



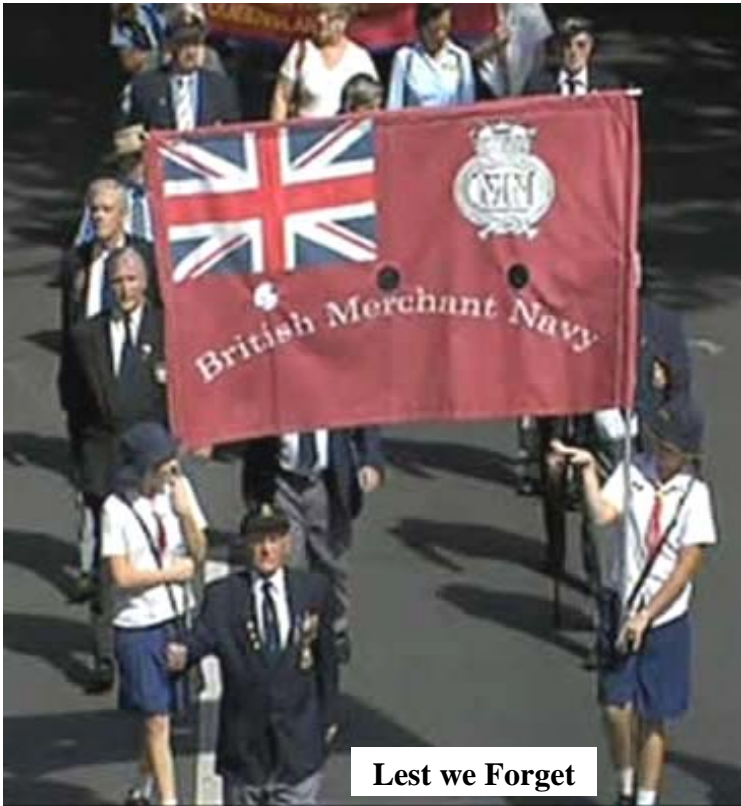
Under the Clock



Issue 68 – June 2010

~ Patron: Doug Duxbury ~

ANZAC Day March 2010



Lest we Forget



Secretary's Annual Report

It has been a quiet time since Christmas 2009. However, we participated in the Anzac march in April. Some 13 lads and 4 ladies marched on Anzac Day. Those who have seen the march on ABC TV Channel would not believe that Gordon Cohen was able to lead the parade as he had missed last year. Four days before Anzac, he was wrongly diagnosed by the doctor with incorrect medications for skin allergy from midge bites. He was in hallucination after taking the first course of tablets. Whilst this was happening, we had a surprised visit from Terry Creasey who shockingly witnessed the event. Terry and I did not think that Gordi would be well enough for the march.

Terry had very kindly taken the Banners off us so that he could bring them to the march. As Gordi was persistent that he would not like to miss the march this year, he went to his own GP the next morning and was lucky to receive the correct medication. He was very happy to be able to lead all the lads in the march though still not 100% fit. To our disappointment, we all were not able to get into the pub like we did in previous years to swing the lamp as the queue was far too long to wait and the weather was very hot. Some had a cold drink and snack by the Railway Station Café and some ended up at MacDonald's for lunch. (No beer, shame!!!) As Ray Morton was in an event taxi and being in the front of the march, Ray was able to get into the pub before us. We are sorry that Ray was left on his own, but Ray told me later that he was in good company with the RAN Boys who have made a fuss of him. As for photographs, there was only a couple which I took by the Anzac Shrine when we laid the Wreath.

This year had been a great and memorable year for Vindi Queensland as we had proudly once again organised the 9th Down Under Reunion at Caloundra in November 2009. It was a lot of work but the Committee enjoyed it. It was also a good reunion though the numbers of attendees was nowhere compared to our last Tweed Heads Reunion in 2003. Vindi Boys with their wives came from UK, other Aussie states and NZ with Christchurch representing the most numbers from NZ. All members of everywhere are now getting older, with health problems and mostly on pensions have find it not so easy to travel to all reunions each year. We now look forward to 2010 at Fremantle WA.

Vindi Queensland as our members would say "we are a social group" who get together, for the lads to reminisce their sea days with support from their wives as well and for the ladies to foster friendships among us which is most important.

We have been meeting at the Golden Years Seniors Centre for the last three years and have enjoyed the space we have as the ladies are able to prepare lunch in their kitchen and the lads generally jumped into the cooking. We thank all those "hands" who have made our day enjoyable and also a special "thank you" to June Gallagher who never misses bringing her bread pudding. The last time when she had her arms in a sling after a fall, her bread pudding was made by Michael with supervisions. She said to me, "if it does not tastes the same today, blame Michael, he made it!" I think she had supervised very well as it tasted just the same as always.

We had six social outings – a Ride on the City Cat and lunch at Southbank; Tour of Mt. Cootha Botanical Gardens and lunch; Lunch at Food Fantasy, Jupiters and some even stayed on for the show in the evening, A senior's Christmas concert

at City Hall and our annual Christmas Party at Redland RSL. We also participated in the Anzac Day March; MN Day celebration and also the Seafarers' Day at St. John's Cathedral. Some of the social events were not well responded this year due to a few sickness among our members.

Our Tower Fund is doing well with members dropping their "loose change" into the box at meetings. It is a Fund that was created some few years ago to assist anyone who needs immediate urgent assistance. I like to say to members that they should not feel embarrassed requesting assistance as the request only goes to the President and is kept within the Committee confidential. We have as at last meeting \$1060.80 in the Fund. It had already helped members in some small ways. I only wish to mention this as members who do not attend meetings are not aware of this Fund.

Our Membership remains stable and we also have three new members this year. Our long lost friend Evan Lewis has returned to our membership list again. We missed him for a long while that we thought he had returned to Wales!

Our newsletters do bring members up to date of all our news and therefore it isn't necessary that I should repeat the events of the year again in this report.

On behalf of our Committee I would like to say that we appreciate very much to all who have contributed prizes throughout the year for raffle draws. Our next meeting is Thursday 26th August 2010 at 11am.

Best Wishes and Smooth Sailing as we "Sail" along.

Kim Cohen, Secretary

Life at the top as a Steward on an "O Boat"

by Alan Glasson

I left the Vindi on the 6th July 1951 and my first trip was on an old Empire boat. We sailed to West Africa for a six month's trip and got the shock of my life at our first port (we anchored at sea) when about 50 dug-out canoes came out to us, we unloaded our cargo of bags of cement, about 4 bags each time and if the derricks let them down too fast they would tip the canoe over and lose the cement. I guarantee half the cargo went over that way. I was a cabin boy and to be honest I was ready to give the sea away there and then.

My next trip was on the "Bloemfontein Castle" and that thankfully was only a nine week trip round Africa, I did two trips on her, then joined the "Llandovery Castle" where I got my rating as Captains Tiger. A meteoric rise in pay and a boy to a rating in less the usual 2 years sea service plus a good grounding in my future career in pampering to the rich and famous and the not so rich and not so famous, from there I joined "Orcades" in late 1952.

I started off as a Tourist Waiter on the "Orcades" - Orient Steam Navigation Company in 1952 and that was the bottom of the rung, Then I graduated to a Tourist Bedroom Steward that was one step up, but not a very big one. I then joined "Orsova" at Barrow-in-Furness maiden voyage in 1954, still as a Tourist Bedroom Steward.

