venice. My sister Hebe had been in the ATS. Christopher was still in the Navy. Robin was the engineer in a high-speed motor launch working for the RASC in Plymouth.

Having been away for four years, I had very little idea of the difficulties and privations which the civilian population had suffered in the UK. Everything was still very severely rationed, and nobody knew when the war might end.

There were many tales to tell and to hear. My Father's yard had built over 100 craft for the Admiralty - from Inshore mine sweepers, motor torpedo boats, assault landing craft, and various other smaller types.

Earlier in the war, as I now heard, the yard had been bombed by a single German aircraft which sneaked in from seaward. The bomb must have been released a fraction of a second too early because it demolished the Hotel on the other side of the road, but the effect of the bomb was to pull out the whole side of the yard and create dreadful damage. Apparently my Father and Robin had been on the other side of the river when the raid took place and dashed across to see what had happened. Robin was stationed in the road to prevent anybody stealing the stores and equipment which were scattered about everywhere. He told me that he had very vivid memories - including the fact that a complete double bed from the hotel was lodged on the roof of the largest building shed in the shipyard. ([Click HERE](#) for more information on the yard).

I used to go for long walks upon Dartmoor, an area which I remembered from my youth, and it was such a severe winter that snowdrifts were higher than the hedges beside the lanes - so it was easy to get lost. This was certainly a contrast from four years in the Mediterranean climate.

After my leave I was ordered to report to the Royal Naval College at Greenwich to do a Naval Staff Course. In peacetime this was a 12 months course - but now it was very much reduced and lasted only three or four months. I found that the Commodore President of the College was my old friend Captain Augustus Agar VC. I had a great reunion with Gus Agar and his wife "Shrimpo" and daughter Diana and they were extremely hospitable to all the students.

It was a delight to live in the magnificent surroundings of the Royal Naval College. Our conditions of living were indeed a great contrast compared with four years of active service. We all had our meals in the magnificent Painted Hall, which before the war had been a museum. I found that a system of scaffolding was actually inside the Painted Hall, and supported a huge wooden platform, with a thick layer of felt on top, which was only inches from the famous painted ceiling. This was in case bomb damage from a "near miss" dislodged the plaster - it would have been easier to restore it afterwards. One became quickly accustomed to having a large steel scaffold-pole between oneself and one's neighbour at mealtimes!

N.B. Fifty years later I met Lt Donald Pepper, who had married the Wren Officer who had been in charge of the catering department of the Royal Naval College foremost of the war - a busy girl having 500 hungry young officers to feed at every meal. My friend Donald Pepper, as a dashing young Officer, rode a 500cc motor cycle. At a fancy dress party at the College he met a Wren Officer dressed, he recalls, as a Spanish girl in an eye-catching mantilla. Two nights later he took her for a ride on his motor cycle to Blackheath and down towards Rochester, and she was clearly impressed. Sensibly, he says, he sold the motor cycle for £45 and bought an engagement ring. "It was" he declares "a good exchange" - and who will argue with that!

The end of the war in Europe came while I was still at the Staff College. I remember very vividly indeed that Gus Agar invited me and some others to a celebration dinner party. After dinner we all embarked in his Flag Officer's barge, and went up the Thames as far as Westminster. As we emerged from under the bridge in the darkness, suddenly the floodlighting was switched on to illuminate the entire frontage of the Houses of Parliament. This was one of the most breathtaking sights that I ever saw in my life. We stood there in the barge in our uniform greatcoats against the evening chill, well fortified with Gussy Agar's excellent port, and I remember a tremendous glow of wonderment.

So ends Sir Morgan's account of his war time experiences. I shall resume with his post-war account in the next issue. Ed.

More Dredgings from the fast-failing memory of Electrical Superintendent Eddie Hunter



South Atlantic Medal Association (1982) Falklands Memorial Appeal

In May 2012, there will be a memorial unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) at Alrewas in Staffordshire commemorating the Falklands Conflict of 1982. Operation Corporate as the military operation was known, was a success for many reasons not least of which was the task force of Merchant Navy and RFA ships that were requisitioned to take part. Ships Taken up from Trade, or STUFT as they were known, were a crucial part of the operation without which it could not have been mounted. Merchant ships of many different types took part from Cross Channel and North Sea ferries to container ships, bulk carriers and tankers.

The South Atlantic Medal Association (1982) Trustees agreed at their meeting on 29th July 2010 to construct a Falklands War Memorial at the NMA at Alrewas. The memorial will be constructed on the SAMA(82) site by Young Johnson, Monumental Masons of Westbury, an experienced company who have built a number of outstanding military memorials in the NMA. The dedication ceremony planned for 20th May 2012 will commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the landings on the Falkland Islands.

