

TAMAR TIMES

HMS TAMAR

DECEMBER 2023

CELEBRATING 2 YEARS
DEPLOYED!

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR SAILORS

Our Sailors talk about their careers and time in TAMAR so far

READER'S CORNER

AB Jurczykzyn writes about his favourite reads for deployment

AUSTRALIA

Bumper edition of outback adventures had by the crew

For latest deployment news, and updates on what your Ship is up to

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Wednesday 29th November marked Commander Elliot-Smith's last day in command before he handed over to Commander Gell (photograph above). Here, our outgoing Captain reflects on the last period and his extraordinary time in command of one of the Royal Navy's furthest deployed ships.

I hope this edition of the Tamar Times finds you well and no doubt gearing up for Christmas! It is a poignant one for me, my last act as I hand the reigns over to Commander Tom Gell. I have been with Tamar for the past two and a half years and it has been an all consuming part of my life. I have seen what the ship has delivered on operations (recently crowned the fleet's best overseas Offshore Patrol Vessel), but equally I have seen the amount it draws on our people and their loved ones.

It provides inspiration to me daily. I was delighted to bring the Naval Families Federation (NFF) and RN Family and People Services (RNFPS) to the ship recently. They are brilliant support providers - your sailor will be aware of their services now and

if unsure, just call out on the RN Forum chat (details at the end) and a moderator will signpost you to help.

My command of Tamar has left me with wonderful memories of the (ever evolving) ship's company, but looking rearward is for me alone; those with the baton look forwards and have an incredible future with a critical mission to deliver. They will do it with style; the hallmark of this great ship. Commander Gell has surely won the golden ticket!

Best wishes to you all and, for the last time from me, thank you for your support throughout my time with this extraordinary team.

from leading hand to a bright future at

*LET Molly Lawton
writes about her time at
the Admiralty Interview
Board, and what she is
looking forward to about
taking the next career
step towards
commissioning as an
officer*



Dartmouth

I joined the Royal Navy in October 2017 and from the very get-go I always had the ambition to become a commissioned officer. I initially joined as a rating so I could start from the bottom and work my way up, learning the ropes as a junior rate which would provide me with the skill set and whole ship knowledge to therefore build a foundation for my leadership and management techniques for when I eventually reached my goal of becoming an officer.

I officially raised my papers to become an 'Upper Yardsman' candidate in 2019 whilst serving on my first ship, HMS Albion, as a fast track ET (Engineering Technician) CIS (Communication Information Specialist). Due to growing up in Spain and attending a Spanish school, the Royal Navy didn't fully understand my qualification reports. This put a massive delay on my application process, therefore I decided to pause the process with my application and accept promotion to Leading ET(CIS) instead. On successful completion of my Qualifying Course, I joined HMS Tamar in 2021.

Shortly after joining I restarted the process to become a UY (Upper Yardsman) candidate and had my papers re-raised. Sadly there was no official route for a CIS Specialist to become a WE (Weapons Engineer) UY Candidate. This wasn't the news I wanted to hear as I desperately wanted to become a Weapons Engineer Officer managing not only the CIS department, but all of the sub

sections within the WE branch. After a long think and several discussions with my superiors and family, I decided to continue with my UY application, however this time I applied to become a Logistics Officer.

I instantly contacted the Recording Authority for the Logistics Branch and shortly after I received instructions on how to proceed my application to become a logistics UY candidate. This was at the beginning of 2023 and by June I had successfully completed all elements of the Admiralty Interview Board (AIB). The final selection board for the 2024 Dartmouth takes place middle of October this year. This is the final hurdle of my UY application process and is where my special report will be presented. The Recording Authority, along with other members of the AIB, will sieve through all of the reports ranking them from best to worst. Depending on the requirements for each Dartmouth training period, a number of candidates will be extracted to start phase 1 officer training at BRNC Dartmouth in the upcoming intakes in 2024.

I would recommend the AIB process to anyone who wishes to become a commissioned officer in the Royal Navy. It is a 3 stage process which consists of: a psychometric test, followed by an interview, and finally a Group Planning Exercise. You must successfully complete all 3 stages in order to pass the AIB, and a pass now lasts for 5 years.



spotlight on Cairns

Our Ship's Company write about their experiences of our latest port of call in Tropical North Queensland, Australia, and travels further afield...

Engineering Technician Harry McMahon

Arriving in Tropical North Queensland, we were instantly mesmerized by the lush greenery, crystal-clear waters, and vibrant atmosphere of Cairns. Our first few weeks were a whirlwind of exploration, as we ventured into the Great Barrier Reef, discovering the incredible underwater world through snorkeling and diving.

The local culture and Indigenous heritage left a profound impact on us, as we learned about the ancient traditions and stories of the Aboriginal people in the region.

Exploring the Daintree Rainforest was like stepping into a prehistoric paradise, with towering trees, exotic wildlife, and refreshing waterfalls captivating our senses.

As we settled into the Cairns lifestyle, we embraced the warm tropical climate, enjoyed fresh seafood by the marina, and marveled at the stunning sunsets over the Coral Sea, realizing that our adventure in Tropical North Queensland was just beginning.

The area around Cairns has been inhabited by the Indigenous Yidinji people for thousands of years. They had a deep connection with the land and the sea, relying on traditional practices for sustenance and culture. The modern history of Cairns began in the mid-19th century when European explorers, including Captain James Cook, arrived in the region. The area was initially used as a port for the goldfields.

In the latter half of the 20th century, Cairns began to shift its focus towards tourism. The opening of the Great Barrier Reef to tourism, coupled with improved infrastructure like an international airport, led to a boom in visitor numbers.

Today, Cairns is a vibrant tropical city known for its proximity to the Great Barrier Reef and lush rainforests. It has grown into a popular tourist destination, offering a blend of natural beauty, adventure activities, and cultural experiences while also respecting its Indigenous heritage. Recognizing the importance of the Great Barrier Reef's ecosystem, efforts were made to balance tourism with conservation. Cairns became a gateway for visitors to explore the reef while promoting sustainability and environmental awareness.