For some unknown reason I rejoined "Orcades" as a 1st class Bedroom Steward and spent another year on her, that was a pretty good job, you only had 6 cabins to look after, so you could give a pretty good service and of course you got a few



perks to go with it. For example we turned to at 4 pm and we would generally tidy our allotted cabins up and turn the beds down, this would take till about 6 pm, Then we could go up to the Veranda bar and get a drink (for the passengers of course) there was about eight of us that worked out of one large pantry, so there was a constant line of us going up to the bar and of course we could also get a First Class dinner (for a passenger of course.) It was like a club with all eight of us having a nice drink and dinner, till 8pm, then we could officially knock off, and we would then adjourn to the Crew bar, so by 10 pm when the Crew bar closed we would be well and truly under the weather and quite merry, I stuck that out for 2 years.

I rejoined "Orsova" in 1956 as a Tourist Class - Public Room Steward (Bar Steward) and I can tell you that was the top rung of the ladder, there was eight First Class and eight Tourist Bar Stewards and tourist was the best, because they drank a lot more, where the 1st class passenger would just sip away on one drink. Obviously a table waiter only came into contact with his table of passengers, and a bedroom steward would only come into contact with his little section, but we came into contact with the whole bloody lot, we had the pick, the first thing we would do when a fresh lot came on board, would be to suss all the young female passengers out and when we did a cruise from Sydney that was generally MOST of them, we just felt it was our duty to entertain them. So when the bar closed at about 11 pm, we would entertain a young female passenger in her cabin, after plying her with FREE drinks all night, not only did we do all the entertaining, but we made a lot of money while we where doing it. Table Waiters and Bedroom Stewards got their tip at the end of the trip when the passenger were getting off. We on the other hand made our loot every time we served a drink and if they didn't tip enough or worst still not at all, they didn't get very good service, they soon learnt. We would make at LEAST £3-4 a day, so by the time we got to Sydney we had made about £100, needless to say we used to live it up in Sydney, Night clubs every night, we NEVER had a sub, and we got 1½ hrs overtime every day. Come pay off in Tilbury we got a wad of £5 notes that you couldn't jump over, plus what we had left over in tips,

I cruised the world from UK to Australia Melbourne and Sydney then cruises to NZ and Fiji. As they became more popular we did cruises to USA and Canada, LA, Frisco and Vancouver from Sydney. Sometimes we would go back to the UK via the Panama, but most times we would come back to Sydney, then back to the UK via the Suez. we were away 6 months at a time, back in the UK for 3 weeks and off again. I have been often asked if I had a girl in every port – my reply would be "I have never been to every PORT".

One of my proudest moments was when I received my 5 year Long Service badge from Sir Colin Anderson, and we wore those badges with pride as we were company men. Just about all the public room stewards where company men, the rest of the crew hated us, ha bloody ha. We where treated as Royalty, we even had a steward wake us of a morning with a cup of tea, he made our bunks and kept our cabin clean, took our laundry to the laundry and picked up our clean. All of us had our uniforms (No 10's) made to measure in Colombo, cor we were bloody SNOBS, but we loved it, you had to practically wait for one of us to die before you got a Public Room Stewards job,

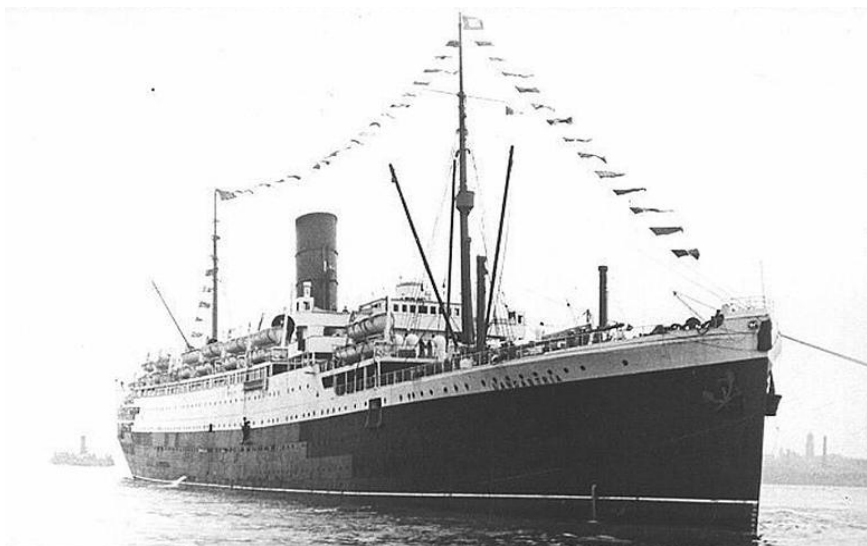
We used to fleece the passengers all the time, I had one occasion when this elderly man came up to me in Honolulu, and said he and his wife where doing a World trip with us and there was going to be some friend's farewell to see them off that night and would I look after them? That night I closed a section off and laid on some nibbles for them, it came to about £20 odd, so I thought £30 then you double it £60, next day at sea he approached for the bill, and without even blushing I said £60 Sir, he thanked me gave me the £60 and a £60 tip, the bar was on tab and equally paid with no fuss. For the rest off the trip he wouldn't let anybody else serve him and it was always a two bob tip. Well he went to England via the Panama and spent the 3 weeks we where in England touring then rejoined us for his trip back via Suez and Australia. The day before they where due to disembark at Honolulu, he called me over to thank me for my great service and told me they owned a string of hotels in Honolulu and would I like to go ashore there and help him run them. WELL I was having such a great time and earning so much money I had to reject his generous offer.

All good things must come to an end, I met one lovely female passenger and entertained her all the way to England, then I met up with her in Earls Court, and again every time we got back for a couple more trips, she then booked her passage back on "Orsova" and one night my entertaining got so good I proposed, and that was 50 years ago.



Young, Al Glasson (centre)

The HMT Lancastria



The **RMS Lancastria** was a British Cunard liner sunk on 17 June 1940 during World War II with the loss of an estimated 4,000 plus lives. **It is the worst single loss of life in British maritime history** and the bloodiest single engagement for UK forces (in terms of lives lost) in the whole conflict, claiming more lives than the combined losses on *Titanic* and *Lusitania*.

In the years immediately before the War, Lancastria was primarily engaged in cruising, the last cruises being from New York to the Bahamas. On the outbreak of war in September 1939, Lancastria returned to New York, where she was painted grey. She then sailed back to London where, in October, she was requisitioned by the Ministry of War Transport and became 'His Majesty's Transport

Lancastria' – hence the HMT. After that she continued making transatlantic voyages, mainly taking passengers westbound and bringing cargo and war materials on her eastbound passages.

In May 1940 Lancastria was involved in trooping for the Norwegian campaign; (Norway and Denmark had been invaded by Germany in April 1940). At the end of the month she went to Harstad, near Narvik to assist in the evacuation. On the return trip, carrying about 2600 troops, the small convoy she was in was attacked by high-flying German bombers. Two bombs fell close to Lancastria but no damage was done. She returned to the Clyde, via Scapa Flow, before sailing on to Liverpool, where she arrived on 13th of June in readiness for much-needed dry-docking and repairs (including the removal of 1400 tons of surplus oil fuel). Those of the crew not required for essential duties were released on leave.

After lunch that day Chief Officer Grattidge (later 'Captain of the Queens'), who was required to stay with the ship for the initial stages of dry-docking, went to the Cunard office, where he was told that he had to recall the crew because the ship had to sail at midnight that night. Remarkably, all but three of the crew of 322 returned to the ship that day.