The Memorial proposal was approved by the NMA Trustees in April 2011. The Chief Executive and the Curator both feel that the Memorial will make a valuable contribution to the Arboretum, being an attraction in its own right.

The Falklands Memorial will be distinctive by reflecting the Falklands' landscape. It will be a memorial that veterans and their families deserve, and inform visitors of this important event in our history. The design and construction will be based on the memorial and cemetery at 'Blue Beach' San Carlos, where the landings took place, by imitating the wall of memorial plaques on a smaller scale.

Whilst many Falklands veterans and their families have visited the San Carlos Memorial during the major pilgrimages and personal visits, the majority have not had this opportunity and are unlikely to in the future. By creating a similar atmosphere in the NMA, it is hoped that veterans and their families will feel it is somewhere in the UK where they can connect with the Falklands and feel at peace.

The Memorial will comprise a curved stone wall approximately 30ft wide by 7ft high in the centre, sloping down to 4ft at both ends, constructed in rough Cotswold stone. Two stone buttresses on the rear will provide the necessary stability. A rock structure using rock from the Falkland Islands approximately 3ft high by 4ft wide by 5ft long will be placed 20-25ft in front of the Wall. Two benches with Granite seating on Cotswold supports will be placed on either side, between the Rock and the Wall. The area enclosed by the Wall, Rock and Benches will be paved with natural paving to define the Memorial space.



A number of engraved Granite plaques will be mounted on the Wall, Rock and paving. Granite will ensure that the engraving does not deteriorate over time. The Wall front will have seven plaques reflecting the San Carlos design. The Main Plaque, in the centre, will be flanked on each side by three smaller plaques, and comprise an engraved Joint Service Operations crest over an inscription using similar wording as at San Carlos. The six flanking plaques will each be engraved with a crest of the participating military and civilian forces: Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army, Royal Air Force, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the Merchant Navy. A Dedication Plaque will be set below the Main Plaque. A circular plaque depicting the South Atlantic Medal will be placed on the rear of the wall; below this will be a small plaque stating that the Memorial was commissioned by SAMA(82).

The Falkland Islands rock structure will be the entrance point for visitors to the Memorial space. A plaque mounted on the front will comprise an outline map of the Falkland Islands with, above the map, the words 'Falkland Islands 1982' and below the map 'From the Sea – Freedom'. The rear will have a matching plaque to remember the three Falkland Islanders who lost their lives.

A Granite Plaque will be set into the paving stones in front of the Wall. It will show an outline map of the Atlantic Oceans with broad arrows showing the distances from UK and Gibraltar to Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands. South Georgia will also be shown. This plaque will inform visitors where the islands

