



HMS BELFAST ASSOCIATION



HMRC Recognised Charity
Life Patron Admiral the Lord West of Spithead. GCB. DSC. RN.
President Captain Mike Matthews. RN
Vice Presidents Rear Admiral Ian H Richards. AO. BEc. RAN.
Hon Tim Lewin
Commodore Peter Eberle. OBE. RN.



SEAHORSE Summer 2018



Ships 80th Birthday Celebration Edition



Photo of Veterans attending ships 80th Birthday Celebration in front of A Turret

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Website:- www.hmsbelfastassociation.org

Your Presidents Piece



What a spirited time we have had since the spring Spotlight! As you will read the 80th Anniversary Celebrations were a resounding success. From the Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast striking 8 Bells to start the party to you our Veterans manning 2-deck passage to regale visitors with your inimitable stories it was a memorable weekend. I met Deputy Lord Mayor Sonia again in Belfast City recently and she affirmed that this had been one of the highlights of her year in office. While there I also visited the just visible remains of the slipway from which our ship was launched on St Patrick's Day 1938. It gave me quite a tingle to remember all that had happened in the intervening years. I applaud

Ngaire's initiative to populate the visitor route with our (and other) WW2 Veterans whenever she can. I will be on occasional parade for this venture.

Hot on the heels of the 80th came our inbound WW2 Victory Day visitors from Russia. Our Association hosted them through 5 days which took them up to Yorkshire and down to Portsmouth as well as on board for a well-attended evening Reception. None of us will forget the Sunset Ceremony with British, Russian, Canadian and Jamaican Veterans seated in fraternal accord on the Quarterdeck. And if you weren't there then catch the magic on this video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odaVavRG3x4>

Looking ahead our next major event will be the Trafalgar Dinner with our Life Patron Admiral Lord West as the principal guest. After that we plan to repeat last year's precedent of flying the Canadian Maple Leaf Flag during Christmas week, particularly as this year is the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the North Cape. Next year is of course the 75th Anniversary of D-Day and so it would seem appropriate to mark our ship's 3rd Battle Honour with an event next summer.

Finally we mourn the recent death of 'Admiral Jim' our much loved past President and Life Patron and possibly our only Veteran who served twice in BELFAST. However the Eberle name lives on in our ranks with his son Peter becoming an increasingly active Vice-President.

It is intended to hold a memorial service to remember the life of Admiral Sir James Eberle at Dartmouth Royal Naval College in the Future. If anyone would like to know details of this when known, please let Wally know by letter or email and he will send you any information when known.

H.M.S Belfast Association, Slops List

Association Baseball Caps,	£10.00p	Association Ties	£15.00p
Association Blazer Badges	£17.00p	Polo Shirt	£12.00p
Please Add for Post & Packing	£ 3.50p		

Please send requests for Slops To:- Wally Filby, 208 Elis David Almshouses, Duppas Hill Terrace, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 4BT

Please make Cheques payable to "HMS Belfast Association" Alternatively if you can pay by internet email your request to Wally at:- wh.filby@gmail.com

Our Bank Details are:-	Bank:- Lloyds TSB.	Account Name:- HMS Belfast Association.
	Account No:- 03527852	Sort Code:- 30-99-93

80th Birthday Anniversary Celebrations – 16th & 17th March 2018

Please note all photo's included with this article are with the Kind permission of those who have donated them including the Imperial War Museum and Sandra Rowse.

The idea of celebrating the 80th Anniversary of our ship's Launch at Harland & Wolff on St Patrick's Day 1938 took hold a year ago. It will quite likely be the last significant decade date when there will be any of us around nimble enough to attend and, once the IWM had appreciated this, they were keen to share the event with us and use it to raise the ship's profile and re-energise some of our traditional links.



Many contributed thoughts and ideas. It was decided to split the activities over 2 days. The IWM would mastermind a gathering on the Friday and activities for visitors throughout the weekend and we would precede our AGM on the Saturday with an 80 minute Veterans "man ship" for early visitors.

Vice-President Tim Lewin took the lead for us in assembling the ingredients and guest list for Friday: the Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast striking 8 Bells at noon: a speech of welcome on the Boat deck by Tim; an act of Remembrance (the Reverend David Houston); the Last Post, 1 minutes Silence and Reveille: a 6 gun salvo from A and B turrets; 3 Cheers for the ship and her Association, all in warm sunshine on the upper deck.



Rear-Admiral Amjad Hussain (an IWM Trustee) acted as Master of Ceremonies ushering all down to the Ships Company Dining Hall for a Buffet Lunch, Speeches, the Cutting of a Cake (jointly by 104 year old John Harrison and the youngest City of London Sea Cadet) and 2 Toasts (proposed by our Chairman, Fred) drunk with gifted white rum.



