



**SIMON'S TOWN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

BULLETIN



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VOL. XIV No.4
JULY 1987

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Articles dealing with matters of historical interest to Simon's Town and the surrounding area will be considered for publication.

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CONSTITUTION: Should any member wish a copy of the Constitution would they kindly send their request together with a stamped addressed envelope to the Hon. Secretary.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Presented by the Chairman Mr. G.B. Read, CBE at the 27th Annual General Meeting held in the Lecture Hall, Simon's Town Museum on Thursday 19th March, 1987 at 7.30 p.m.

In line with previous custom we meet tonight in our dual roles as Members of the Society and Friends of the Museum. The need for the latter organisation whose activities relate directly to the raising of funds for the Operation and Development of the Museum will be explained on request, in the course of the meeting, should this be required. A full Report and Accounts covering the Friends' activities during the past year will be presented later in the Meeting.

As you are aware the 14th March 1987 saw the unveiling of the plaque on Jubilee Square commemorating the role played by SATS GENERAL BOTHA from 1921 to 1948. The Museum was subsequently honoured to be the location chosen by the General Botha Old Boys' Association for a reception to mark this event. It is fitting therefore that our speaker tonight should be the Chairman of the General Botha Old Boys Association in the Cape, Cdr. Brian Powell SAN (Retd). The subject of his talk will be about "Life on board the old Training Ship and some of the objects of the Old Boys Association." I am sure you will extend a very warm welcome to Commander Powell. Incidentally copies of their very interesting book are on sale in the Museum Shop at R12. per copy to members. It is wonderful value.

This year it is sad to report the deaths of the following members: Mrs. Ann Samson, Mr. H. Croome, Mrs. E. Taylor, Mrs. R. Elliott, Mrs. F. Prescott, Mrs. S. Porter, Mr. A. Edwards, Mrs. C. Greenland, Mrs. G. Read Snr and just this last week, one of our great contributors to our activities and the Bulletin - Peter Philip.

To return now to the main part of the report, so many activities engage the attention of an increasing number of members that the months seem to flash by before anyone really notices the passage of time and 1986 was no exception. May I just mention some of the principal activities. The Conservation of the Historic Mile and Certain Other Areas of Special Historic and Aesthetic Interest; The Restoration of the Old Burying Ground; The Issue of Anniversary Covers (of which more anon); The Flora Conservation Group; The Environmental Advisory Committee; The Publicity Association and The Information Bureau. You will be amused to hear that a former colleague of mine recently said to me "Tell me, what do you all find to do in Simon's Town?". The foregoing list I think provides at least a part of the answer.

ANNIVERSARY COVERS:

Recently because of a substantial increase in Membership numbers, in Membership participation in Society Activities etc. our financial resources showed a modest improvement and the Committee was faced with a decision as to how best to deploy these monies to generate more funds to cover ever increasing costs, Society contributions to the Museum etc. Based on the experience of various other organisations, it was decided to issue a series of Anniversary Covers beginning with one to mark the 50th Anniversary of Just Nuisance's birth and ending with a cover to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the completion of the railway line to Simon's Town in 1890. A 2nd cover commemorating the Tercentenary of Simon van der Stel's exploratory visit to Simon's Bay and later two more covers commemorating important events between 1968/89 will be issued. So far demand for the 1st Anniversary cover looks promising.

MEMBERSHIP:

This increased by 56 from 676 at the end of 1985 to 732 at the end of 1986. These figures relate to Fully Paid-up Members. Whilst this rate of increase i.e. about 8%, is about half the average annual increase between 1980/1985, it still means that if it is maintained our membership will double over the next 8 3/4 years!

One of my most pleasant tasks this evening is to announce the award of the Society's Citation Certificate to Iris Hutchings for outstanding service both to the Society and the Museum.

PUBLIC RELATIONS TOURS:

In addition to the very successful Tour in March 1986 to Beaufort West to view Halley's Comet, a second Tour was mounted in October 1986 which took the Party to Wellington, Paarl and Franschoek, a fascinating part of the world which because it is comparatively close to home is often overlooked. This second Tour was far less strenuous and more luxurious than the first and proved to be very enjoyable.

Because the Society had mounted two week-end Tours, no one-day Tours were mounted but as has been the experience in recent years Member's Day (comprising a Tour of the town followed by a Braai at the Marlin and Tuna Club) was very well supported. The Society is very grateful to Mr. Brian Cohen for the use of this fine facility.

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS:

The Society has purchased a set of drawings of all the important buildings in the Historic Mile, compiled by the Final Year Architectural Class at UCT under the direction of Professor John Rennie. To be more specific, this means that the Museum will have a permanent record supported by a comprehensive set of photographs taken by Nigel Farquharson, of all the Buildings in that part of the Historic Mile which has been declared "An Area of Special Historical and Aesthetic Interest."

The year also saw the formation of the Architectural Heritage Committee by the Simon's Town Municipal Council to advise on all applications for alterations, restoration, development etc. in respect of buildings in the sensitive areas. It must be stressed, however, that the function of this Committee is of course purely one of advice and the final decision will rest, as indeed it should, with the Council.

BULLETIN AND CHRONICLE:

These continue to be well received and obviously read in considerable detail. The Society's thanks must go to Mesdames Biggs and Read and a special welcome back to the Editorial Committee to Nigel Farquharson who resumed Editorship of the Chronicle some 10 years after he relinquished it.

FINANCE:

Although the position is satisfactory as you will hear later from the Hon. Treasurer, the calls on the Society's financial resources continue to increase. As pointed out last year the Bulletin now costs + R2.00 per copy to produce and next year the cost will rise to about R2.50 per copy. Cost of postage of Circulars etc is also constantly rising and it is becoming apparent that regrettably subscriptions will have to rise also, although your Committee has kept and hopefully will continue to keep them below the levels imposed by most of our peers. It is mainly for these reasons that a proposal to widen the Committee's powers to increase subscriptions is one of the four amendments to the Constitution set out in the Agenda on which the Meeting will be required to vote later on.

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION:

Four changes are proposed in the Agenda:

1. CLAUSE 1: NAME: This change seems desirable so as to absolve individual Members from individual responsibility for any legal claim i.e. for damages against the Society.
2. PARAGRAPH 4 : At present subscriptions may only be increased by Agreement of Members at the AGM which is held in March of each year. This means the Society must wait until the following January to implement the increase.
3. ADDITIONAL: CLAUSE 15: GENERAL CLAUSE: This widens the executive powers of the Committee which are presently somewhat restricted and not quite adequate to deal with the increasing range of the Society's activities.
4. ADDITIONAL: CLAUSE 16: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION: This is designed to define more clearly the mechanism by which amendments to the Constitution are introduced.

THE MUSEUM:

A full and impressive report is included in to-night's documentation and it seems superfluous to comment on what appears there. However, I think it is appropriate to remind Members that whilst the Society played a very important role in founding the Museum its efforts must not stop there. The increasing number of visitors both casual and in formal groups sometime ± 100 is placing an ever-growing strain on the Museum's resources both human and material. At the request of the Simon's Town Council the Museum is now operating an Information Bureau and it will be necessary to have this Bureau open on the week-day i.e. Monday, when the Museum is usually closed, during the holiday season. Thus more volunteer helpers will be required both for the morning and afternoon sessions. Also a reserve of helpers is required to meet emergencies. Whilst hopefully the Museum can offer considerable job satisfaction, monetary rewards are modest; the honorarium (in the fullest meaning of that overused expression) is R5 per session but it should be enough to cover some equally modest post-session indulgence - perhaps!?

SIMON'S TOWN FLORA CONSERVATION GROUP:

The Group has had a very active year and is to be particularly congratulated on the large numbers of School Children it has organised and lead on some very worthwhile clearing activities on our mountain sides.

Again it is my pleasant task to thank our Vice-Chairman Gordon Wilson, our Hon. Sec/Treasurer 'D' Kinkead-Weekes and Committee Members Nicki Holderness, Liz Biggs, Cherry Dille, Jill Grant, Nigel Fraquharson, Alf Glover, Malcolm Cobern and the S.A. Navy Representative Mac Bissett for their tremendous support during this past year. It is also I believe only right that I should mention the valuable and imaginative way in which the S.A. Navy has supported this Society and several of its peers in Simon's Town during the year. I would particularly like to thank Admiral Bennet, Captain Le Roux and Commander Bredenkamp for all they have done. As usual, and most probably gritting their teeth, in the face of the Society's latest eccentricities, the Mayor, Councillors and Municipal officials have been as co-operative as ever and we are very grateful to them for their help.

Finally, another sincere thank you to the ever-increasing number of members who participated in the Society's activities. It augers well for the future.

THE RENNICKS - CHIEF CONSTABLES OF SIMON'S TOWN

Gordon Wilson

Mention of Chief Constable Rennick in the January 1987 issue of the Bulletin led me to write this article as there were two Mr. Rennicks (father and son) who both became Chief Constables of Simon's Town.

The elder Rennick, James, was born in 1808 in Clones, a small market town near the western border of County Monaghan in Ireland. He came from a Protestant family and he married Jane, who came from a Roman Catholic family. This action caused so much friction from both their families, that they decided to emigrate. In the fullness of time the couple arrived at Simon's Town where James joined the Police force, rising eventually to the position of Chief Constable. His wife Jane, was for a number of years Postmistress here, running her Post Office on the lowest floor of the Residency. James and Jane had two children: Eliza born 1839 and a little later a son William Thomas. Stephen Sawle Osler, progenitor of the South African family of that name records while he was Sexton of St. Francis Church that Eliza died at the age of 11 years and was buried in the Old Burying Ground at Seaforth.

contd. p. 129

JOHN WALTER EDINGTON WILEY
1927 - 1987

The untimely death of John Wiley on 29th March 1987 left Society Members and indeed the Community at large stunned and deeply saddened. He was truly a man of the Peninsula. Born at St. James in 1927 he was educated at the Diocesan College, Rondebosch and at the Universities of Cape Town and Oxford. He took a degree in law at each of them.

He was a gifted all round sportsman. Besides playing rugby, he was a fine athlete, he was a good swimmer, he played tennis and squash and he was a keen angler but cricket was the game at which he excelled. After playing Nuffield cricket for W.P. Schools he played for Western Province, Oxford University, U.C.T. and South African Universities and in the course of his career he played against the 1948/49 M.C.C. Touring Side.

Before being elected to Parliament as the United Party Member in 1966, he practiced briefly as an attorney from 1954 to 1956. He subsequently worked in the Estate department of Syfrets Trust Company for 10 years. His political career had really begun when he was elected unopposed to the Cape Provincial Council in 1959 on which he also represented Simon's Town for the U.P.

By the early 1970's he had become Deputy leader of the U.P. in the Cape but amid mounting differences with members of the left wing of his party he first resigned as deputy leader of the U.P. in the Cape in 1974 and finally in early 1977 he was one of six Cape M.P.'s to be expelled from the Party's parliamentary caucus principally because of their refusal to back the Marais Committee's proposals for the formation of a new opposition party.

He and the other five ex-U.P. M.P.'s sat first as Independant MP's until the S.A.P. was formed later in the year. He then resigned his seat and stood in a bye-election for the S.A.P. and won. He led the S.A.P. until it was disbanded in June 1980 when he and his five colleagues joined the Nationalist Party. He subsequently resigned his seat and fought a successful bye-election for the Nationalist Party against Springbok cricketer Eddie Barlow. His majority was 1,182 votes.

Not surprisingly given his experience and tenacity of purpose his promotion within the ranks of the National Party was rapid. He was appointed Deputy Minister of Environment Affairs and Fisheries in 1982, Minister of Environment Affairs and Tourism in 1984 and latterly in December of last year, Minister of Environment and Water Affairs.

He was arguably the best Constituency M.P. in the House of Assembly. No detail, no request ever seemed too unimportant to engage his attention. How he managed to undertake all this work on behalf of his constituents in addition to his parliamentary duties particularly after his appointment as a senior Minister, will remain a mystery to those who knew him, although unhappily this great burden must surely have taken its toll. The Members of the Society in particular owe John Wiley a very great debt. Apart from his unrelenting efforts directed towards the conservation of the Marine Resources of False Bay and the preservation of the mountain environment, he was of course principally responsible for the acquisition of the present Museum premises in The Residency, the principal basis of the ever growing success both of the Society and the Museum.

To all the members of his family, the Society expresses its deepest condolences and it only remains to say - it was a great honour to have known him and to have had him as one of the Society's Vice-Presidents.

PETER HUGH PHILIP M.B.E.

W.H. Stoops

Peter Hugh Philip had the great good fortune to be born of wise and loving parents who provided their children with all the love, warmth and security of which they were capable and imparted the values and norms which in their own time Peter and his brothers were able to transfer to their own hearths.

When he was twelve Peter suffered a severe attack of polio, the ravages whereof he bore for the rest of his days. He did not allow his disability to depress his spirit in any way. Indeed he appeared to regard it as a challenge to achieve what others could. How else does one account for a polio victim enlisting in the Royal Navy as a rating? But let me not anticipate events.

After Peter had matriculated at Bishops, his father despatched him on an extensive tour covering much of Europe and the Middle East, winding up in due course at Oxford where he was fortunate enough to gain admission to Magdalen College. Here he was privileged to have as his tutor the legendary C.S. Lewis, at whose feet he learnt the felicity of expression and elegance of language which was to characterise his writings and his utterances in after years. At Magdalen he coxed the College 1st Eight to Head of the River, and by so doing achieved membership of the Leander Club, a cachet honoured by oarsmen and rowing people the world over.

Coming down from Oxford immediately before the outbreak of World War II, Peter returned to Cape Town and took up the position of announcer at what is now known as the S.A.B.C. John Hennessy remembers driving him to the studio to make the announcement of the outbreak of war.

Quite early on in the War an R.N. Cruiser called at Simon's Town for repairs and additions to its depleted crew. Peter got to hear of this and when the cruiser sailed for action off West and North Africa, it carried Able Seaman Peter Philip. After some months Peter was put ashore for further training, was commissioned and was serving in the small ships which kept open the sea lanes for the huge convoys when volunteers were called for to train for operations in midget submarines. Peter at once stepped forward and having been selected, trained to such good purpose that he was among those chosen to engage in what was most probably his unit's most noteworthy exploit - the crippling of the TIRPITZ where she lay in the shelter of a Norwegian fjord. Peter and one other were the delivery crew. Off the coast of Norway they handed over to the action crew who with magnificent skill and daring penetrated the defences and accomplished their mission. They did not however, return and it was generally accepted that they had perished in action.

All connected with the enterprise were given immediate home leave, and Peter headed back to Cape Town. It so happened that I was on leave in Cape Town myself at that time and Peter's mother had me to dinner with Peter. As we dined, the radio was tuned to Daventry to catch the news. All of a sudden Peter leapt from the table, turned up the volume and we learnt that his missing comrades had been found in good health in a German prison camp. They were each awarded the V.C. and Peter received the M.B.E. As the war moved towards the Far East, the midget submarines and their tenders were directed to Australia where the crews engaged in further training when the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought hostilities to a conclusion. On the way home across the Indian Ocean a shipboard romance struck up and when the vessel continued its voyage to Europe, that portion of one ticket covering the section South Africa/England was forfeit to Eros. It was such a lovely wedding - everyone enjoyed it immensely.