Lancastria sailed first to Plymouth, then, in company with another Cunard ship, Franconia sailed to Brest where they were ordered to proceed to Quiberon Bay as part of 'Operation Aerial' which was the British codename for the evacuation of the remainder of the British Expeditionary Forces from the ports of north-west France. As they approached their destination the Franconia was attacked by a single Ju88 bomber. The near misses severely damaged the Franconia which then returned to Liverpool. Later that day Lancastria was ordered to Charpentier Roads, near St Nazaire, where she arrived early in the morning of the 17th of June.

Background. *The signal 'Operation Dynamo now completed' which was circulated on the 4th of June, indicated the end of the evacuation at Dunkirk, but by no means implied that all of the B E F troops had returned from France, indeed, with the French capitulation on the 12th and capture of the 51st Highland Division on the 13th of June, there were still exceedingly large numbers of troops awaiting evacuation.*

Winston Churchill had the idea that possibly the French Government would continue fighting. With that thought in mind, General Sir Alan Brooke was sent to France as head of the 2 B E F. The 52nd Lowland Division had been sent to France 7 – 12 June: 1 Canadian Division went 12 – 13 June and complimented the remnants of the 1 Armoured and Beauman's Divisions.

By the 17th of June, of the 124,000 servicemen still in the war zone, 57,000 had been evacuated, leaving 67,000 who needed to be repatriated. The War Cabinet decided there would be a last attempt to evacuate via St Nazaire. On the 16th of June some 17,000 men embarked and left on four large passenger liners, Georgic, Duchess of York, and the Polish ships Batory and Sobiesky.

June 17th. Lancastria lay at anchor in the Roads and was joined later by the Orient liner Oronsay. A number of destroyers, tugs, tenders, and other small craft made repeated trips out to Lancastria, ferrying soldiers, airmen, and civilians. There are no accurate figures for the numbers who came on board, the consensus is 6,000 plus.

At 1.48pm there was an air attack on Oronsay, which was about half a mile away, and one bomb struck her bridge, destroying her compass and all her navigating instruments. Fortunately, no one was killed. After that Lancastria expected an air attack at any time. The boats were turned out, ready for lowering. A signal came from a nearby destroyer suggesting that if Lancastria was full to capacity she should get under way. However the Navy were unable to provide an escort and Captain Sharp and Chief Officer Grattidge, concerned about the possibility of submarine attack, and not having charts for those waters, agreed that it would be better to wait and go in company with Oronsay.

At 3.43 pm the air-raid alarm was sounded. Lancastria was being attacked by Ju 88s of II Gruppe/KG 30. Four bombs hit Lancastria. The first bomb hit No. 2 hold, which held about 800 RAF personnel, and blocked the exit for those who were not killed by the blast. Another bomb burst in No. 3 hold, releasing about 300 tons of oil this could result in a running fire, the most difficult of blazes to control aboard a ship. When the smoke drifted and parted Chief Officer Grattidge saw the mess of blood and oil and splintered woodwork that littered the deck and a furious core of water that came roaring from the bottom of the ship

in No. 4 hold.

Many sources, including Captain Sharp, say that the fourth bomb went down the funnel, but surviving Engineer Officer Frank Brogden, who was on duty in the engine room, is adamant that this did not happen, because they would not have survived the blast.

Lancastria started sinking by the bow; she developed a list to starboard, but by ordering all hands to the port side, this was corrected, only for an uncontrollable list to port to develop; she rolled over onto her port side and at 4.12 pm she disappeared into the shallow waters of the Loire estuary.

In this summary it is not possible to describe the chaos that followed. The water was covered with oil from the ruptured tank; there were only 2000 lifejackets on board and many of those on board could not swim; German planes machine-gunned the survivors and used tracer bullets to try and ignite the oil; a soldier slashing the rope fall of a lifeboat with his army knife as the boat hung suspended – the boat swung slowly outwards and the struggling passengers were toppled into the water.

After the air attack had subsided about 4.30 pm, many vessels – destroyers, tugs and smaller craft, both French and British – came to the rescue of survivors. The trawler HMS Cambridgeshire was first on the scene and was able to rescue between 800 and 900 survivors, all taken from the water, with the exception of the occupants of one boat. Most of these men were transferred to the freighter John Holt. The badly wounded were taken to St Nazaire for medical treatment.

Most of those rescued were taken to Plymouth, the destroyers HMS Beagle taking 600 and HMS Havelock taking 460; the cargo ship John Holt took 829; the tanker Cymbula took 252 and the liner Oronsay 1557. Lesser numbers were brought back in other ships which are commemorated in a panel in 'Lancastria's Church', St Katharine Cree, in the City of London.

The accounts of the experiences of many of those who were there are recorded in several books.

With thanks *The HMT Lancastria Association*

SCOTLAND

In the beginning, the God Almighty sitting on his throne on high turned to his mate the Archangel Gabriel and said, "Gabby today I'm going to create Scotland. I will make it a country of dark beautiful mountains, purple glens and rich flowing rivers and I will fill them with salmon.

The land shall be lush and fertile, on which people will grow barley to brew into an amber nectar which will be sought after the world over. Under the land I shall lay rich seams of coal, and in the waters around the shores there will be an abundance of fish and beneath the seabed there will be vast deposit of oil and gas."

"Excuse me sire the Archangel Gabriel "don't you think that you are being a bit too generous to the Scots". "Hell no," replied the Lord, wait till you see the f....., neighbours I'm giving them."

How to deal with pirates, Russian-style

Russian Special Forces abseiled from a helicopter to storm an oil tanker hijacked by Somali pirates in a dramatic rescue off the coast of Yemen. One pirate was shot dead and ten captured after they opened fire on the helicopter and a Russian naval speedboat with Kalishnikovs and rocket propelled grenades. The raid came after special forces aboard the Russian antisubmarine destroyer Marshal Shaposhnikov rushed to the aid of the tanker, Moscow University.

The 23-man crew had locked themselves in a safe room after disabling the engine of the tanker which was carrying 86,000 tons of crude oil worth £33million. Dawn raid: Russian commandos, deployed from the Marshal Shaposhnikov, successfully stormed the ship Moscow University.

Maritime officials in East Africa hailed the operation as a clear warning to pirates, who are currently holding 20 foreign ships with almost 400 sailors in hideouts along the Somali coast. The Russian rescue, backed by the Kremlin, was in marked contrast, they said, to the way ministers in London refused to allow Royal Marines to rescue a British couple after their yacht had been hijacked.

Somali pirates captured by the Navy have been given fuel, food and water and sent on their way. Russian officials said the pirates captured yesterday were being sent to Moscow where they would stand trial for piracy, kidnap and 'criminal activity'.

Some oil tankers are sailing around southern Africa and further east into the Indian Ocean away from Somalia's coastline to avoid the Gulf of Aden and pirates who are striking deeper out at sea. Kenya and the Seychelles have prosecuted dozens of pirates handed over by foreign navies, but have both said they would have difficulties coping with the numbers if every seized pirate was placed in their hands.

Last month, the UN Security Council suggested creating special piracy courts to plug a gap in the world response to the costly attacks on merchant ships off Somalia's coast. Although there are dozens of warships patrolling the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, it is unusual for rescue operations to be launched once pirates have boarded a vessel because of the potential danger to crews.

But in the case of the Moscow University, which was seized off the coast of Yemen as it sailed to China, the crew had switched off the engine and locked themselves in a strong room with a reinforced door opened only from the inside which, during a 20-hour siege, the pirates were unable to open.

