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THE **NAVAL**
MUSEUM
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the ensign



Ken Macpherson / Naval Museum of Alberta



This historic image taken aboard the River-class destroyer HMCS *Skeena*, shows *Skeena*, *Saguenay* and either *Champlain* or *Vancouver* on their maiden cruise entering Halifax Harbour on July 3, 1931. On July 31, 1942, while serving with Escort Group C-3 and escorting convoy ON.115, *Skeena* shared with HMCS *Wetaskiwin* in the sinking of *U 588*. Reassigned to EG-12 for invasion duties, she was present on D-Day. Transferred to EG-11 in September 1944, she dragged her anchors in a storm and was wrecked on Videy Island near Reykjavik, Iceland, losing 15 members of her complement. For more information see the Project Pride website at http://www.navy.gc.ca/Project_Pride/home/index_e.asp.

www.navalmuseum.ab.ca

The Chairman's Bridge

By Glenn Hardie

The first thing you'll notice about this column is that it wasn't written by Ken Moore. You may also have noticed that the last edition of *The Ensign* did not contain a chairman's column. After many years of participation on the Board of our Society, including his leadership as Chairman of the Board since November of 2005, Ken decided to retire from the Board effective April 1, 2008. Given that the next Annual General Meeting of the Society won't occur until November 18, 2008, the Board has requested that your President fill Ken's shoes in the capacity as Acting Chairman over the intervening six months until a new chairman is elected at the next AGM.

On behalf of all members of our Society, and in particular on

behalf of all directors on the Board, I wish to sincerely thank Ken Moore for his many years of valued service to the Society, and his many outstanding contributions to the affairs of the Naval Museum over the past decade. Many of you may not know that Ken was an integral participant in the Sharing Our Military Heritage Foundations since its inception in 2001. The SOMH Foundation was the fund raising vehicle that successfully raised all those millions of dollars that were ultimately used to finance the expansion construction at The Military Museums, and in particular our new Naval Museum facility located at TMM.

During Ken's tenure as chairman, he provided strong input and wisdom to the Board and to the Executive Committee that reflected his devotion to the Naval Museum and his past experience as Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench of the Province of Alberta for many years. Ken's sage advice and steady hand at the tiller will be greatly missed as we steam forward into the next exciting phase of opening our new Naval Museum home. I'm sure that you'll all join me in wishing Ken and Audrey the very best in their future endeavours.

In the President's View

By Glenn Hardie

The Chairman's Bridge column of *The Ensign*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Winter 2007-08) edition was entitled "A Door Closes on the Past with an Exciting New Era Ahead." That "New Era" is no longer on the distant horizon, but now only mere cables ahead! Our volunteers and contractors have done yeoman service in completing the interior build out and setting up our exhibits in the new Naval Museum.

The move of our artefacts went off without a hitch but none of us could foresee the delays caused by local labour and material shortages. At our recent Executive Committee meeting it was decided the official opening of the museum should take place on or close to the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Naval Museum at HMCS *Tecumseh* in 1988.

Assuming that the requisite occupancy permits are in place, we're tentatively planning to hold the "official opening" of the new Naval Museum on Thursday, October 16, 2008. The opening will highlight the introduction of our new "Convoys and the Battle of the Atlantic Exhibit."

Those of you who are longtime members of the Society will recognize the importance of October 16, 1988. This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Naval Museum of Alberta. You may recall that it was Her Honour Helen Hunley, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta at the time, who officially opened the museum.

The other significant piece of news is that the ongoing sustainability of our Naval Museum is now assured. Some seven or eight years ago, the Board executive at that time took a hard look at the long term future of the Naval Museum, given the ageing nature of our volunteers, the difficulty of raising sufficient funds for operation, maintenance and artefact acquisition, our declining attendance and the growing lack of space in the old building.

A series of multiparty discussions followed that ultimately led to our Naval Museum becoming an accredited museum of the Department of National Defence (which indeed was a prerequisite to our being able to relocate the museum to TMM).

Since the last edition of *The Ensign* was released, DND stood up the "Maritime Command Naval Museum" (MCNM) on June 15, 2008. The MCNM will have constituent component museums initially located in each of Halifax, Québec City, Winnipeg, Calgary and Esquimalt; all administered under new MARCORD 06-01.

The aim is for DND to create a single, fully catalogued, professionally managed naval artefact collection under the administrative and oversight authority of the Staff Officer Heritage located at NDHQ in Ottawa.

This initiative is based on three specific pillars:

- national responsibility for collection, preservation, protection and display of naval artefacts;
- departmental responsibility for the efficient management of the MCNM activities and accounts; and,
- MARCOM responsibility to boost public awareness of Canadian Navy roles in each constituent location.

In due course, the position of new "National Director" of the



MCNM will be established and filled, DND will establish and pay for a salaried curator at each constituent museum, and the national Board of Directors of the MCNM will be formed which will include the National Director and the five Curators, chaired by SO Heritage. I have no doubt whatsoever that our Naval Museum here in Calgary will be the absolute jewel in the MCNM crown!