My Travels to Bali

AB(AWW) Robert Stevenson

On the 5th July, the mrs and I went off to Bali for what would be an incredible and memorable 18 day holiday. In total we stayed at 6 different areas in Bali, the first being Canggu where we stayed for 3 nights and spent a full day at the world famous beach club Finns where we had 150 Rupiahs to spend on things like Pina coladas and lovely tasting beer. Each only cost around \$1.50, so as you can imagine I was like a child on Christmas day.

Afterwards we had a couple more relaxing days before heading to Uluwatu for 2 nights. It is known for its beautiful beaches and remarkable views. We visited many of the attractions and made full days out of them. After enjoying the relaxing Uluwatu we headed off to Ubud which is located in the middle of the island.

We spent 4 nights there in a small private villa, and headed off for quite a bit of sightseeing and travelling around. We booked full day tours around attractions including riding on the famous 'Bali swing'; looking around the amazing rice fields and forests; visiting a Hindu temple; and washing in holy water. We then went to an amazing waterfall and swam in the small pool it created, all in one day!

A couple of relaxing days chilling out at the villa followed, before going on a quad biking day through a jungle across multiple tracks and roads. Sadly it was time to leave the amazing Ubud however we weren't too saddened as we

had another great place to go to; next on the list was Sanur. Our plan here was to chill out more than the other places and have a few pool days sipping on cocktails.

After 4 nights in Sanur we went to Nusa Dua for 2 nights at a villa complex which had everything we needed from restaurants to shops, spa rooms multiple pools and shows in the evening.

Our last stop would be Seminyak for the last 2 Nights of our holiday. The absolute highlight of this place was visiting the small island just off the east coast of Bali called Nusa Penida. Home to the famous Killingking beach which has a distinctive cool looking t-rex shaped cliff, ot really was an incredible view.

We also visited Angel Beach and Broken Beach which were just as spectacular, and then after that we did a snorkeling tour visiting 4 different coves and areas of the island getting to see tropical fish, turtles and coral reefs.

All in all it was a brilliant holiday and would definitely recommend it to anyone.

Nicky Gardiner

Medical Assistant Nicky Gardiner joined HMS TAMAR in October 2022, and has since travelled with the ship throughout Asia and the Indian Ocean. Her role means she provides crucial first-aid response to emergencies, and provides medical training to Ship's Company.

Co-editor Lt Leo Jeune sits down with Nicky to hear about her day-to-day work; why she joined the Navy; and what three items she would take to a desert island

Where are we at the moment?

We are in HMS TAMAR's Sickbay, it's quite a small sickbay but we do also have a ward here and the capability to house patients.

What's a typical day at sea like?

Lots of sea sickness! So we have fresh cases in the morning, where Ship's Company can present to the sickbay if they are feeling unwell or have an issue. People can of course come at any time

if they are feeling unwell. I often spend a lot of time sorting out stores that we might have taken on board. There is a lot of paperwork and process that goes in to keeping them stored safely. I am usually in communications with the UK regarding all sorts of things. When we are sailing near land I will also be a key member of Yankee Patrol.

What's Yankee Patrol?

It's how we help maintain the watertight integrity of the ship, making sure all the doors labelled "Yankee" are kept closed when we go to a higher state of watertight integrity. Rounds are conducted to ensure these doors are kept closed. The Medical department on board have this as a

secondary role where they will take a leading part in ensuring the ship is always in the correct watertight state.

When you are at Sea how do you relax? How do you best enjoy a break?

Going on the flight deck at lunchtime, getting some fresh air and sitting in the sun!

What made you want to join the medical branch?

More like Family related points, when I was younger I had quite a few family members who were unwell. I took an interest as to what was wrong with them. My Dad had a heart condition and I didn't really understand what it was. So I started doing a little bit of research and I found it quite interesting. It made me look at the Medical branch because I wanted to join the Military but wasn't too sure what as. The Medical branch certainly shone out as something that I had already been interested in, especially on a personal note.

To you, what is the most interesting thing about your job?

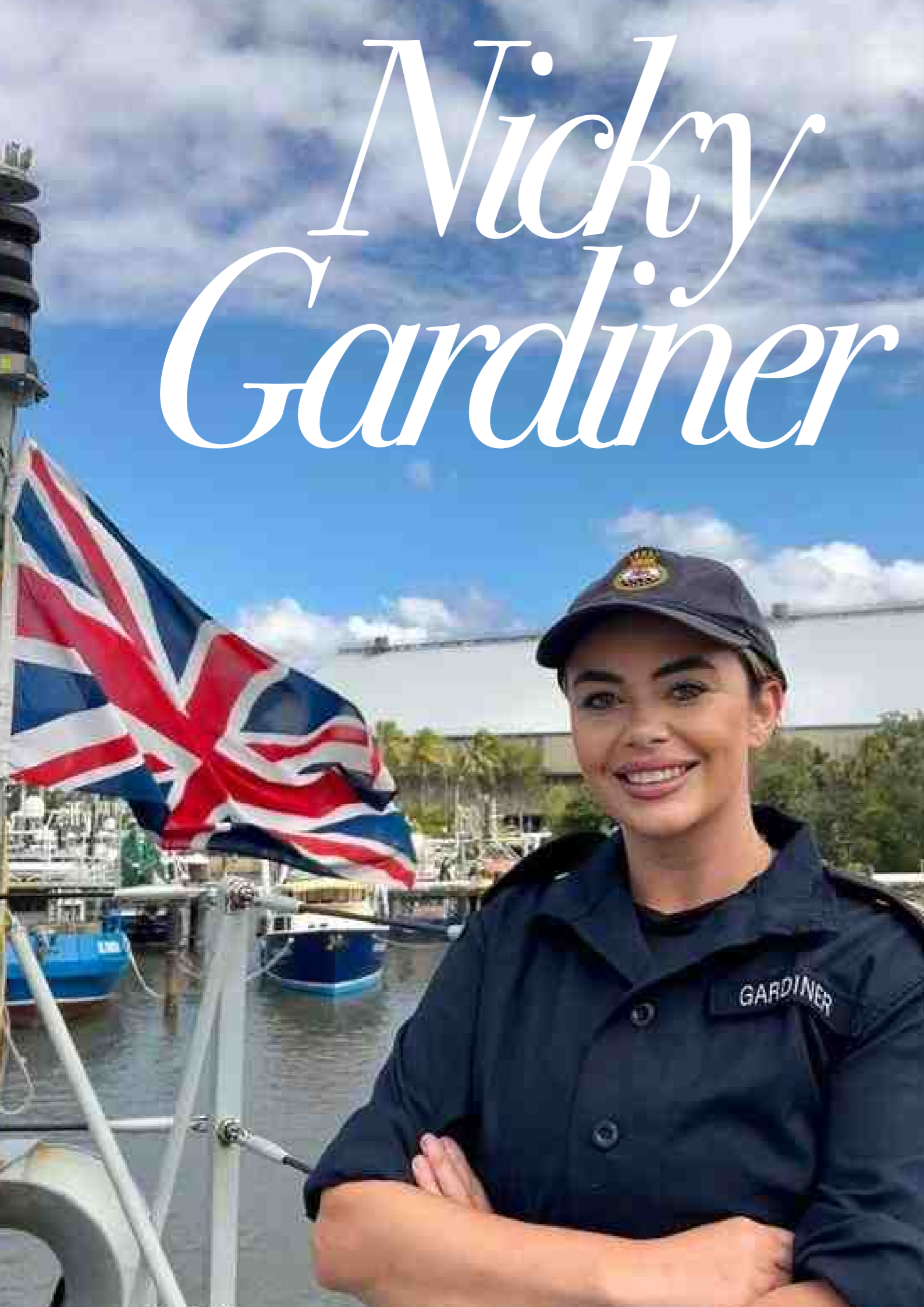
Just the different people that you meet and the things they present with, I must say I really enjoy patient care. An example