Some oil tankers are sailing around southern Africa and further east into the Indian Ocean away from Somalia's coastline to avoid the Gulf of Aden and pirates who are striking deeper out at sea, shipping experts say. But Somali pirates are still able to seize ships despite the presence of an international fleet of warships in the busy shipping lanes linking Europe with Asia.

Shipowners and insurers have paid out tens of millions of dollars in ransoms. Russia has been sending warships to patrol and protect Russian crews and cargoes off the Horn of Africa since the hijacking of the Ukrainian-owned cargo ship MV Faina in 2008 and the death of its Russian captain. The Faina was carrying a cargo of 33 tanks.

Oh the Memories

by Rod Orrah

Listen lads, I was sitting around one day last week, and I started to think back to when we were at sea, some of it over fifty years ago. How things have changed. I know there must be a lot of ships still sailing the seven seas, but somehow you don't hear much of them; that is name wise, like we knew a lot of the shipping lines. It's certainly a different ball game now, with super tankers, and container ships, also big ore carriers, and timber ships. Liners are once again making an appearance, but not as people movers, but travel and entertainment places.

Some of the ships, that I was on I spent quite a bit of time in Port Said, Aden and Colombo all places where there was a lot of sea traffic, going to and from the Far East, and Australia. One ship I was on, we loaded a cargo of salt in Port Said for Japan, and another one, the SS Masirah belonging to Brocklebanks, was one of the last of the deep sea coal burners and we used to bunker in Port Said and Aden. Not by mechanical means I might add, but by small baskets of coal being carried up the ships side from barges. During those times I used to watch the convoys going through the canal, mornings and night, and I think it was passenger liners first, then oil tankers, followed by cargo liners, with tramp ships, and bits and pieces bringing up the rear.

I know there has been a lot written about various lines, at different times, also there are a lot of videos to be obtained these days, but when I started to think back, I surprised myself at the number of different shipping companies that I had seen. Of course I saw a lot of other liners, when in London, Liverpool and other ports around the world, and the biggest conglomeration of ships I ever saw, was off the port of Suez in January 1955. We were homeward bound from India, and when we arrived at Suez, we were told to go to anchor, as a ship had just hit the railway bridge that crossed the canal, and so blocked the canal for about three days. During that time, it was amazing how many ships turned up, in order to pass through the canal, and if you could have such a thing, it was more or less standing room only in the anchoring area.

To begin my list of shipping lines, I'll start with the Liner companies, and some of their ships I saw and remember. I'll start with Cunard, Orient, and P&O line, also the Empress boats which crossed the Atlantic. I remember seeing the old Aquitania in 1948. We were on our way to Cuba and she overtook us at a gallop. She passed close by and was a magnificent sight, with her four great big funnels and going at full speed. Of the Orient boats, I remember the "Orcades", "Orsova" and I think there was an "Otranto". These of course were on the Australian run, and the P&O also went to Australia as well as doing the Far East run.

Some of their ships that I recall were the "Arcadia", "Chusen", "Corfu", "Canton" and the Strathboats, P&O also had a big fleet of cargo ships. There was also quite a big movement of troops to the Far East in those days. I think the "Empire Windrush" was a regular troop ship. The French also had quite a few ships taking troops and passengers to and from Indo China as it was then called. I remember seeing the "Pasteur" one trip and I have a photo of her somewhere.

The Italians also had quite a few liners, taking immigrants to Australia; one of them was the "Victoria", (another photo),

and I must not forget the two Dutch Liners, the "Oranje" and the "Willem Ruys". They had a collision in the Red Sea, when they were passing. They must have decided to wave to one another and got a bit too close. I must not forget the Union Castle Line, with regular services to South Africa and of course Shaw Saville with the likes of "Gothie". I still have a photo of her arriving in Aden, when she had the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh on board. Later on Shaw Saville had the "Northern Star" and "Southern Cross" on a regular run to Australia and New Zealand. They also had quite a fleet of cargo liners.

There were a lot of tankers around in those days, mainly because they weren't very big. Shell oil would be one of the biggest, with the British Tanker Company a close second. I did a trip to the Persian Gulf in the "British General". She was about 8000 tons. We sailed on her on her maiden voyage, and she was one of the forty ships of the same class that the B.T.C had built after the war. There were also the Athel Tankers that I remember. They didn't all carry oils. The one I was one had a regular run to Cuba, carrying molasses. The Americans also had a lot of tankers at sea, with Esso, Texaco, and Standard Oil being some of the companies.

I next come to the Cargo Liner companies. I've already mentioned P&O and Shaw Saville and some of the others running to the Far East, were the Ben line, the Glen Line and Blue Funnel Line. The Blue Funnel Line had some very fine ships and they all seemed to have Greek Mythology names. Wasn't it Alfred Holt who owned that line? The City Boats (Ellermans) seemed to run everywhere and the Port Line (A Cunard subsidiary) has a regular run to Australia & NZ. Blue Star (Lord Vestry) were also regular runners to Australia and NZ, but they also went to Argentina on the meat trade. Brocklebanks (another Cunard subsidiary) and the Clan Line were regular runners to India and Pakistan and British India (BI) and the East Asiatic Company were to be seen regularly in that area. Most of these companies, I had nothing to do with, but saw them from a distance, or when we were in port together. Other lines that I saw, when we were around the British Coast, were Elder Dempster, which had the colouring as the City Boats and I think they carried fruit from the Mediterranean ports.

The Palm boats which had a regular West African run. The Manchester liners who did the North Atlantic run to Canada and I think they had a subsidiary line, which was known as Cairn boats. The Prince boats which had the three Prince of Wales feathers on the funnel, were also part of this group, which were known as Furness Witheys. At least I think they were. Maggie Booths ships had a regular run to the Amazon, also Lamport and Holt ran down that way too. The New Zealand Shipping Company and Federal boats had the regular run to NZ.

The Pacific Steam Navigation Company Co. did the West Coast of America. Somebody once told me they did forty ports on their trips, so you would be putting the derricks up and down all the time. The only other two that I can remember in this class are Harrisons of Liverpool (two of fat, and one of lean). They had names like:- Geologist, Historian, Scientist etc. and The Strickeline who had a regular run to the Persian Gulf and went up the Shatt Al' Arab river past Abadan, as far as Basra. I nearly forgot the Royal Mail Steamers and the Bibby line.

I now come to the tramp ship companies. Some of them were

Smiths of Cardiff (Sir William Reardem Smith) Ropners of Sunderland, the King Line, Harrisons of London and Haines Company. They had a big white H on a black funnel and their names all began with TRE, like the Cornish names. One of their ships foundered off Southern Ireland in the late 50's or early sixties. She was carrying a cargo of grain, so maybe her shifting boards broke. Then there were the Bank Line and Baron boats. I think the Bank line was owned by Andrew Weir and the Baron line was Hungry Hogarths. There was another Stricke Company who took coal to the Mediterranean and brought iron ore back. They had three ships, "Brika", "Kerma" and "Carneretta" that I remember, as I was on the Brika and Kerma. Headlams of Whitby has several ships and they had a regular run to the River Plate in South America. On my first trip to sea we had an apprentice deck officer whose father was a Captain with Headlams. When he told his father that he wanted to go to sea he said, "You're not getting a job with Headlams, as you have to learn to navigate and Headlams boats, they just wind them up and they run to the Plate and back by themselves."