As a result, there will be some changes in the way our Society has done business in the past. Our Society will continue to own its artefact and archive collection, and will continue to place that collection on loan into the Naval Museum. We will also continue to have full autonomy regarding the setup of our artefacts, and current and future exhibit plans. For the time being Murray Bialek will also continue to act as our General Manager pending establishment of the new Curator position.

Finally, we expect that we will be responsible for providing watchkeepers and tour guides, and for hosting Society events. The old "Museum Operating Board" that was formed under the chairmanship of the Commanding Officer of HMCS *Tecumseh*,

has now been abolished. New rules will be implemented regarding artefact donations and the issuance of tax receipts if artefacts are donated directly to the MCNM (rather than our Society).

Ultimately, our Society will need to change its perspective to have a greater focus on fund raising, public awareness, project assistance and participation in local events, and less of a focus on operations.

All in all, this signals a significant change in the way our Society will do business in the future. In my view, a very important change that fully meets the aim of that introspective sustainability review conducted by your executive several years ago.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the Official Opening of the new Naval Museum, headlined by the Convoys and the Battle of the Atlantic exhibit on October 16th. More detailed information on the official opening at our new site will be provided once preliminary plans are confirmed.

We all look forward to the grand opening of The Military Museums tentatively scheduled for May/June 2009.

The Curator's Cabin

By Murray Bialek

Two students were hired for the summer. Ryan Jenkins was hired under a grant from Young Canada Works, and Shannon May under a grant from the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP). Their help has been invaluable. There is enough work to keep both of them busy for an entire year but alas, they are only here until the end of August.

Our mannequin project was a success. Art Hazel, President



No, not the scene of a grisly murder ... but rather some of our mannequins being prepared for display in the new facility.

of Leaseway Corp. Ltd., provided the refrigerated truck (reefer) in which our mannequins were frozen for seventeen days in order to get rid of any potential insect pests before moving them to our new museum. Bill Buchanan contacted numerous volunteers and set up a work schedule, while Cal Annis headed up the project to unwrap, thaw, put the uniforms on hangers, iron them and steam them, and finally, dress the mannequins. The work was completed much more quickly than anticipated due to the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, and most of our mannequins are now on display.

A popular display was set up for the "North American"



Cal Annis during the work to thaw the mannequins and uniforms.



tournament at Spruce Meadows, July 4-6, headed by George Pumple. A big **Bravo Zulu** is due to all the volunteers who stood a watch.

A grant was received from the Canadian Museums Association which will now enable us to prepare some curriculum based tours for school children. Our annual Museum Developing Funding application to the Department of History & Heritage (DHH) was completed, and hopefully some benefits will also result from this submission. Mr. Rafael Sandoval from DHH visited our museum and met with two of our volunteers, Al McBean and Pat Nichol, to update our Canadian Forces Artifact Management System (CFAMS). Pat and I also attended the annual Organization of Military Museums of Canada Museum Studies Program in Winnipeg in July. We visited eight museums and participated in numerous sessions ranging from CFAMS to artefact care and handling to keeping track of your collection.

Even though our museum was not yet open, I conducted our first official tour on June 24 when a bus load of British tourists from The British Aviation Enthusiasts Society, led by Alan Key, visited our new museum. The group is travelling across Canada visiting museums displaying aircraft. Norm Holden also conducted a tour on July 30.

MAJOR TASKS AHEAD

- Mess deck display, honour room and bridge deck completion.
- Interactive audiovisual display installation.
- Signage for cabinets.
- Library inventory.
- Artefact inventory.
- Storage, shelving, and workshop project.

OTHER TIDBITS

- Our firearms license has been renewed.
- The Oberon periscope, stored in HMCS *Tecumseh's* boat shed, has been moved into our old museum. Refurbishing work will soon begin before moving it to its new location alongside the periscope from HMCS *Grilse* already installed in the new museum. A new Canadian submarine display is being designed around the two periscopes.
- Mannequins are being kitted out for the mess deck, asdic hut and chart room dioramas.
- A large U-boat model complete with German skipper will form part of our U-boat display.

RECENT DONATIONS (a small sampling)

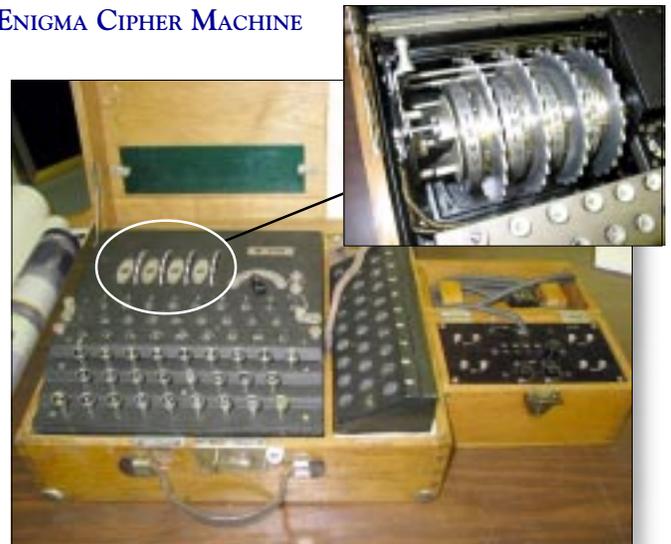
Among the items recently received are: books, Navy Lists from 1913 to the present, warship supplements, various archival documents, 4th Canadian Training Squadron kisbey ring, engine room telegraph, brass ship's wheel on pedestal, WWII unique photos, Grey "constructor" sub-lieutenant shoulder boards, hammock, WWII clothing, maps, negatives, RCN silverware, newspaper clippings, WWII letters, cap tallies, medals, observer wings, video, and course notes.