Peter then busied himself with some further broadcasting and writing the history of midget submarines when he was accepted as a cadet in the Department of External Affairs and commenced a career which took him to many foreign climes ending with two

tours of duty in New Zealand. In the service of his country abroad Peter was greatly assisted by a helpmate who brought to her office a grace and elegance which is acknowledged by all. In retirement Peter spent long hours in the Archives collecting material for his writings and lectures. He had one book published and a second ready for printing.

Peter meant different things to different people. To his family he was an exemplary husband and a wise and loving father. No brother could have asked for more affection and loyalty than he showed his. He was tremendously proud of his colleagues in the diplomatic service and enjoyed greatly his association with them. That these sentiments were reciprocated is evidence by their presence here to-day. Peter was very sociable. He loved company, he loved discourse, swapping yarns. He took great licence in some of his tales. The stories he told about me were wholly apocryphal. There was never any hurt in his stories for Peter was incapable of an uncharitable thought or an ignoble deed.

He was the member of the Owl Club from which he derived much pleasure. In his last year he adorned the President's chair. Peter passed away on Thursday 12th March, 1987. Elizabeth and family, David and family, Billy's daughters, it must comfort you to know that Peter is assured of the noblest of all sepulchres - a place of honour in the minds of all who knew him where he will live on, ever ready to stir to thought or action as the occasion comes by.

COMMENTS ON MAFEKING WEEK

(From an article in the Simon's Town and District Chronicle
Saturday 26th May 1900)

The correspondent writes that Mafeking Day went on record as a complete fiasco in Simon's Town. The townspeople were willing to celebrate Major General Baden-Powell's great endeavours but the Mayor of Simon's Town and "his satellites did nothing - they even made no application to Captain Prothero to land the band of HMS DORIS until it was too late and allowed Mayor Hansen of Muizenberg to forestall them."

It seems things never change, the townspeople are always complaining about the activities of the Municipality! Even the Dockyard come in for a rollicking by the correspondent who states "It is common knowledge that a Gazette Extraordinary was published establishing the previous Monday as a holiday (to celebrate the relief of Mafeking) but this was passed over by our Commander-in-Chief Sir Robert Harris who proclaimed no holiday".

As a result the majority of employees refused to turn up for work on that Monday. When asked, the Admiral replied "we cannot all be fighting men" but at least one would have thought that the men would not have been expected to work on a day of national rejoicing. The correspondent felt Admiral Harris had not improved his popularity by his action.

It was not a good week for the civilians of Simon's Town either - Messrs C.P. Albertyn and Fred. Hugo having suffered the loss of 2 valuable cows worth £80 being in calf on grazing land between Millers Point and Rocklands, gave notice of their intention to shoot any stray dogs found on their land and to prosecute trespassers.

The Simon's Town and District Chronicle was published every Saturday at Simon's Town Price 1d. and was also on sale at approved agents outside Simon's Town.

contd. from p.125

James Rennick died, while still serving in the Police, on 12th February 1861 at the age of 53 years. His wife Jane lived for another 11 1/2 years, passing away on 13th August 1872 aged 59. Their headstone is also in the Old Burying Ground.

Later James Rennick's post was filled by another Irishman, William James McCarthy, born in Limerick, Ireland in 1830. He too died while still serving at Simon's Town on 22nd February 1882. His grave too is in the Old Burying Ground in the Roman Catholic section. His great-grandson presently has a house in Simon's Town and is a member of our Society, so we hope to write him up at a later date.

In the meantime the younger Rennick, William Thomas, who by now had also joined the Police, rose through the ranks to become Chief Constable. His photograph appeared on page 99 of our January 1987 Bulletin. W.T. Rennick it was who lived in the small cottage close to Palace Barracks which is at present undergoing renovations. His father and mother lived in one of the two small cottages which were demolished in the early 1950's. The writer's great-grandmother Mrs. Ann Lankester also lived in one of these cottages for a short while. These were between Jubilee Street and the entrance to the Admiral's garden, an area now occupied by parking bays. To confound the researchers not only were there two Chief Constables by the name of Rennick but they both married a Jane. Jane the wife of W.T. Rennick (the younger) was Jane van Oosten an adherent of the Dutch Reformed Church. William Thomas and Jane had a daughter (Augusta) and a son (James).

In the 1890's W.T. acquired a piece of land in Wilfred Street, Mount Pleasant whereon he built a house "Clones Villa" after his father's birthplace. He, however, never lived in it. After completion it was let to a Simon's Town couple named McTeer. It is at present owned by Mrs. Ina de Villiers. Shortly after completion tragedy struck. Chief Constable W.T. Rennick died at the turn of the century in his early forties, leaving a wife and two small children. In order to engender income to keep herself and the children, Mrs. Rennick took in several boarders and ran a small herd of cows on the hillside behind her house, selling fresh milk to customers. Both children were well educated and the son became an accomplished pianist at an early age. He was much in demand as an accompanist to singers at concerts and gala evenings in the Town. Sadly in 1918 young James died in the influenza epidemic aged 19.

During World War I a young charge-hand was sent by the Royal Navy to work in the Torpedo Shop (to-day's Simonsberg Theatre in the West Yard). His name was Allerton and he boarded at Mrs. Rennick's. He married her daughter Augusta (Gussie) and they went to live in Clones Villa. They had a son Gordon Richard Rennick Allerton who recently retired from a senior position in the Cape Provincial Administration and is currently District Grand Master of the South Africa (West Division) of the English Constitution of Freemasonry.

The remains of Chief Constable William Rennick are immured in the now walled up more westerly vault in the Dutch Reformed Church section of the Old Burying Ground. His wife is buried in the Dutch Reformed section of the Dido Valley Cemetery.

Tribute should be paid to the family for the service they rendered to Simon's Town. To father and son who helped to keep the peace for so many years; to Jane (senior) Mother and Postmistress and to Jane (Junior) for raising a family so successfully in the face of adversity.

 From: The Cape Town Gazette & African Advertiser
 No. 689 Saturday 27.3.1819

"A Public Sale Will be Held at H.M. Naval Yard, Simon's Town on Thursday 9 April 1819 of 140 Flock Beds and Blankets used by Detachments of the 38th Regiment on the passage from England; also of various Articles of condemned Navy Slop Clothing consisting of Seamen's Hats, Blue Cloth Jackets and Trousers, worsted Jackets, Drawers and stockings etc. signed: W. Pennell, Naval Storekeeper."

THE RECAPTURE OF HMS HERMIONE IN 1799

A.F. Moore

There are in the Simon's Town Museum two prints and a ship's crest connected with HMS HERMIONE which remind us of stern events that took place almost two hundred years ago. These memorabilia have found a fitting home, for at least three ships of the same name have been well known in Simon's Town. The writer has an additional interest because in June 1942 during an attempt to get a convoy of urgently required supplies through to Malta, a later HERMIONE which was close on the starboard beam of HMS BIRMINGHAM was sunk. It was said that BIRMINGHAM, to which the flag had been transferred after HMS NEWCASTLE had been put out of action, was the real target that dark night. Such are the chances of war!

The prints, published in London in September 1800 by "Robt. Dodd of 41 Charing Cross Six Doors from the Admiralty" are both dedicated to Captain Sir Edward Hamilton. The first depicts HMS HERMIONE flying a foreign flag and with sails tightly furled. She is secured fore and aft in the harbour of "Porto Cavalla" under the protection of batteries of guns that have just belched clouds of smoke, while armed men in boats are approaching her. In the second print the flag has been hauled down, HMS HERMIONE has been cut loose, has some of her sails unfurled and is being towed away by the same boats, which were from another RN ship. The artist, in his endeavour to honour an intrepid man and his equally courageous and determined ship's company has, perforce, turned a raven black night into daylight; yet it is a pity that the canvas reveals little of the stirring and heroic deeds connected with an amazing exploit. It is a pity also, that the little port on the coast of Venezuela, Puerto Cabello, became confused with something Italian sounding that probably does not exist, for the correct name honours one of the early pioneers in the history of South America.

HMS HERMIONE in the paintings was a 32-gun frigate of 715 tons with a ship's company of 220 men under the command of Captain Hugh Pigot aged 27 and was operating off the West Indies, in 1797. In those rough days Pigot was among the roughest of the rough and delighted in meting out punishment of the utmost severity and, thus, he was both feared and hated by the men under him. He was possibly the cruellest captain in the service.

Late in the afternoon of 21 September 1797 while the men were reefing the topsails Pigot worked himself into a paroxysm of fury and vowed that the last man off the mizzen-top yard would be flogged. In their anguished haste to avoid the retribution which they knew their captain would delight in wreaking, two men fell onto the quarter-deck and were killed instantly. With cold-blooded heartlessness the order was given that their bodies should be thrown overboard.

The leaven of anger fermented all next day, but matters were brought to a head that night when the men began to indulge in a bit of tomfoolery on deck. The first lieutenant appeared, was jostled, tempers flared, he was stabbed to death and then simply cast to the waves. The wall of the dam of wrath and anguish then burst and the ship was overwhelmed by a tidal wave of mutiny. Only three junior officers were spared (among them David O'Brien Casey who survived in the Navy until at least 1845); the rest, Pigot among them, were slain and their bodies unceremoniously dumped into the sea. When conditions are bestial men are apt to be turned into beasts. In all Pigot and 9 other officers were killed.

In order to escape from the inevitable consequences of their actions - remember it was not long after the famous Spithead mutiny - the mutineers sailed to La Guaira in Venezuela and handed themselves and the HERMIONE over to the Spanish authorities who immediately cut sufficient new ports, increased the number of the ship's guns to 42 and her complement to almost 400, some of whom were soldiers and artillerymen.

However, she seldom left harbour because British ships were constantly on the lookout for her.

In September 1799 Captain Edward Hamilton of the SURPRISE, an aptly named frigate of 28 guns and a ship's company of fewer than 200 men, became tired of waiting for HERMIONE to come out of Puerto Cabello and so decided to go in and take her. Drake, Nelson or many another would have hurrahed, for Puerto Cabello was a fortified harbour with close on 200 guns, apart from gunboats, while the prize that Hamilton sought boasted 14 guns more than the SURPRISE had, was moored head and stern and had twice as many men. To make matters worse - or more glorious - not even half of the men from SURPRISE could be taken on the madcap cutting-out expedition that had been planned.

It was only on the later afternoon of 24 October 1799 that Hamilton revealed his hazardous scheme. There was immediate enthusiasm despite the odds or the overwhelming probability of failure. Every move had been considered to the last detail before the project was made known to the eager men and within a matter of minutes all was ready. Only 6 of the ship's boats were to be used, and fewer than 100 men were to be on the thwarts by 7.30 that night. The launch was to make for HERMIONE's bow and 3 of her men, before clambering on board to join their comrades, were to sever the anchor hawser; the jolly-boat was instructed to head for the starboard quarter where two men would climb aboard and loosen the mizzen topsail, while others were to part the stern cable, and men for the gig had the task of loosening the fore topsail. With the optimism of confidence it was hoped that all this could be achieved undetected and that the ship could be under tow and making way before the Spaniards realised that they were being taken out of the harbour. Expectations of failure there were none.

When hopes are dupes courage and determination often win the day and the Royal Navy of that time had had plenty of experience in "cutting-out" operations round the coast of France and in the Mediterranean. Everything favoured the Spaniards, yet strength, especially when there is the element of surprise, is often a weakness, for the strong are apt to believe that only a superior force would dare to attack them. In the Stygian darkness which entombed the bay, and when the boats were still almost a mile from their quarry, the alarm was given. Caution and silence were therefore discarded, and the men at the oars pulled furiously and the boats sped towards their goal. Hamilton was in the pinnace and, even though her rudder became fouled, he and his men reached their objective as well and all set about their detailed tasks. Danger and difficulty were scorned, and before long their captain was able to look down from the forecabin onto a multitude of the enemy on the main deck firing frantically into the emptiness of an ebony black night.

Soon the intrepid attackers from SURPRISE were in the midst of the mêlée, and pandemonium followed shortly and fortunately by Spanish panic and superstition, awoke echo after echo across the dark waters of Puerto Cabello. Confusion became confounded as the shore batteries joined in the tumultuous free-for-all; but while some of the British sailors smote with might and main others scrambled into the rigging like so many squirrels, loosened the topsails and, with the aid of three of their boats, got HERMIONE moving towards the open sea. Superb training and the many months of the year spent out of port gave the British sailors of those days an enormous advantage. "I have seen Spanish line-of-battle ships twenty-four hours unmooring" said Admiral Brenton (1770-1844) "as many minutes are sufficient for a well-manned British ship to perform the same operation."

Darkness and confusion are the enemies of a heart that is not over-stout. When the Spaniards felt the ship under them making way, they were convinced that this could have been achieved only by a vastly superior force or a supernatural foe, and they surrendered. Yet such had been the fury of the attack that their brief resistance had cost them dear: 119 killed and 97 wounded, many of the latter seriously. Of the British - Captain Hamilton received five wounds, yet he survived; 12 of his men were wounded, but not one life was lost. HERMIONE then made for Port Royal, Jamaica

and arrived there on 1st November. The Spanish prisoners were trans-shipped to an American schooner which hove in sight en route to Puerto Cabello. HERMIONE was renamed RETRIBUTION: a stern name indeed, but stern were the deeds connected with her mutiny and her return to the British fleet. The mutineers were ruthlessly hunted down by the Royal Navy so that over the next 10 years more than a score of them were hanged from the foreyardarms of the King's ships.

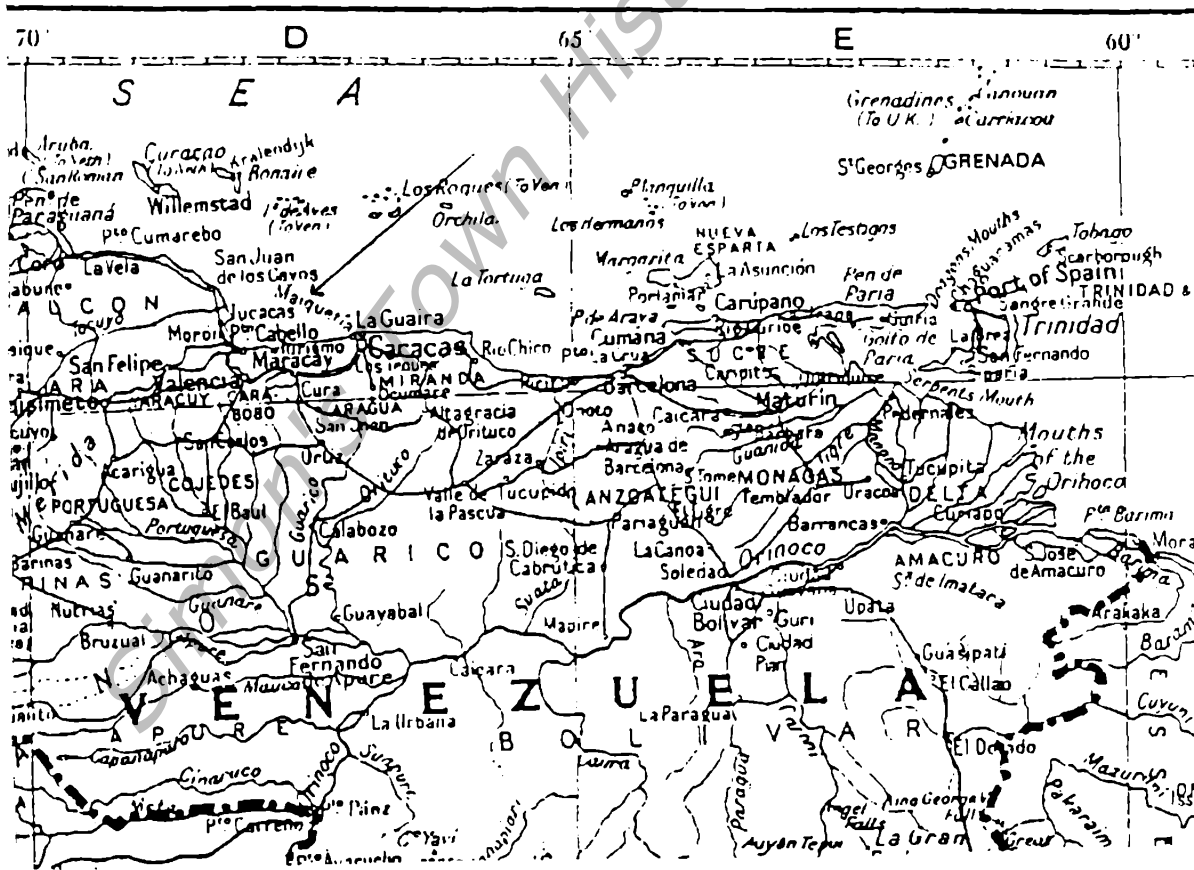
HMS RETRIBUTION was no longer needed by the Royal Navy with the Treaty of Amiens about to be signed and she was passed over to Trinity House. However they only used her for a brief time and she was broken up in Deptford in June 1805. Officers and men of 3 ships that have borne the crest of HERMIONE have known Simon's Town but we have no evidence that this HERMIONE actually visited here.

