



# LONDON BRANCH (CFV) NEWSLETTER

SPRING  
2016



## ROYAL NAVY

### Editorial:

It is a sad start to the New Year with reporting the loss of two valuable members.

Our sincere condolences of course go to John and Ted's families.



This issue -

- Branch Report
- 73ft Vosper MTB's by Geoffrey Hudson

Time flies, as we all know and now it is the time for a gentle reminder for renewal of subscriptions. Send your contributions to the Treasurer; David Carter at -  
18 Surbiton Hill Park  
Surbiton  
KT5 8ET

If you have any thoughts to share with our Newsletter, please do let us know.

We appreciate any/all 'feed back'.



Members of the crew of Motor Torpedo Boat 32 smile for the camera as they watch Able Seaman J Budden (the gunner) drink his [first?] tot of rum. Also identified in this crew are: Wireless Operator D G David (left), Torpedo Operator Able Seaman Saxby (right),

Photo © IWM (A74)

## BRANCH NEWS

### Chairman's Report

Greetings Shipmates,

Our Branch Meeting on Sunday 21st was a rather 'thin' affair but a pleasant and useful one nevertheless. Although our two recruiters have been resting over the Christmas holidays, good old everlasting Bernie came to the rescue and brought in a new member, a likeable lad, Martin Harris. An ex-Army Sergeant, but we can't afford to be too fussy now, can we? We welcome him, and I feel he will soon pick up our language and be another useful member.

I had my 92nd birthday last week and it reminded me that I'm getting old. This led me to the rash of death notices received lately. The latest notifications are those of Branch members John Lambert and Ted Childs. We haven't seen much of either of them lately but we were aware that John had been unwell for some considerable time. I am pleased to say that both funeral Services were attended by Branch representatives, both senior and, significantly, one not so senior. But a good Branch Shipmate. I hope he is setting a good example for the future.

I am aware that only five members (your Committee and Kevin) receive prompt notifications of deaths of members. All others are informed by the next Newsletter, which could be up to three months later. We realise that this could lead to a member missing an opportunity to attend the funeral of a close shipmate, but our limited funds do not allow us to inform all members by telephone. Our information process is that Kevin, at the website, is informed, either directly or via a Committee member, following which, a notice with a brief obituary is posted on the website within hours of notification.

Should members be sufficiently interested, may I suggest that they ask a friend, relative, or member of a public library to look up our website at regular intervals, even if it is only to view the latest death notices. It should take only five minutes. (And If my name appears on it, to take note that I have already arranged for my surviving family to provide a warm welcome, with a nautical tot, to all who turn up for the funeral). And now it is my pleasure and honour to present a very interesting article written by Branch member Geoffrey Hudson, CFVA's official historian of HM Coastal Forces. Our Newsletter editor has kindly been given permission to reproduce a detailed piece of reference work, written way back in May 2002, on the developments of the Vosper 'short boats'.

I wish you all a Happy Easter.

Ken Gadsdon

[www.cfv.org.uk](http://www.cfv.org.uk)



**73ft VOSPER MTBs**  
**By Geoffrey Hudson**

**1943 class - MTB 380 to 395. 1944 class - MTB 523 to 538.**

Until 1942, in order to simplify the slipping and docking of MTBs, the Admiralty did not allow Vosper Ltd to modify its standard 71ft x 19ft 2in hull form, of which 278 boats were built in the UK and USA. The earlier Vosper's had less beam:

**1938 class MTB 20 - 23, 29 and 30 and ex Greek MTB 69 and 70** were 70ft 3in x 16ft 5in

**1939 class MTB 31 - 40 and ex Greek MTB 218 - 21** were 71ft x 17ft 1in

The lengths quoted above are for the boat hull only. Trailing rudders added a further 1ft 6in to the overall length.

Of the 278 boats with 71ft x 19ft 2in hull:

76 were ordered from Vosper Ltd and built by that company in its yards at The Camber [Broad Street], Portsmouth; Portchester; and Wivenhoe, Essex; plus six sub-contractors: Berthon Boat Co Ltd of Lymington; Camper & Nicholson's Ltd, of Gosport; Harland & Wolff of Belfast; McGruer & Co Ltd of Clynder; Hugh McLean Ltd of Renfrew; and Morgan Giles Ltd of Teignmouth.

**1939 Extension class. MTB 57 - 66. 1940 class. MTB 73 - 98**

**1941 class. MTB 222 - 245. 1942 class. MTB 347 - 362**

18 were ordered direct from J Samuel White & Co Ltd of Cowes, with the Admiralty supplying the Vosper drawings to White.

