



ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

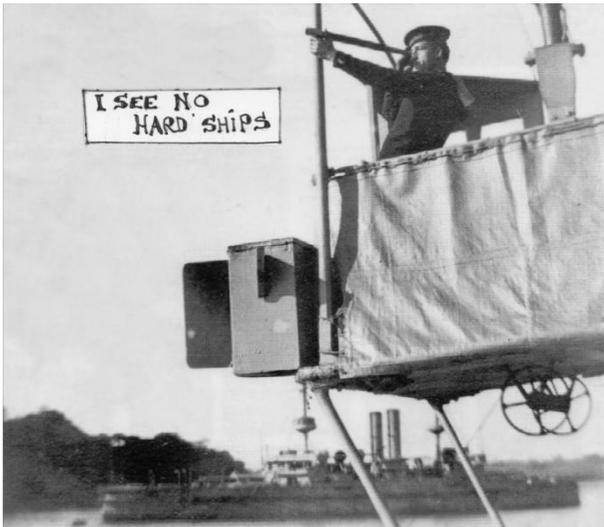
I have endeavoured to comply with the command issued at the last A.G.M., via Libby Saunders, in the official record of proceedings, now housed in the national archives at Kew. 'Onest strewth!

Gospel of St. John - 'In the beginning was the word'.

To spread that word, in an attempt to harvest new blood, I wrote all relevant information, brief and clear to Navy News. They require three months advance notice and issue no guarantees. Being seven months in advance we 'bonnie lads' should clew up on top of the heap by October.

An old adage advises, 'Tis better to travel hopefully than to arrive'; written, obviously, by a person minus British Rail experience.

Contact with British Legion magazine holds better hope. Their nationwide publication is really well produced, glossy, instructional and interesting, about A4 size, with a large circulation, same lead time, they seem eager to help.



My third string defied the plucking; that is Kent radio. To any of an experimental nature I'd liken it to standing in the bull ring at warp factor six, trying to piddle into the wind - the only certainty is you will get your own back. But 'I see no hard ships', as instructed by that Noble Lord - will engage the enemy more closely - shortly!

You all know of Commander (Sharky) Ward; Fleet Air Arm pilot of renown, who led 801 N.A.S., demonstrated his prowess as a Harrier pilot in 1982 Falklands debacle, a most bitter and vocal opponent of the 'security review' that cancelled, forbid any further use of our Harrier Carriers or their aircraft.

I learned from reading an obituary that his son was an aircraft devotee. To pursue that calling his father (Sharky) advised best chance to become a fighter pilot was with the R.A.F. Following basic training his entire class was arbitrarily diverted to helicopters. That made him seek transfer to F.A. Arm via becoming a naval officer.

He joined 801 N.A.S. in 2001, eventually became senior pilot of the Strike Wing in 2009. He completed four tours in Afghanistan.

Not well known is that the R.N. contributed one third of Great Britain's effort there; Marines, helicopters, medical services, ordinance disposal, a splendid effort on slim pickings.

It is on record that Lieutenant Commander Kristian Ward (F.A.A. call sign 'Mental') was in H.Q. Northwood when P.M. Cameron visited following that 'security review'. Ward asked him 'How am I supposed to feel about that please Sir? I am a Harrier pilot, flew 160 missions in Afghanistan, am now unemployed!' Reports have Cameron's reply as 'ill informed'. Lieutenant Commander Ward resigned in 2012, rapidly became a senior Captain on Boeing 737's for Jet 2 airline. Accolades from flying instructors have him as one of the three most natural aviators to have passed through their hands.

He died suddenly, aged a mere 45, another of the Fleet Air Arm elite. For father and son to excel in the same type of aircraft for 'Queen and Country' must be a record.

Aircraft made redundant by that 'defence review;' were sold at scrap value to the U.S. Marine Corps, an organisation 'not known for making mistakes'. 18 airframes refurbished, modified just prior to sale, all had zero timed spare engines. That was nine-ish years ago and just prior to the ham-fisted cock up Cameron made in Libya, for want of a small carrier with installed 'strike wing' -- -- Oh well, dream on.