What a queer world it is for Captain Sir Edward Hamilton, then of HMS GLADIATOR, was himself court-martialled in 1802 and dismissed the service.

World War II
HMS HERMIONE
was a Dido Class
Cruiser.



She was dry-docked at
Simon's Town 20.4.1942
to 23.4.1942 because of
hull damage (fore peak)



EDITOR'S NOTE:

Anne Marshall who has written the following short piece "Their Fresh Air Fund" has been engaged over the past year or so in the somewhat Herculean task of indexing and cross-referencing the Works Department records of HM Royal Naval Dockyard, Simon's Town. Much material of interest has come to light including the following short article. The Society and the Museum are very grateful to Anne for the extraordinary patience and perserverance devoted to the successful completion of this Index.

THEIR FRESH AIR FUND

Anne Marshall.

In 1899 an earnest appeal was made to the staff of the Works Department, HM Royal Naval Dockyard, Simon's Town, by the Poor Children's Society, London, for a donation to provide a week at the Holiday Home at Southend-on-Sea in Essex for poor children, many living in "close and badly ventilated slums".

Twenty-six men subscribed, the list being headed by a donation of 3/6d from the Civil Engineer, and a cheque totalling two guineas was gratefully acknowledged by the President of the Society.

The aim of the Society was to provide a free week's seaside holiday for little ones "not absolutely ill but merely dull and drooping from winter colds and exposure, which has told on many, and in some instances suffering from family trials and insufficient food."

According to the brochure, at that time 2/- would give a child a day's outing in the country, including food and railway fare, and so the generous donation from the men of the Works Department would no doubt have provided many needy London children with a week's seaside holiday.

Not long after, Cape Town's morning paper launched an appeal for a seaside home and we give below the story of the Cape Times Fresh Air Fund Camp-Froggy Pond. EDITOR

CAPE TIMES FRESH AIR FUND CAMP - FROGGY POND - SIMON'S TOWN

Joy Cobern

The Society for the Protection of Child Life first proposed the launching of the Cape Times Fresh Air Fund in 1919, to bring needy children to a camp at Kalk Bay. An article proposing this appeared in the Cape Times on 31st October 1919. It had been noticed that considerable sums were being raised for charities for children overseas whilst there was a great need locally for a fund to provide holidays at the sea for children from the poorer districts of the Cape. Camps were run at Kalk Bay, Muizenberg, Camps Bay, Jonkershoek and even in the Karoo.

In 1934 the Fund acquired a permanent site at Froggy Pond, where it has remained ever since. After the camp was set up the Divisional Council tarred 200 yards of road in front of the camp to prevent the dust floating into the buildings. The Governor-General and Countess Clarendon visited the camp. The music hall artist, George Clarke, took his company to perform there and film star Bebe Daniels took part in a Bridge Drive to raise money for the camp and came visiting with toys for 80 children.

In 1939 the Royal Navy requested the use of the camp. As Simon's Town was to be a restricted area and the camp would have to close anyway it was turned over to the Royal Navy to be used as a transit camp for the duration of the war and also as a base for the D.E.M.S. for a short time. They were the men who manned the guns on merchant ships. It was here that the famous dog JUST NUISANCE had a permanent bunk during the war.

At the end of the war the C-in-C South Atlantic Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Burnett wrote to the Chairman of the Fund thanking them for the use of the camp. He was also present at a ceremony during which the White Ensign was lowered for the last time and presented to Mr. G.H. Wilson, Chairman of the Cape Times Fund who officially received the camp back from the Royal Navy. A full scale wooden model of a 12-pounder, 12 cwt HA/LA gun, which was originally mounted in a merchant ship to mislead the Germans as to the armament of the ship, was presented to the Camp and installed under the flagstaff with the inscription:

Presented to the
Cape Times Children's Fund
by D.E.M.S.
Simon's Town
1939-1945

In September 1949 the Fund was registered in terms of the Welfare Organisations Act. C.S.S.M. (Children's Special Service Mission) provided Leaders and Helpers for the camp for many years.

After the war the camp was improved. Junior Fairhaven Work Party donated a hall. Extra land was leased from the Department of Lands and playgrounds were laid out. The Simon's Town High School woodwork class made 2 see-saws and the Playing Fields Association donated swings. Handwork camps for older boys and girls were held.

Groups of children not connected with the Fund also use the camp for which they make a donation towards costs. These are usually from Cape Peninsula schools and they are usually visitors to our Museum.

D.E.M.S. = Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships and the men were collectively referred to as Dems Gunners.

From: The Cape Times June 2 1886

"It needs little skill to point out how delightful would be a promenade road, perfectly level, winding along the base of the Kalk Bay range, well above the houses, and commanding a splendid view of the sea. A liberal supply of rough, strong not costly benches would be essential along this promenade. Here visitors and convalescents might stroll and rest in pleasure and peace, afar from the madness of the fish-cart horn and the dust of the prancings on the too much trampled high road."

100 years on and what about the traffic on the high road? Editor.

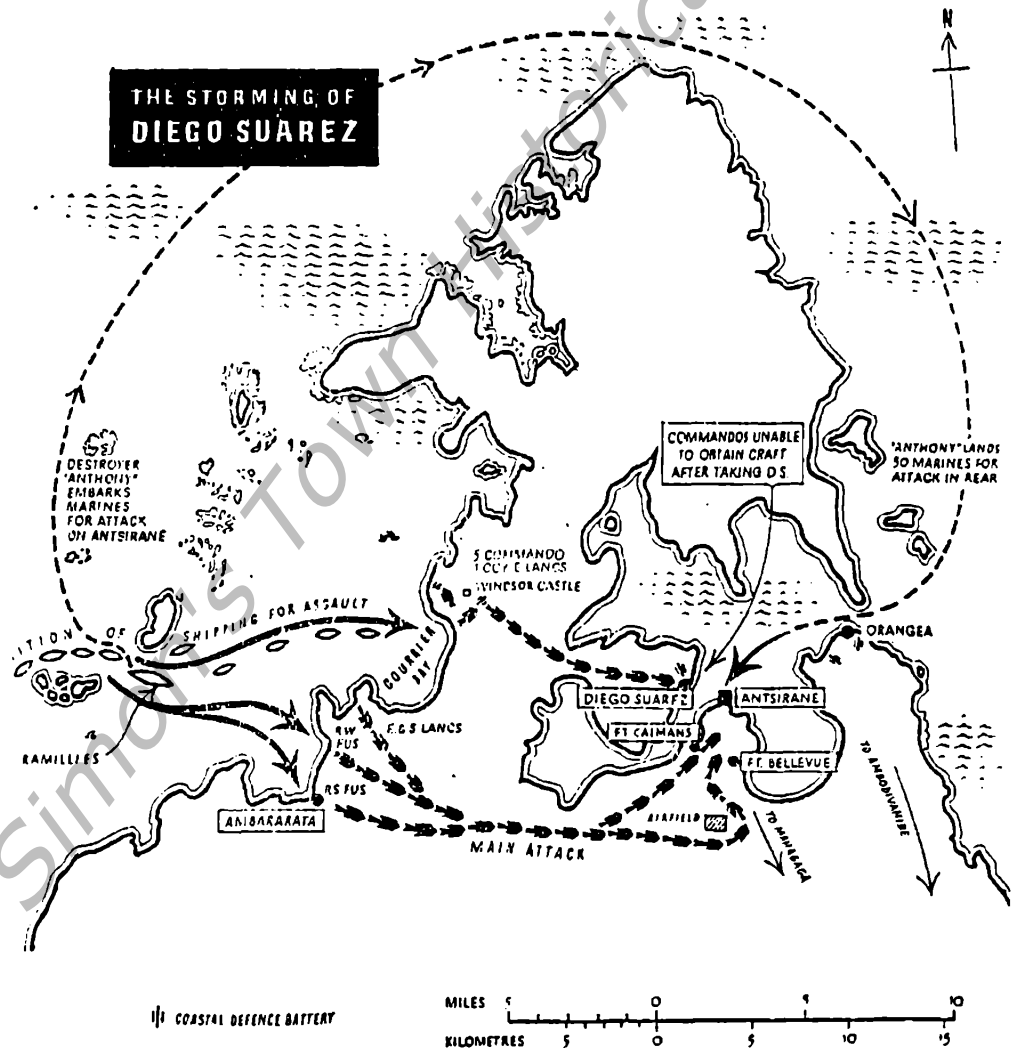
From: The Cape Times March 7 1887

"The last Russian man-of-war in Table Bay was not behind the previous one in the collection of useful topical information. Everyday almost an officer, with a party of sailors, used to go from the RYANDA to Lion's Hill, armed with theodolite and ether surveying apparatus, and from the summit carefully take the bearing of the several points of importance to mariners in the navigation of the bay."

MADAGASCAR LANDINGS 1942

Although everyone has heard about the capture of Diego Suarez and the subsequent invasion of the rest of Madagascar, most people probably imagine the latter to have been one operation instead of several smaller ones forming a complete whole. That the planners recognised this is shown by the code name for the operation "Stream Line Jane" - "Stream" being the landing at Majunga "Line" the Army advance from that port and "Jane" the bombardment and landing at Tamatave. In addition to these three operations there were several smaller ones such as Julear the landing of Commandos from a destroyer at Morandava on the western side of the island as a diversion and to make the French believe that a landing was being made there in addition to the main one at Majunga. This small operation was entirely successful and its object was achieved without loss of life.

Tamatave is the chief commercial port of Madagascar and lies on a bay on the east coast, surrounded by reefs, about 150 miles from the capital Antananarivo, to which it is connected by rail and road. Tamatave's population in those days was about 15,000 and it was hoped that by its capture the eventual capture of Antananarivo would be expedited. Accordingly Friday 18th September 1942 was fixed for this part of the operation.



Meanwhile it was also decided to take Diego Suarez to prevent it falling into enemy hands. Rear Admiral E.N. Syfret C.B. RN (a member of the well-known Cape Town family) was to be in overall charge. The military force was under the command of Major General R.G. Sturges, C.B. R.M. and Captain G.A. Garnons-Williams D.S.C. R.N. of Combined Operations Command was the Naval Commander of the assault landing craft. Admiral Syfret sailed from Gibraltar in HMS MALAYA on 31st March, 1942. At Freetown on the West Coast of Africa he picked up a troop convoy and there conferred with Maj. Gen. Sturges. They had but two days in Freetown to arrange the details of their strategy. They arrived in Cape Town on 19th April, 1942 and landed to discuss details with General Smuts. Admiral Syfret then moved his flag to HMS ILLUSTRIOUS and sailed on 20th April for Durban. There he transferred his flag to HMS RAMILLIES for the assault. He sailed from Durban on 27th April. Admiral Syfret met up with the forces of Admiral Boyd (2 aircraft carriers brought south from Kilindini in Kenya). Their forces landed at Courrier Bay and Ambararata Bay on the west side of the island, having arrived off the latter on 5th May, 1942. Also in use was the Dido Class Cruiser HMS HERMIONE which had been in dry dock in Simon's Town from 20th/24th April 1942 for inspection/repair of hull damage in her fore peak. She was to distract French attention from the west side of the island by creating a diversion just before dawn on the east side making smoke and firing starshell in the vicinity of Ambodivahibe Bay, the most probable landing place on the east coast, south-east of Antsirane. This was very successful and caused the French to send troops to the area of Antsirane long before troops were sent in the direction of the real landings in Courrier and Ambararata Bays.

The action took three days before the great harbour of Diego Suarez was in British hands at a cost of 500 casualties - less than one-sixth of them being fatal. At times the French fought well and certainly at Antsirane it needed a dash by 50 Royal Marines to ensure success. There is little doubt that the surprise attack disconcerted the garrison, especially those whose heart was not altogether in the fight.

The operations which resulted in the occupation of Madagascar were eventually completed at midnight on 5th/6th November 1942. During operations on land, 58 bridges were repaired and at one place it was even necessary to run a rope ferry across a river. A light railway was also laid from Tanpani through 50 miles of lagoon and river to Brickaville.

I have digressed a little and will now return to Admiral Syfret's operations. He entered Diego Suarez harbour p.m. on 17th May to discuss the terms of surrender. He met the Vichy French commanders on 18th May. Admiral Syfret was very firm and an agreement was eventually reached. Maj. Gen. Sturges R.M. went ashore as the Military Commander. For this action Admiral Syfret was "mentioned in despatches". He left Diego Suarez in HMS RAMILLIES for Durban. He spent two weeks in Durban then took the train to Cape Town to visit his family. He then hoisted his flag in the Armed Merchant Cruiser CANTON which from 16th April to 1st May 1942 had also been using the dry-docking facilities at Simon's Town. Admiral Syfret took passage in CANTON for Freetown. From there he flew to London by air. He was promoted to Actg. Vice-Admiral on 4th July 1942 and continued his service in the Mediterranean from where he had been plucked as Flag Officer Commanding Force H to lead the Madagascar operation.

Subsequently on 18th September 1942 at 0500 a force of His Majesty's ships known as Force "M" arrived off Tamatave under the command of Rear-Admiral W.G. Tennant CB CBE MVO flying his flag in HMS BIRMINGHAM. Other ships in Force "M" were WARSPITE, ILLUSTRIOUS, GAMBIA and the destroyers NAPIER (Commodore S.H.T. Arliss, DSO) HIZAM, ACTIVE, ARROW, BLACKMORE and INCONSTANT in addition to landing ships and fleet minesweepers. Except for ILLUSTRIOUS and WARSPITE, the rest of the fleet was swept into Tamatave Roads by the fleet sweepers and anchored in preparation for a bombardment should this prove to be necessary. At 0529 Tamatave Radio was instructed to inform the local Chef de Region that the fleet was there and that he should not give the order for the French forces to fire on the British ships. He acknowledged immediately and the invasion force then sat waiting for the next move. Eventually

as dawn broke it could be seen that French soldiers were manning pillboxes covering the beach near Tanio Port Lighthouse. At last the Chef de Region replied to the British commander "Your message will be passed on to Antananarivo at 6a.m. Do not send anyone ashore as I have orders to defend the town. Request you await answer from Antananarivo."