Diane Lees (IWM Director-General), Gavin Robinson (MP for East Belfast) and I as your President were the speech-makers. Guests present represented the IWM (including the Chairman Sir Stuart Peach); the City of Belfast, the Irish Society and Harland & Wolff; Central and Local Government; MOD and Foreign Office; Commonwealth Attachés and local Thames associated organisations. From further afield came 3 of our Russian friends (Captain Sergey Aprelev, Professor Valentina Golysheva and KRASSIN Director Irina Stont) and George Milne (Russian Arctic Convoy Museum Project, Aultbea). 3 of Admiral Morgan-Giles' "children" were present. Mix in you, our Veterans, and your families, our growing number of Associate Members and our smart young Sea Cadets and it all made for a very merry and friendly affair. The Souvenir Book "HMS BELFAST 1938 - 2018" – inspired by Tim Lewin and beautifully illustrated with Jim Rae's atmospheric water colours – was a free gift to all who attended.



The IWM Team excelled themselves throughout. A memorable photo call started the proceedings with John Harrison stealing the show. Press and media interest was high throughout. Winter had returned overnight on Friday but this did not upset the first event on Saturday: a photo call with Great British Bake-Off winner Sophie Faldo and the 9-tier cake she had made for visitors to enjoy.



The weather also constrained our “meet the vets” evolution confining it to the length of 2-deck passage. Those visitors who had braved the elements to arrive early were rewarded. How appropriate that Ngaire, who organised it, placed John Miell in the Galley!



As well as the cake, birthday balloons, a rum bar, a photo booth and temporary tattoos were available on the visitor trail.

We started our 20th AGM in the SCDH at 1230. Once we had completed our business, time was allocated for short presentations by Sergey Aprelev and Valentina Golysheva before Up Spirits (brown rum this time!). An animated finger buffet lunch punctuated much reminiscing well on into the afternoon.

So ended a fitting celebration of BELFAST's 80th Anniversary. I hope that the ripples from it will spread wide reminding everyone that we are a big pebble in the Pool and renewing old - and forging new - links with our supporters. 57 years after I first set foot on board I have been reminded just how very lucky we are to still have our ship around and accessible.

#592 Captain Mike Matthews Association President

20th AGM 2018 Report

The full minutes of the meeting will be published in the Spring 2019 Seahorse prior to our next AGM,

Our 20th AGM & Reunion was held in the Ships Company Dining Hall on Saturday 17th March, 34 voting members attended with 19 Wives, Carers & Guests, Coffee and Tea were served to all prior to the start of the meeting at 12.30, there were 6 apologies for absence.

The meeting started promptly with our President Captain Mike Matthews welcoming everyone to the meeting on this the ships 80th Birthday, he expressed thanks to the IWM team which had made yesterdays and this morning celebration such a success, he then went on to welcome our friends from far away who were present, George Milne president of the Arctic Museum project Loch Ewe, also Captain Sergey Aprelev Vice President of St Petersburg Polar Convoy Club and Professor Valentina Golysheva a Russian Arctic Convoy Veterans Daughter from Arkhangelsk.

In the absence of our Padre Arthur Nunnerley and at his suggestion, Richard Thorne read out the names of 20 of our members who have Crossed the Bar since our last AGM finishing with the Naval Prayer and after a short silence finished with the Kohima epitaph.

The minutes of the 19th AGM were adopted as correct.

The Chairman mentioned the fact that this was the second year that we have had Ladies sitting on our committee who are making a great difference especially with our relationship with the IWM, he also mentioned what a successful year we have just had mentioning the VE day celebration both here and at Loch Ewe, and excellent Reunion in June and the Immortal Convoy Conference at St Petersburg, amongst many other events.

Last years Accounts on page 7 & 8 of the Spring Seahorse had been Audited with a good report, which as we are now a recognised Charity were examined in accordance with the Charity Commission Guidelines & Rules. The 2017 Accounts were accepted by the meeting, the treasurers also mentioned that he had just received £436.41p from HMRC being our Gift Aid Claim for Subs and Donation received last Year. It was agreed that we should retain our Auditors services for next year. The remainder of the Administrators reports were also accepted.



The Social Secretary besides mentioning the Buffet and Cash bar after the meeting also reminded everyone that this years Trafalgar night Dinner will be on Saturday 20th October, we hope the price will be about the same, and asked that members should get their application in as soon as they can to avoid being disappointed.

The slops Bosun was not present but the Chairman stated that slops are selling Slowly and we still have Stock. The standard bearer stated that he had paraded the Standard 10 times since the last AGM which Included 5 Scattering of Ashes Services, and that our new Standard was on Display here today.