There was another line which I remember as the Silver boats. I didn't see many but I believe they did very long trips. Someone once told me they signed three year articles, where the norm was two, but I don't know whether that is true or not. There were several London Greek tramp ship companies. I was on two different ships that were owned by London Greeks. Both of them were ex Fort boats and on one of them we went to Archangel in North Russia for a cargo of sawn timber. By that I mean planks, 3"x1" and 6"x1" etc. We were up there five weeks loading and it was freezing, being late November when we finished loading. We were told that there would be no deck cargo as the amount we were to load would easily go into the holds. Well we finished up with a ten foot deck cargo and we had no chains or stern house slip gear on board. The cargo was eventually strapped down with old cargo runners, heaved tight by the winches. We all knew we would be in trouble if we ran into bad weather, as we were a flush decked ship, but we were lucky and got to London without any trouble. We came down through the Norwegian Fjords, which was an interesting trip. In the time I was at sea, there were three times when I was on ships that sailed in very shallow waters and I learned that a ship feels as though it was bouncing, when there isn't much water underneath.

One of those times, was coming down the Fjords. We had anchored off Tromso for the night and when we set off in the morning I was on the wheel. We hadn't been going long, when the Pilot came up to me and asked me how she was steering, as we didn't have much water underneath and he daren't tell the Captain. She was bouncing a bit, but we didn't run aground. When I was coming out to Australia as a passenger on the "Orsova" in 1956 I experienced the same bouncing feeling. It was late at night, just after we left Melbourne and several of us were having a bit of a farewell party, before going our separate ways when we all got to Sydney. I remember saying, "we're in shallow water", when we suddenly stopped. This time we were aground and all the watertight doors were shut. No damage was done and the tugs pulled us off the sandbank the next day. The other time I experienced shallow water was coming out of the river from Abadan. By all accounts when you crossed the bar full loaded, you were more or less just pushing through mud.

Before I finish off with tramp ships I must add that there were two more companies that I'd heard of but can't

remember ever seeing any of their ships. They were Runcimans and Watts Watt. During the war there was quite a lot of cargo boats built. The ones built in Britain were known as the Empire boats, Canada built the Fort boats and America the Liberty boats, Victory boats and T2 tankers. The Liberty boats had a construction fault having a long flush foredeck and a lot of them broke their backs when crossing the Atlantic. In 1947 there were several anchored at Gibraltar which had broken backs and had been towed in. The ones the British were running after the war were given names beginning with Sam. When I was in the "Vindicatrix" in 1947, the Samtampa sank off the South Wales coast, near the Mumbles light house (I think). The Samkey disappeared near the Azores in 1948 and was never heard of again and the Samhope being run by the Federal line and renamed "Leicester" foundered off Bermuda. Yet a lot of them survived and carried cargo for many year after the war.

The Americans must have made hundreds if not thousands of these ships, as I remember in 1955, going into Charleston in South Carolina and Mobile in Alabama and they had hundreds of them moored in long lines. They were four abreast and the lines were over a mile long. I often wonder how long they kept them in reserve before they were scrapped.

The Victory ships and T2 tankers were big powerful fast boats of their day, but were very uneconomical to run. For a while the British Tanker Company had six T2 tankers running out to the Gulf from Swansea and they all had Western American names. Three I can remember were "Chisholm Trial", "Mesa Verde" and "Red River" and the men who sailed out of Swansea had their discharge books, looking more like Cowboy discharges rather than seafaring ones. I don't think the B.T.C kept these ships very long as by all accounts they just about used in fuel, the equivalent of a quarter of their cargo, before they got home.

I once made a trip to Norway on a small ship belonging to Salvasons of Leith. They of course were the Whaling Company. They also had three cargo boats that they took supplies down to South Georgia. They were called "Culrain", "Culross" and Cultor. On top of all these British Companies and ships that I have mentioned, there were hundreds of foreign ships at sea. The Scandinavians had some very fine ships. The Danish Maersk boats, the Norwegian Wilhelmsen line and the Swedish American line which had three gold castles on their funnel, just to mention a few. There were the American Lykes, Steel and Isbranden ships, also Italian and Greek ships. By the middle 1950's the German and Japanese ships were starting to make a name for themselves in the Shipping world.

Before I close I must make a mention of the Wave and Tide boats, the Fleet Auxiliary ships that used to lie for weeks on end at strategic ports around the globe. What I have put down here is what I remember!! But there were many more ships at sea, including hundreds of coasters. Maybe what I remember though will bring back memories for you and perhaps make you nostalgic.

Regards, Rod

I thank Rod for that story, which sure stirs quite a few memories and jogs the old grey matter and hope it does for YOU lads and inspire you to write me a story of your time at sea.....I can help with the grammar and typing with no embarrassment, just put pen to paper.

Editor

The Flannel Suit

Rob Lynde

Early in October 1942 the British Merchant Service had lost 1,527 ships along with the estimated 30,000 seamen who had perished. England gathered every ship laying idle or ready for the scrapyard, ships that were once proud cruise ships were turned into hospital ships and others that had sat idle sometimes for years awaiting buyers were pressed into service as replacement ships.. It was not uncommon for ships well passed their working lives and after only cursory examinations to be sent in convoy to the Americas, Australia and New Zealand.

The loss of seamen to watery graves meant a recalling of all those men who had left the sea for whatever reason, and the Royal Navy were pressed to provide suitably qualified men as officers to man these Merchant ships, also. Sea Training Schools came into their own churning out boys, who after a very short period of training became young men ready to be taken on as crew working under these newly appointed Captains.

One of these men was a Cyrus T Baines, a Lieutenant at Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham. Because of his strict parade-ground behaviour his superior officers assigned him as Captain on one of these older ships, they chose the S.S. Doric Castle. He was a Lieutenant at the time so was quite happy about the promotion, until he saw the ship!!

The gangway of the Doric Castle was dirty and showed much rust as her new Captain came aboard in his immaculate uniform, his buttons shining like gold, his polished shoes like twin mirrors on his feet, the regulation size knot tied perfectly at the collar of his starched white shirt, he cut a very splendid figure; however more noticeable than all this was the utterly disdainful look on his face as he studied his surroundings, this was an unhappy man, a very unhappy man! No one had met him, and evidently no one was coming to show him to his quarters, certainly not one of the three unshaven dirty greasers who had just come oil deck from the engine room, and who were making the most uncomplimentary remarks, one of which was "Gawd, we got a brass monkey this trip Bert," and easily overheard by all on deck, including the new Captain. "Things will change around here," he angrily said to himself as a Junior Officer approached him, (no salute - uniform un-pressed and grubby), "I'll show you to your cabin skipper." Baines glared at the young officer, "Skipper, skipper!!? You will only ever address me as Captain and the next time I see you, you'd better be wearing a clean well pressed uniform or I'll throw the book at you." he shouted. A short time later as the Junior Officer returned to his quarters he was met by the ship's Bosun, "Never mind him laddie, the crew have marked him and this will be an interesting trip, you mark my words."

After ten days of loading and preparations for sailing, an officer from the Board of Trade, after receiving complaints from the crew, had told the Captain that all Merchant Ships' crew were not required to salute and that all fines already imposed by him were to be returned. This was akin to a slap in the face to the "would be King of all he surveyed" especially when he overheard some of the crew discussing his parentage. They finally sailed and joined a convoy headed for New York, but after only four hours out, funny things started happening to Cyrus. He was strutting around the bridge deck in his specially made elevated shoes when the heel on his left shoe snapped off, crimson faced he bent

down to retrieve it only to have his binoculars slide forward, the strap snap and the glass smash into the deck rendering them useless. He returned to his quarters intending to calm his nerves with a shot of whisky, but almost had a heart attack when on opening a closet door, two huge rats hurtled past him. They had been chewing on his uniform and had actually nearly chewed all the braid off his cap. Still in a state of shock he opened a fresh bottle of whisky and threw back a tidy slug, then nearly threw up as he swallowed cold tea. On examining the bottle, it was impossible to tell if it had been tampered with and lie realised that the bottle must have come aboard like that.