In order to hasten things and to give the French less time to arrange for the defence of the town should they decide to open fire on the fleet, at 0609 Tamatave Radio was told to inform the Chef de Region that in the event of fire being opened by him, the town would be shelled by the 15" guns of the battleship which could just be seen out to sea. However, this did not hasten the action and the Commander sent a further message that if they did not accept his envoy under a white flag within half an hour he would be forced to commence bombardment to cover the landing of troops. The fleet was told to stand-by for bombardment at 0645 if the French refused to accept the envoy. Time dragged on, enlivened by an aerial display by aircraft from HMS ILLUSTRIOUS and finally at 0640 another attempt was made to get an answer from the French. It took the form of this message "If you compel me to bombard, in order to save life hoist the white flag at Government House and Tanio Point Lighthouse when you feel you can surrender with honour". It was decided to postpone the action till 0700 when the French were again asked whether an extension of the time limit was required, the reply being in the affirmative. Zero hour was then postponed till 0730. Meanwhile a message had been intercepted from the local Chef de Region to Antananarivo requesting orders, but still nothing happened. Accordingly at 0721 the Chef de Region was informed that an envoy was being sent ashore under the white flag and if he was fired on the bombardment would immediately begin. He replied that he had still received no fresh instructions so at 0730 aircraft were recalled to rearm and standby in case the French eventually decided to make a go of it. During this time an "R" boat was being prepared to take the envoy ashore and everyone wondered if the French were bluffing and playing for time while they prepared buildings and port facilities for the landings. Light relief was provided during this period by intercepting a call by Tamatave Radio to Mauritius Radio - "Good morning, old man. no traffic this morning, too much interference from British warships."

At 0745 the "R" boat flying the white flag left HMS BIRMINGHAM and proceeded towards the shore. At 0749 fire was opened on her from machine gun nests on the beach and she immediately turned and steered back to the fleet. There was nothing for it but to begin the bombardment which was started at 0752 from pom-poms and oerlikons only, fire being directed on the barracks and lighthouse. Exactly two minutes later, French honour had been satisfied and the white flag, which could be seen at the foot of the flagpole before the bombardment began, was hoisted. Shelling immediately ceased and fortunately only a few casualties had been caused, unfortunately mostly among civilians. Shortly after 0800 the landing started, troops being instructed not to fire unless fired upon. The landing was uneventful and by 1330 the town was completely in British hands, the aerodrome was captured and ready for use and the harbour obstructions removed. Little demolition to the port facilities had been done by the French though most of the cranes had been immobilised some time before the attack. The population appeared to be completely indifferent, and the Chef de Region though a bit disgruntled was willing to co-operate at least temporarily. This ended one of the little-known landings of the war, happily with a small loss of life and not much damage to property.

When researching this article we asked for help and information from members of our Society who may have been present. We had a reply from Derek Woodyat who was involved in the follow-up to the Diego Suarez landings, who writes as follows:

"At the time I was a Bombardier attached to the 15th Battery of the 6th Field Regiment, S.A. Artillery, in the 7th South African Brigade. We left Durban in convoy, I being aboard the EMPIRE TROOPER. My job was manning the rear gun in shifts day and night. Our route took us a long way round the west coast of Madagascar to avoid the German submarines which were known to be in the Mada-

"gascar channel.

"We arrived at Diego Suarez during a monsoon and in order to enter the channel into the harbour, with the gale coming from our port side, we had to travel at high speed in order not to strike the concrete side which we only just missed but instead we struck the bows of a stationery ship which tore off some of our davits and lifeboat, at which we troops surged back on deck to avoid injury although one of our number was crushed and killed. There was no opposition on landing as the area had been cleared by the Commandos. We bivouaced in a valley but as some of the men developed malaria we soon learnt from the local inhabitants that this was known to them as "death valley" and we moved camp.

"In the meantime the Commandos had taken over the 4 heavy gun emplacements overlooking the harbour entrance to Diego Suarez but with no-one to man it. As I had initially trained in heavy artillery with the S.A. Heavy Artillery, and as a British Artillery Unit had now arrived without their equipment which had been sunk by the Germans en route, I and a couple of other South Africans together with the British Unit, mainly Welsh coal miners, took over this gun emplacement. It was extremely interesting with the shell trucks running on lines in underground tunnels, and the whole system metric and electrical, so we had to do quite a lot of experimenting before we managed to fire off our first salvo. Some of the vital parts had been buried by the French but we managed to find them all. We were not short of music as the Welshmen formed their own choir and what magnificent voices some of them had - it is little things like that which keep up the morale of troops, which is so important. A cable from General Smuts congratulating us on the capture of the island was read out to us. On one occasion when on look-out duty from our pill-box I spotted, through a telescope, what appeared to be a periscope on the horizon, and I immediately phoned through to H.Q. in Antsirante (the town of Diego Suarez harbour). On instructions we then had to train our guns onto that spot and follow it through for the 12 miles or so into the harbour and it turned out to be a Vichy French submarine coming in to surrender to the Free French.

"When the island was firmly in Allied hands the whole of the South African contingent of about 7,000 men embarked on the NEW AMSTERDAM back to Durban, before re-embarking in another convoy for Egypt."

It seems appropriate to mention briefly a previous action by the British in Madagascar in which the Royal Navy was greatly involved.

This relates to the previous occasion when the French flag surrendered to the British, nearly 180 years ago in an action for which the bar "Off Tamatave 20th May 1811" was awarded with the Naval General Service Medal 1793-1840. Incidentally this General Service Medal (which covered some 230 battles and smaller actions of the Napoleonic Wars and elsewhere) was not awarded until 1849, and then only to survivors, over 2,000 of whom had fought their qualifying actions 50 or more years earlier.

A squadron of 3 French 40-gun frigates RENOMMÉE, CLORINDE and NEREIDE carrying munitions from Brest to Mauritius had captured the garrison post at Tamatave when Captain Schomberg appeared on the scene from Simon's Town with his squadron of three 36-gun frigates ASTREA, PHOEBE and GALATEA and the 18-gun brig RACEHORSE. Schomberg was destined to become Commander-in-Chief at Simon's Town 1829-1831. A fierce action was fought for four hours after which the RENOMMÉE and NEREIDE surrendered. The British frigate GALATEA was badly cut up while the French CLORINDE escaped. Captain Schomberg returned to Tamatave and summoned the French garrison to surrender, to which no serious opposition was offered. The two captured frigates, fine new vessels were added to the British Navy under the names of HMS JAVA and HMS MADAGASCAR, the latter coming to Simon's Town.

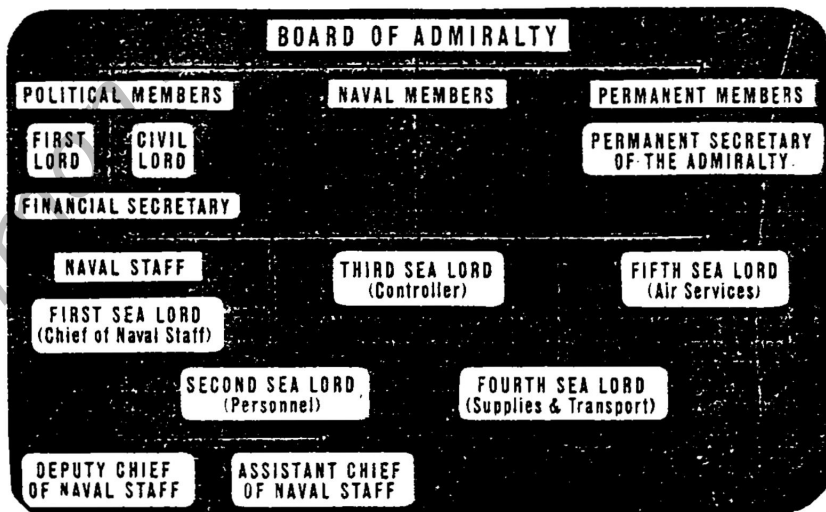
THE BOARD OF ADMIRALTY

Sometimes we have referred to "The Admiralty" or "The Board of Admiralty" and it is proposed in this article to tell you a little more about it.

Originally a Great Officer of State appointed by the King and called the Lord High Admiral was responsible for the Navy. Eventually his job was "put into commission" as it is called and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty - generally known as "Their Lordships" discharged the duties of that office. The office has been in existence for over 500 years and, like so many of the British institutions, it has evolved, in the course of time, into something very different from its original form. Instead of a single man - generally a nobleman - who often made a good thing out of it (and was expected to), the Navy has latterly been controlled by a group of men expert in administration - the Board of Admiralty. But however it was executed the office of Lord High Admiral has always been one of the great offices of State. The Admiralty is responsible to the Sovereign, and, through Parliament, to the Nation, for the conduct of naval officers. It is in command of all commanders-in-chief. Its word is law and its decisions ultimately affect all naval personnel.

The Admiralty also differs from most other Government Departments in that it is not staffed exclusively by Civil Servants. A number of Naval Officers are employed there, and as these are always changing, there is a continual stream of people fresh from the sea. The result is that the Admiralty is not some vague and impersonal institution that might be far beyond the clouds for all it knows about conditions in the Service. The Board is composed largely of Naval Officers. Each of these officers has lately been to sea, so they know the conditions there and the problems that are always arising because they have themselves had to deal with them.

Vice-Admiral E.N. Syfret CB RN was once Vice Chief of Naval Staff (from 1943) and from the Diagram below you can obtain some idea of how the Board was composed during the 1939-45 war. The First Sea Lord, who is always a Minister of the Crown (of Cabinet rank); six Sea Lords of whom the First Sea Lord is also Chief of Naval Staff; a Vice-Chief and two Assistant Chiefs of Naval Staff; a Civil Lord, a Parliamentary and a Financial Secretary; the Permanent Secretary to the Admiralty (who is always a distinguished member of the Civil Service) and in war time the Controller of Merchant Shipbuilding and Repairs. In 1939 Mr. Churchill was First Lord and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound was the First Sea Lord.



The duties of the individual members of the Board are:

First Lord: responsible to King and Parliament for all the business of the Admiralty; represents the Navy in Parliament and Parliament in the Navy.

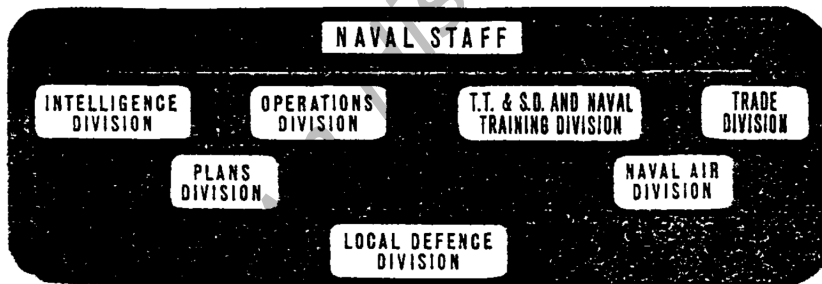
First Sea Lord (also Chief of Naval Staff): the First Lord's chief adviser on all important questions of naval policy, in which duties he has as his assistant the Deputy First Sea Lord, who counts as one of the six Sea Lords. As Chief of Naval Staff, assisted by the Vice-Chief and Assistant Chiefs of the Naval Staff, the First Sea Lord has the superintendence of the distribution and movements of the Fleet, the preparation of war plans, the direction of operations, and the superintendence of the many divisions of the Naval Staff, whose duty it is to study and prepare for all branches of Naval war.

The Second Sea Lord: He is the Chief of Naval Personnel. He is responsible for the manning of the Fleet and in that capacity superintends recruiting, general training and advancement. He appoints officers, and deals with welfare matters and discipline.

The Third Sea Lord and Controller: He is the superintending Lord for design, construction, equipment, armament and maintenance of ships of the Navy.

The Fourth Sea Lord: He has charge of Stores and also of questions of pay, allowances and pensions. He is also Chief of Transport.

The Fifth Sea Lord is Chief of Naval Air Equipment.



In the room at the Admiralty where the Board meets, instead of a picture over the mantelpiece, there is still a large arrow worked from a wind vane on the roof which gives the direction of the wind. During their deliberations in the days of sail, the members in their kneebreeches and powdered wigs, cast many an anxious glance at that indicator; for a shift of wind might at last give a weatherbound fleet its long-awaited chance of sailing; or it might even bring with it the invasion of the shores of Britain.

News of battles once took months to reach the Admiralty. From the South Coast ports news was passed on by the many "Telegraph Hills" which existed south of London and it was a laborious business of passing orders to the Fleet in southern harbours by semaphore from hilltop to hilltop. What a boon W/T (Wireless Telegraphy) was to the Navy when a ship half a world away in the Indian or Pacific Oceans on sighting an enemy could advise the Admiralty in London about it within hours. It is supposed that naval personnel have frequently felt themselves lonely and forgotten in some small ship in a distant port but the movements of all ships are plotted all the time in a room of the Admiralty, especially in the "War Room" in war time such as in the recent Falklands campaign.

HMS SOUTHAMPTON - A FAMOUS NAME IN THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL NAVY

G.W. Haddon

Editor's Note: The considerable role played by HMS SOUTHAMPTON in the annexation of Natal, prompted Society Member G.W. Haddon to research the history of the ships of the Royal Navy which have borne this name. His step-father was a survivor from the World War II vessel of that name. The following article presents the very interesting results of his research.

The very first known Royal Navy vessel to carry the name of HMS SOUTHAMPTON was a 48 Gun Frigate type wooden sailing ship of approx. 600 tons, launched from the Itchen River shipyard of John Winter at Southampton, Hampshire, in the year 1693. The wood used in her construction was of poor quality, and in 1699 the ship was partially re-built at Deptford, Kent. When the matter was raised in the House of Lords regarding the unnecessary expenditure, much displeasure was evident, as it was allegedly stated "That the builder should be Hanged". This HMS SOUTHAMPTON saw action in January 1695, when she was part of Captain James Killigrew's Squadron in the Mediterranean, and assisted in the capture of the French Men O'War "Content" and "Trident". During the 1690's HMS SOUTHAMPTON served in the West Indies under the command of Captain Kirkby (he was later shot for failing to engage the enemy) and the ship returned to home waters. The frigate was taken to Jamaica in 1728 (as a hulk) and broken up in 1735.

The second warship to bear this name, was similar to its predecessor, being launched in 1757, carrying 32 guns but having the distinction of being the very first "True Frigate" and her baptismal-of-fire came unexpectedly in July of that same year in the English Channel whilst she was on her way to Plymouth with money to pay the Dockyard, when the brand-new ship was attacked by two French Frigates "Marechal de Belle Isle" and the "Chauvelin" accompanied by two Sloops. Captain Gilchrist commanding HMS SOUTHAMPTON made a hard fight of it for almost 3 hours, off St. Albans Head, before the attackers broke off the engagement. Shortly afterwards, in September 1757 the SOUTHAMPTON was ordered by Admiral Hawke to the French port of Brest, to engage the enemy, whereupon Captain Gilchrist held his fire when approaching the French warships, and only when at close quarters did HMS SOUTHAMPTON strike, resulting in the capture of the 28 gun French frigate "Emeraude" (re-named by the British as "EMERALD"). In 1780 HMS SOUTHAMPTON was one of three British warships escorting 63 English Merchant vessels, when the combined Spanish & French Fleets set upon the convoy on 9th August, capturing 55 of the ships (assessed cargo value of £15 million), and only 8 of the convoy, with the 3 British escorts - including HMS SOUTHAMPTON - managed to escape...an episode not relished in the annals of the Royal Navy. However, HMS SOUTHAMPTON did win Honours in the "Glorious 1st of June" 1794, when Lord Howe's ships gained a victory over the French Fleet and this was followed by the other famous naval battle of Cape St Vincent in 1797. In the year 1810, HMS SOUTHAMPTON was involved in the Europe blockade of Napoleon's ports, and then during 1812 was involved in the conflict along the coast of the United States, and also in 1812 was engaged in battle with a Privateer "Amethyst", which was successfully de-masted and taken to Jamaica. Later that same year, HMS SOUTHAMPTON was escorting a captured American ship "Vixen" when in the November HMS SOUTHAMPTON became a total wreck on an uncharted reef off Conception Island in the Bahamas, without loss of any lives, but the Captain Sir James Yeo was subsequently Court-Martialled (as was always the case when something of this nature occurred) and thoroughly exonerated.