On behalf of the museum I would like to recognize and thank a number of individuals and organizations who recently made artefact and equipment donations: Ross Arrosmith, Jerry R. van der Linden, Robert Tomlinson, Al McBean, Terry Allen, David Jamieson, Jeff Farley, Wilma Mitchell (John Wright), Bette Best, Judith Blythe, Bud MacLean, Don Connolly, Heather Dawn Green, DHH, Canadian Navy Heritage Team (DND), Brian Mathyk and Greg McKenzie.

VOLUNTEER HELP STILL REQUIRED

Without the help of numerous volunteers like Gary Hansen and Bruce Connolly, your museum would not be able to function. However, additional volunteers are still required, especially if you have some 'paper-pushing' and basic computer skills. If you are able to give a minimum of one to two full days per week (Monday-Friday), please phone me at 242-0002.

ENIGMA CIPHER MACHINE



An Enigma machine has been loaned to the Naval Museum by Fred Mannix. As some of you will be aware, the Enigma was an advanced cipher machine developed in Germany following WWI. The machine was used by all branches of the German military as their primary device for secure wireless communications until the end of WWII. Several types of Enigma machines were developed before and during WWII, the code of each more complex and harder to break than its predecessors. The most complex Enigma type was used by the German navy (*most notably perhaps, in their U-boat operations. Ed.*)

A number of books have been written about the Allied effort to decode Enigma messages. During WWII, Bletchley Park, an estate located in the town of Bletchley, England, was the location of the UK's main code-breaking establishment. Codes and ciphers of several Axis countries were deciphered here, most importantly those of the German Enigma machines. The high-level intelligence produced by Bletchley Park, code named ULTRA, is frequently credited with aiding the Allied war effort and shortening the war.



The Naval Museum of Alberta Society christened the new naval museum on Saturday, August 16, as close to 100 of our members turned out for good food, cheer, fellowship, and a preview look at the progress to date in the transition from the old to the new.

Our own Gary Hansen supervised the festivities as those attending enjoyed refreshments and BBQ'd food, interspersed with tours through the developing exhibits. The wheelhouse, nearing completion, was high on the must-see list of displays as everyone moved about informally through what will soon be the Convoys and Battle of the Atlantic exhibit, and many other exhibits in various degrees of development.

The ASDIC Hut and the Chart Room are 95% complete, drawing a lot of attention along with the beginnings of the Mess Deck Diorama scheduled for completion over the next few weeks.

Curator, Murray Bialek, congratulated all of the many volunteers without whom the success of our museum would not have been possible. Our acting Chairman and President, Glenn Hardie, expressed his thanks to all of those who had worked so hard over the past several years to transform the museum into a unique repository of artefacts, archives, library and historical documents that will be second to none in Canada.

Glenn pointed out that since we had been designated as an accredited DND museum, our collection would be on loan to DND and would come under a new curator position to be established shortly by NDHQ. The Naval Museum of Alberta Society will no longer be accountable for annual operating and management costs, but will continue to have responsibility for programming exhibits and displays in cooperation with DND.

And so, our first event in the 'new era' has come to pass. Our highly proficient volunteer BBQ crew and refreshments staff are to be commended for the excellent fair and service provided in a highly professional manner.

As stated elsewhere in this issue of *The Ensign*, watch for details on the official opening this fall. Also, watch for our Annual General Meeting in November, followed by our volunteer breakfast in early December.

Annual BBQ a Resounding Success!

Terry Thompson

Photos by Norm Holden and Murray Bialek



Indian Ocean Rendezvous

The destruction of SMS Emden by HMAS Sydney

Frank Saies-Jones

The welcome rays of the sun streaming through the windows of our aircraft indicated that our long flight across the Indian Ocean was coming to an end. Our plane was scheduled to land in less than fifteen minutes. Having taken off from Perth, Western Australia, late in the evening of the previous day, our RAF Liberator of Transport Command was scheduled to refuel in the Cocos Islands, about half way to our final destination, Colombo, Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka). Over the roar of the engines, our pilot's voice came through the intercom as we were about to touch down: "If you look out of the starboard windows, we're about to fly over the wreck of the *Emden*. As the great bomber banked to starboard to line up with the runway, my fellow passengers and I looked down on a shimmering aquamarine lagoon enclosed by the white ring of a coral reef, in the centre of which the dark outline of what remained of the German light cruiser *Emden* of World War One could be seen.

