



KEEP FIT FOR THE SHIPS COMPANY

Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room each side. With a 5-lb potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax. Each day you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer. After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb potato bags. Then try 50-lb potato bags and then eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute. (I'm at this level now after a lot of hard work.) After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag. "Fitness is good for you."

Hello Shipmates and welcome to the May meeting.

At this time I am preparing an article for the June newsletter and I am asking you for a little help.

The article is about HMS Speedy during WW II and I have done quite a lot of research about her. It is a most interesting story which starts in 1782 when she was a 14 gun sloop-of-war. The story then continues through the years, during which there were nine ships bearing that name.

I seem to recollect that Speedy had a wartime association or connection with Wigston but I have no details. Can anyone assist me please? I thank you in advance.

David.

Social Notes.

We look forward to our George Dibden social on Saturday 12th June when we entertain ourselves, something we seem to do really well. The theme is "Black & White" so it will be easy for everyone to participate. No RNA blazers please, let's all join in and make it a great night.

I hope that you all enjoy your long weekend trip to Normandy, France. John Simpson will be your organizer and will be planning some good excursions which I'm sure you will all enjoy.

The coach company are awaiting ferry timings before they can give a departure time from Wigston but I would hope to have it for the Sunday meeting.

Mike.

Welfare Corner (Sheila & Roy)

Good morning Shipmates. An update on Dawn Simpson – She has completed a five day course of radio therapy and is resting at home. Dawn wishes to thank all of you who sent messages, cards and made enquiries regarding her health it is greatly appreciated.

We shall give you a verbal update of the work of the welfare section at this meeting.

Diary Dates. May 2010.

11th S/M George Wilson, birthday.
28th S/M Roy Clarke, birthday.

The crew wish you a 'Happy Birthday' and have a nice day.

Naval Slang No5.

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea.

In the old sailing warships the "Devil" was the outermost seam between the planks and the deck of the hull. While a sailor was working on this seam, perhaps even hanging over the edge of the ship in a caulking seat, he was; literally, between the devil and the deep blue sea, a very precarious position to be in. The phrase has been moved ashore and is used to describe someone who is faced with choosing between two unpleasant outcomes.

"Caulking" was the process of making a seam watertight on wooden ships. On the decks, in between each plank was a seam that had to be made watertight, this was done by forcing oakum into the seams and sealing it with hot pitch, a process called Caulking, or on naval slang, "Paying.

Oakum was old, frayed or unpicked rope and paying was often a common punishment task for miscreants on board ship. The outermost seam where the deck met the hull was notoriously difficult to caulk as it allowed little room for the sailor to use caulking irons and mallet necessary to force the caulking in, hence the nickname "The devil." Another old slang term used here was also "The Devil to pay"

Submitted by S/M John Simpson.

London Lawyer v Glasgow Cop.

A London Lawyer runs a stop sign and gets pulled over by a Glasgow copper. He thinks that he is smarter than the cop because he is a Lawyer from London and is certain that he has a better education than any copper. He decides to prove this to himself and have some fun at the Glasgow cops expense!!

Glasgow cop says, "Licence and registration please." London Lawyer says, "What for?" Glasgow cop says, "Ye didnae come to a complete stop at the stop sign." London Lawyer says, "I slowed down and no one was coming." Glasgow cop says, "Ye still didnae come to a complete stop. Licence and registration please." London Lawyer says, "What's the difference?" Glasgow cop says, "The difference is, ye huvte to come to a complete stop, that's the law, Licence and registration please."

London Lawyer says, "If you can show me the legal difference between slow down and stop, I'll give you my licence and registration and you give me the ticket. If not, you let me go and don't give me the ticket."

Glasgow cop says, "Sounds fair. Exit your vehicle, Sir." The London Lawyer exit's his vehicle. The Glasgow takes out his baton and starts beating the hell out of the Lawyer and says, "Dae ye want me to stop or just slow doon?"