The third vessel of the Royal Navy was a much larger version, being a Frigate of 1500 tons, carrying 50 guns and was laid down at Deptford as early as 1805, but for the want of seasoned oak and a probable delay beyond normal because of the economic recession in Britain, directly after the war with the Napoleonic Empire, the newly constructed warship was only completed at the end of 1819, and directly after she

joined the Royal Navy, was laid up until 1829 when it was sent to the East India Station for duty. During 1832 she was utilised for the blockade of Dutch ports and then during 1833/1840 she was put into Reserve. The next record concerns her assignment to the South American Station at Montevideo.

HMS SOUTHAMPTON left Montevideo on 23rd January 1841 for the Cape of Good Hope Station where she arrived on 19th February 1841 at Simon's Town bringing the Commander-in-Chief for Brazil and Cape Station Rear-Admiral Sir Edward Durnford King KT, KCH, RN

HMS SOUTHAMPTON's involvement in the relief of the besieged British military enclave at Port Natal, in the Boer Republic of Natalia during 1842 will be dealt with in a further article. On departure from Simon's Town on September 14th 1842 for Home waters, the Frigate was subsequently laid-up in Reserve from 1843 to 1848, a common practice for wooden men-of-war, as shipbuilding techniques were undergoing a revolution with the rapid change to steam/propeller motivation for the "Iron-Duke" war vessels. During 1849 HMS SOUTHAMPTON again returned to Simon's Town where she was Flagship till 1851. A further brief period of naval service began in 1854, but there are no specific records available, although it is known HMS SOUTHAMPTON was being utilised as a Coastguard ship at Harwich, England and in 1867 she was a Training ship at Hull for a period, but there is no definite record of the Frigate's career through to the year of her being finally broken up in 1912 - giving it an unique and pro-longed life span of 107 years.

The name of HMS SOUTHAMPTON was once more accorded to a ship of the Royal Navy which marked the birth of a new era, as this fourth ship, was constructed entirely of STEEL, and designed for coal-fired steam propulsion. The keel was laid at John Brown's shipyard on the Clyde in Scotland in 1911 and the warship of 5,000 tons, classified as a Light Cruiser, having 4 smoke-stacks (funnels) was completed in November 1912 and her main armament consisted of 8 6" guns, with 2 21" Torpedo tubes. This new style HMS SOUTHAMPTON was the highlight of the Royal Navy Fleet's visit to Kiel (Germany) for Yachting-Week, being the social event of Kaiser's German Grand Fleet. Shortly after the commencement of hostilities on the Western Front in World War I, on 31st May 1916, it was from the bridge of HMS SOUTHAMPTON that the first sight of the German High Seas Battle Fleet was observed, and the cruiser played an important role in the strategic planning by Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, in formulating the Battle Plan for the Battle of Jutland. HMS SOUTHAMPTON was hit by the enemy during an early encounter with four German Light-Cruisers, and many casualties were suffered, as well as serious fires, but the British sailors managed to fire torpedoes during the calamity, one of the "tin-fish" scoring a hit on the German warship "Fraunlob" which blew up. In August 1916 the enemy fired 5 torpedoes at HMS SOUTHAMPTON but the cruiser successfully evaded them all. After the 1919 Armistice, she was refitted and painted in Peacetime colours, sent to South America as Flagship and later transferred to the East Indies Station. On her return to the United Kingdom she was paid off in August 1925 and finally scrapped in 1926. The end of a wonderful ship!

The fifth warship to bear the name was also a Light-Cruiser - this was a description applied to the class of ten similar ships that were restricted by the imposition of the London Naval Treaty of 1930. This new Cruiser was originally built by John Brown's on the Clyde, as a 9,000 ton vessel, laid down on 21st November 1934 as the HMS POLYPHEMUS, but on launching on 10th March 1936 she was re-named HMS SOUTHAMPTON. One of her sister ships being constructed as HMS MINOTAUR was re-named NEWCASTLE. During the years of 1936/8 when Britain was awakening to the necessity to mount a re-armament programme to counter the growing threat of Hitler's Nazi Germany, the other well-known names in this class were: GLASGOW, SHEFFIELD, BIRMINGHAM, LIVERPOOL, MANCHESTER, BELFAST, EDINBURGH, and GLOUCESTER. HMS BELFAST still survives as a floating museum moored just upstream of Tower Bridge, London.

This new 5th ship had twelve 6" guns, arranged in four triple turrets, supported by eight 4" (in twin mountings) and with a reputed speed of 32 knots the cruiser was considered able to keep out of trouble, as the lighter-weight 6" shell (100 lbs) would result in quicker fire-rating than the normal cruiser 8" shell (250 lbs).

However, in practical application the ammunition supply handling systems were never completely satisfactory in combat conditions - this was quickly borne out when the new techniques of aerial bombing were experienced. This class of Light-Cruiser was vulnerable to dive-bombing attacks as subsequent war-time experience proved. The new cruiser had the 'old' style Pentagon frame for its Ship's Crest, and the motto "PRO JUSTITIA PRO REGE" (For Justice and King) i.e. King Edward VIII and King George VI, was very appropriate, for when the cruiser was Commissioned into the Royal Navy and handed over to the 2nd Cruiser Squadron of the Home Fleet on 6th March 1937, she in turn became the highlight at the Coronation Review at Spithead by King George VI in May of that year. She was then under the command of Rear-Admiral T.F.P. Calvert.

During the Spanish Civil War of 1938 the cruiser escorted refugees to and from France, and early in 1939 went across the Atlantic for the Royal Tour of Canada. On the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 she was flagship of Rear-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins and was allocated to the Humber force, and had just arrived at the Firth of Forth at Rosyth Naval Base, when the German Luftwaffe made a daring aerial attack on 16th October 1939, dropping some 20 bombs around HMS SOUTHAMPTON. One of the 500 kg bombs actually passed through 3 decks of the cruiser, coming out of the side of the ship above the water line, exploding and sinking the Admiral's barge, with only very slight damage to the warship. The Cruiser shortly after went to the naval anchorage at Scapa Flow in the Orkney Island to the north of Scotland, only to be attacked again by German aircraft, this time being damaged by the bombs.

HMS SOUTHAMPTON, now under the command of Captain F.W.H. Jeans, CVO., RN, became operationally involved in the escort of Troops to and from Norway, during the early part of the German invasion as from 5th April, 1940 with the cruiser being subjected to many aerial attacks and she was lucky to escape with only minor 'near-misses' when conveying the Scots Guards to Harstad, being damaged on 25th May and again on 26th and 28th - the day Narvik was captured by the Invaders. Then during the final evacuation of the British/Norwegian and Allied Forces from Norway which included the important personages of General Auckinleck, French General Bethouart and the British Admiral Lord Cork and Orry the cruiser was again lucky to escape without being detected by the wary German Navy and Luftwaffe.

June 8th 1940 was indeed a very tragic day seeing the loss of the British aircraft-carrier HMS GLORIOUS, as well as the Destroyers HMS ARDENT (H41) and HMS ACASTA (H09) in addition to other ships when they were attacked by the German Battle-cruisers Gneisenau and Scharnhorst (with their 11" guns), coupled with the German Cruiser Hipper (with 8" guns) and accompanying Destroyers which also sank the s.s. ORAMA and the Fleet Tanker OIL PIONEER. But these separate actions diverted the attention of the Germans and in fact allowed the British convoys with some 25,000 troops to be safely escorted by HMS DEVONSHIRE (cruiser of 9,900 tons) to bring out King Haakon and his Norwegian Government in Exile from Tromso to Great Britain to continue active participation in the War.

When the real threat of a German Invasion of Britain appeared imminent in the summer of 1940 and the Luftwaffe were making massive bombing raids over Southern England, especially in the Thames/London area, HMS SOUTHAMPTON was transferred from its base at Sheerness on the Thames to Rosyth Naval base on the Firth of Forth in Scotland, but shortly afterwards she was ordered to Northern Ireland and sailed from Belfast on 15th November 1940 with reinforcements for the Mediterranean. With her sister-ships HMS MANCHESTER, NEWCASTLE & SHEFFIELD she was involved in a surprise encounter with the Italian Fleet and on 27th November they fought a long-range battle off Cape Spartivento, but the enemy with their superior speed, escaped from the British force. It was in this same month, on 11th November, the Fleet Air Arm made its famous attack on the Italian Fleet at Taranto.

HMS SOUTHAMPTON reached Alexandria in Egypt on 30th November and then went through the Suez Canal and on 10th December attacked enemy shipping at Kismayu. She then returned as an escort for a convoy coming from the Cape and arrived at Suez on 28th

December 1940. Immediately thereafter the German Air Force made it's forceful appearance in the Mediterranean in January 1941, causing a most serious threat to the British naval operations, and this sudden onslaught was the 'undoing' of HMS SOUTHAMPTON.

On 6th January she sailed from Alexandria with a convoy taking troops to the Island fortress of Malta. She left the Island on the 8th to join up with the smaller cruiser HMS BONAVENTURE (5,600 tons & 4 x twin 5.25" guns). They successfully sank an Italian Destroyer in the Eastern Mediterranean and then HMS SOUTHAMPTON was called away to assist the Destroyer HMS GALLANT (H59) which early that dawn had struck a mine soon after leaving Alexandria whilst protecting a convoy in OPERATION EXCESS. HMS SOUTHAMPTON was that same day joined by the Flagship HMS GLOUCESTER under the command of Rear Admiral de Renouf. The two cruisers with the crippled Destroyer HMS GALLANT arrived safely at Malta early the next morning, but the cruisers were ordered to steam out immediately to join the main Fleet in the area of Suda Bay in Crete which was being attacked by some 40 enemy bombers in their concerted efforts to attack the British Aircraft-Carrier HMS ILLUSTRIOUS.

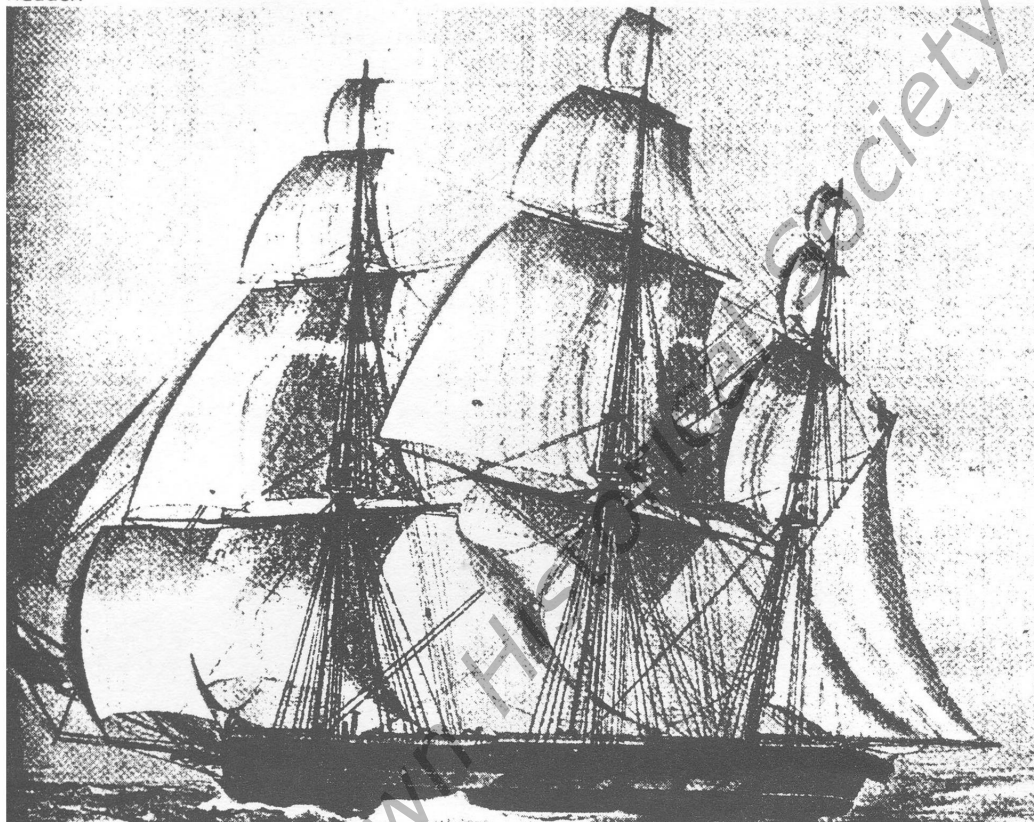
It was later in the afternoon of 11th January that the Luftwaffe sighted the two cruisers and a determined aerial attack was launched. At approximately 1415 hours (2.15p.m.) twelve Dive-Bombers struck. HMS GLOUCESTER was hit on the Bridge, by a 'dud' bomb, which however killed nine and wounded 14 crew members, but the warship survived with negligible damage. However, the situation in HMS SOUTHAMPTON was far more serious, for an aircraft flying down out of the sun managed to straddle her with a stick of bombs and two 250kg bombs penetrated the upperdeck of the cruiser. One exploded in the Wardroom and one in the Petty Officers Mess, which killed instantly an unknown number. Unfortunately for the ship fires were started which became uncontrollable below decks in the aft and mid-ship sections. The After Engineeroom was extensively damaged and the engines stopped at 1600 hours (4p.m.) but meantime the fire was creating a very high risk of explosion at one of the 6" shell magazines. Fearful that the warship might blow up the decision was made to seek urgent assistance and the Destroyer HMS DIAMOND (H22) of 1375 tons with a complement of 145 men, was summoned to rescue the crew of HMS SOUTHAMPTON. The Destroyer only managed to reach the stricken cruiser at 1900 hours (7 pm) that evening 11th January and she successfully rescued all who were still alive. The Captain and Officers of HMS SOUTHAMPTON considered it was impractical for the ship to be towed, even if the fires could be brought under some measure of control, and so the order to Scuttle the ship was given, and she was torpedoed by her sister ship HMS GLOUCESTER and then by the 7,200 ton cruiser HMS ORION whose strike caused a massive explosion and sadly the SOUTHAMPTON sank below the Mediterranean. Of her total crew of 750 officers and men she lost 81 killed/drowned and there were 87 seriously wounded amongst the survivors. Regrettably the Destroyer HMS DIAMOND was herself lost on 27th April, 1941. HMS GLOUCESTER was to follow her sister ship, being sunk by aerial attack on 22nd May 1941.