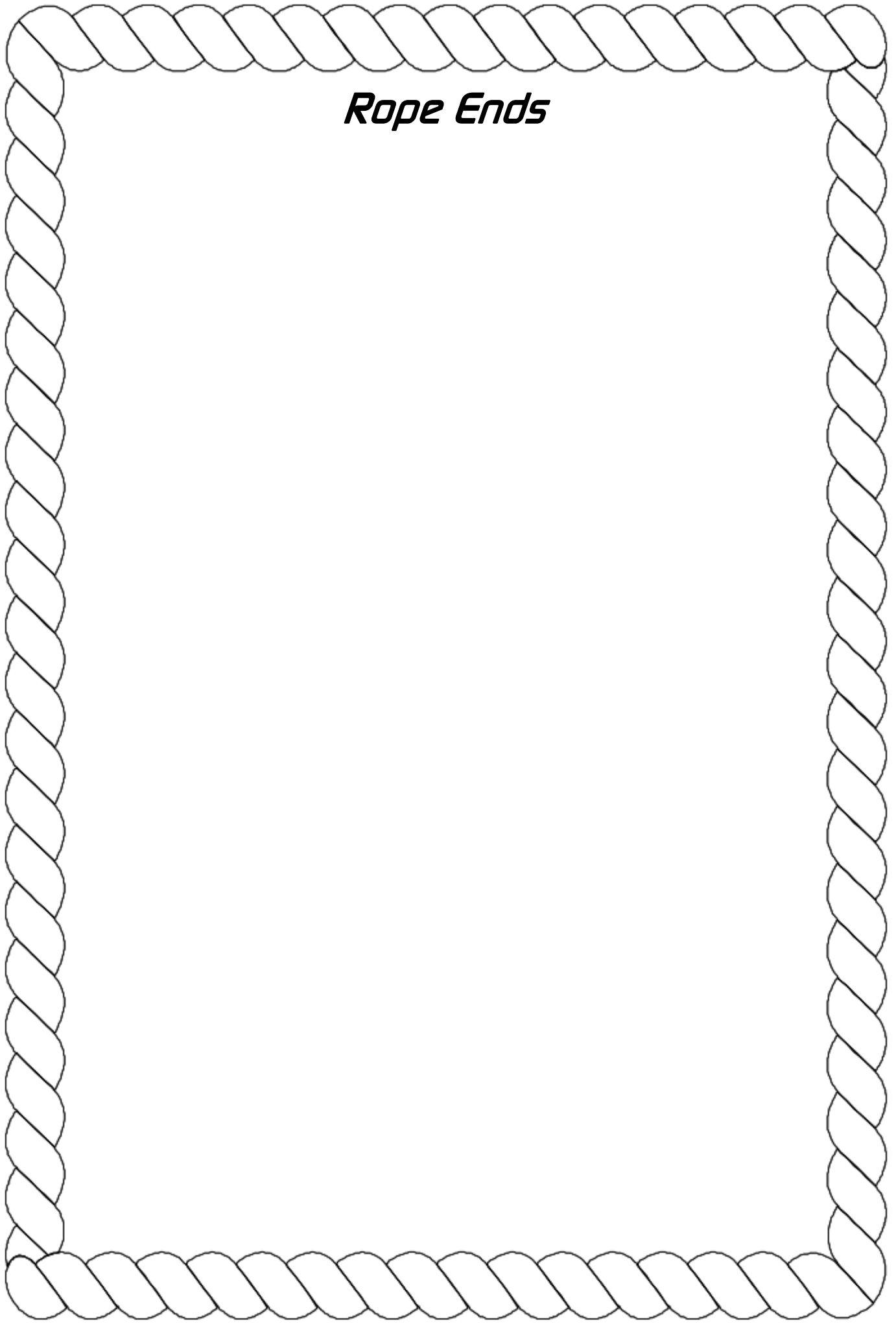
are in the world, and the vast distances the Task Force sailed before engaging in combat with the Argentine Forces.

This is an exciting project which will provide a memorial that Falklands' veterans and their families will feel is theirs, and visitors to the National Memorial Arboretum will expect to see. For more information please visit the SAMA 82 website, www.sama82.org.uk or contact the SAMA office on 01495 791592.

Mike Bowles, Chairman SAMA 82

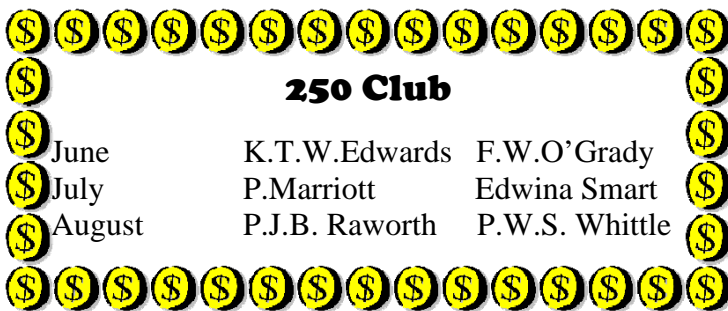
Tambo's Tales

More reminiscences of Peter's time as a junior officer with Elders & Fyffes, extracted from his memoirs.



Rope Ends

New Members



**Cut-off date for the next edition:
 18th November 2011**

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The Club room is currently open **two** days a week, Thursday and Friday, 1130 - 1500. Liz will be only too happy to serve you a drink and she can take your orders for meals, sandwiches and snacks. Suggestions for events, for improvements, offers of help, articles and anecdotes for inclusion in this newsletter will all be received with pleasure. We are even prepared to receive complaints if they are constructive.

Dates for your Diary

- Sat Sept 3 Curry Lunch, Kuti's
- Sun Sept 4 MNA Memorial Service
Holyrood
- Fri Sept 9 Club Supper, Club room
- Sat Oct 8 Autumn Dinner Dance
RAF Yacht Club, Hamble
- Sat Oct 15 Curry Lunch Tba
- Fri Nov 4 Harpooners' Dinner
Club room
- Wed Nov 9 Sea Pie tickets on Sale
- Sat Dec 3 Christmas Lunch
King's Court
- Sat Dec 10 Christmas Dinner,
King's Court