the medical branch certainly shone out as something I had been interested in on a personal note

of this would be when someone comes in and you can see that their not obviously unwell and its more of a case of mental health, they might be feeling a bit under the weather and they just want someone to talk to. That can be so nice that you can be that shoulder to lean on. On a small ship it's really nice that people see you as that person to talk to sometimes.

What are you most proud of having achieved on board?

I think it's probably when we just have really busy stints at sea, I think most recently we were sailing from Singapore to Australia. It was a really stressful time. We had a lot of poorly people on



board, Covid-19 etc. We had a lot of sea sicknesses as well as a few injuries in-between that. At the time you feel ragged and you feel so tired but when you look back you can say to yourself ôthat was a really busy period and I actually did really well to maintain that.

What is your favorite place of the deployment so far?

Ooh that is a tricky one, I think it might be Kuala Lumpur you know. I think it was just a nice mix of everything. You had the city aspect of it, there was lots to do sightseeing wise, it was also my first Christmas away on deployment as well, so it was really nice to go out with everybody and go to KL zoo and theme parks. Christmas last year was really great, it was the morale that made it and I didn't think I would enjoy it because it was the first one away from home.á We were in Brunei before and they didn't really celebrate Christmas as a mostly Muslim Country, but after finally arriving in Kuala Lumpur it was like oh my god, it's actually almost Christmas and we could finally start to get excited for celebrating together!

I have one final question for you. If you were stranded on a Desert Island what three things would you take with you?

- 1. Starbucks Filter Coffee*
- 2. A Defibrillator (I think they can be quite handy!)*
- 3. Probably my Eyebrow dye!*



Block & Tackle with buffer

Station Leave with PO(Sea) Antony Parker

Over the watch rotation I flew out to Phuket, Thailand to do a muay thai training camp. As this is the home of the sport this is always something I've wanted to do. The gym I chose was called Sinbi muay thai, a well renowned gym in Rawai, the southern region of Phuket. It is situated on the southern tip of the island away from the hustle and bustle of big towns and still retains that traditional Thailand vibe. Training was 6 days a week from 0730-0930 with additional sessions in the afternoon if you still had the energy to train again. I did this for two weeks, getting put through my paces making 8 sessions a week, with Sunday as a rest day.

The third week I took as a break travelling down to Krabi, for 3 days and nights for a fishing trip to

Gillhams fishing resort, catching Siamese carp to 90lb and Redtail catfish to 60lb. After this a quick boat over to Phi Phi island for a weekend blow out before returning back to Rawai for another two weeks in the gym. All in all it was a fantastic trip, and I came back to the Ship feeling better than ever!



Sub Lieutenant Patrick Digby is one of TAMAR's warfare officers under training. In this article he shines a light on the Ship's recent period of Operational Sea Training.

To remain deployed and effective overseas, TAMAR conducts an intensive training package annually to put the Ship's Company through their paces for eventualities we might encounter whilst deployed

My First Operational Sea Training

Getting thrown straight into a Directed Readiness Training period straight after joining a ship feels a lot like being thrown into the deep end of the swimming pool.

The other new young joiners and myself were still trying to figure out the layout of the ship ("up one ladder chain then right?" "No, that's sick bay. You're on the wrong deck") when preparations for DRT began. However, if there is a good way to get to grips with a new ship than cleaning every part of it within an inch of its life has to be a solid start.

After two days of relentless cleaning, rounds and re-cleaning we felt we'd earned our pizzas the night before the big day. We also felt that Australian Domino's has a lot to be desired as to they do not label any of their pizza boxes. I don't know if you have ever tried to sort through 57 pizzas, opening each and attempting to assess what the toppings might be, but it is surprisingly difficult.

Morning rolled round and the FOST staff embarked. It is inevitably strange having other sailors assessing you but they were enthusiastic and fair with their praise and criticism alike and receptiveness to good training is key in any walk of life.

The first success for Team Tamar came with the whole ship inspection. This involved our visitors doing a material check on the entire ship, looking out for things such as cleanliness, safety, defective equipment and our ability to secure our compartments for heavy sea states. This was where all of the cleaning came into its own and we passed with flying colours. A great turnout in and of itself but also a good start to the rest of the DRT period; as ever, first impressions really do matter.

The rest of the week was a bit of a blur as the crew were put through their paces. This took the

form of department level scrutiny; where the sailors who knew your job would shadow you and make sure you knew what you were doing, and observe whole ship evolutions. These included exercises by the exquisitely knicknamed 'wreckers', who would put our damage control and firefighting skills to the test. They had their base onboard between my cabin and the heads; meaning every trip to take a shower meant running a gauntlet of questions about the ships' firefighting equipment. Having to remember how long a drum of foam lasts when attached to a centre-fed hose reel is a novel price to pay to brush your teeth in the morning but it keeps you on your toes I guess.