The sixth Royal Navy ship to bear the name HMS SOUTHAMPTON was built at the Woolston shipyard of Vosper Thornycroft (UK) on the River Itchen at Southampton, Hants. Her keel was laid-down on Trafalgar Day 21st October 1976, and she was launched on 29th January 1979. The new Type 42 Guided-Missile Destroyer was officially accepted by the Navy on 17th August 1981 and Commissioned at Southampton city/port on 31st October, 1981. It is with pride she carries the name of her illustrious forbears.

The article was compiled with the help of information supplied by the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England.

HIRD HMS SOUTHAMPTON - IT'S IMPLICATION IN THE "SAVING" OF PORT NATAL 1842.

Haddon



arronade mentioned on 9th February 1842 as being fitted to HMS FAWN ex HMS SOUTHAMPTON at present adorns the entrance opposite the City Hall, Pietermaritzburg.

LOGICAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- 27.8. The British Union Jack first hoisted at Fort Farewell, Port Natal.
- 23.6. The founding of Port Natal as a trading base for ivory, by the British/Colonial traders, who had entered Zululand from the Eastern Cape.
Arrival at the Cape of Good Hope of the 27th Inniskilling Regiment of Foot, from Barbados.
- 17.7. The port settlement of Port Natal was re-named DURBAN, in honour of the Governor of the Cape Colony from 1834-38, Sir Benjamin D'Urban. The new Colony being named VICTORIA in honour of the recently declared accession of the 18 yr old Queen Victoria on 21st July 1837 in London.
The Afrikaner Trek-Boers settle in the Zululand area.
- 14.11. Sir George Napier, Governor of the Cape Colony, declares the port area of Durban as British territory.

- 1838 16.12 The Burghers, under Andries Pretorius defeat Dingaan and his Zulu Impis at the Battle of Blood River.
- 1839 -. 3. Founding of 1st Boer Republic in Southern Africa, named Natalia; with the capital to be called Pietermaritzburg.
- .11 Governor Napier orders the evacuation of the Durban area, but the Fort to be garrisoned by British troops and the British Flag to remain hoisted - the enclave within the Boer Republic of Natalia.
- 1841 19. 2. The 4th Rate Frigate (50 guns) HMS SOUTHAMPTON arrives on its first visit to Simon's Town, under the command of Captain Hollgard, RN. Ship arrived from Montevideo having left there 23.1.1841, bringing the Commander-in-Chief Brazil and Cape of Good Hope Station Rear-Admiral Sir Edward Durnford King Kt. KCH RN. Frigate leaves shortly thereafter for South America.
- 23.12. HMS SOUTHAMPTON returns to Simon's Town now commanded by Captain S.G. Freemantle, RN, from Montevideo, to celebrate Christmas as the Flagship Cape of Good Hope Station.
- 1842 9. 2. The refit completed at Simon's Town dockyard of the flat-bottomed Gun-boat HMS FAWN, having received its 2 guns (muzzle-loaded 12 pdr carronade) from HMS SOUTHAMPTON. HMS FAWN is under the command of Lieutenant Joseph Nourse, RN
1. 4. Captain Charlton Smith with 3 companies of the 27th Regt. of Foot, reinforced with 50 Cape Mounted Rifles and some 200 servants with 50 waggons, left the Camp at Umgazi Post (Pondoland) and commenced their 260 mile journey through a wilderness and swollen rivers to reinforce the British enclave at Port Natal.
4. 5. The relieving column arrive at Port Natal only to receive forcible demands from the Boers for the new arrivals to leave the Republic of Natalia.
5. 5. Schooner HMS CONCH leaves Algoa Bay for Cape Town.
23. 5. British midnight attack on Boer Camp at Kongela, with disastrous results for the attackers with 17 soldiers killed and 31 wounded.
26. 5. Captain T.C. Smith (Commandant of 27th Regt.) informs Mr. G.C. Cato (civilian) at Port Natal that information of the disaster of 23rd as well as the necessity for reinforcements must be taken to the Eastern Cape without delay. Mr. Cato knew a reliable British Settler who was living at Isipingo (formerly a Lt. in the Port Natal Volunteers in 1837) but at present in the port/lagoon area. This man Richard Philip King (born 28.11.1813 at Chatham, England) became the hero known affectionately as "Dick" King.
- At midnight King with his horse "Somerset" were taken by rowing boat/ swimming in darkness, set off from Salisbury Island for the 600 mile trackless journey to Military H.Q. in the Eastern Cape at Grahams-town to seek urgent aid for the besieged garrison at Port Natal.
- 1842 31. 5. Schooner HMS CONCH arrives Algoa Bay from Cape Town.
1. 6. Under a Flag of Truce, the Boer Commandants Mocke and Pretorius propose to the British garrison to accept the removal of women and children from the besieged Fort to go aboard the ship in the lagoon. The Schooner MAZEPPA is under the surveillance of the armed Boers. Proposal accepted as a measure of safety although MAZEPPA not permitted to leave Port Natal.

- 1842 4. 6. Richard "Dick" King reaches Grahamstown alone, completely exhausted, the horse "Somerset" died the next day. He had negotiated 122 river crossings on the historic 10-day ride. After delivering the Despatch to Col. John Hare (Lt. General of the Eastern Cape) Richard King is taken to Grahamstown hospital to recover from his ordeal.
10. 6. Schooner MAZEPPA escapes over the 'Bar' at Port Natal into the open sea and sets sail for Delagoa Bay (then Lourenco Marques and now known as Maputo) carrying little food for the refugees. After reaching Delagoa Bay, the ship turns about and eventually arrives off Port Natal to be greeted by the Royal Navy frigate HMS SOUTHAMPTON on 29th June.
11. 6. Richard "Dick" King leaves Grahamstown and joins HMS CONCH under the command of Captain Bell, at Algoa Bay and with ship full to capacity with military reinforcements, the 100-ton vessel sails for Port Natal with 100 men of the 27th Regt. commanded by Captain Durnford.
14. 6. HMS SOUTHAMPTON under the command of Captain Thos. Ogle RN takes on a contingent of the 25th Regt., commanded by Lt.-Col. A.J. Cloete, sails from Simon's Town for Port Natal.
24. 6. HMS CONCH arrives off Port Natal anchorage
25. 6. HMS SOUTHAMPTON's arrival approx. midnight is announced by a rocket sent into the dark sky to let besieged Camp know help is near.
26. 6. This Sunday morning the naval ships had to wait until the tide began to rise just after noon (it was too shallow to permit HMS CONCH to go safely over the Bar) when the Schooner collected the long-boats from the Frigate, laden with military aid and towed them into the Port/lagoon. Meantime HMS SOUTHAMPTON fired some broadsides from her 50 guns causing little destruction but much consternation to the Boer forces. When they witnessed the oncoming invaders the 600 Boers wisely dispersed to their camp at Kongela and the relieving military/naval force disembarked, taking only 20 minutes to complete the Relief of Captain Smith's besieged Fort.
28. 6. MAZEPPA returns from Delagoa Bay to find HMS SOUTHAMPTON has arrived.
4. 7. HMS CONCH departs from Port Natal for Algoa Bay.
HMS SOUTHAMPTON departs the anchorage for return to Simon's Town where she arrives 15th July.
15. 7. Schooner MAZEPPA departs from Port Natal for Algoa Bay where it arrives 22nd July
- An Armistice Agreement is signed between the Boers at Pietermaritzburg (capital of Natalia) and the British military whereby the Republic is ceded to the Crown (Queen Victoria). The formal annexation of Natal as part of the Cape Colony was on 31st May 1844 although it was Proclaimed on 12 May 1843.
14. 9. HMS SOUTHAMPTON sailed from Simon's Town - mission accomplished.
9. HMS WINCHESTER the relieving Frigate (50 guns) commanded by Captain Eden arrives Simon's Town from England where it left 9th June via Rio de Janeiro (5th August) as the new Flagship.

N.B. A Fort Victoria constructed at the Point, Durban in 1838, hoisted the Union Jack in December 1838. This is NOT the present day "Old Fort" which was besieged in 1842, which was called Fort Itafa Amalinde, being constructed by

SIMON'S TOWN COTTAGE HOSPITAL also known as FALSE BAY COTTAGE HOSPITAL
- and - about a memorial to Mary Kingsley.

In the Simon's Town and District Chronicle of 2nd June 1900 there is a report of a meeting held in the Public Library, Simon's Town "to consider the views of Dr. Carré and Rev. Mr. Legg with the aim of creating a national fund in order to place on record the world's appreciation of the good work accomplished" by the late Mary Kingsley who died at Simon's Town on 3rd June, 1900.

Present were Rear Admiral Harris, Councillor Hugo, Rev. Legg, Father Meagher, Rev. v.d. Lingen, Rev. Gathercole and other influential townsmen together with many ladies including Mrs. Hastings and Mrs. Shakespeare. Mr. Runciman (at the time Mayor) attended towards the end of the proceedings.

Sir Robert Harris was elected Chairman of the Meeting. He opened by asking Dr. Carré to read a letter written to Rev. Legg:

"I think your idea admirable. but it wants a lot of thinking over and working out. I have had a large experience in the manipulating of projects involving the collection of money, and I never touch a failure or anything threatening to be a failure, therefore I should have to satisfy myself that the scheme would be successful before I would have anything to do with it, and I am quite sure that these represent your views. The second consideration is that anyone initiating any such project would have to be prepared for very hard work, in fact three months' down right hard labour; the third consideration - how is the scheme to be worked? There would have to be a "Scheme Committee" and then two local "Working Committees" each with its honorary Secretary, one committee at home in England and one here. If the scheme is eventually initiated I should be pleased to do anything I could with the local committee, and as secretary of the home committee I would suggest as hon. secretary either her brother Geo. McMillan (the publisher) or Mr. Jones a rich Liverpool Merchant. With regard to its objects I would not advise putting all your eggs into one basket. I believe the project of a native hospital here would be entirely consonant with Miss Kingsley's dearest wishes. but her West Coast friends would be loath to subscribe to a Simon's Town charity. The Liverpool commercial magnates who are amongst her admirers would think twice before they sent a cheque for £105 to South Africa, that wicked country which is costing them 1/- in the £. But then, on the other hand, would it not be a popular idea with the local Dutch whom I should expect to subscribe heavily, therefore I think your scheme should be manifold, so as to embrace the poor man's penny, the middle man's guinea. the merchants £500 and the aristocrat's sympathy."

Dr. Carré then went on "Now is the acceptable time! Now is the time of collection! With the memory of the dead still fresh, gratitude still a quality with existence. We might collect £7,000 or £8,000 with hard work. £5,000 for a hospital here, £1,000 for a scholarship of finance on the problem of Native Barter and Exchange in the Liverpool University, and £1,000 for personal memorials at her birthplace. in Westminster Abbey, and on the West Coast. All this wants thinking about and talking over. It would be best if there is to be a movement

1. That it should be general and not confined to any one clique.
2. That it should be conceived on a large scale and not any cramped enterprise.
3. That it should be under our control and therefore be initialed by us."

Mr. C.A. Horne, Resident Magistrate, then rose to say he felt there was a strong need for our own Cottage Hospital. He felt that if the townfolk could collect sufficient funds towards a start, the Government and Council would put up the Building. However Mr. Legg argued that it would be better to form a committee to discuss the memorial fund in detail.

Councillor Hugo said "that Miss Kingsley was indeed a model woman. She was tender hearted, a noble nurse and a mother to the sick. He felt with Simon's Town the loss. He quite agreed with Dr. Carré's remarks that if this Cottage Hospital is to be built, or rather maintained, it must be upon national lines; he would like to see a meeting

called in every town throughout the world. Mr. Hugo was then proceeding to explain what the Government would do provided we could make this hospital self-supporting, when Mr. Runciman put in an appearance; and turning to Mr. Runciman, he said he would leave this matter in the Mayor's hands."

After lengthy discussion the following gentlemen were elected to the committee with power to add to their number:- Mr. Horne, Resident Magistrate; Reverends Mr. Legg, van der Lingen and Gathercole with Messrs. Runciman and Hugo.

It took some time to bring Mr. Horne's idea to fruition but Saturday 1st April, 1905 will long be remembered as a red-letter day for Simon's Town, for on that day, after years of persistent struggling, the efforts of the residents to provide a hospital for the accommodation of general patients was realised. The South African News Vol. VII No. 1575 of Monday 3 April 1905 (price 1d) gives us the details of the opening ceremony.

"The opening ceremony was time for 3.45 p.m. but prior to that the Foresters Club and the Friendly Society met at their headquarters and headed by their bands marched up the winding road to the hospital. Here in the absence of the president of the hospital board Mr. W. Runciman MLA, who was somewhat late, they were met by the Mayor of Simon's Town (Mr. R.S. Whyte). The arrival of Admiral Durnford and his party was the signal for an outburst of cheering. When at length Mr. Runciman appeared there would be over 1,000 persons present.

The stoep of the hospital was utilised as a platform and here Mr. Runciman, after apologising for being late, stated that they had at length succeeded in their object. The hospital now to be opened would cost about £500 to start and the Government had promised to subscribe on the £ for £ principle. Some pessimists had contended that Simon's Town would never have a hospital, but he trusted that they were now converted. He had pleasure in asking Admiral Durnford to declare the hospital open. Admiral Durnford, in taking the key, said he would be only too pleased to do anything he could for the hospital or for Simon's Town. He was surprised to see, by the number present, what a keen interest was taken in the undertaking, and he hoped they would all continue to support so laudable an institution and that in the future its scope would be much extended.

The Mayor thanked the Hospital Board on behalf of the town for having brought the Cottage Hospital scheme to a successful issue. At first he had been dubious of success, but when the Government had offered a building worth £1,000 he was heart and soul with the undertaking. He could not quite follow Admiral Durnford as to having a large hospital in the future. He hoped it would never be required. (Hear, hear).

At the conclusion of the ceremony a large number of those present, including the Town Councillors of Simon's Town and representatives for Kalk Bay, Muizenberg and Wynberg inspected the wards etc. and expressed themselves as highly pleased with the arrangements for the comfort of the patients and with the various medical and surgical appliances provided.

The building itself, which was formerly a Government hospital, is a substantial stone structure situated about a couple of hundred feet up the mountain side and commanding a very fine view of the bay. There are four wards (each capable of accommodating three beds), an operating room equipped with all the necessary instruments and a sitting room and bedroom for the nurse in charge. The wards are lofty, light and cheery. The ventilation is excellent and the lighting and sanitary arrangements perfect. The establishment of the hospital will be a boon to the inhabitants not only of Simon's Town but the surrounding district. As always Simon's Town possessed already naval and military hospitals and Sir John Jackson Ltd had also one for their workmen but there had been no provision for residents."

The hospital closed its doors in 1965 when it was replaced by the new False Bay Hospital in Fish Hoek.

MEMOIRS OF AN ADMIRAL'S NURSE, ADMIRALTY HOUSE, SIMON'S TOWN 1910/1912

as told by Alice Kelly to South African Navy News

Vice Admiral Paul Warner Bush was looking for an Undernurse for his children and asked the Vicar if he knew of someone suitable for the post, to go to South Africa. I was a strapping young girl of 16 years looking more like 22 - the Vicar said yes, and introduced me. My mother did not want me to go but I had always wanted to travel and had my own way. I was soon settled in and by mid-December 1910 we were ready and sailed in the old Union-Castle ship, the BRITON.