**1940 class. MTB 201 - 212.**

**1941 class MTB 246 - 251.**



**1939 Class MTB's 28 and 32 (70ft 3in Hulls) at HMS Beehive. Photo © IWM (A1090).**

64 were ordered in the USA, under Lend-Lease, for the RN and built in four yards licensed by Vosper Ltd: Annapolis Yacht Yard of Annapolis, Maryland; Harbor Boatbuilding Co of Terminal Island, Los Angeles, California; Herreshoff Manufacturing Co of Bristol, Rhode Island; Robert Jacob Inc of City Island, New York.

**1941 class MTB 275 - 306** [of which 287-290, 295-298 operated in Mediterranean by RN; and **MTB 275-286, 291-294, 299-306** were Royal Indian Navy]

**1942 class**

**MTB 363 - 378** [of which **MTB 363-370** shipped from USA direct to USSR; **MTB 371-378** operated in Mediterranean by RN.]

**1943 class**

**MTB 396 - 411** [RN in Mediterranean]

A revised hull form would have improved the 71ft x 19ft Vosper MTB's performance and ride, which had suffered, due to the installation of the US built Packard engine, instead of the Italian Isotta Fraschini, for which the original 71ft x 19ft boat was designed. However, in November 1942 Vosper did receive an Admiralty order for a new, prototype 73ft boat, **MTB 379**. This was followed in March 1943 by an order for 16 boats of the 1943 class [**MTB 380-395**] and in December 1943 for 16 boats of the 1944 class [**MTB 523-538**].

Unlike the earlier 71ft Vosper MTBs which had the raised forecastle, the 73ft boat's weather deck was continuous from stem to stern. It also had three underslung rudders, instead of the trailing rudders of earlier Vosper's. The 73ft had a more compact bridge, with a chart room immediately below the open bridge instead of in a wheelhouse, which earlier Vosper's had forward of the bridge.

The 1943 class boats served in the 31st and 21st MTB Flotillas. The 31st was a new flotilla, based at Lowestoft and comprised **MTB 380-384, 386, 391** and **392**, which completed between May and November 1944. With the end of the war in Europe, the flotilla moved to Portland before disbanding in October 1945. Its Senior Officers were Lieut A F Moseley RN [in **MTB 383**], Lieut D A Shaw RN [in **MTB 383**] and finally Lieut D E J Hunt RNVR [in **MTB 392**]. The 21st was an existing flotilla, based at Lowestoft, which replaced its old 71ft 1941 class Vosper's with **MTB 385, 387-390** and **393-395**; these completing between August 1944 and April 1945. In May 1945, the 21st MTB Flotilla moved to HMS *HORNET* where, between July and September, its boats paid off. Its SO was Lieut Commander G J MacDonald RNZNVR [in **MTB 393**].

At the end of 1944, Vosper was instructed to set aside **MTB 538** for experimental work. Built to a new, 74ft design she completed in August 1948. To reduce weight, considerable use was made of glues and lamination in her structure, and alloys in her machinery. A sound proof engine room control cabinet, underwater exhausts and variable pitch propellers were fitted.

By mid 1945, the remaining fifteen 1944 class boats were intended to form the 37th [**MTB 523-530**] and 39th [**MTB 531-537**] MTB Flotillas, but with the end of the war against Japan, **MTB 534-536** were cancelled in October 1945 and **MTB 531** and **537** were completed, in September 1947 and September 1948 respectively, as C/T [Control and/or Towing (boat)] **44** and **45**. **MTB 523-530, 532** and **533** completed between July 1945 and October 1946.

Post war service. In October 1945, four 1943 class from the disbanded 31st Flotilla, together with four new, 1944 class boats formed a new 2nd MTB Flotilla based at '*HORNET*'. The last of the 1943 class boats paid off in early 1946, being replaced by further 1944 class. 1944 class boats ten operated from '*HORNET*' with the 2nd or 1st MTB Flotillas, and finally with the 1st and 2nd Fast Patrol Boat Squadrons until 1953, when the new, 75ft GAY class boats came into service. **MTB 528** was sold in 1948, following damage, by collision and grounding, at Belfast in June 1947. In July 1949 Coastal Forces Craft were renumbered and the term Fast Patrol Boat came into use; [a] to avoid the use of the word 'motor' in boats powered by gas turbines and, [b] to allow for the 'convertibility' principle, of boats able to arm as torpedo boat [TB], gunboat [GB], or a mix. **MTB 523-527, 529, 530, 532, 533, and 538** [experimental] then became **FPB 1023-1027, 1029, 1030, 1032, 1033, and 1601** respectively. In 1952, to standardise terminology with the US Navy and other NATO Navies, Flotillas became Squadrons and in March 1953 the number of boats in a Squadron, which since 1946 had normally been six, was reduced to four.