A week passed, two ships in the convoy had been torpedoed and all on board from the Master to the galley boy were living in hourly apprehension of being a submarines target. The watches were four hours on duty, four hours off, however as the alarms were sounding nearly every hour, sleep for most men on the ship was a precious commodity. After one particularly harrowing day, it was close to midnight as the Captain strode around the bridge and called to his Junior. "Tell the cook I want hot cocoa and sandwiches immediately." The Junior Officer realising the time, answered "But the cook went off duty at eight bells sir."-"Just do what I tell you." yelled the irate Captain.

The young man hurriedly went below and found the senior cook playing cards. His request was met with scornful sallies, such as, "Tell him he knows where the galley is...Tell him to get it himself." The Junior returned to the Captain telling him everyone was sleeping. "You damn well wake them up, I want cocoa and I want it now." Cyrus Baines took a great delight in demeaning those beneath him in rank. Much later an unsmiling cook handed the young man the cocoa to be taken to the Bridge. "Put it there I'll have it in a minute or two." No thanks or enquiries as to how he had been able to produce the cocoa, so the young officer returned to a corner of the bridge and waited for the for the next imperious order. A short time later a loud smacking of the lips told that Cyrus was indeed drinking the cocoa, however no further order was to come, as thirty minutes later the Captain developed the most terrible stomach pains, the toilet was too far away for him, thus a terribly embarrassed Captain made a hasty retreat to his quarters where for many hours he was confined to his toilet. The result of a very large dose of Epsom Salts!!

Life aboard the Doric Castle after leaving America was reasonably peaceful, the cargo was bound for Australia and the thought of a few months in the sun helped bring a type of armistice between the Captain and crew. On the 31st of November 1942 the ship docked at Bretts Wharf in Brisbane, Queensland. Again in his old imperious manner he told the Mate to order him a car for 10 a.m.sharp "Where will you be going Sir?" The mate asked, so he could give a direction to the driver. "To the Shipping Office you fool, where else?" Just on 10 a.m. a small brown Austin car appeared on the dock against the ship's gangway. The Captain, resplendent in his now slightly rat-chewed uniform and cap, descended the gangway watched by at least half the crew, he really was mortified that he was to travel in this insignificant vehicle. As he reached the wharf side, a big black limousine pulled in beside the Austin, clearly mollified by this change of events and with a wide smile on his face visible to his interested watchers, Cyrus T. Baines shifted his attaché case to his other hand and walked to the black limousine. As he went to open the door, the apologetic voice of the elegantly dressed driver reached him, "I'm sorry Sir, this vehicle is not for you,

I'm waiting for Seaman Evan Jones, he is the nephew of Mr Raymond Townsend who is the Speaker of the Queensland Parliament. "Never mind, just drop me at the Shipping Office." Snapped the Captain.. "Sorry Sir, this is State Government property and my orders are to take only Seaman Jones. As he was speaking the youngest member of the crew walked around to the other door and climbed in. With a murderous look the Captain walked back to the driver of the Austin who gave him further bad news. "You'll have to get me a bucket of water mate, this old girl is boiling."

Looking down from above, the watching crew were delighted, for sure this tale would be told over and over on the homeward trip. A little later, the black limousine pulled into a hotel car yard about a mile down the road, the driver turned to the young man and said "There you are laddie, do you think the boys will be pleased." "My bloody oath." came the reply, "and here's the two quid the bosun promised you."

After filing his report at the Shipping Office, the now much deflated Captain decided to drown his woes at the local hotel before heading back to the ship. It was the attraction of the Captains uniform that probably gave Cyrus T.Baines the opportunity to woo a rather large breasted young lady . Some hours and several drinks later he was able to entice this lass back to his cabin on the ship, where again they partook of a bottle of "Mothers Ruin", she subsequently stayed the night. As the Doric Castle was to sail 48 hours later, the Captain went ashore the next day returning with the same young lady and some brown paper bags evidently containing bottles, again she stayed the night.

"Mister Mate, The Bosun, Officers of the Watch I want you all on deck now!!!" The Captain's voice was hoarse through the loud hailer, it was enough to wake the dead. Most of the crew assembled on the main deck to see what the trouble was. Dressed only in a bed sheet like a Roman toga and with his hair standing on end, he was screaming that some evil person had stolen every stitch of clothing he possessed, not only that but they had taken his lady-friend's clothes as well while they slept. Apparently nobody knew anything about it and the police were called. Searches were made but nothing could be found. Later the lady dressed also in a bed sheet was escorted to a taxi while Cyrus T Baines dressed in a pair of greasy overalls went ashore to buy a uniform. How ever with only four hours to shop before the ship had to leave port, he was able to replace all his clothes, but unfortunately, no uniforms were to be had in Brisbane and he had to settle for a white flannel suit and a panama hat.

From that day onwards, his authority was shot, the First Mate taking over most of his duties; however his troubles were not over. Re-crossing the Atlantic some weeks later, the Doric Castle was torpedoed and most of the crew were saved and in life boats when the German submarine surfaced. Its Captain, looking to take an officer as proof of his success took Cyrus T Baines whom he believed was not the Captain but rather a spy getting a lift back to England in an old freighter.

In relating the action to his superiors, later at his submarine base, the English speaking German Captain shrugging his shoulders and with eyebrows raised commented, "Well, if you were the Captain of a ship, why would you be wearing a white flannel suit?"



Obituary

Roger Jewson 2/09/1944 – 4/04/2010

Queensland Vindi boy Roger Jewson (1960) crossed the bar following a long illness. According to his wishes, Roger's ashes were scattered at Cleveland Bay, Townsville on Saturday 24th April with a service to celebrate his life.

About thirty relatives, friends and Vindi representative Roger Chandler turned out at ten o'clock at the Memorial on the Strand, Townsville to cast his ashes into the sea.

Roger loved the sea, his great love was the water, the sea and sailing. In the words of Eric Bogle a poem was read as follows:

"Have you stood by the ocean on a diamond hard morning
and felt the horizon stir deep in your soul?
Watch the wake of a steamer as it cut through blue water
and been gripped by a fever you just can't control?
Oh! To throw off the shackles and fly with seagulls
to where green waves tumble before a driving sea wind,
Or to lie on the decking on a warm summers evening,
watch the red sun fall burning beneath the Earth's rim".

Roger knew these feelings. He travelled the oceans of the world on the cruise liners. These trips took him to many places, and he met many people. He knew the ocean and its extent. Many hours were spent aboard his boat "The Lazy Moon" in these waters around Townsville and beyond.

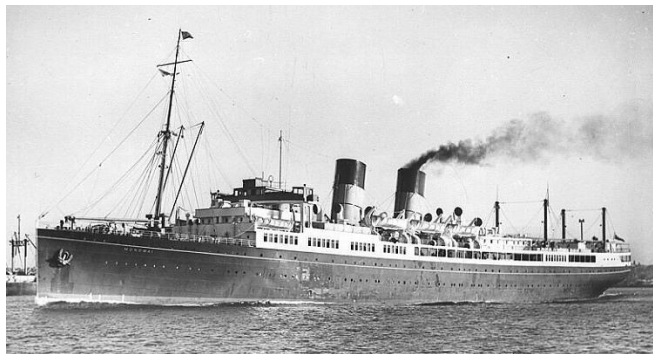
After a reading from Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar" was read, the congregation were asked to release paper boats onto the sea as Roger's ashes were spread on the water, and ending with the words:

"But every sailor comes time to drop anchor.
Haul in the sails, and make the lines fast.
You deep water dreamer your journey is over.
You're safe in the harbour at last."