This had been the ship whose exploits in the first three months of that war, under the command of K apitan Karl Friedrich Max von M uller of the Imperial German Navy, had been responsible for having altered the disposition of warships around the world. She had delayed the sailing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps for England, and disrupted the timely shipments of horses, food and ammunition desperately needed in Europe to stem the German advance on Paris. Her presence in the Pacific and Indian Oceans had caused Lloyds of London to increase marine insurance rates for all shipping east of the Suez, and bottled up Allied vessels in ports from Rangoon to Sydney and Calcutta to Hong Kong. In just under three months she had sailed over 30,000 nautical miles, sunk 70,000 tons of Allied shipping, captured three modern liners, sunk a Russian cruiser and two French destroyers, raided the port cities of Madras and

Georgetown, sent valuable cargoes of over three million pounds to the bottom, and almost ruined the career of the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill.

What makes the story of *Emden's* cruise even more remarkable was the high regard held throughout the world for her commander, K apitan Karl von M uller. In an age when chivalry in war was still occasionally exercised, he won the admiration of friend and foe alike for the humane treatment of his prisoners; he never sank a merchant ship without warning, and, often at great risk to his own vessel, made certain the passengers and crew of his victims were safely disembarked before destroying their ships. Nations around the world, including his enemies England and

France, and even neutral countries such as the United States, were to extol his virtues. In a contemporary editorial published in the *New York Times* following the destruction of his ship, it was said of von M uller: "The extraordinary skill, audacity and heroism of *Emden's* officers and men will not soon be forgotten."

At the outbreak of war in 1914, the light cruiser SMS *Emden* was one of five warships in the German East Asiatic Squadron com-

manded by Admiral Maximilian Graf (Count) von Spee. The other four ships under his command were the armoured cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and the light cruisers *Leipzig* and *Niirnburg*. Prior to the outbreak of war, the squadron had been based in the Chinese harbour of Tsingtao (a German leasehold in the Province of Shantung, China), but the Germans had also constructed in great secrecy, a naval base at the island of Pagan in the Marianas, and it was at Pagan that the German East Asiatic Squadron gathered on August 12, 1914.

Summoning von M uller to a meeting in his flagship, Admiral von Spee informed him that as a result of Japan's growing hostility toward Germany, it was his opinion it would only be a



The German light cruiser SMS *Emden* during her builder's trials in the Baltic Sea in 1909.



matter of time before that country entered the war on the side of the Allies, thereby drastically changing the situation in the Pacific. Three British squadrons including the battle cruiser *Australia*, two dreadnaughts and ten cruisers (supported by four French and Russian cruisers), combined with the entire Japanese fleet, meant that for the German ships to remain among the Pacific Islands was tantamount to suicide. The admiral then revealed to von Müller his intention to take the squadron across the Pacific to a friendly country, from which he would be free to attack Allied shipping off the west coast of the Americas.

Emden was to be detached from the squadron and, together with the German liner *Markomannia* as her consort, von Müller was to be given carte blanche to roam the East Indies and the Indian Ocean seeking to intercept and destroy enemy shipping. Initial plans called for using *Markomannia* as a source of supply for coal and food, but as her stores were depleted, von Müller was expected to rely on captured enemy ships for food and fuel. That evening, as von Spee and his squadron sailed away to the east, von Müller watched as they disappeared over the horizon. He did not know then that he would never see them again. After defeating Admiral Sir Christopher Craddock's West Indies Squadron at Coronel, the Royal Navy extracted a terrible revenge on von Spee when he was surprised at the Falkland Islands by Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Sturdee who brought him into action and sank all his ships with the exception of the cruiser *Dresden* which managed to escape, only to be hunted down and destroyed three months later by the British cruisers *Kent* and *Glasgow*.

After leaving Pagan, von Müller first sailed to the Palau Islands from where he began his dramatic cruise that was to later result in over seventy-two warships being deployed in the Indian Ocean in search of the elusive raider. Unfortunately, space does not permit a detailed account of the *Emden*'s operations during the period August 19 to November 8, 1914. Suffice to say that during that time, this lone cruiser was to account for over half of Britain's shipping losses during the first three months of the war. One of the ships captured during her foray in the Bay of Bengal was the British collier *Exford*, with over 5,000 tons of Welsh coal, manned by a German prize crew from *Emden*. Kåpitan von Müller had detached her with instructions to meet him at the Cocos Islands on November 7, 1914.

Due to *Emden*'s depredations, critics called for the resignation of Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty. Meanwhile, Turkey declared war on the Allies and troops from Australia and New Zealand were desperately needed in Europe.

However, while the whereabouts of von Spee's squadron was unknown, and while *Emden* remained on the loose, both Dominions were reluctant to have their troops sail. After the Admiralty managed to allot additional ships to protect a troop convoy by deploying the Japanese battle cruiser *Ibuki*, the British cruiser *Minotaur*, the Australian cruisers *Sydney* and *Melbourne*, as well as two destroyers, *Philomel* and *Psyche*, governments of both Dominions expressed satisfaction.