The final exercise we undertook was always going to be a big one, and it certainly turned out that way. Multiple floods and casualties in a 'collision at sea' scenario. The outcome was also specifically important. We had been informed the night before that a good showing would mean the end of DRT that evening; but a poor result would mean a re-run the next day. The challenge had been set.

I was very lucky indeed as the doctor chose me to be one of the casualties that the first aiders and his medical team would have to treat. This meant that instead of running around the ship fighting floods and fires in layers of protective clothing, I would be lying on the ground pretending to be hurt. My lucky day. I can't speak for the areas of the ship I didn't see but the first aiders got to me in good time and did a bang up job of figuring out the various injuries I had been told to act out. To be totally honest I think any confusion would have been more likely from my terrible acting skills than any insufficiency in their medical knowledge. I was modelling my performance on one of the gorier scenes in Saving Private Ryan; I expect my Oscar got lost in the post.

This last exercise certainly was a great test of the ships' company in a very challenging scenario.

From my limited perspective I think everyone gained a lot from it. It was always going to be chaotic as these situations will be in real life; but dealing with that chaos and establishing priorities that are then carried out is the key. As a validation that we could do this effectively, we passed the exercise and DRT was due to end that evening. The whole ship was very happy when we found this out.

On a more personal level, DRT was very useful for us Young Officers as we got the chance to try and absorb as much as we could and use the depth of knowledge available. This is our first extended period on a ship and it can sometimes feel like hearing one more arcane acronym will finish you off but we still gained an awful lot from the FOST staff that came on board.

That being said, after a fairly intense period with lots of exercises and inspections, we had to get down to Sydney and continue our programme. Therefore it was with great excitement that we got our final briefing from the Commander, who was upbeat about our performance. We then wished FOST on their way; disembarking them on a small pilot boat. Them; slightly sea sick. Us, eager to get going. For we had an Opera House to see, a harbour bridge to climb and Bondi beach to surf, as well as a series of high profile defence engagement events and a multinational seabed warfare exercise. Tamar waved goodbye to the departing guests, turned to starboard and headed South. Sydney beckoned.





adventure training

TAMAR was lucky enough to embark two Royal Marine adventure training instructors for 9 days in August. They led expeditions into the jungle, hikes on tropical islands, and snorkelling over the great barrier reef. Read some of our Ship's Company's accounts of their time.

Sub Lieutenant Polly Shaw (CFT)

During Tamar's time alongside in Cairns, Australia for a Maintenance Period, Tamar's Ships Company have had the opportunity to take advantage of the Adventure training that is offered to ships across the fleet, Tamar has been lucky enough to work with two Royal Marine Physical Training Instructors who have organised over a weeks' worth of AT for everyone onboard, due to the proximity of Cairns to The Great Barrier Reef, activities on offer have ranged from Mountain Biking to snorkelling.

I was lucky enough to have a day of snorkeling and hiking on Fitzroy Island which is a National Park, the reefs surrounding the islands are home to not only local marine life but also turtles. My group were lucky enough to see numerous turtles,



the group also enjoyed short hike through the rainforest area of the Island to the summit of the Island which is 269m above sea level.

Many of the ships company have been lucky enough to benefit from multiple days of the AT that was offered, this culminated in over 20 members from across the ships company enjoying a day snorkeling at 3 different sites on Flynn reef.

Chef Matt Bowyer

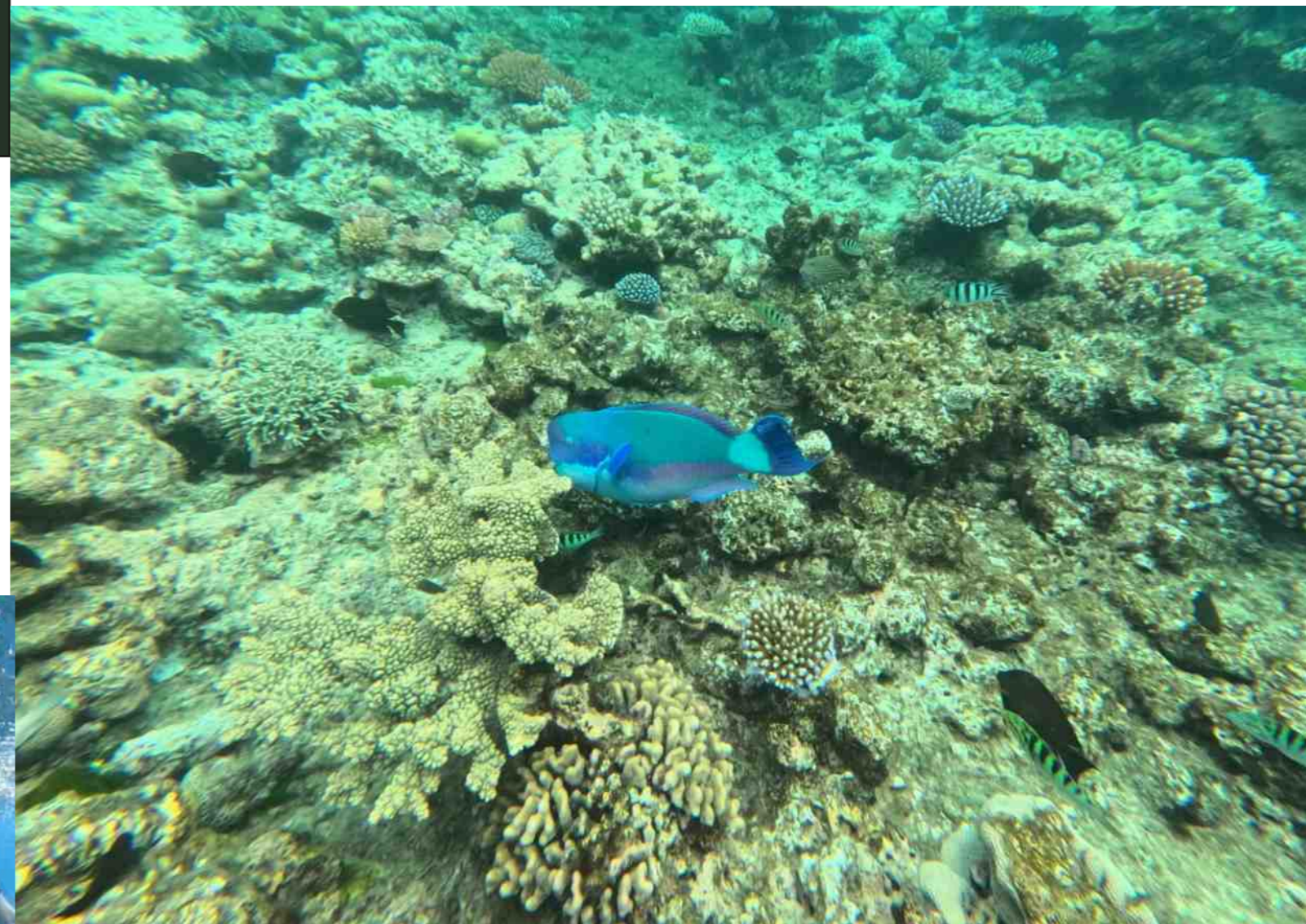
Our day started bright and early, we collected our bag meals and headed for the transport. We were all excited for what the day had in store. We hopped of the shuttle bus and waited while the PTI collected the tickets for our boat trip, we all got onboard and were on our way to Fitzroy Island. Once we arrived, we got off and had a quick brief about how the day was going to unfold, this gave us the chance to appreciate the surroundings crystal clear water, bright sunshine and not a single cloud in the sky.