After an enjoyable voyage we arrived in Cape Town. I can still see it all now. The lovely sunshine and the harbour with ships all around - one was a troop ship - and my first sighting of Table Mountain. It seemed so different then. There was more foliage and it was greener. We moved forward to our landing stage and I was so surprised to see sailors lining the quayside with a band playing to meet us. Carriages were waiting for us. First the Admiral and his officers, all in their white and gold uniforms, filled one carriage. Then came the ladies with two of the children, the nurses with the other children, the band, the domestic staff, the two stewards, two chefs and valets for the officers. The luggage followed this procession in the last carriage.

We proceeded in style to the old station, quite a procession! The train was waiting for us. The Admiral and the ladies were driven to Simon's Town by road. The only memory I have of the journey was our surprise at seeing a fat native woman and her two children dressed in the latest style - the little girls with lovely sashes! It was only the shortest distance from the station at Simon's Town to Admiralty House so we walked entering the grounds by a small green gate; the Admiral was already there inspecting rows of sailors lined up on the lawn - how smart they looked! Guns were firing and we watched through the trees, from where I had my first view of Admiralty House.

We were shown to our nursery, a high-ceilinged room overlooking the front and the road, and a smaller room and bathroom. There were two lightly coloured housemaids who lived in the house who had been there for years and it seemed a family post with sister stepping in when necessary. They greeted us and showed us around and ordered refreshments for us which were brought up by a Native sailor.

Now I must describe the house to you. It seems very changed. As we entered the stoep, it was not built-in as it is today, but open with some kind of rush curtains, which could be rolled up if necessary. It was a lovely cool room. Her ladyship sat



Alice Kelly, aged 19

her guests. Entering the hall, the drawing room is the same, lacking only the flowers and cushions, etc. The room opposite must have been a small sitting room. Passing the stairs one found the Flag Lt's quarters. His room is now the small dining room. It had a small stoep with a glass roof and another room connecting to his office. His name, I remember, was Hamer.

Opposite was the large dining room. There were photographs of the previous Admirals all round the room, a large sideboard at the top and a door leading into the pantry where the food was brought in from the kitchen. At meal times the two stewards stood by the sideboard and the valets stood behind their officers' chairs to wait upon them. This was the same pantry in which the valets used to put in their spare time cleaning piles of lovely silver. Opposite was the kitchen as it is now, not much changed except the kitchen range. A coal fire was on the side as you came in, with a huge stock pot at the side. The ceiling reached right up to the top of the house, with sky light at the top. The servants' hall and back stairs close by and the stewards' rooms as usual. I never went up the staff stairs - the bedrooms there were for the men staff.

Going up the back stairs one came out into the housemaids' rooms. There was a door facing the back with a small verandah leading to a room that had been built on for the previous Admiral's lady's maid. From the back landing we entered the nursery suite and through there to the main large upstairs hall. The Admiral's and her ladyship's rooms were at the top with guest rooms all round. Under the lady's maid's room was a little cubbyhole where the valets taught the Native boys to read and write count etc. each afternoon.



Vice-Admiral Paul W. Bush (c.f.) and his staff outside Admiralty House in 1912. They were: de Denne, Estob, Woodward, Forman, Dreaper & H.J. Saville. Flag Lt Hamer is c.f.

There was the secretary's cottage in the grounds just by the cottages used by the boats' crew. Further along was a tall building where the rest of the officers lived. Steps led from the lawn to the beach where there was a bathing hut.

you should have seen them on Sunday dressed in the height of fashion. I can see them now in their hobble skirts. Next came the stables. The groom's name I remember was George Lloyd, the opposite to the Prime Minister. In the gardens across the road grew lovely figs. The gardener Mr. Weeks told us we could eat all the fruit we liked except the apricots. We fed on figs as we went along, then past the grapes on to the peaches and by the apricots was a pomegranate tree; o joy! As a child I was always asking my mother to buy me one. My mother said "Horrid things full of pips. You would not like them." Well, I picked one and found that, as usual, mother was right. I did not like them. Finally we settled ourselves on a seat under a loquat tree by the tennis courts. There was a swing by the courts and the sailors whose job it was to keep the courts in order, used to give us swings. One day I was high in the air when I saw the Admiral making his way to the court. I called a halt. And when the Admiral arrived - never were sailors working harder, or nurses more demure!

Mr. Weeks, the gardener, had his own cottage in the garden and several native boys to help; good hardworking boys. One went by the name of Toby and one Cashmoney, another Walker. Toby had a mouth reaching from ear to ear. Through a gate in the garden was a wild part called the wilderness. Arum lilies ran riot and bananas were growing there. I often took my charge there; we loved the quiet. There was a tortoise a hundred years old which used to make its appearance.

 The above was related to Navy News when Mrs. Kelly visited in 1985 at the age of 92 years, accompanied by her daughter Mrs. M. Worthington-Smith of Constantia. Ed.

 BOER PRISONERS VISIT THE FUTURE KING OF ENGLAND

"One episode occurred not without significance when the Duke of York paid his second visit to South Africa. This was during his world tour in 1901, when on his way back from Australia via Mauritius en route to Canada he and the Duchess stopped off in Simon's Town in August 1901."

"By special invitation a number of Boer prisoners were present at Admiralty House, Simon's Town for the departure of the Duke and Duchess, when a deputation from them presented an Address and some specimens of their workmanship. The gifts offered with rugged courtesy were accepted with perfect grace. Five months earlier Kitchener had written to the War Minister with respect to Louis Botha's refusal to agree to the requirements of Milner and the British Government: "The Boers have a good deal of sentiment of honour, and leaving those, who had helped them, to go to prison for six years would, I felt sure, make it impossible for them to accept the terms offered. We are now carrying on the war to put two or three hundred Dutchmen into prison at the end of it; it seems to me absurd and wrong". It was not for the Heir to the Crown to traverse in any way the policy of the British Government, however he might agree with the views of the Commander in the field; but he could and did, show on 23 August 1901 that what he looked for was not a South Africa beaten to the dust, but eventually a South Africa amica, who would harness her energy to England's effort in the day when that effort must be made. Thirteen years later King George would call the Transvaal patriots to battle and range them in line with his own great armies; the memory of a graceful act had not, perhaps, been wiped from the minds of men who at one time had borne arms against King George's father."

 Extract from "King George V" by Sir George Arthur, Johnathan, Cape. Edinburgh, 1929. Brought to our attention by Commander Bissett.

THEY VISITED SIMON'S TOWN

United States Confederate Ship GEORGIA

"On the 15th of August we sighted Table Mountain at the entrance of Table Bay. Behind the mountain is the city of Cape Town, the capital of the Cape Colony. We chased vessels right under the shadow of lofty Table Mountain with its flat top, and still kept well outside of the sacred marine league. Over the mountain, when the wind is from a particular direction, there hangs a white cloud formed by mist ascending which is called the "Tablecloth". Looking down on Table Mountain is the Lion, a much high eminence, the crest of which from certain points at sea looks like a lion couchant. The whole coast scenery is very grand as viewed from the ocean.

The next morning we found ourselves very close to that awesome and forbidding-looking promontory called the Cape of Good Hope - why so called is as mysterious as the ugly, ragged and jutting rock itself looks to be. No wonder that the ancient Portuguese mariners believed that the demons who dwelt there dragged their ships back in the night, and so prevented them from doubling the ugly headland. As we passed it under steam the sea was angrily lashing its base, and the black rock was ugly enough to fill any one with dread even though he had never heard any of the blood-curdling legends connected with it.

Passing into False Bay, which lies behind the Cape of Good Hope, on August 16, we dropped our anchor in front of Simon's Town situated on Simon's Bay, a small indentation of the land on the great False Bay. We had no sooner let go our anchor than a British official boarded us and ordered us to put to sea at the expiration of 24 hours. But we knew many a trick to get around international law, and showed him that our engine was broken down, omitting to add that the disaster had occurred just before we came to anchor. It was a habit of that engine to break down just as we entered port if we wanted to remain over the legal 24 hours. Besides, we wanted to caulk our decks which leaked badly, as the oakum, in the bad weather to which we had been subjected, had worked loose; besides we had been constantly at sea for 4 months in tropical waters, and the iron bottom of the GEORGIA was covered with a growth of sea-grass from 8 to 12 inches long, which impeded her speed more than one half. The British authorities ordered their own officials to hold a survey on her and report on the absolutely necessary repairs.

The first news of interest to us was that the ALABAMA had sailed from Simon's Town a few hours before our arrival. It seemed that she had got into hot water with the authorities by capturing the bark CONRAD too close to the line of the ubiquitous marine league, had changed her name to TUSCALOOSA and converted her into a Confederate cruiser. This news that the ALABAMA had got herself disliked by the Colonial Government brought on an attack of 'cold feet' which so seriously affected two of our engineers, the boatswain and the gunner, all Englishmen whom we had brought from London with us, that they pleaded with the captain for their discharges. This he granted, although the loss of the engineers was a serious matter. Several of the British sailors who had joined us at Ushant Island, sailor-like, discharged themselves and left behind the pay due them. With three or four exceptions our ship's company was now composed entirely of Americans. But a much greater loss to us than these men was the detachment of our first lieutenant Mr. Chapman. He had become dissatisfied with his position of executive officer of a little brig, knowing as he did that many men far beneath him in rank were in command of gunboats in the Confederacy, and that others were aspiring to command the cruisers which were being fitted out in England and in France. Captain Maury sympathised with his ambition and allowed him to return to England - and bad day it was too for the GEORGIA when he left, for he was a man of iron nerve, a strict disciplinarian with a kind heart, and absolutely just.

Having been cooped up in very restricted quarters for more than four months, I

longed once more to throw my leg over a horse and get a little congenial exercise. Having obtained leave, I mounted a livery-stable steed and started for a 20-mile ride to Cape Town. The journey across country was a very uninteresting one. I met only one Dutch boy who either could not or would not talk English and a Kaffir negro with whom I did not care to fraternise on account of his colour. But I did see what interested me greatly - geraniums in profusion growing wild and called weeds, and 'everlasting' flowers which when plucked may be laid away in a drawer for months and when taken out and placed in water will regain their freshness in a very little while.

At the hotel where I stopped in Cape Town I found that 8 or 10 captains and mates of ships recently destroyed by the ALABAMA were guests. I was in uniform, and being in neutral territory I had no idea that they would attempt to molest me. But I was mistaken. I passed them in the lobby and on the piazzas without their taking any notice of me, but when I entered the dining-room where they were already seated and where there were many other people, they arose en masse and swore worse than did the 'army in Flanders' damning pirates in general and myself in particular. They were advancing on me in a most threatening manner when the proprietor of the place rushed into the room and commanded the peace. He begged me to go with him into his private dining-room but I protested that it was the disturbers of the peace who should be made to leave. I was finally persuaded to accompany my host, and at his private table found much more congenial society in the company of his charming wife, two lovely daughters, and two grown sons, especially as they told me that their sympathies were all with the South. They also gave me a glass of the sweet Constancia wine for which the colony is famous. The only thing that marred the pleasure of the meal happened at the end, when my host unfortunately asked me what I would have done if the Yankee skippers had assaulted me. I naively answered that I was perfectly able to take care of myself, as I had a Colt's revolver strapped to me and very handy. I shall never forget the look of horror that passed over the faces of those English people. I could not understand it - coming as I did from a country where almost every man carried a weapon, and where it was considered the proper thing to resent an assault with a shot.

When I returned to my ship I found the caulkers still at work, and the din they made interfered with our comfort for many a day. I also found that Her Majesty's troopship HIMALAYA had come into port with a regiment of Highlanders on board bound for India. One day, while returning from shore in one of our cutters, I steered her very close to the troopship. The band was playing on the quarter-deck and as we approached the band struck up 'Dixie' and I stood up in the boat and took off my cap. The HIMALAYA's crew and the soldiers raised a cheer which was quickly suppressed and I afterwards heard that the bandmaster and the officers who had instigated him to play 'Dixie' had been reprimanded. We afterwards met some of these officers on shore and they invited us to dine with them on their ship. The dinner was a very picturesque affair - the gay uniforms of the officers with their gold lace and the beautiful toilets of their wives and daughters: the scene was not one to be easily forgotten. The Highland pipers playing their bagpipes marched three times around the table, and a more awful screeching noise than they made it had never before been my misfortune to hear. A Scotch officer greatly embarrassed me by asking if I did not think it delightful music. When the table was cleared of all the good things, the colonel arose and said "Gentlemen, will you fill your glasses?" This having been done, he again rose and solemnly proposed the toast which consisted of only two words. "The Queen!". The glasses were emptied and the function was at an end.

The weather around the Cape of Good Hope is notoriously treacherous. One afternoon I asked permission to go on shore, and it was granted me on my solemn promise that I would be back in time to keep mid-watch. I had a most enjoyable time until about ten o'clock, when I had to leave my companions so as to catch the GEORGIA's boat. I was disappointed to find that no boat had come for me, and that it was blowing 'great guns'. I wanted to keep my promise, but none of the native watermen would undertake to put me aboard, saying that the sea was too high. At last

a man told me that some little distance up the beach there was a hut occupied by some Malay fishermen, and that they would risk anything for money. I went to the shanty, and had some little difficulty in routing them out of their slumbers. After a great deal of bargaining, five of them agreed to go with me for £2, which I truthfully told them was all I had. At Simon's Town when the wind is from the south-west the huge rollers of the South Atlantic have a clean sweep into the open roadstead which answers for a harbour. The huge HIMALAYA could be plainly seen in the moonlight tugging at her anchors while rolling heavily and the little GEORGIA was wallowing and plunging bows under and the spray in sheets passing over her. The curlers coming high on the beach did not look inviting but it had to be done. Before embarking the Malays insisted that in the presence of the witnesses gathered around the boat, I should agree to take all the responsibility and steer the boat. The boat was high on the beach and was resting on wooden rollers. She was taken to the water's edge and we got into her - the Malays got out their oars, and their numerous friends seized hold of the gunwales and dragged us out until she was afloat. Then they let us go. It was an awful effort to get through the surf, but the feat was finally accomplished. Outside of the breakers the seas were still higher and we took a great deal of water into the boat, which compelled two of the men to take in their oars and go to bailing. The water gained on us, and it began to look very dubious as to whether we would reach the ship or not. But by almost superhuman exertions the Malays succeeded and only just in time, for as a line was thrown to us from the GEORGIA the boat sank under us. The smart Malay at the bow oar, the moment he caught the line had instantly taken a turn around the forward thwart and made it fast. The GEORGIA quickly sent down a 'whip' from the main yard and we were safely hoisted on board. The officer who would have had to walk the mid-watch if I had failed to return, seemed disposed to regard me somewhat in the light of a hero. The others said I was an idiot, and the captain gave me a good scolding for what he termed my foolhardiness. Somehow or other I never could make a success of that hero business.

We had received information that H.B.M. cruiser NARCISSUS was coming from Table Bay to investigate our long stay in a British port, and to see that we did not longer infringe upon the rules set forth in Her Majesty's neutrality proclamation, so like the sensible dog which 'got up and walked out when he saw preparations being made to kick him' we bade good-bye to Simon's Town. As we were leaving, who should come into port but the NARCISSUS and that policeman of the seas not only did not attempt to arrest us, but dipped her colours to us as her enthusiastic crew manned the rigging and gave us three lusty cheers - needless to say that we returned the compliment with interest.

Passing out of False Bay into the South Atlantic we steered a south-easterly course, followed by many graceful albatross and thousands of Cape pigeons, a pretty little speckled sea-bird strongly resembling in size and appearance its domestic namesake.

