

CPOMEA Martin "Barney" Barmby

I joined the Royal Navy as a Marine Engineering Mechanic 2nd class on the 16th of June 1986 at HMS Raleigh. I had followed my elder brother Peter, into the RN as he had already been in 9 years as a submariner, having served on O Boats and T boats as an MEM, LMEM and had become a POMEA(M).

An intense 7 weeks of turning me from a civilian into a sailor followed, this task had been made a bit harder as I had 4 years army cadets and a year in the Territorial Army and as we all know army drill is a lot harder than navy drill! The RN must have seen something in me as I was made class leader through out Phase 1,2 and 3 training, my time as a cadet Sergeant and a Lance Corporal in the TA may have helped! After trade training to be an MEM at HMS Sultan I was sent to HMS Collingwood for the second to last MEM(L) course to be held there before all ME training moved to HMS Sultan. On completion of Electrical training I was picked to be an SSMEM, a specially selected MEM for accelerated advancement to Leading Hand. After completing my auxiliary machinery certificates on HMS Illustrious and my Fleet board for LMEM, a year to the day after joining up I was passed for killick. A short time in Fleet Support at HMS Nelson followed after which in September 1987 I joined HMS Dolphin for basic submarine training as a volunteer, following my brother onto diesel electric submarines. I joined HMS/m Otter in January 1988 and after completing my Part 3 training to be a qualified submariner I stayed on Otter until September 1989 when I was sent back to HMS Sultan to complete LMEM(L) Qualifying course for



six months, followed by Leading Rates Leadership course at HMS Royal Arthur for two weeks. Joining HMS/m Opportune in Plymouth just as she was leaving refit saw some interesting times, a full work up to war standards, making it to the Mediterranean Sea for the first Gulf War to be turned round before the Sue Canal as the war had finished! Time spent spying on Colonel Gaddafi due to the trade embargo in force at that time, covert operations with SAS embarked and supporting NATO in the blockade of Yugoslavia/ Bosnia during that conflict.

Whilst on Staff College sea days with many high ranking officers on board we struck a Panamanian Cement freighter off the Isle of Wight in thick fog, they thought they had sunk us, but thankfully they had not, we sustained damage to our fore planes. The report in the Sun newspaper stated that "Sailors heard a loud bang, followed by swearing!" Options for change saw the RN get rid of all diesel submarines, after which I volunteered for Vanguard class submarines based in Faslane. A short stint on MV Endeavour, a tug in Faslane as its MEO before being drafted to HMS Sultan followed. I completed the second to last Marine Engineering Artificers Candidate Course at HMS Sultan, finishing as an A/POMEA(EL)SM. Three months in Rutherford block saw my conversion to a Nuclear Submariner, joining HMS/m Vigilant in January of 1998. I stayed on Vigilant until December 2000, completing four deterrent patrols. Eighteen months shore side split between HMS Sultan and SMQ(N) as an instructor, saw me return to HMS Vigilant as a CPOMEA(EL)SM completing a further three deterrent patrols. One of my last duties on board Vigilant, saw me save the life of a WOMEA2 who went against my advice and subsequently shorted out a spanner across live 440v terminal and suffered horrific burns. For my swift life saving actions I was awarded a Commander in Chief Fleets Commendation. I returned to SMQ (North) as an instructor in January 2005 and stayed there, finishing as lead instructor in August 2008 whence I de-mobbed. During that time I acted as a sea rider taking a group of trainee submariners to the USA on HMS/m Vanguard after they had only done five weeks of a ten week course and all managed to qualify as submariners, a very proud time indeed. November 2007 saw me awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for all the work I had undertaken with cadets outside my duties in the RN at Gosport, Helensburgh and Bridlington and my allegiance to the RNA and RBL whilst serving. On return to Bridlington I was heavily involved with the Royal Naval Section of the Combined Cadet Force at Bridlington School, which I commanded for three years as LT(CCF) RNR.

Following the closure of that unit last September LT(SCC) Mikki Jackson and I have formed a Sea Cadet Unit in Bridlington that is heavily supported by the RNA of Bridlington. Within the RNA I have served as Chairman for five years and now hold the role of Standard Bearer. Having been a member of Bridlington RNA since 1989, I can honestly say the overriding factor that makes it such a wonderful thing to be part of is the shipmates I have met, to a man and woman in these PC days I can honestly say I would have been honoured to serve with everyone of you, having experienced the antics we get up to in the RNA, I am not sure, however, if I would have made it to Chief if I had known you lot in the mob! Once navy always navy.

RNA, its more than just a drinking club!
Martin Barmby RN 1986-2008