Election of Officers the Following were Re-elected, Sir James Eberle, GCB. LID. MH and Admiral the Lord West of Spithead GCB. DSC. PC. As Life Patrons Captain Mike Matthews as President, Tim Lewin; Rear Admiral Ian Richards, AO. BEc. RAN. and Commodore Peter Eberle, CBE. As Vice Presidents. The Association's Chairman, Fred Wooding MBE. And the Committee comprising the following were then all re-elected: Wally Filby, Administrator. David Gibbon, Social Secretary. Bryan Stockley, Welfare and Slops, Richard Thorne, Minutes Secretary. And the Following Committee were Relected, Clare Armstrong, Ngaire Bushell, and Fiona Etheridge.

Vice Chairman David Buckler has resigned and the Meeting expressed their considerable thanks to David for his outstanding service to the Association over many years, this position is now vacant. The Chairman said that he was very pleased to lead an excellent Committee.

In any other Business The President said that the Polar Convoy Club of St Petersburg had proposed that there should be another Conference – this time in Reykjavik - later in the year. He said that the Committee was not in favour of this - they prefer to have something more streamlined and the 80th Anniversary had been a major feature of our year already.

There followed two brief presentations given by our Russian guests Sergey Aprelev, Vice President Polar Convoy Club in St Petersburg and Professor Valentina Golysheva from Archangelsk in the course of which Sergey Aprelev presented the Association with a Symbolic Sword. Both said how very pleased they were to receive copies of the 80th Anniversary Souvenir Book.

The Chairman ended the meeting by announcing “Up Sprits”

We Were There Family Activity

On the morning of the ship's birthday, Saturday 17 March, many of you very kindly took up positions all along 2 Deck – the most accessible deck for visitors – to talk to the public for ‘80 minutes on the ship's 80th birthday’. From the torpedo to the Sick Bay; within the Arctic Messdecks and galley; beside the Beef Screen and NAFFI, visitors were given the very special opportunity to ask you questions about your time on board. Despite the Arctic weather outside the warmth of these conversations and the attentiveness with which visitors of all ages engaged with you all was very special indeed. Thank you to all who took part.

Due to this success and knowing myself how much it means to visitors to meet someone ‘who was there’ IWM have asked me to create a new ‘We Were There’ family programme which will take place on board the ship and at Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road every school holiday.

The first of these ran on Wednesday 11 April with the public meeting Len Brice (Able Seaman, 1949-50) Bernard Morgan (RAF, who last saw HMS Belfast bombarding the Normandy Coast); Ron Yardley Telegraphist 1950-52); and Bernie Bristoll (Telegraphist 1962-63) – all are pictured below during our ‘stand easy’ of tea, biscuits and sandwiches in the Arctic Messdecks!



Also present on that Easter Holiday Wednesday were Anna and Hilda who witnessed the Second World War as children, Fred who was an OA in the Navy, John a naval stoker, and the wonderful volunteers of the Amateur Radio Society who manned the Bridge Wireless Office talking to visitors and letting them take a turn on the Morse Key.

On the second of the activity, Thursday 12 April, I was delighted to welcome Paul Benton (Junior Stoker 1961-63), Wally Filby (Able-Seaman in 1962-63), Richard Thorne (sub-lieutenant 1961-62), Gladys who was evacuated from London at the outbreak of the war and the Radio Specialists again.

This second day of the activity was also incredibly successful; just over 1,300 visitors came aboard on both days and it was incredible to witness the reaction from those visitors of all ages and nationalities as they encountered the 'eye witnesses'.

A third successful activity was held on board on 30th May with Wally Filby, Paul Benton, Len Brice, Ron Yardley, Bernie Bristol and Richard Thorne.

Our next "we were there" activity's will take place every Wednesday in the summer holidays on July 25th and August 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th.

I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to take this programme forward and would welcome any of you who are interested in taking part in the next 'We Were There' to contact me on nbushell@iwm.org.uk or 020-7091-3081.

Ngairé Bushell, Honorary Member & IWM Learning team



Admiral Sir James Eberle GCB. LID. MH. – "Admiral Jim"



Jim Eberle crossed the bar on 17 May, two weeks short of his 91st birthday. Born in Bristol, he retained a close connection with the city throughout his life. He passed the qualifying competition for officer entry in 1940 and, after time at Dartmouth and Chester, initially served in HMS RENOWN and coastal forces. During his naval career which ended on retirement in 1982 from the post of Commander in Chief Naval Home Command, he served twice in HMS BELFAST, as a midshipman in 1945, and then again in 1952.

Jim Eberle was quick-witted and charismatic. He learned early on to tone down any instinct for authoritarianism, helped no doubt by his extensive interests outside the Navy. He was a passionate supporter of the countryside and for more than fifty years was the Master of the Britannia Beagles. He played tennis for the Navy and was an above average talent at many other sports.