After a quick coffee and change into some rather dashing swimwear we collected our snorkelling gear and headed to the beach. Bags down and suited up we were ready to hit the water, thinking it was going to be nice and warm we all hurried in only to find it was freezing! not what we were expecting!

We had a plan to head along the coral and towards a rock in the distance so we could get to see as much of it as we could. The

water being so clear it was easy to spot all the tropical fish zooming around, along the way we spotted 2 turtles and a few sharks which made a few of us cry out. We reached the rock and headed back going a little further out to see more turtles and fish doing what they do, and headed back to shore to dry off and have some lunch.

We then decided to head up on a short hike to a view point that was overlooking the whole island, it being a hot day with no clouds it made the hike a little more challenging but was worth it when we saw the view of the surrounding island and even managed to see parts of the great barrier reef. Once we arrived back down to the bottom we celebrated with a drink at the local bar before heading back on the boat that drop us back to the jetty where we picked it up early in the morning. It was such an amazing experience which I would highly recommend if anybody gets the chance to do.





finding

nemo
with **WEO**

Lieutenant Nath Davis
(Weapons Engineer Officer)

On Tuesday 22nd August, HMS TAMAR's Ship's Company were treated to a great opportunity to go snorkeling during the working day. I of course signed up for the experience as it sounded too good to be missed! We started the day by boarding a sleek catamaran tourist dive boat, based out of the Reef fleet terminal in Cairns.

After casting off the lines we were immediately headed towards one of the great wonders of the world, the Great Barrier Reef. We spent the entire day out on the water, snorkeling on 3 different dive spots on the same reef, it was the most amazing bit of snorkeling that I have ever done.

We spent over an hour at each dive site, all three of them were beautiful and full of nature. Snorkelling and diving was taking place simultaneously onboard and looking below the

azure waves to see columns of bubbling divers was a surreal sight to behold. We were even treated to a fantastic lunch on board, which included Japanese Pork Curry and cake!

Although some of our civilian counterparts struggled with the heavy chop the dive boat experienced on its way out to the reef. As we got closer the waves calmed and as we entered the water we were immersed in a vibrant blue world that was teeming with untouched nature. Although it got cloudier throughout the day, the coral seemed to shine with a supernatural brightness which never diminished. All in all it was certainly one of my best Tuesdays with the Navy! I would heartily recommend Ship's Company to take any adventurous training opportunity. Not many jobs allow you to do it, the Navy is unique in this regard and we all stand to benefit!



Camping?

Alpacca my tent!

By Lieutenant Matt Burton

TAMAR's Ship's Company has been spoilt to plenty of Australia's delights this year. Having conducted a maintenance period in Perth earlier in the summer and a quick stop in Darwin, we now find ourselves in an extended equipment-fit period in Cairns. Although the scenery could scarcely be more different (from temperate Western Australia to sub-tropical Queensland) the facilities and amenities available to your everyday traveler have remained constantly impressive.

A drive down any street in Australia will give one an education in how to 'beef up' a 4x4 to conquer the natural environment. From simple snorkels and roof tent kits, through to post-apocalyptic style mission vehicles, the Australians are endemically crazed with the ability to get into the most inhospitable but awe-inspiring places and enjoy them. This national past time intrigued a few of us back in Perth, where – having no camping experience between us – we decided to grab the essentials and an old Mitsubishi Pajero, and head into the great forests to explore and catch this national bug. It seems in retrospect to have been quite contagious. Their National Park campsites

are seemingly always situated in perfect isolation and beauty; and individual sites spaced out sufficiently that each group has their own space to enjoy the surroundings.

A prolonged period alongside anywhere means you need to structure your time – both on board the ship, and at weekends to get away and make the most of your location. When the Correspondence Officer and I were faced with this period in Cairns, we decided our experience in Perth was one to build upon. After much research of the local area it became clear that Queensland was just as well geared for outback camping as Perth. Without further ado a couple of us packed a rudimentary selection of sleeping bags and bare essentials from the cutlery cupboard; loaded up our rented 20 year old Toyota Echo (although minute, she proved most reliable!), and headed for the rainforest with a small detour to pick up a few steaks and sufficient Australian Malbecs to see the weekend through.