Apart from **MTB 386 and 392**, which became **FPB 1001** and **1002** in July 1949, the 1943 class boats were all placed on the Disposal List in 1945-48. **FPB 1001** was sold in 1949, while **FPB 1002** lay at *HORNET* until the mid 1950s, being used for research into timber and plywood construction, prior to her disposal.

**FPB 1030** was lost on 28 March 1952, after collision with **FPB 1032**. **FPB 1023**, the last 73ft Vosper in operational service, was lost on 17 May 1953, when she caught fire and blew up in Aarhus harbour, Denmark. **FPB 1024** was sunk in 1955 as a gunnery target. The remaining 1944 class were disposed of in 1953-58.

Dimensions: length 73ft, beam 19ft 5in, draught 5ft 8in

Displacement: Full load on trials: **1943 class**: 44.4 tons; **1944 class**: 48.8 tons

Machinery: 3 x 1,320bhp Packard W 14

Maximum speed At 2,400rpm: **1943 class**: 40.5 knots; 1944 class: 36 knots

MTB 524 disarmed and in light condition 48.4 knots.



Fuel at 95% capacity: 2,510 gallons, 100 octane petrol  
Range at 20 knots: 470 to 490 nautical miles  
Crew: 2 officers, 11 to 14 ratings  
Radar - **1943 class:** Type 291. [SOs' boats MTB 383 and 393, Type 970, with Plan Position Indicator]  
**1944 class:** Completed with Type 268

Armament - **1943 class:** 1 twin 20mm Oerlikon Mark IX for'd, 4 - 18in TT,  
2 - 2in Rocket Flare Projectors [RFP] on saddle mountings on the for'd tubes, 2 twin 0.303in Vickers on saddle mountings on the after tubes.  
**1944 class:** 6pdr Mark VII for'd, with 2in RFP mounted on the cab, 2 twin 0.303in Vickers sided, on pedestal mountings, twin 20mm Mark IXA aft. 6pdr replaced by 4.5in in MTB 528 [for the gun's sea trials] and at least in **MTB 530**.

By late 1949 armament was 'convertible'. As MTBs carried up to three RFPs, 2-18in TT and a twin 20mm aft. As MGBs, a 4.5in for'd, up to three RFPs' and a twin 20mm aft.

**MTB 538 [FPB 1601]**, as an MTB had a twin 20mm for'd, 4-18in TT and 2 RFPs. Later she tested side dropping gear, thus dispensing with torpedo tubes. As an MGB she carried a 4.5in for'd, 2 RFPs and a twin 20mm aft.

GMH 7.5.02



The experimental MTB 538 (74ft Hull) seen exiting *HMS Hornet* late 1940's.

**Finally - A very Happy Easter to you all.**





# City of London Sea Cadets Spring 2016 Report.

Late Supplement!!

Winter is the quietest time for the Unit, which enables us to concentrate on the routine training and development that is delivered on our Tuesday and Friday parade nights. Never the less, there has still been significant activity away from home.

## Christmas Treat

On Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> December the Unit had its Christmas treat; ice skating at the Tower of London, followed by pizza and a sleepover aboard HMS *Belfast*. The ice skating and pizza was paid for by the CFVA *London Branch* and the Unit's *Parents' and Supporters Association*, so big thank you from the Unit to our branch!



CO. CPO Paul Townsend with Junior Cadet Madi ice skating at the Tower of London.

There is perhaps, as with lunches, no such thing as a free treat. On the Sunday morning the cadets were roused early, they dressed in their smartest uniform and, together with a good turnout of parents and uniformed



Cadets Harry and Alex at the Isle of Dogs ASDA 'bag pack'.

staff, spent the day bag packing at the Isle of Dogs ASDA. This fund raising event was both a tremendous financial success and an excellent "profile raiser" with the general public. As ever thanks are due to Mary Cosgrove, Community Life Champion at the store, and her colleagues for their invaluable support.

## Activities and Training

In January three cadets attended the Naval Acquaint Course at HMS *Raleigh*, here they undertook some of the Royal Navy basic training syllabus. Numerous cadets attended the Area Multi Training weekend at Crowborough Camp and Able Cadet Dawid gained his Marine Engineering, Mechanical 1<sup>st</sup> Class qualification. The Unit continued with its community engagement with Carpet Guards for the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers and the Worshipful Company of International Bankers.

## Careers

Following on from the recent successes with ex cadets entering training to become Merchant Navy officers, the Unit's trustees are working with City shipping interests, to develop careers advice and work placements for our cadets. This is an exciting project, which has the potential to provide our cadets with a real boost to their future lives.

Steve Borne.