In 1983 he became the Director of the Royal Institute for International Affairs and contributed innovative thinking to furthering improved international relations. Despite retiring in 1990, he continued his involvement in the international arena. He was President and then Life Patron of the HMS BELFAST Association.

His wife, Ann predeceased him in 1988. He is survived by a son and two daughters.

The following article was printed in the March issue of “Down our Way Yorkshire Memories” about our 80th Anniversary Celebrations.

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VETERAN WARSHIP

Sam sails the high seas



HMS Belfast is celebrating its eightieth anniversary. Here we talk to Skipton man **Sam Bottomley**, who served on the ship during the Korean War. Today, HMS *Belfast* is part of the Imperial War Museums and is permanently moored in London

Sam Bottomley was just eighteen when he set sail on HMS Belfast, bound for Korea, in 1950.



Sam, who was born in Skipton, had little sailing experience; before training at HMS Raleigh, he had only seen the sea twice: at Morecambe and Blackpool.

After leaving school, he became an apprentice painter and decorator, but the job failed to fulfill his longing for adventure. So, he signed up for the Royal Navy and HMS Belfast was his first ship.

She was launched on St Patrick's Day 1938, and during the Second world War helped with the British naval blockade against Germany, escorted convoys to the Soviet Union, assisted in the destruction of the German warship *Scharnhorst* and took part in the Normandy landings.

In the spring of 1950, she was bound for Japan. there was unrest in the region, which suddenly worsened, putting HMS Belfast back on a war footing. Just six weeks into the tour, North Korea invaded its southern neighbour.

All British and Commonwealth warships were placed at the disposal of the United Nations and HMS Belfast soon found itself under American command as part of Task Force 77. It wasn't long until her first taste of action.

Despite being manned by a peace-time complement of sailors, she bombarded the Korean shores for several days and nights. Further encounters ensued, before the ship returned to Chatham for a refit at the beginning of October. She set sail again just three weeks later, with a full wartime crew of 800 officers and men.

Sam was a stoker mechanic in the boiler and engine rooms. "I was hoping for some excitement,, he said.

HMS Belfast returned to the Far East, but the winter weather with its rough seas, blizzards and pack ice, created an additional hazard. "It was so cold that if you grabbed the handrail, it pulled the skin off your hand," said Sam.

By contrast, the summer brought almost unbearable tropical heat, and in October the ship encountered Typhoon Ruth. Sam recalled: "It was horrendous and I thought we were going to sink. It was unbelievable; you could hear the water above you."

An account of the typhoon is given in a booklet, recording the ship's Korean commission. It states: "The ship rolled up to thirty-five degrees, and the seas filled the waists (the middle part of the ship) to a depth of three to four feet.

Certainly, to stand at the level of our Flag Deck and look at the wave-crests higher than you, is a situation in which not one of God's children should ever want to find himself " And the wind! If the wind in John Masefield's poem was, as he says, like a whetted knife', this particular wind was all the swords, scimitars, daggers and stilettos that have ever been forged, cast tempered and sharpened."

As the Korean War continued, HMS Belfast patrolled the west coast. Boredom was punctuated by "moments of excitement, too intense for recognitions".

On 29th July 1952 the ship was hit by enemy fire off Wolsa-ri island. A seventy-five-millimetre shell struck a forward compartment, killing a Chinese rating in his hammock and wounding four others. this was the only time the ship was hit by enemy fire during her Korean service.

By coincidence, fifty years later Sam bumped into one of those who had had narrow escape: cook Kam Moon Leung. "I was visiting a Chinese restaurant in Skipton, and who should be there cooking, but my old Chinese shipmate, Kam Moon Leung said Sam. Sadly, Mr Leung has since died.

The Korean commission wasn't all about fighting. The crew was able to go ashore occasionally, and Sam remembers the unforgettable sounds of Hong Kong and the cherry blossom in Japan. "I enjoyed Japan as a country, although it was only six years after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima,"

A ceasefire was declared on 27th July 1953, and shortly afterwards HMS Belfast was 'retired' for four years. She was finally decommissioned on 24th August 1963 and became part of the Imperial War Museums in 1978.

Meanwhile Sam returned to Devonport where he carried out refitting work, but he soon got bored and volunteered to become a submariner. He stayed in the Navy for a further five years, before going to work for Rolls-Royce in Barnoldswick, and then the English Sewing

Cotton Company at Dewhurst's Mill in Skipton. He stayed at the latter for twenty two years and, when the mill closed returned to being a painter and decorator.

However, he kept his links with HMS Belfast, being a founder member of the HMS Belfast Association and its chairman for eight years. "It is nice to go back to the ship, but it has altered a lot since my day's said Sam.