Gunfighter. A young cowboy sitting in a saloon one Saturday night recognised an elderly man standing at the bar, who in his day, had been the fastest gun in the West. The cowboy took a place next to the old-timer, bought him a drink and told him of his great ambition to be the greatest shot in the West..."Can you give me some tips?" he asked. The old man said, "Well for one thing, you're wearing your gun too high – tie the holster a little lower down your leg." "Will that make me a better gunfighter?" "Sure will" said the old man. The young cowboy did as he was told, stood up, whipped out his .44 and shot the bow tie off the piano player.

"That's terrific!" shouted the cowboy, "got any more tips?" "Yep" said the old man. "Cut a notch out of your holster where the hammer hits it, that'll give you a smoother draw" "Will that make me a better gunfighter?" shouted the cowboy. "You bet it will," said the old timer. The cowboy took out his knife, cut the notch, stood up, drew his gun in a blur, fired and shot the gold cufflink off the piano player. "Wow!" exclaimed the cowboy, "I'm learnin somthin here. Got anymore tips?" The old man pointed to a large tub in the corner of the saloon. "See that axle grease over there? Coat your gun with it." The cowboy smeared some of the grease on the barrel of his gun.

"No" said the old timer, "I mean smear it all over the gun, handle and all" "Will that make me a better gunfighter" asked the young cowboy? "No" said the old timer but when Wyatt Earp get's done playing the piano, he's gonna shove your gun right up where the sun don't shine and it won't hurt so much."

THE ROYAL MARINES

By Colonel G.W.M. Grover, O.B.E. (Retd)

(3)

This article appeared in "Coronation Review of the Fleet" (1953)



The Royal Marines trace their origin to the Maritime Regiment of foot raised, the Dutch wars. It is from their origin in shared with the Grenadier and Royal Fusiliers, of marching within its playing, and bayonets fixed. Regiments wars under various names, and in 1755 brought into being under Admiralty surrounded by a laurel wreath, is symbolic of the service of the Royal Marines in all seas and on all fronts; the motto is "Per Mare, Per Terram" Another element might reasonably be added, as a good portion of the Corps is now parachute trained.

from the Duke of York and Albany's City of London in 1664 for sea service in the City that they derive the privilege, Coldstream Guards, the Buffs and the boundaries with colours flying, bands of Marines were raised for successive a permanent body of Marines was control. The Regimental badge a globe

Although founded in their recognizable form after the Restoration of 1660, the work and functions of the Royal Marines derive from the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth 1. Sir Walter Raleigh, a product of that great era, has recorded, "A Fleet could easily, without putting its self out of breath, outrun the soldiers that coast it" (this means) The Royal Navy possesses the capacity for putting on shore soldiers who strike without warning and in unexpected places. While the weapon of the sea supremacy was being forged on the anvil of many wars, the Royal Marines constituted one of its most formidable components. It was not enough for a Fleet to be supreme at sea; it had to give the capacity to strike at a distance. All the world over, the Royal Marines were engaged in raiding expeditions and in guarding Fleet bases when no army troops were present. In the development of tradition, two factors were firmly established in the mind of the Corps. Firstly, that their loyalty was utterly at the disposal of the Royal Navy, and parallel with this, that they could only serve the greatest of sailors if they, for their part, aspired to be the greatest of soldiers. Thus, it was normal for units of the Royal Marines to serve on land and at sea. In the twentieth century there was some departure from this essential ubiquity of function. In 1914 during the First World War, the Royal Marines provided troops, both gunners and infantry, to stem the German advance in France and Flanders. A brigade of light infantry which was sent to the Dardanelles in 1915, proceeded to France in 1916, and ended the as one battalion before Mons, "On the starboard bow of the army" The assault on Zeebrugge on St Georges day in 1918 was accomplished by the Royal Marines battalion in conjunction with the Royal Navy. Thereafter, between the wars the pressure of economy, so reduced the Corps that their amphibious function was gradually lost. In 1939, at the beginning of the Second World War, it was hard for the Royal Marines fully to provide those assaulting military bodies, considered to be their traditional roll, for the service of the Fleet. Yet, in the defence of the Channel Ports, in Burma and in Crete, it was demonstrated that the fighting qualities of the Corps had suffered little through long disuse. It was not however, until this phase of warfare was at an end that the traditional offensive role became a possibility. In this the Royal Marines owed much to the Army. Commandoes had been formed from selected Army Officers and men; these were the lightest of infantry projected from the sea. The darkest of nights would not stop them coming, the tallest of cliffs would not arrest their progress, for they could climb it, and they could destroy the most cunningly devised of obstacles. When they struck, the defenders were left to survey death and devastation, and the empty sea which leaves neither footprints nor any hint of when they may come again. The Royal Marines entered upon this enterprise with avidity.