Rest in Peace Sailor

New Zealand has a small connection to the poignant story as does Anne Frank, via her father, Otto, and the merchant ship SS Monowai.



On 22 April 1945, shortly before the end of the war in Europe, the Monowai sailed from England for Odessa on the Black Sea carrying 1600 Soviet citizens who had been captured serving with the Germans in France. The ship then embarked Jewish Holocaust survivors from Western Europe - including Otto Frank - who had been liberated from the Auschwitz death camp by the Soviet army. On 21 May it sailed from Odessa for Marseille, arriving on the 27th.

In *The Footsteps of Anne Frank* (1959), Ernst Schnabel wrote that: 'The Monowai flew the New Zealand flag, and had come all the way from New Zealand so that a few survivors from Europe could return home.' The men slept in hammocks, while the women were accommodated in cabins. Otto was impressed by the ship's comfort, the abundant food and the kindness of its crew.

By this time Otto had discovered that his wife, Edith, had died at Auschwitz, but he knew nothing of the fate of his two daughters, Anne and Margot. On board the Monowai, he wrote to his mother in Switzerland:

My entire hope lies with the children. I cling to the conviction that they are alive and that we'll be together again, but I'm not promising myself anything. In July, back in Amsterdam, he learned the devastating news that both girls had died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen in March 1945, just weeks before the camp's liberation. Otto lived until 1980, by which time Anne Frank's remarkable teenage diary had become an icon of 20th century literature.

This ship has many tales to tell: One being that it was the ship that carried Phar Lap to the USA and would later return Tommy Woodcock, Phar Laps strapper/trainer after deportation. Another of taking Don Bradman to England and return.....

SS Razmak - SS Monowai

The Union Steam Ship Monowai or "The Grand Old Lady of the Tasman" as she came to be known, was purchased to replace the ill-fated Tahiti, which foundered after breaking a tail shaft. With her exceptionally tall reciprocating steam engines, she had an unusually deep draught. This factor along with her fine lines made her sensitive to the smallest helm alteration, while the powerful engines provided instant full astern power, making her very responsive to rapid changes of direction.

In her second career, there was frequently a tinge of pride when a person stated that he or she had recently travelled on the Monowai. A passage on this popular ship was more than a mere conveyance from one port to another. It was usually a

delightful and exciting experience - a social event. Over a period of years some newspapers provided a special social news section, giving details of the movements of citizens who were well known and of others not so well known.

Log: 1924 October 16. Launched by Harland & Wolff from their Greenock yard for the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. The naming ceremony was performed by Viscountess Inchcape, the wife of the P&O Chairman. With a straight stem and elliptical stern, she was especially designed for continuous service in Indian waters and was employed on fortnightly trips each way between Bombay and Aden.

After the launch, she was towed across the Irish Sea to Harland and Wolff's Belfast yard to have her propulsion machinery installed and to be fitted out. SS Razmak had been commissioned to replace the line's R.M.S. Salsette, of 1908 and sunk in July 1917 by a torpedo from the UB40. The new liner was named after the garrison town in Waziristan on the North West Frontier of India, which was developed by General Lord Rawlinson in 1922, and the General himself was a guest at the launching ceremony. The Razmak Plateau, is located in what is now Pakistan's Khyber Pass, near the border with Afghanistan, amid the rugged, lofty mountains at an altitude that varies from 6,000 to 11,000 feet.

1925 March 13. Maiden voyage from London to Bombay via Marseilles and Suez.

1930 July 18. Due to increased foreign competition from the Mediterranean, the service lost popularity and the liner was laid up at London and offered for sale.

1930 August. Transferred to the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand and renamed SS Monowai (in August 1917 the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand had joined the P&O group by the latter's acquisition of the USS Co's shares).

1930 October 3. Departed from London on her final voyage for P&O. She sailed via Gibraltar, Marseilles, Suez, Bombay and Colombo, arriving in Wellington in mid November where she was given a refit and renamed SS Monowai. She had been stiffened and fitted with gun mounts, the heavy armament being shipped to New Zealand and stored at the Devonport Naval base.

1933 March. Broke the Maheno's 26 year old Sydney to Wellington record, with a time of two days, fifteen hours and 35 minutes at an average speed of 19.84 knots.

1939 October 21. Requisitioned by the Royal Navy and work began to refit her as an armed merchant cruiser at Devonport, Auckland. Then followed a period of indecision.....

1940 February 11. Work on her was halted and not resumed until June the 23, when it was definitely decided to complete her refit.

1940 August 30. Flying the White ensign and commissioned as the armed Merchant Cruiser HMNZS Monowai, with eight 6 inch guns, two 3 inch anti-aircraft guns and six 20 mm guns, plus some machine guns and depth charges. Her engineering officers were given commissioned rank and remained with her. The service consisted mainly of escorting freighters, tankers, and liners between Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, while the threat of German raiders existed.

1942 January 16. Monowai was attacked by the Japanese submarine I20. Once under enemy gunfire Monowai fired

with her port side guns, her rounds just finding range as the submarine crash-dived. She then steamed at high speed through poorly charted waters to avoid possible torpedoes. Japanese records reveal that I20 had fired four torpedoes, but missed with all.

1943 April. Due for a refit at Auckland, but considered surplus in the Pacific she sailed for England via Panama, where she would be of more use.

1943 June 18. Paid off at Liverpool where she was taken over by the British Ministry of War Transport for conversion into an assault landing-ship. Captain G. B. Morgan, DSO, DSC, a veteran of the 1914-1918 war, was sent to Britain to take command, with Chief Officer J. Billingham to assist him. Chief Engineer Harold Simmonds and the company's engineer officers who had served in HMNZS Monowai as naval reservists remained with the ship. Substantial overhaul, refitting and structural alterations were required, and installation of defensive armaments and replacement of lifeboats with 20 assault boats (LCAs) capable of landing 800 troops and their equipment.

1944 January With the refit completed, she was now a very different looking ship with her mainmast and hydraulic cranes removed and 20 landing craft slung from davits on both sides of the hull.

1944 June 5. Left the Cowes Roads in the evening, she was the largest ship of a veritable armada as they headed for Normandy. The overnight run was uneventful and she anchored seven miles off "Gold Beach" at dawn on June the 6th and disembarkation began at 6.15 am, when the first wave of assault troops was dispatched in Monowai's LCAs within 30 minutes of arrival. They met with strong opposition and casualties were heavy but they achieved their objective and during the day the remaining troops were sent ashore. One witness, the ship's surgeon, recalls the mass of shipping all around, with warships forming a complete half circle round the horizon firing continual broadsides inland as the men were landed. Some hours later a few of Monowai's landing craft returned, but only six of the original 20 survived, the remainder being blown up by mines off the beaches. After embarking about a dozen casualties Monowai returned to Southampton. She subsequently made a further run to "Utah Beach."