He will be taking part in the eightieth anniversary celebrations over the weekend of 17th and 18th March and will be accompanied by his wife, Trudy. The couple were married at St Thomas's Church, Sutton-in-Craven, in 1954 and have four Children, eleven grand-children fifteen great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild

Evening Reception on board for WW2 Veterans – Tuesday 8 May

Having returned south after their 24 hour trip to Yorkshire the 7 Russian Veterans, accompanied by their seasoned group leader Sasha Goncharov, 2 Carers and Professor Valentina Golysheva arrived on board in time for a gentle tour of the ship at the hands of Yeoman Kevin.



About 90 guests arrived while this was in progress and assembled in the SCDH. At least 6 of our own Arctic Convoy Veterans were among them with members of their families together with Canadian and Jamaican colleagues and friends of ours from within the London Russian community. Others ranged from Lt Cdr John Blake who has just finished a new book about HMS BELFAST to Hugh Sebag Montefiore who is about to write one about the Arctic Convoys.

With the premiere showing of the new film "White Road to Red Coast" running quietly in the background I greeted them all, our Patron Admiral Lord West reminded them of the Last Witness Project 10 years ago when the 2 lattice masts were replaced by the Russians, Jamaican Veteran Neil Flanagan spoke on behalf of his group and Nikolai Dupak made a dramatic intervention on behalf of our Russian guests.

The undoubted highlight of the evening came when we all moved to the Quarterdeck to witness Ceremonial Sunset. It was a beautiful evening with Tower Bridge glowing astern, our Veterans all sat together in front of the flagstaff, the City of London Sea Cadets lowering the Ensign and the HAC Bugler sounding the call for Sunset impeccably.



Once lowered the white ensign was carefully folded, put in a bag and presented to Nikolai Dupak. Many a tear was shed over this simple but poignant tradition as Tim Lewin reminded all those present to open their hearts to the memory of the 50 million people, half of them from the Soviet Union who did not survive to see final Victory.





Then back to the SCDH for a Finger Buffet and the traditional Tot of Rum inseparable from such occasions. Some nostalgic “Garmoshka” accordion music rounded off a very happy and sociable evening with those who had not already acquired one being given a copy of “HMS BELFAST 1938-2018”.



Our visitors left in fine fettle for their attendance at the Commemoration Service at the Soviet War Memorial and the March of the Immortal Regiment down Whitehall the following day.

#592 Captain Mike Matthews

VE Day Celebrations 9th May London

The day after our Reception on board for our Russian Veterans and other Guests, there was a ceremony at the Soviet War memorial in Harmsworth Park adjacent to the Imperial War Museum beside our Russian friend, the following attended on behalf of the association, #846 Seymour Taylor (Arctic Convoy Veteran) with Daughter Janet and #832 Ernest Davies with carer, Seymour Taylor laid a wreath on behalf of the Association.



In the evening the Russian Veterans attended the Immortal Convoy March that now takes place in Whitehall, this is a moving parade in honour of all those who made the supreme sacrifice during the first World War (which is known in Russia as the Great Patriotic War) and which take place all over Russia on VE Day.

The following day the Russian Veteran visited Portsmouth.



VE Day Celebrations 9th May Loch Ewe

The ceremony at Loch Ewe took place at the Russian Convoy Club Memorial Stone overlooking the Minch and was attended by seven from the Russian Consulate (Edinburgh), four veterans from Glasgow (with three carers), a dozen outriders from the Royal British Legion Scotland in leathers (plus Standards), cadets from the 832 ATC squadron (Gairloch) and piper, all making for a colourful ceremony in warm sunshine. Also attending the ceremony was #833 Ralph Todd with Wife Brenda, Ralph's father served on Russian Convoys on HMS Cumberland and HMS Bellona .



Prior to travelling up to Loch Ewe Ralph picked up our old Standard from the ship to take up to Scotland and it will now be on Display in the Museum.

Russian Veterans Visit Portsmouth

An item in the programme of the Russian World War 2 Veterans, who came over as a part of the 2018 Victory Day celebrations, was a visit to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

This took place on Thursday 10th May and the really wonderful veterans – most of them bedecked with many, many medals and accompanied by quite the most caring carers and interpreters one would ever wish to meet – arrived by train at Portsmouth Harbour station - having set off from Waterloo and their London base.

The minibus awaiting these gentlemen at the station was just about big enough for the whole party which, by then, numbered some 16 plus two wheelchairs, Mike Matthews, Peter Eberle and Richard Thorne from the Association!



An excellent programme had been arranged – masterminded by Mike.

The first port of call was to the newly updated and improved D Day Museum – due to be formally opened by Princess Anne the following day! The Party then found themselves just about ENGULFED by a great variety of Chelsea Pensioners – wearing their most striking red frock coats - also sundry RAF and Army veterans from goodness knows where – all these embarked on a visit arranged in 42 London taxis - and paid for - by the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans (www.taxicharity.org) which is a small charity and all the cab drivers are volunteers - the most wonderfully generous, talkative, friendly and lively body of men you would ever wish to meet!