On November 1, 1914, transports carrying the ANZAC troops and their horses, sailed for Europe, almost three months following the declaration of war. Eight days after leaving Australia, the British cruiser *Minotaur* leading the convoy, picked up an urgent wireless signal from the Admiralty ordering her to leave the convoy and proceed at high speed for South Africa where a rebellion had broken out. On leaving the convoy, *Minotaur*'s position at the head of the line was assumed by the cruiser *Melbourne*.

Kåpitan von Müller had intended to raid the Cocos Islands, located approximately half way between Fremantle, Australia and Colombo, Ceylon. As previously mentioned, he had given orders for the captured British collier *Exford* to meet him there on November 7, 1914. After a raid on Penang, off the coast of the Malay Peninsula on October 27, he set course for those islands in company with another captured collier, *Buresk*. His intention was to destroy the British wireless and undersea cable station located on Direction Island, one of twenty coral atolls that made up the Cocos-Keeling Group. As part of the group, but separated from the nineteen smaller atolls by 15 nautical miles, lay the island of North Keeling.

Meeting *Exford* on November 8, von Müller ordered her to a position 1,200 nm west of the Cocos Islands, and having been told by *Exford*'s captain that smoke had been spotted on the horizon to the southeast the day before, it was presumed it might have been from the warship which *Emden* had heard talking to the Cocos Islands Station on November 7. However, due to the diminishing strength of the signals on the 8th, she was thought to be more than 200 miles away. No one however, suspected that the smoke seen by *Exford* was the Australian troop convoy on the way to Aden.

Always wary of encountering a British trap, von Müller proceeded with caution. Original plans called for the attack to take place on November 8, but this was postponed for twenty-four hours, and having given orders for the *Buresk* to cruise fifteen miles north of Keeling Island, *Emden*, with a landing party ready to disembark, inched her way through the narrow entrance



Kåpitan Friedrich Max von Müller.

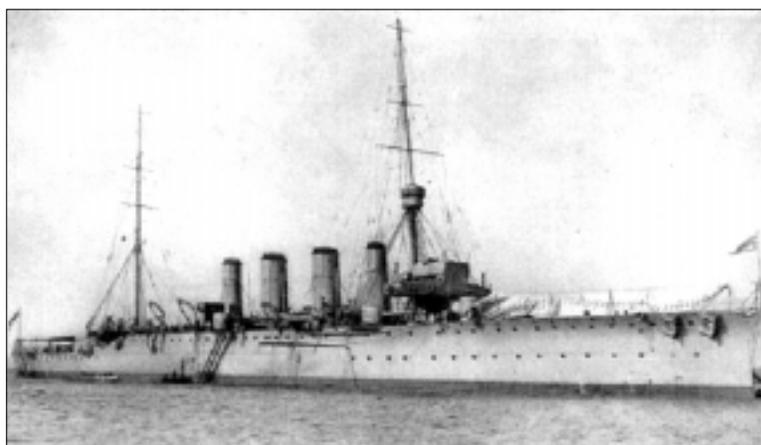


leading to the lagoon at 0600 on the morning of November 9. When first spotted by station staff, the cruiser was thought to be a British warship, and an effort was made to signal a greeting and enquire as to her identity, but on hearing the *Emden* calling the *Buresk* in an unfamiliar code to join her in the lagoon, it became apparent the strange warship belonged to the enemy.

The station then tried to send a general alarm, "NGH," meaning strange warship at entrance, but found their signal jammed by the *Emden*. Moments later the landing party under the command of K apitanleutnant von Mucke arrived and began destroying radio equipment. Then, after dynamiting the transmitting and receiving tower, turned his attention to finding and cutting the undersea cables. Anxious to complete the task at hand, von M uller grew impatient and signalled von Mucke to return to the ship. But von Mucke, who was fully occupied, chose to ignore the signal.

Meanwhile *Emden's* lookouts reported a ship with one funnel and two masts approaching, which was first thought to be *Buresk*.

They were mistaken however, for *Buresk*, still 30 miles distant, sighted a warship moving at top speed towards the Cocos Islands, and unable to warn *Emden* because of a defective radio transmitter, turned away from the islands in order to escape. The approaching warship was the Australian cruiser HMAS *Sydney*, dispatched by Captain Silver of *Melbourne* to investigate the strange ship reported in the "NGH" message transmitted by the Cocos Islands Station. In *Sydney*, as she left the



HMAS *Sydney*.

convoy and worked up to 26 knots, Captain, later Commodore, John Glossop, CB, RN, and his First Lieutenant, speculated as to the nationality of the stranger. Moments later his lookouts sighted *Buresk*, but on recognizing the vessel as a merchantman, Glossop maintained his course deciding to check her out later. Meanwhile von M uller, studying the approaching vessel, was shocked to realize that his lookouts had been mistaken. Recognizing her as an enemy warship, he brought his ship to action stations, called for full steam ahead, and began to weigh anchor as he could no longer wait for his landing party to return.

