

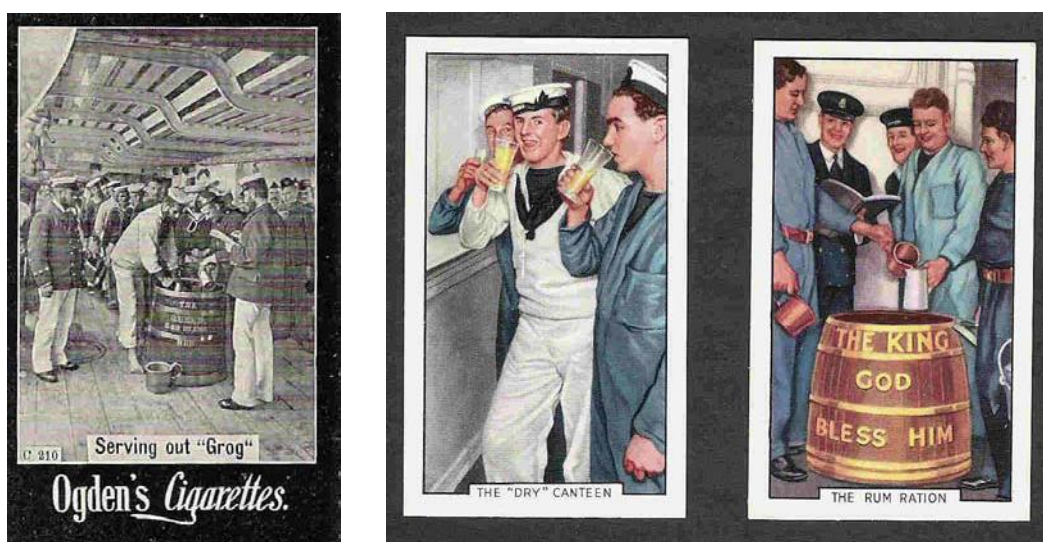
Both L&B and Wills mention that those men who opted not to take their rum ration were entitled to a payment in lieu. The amount is not stated but from a book written by a wartime sailor, which actually started my interest in the subject, the sum allowed during the 1939-45 war was threepence a day. Even in those days this seems pretty poor value, certainly not enough to buy five cigarettes from the tobacconist, but maybe sufficient if sailors could purchase their fags duty free.

The book gives a more human insight into the procedure surrounding the rum ration and confirms that the spirit purchased in pubs was nothing like as good as Navy rum. The routine of dishing out the grog started when at eleven o'clock "Up Spirits" was piped. This was the signal for the Officer of the Day and the Cox'n to descend to the spirit room and to draw off the precise amount of rum required. The rum was sucked out of the barrel through a long pipe and plunger into copper jugs of standard measure. The spirit was eventually poured into a large teak brass bound tub, which can be seen most clearly on the Gallaher card, and the water added.

As can be seen from the L&B card, the Leading Hand of each mess comes in turn with a container and the Cox'n measures out his mess's issue. When every mess has drawn, any surplus is poured into the scuppers and the tub is swilled out with water. The Leading Hand returns to his mess and pours out each man's tot. Although illegal to save or share these tots this was not an uncommon practice. To give someone else your tot or even "sippers" was considered a mark of friendship and on anniversaries or birthdays it was, apparently, almost obligatory.

That the custom was highly regarded and appreciated by the crew probably accounts for it being so well represented on cards. Other images of this practice from an earlier age can be seen in Ogden's *General Interest Series at C210* and Player's series of *Life on Board a Man of War 1805-1905*. Rather sadly, the practice was discontinued on 30th July 1970, although a former naval officer has told me that at ex Naval "get-togethers" there is a traditional ceremony of "The Death of the Tot" as a memorial to bygone days. Bearing in mind that there are certain shared customs I wonder if the Royal New Zealand Navy ever embraced "grog". Can anyone confirm this? {see footnote; Ed.}

Gallaher's *The Navy* series provides a couple of interesting postscripts to the story of grog. Firstly, card No.14 already referred to also includes a brief explanation of the phrase, "Splice the Mainbrace", which is a special issue of rum for the crew to drink the monarch's health on great occasions such as a Naval Review. In more recent times this could be ordered by the Captain for work in exceptional or hazardous conditions. Secondly, on card No.8 there is reference to The "Dry" Canteen where the picture shows men enjoying a cooling drink. These canteens were found on Battleships and other large vessels, and served different flavoured soft fruit drinks, iced drinks, ices and sundaes.



Somehow, I can't imagine a visit to the dry canteen being quite as invigorating and uplifting as that daily tot of grog!

{Footnote: Noel Martin, an ex Royal NZ Navy man confirms that the NZ Navy had similar rum rations and rules but the RNZN also discontinued the custom some time in the 1980s; Ed.}