Having separated our Russian visitors from the rest of the world – with some difficulty – we then enjoyed a fairly quick lunch – also a thorough tour of the Museum – accompanied meanwhile – and wearing his chain of office – by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Portsmouth who, very kindly, welcomed our party on behalf of the City – can't play football!!!



There followed a quick trip – in our minibus – via the Victory Gate to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard for a fascinating visit to HMS Victory where we ended up in the Great Cabin for a most heart warming TOT – provided courtesy of our Jamaican friends of the Association and much appreciated by their Russian equivalents!!!

The final port of call was to the National Museum of the Royal Navy - after which they all embarked on their train back to London. By the time of their arrival on their return they must have been absolutely DRAINED!!

All in all it was a MEMORABLE day and nothing but good can be said about it – the “veterans” were – to a man – most excellent guests and all the arrangements worked wonderfully. Perhaps the true stars of the day were Sasha Goncharov the tall, charming interpreter who accompanied the party throughout, also Katya Fowler who is Russian, lives over here and seemed to spend her entire day holding about 15 smart phones taking photos of, and for, everyone!! This was a bit of a pity because she was far and away the best looking of the entire party and she wasn't in ANY of the photos!!

#665 Richard Thorne

HMS Belfast will be holding a Remembrance Service on Sunday 11th November 2018.

IWM (Imperial War Museums) would like to invite HMS Belfast Association members to attend, numbers may be limited. If you would like to Attend and bring a guest could you please let Wally Filby know together with the names of your guests, and he will forward your names to IWM.

His contact detail are:- Email:- wh.filby@gmail.com or by post to:- 208 Elis David Almshouses, Dupas Hill Terrace, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 4BT.

Subscriptions 2018

Please remember Subscription which are still only £10 per year, were due on 1st January 2018. If you are one of the few who have not paid could you do so as soon as you can. You can pay by Cheque payable to “HMS Belfast Association” if it is in GB£. (Pounds Sterling) Cheques in any other currency incur very heavy bank Charges so please no foreign cheques. If you live abroad I can change foreign currency notes at the going exchange rate without incurring charges.

If you are not sure if you have paid could you contact Wally preferably by Email or by Post. If you pay by Cheque and would like a receipt please enclosed a stamped self addressed envelope. To Wally Filby, 208 Elis David Alms Houses, Duppas Hill Terrace, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 4BT.

Alternately if you have internet banking and can pay directly into our bank account, Account Details:-

Bank:-	Lloyds	Account Name:-	HMS Belfast Association
Account No:-	03527852	Sort Code:-	30-99-93.

If you pay by internet please include Name and Membership no and inform Wally by e-mail that you have done so. To wh.filby@gmail.com. He will then acknowledge receipt by e-mail



Crossed the Bar



+	Harry F Woodruff	No 195 Rate Shipwright	On Board for one Year	+
		Crossed the Bar 21st December 2017		
+	Roger Bottomley	No 752 Rate Radio Electrician	1959-61 Commission	+
		Crossed the Bar 15th January 2018		
+	Frederick H Howden	No 352 Rate Leading Telegraphist	1950-53 Commission	+
		Crossed the Bar 2nd February 2018		
+	Arthur S Tillyer	No 347 Rate Stoker Mechanic	1946-47 Commission	+
		Crossed the Bar 9th March 2018		
+	Peter Guthrie	No 103 Rate Corporal RM Band	1950-52 Commission	+
		Crossed the Bar 6th April 2018		
+	Admiral Sir James Eberle GCB. LID. MH. Rank Midshipman 1945 and Lieutenant 1950 Crossed the Bar 17th May 2018			+
+	James Hudson	No 598 Rate Stoker Mechanic	1950-53 Commission	+
		Crossed the Bar 23rd May 2018		



We have every reason to remember them



CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no mourning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full of sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep,
Turns again for home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark,
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place,
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crost the bar.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SEAFARERS 23rd PSALM

The Lord's my Pilot, I'll not drift
Across the waters dark,
He lights my way, mid channels deep
He safely steers my barque.

He keeps my log, he guides me by
The pole star of his love
For his names sake my voyage end
Will bring me safe above.

Yes, though I sail "mid thunders loud,
And tempest on life sea,
No danger will I dread for thou
Art ever near to me.

The waves thou dost with oil anoint
My ship in calm doth ride,
Sunlight and moonlight favour me
However rough the tide.