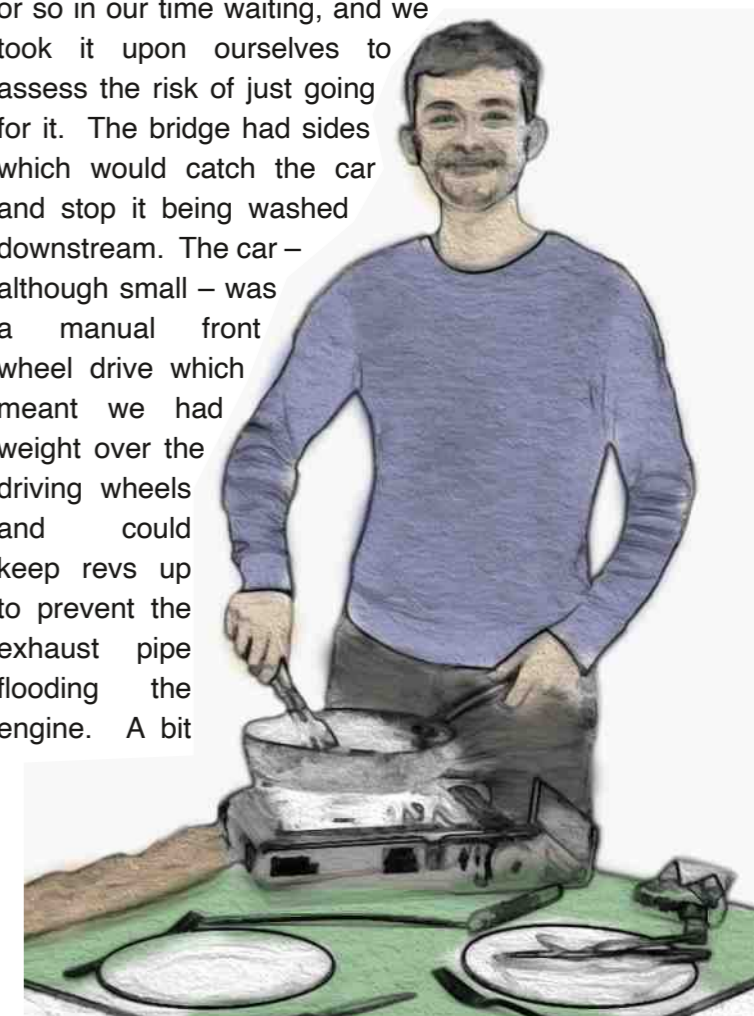
Best intentions seldom survive reality, and we soon found ourselves arriving at our campsite in the pitch black of night and deluges of driving rain. The place had something of Isla Nublar (Jurassic

Park) about it; and whilst pitching our tents the sounds of creatures around us were no less exotic than the famed Hollywood island.

A rather sleepless night followed (a midnight invasion of large toads dominates my memory of the evening); and when morning came we decided we might try for a slightly less isolated experience for our second night. We packed up our bare necessities and headed East. Destination – Lake Tinaroo – a beautiful reservoir on the high altitude tablelands to the South of Cairns. All was going well, and we were on our way by 7am, when the magnitude of the previous evening's deluges became all too suddenly apparent. After wheelspinning up a number of dirt tracks and fording a few rather increased streams, we arrived at the final obstacle. The bridge over a small river we had crossed the night before had been subsumed into a torrent of estuary proportions and Thorpe-Park-esque rapids. The storm surge was going to take a time to reduce, so we unpacked some croissants we had conveniently impulse-purchased, lit up a cigarette and started to ponder how best to attack this next obstacle. There was something remarkably old-school-TopGear about it. High-riding SUVs came and went deciding they weren't up to the task, with one warning us of fresh water crocodiles patrolling these waters. It was at this point I calmly beckoned the Correspondence Officer back who had taken it upon himself to wade to the middle of the bridge and see whether

the depth or rate of water could be surmounted oblivious of our prehistoric friends. Who ever said you feel most alive around nature had a point!

Another croissant, cigarette and a few more SUVs came and went. The lack of telephone reception also meant our looming check-in deadline time with the ship was also getting closer. I was convinced that the water had subsided by an inch or so in our time waiting, and we took it upon ourselves to assess the risk of just going for it. The bridge had sides which would catch the car and stop it being washed downstream. The car – although small – was a manual front wheel drive which meant we had weight over the driving wheels and could keep revs up to prevent the exhaust pipe flooding the engine. A bit



of dodgy engineering analysis told us that the air intake was on the down-stream side and well above the waterline, so as long as we avoided generating an all-consuming bow wave we would surely make it. With an agreement to share the costs of the tow-away operation if it all went to pot, we went for it.

I slowly let the clutch out whilst maintaining high revs to give us a good turn of speed as we entered the water. Adrenaline coursed through the cabin of the tiny Toyota, peaking when we were exactly halfway across the sunken bridge. Water poured out from the glove box above the Correspondence Officer's lap and we both tried to ignore the sinking feeling that what we had just done was A. Very stupid and B. About to result in our Toyota losing traction and being flipped to offer the waiting crocodiles their choice of human sardines. Looking out of the windows on either side we appeared to be sailing along the river. Our sub marine exhaust pipe gallantly continued to belch a machine gun staccato of fumes and the air box noisily gulped the dry Queensland air narrowly a few inches above the bow wave. Somehow the mighty Toyota never faltered. As we reached the last few metres of flood water before the high ground, morale was at an all-time high. "We had made it!"

Our trusty 250,000km Toyota never floundered and put the SUVs to shame. We stopped briefly to celebrate our successful ordeal with a breakfast steak on the side of a sugar plantation. Then on we went – still adrenaline fuelled – to our next destination in the tablelands.

After collecting firewood and a few more provisions for the next night, we went on to the lake. The environment was just as astonishing, and campsites similarly well catered for. All that remained was to uncork the next bottle and open our books to while the afternoon away; a format we have similarly repeated weekend-in, weekend-out, throughout our time in Cairns.

There are a good many of us pinching ourselves for the opportunities to see this part of the world as part of our jobs. Whether encountering gap year travelers or locals, everyone here has a similar outlook on this splendid country and its natural wonders. Whether it is scuba-diving courses over the Great Barrier Reef; treks over mountain ranges; or scaling enormous waterfalls, Queensland just keeps delivering the great outdoors in abundance. But for me it is at its best in the form of a serene vista, whilst peering over the brow of an improving novel and sipping a delightful glass of some local vintage.