1945 was spent traveling many miles in troop carrying for repatriation around the world. Throughout her war service, Monowai displayed on her bridge a model of the historical Maori canoe Tainui and a Maori ceremonial cloak presented by Princess Te Puea Herangi. These were tokens that, according to Maori tradition, afford protection from an enemy. Indeed, Captain Morgan, as a defiant gesture from the Maori members of his crew, wore the cloak whenever his ship was in danger of attack. When the liner ended her war service Captain Morgan sent the model canoe and cloak to the Auckland Naval Base where they are now displayed.

1946 August. Arrived at Sydney where she was released by the British government. The Union Company was far from enthusiastic about restoration of the ship for normal service, but being anxious to resume the trans-Tasman passenger services as soon as possible, decided to put the work in hand. The company's workshop at Sydney was fully committed to restore Aorangi, so Monowai was placed in the hands of the Mort's Dock & Engineering Company.

1946 September to December 1948. It had been decided to

put the Monowai back on to the Tasman run, to replace the six-year old Awatea, which had been sunk during the North African landings. It was a long and expensive job involving the renewal of much of the machinery and an almost complete reconstruction of the ship's interior. The refit was dogged by industrial troubles and cost more than one million pounds.

1953. Monowai and Huddart Parker's Wanganella made 49 return crossings of the Tasman during the year. The average berth utilisation during was 75 percent of capacity and they were accommodating capacity traffic during the summer months.

1954. The question of replacing the ship arose. As she had always been a heavy consumer of fuel oil and had also reached the age when a classification survey due in 1956. This would give her a further four years in service, but was expected to be very costly. At that time the future looked promising enough for the P&O principals to approve the building of a replacement ship, but they left the final decision to the Union Company. However, the company was starting to feel the effects of competition from the larger and more efficient aircraft that had evolved from technological developments during the war. The company expected this competition would increase and was concerned that the high cost of a new ship would prohibit competitive fare charges, so it was planned that the trans-Tasman passenger service would be abandoned when the liner's time ran out in 1960.

1959 June A fire in her engine room delayed the departure from Sydney by a week.

1960 May 30. By the late 1950s the Union Line was claiming that air travel had begun to take away potential passengers and it was getting more and more difficult to fill her berths. Above: the last sailing of the Monowai from Sydney's Darling Harbour terminated the Line's trans-Tasman passenger service. The remote Dominion's talent for exporting commercial acumen would see what had once been the Southern Hemisphere's largest shipping line, reduced within a generation to a coal barge and a couple of tugs - now laid up at Lyttelton.

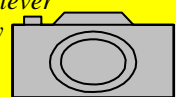
1960 June 2. Departed for a Pacific cruise, which was to be her last passenger voyage. The veteran liner was withdrawn from service and offered for sale, but being well past her prime there could be only one fate for her; the breakers yard. However, there was strong opposition in New Zealand where she was a much loved ship. A last minute attempt to extend her career for another year as a passenger liner was refused by the Union Company.

1960 July. Sold to the Far Fast Metal Industry Company of Hong Kong for £165,000.

1960 September 6. Arrived at Hong Kong under the command of Captain S. M. Barling to be broken up.

1960 September 13. She was taken in tow for her last short trip across Kowloon Bay to the Ngautaukok breaking yards near the airport.

* *Editor: Photos on the front cover of the Anzac parade* *
* *are courtesy of the TV, a DVD and clever* *
* *computer software, sorry about quality* *
* *of pictures.* *



Dunkirk 70 years ago

The Dunkirk evacuation, codenamed Operation Dynamo by the British, was the evacuation of Allied soldiers from the beaches and harbour of Dunkirk, France, between 27 May and 4 June 1940, when British, French and Belgian troops were cut off by the German army during the Battle of Dunkirk in the Second World War. In a speech to the House of Commons ("We shall fight on the beaches"), Winston Churchill called the events in France "a colossal military disaster", saying that "the whole root and core and brain of the British Army" had been stranded at Dunkirk and seemed about to perish or be captured. He hailed their rescue as a "miracle of deliverance".

On the first day, only 7,010 men were evacuated, but by the ninth day, a total of 338,226 soldiers (198,229 British and 139,997 French) had been rescued by the hastily assembled fleet of 850 boats. Many of the troops were able to embark from the harbour's protective mole onto 42 British destroyers and other large ships, while others had to wade from the beaches toward the ships, waiting for hours to board, shoulder-deep in water. Others were ferried from the beaches to the larger ships, and thousands were carried back to England by the famous "little ships of Dunkirk", a flotilla of around 700 merchant marine boats, fishing boats, pleasure craft and Royal National Lifeboat Institution lifeboats the smallest of which was the 15-foot fishing boat Tamzine, now in the Imperial War Museum whose civilian crews were called into service for the emergency. The "miracle of the little ships" remains a prominent folk memory in Britain. *The paddle steamer Medway Queen made 7 round trips rescuing 7,000 men and earning herself the nickname "Heroine of Dunkirk".*



Medway Queen

A Yorkshireman's wife dies and the widower decides that her headstone should have the words "**She were Thine**" engraved on it. He calls the local stone mason, who assures him that the headstone will be ready a few days after the funeral. True to his word the stone mason calls the widower to say that the headstone is ready and would he like to come and have a look.

When the widower gets there he takes one look at the stone to see that it's been engraved "**She were Thin**". He explodes good grief man, you've left the flamin' "e" out! The stone mason apologises and assures the poor widower that it will be rectified the following morning. Next day comes and the widower returns to the stone mason "There you go sir, I've put the "e" on the stone for you"..... The widower looks at the stone and then reads out aloud - "**E, She were Thin**".



Paddy phones an ambulance because his mate's been hit by a car. Paddy "Get an ambulance here quick, he's bleeding from his nose and ears and I tink both his legs are broken" Operator "What is your location sir?" Paddy "Outside number 28, Eucalyptus Street" Operator "How do you spell that sir?" Silence. After a minute:- Operator "Are you there sir?" Silence. A minute later:- Operator "Sir, can you hear me?" This goes on for another few minutes until:- Operator "Sir, please answer me. Can you still hear me?" Paddy "Yes, sorry bout dat. I just dragged him round to number 3, Oak Street".



Dear Bill, I write re: the SS Waratah. The reason for my interest, is that the Waratah has a particular place in my family folklore. My maternal Grandparents were married in 1901 in Pietermarisburg, Natal, South Africa, my grandfather was in the Army during the Boar War and was also an Army bandsman, from here things get a bit sketchy, until 1909. In that year my grandparents boarded a ship in Durban, with all their possessions, and literally just as the gangplank was to be drawn up, they were taken off the ship along with other members of the band, there was not even time to get their possessions off. The reason being was, that being a bandsman my Grandfather and the others were required to play at some civic function or other. I can clearly remember my Grandmother telling me that the name of the ship was the SS Warateh, and of course she (the ship) was never heard of again and they lost all their personal possessions.

The next part of the history was that my grandparents were in Mauritius, and my Mother was born there in April 1910. I always understood that when my grandparents embarked on the Waratah, they were with the regiment, but as the Ship left Durban bound for Cape Town, how did my grandparents get to Mauritius, was their posting changed, and it would seem that the regiment was not on board, or this would have been detailed. I have never really given much thought to this in the past, but recently, due to many articles on the anniversary, this has now created an interest in me.

Pete Schofield
Vindicatrix Midland Branch

Editor. I have forwarded this correspondence to Suzanne-Jo Leff Patterson and further research being made, with a most appreciative Pete fully in the picture.

**ALL MONIES, for whatever reason to be paid to the Treasurer
(Cheques & PO's made payable to Vindicatrix Association Queensland - ONLY)**

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