A harbour thou has made for me
On the eternal shore,
There will I rest within the port
Of heaven for evermore



HMS Belfast Association



Presents the

2018 Trafalgar Night Dinner

The HMS Belfast Association will be celebrating the Battle of Trafalgar by holding a Dinner on board the ship on Saturday 20th October 2018.

It is by kind permission of the Imperial War Museum allowing us to have use of the facilities on board that enables the Association to hold such an important and unique occasion on our very own ship.

Events will commence at 1830 with a Reception and followed by the Dinner at 1930, the very popular 'Living History Group' will once again, be in attendance giving the evening a very nostalgic atmosphere.

Tickets for this extremely popular event are very competitively priced at £35 per person, guests may be invited, but you do need to book early to avoid disappointment. A Booking Form is available in this edition of the 'Seahorse'.

For any other information, please contact the Association Social Secretary:

David Gibbon - Tel No. 01793 813484 or Email: gibbon35@gmail.com

New Members

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The Boxing Day Shoot: The Sinking of the Scharnhorst Part Two

By John Wilson Ordinary Seaman 1942: The Late Lord Moran

There now began a silent and dramatic encirclement. Scharnhorst, her attacks on the convoy baffled by the cruiser squadron, was heading back to her shelter in the Norwegian fiords. Cutting through the rough sea at 28 knots, she was in no danger from the cruisers behind her. Unknown to her, however, Bruce Fraser, Flying his Flag in the battleship Duke of York, with the cruiser Jamaica in company was coming from the westward to intercept

The Commander gave us the gist of the situation over the loudspeakers. We in the cruiser squadron were shadowing Scharnhorst and reporting her course and speed, while our own capital ship was maneuvered into position to strike the decisive blow. The fleet destroyers were also being called up to plug the gaps making the trap complete, and I could see them streaking along beside us in the half light. The German destroyers which had been with the Scharnhorst had earlier disappeared in the gloom.

So it went on through the long dark afternoon. As the time the shadowing seemed to go on "for seemingly hours and hours". At first the three cruisers held together, racing after the retreating battle cruiser. At time we were doing 30 knots, despite the awful conditions. Then at 3.45 the Damaged Norfolk fell back with a broken shaft gearing, her speed reduced to 8 knots. It grew a little lighter, and we could see that Belfast was now alone. Burnet's shadowing report ended. "By myself" Our Commanding Officer, Captain Parham, later said: We were alone, shadowing that great ship. She was a much bigger ship than us. She'd only got to turn round for ten minutes and she could have blown us clean out of the water." However, she did not turn round, and by five Norfolk was with us again and Sheffield reported to be catching up. And once more we on the lower deck were blissfully ignorant at the time of the risky position we had been in.

We had little to do during the long chase occasionally the bridge reported through our speed and that of Scharnhorst and of the wind, and the inclination of the enemy, and I put these on my instrument, but otherwise we could only wait. But by now the trap was complete. At a quarter to five we again fired starshell, and at ten to five Duke of York fired her just broadside.

From the A.D.P. we saw at just only a slumber of distant flashes on the horizon, like summer lightning. As we got nearer we could distinguish two sets of flashes. It looked like a distant firework display. It was hard to realise that the fate of great ships and of hundreds of men was at stake. The Commander over the loudspeakers told us the bearings of Scharnhorst and the Duke of York and we watched the battle. There would be a great red flash in the distance and then the ten tracer shells of the Duke of York's 14 inch broadside rose slowly into the air, keeping close together like a covey of partridges and glowing red. At the top of their trajectory their light would go out, and the remainder of their flight took place in darkness. It was an extraordinary sight to see these stately lights of luminous shells, and the whole scene, with the northern lights playing above the clouds, the starshell flares - our own yellow, and the enemy's a sort of electric-blue, casting their unearthly radiance over the sea and the tracer shells following each other in ordered flights, was beautiful and fantastic. It seemed to bear no relation to the battle.

Just after five, we and Norfolk opened fire, and for five minutes the ship was again rent by the shattering 6 inch broadsides. Big jets of water near us suddenly showed that we ourselves were also a target and we swung right in a circle to throw oil at the enemy's aim.

Then for another hour we steamed south-east to join the C in C, while the gunnery battle between the Duke of York and Scharnhorst continued. The great highs of tracer shells went over in their steady battalions - all in one direction, for though Scharnhorst was firing too she did not use tracer with her main armament. Now and then, after the shells had disappeared into darkness at the summit of their flight, there would be a sudden dull red angry flash on the horizon which we supposed was a hit. We had little idea how the battle was going. In fact, Duke of York alone hit the enemy with some of her salvos, while Scharnhorst, though frequently straddling Duke of York with some of her salvos, with many near misses, was dogged by ill fortune and scored no direct hit. Both Duke of York's masts were shot through by 11 inch shells which did not explode and all the cables up her mainmast were cut. She was a very lucky ship.