On Direction Island, von Mucke who was finally about to return to his ship, was shocked to see that *Emden* was underway, her battle ensigns flying at topmasts as she gathered speed and headed out to sea.

At 0932, Glossop signalled *Melbourne* "ENEMY IN SIGHT," and at 0940 *Emden* opened fire at a range of 9, 800 yards. This action, which was to last for one hour, forty minutes, was fast and furious. With her fourth salvo *Emden* scored a hit on *Sydney*, and

before *Sydney* could return fire, a further salvo put her range finder out of action. Using a portable range finder *Sydney* finally opened fire, at which time her fall of shot indicated to von M uller that he was fighting a ship with a heavier armament than his. In order to score a 'knockout,' he had to close the range and hit the enemy quickly with both shells and torpedoes. *Sydney* continued to take hits from the enemy as she turned away to open the range, and before she was able to do so, suffered severe damage. As the range opened however, *Emden's* fire became less accurate and *Sydney*, which up to this point had not hit *Emden*, now had the range and her shells rained down on her. With fire below, her steering shot away, and her decks littered with dead and dying, von M uller steered his crippled ship onto the coral reef of North Keeling Island. The time was 1120.

Signalling *Melbourne* and *Minotaur* "ENEMY BEACHED AND DONE FOR," Captain Glossop left the scene in pursuit of the collier *Buresk*, catching up with her at 1153. Ordered to stop and strike her colours, a boarding party was dispatched but it was too

late. At 1240, having opened her sea cocks, she listed to port and sank beneath the waves.

Having learned from the captain of the *Buresk* that von M uller had put a landing party on Direction Island, and believing them to have no way of escaping from the island, Glossop decided to return to the wreck of the *Emden* and round up von Mucke and his men the following day.

On reaching the wreck of the *Emden* at 1610, Glossop was surprised to see the German Ensign still flying from the truck of her mast. At 1615 he signalled: "WILL YOU SURRENDER," and according to *Sydney's* log, *Emden* replied, "NO SIGNAL BOOKS." Five minutes later *Sydney* repeated the question to which *Emden* made no reply. Deciding to cut the ensign down by gunfire, Glossop gave the order to "Open Fire." Too late to stop the carnage, a German sailor (noting the Ensign was still flying), climbed the mast and cut it down.

This final act on the part of Captain Glossop tarnished his well earned victory and embarrassed the British. As guns fell silent, one hundred and twenty-five officers and men of *Emden* lay dead, and many more later died of their wounds.

The pursuit of *Buresk* by *Sydney* gave von Mucke time to plan his escape from the Cocos. Having witnessed the destruction of his ship, he decided to requisition the schooner *Ayesha* which lay in the lagoon, and sail her to Batavia. By 1830 he had provisioned the vessel, and as the day drew to a close the small schooner set sail. The following morning when Glossop landed on the island,



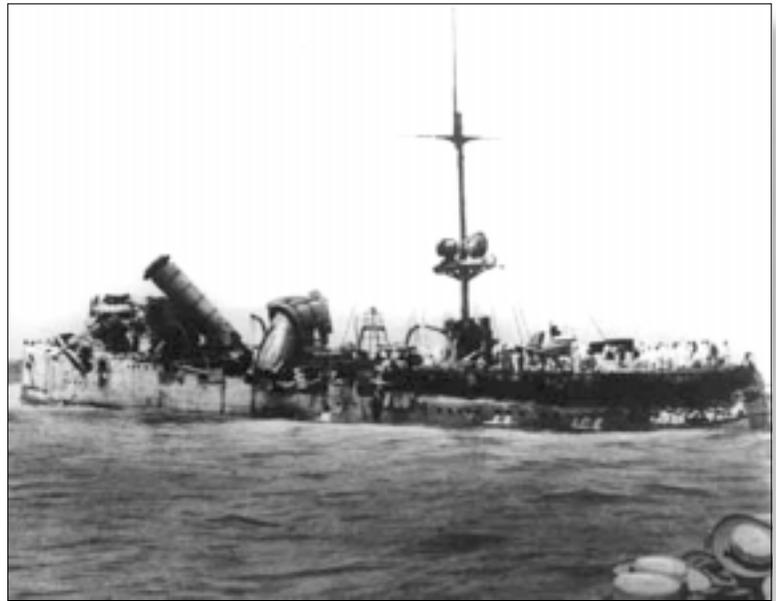
von Mucke and his forty-five men had been gone for over fifteen and a half hours.

The voyage of the *Ayasha*, and the adventures of her crew following the destruction of *Emden* is another story. All but ten of the original landing party eventually made their way home to Germany.

Twenty-seven years later, on November 19, 1941, a German raider of the Second World War met and was engaged by another Australian cruiser named *Sydney*, not far from the Cocos Islands. The outcome of that battle was somewhat different because, having sunk the raider *Kormoran*, HMAS *Sydney* was last seen on fire, sailing over the horizon in the Indian Ocean. She was lost without a trace, carrying a complement of 645 men to their graves.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Guns in Paradise," by Fred McClement, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto (1968).