Lieutenant Tom Powys Maurice RN (Gunnery Officer)

Sydney Harbor recently played host to HMS Tamar for a visit featuring high level defence engagement (including a Trafalgar Night dinner attended by His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia) as well as spearheading the innovative use of experimental underwater drones from the US, UK and Australia aboard our Ship. HMS Tamar's visit reinforced the robust ties between the United Kingdom and Australia, and support of the AUKUS defence arrangement.

Engaging in a joint defence exercise with the Australian Navy and US Navy, HMS Tamar demonstrated the interchangability between allied forces by embarking nearly 40 sailors from all three nations, proving our joint ability to work across each others' decks to great effect. With the spin up of AUKUS this partnership will be an integral part of Tamar's future operations.

A standout feature of HMS Tamar's visit was the deployment and showcase of experimental underwater drones as part of a seabed warfare exercise. These cutting-edge devices, equipped with advanced sensors and autonomous capabilities, underscored the Royal Navy's dedication to staying at the forefront of maritime

technology. The drones demonstrated their prowess in underwater protection of seabed cables critical to national security, adding a layer of strategic depth to naval operations beneath the waves. Capable of identifying and neutralizing underwater mines without endangering human life, these drones contribute significantly to ensuring safe maritime passages and fortifying both national and international security interests.

While onshore engagements and maritime exercises kept the Ship's Company of HMS Tamar busy, there was ample time for them to savour the delights of Sydney. Berthed right next to the Sydney Opera house, the crew had breath-taking views of the city and the prime location meant that Ship's Company could easily engage in sport, leisurely walks along the harbour and the exploring of iconic landmarks such as the botanical gardens and the Opera House itself. They also enjoyed the vibrant atmosphere of the city's nightlife and warm hospitality of their Australian hosts.

The city's diverse cultural offerings and scenic beauty definitely ranked among the ships best port visits so far.

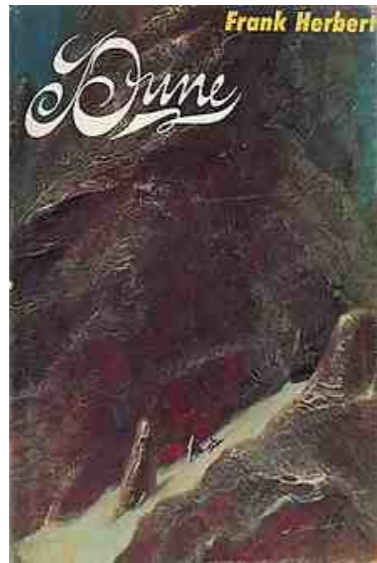


Readers' Corner

We are delighted to welcome you to readers' corner! For many of our Ship's Company, getting lost in a book provides the perfect respite from what can be an intense and busy programme, particularly when we are away for 9 months of the year. In the first edition Able Seaman Connor Jurcyszyn reviews Frank Herbert's 'Dune'.

Frank Herbert's seminal 1965 Sci-Fi epic is set 20,000 years in the future. Liberal democracy is long a thing of the past and the vast majority of the civilized universe is ruled by an interplanetary Imperium. Crucial to the continued existence of the Imperium is the precious geriatric spice known as 'Melange' which when habitually ingested, grants its user prolonged life, increased awareness and in some humans: prescience; the ability to see into the future. It is this form of precognition that makes space travel possible and in doing so makes Melange by far the most valuable commodity in the known universe.

However the spice grows on one planet only: the barren desert world of 'Arrakis' also known as 'Dune', guarded by the giant killer sandworms that inhabit it. Governance of Arrakis, long held by the cruel and tyrannical House Harkonnen is now being handed to their centuries old rivals the noble House Atriedes; however when an imperial plot sees the Atriedes patriarch Duke Leto assassinated, his son, the young Paul is forced to seek the aid of the indigenous desert dwellers known as the Fremen, in the hope of defeating the Harkonnens and securing the survival of his House.



Dune appealed to me after having seen the trailer for the recent film adaptation by Denis Villeneuve back in 2021. I'd been aware of its cult following for years however not being much of a science fiction fan it had never really found its way to the top of my reading list until now. By no way a

simple action adventure novel, Dune deals with themes of politics, ecology, leadership, destiny, causality, religion, philosophy, psychology and the cult of the hero. Its success would go on to spawn several sequels and prequels including 'Dune Messiah', 'Children of Dune', 'God Emperor Of Dune', 'Chapterhouse Dune' and many more. With regards to style the use of literary allegory heavily permeates the series. Herbert: a former US Navy photographer, journalist, editor and speechwriter

