**Setting The Standard**

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I have been asked by our Website Guru, Mick Murden, to pen a few words with regard to The HMS EXETER ASSOCIATION STANDARD, so here goes.....!! Firstly let me introduce myself, I am Dean Deakins, formerly Leading Seaman (Missile) Dean Deakins, 4.5” Gun Controller, Quarter Master, Gunners’ Party, Foc’sle Part Of Ship Leading Hand and Leading Hand Of The Mess for the Gunners’ Mess which during my time was 3 DELTA. I served on the Type 42 Destroyer EXETER from 1981 – 1983, throughout The Falklands Conflict and attained the Rate of Petty Officer upon our return in 1982.

HMS Exeter was by far the most enjoyable and memorable ship upon which I served, for a whole host of reasons, and I can safely say that it was my ‘Purple Patch’ in what has turned out to be a rather ‘chequered’ Career!!...

As a Gunnery Rate in the RN, it is instilled into you that one must maintain the highest ‘**Standards**’ in Dress, Appearance & Bearing and carry out one’s Drills to a ‘**Standard**’(oops there’s that word again!) higher & greater than those of your foe..... ‘Si Vis Pacem Para Bellum’ In Time Of Peace Prepare For War is the Motto of The Gunnery, Missile, Above Water Warfare, call it what you will, Branch...More Latin, apologies to Mick Murden if incorrect (I’m sure as a Latin Scholar he’ll correct!), ‘Semper Strenuissima’, Forever Striving is the Motto of The Royal Naval Gunnery Instructors’ Association.

I was extremely fortunate in the fact that I was ‘mentored’ by Chief GI’s of the ‘Old School’, Roy Smith to begin with, and latterly Phil Greenaway, and Petty Officers David ‘Danny’ Daniel and ‘Bungy’ Williams , now both sadly ‘Crossed The Bar’, who all greatly influenced and moulded both my professional and personal outlook on life in the Royal Navy. They taught me as a Leading Hand to ‘Set An Example....Not Be One!!’....Under their Guidance and Influence, I learned Values and ‘**Standards’** of Leadership & Compassion that were to put me in good stead for the testing times ahead.....

HMS Exeter, my Exeter, was a very happy ship and this stemmed from the **Standard** set from the very Top under the Command of Captain Hugh Balfour right down to the youngest Junior...Captain Hugh loved his ‘Whizz Bangs!’, as he called Gunnery, and we in turn strove to aspire to the **Standard** he asked of us... This was not just a ‘Gunnery Fest’, but his happy and professional Outlook & Leadership filtered throughout the whole Ships’ Company. Little did we know that this Standard was to be put to the test in 1982?

The 1982 Crew are justly proud of their achievements during the Falklands Conflict, and have met each year to commemorate surviving countless attacks during that time. Over the years, the notion of commissioning an HMS EXETER STANDARD was bandied about, although nothing really came of it until the Autumn of 2015.

I went on to become a State Ceremonial Drill Instructor during my time in the RN, and was involved in The Garden Of Remembrance, Lord Mayor’s Show, The Festival Of Remembrance & The Cenotaph Parades in London and particularly The 50th Commemorations of VE & VJ Days in 1995. Some time after leaving the RN, I was approached by Bob Mullen, who was keen to form a Type 42 Association, for those who had served on these 14 ships of the Class, including SHEFFIELD, COVENTRY, GLASGOW & of course our beloved EXETER. I served on six of this Class, Sheffield (first commission), EXETER, Newcastle, Manchester, Southampton & Nottingham and met many many ex Exeters during this time, all of whom agreed that Exeter was by far the best ship we had served on.

Bob wanted me to look after The Ceremonial, ‘Corporate’ aspects if you like, of forming a Veterans Association with it’s own identity, Crest, Blazer Badge, Dress and wait for it, to set the **STANDARD** for it’s Members....Thanks very largely to Social Media, and a certain age range of it’s target audience, wishing in some way to commemorate almost 40 years of Sterling Service of the Type 42’s, an Association was formed....A Committee was formed...Ties and Blazer Badges ensued....And then (wait for it!!).....A **Standard!!**..The T42A’s First Reunion was held at HMS Excellent, and The first T42A Standard (now The T42A National Standard, paraded alongside ours at Exeter this year) was Dedicated at a Drum Head Ceremony provided by The Corps Of Drums Royal Marines School Of Music. Little was I to realise that this would spawn not just one but to date SIX Divisional T42A Standards, with a London Divisional Standard to be Dedicated shortly, and also an HMS Birmingham Standard!!...

Which brings us to the History of The HMS EXETER ASSOCIATION Standard...Following the success of The T42A, and the willingness of it’s Members to volunteer as Standard Bearers around the Country at local Remembrance Parades & also Funerals, and also attending The National Remembrance Parade at The Cenotaph for the fourth year (No Standards at this one, the Flags of The Army Navy & RAF adorning the Cenotaph act as The Standards for all 3 Services), and having designed, sourced and commissioned the T42A Regional Standards from The Hampshire Flag Company and accessories from Newton & Newton, (not without some Trial & Error, the first Standard was distinctly Sub Standard!!...a ghastly patchwork affair that had to go back to the drawing board!!....Spelling mistakes Exeter spelt EXETETER (which is fine if you’re the Station Master at Exeter St David’s!!), incorrect Ship’s Crests (Coventry!) and the like, I had learned the hard way and was ready to mute a notion on Social Media.....