Emden aground and wrecked following her action with HMAS *Sydney*.

My Part in the Sinking of the Bismarck

By Harry Clark

Young Petty Officer Harry Clark served aboard the Tyneside-built Tribal class destroyer HMS *Tartar* which was involved in the chase and eventual sinking of the *Bismarck*—the pride of the German Navy in World War II. This is his story.

Cyril Hudson

May 1941 – We were ordered to Greenock in the Clyde to escort the battleship HMS *Rodney* and a troop ship with RAF flying crews to Canada. The cadets were going for training; *Rodney* was going to a New York dockyard for a refit. We were only going half way then Canadian destroyers would assume the escort.

At sea I was on 'B' gun with my crew at defensive stations. Four hours on, four hours off. I was a young acting Petty Officer, captain of the gun, and at about 0200 one of my crew asked if he could go to the heads. I gave him permission, and within five minutes he came back to say HMS *Hood* had been sunk and the *Prince of Wales* damaged by *Bismarck*. I couldn't believe this because *Hood* was the biggest battle cruiser, and to we prewar sailors, she was invincible. I left the gun and went below, and on the

notice board was the message: "PROCEED NORTH, INTERCEPT BISMARCK AND SINK," or words to that effect. The troop ship carried on [toward Canada] at full speed, and we turned north with *Rodney* and a sister destroyer to look for the *Bismarck*.

We didn't get a lot of news, but it transpires that the cruiser with *Bismarck* turned back, while *Bismarck* had passed through the Greenland Strait and was on her way into the Atlantic. If she was allowed to go free she could cause havoc with our Atlantic merchant shipping. We had a report that a Catalina flying boat

had sighted *Bismarck* and we made for the sighted position, but there was nothing. In the meantime we had gone to action stations and only a destroyer sailor can understand how cold and fatigued we were on the gun. We had no cover and couldn't stamp our feet



The Tribal-class destroyer HMS *Tartar* swings on a buoy in 1944.



because of the people below. We had gone to defence stations after four hours so we were still on our gun. That's why we couldn't stamp our feet as the off watch crews were sleeping in their hammocks below.

The further north we went the colder we got, and by the time we finished our watch we were frozen stiff. I remember climbing into my hammock and couldn't sleep because I was too cold. By the time I nodded off, it was time to go back on watch.

During the chase, the [aircraft carrier] *Ark Royal* had sent Swordfish aircraft to attack the *Bismarck* after she was found. We were told they had made no hits, but *Sheffield* [cruiser] reported she had sighted *Bismarck* and there was an oil slick; then she lost her.

When *Bismarck* was found again, our sister ships, *Punjabi* and others, conducted a torpedo attack during the night, but with no hits. We had orders to slow down and wait for the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Jack Tovey in *King George V*. *Bismarck* was making for the French ports. If we didn't stop her she would be safe. At daylight she was sighted again and had turned away from France, and then back again. It became clear she was actually going around in circles. We were later told that one of the Swordfish torpedoes had hit her rudder which was jammed so she couldn't steer a straight course.

During the morning I was off watch so went to the foc's'le and sat on one of the pull-down seats to watch the action. I can't remember who fired the first shot, but it was like a tennis match watching the shells from *Bismarck*, *Rodney* and *King George V* firing at each other. After a time it became obvious *Bismarck* was losing the battle. She had ceased firing and fires were breaking out all over the ship. This time I went into the Petty Officers' Mess for a cup of tea, and I always remember the PO's mess man, a Cornishman, coming in off the foc's'le and saying "her be zinking."

Prior to this we were expecting help to be sent by the Germans to assist *Bismarck*. We hadn't a clue which help would be sent, so we were a bit worried when the C-in-C ordered the destroyers to investigate ships to port on the horizon. Nevertheless we, together with *Punjabi* and *Mashona*, turned to port and sailed toward the ships. We challenged, and to our great relief it

turned out to be three of our cruisers—*Dorchester*, *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*. They opened fire on *Bismarck* and later we were told that their 6-inch shells did as much damage as the big shells. They exploded inside the ship, whereas some of the 16-inch shells from *Rodney* passed right through [without exploding].

When the cruisers arrived, *Dorchester* closed in on *Bismarck* and torpedoed her. We had been at sea for four days and were running short of fuel oil. The C-in-C, being aware of this, ordered *Mashona* and our ship to go to Londonderry in Northern Ireland for oil. We had to travel at a very economical speed because of the lack of fuel.

I was off watch when during the afternoon when the alarm went off warning us of aircraft. I ran to my gun and looked up in the sky and could see at least six Focke Wulf airplanes. They dived on us and we were later told by men on the bridge that our captain stood looking into the compass and listening to the navigator because our fuel was close to being rock-bottom. He told the navigator to tell him what the aircraft were doing, and this is how it went:



The German battleship *Bismarck*.