As Commandoes, the Royal Marines took part on the assaults of Sicily, Italy and Normandy. In the capture of the Island of Walcheren, they were ably assisted by their comrades manning the Landing craft and serving the guns of the supporting craft and ships. In Burma and the Far East, they carried their arms to old haunts, for so much is the Corps "Father and Son" affair, that the Officer who hoisted the Union Jack at Yokohama, was the grandson of the Officer who had carried the colour on the bluff eighty years before.

At the end of hostilities the Royal Marines retained in the 3rd Commando Brigade their historic and traditional entity as the striking force from the sea.

The Brigade has served in Hong Kong, Palestine, and Malaya and is now stationed in the Mediterranean. The 41st Independent Commando R.M. has won distinction while serving in Korea. Meanwhile the interchange ability of roles is ensured by the furnishing of detachments for the ships of the Fleet, the manning of the Landing craft squadrons, a steadily increasing requirement, and the provision of certain units of a specialised amphibious nature.

Two further activities of the Royal Marines demand mention. The Band service of the Corps is the pride, in its own line, of the Fleet. Its reputation on ceremonial occasions in all parts of the world is well known. In action, musicians have distinguished themselves in manning gunnery control instruments in the ships in which they have served. Last but not least, are the Royal Marines Forces Volunteer Reserves.

These citizen soldiers give their time and energy to our service. It is in keeping with events, that our successors are to be found in the City and Cities where, nearly three centuries ago, drums beat for "Land Souldgers" to be rayed in readiness to be His. Mats. Fleets preparing for sea service" These men were described by the Earl of St Vincent in 1802 in the following terms: "If ever the hour of real danger should come to Brittainia, they will be found the countries sheet anchor"

Article by, Shipmate Terry Heaps, RNA, Ontario Canada.

The Slapton Sands Disaster 1944.

On the night of April 27th 1944, more than 30,000 U.S. soldiers were taken out into the English Channel off the coast of Devon. They were to stage a mock assault on an English beach in preparation for 'D-Day.' Patrolling German E-boats stumbled on the loaded landing craft and they swiftly torpedoed three of them. In the confusion of darkness, some Americans opened fire on their own boats.

The next morning, hundreds of soldiers were found floating upside down in the icy water. They drowned because they had put their life vests around their waists instead of under their arms, never dreaming a practice exercise could end in such a violent confrontation with a real enemy. 749 U.S. soldiers perished in this disaster which almost caused the cancellation of the Normandy invasion, which was only six weeks away. The death toll in this practice raid was more than four times the 179 killed on Utah beach on D-Day. The American military kept this botched operation a secret for many years, and even today most Americans have never heard of the Slapton Sands Disaster.

The people of Devon later found live cartridges, shrapnel, military buttons, and even men's signet rings on the beach and they realised that something terrible had happened in their midst. A tank was hauled from the surf and it acted as the only memorial to these young men for many years. Pressure was placed on the U.S. Government until finally, a fitting monument was erected. "They never lived to fight but at last they have been recognised."

This story is one of the many coming out of the mists of World War II.

Note: The above account was printed in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, "Albainn" October 1998. Printed here as a matter of historical interest and to permit anyone visiting Devon to visit the Memorial and pay tribute to those who lost their lives in what was supposed to be a "Tune-Up" exercise.

Borrowed from "The Bootneck" Royal Marines Newsletter, June 2000.

Submitted by S/M Terry Heaps, Southern Ontario RNA.