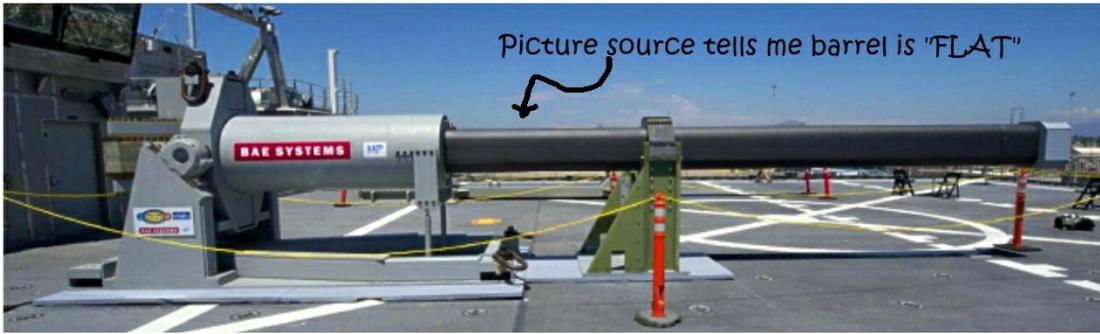
Last week's report of successful conclusion in the Mediterranean of a major N.A.T.O. exercise had a nice picture of vessels that took part. Front and centre was a landing platform, not sure if an L.P.D. or L.P.H. - *U.S.S.Kearsage*.

To twang ones G-string, lined up on deck was a U.S. Marine Strike Squadron - of HARRIERS, their weapon of choice. I would wager my finest Harrods String Vest at least one of those aircraft had chassis or engine number issued to *Ark Royal*, at least ten years ago.

All this is the result of inter-service rivalry by the R.A.F., who convinced our Joint Services political masters 'they only' should hereafter be sole operators of all 'fixed wing assets'.

The much used term 'joint' seems apt of late, not much time elapses before another tranche of service men or women test positive for cannabis, Joint Smoking. The benign old weed of years back, now genetically modified to a mind-warping time bomb; "Jointery" is alive and well in our military.

The e-mail newsletter article on use of E.M.A.L.S. (electric material approved list) in new carriers for 'lifts and ammo hoists' interested me. Was first aware of E.M.A.L.S from a Professor Laithwaite on evening BBC T.V. years ago. His proposed application was mass transit rail systems, a small example is built in Germany, now a modern rendition pays its way between Beijing and its airport, wheelless, noiseless, emission free and lightening quick. Today only known 'research and development' being conducted with vigour by 'national navies'. Catapult launch of aircraft, and the super efficient 'rail gun'. The U.K. was well up in this endeavour when decision to make our two new carriers 'castrated white elephants', minus catapults.



The entire U.K. programme was handed to the U.S. Navy to assist best possible system be fitted to Ford/Bush class of carrier with four catapults each.

Weight saved with no need for steam generation, space and complexity was, to builders, like a lottery win each hour of operation. To confirm our technical effort crossed the pond I offer a picture of a 'rail gun' aboard new class of 'U.S. littoral combat vessel' for trials, demonstration with maker's name clearly visible. Most recent reports say U.S. E.M.A.L.S. stalled! What that means is a guess.

On the other hand 'China Naval University of engineering openly claims a 'breakthrough in electromagnetic technology' with a working model gun at sea, on trials. From what one reads 'cyber espionage' is their shortcut to success; that seems a safe bet!

With second carrier 'fitting out' and a third well into modular construction, their need for 'electric catapults' is as pressing as Uncle Sam's. We will have to wait and see what extent miss-information plays in this game. Chinese model gun reported similar to U.S. test item, one of which the aforementioned B.A.Systems reportedly fires a projectile of 10 kgs. at mach 7 to 150 kms, propelled by 32 mega joule -what they are mystifies this country boy. A spec. like that is on par with small missiles/rockets.

Hope some of that makes sense shipmates, and life is being gentle with you all.