**THE HMS EXETER STANDARD**

Sometime in the autumn of 2015, I posted on Facebook, the idea of an HMS EXETER STANDARD, and asked if anyone would be interested in raising the funds and contributing to the costs of having a Standard commissioned?....Within some 36 hours, ex Type 42 Exeters from across the whole span of it’s service had pledged contributions to the approximate total of £1000 required.....That is some £500 for the actual Standard and the rest for Pole, Tassles, Carry Belt, Gauntlets, Funeral Drape & Carry Case etc. Astounded by this, I stated that although happy to instigate the Sourcing & Design

of said Standard, being a simple ‘Cement Head’, I was reluctant to handle the financial aspects?...Step up to the Plate Paul ‘Jed’ Stone our ‘Treasurer In Waiting!!’ who set up a PayPal Account and coordinated payments. ......Step Up Jessica Davies our ‘Association Secretary In Waiting’ who coordinated a whole host of things really!!??....Others soon followed (Dougie Leask, Mandy Cooper, Mick Murden to mention a few, followed by many too numerous to mention here!) and a Design was hammered out and the Standard was set into Production!!....

Now that we had a Standard, the question was raised of what exactly we were going to do with it!?!?...... One of my Proudest Moments was when in between returning from The Falklands Conflict in the Summer of 1982, and the weekend just before we re-deployed to The South Atlantic in January 1983, D89 Exeters were Granted The Freedom Of The City of Exeter for the first time...It was my greatest Honour to be Leading Hand Of The Colour Escort along with Daffyd Williams, and PO(M) Bungy Williams carrying the White Ensign... I suggested that we request to Dedicate our New Standard in Exeter Cathedral in January 2016 to commemorate the First Freedom Parade?....Meanwhile Dougie Leask had established and maintained links with the Survivors, Families and Relations of The Battle Of The River Plate, and also The Macassar Survivors’ Families, who it transpired, held a small Service to commemorate the Sinking of 68 EXETER at The Battle of Java Sea on or as near to March 1st...We humbly requested that we may join them in their Commemorations...

Enter Tom Jowett, and thanks to the efforts of Dougie Leask and Jessica Davies, an association (quite literally!!) and affinity was formed!....This association (note with a small ‘a’!!) was gaining momentum...We now needed a Committee to coordinate all manner of things...Cathedral Service, Reunion, Catering, Ticket Sales, and a hundred and one other aspects!!...And so an ASSOCIATION was Born!! .......

I wish to acknowledge someone who has perhaps not been aware of her contribution and that one is Trish Ashmore ......Trish had set up a rather obscure, overlooked HMS EXETER Facebook Page, which we as a Committee asked to take on, as a communications tool to get the message out there...This is now of course our Association Face Book Page, bringing together the many aspects of the Rich & Memorable History of 68 and D89, and Uniting all who hold the name HMS EXETER dear to their hearts. From this has been born the HMS Exeter Website, for which our Thanks and Gratitude go to Mick Murden, our Website Guru....

I will not go into specific details as I have probably bored you enough already, but suffice to say that the Momentum was unstoppable and thanks to the dedication and efforts of many, The HMS EXETER Standard was Dedicated on February 27th 2016, alongside HMS EXETER 68 White Ensign, and a Wreath Laying Service to the Memory OF The Battle Of The River Plate and Java Sea and Macassar Far East Prisoners Of War....The various components of this new Association gathered together and a very festive Reunion ensued!!......AND (beyond my wildest expectations) I got my Parade!!.....On Sunday 1st March The Standard was then Paraded at The National Memorial Arboretum for The Unveiling of The Gulf War Memorial, thereby commemorating 4 of the 9 Battle Honours of HMS Exeter

Our Thanks go to those who have helped and given their Support along the way....The Western Division Royal Navy Commander Commodore Jamie Miller and his Deputy Commander Steve Henighan, Rear Admiral Paul Bennett, The Band of HM Royal Marines Lympstone, HMS Raliegh, HMS Defender, TS Exeter, The Royal Marines Association Exeter Branch, The Submariner’s Association, The White Ensign Club Exeter, The Lord Mayor of Exeter, Exeter Chiefs Rugby Club, South West Communications, Sir Donald Gosling and all that have donated and sponsored us...

But finally getting back to THAT Standard......In times of Old, a Regimental or Corps Colour or Standard was used to Rally The Troops on the Battle Field, a focal point to Muster and Defend...My eternal gratitude must go to those who have volunteered to Carry Our Standard....Tom Tug Wilson (Portsmouth Remembrance 2015 Exeter 2016), Michael Husselbee (Armed Forces Day Plymouth & Exeter, Exeter Remembrance 2016), Robbie Robinson (Funeral 2016), John McKnight(Pangbourne College 2016) Mick Murden (Funeral 2016)....Always on the lookout for more Volunteers to step up to the Plate??.....Thank You!!



Rallying to Our Standard, Setting & Maintaining The Standard....SEMPER FIDELIS!!

Dean Deakins

Parade Marshal (Gob On Legs)

HMS EXETER ASSOCIATION