The sailors threw out a line with a hook baited with a small piece of fat pork, which was almost instantly gobbled by a huge albatross. measuring almost twelve feet from tip to tip. The poor bird was hauled aboard, the hook unfastened from its bill, and it was turned loose on the deck, when it became fearfully seasick, causing much amusement for the men. It is a singular fact that all sea-birds, despite the fact that they will alight on the water and ride over the highest waves without discomfort, become ill the moment they touch a ship's deck. Besides his size, our albatross was remarkable for a brass bracelet he wore on one of his legs on which was engraved 'Condor 1854'. His appetite had evidently got him into trouble on a previous occasion.

The morning after we lost sight of the Cape of Good Hope we saw on the horizon a large number of sail. We knew at once that they were the quarry we were looking for. The wind was very light and fortunately they were coming toward us, for the GEORGIA's chasing days were over. The mass of long sea-grass on her hull had reduced her boasted speed of 9 knots an hour under steam to less than five.

As the fleet of Indiamen loaded with silks and tea from the Orient approached, we picked out those ships which we suspected might be American and ran up alongside of them, sending an officer on board to examine their papers without putting them to the inconvenience of having to heave to, as we knew how anxious they all were to get to the northward of the Cape before bad weather came on again. We went from ship to ship, but had no luck, as all we boarded were either neutral vessels or else American ships which had changed their nationality and had neutral cargoes aboard. We had changed our course and accompanied them until the evening of the next day when we found ourselves under the shadow of Table Mountain. The sun was setting when suddenly we saw a great paddle-wheel steamer, her double walking-beam engines making her nationality unmistakable. She was headed for Table Bay, her course taking her across our bow and she soon was only about 5 miles away.

Captain Maury ordered all hands to assemble at the mast and said to them 'Men, that steamer is the VANDERBILT; she can outrun us and she can whip us after she catches us. I am going to lay you alongside of her, and you had far better follow me aboard her and die like men fighting for your lives than tamely allow yourselves to be hung from her yardarms. Go to quarters!'

We held our course and the VANDERBILT kept on without taking any notice of us and entered Table Bay, into which she had hardly poked her nose before we captured the American ship JOHN WATT in plain view of the lights of the city of Cape Town which by this time were beginning to twinkle in the distance. I fear that we were perilously near that sacred limit called the 'marine league' within which captures were unlawful, but we saw no fence demarking private property and gave ourselves the benefit of the doubt.

The VANDERBILT carried 12 11" guns and she had come thousands of miles to capture the ALABAMA. She lay for some time at Cape Town and if her captain did not know where the ALABAMA was at that time, he must have been the only man in the Cape Colony who was unaware of the fact that the Confederate cruiser was only a few miles away to the southward.

We had not proceeded very far when we discovered that innumerable fish, albacore and bonito, seemed to be following the ship, many of them swimming so close to her sides that they almost touched her. As we were under sail alone and going very slowly, there was nothing to disturb them except the occasional throwing of a grange (a 3-pronged harpoon) by the men. The fish were so close together that it was impossible to miss, and we had quantities of fresh fish for all hands for ten or twelve days before they left us. The nights were dark, and we witnessed a singular phenomenon caused by these myriads of fish rushing through the phosphorescent water, causing the ocean to be streaked, as though by flames, from horizon to horizon. In the daytime great schools of small fish could be seen flapping on the surface in mortal fright, and giving one the idea of a huge silver salver as their shiny sides contrasted with the ocean's blue and shimmered in the sunlight. They had cause to be alarmed, as from under them hundreds of albacore would pop up, leaping 15 or 20 feet in the air, each one of them having a victim in his mouth. Flying-fish in efforts to escape were sailing in every direction through the air.

It was useless for us to chase any vessels so long as we were in the south-east trades, as they would run away from us in the fresh breeze, but when we neared the Equator and got into the doldrums that region of calms and squalls, waterspouts and rains which fell in sheets instead of drops we had no trouble in running up to any sailing vessel that we selected to examine."

The above is an extract from the book "Recollections of a Rebel Reefer" by Captain James Morris Morgan of the Confederate States Navy - the youngest son of Judge Thomas Gibbs Morgan, Collector of the port of New Orleans - in the Museum Library.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ADMIRALTY & SIMON'S TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE SUPPLY OF WATER

1. This Agreement between Rear Admiral H.F. Nicholson for the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and hereinafter referred to as the Admiralty on the one part, and the Municipal Council of Simon's Town on the other part, is made in respect of the supply of water from the Springs above Simon's Town to the Inhabitants and to the Naval Establishments, and of certain improvements proposed in connection therewith.
2. The provisions in the Agreement made between the contracting parties on 29th August 1884 respecting the use of water in case of Fire or War, the transfer of rights to water at North Battery from Municipal Council to Admiralty, and the annual payment of £50 by the Admiralty are to remain in force and are recapitulated below.
3. In case of fire of Naval property the Admiralty to have the control of the full supply of water and the same privilege to be conceded to the Municipality in case of fire on private property. In time of war when required the Admiralty to receive the full supply of water to H.M. Ships and Transports, with the exception of 50 tons per diem required for use of the Inhabitants.

The Admiralty to be allowed to bring in the water from the North Battery at their own expense and for their entire use. The Admiralty on their part in consideration of the aforesaid privileges to pay to the Municipality the sum of (£50) FIFTY POUNDS per annum.

There being certain 5 junctions of private water leadings at present with Naval Main pipes, it being the intention of Municipality to purchase the said water leadings, the Admiralty by allowing the same to remain, the Municipality will pay them 1/- per annum for each junction as an acknowledgement of the privilege.

4. The junction or supply pipe to Victualling Yard Tank is to be cut off, and a distributing tank placed on a site to be agreed upon by both parties to divide the total supply from Springs equally between the Admiralty and the Municipal Council. This Tank is to be constructed in a manner approved by both parties and is to have one inlet in upper side and two outlets of equal size in floor which are to be placed symmetrically with respect to the inlet. This distributing tank to be constructed and fixed at the expense of the Admiralty.
5. The Admiralty shall not supply to private individuals, or to any building or property other than their own, and shall disconnect all such leadings at present attached to their pipes.
6. The work of opening out fresh Springs, higher up than those now in use and connecting them with existing Main is to undertaken at the joint expense of the Admiralty and the Municipality. The Admiralty to bear the entire charge of the preliminary examination of the ground and the design and supervision of the proposed works, but the cost of Labour and Materials required in carrying them out is to be shared equally by the Admiralty and the Municipal Council.

The Admiralty to have the entire executive charge of the work, but the plans and arrangements and estimates to be first submitted to the Municipal Council for their approval. On the conclusion of any work executed at the joint expense of the Admiralty and the Municipality the latter may appoint an Auditor who will be allowed to examine the account of labour and materials expended kept in Office of Asst: Civil Engineer.

7. It is hereby agreed between the contracting parties that neither of them without the consent of the other divert to their particular use any water flowing to the aforesaid Springs the supply from which is to be equally divided between

them.

The above Agreement is concluded this 16th day of November 1891 by Rear Admiral H.F. Nicholson for the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and Mr. F.H.S. Hugo, the Mayor of Simon's Town, for the Municipal Council.

Signed: F.H.S. HUGO

Signed: H.F. NICHOLSON

Witness to the above.

(Sgd) FRANK S.C. DENT

Secretary

(Sgd) D.C. LEITCH Asst:Civil Engineer.

We have written about the KONIGSBERG and HMS HYACINTH but now we want to bring to your attention one of the forgotten heroes of the episode. Editor.

MAJOR PHILLIP JACOBUS PRETORIOUS CMG DSO & BAR (researched by Joy Cobern).

He started as a transport rider for the British South Africa Company and wandered through Central and East Africa hunting for many years. He did not hear of the Boer War until it was over! He decided to be the first farmer on the Rufiji River, growing cotton. He used nearly all his money building a house so went off to hunt elephants and sell their ivory for money to continue. The Germans suddenly revoked his hunting licence, although still issuing licences to German nationals, so he was forced to hunt in the Belgian Congo and Portuguese Nyasaland. Whilst in Portuguese Nyasaland he received a letter from the authorities in German East Africa advising him to sell his farm to a German officer for a very small amount; if he refused it would be confiscated and given to the German anyway. He replied that he would not sell and should it be confiscated he would shoot elephants in German territory, without a licence, until he had ivory to cover the value of the farm. The farm was confiscated so Pretorius wrote to the German authorities stating that he would be hunting in the Nawala district and challenged them to catch him. He evaded capture and recovered the cost of the farm.

At the outbreak of the 1914-1918 war he was in German territory. His camp was attacked and he was shot in both legs. He escaped, was captured and escaped again and eventually reached Nyasaland, having operated on his own leg on the way. He went to Pretoria and offered his services to the British but was refused as they thought he was a German spy. A few weeks later he was asked if he would go into Government service and was taken to Durban where he went aboard HMS GOLIATH to meet Admiral King-Hall. He was landed on Mafia Island with a wireless operator. He marched up the Rufiji River with a party of Africans and located the KONIGSBERG. Admiral King-Hall then asked Pretorius to find out the distance to the sea, what guns she still possessed, whether her torpedoes were aboard and the rise and fall of the tide in the main channel and subsidiary streams, and if the channels were mined. He contacted a local chief, who he knew, and discovered that the chief's son was a stoker on KONIGSBERG and could be visited if one took a basket of chickens as a present for the Germans. As his skin was brown from years of sun and repeated doses of malaria he disguised himself as an Arab trader and told the Germans that his 'boy' (the Chief) wanted to see his son.

The chief asked his son the questions that Pretorius had told him to ask and discovered that the torpedoes had been taken off and placed in boats near the mouth of the Rufiji ready to be fired at any British ship near the entrance to the river.

Pretorius then spent many days in a dugout canoe investigating the depth of the

various channels to determine if monitors could be used. He was then asked to stick a marked pole in the sea a certain distance from shore and for a month make an hourly record of the rise and fall of the tide.

He was then asked to commandeer two dhows and try to lure KONIGSBERG out into the open. This failed as a storm arose and both dhows were wrecked. He was present, aboard the Flagship HYACINTH at the final engagement.

THE BIRKENHEAD TRADITION - THE TYNDAREUS ROLL CALL 6.2.1917

Cdr. W.M. Bisset

The gallantry of those in HM Steamer BIRKENHEAD on 26 February 1852 ranks as one of the most glorious episodes in the annals of British Military History. It has served as an inspiration ever since and also made a deep impression on King William I of Prussia who ordered that all his troops should be made familiar with the incident. Less well known, but equally memorable was the "accident" which befell s.s. TYNDAREUS on 6 February 1917 off Cape Agulhas, some distance beyond Danger Point where the BIRKENHEAD went down.

Lt. Col. John Ward, the Labour Party MP and trade union leader, who commanded the 25th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment (over 1,000 strong) which distinguished itself on this occasion, is probably best remembered for his services during the Russian Civil War of 1917-1920, which included a 6,000 mile trek into Russia from Vladivostock (1). He wrote an account of this turbulent time entitled "With the 'Die-Hards' in Siberia" which was published by Cassell in London in 1920. Colonel Ward was created a CB(Mil) in 1919, CMG(1918) and awarded the Croix de Guerre (France), War Cross (Czechoslovakia) and Croce di Guerra (Italy) (2).

Until she reached the Cape s.s. TYNDAREUS (11,347 gross tons) had passed an uneventful four week maiden voyage in convoy, but in Cape Town the convoy split up and the troopship was advised to avoid the usual shipping lanes. At 1500 hours on 6 February s.s. TYNDAREUS was off Cape Agulhas (about 105 miles south-east of Cape Town) when she struck a mine laid by the German raider WOLF. Extensively damaged on the starboard side, her bows were soon dangerously low in the water.

In this moment of supreme danger all reacted with praiseworthy calm. The "Die-Hards" were mustered on deck for roll-call which took place whilst the ship assumed an increasingly precarious position. Thereafter, "The Long Trail" and other songs added an unreal cheer to the seemingly hopeless scene, for though the boats were now being prepared, a heavy sea was running, the South-Easter was blowing strongly and no help was in sight. Sergeant J.B. Sutton who later settled in Cape Town, recalled in 1945 that the singing had to be stopped because it made it difficult for orders to be heard.

Less than an hour after the explosion, the EUMAEUS, a Blue Funnel sister ship and the OXFORDSHIRE a hospital ship, answered the TYNDAREUS's SOS radio signals. Nevertheless, there remained the dangerous task of transferring the troops in a heavy sea in an agonising race against the clock, for each lifeboat could hold only fifty men and nobody could tell at what stage the TYNDAREUS might suddenly sink. Fortunately it was summer at the Cape and remained light until quite late. Then when darkness fell, a good moon greatly facilitated the rescue work. Equally important was the survival of the ship. So all ranks were saved and conveyed to Simon's Town which they reached early on 7 February.

The tug LUDWIG WIENER towed the TYNDAREUS to Simon's Town whilst HMS HYACINTH and HMS TRENT stood by. There she underwent repairs which enabled her to resume her

vital war work later that year.

In their short stay at the Cape the men of the 25th Middlesex Regiment moved three times. From Simon's Town they were transferred to Cape Town where they were issued with new kit and were inspected by the General Officer Commanding, Major General C.W. Thompson, CB DSO. They then travelled to Wynberg Military Camp by train where they spent the remaining three weeks until the arrival of the INGOMA, an East African transport, in which they sailed to Hong Kong via Durban.

As a fitting climax to their stay at the Cape the battalion provided the guard of honour for the Governor-General Lord Buxton, at the opening of the Union Parliament. The wild enthusiasm which greeted these brave men in Cape Town and Durban left them in no doubt that their gallantry had not passed unnoticed.

It is understandable that H.M. King George V's message to the Officer Commanding on 10 February 1917 should have recalled the episode which it so closely resembled. The King wrote "In their discipline and courage they worthily upheld the splendid tradition of the BIRKENHEAD ever cherished in the annals of the British Army" (3). But there is another episode with which the men of the 25th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment may have been equally familiar. It is Lady Butler's well known painting "Steady, The Drums and Fifes!" which depicts a group of Middlesex Regiment (then the 57th Foot) bandsmen, some of them little boys and lads in their early teens standing still under fire on the ridge of Albuera in the Peninsula War. The caption of a print of this painting tells us that Cardinal Manning once observed "to stand under fire, still and motionless, is a supreme act of the will".

In the years between the two World Wars the TYNDAREUS served on the trans-Pacific route from the Far East to Vancouver and other North Pacific ports. The ship survived the Second World War and was employed on the Blue Funnel Line's Australian service from Glasgow, South Wales and the Mersey via the Cape. From 1950 until 1960 she carried pilgrims en route to Mecca from Indonesia to Jeddah. In 1960 it was announced that the ship had been sold to shipbreakers in Hong Kong.

End Notes

1. Cumberland G in Dictionary of National Biography page 889
2. Black Adam and Charles Who's Who 1930 page 3235
3. South China Morning Post (Hong Kong) "The Roll Call of the 25th Btn Middlesex Regiment after the accident to s.s. TYNDAREUS 6 February 1917"

NAVAL EXPRESSIONS:

MESS - (mes) n. (O.F. mes, a dish of food, fr.L. mittere, send) a dish or a quantity of food prepared or set on a table at one time; a number of persons who eat together, and for whom food is prepared in common; - v.t. to supply with a mess; v.i. to eat; to eat in company. Mess-room, eating-room of the mess in barracks or in ships of war. Mess-table, a table at which a mess eat together.

Authority: The King's English Dictionary. (Sent in by Captain Bill Damerell who has recently retired as Port Captain of Cape Town.)