Navigator: "Aircraft approaching from starboard, bomb doors open, bombs coming down."

Captain: "Full ahead both, hard a' starboard."

As the bombs landed in the place we had just left, the captain ordered slow ahead both. This kept up for most of the day, and apart

from keeping the enemy off our tail with our guns, we would rush to the side to watch the bombs explode 20 yards away. Our sister ship *Mashona* was following the same tactics, but unfortunately as she turned to port to avoid a plane coming in from that side, another came in from starboard and she ran into a salvo of bombs. We watched her come to a stop, then gave a cheer as she got underway again. But I'm afraid we were being optimistic. She stopped again and started to turn over. Her captain gave the order to abandon ship. We then had the nasty job of picking up both able and wounded men. I think this must have satisfied the enemy. Either that or they must have run out of bombs and fuel, because they turned away and we crawled our way along the Irish coast.

While we were in action against the aircraft, we were later told that Admiral Tovey, when advising the Admiralty of



Mashona's sinking, said: "IF AIR SUPPORT ISN'T SENT TO TARTAR I SHALL TELL HER TO COME TO ME."

This meant giving away his position to the enemy, because the enemy would have followed us and a larger force would have been sent to attack the fleet. The answer was that *Tartar* had to take care of herself. As it was getting dark, one lone enemy aircraft appeared and persisted in doing attacks on us, only to be kept off with gunfire. Suddenly a Hurricane appeared and 'Jerry' took to his heels over Southern Ireland.

I'm afraid we were guilty of criticizing our RAF. Our thoughts were: "We managed without you ... where were you when we needed you most?" Especially when we found out there were Hurricanes in Northern Ireland. But we learned afterwards that fighter planes in Northern Ireland were in reserve for the Battle of Britain which was taking place at home. This also explains why, when we asked the question "Haven't we got an air force?" the answer was "the RAF are fighting for you elsewhere." And a good job they did.

While we were oiling in Londonderry I went into my mess and poured myself a cup of tea. To my horror I couldn't hold my cup in one hand. I had to hold it with both hands because I was shaking so much. This must have been a delayed reaction because during the whole action [with and following *Bismarck*] I wasn't too worried, mainly because I was a Petty Officer and had to show no fear in front of my crew. Also, I was too busy keeping my gun in action to have time to be frightened.

After oiling we sailed for the Clyde, and about ten miles out we stopped main engines and the *Mashona's* survivors buried three of their shipmates who had died after swallowing oil fuel. The captain of *Mashona* read the burial service. When we reached the Clyde we landed *Mashona's* crew to be kitted out and sent home on leave, then we proceeded up the river to our berth.

That journey up the river will always stay in my memory. Apart from the gun's crew, I was also captain of the foc's'le, and we fell in on the foc's'le going past the fleet. As we passed each ship—battleships, cruisers, aircraft carriers, destroyers, etc.—the whole lot came on deck, took their caps off and cheered us. I could feel my heart trying to break out of my chest. Tears started to come from my eyes and I felt eight feet tall.

This was the second time I had experienced this. The first time was on 'B' gun just below the bridge when the action against



Salvoes from the British ships fall around *Bismarck* as her turrets return some of the punishing fire in this painting by Jörg Wischmann.

Bismarck began. I heard the captain say, "Yeoman, fly battle ensigns," and I looked up to see three White Ensigns flying from the mainmast. The centre one on the foremast was huge, and for ten seconds when I looked at the other ships and saw that they were flying battle ensigns, I felt as though I was standing on the deck of *Victory* at Trafalgar.

We reached our berth and rushed to tie up alongside *Ark Royal* with visions of having a hot shower, do some washing and write letters home, but alas, this was not to be. A bosun's mate came along piping "All hands lay after to the quarterdeck." When we arrived we were told to sit on the deck. Then Miss Evelyn Laye appeared and said she was "going to sing to you brave lads." It was a good job she couldn't read our thoughts, but I don't think that was fair. She thought she was being kind. The person who wanted shooting was the idiot officer who arranged it.

We left Scapa Flow and put it all behind us, or so we thought. When the mail arrived we all had pieces cut from the Sunday papers with a full account of the battle, and in huge headlines: "They are called *Tartar*, and they fought like Tartars!" When I did go home on leave my mother told me my father, who worked at Bolckow Vaughan Steel & Iron Works, called into the paper shop [news stand] coming off night shift for his morning paper, then went home and ran upstairs shouting "Our Harry helped to sink the *Bismarck*!" My mother said she almost had a heart attack.

Well, that's it, except to say that when *Bismarck's* sailors were jumping into the water, I didn't feel elated or even antagonistic; just a feeling they were doing a job the same as us.

EDITOR'S NOTE—I would like to thank Cyril Hudson of Sarnia, Ontario, who served in the British Merchant Navy from 1954 to 1956, for sending this little story along to us. He notes that it was originally published in the British publication 'Remember When' in February 2008, and Mr. Clark, who resides in Middlesbrough, England, kindly granted permission for us to reprint it in 'The Ensign.'





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