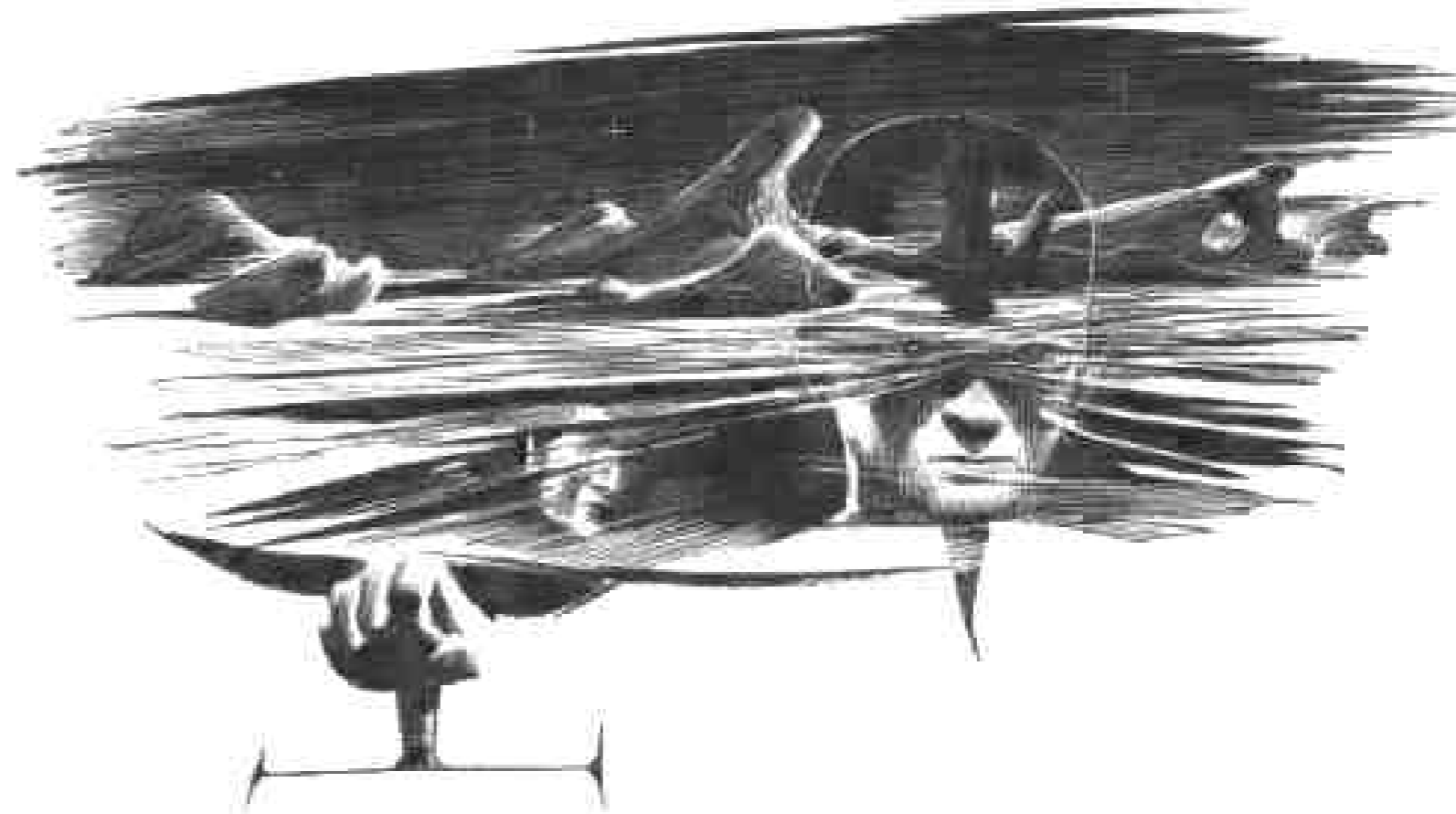
for the Republican Party had spent years fascinated by and researching sand dunes as well as environmental ecology. The ethical questions of environmentalism that arise throughout the series mirror Herbert's own beliefs regarding humanity's affect and treatment of planet earth with Herbert himself having being quite opinionated on the subject in several media appearances throughout the years. Dune is a hallmark of the sci-fi genre and its influence on popular culture whilst not

always acknowledged in the mainstream is without question; creating innumerable imitators over the years with debts owed by George Lucas as well as others.

Life onboard a naval warship often requires a degree of escape, with most sailors onboard Tamar having at least one or two books tucked

away to take their minds off the day to day challenges. However being three books deep into the franchise I couldn't recommend delving into this series highly enough. Whether you're on a 7 month deployment in the Gulf or on a lunch break from the office, the depth, scope and scale of the Dune universe is the ultimate literary escape. Two thumbs up from me!

" life onboard a naval warship often requires a degree of escape, with most sailors onboard Tamar having at least one or two books tucked away to take their minds off the day to day challenges "



Awards & Commendations

Congratulations to the following people for their achievements since the last edition.

HMS TAMAR is immensely proud to announce the selections for promotion of

Lieutenant Matthew Burton to Lieutenant Commander
Lieutenant Thomas 'Tracy' Chapman to Lieutenant Commander
Lieutenant Nathan Davies to Lieutenant Commander
Petty Officer Ben Smith to Chief Petty Officer
Engineering Technician Luke Boardman to Leading Engineering Technician

Successful attainment of the Bridge Warfare Qualification,
Lieutenant Ben Blackmore

Successful attainment of Platform Endorsement as Officer of the Watch,
Sub-Lieutenant Justine Lambert

Successful completion of the Coaching and Mentoring course level three.
With special thanks to Lt. Aimee Foster for the provisioning and teaching of the qualification at
the Australian Shore Establishment HMAS CAIRNS

ET ME Poppy-Rose Chambers
MA Nicola Gardiner
LET WE Rhys Warren

LMA Katheryn Dodd
ET ME Marco Richards
ET ME Jordan Lee



The Commanding Officer's Termly prize winners:

PO(Sea) Antony Parker (Warfare)

Chef Matt Bowyer (Logistics)

ET Marco Richards (Marine Engineer)

ET Harry McMahon (Weapons Engineer)

Lieutenant Matthew Burton - successful completion of his first Command Qualification

AB(Sea) Connor Jurczynsyn - selection for branch transfer to Mine Clearance Diver

ET(CIS) Ollie Faucett - advancement to Engineering Technician (First Class)

And congratulations to HMS TAMAR for winning the Jersey Cup - best deployed OPV!

As always, our thanks and appreciation to our Affiliates. Who with each year help broaden the friendship and family of HMS TAMAR

Keeping in touch...

Any family member of a serving military person will understand all too well the trials and tribulations of maintaining contact with loved ones while they are at sea, particularly when operating in areas where connectivity may be limited. It can be an even harder task remembering where in the world your family are and what they are up to. However, it has now become slightly easier since the launch of the Royal Navy Forum—a safe and monitored online site which families can log into and see updates.

To make an account scan the QR code, or search for the Royal Navy Forum on Google where you can sign up with your email address. There is a specific page for HMS TAMAR; once you are logged in click on Groups > Surface Fleet > Offshore Patrol Vessels > Tamar. Once there you can check out photos in the gallery, leave messages and keep up to date with any new announcements. The wider forum provides support and information including upcoming events, support networks and news articles.

Although not everything we do can be shared for security purposes, it is a safe and secure way of hearing news of our deployment.

If you have any questions or would like to know anything about His Majesty's Ship TAMAR and her crew, please get in touch. You can email the Correspondence Officer on:

HMSTAMAR-EXEC-CORRO@mod.uk ... or get in touch with us via our X feed: **@hms_Tamar**

Don't forget to follow us on X for more news. You can find us on the official X page by searching **@hms_Tamar**.