All this time the fleet destroyers had been dosing in. Then the Commander told us "The destroyers are going in to attack." Between half past six and seven they went in. From the A.D.P. this at last really did look like a battle. Streams of red and green pom-pom tracer shells and bright red flashes lit up the sea, while the starshells fired balefully above. My guns were constantly asking me what was happening, and I had long since settled down to give them a running commentary on the scene in the intervals when we were not firing ourselves.

By seven the destroyers had done their work and three torpedo hits had slowed down Scharnhorst. The fleet closed in again on the doomed ship. At one minute past seven the broadside from Duke of York began again. This time there was no doubt about what effect the shelling was having. The dull red bashes became more and more frequent. At a quarter past seven we ourselves opened fire again. There were Flashes all around. A moment later I saw Scharnhorst for the just time. A lot of starshell went off to starboard and there she was, large as life, steaming along a few cables away. I could see that she was burning fiercely, with her superstructure a mass of red-hot metal and with black smoke pouring put amidships. In a letter I wrote five days later, I said: she fired a single starshell which landed right overhead, and there we were, lit up like Piccadilly and waiting for it. Then the shells came, but the big salvo fell aft, and the trace ones went overhead like cricket balls. I expect their gunnery control was all shot to bits. We only saw them once again, when just the Jamaica and then ourselves Went in and torpedoed her.

Then we just went round with searchlights to find the wreck. They went on banging away until they were all under water. . It all seemed rather like a game really until that starshell went above us. That was a bad moment. Still, it was no game for those poor devils swimming round in the ice-cold water, with oil all over them, and sleet beating down on theme.

I shall always remember those moments under the cold blue starshell when we seemed to be moving so slowly and helplessly, while tracer shells from the 5.9's travelled slowly overhead, glowing a dull red and falling about a hundred yards away.

Dense black smoke covered the sea. We fired off another starshell, but I saw only trails of smoke on the horizon. We searched in vain for the wreck, against the gleam of the searchlights which were now sweeping the sea; you could see that there was heavy sleet falling. At last we saw that two destroyers had found the remains and the strong sickening smell of fuel oil rose from the sea. They had dropped a flare on the water and were picking up survivors. We saw nothing except a yellow light with which some of them on a float were indicating their position. We steamed round for a minute or two signaling to the destroyers, and then made off. Scharnhorst had gone down, taking with her the Rear-Admiral Bey; Captain Hintze, every other Officer and the whole ships company of nearly 2000 men, except for 36 ratings who were picked up by the destroyers. We learnt afterwards that Captain Hintze, when his deck was littered with corpses, which were gradually washed overboard, had broadcast a final message to his men "I shake you all by the hand for the last time. I have sent this signal to the fuehrer; we shall fight to the last shell. Scharnhorst onwards" He had been as good as his word. It seemed sad that courageous Germans like these should die while the Germans of the S.S And the Nazi party lived on.

In the excitement of the action we had forgotten the Admiral's K.B.E. We were now reminded of it as we sailed back to Kola Inlet. The Admiral spoke to us over the loudspeakers; His speech was short but felicitous. "I shall get a good deal out of this he said, "and you will get nothing. But I want you to know that, in reality anything given to me is given to the ship and to the squadron. Thank you all for your help" We felt drawn to our Admiral. His complete absence of cant was refreshing. We realised, too, that we had none of us done anything, but watch twiddle our particular knob and hope for the best. The decisions had been Bruce Fraser's and his. Perhaps a good deal of the real praise and blame belonged more than anyone to the technicians at home - those who produced the intelligence and those who made our radar better than the Scharnhorst's. And we were lucky whereas Scharnhorst was not. But we responded to an honest man who put things in an honest way and no "pep Talks" or hackneyed phrases.

In Belfast there was only one casualty The Admiral's reindeer, deserted in its hangar during the action, was found to have become hysterical with terror and had to be put out of its misery by the ships butcher.

In was an extraordinary chance that enabled me, on my very first voyage, to take part in a major surface engagement, and to have an action station where I had a grandstand view of the last battleship action in the history of the Royal Navy. As it was, I only spent just over a month in Belfast. But it was a dramatic and memorable month. Scharnhorst had been a magnificent ship, described by one writer as "arguably the finest ocean-going capital ship ever built" She was the fastest ship in the whole engagement and the only one able to steam at high speed westward into be gale. 2,195 shells and 55 torpedoes had to be fired at her before she could be sunk. But her admiral made fatal errors of judgment, whereas our two did all the right things.

Of all the ships that were in action that day, only Belfast still remains, moored by Tower Bridge and preserved as a monument. My children have suggested disrespectfully that when I died I ought to be stuffed and set up on the A.D.P in my bell-bottoms as part of the exhibit.



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