



# AHOY SHIPMATE

## RNA Torbay Newsletter

Volume 6

Issue 1

January 2017

### In this issue

|                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Editorial .....               | 1     |
| Chairman's Corner .....       | 2     |
| Joseph Watt – Fisherman ..... | 2     |
| Battle of Jutland .....       | 3-7   |
| HMS Lusty .....               | 8-9   |
| Hos-Peace-Care .....          | 9     |
| HMS Temeraire Mutiny... ..    | 10-11 |
| Joseph Watt – continued.....  | 11-12 |
| His name was Fleming.....     | 12    |

### **The Will**

Mr. Smith is on his deathbed and knows the end is near. The nurse, his wife, daughter and 2 sons, are with him.

He asks that 2 witnesses be present and a camcorder in place to record his last wishes, and when all is ready he begins to speak:

"To my son, Bernie, I want you to take the Mayfair houses."

"My daughter Sybil, you take the apartments over in the east end."

"My son, Jamie, I want you to take the offices over in the City Centre."

"Sarah, my dear wife, please take all the residential buildings on the east bank of the river."

The nurse and witnesses are blown away as they did not realize the extent of his real estate holdings, and as Mr. Smith slips away, the nurse says,

"Mrs. Smith, your husband must have worked very hard to have accumulated so much property". To which the wife replied,

"The pillick only had a paper route."

### Editorial

*By Shipmate Norrie Millen*

Hi! Shipmates,

So how was your Festive Season? I hope that a bit better than mine. I had attended a Memorial church service at St James in Teignmouth organised by local funeral director for all those that had lost a loved one during previous 12 months. A beautiful candle lit service and I am glad that I attended. A few hours later after a short rest I set off for Scotland to spend Christmas and New Year with my eldest son. Rather than make my usual break at a Travel Lodge and old shipmate had suggested a two day break of journey with him.

On getting into my car, I found that my Satnav was defective. I had only bought it two months previously. Well obviously I knew the way to Scotland having driven it hundreds of times, however without the Satnav, I had no idea how to find the way to my old shipmate who lived in Widnes.

The M5 was a nightmare, down to one and two lanes every few miles with a 50 mph speed limit. Then somewhere south of Birmingham the M5 was closed completely and signs indicating to take the detour and follow the Triangles. At top of exit ramp was a ðŸŒŸ intersection with no indication (or triangle) of which road to take. I took the left road (and wrong one) and spent about an hour roaming around country lanes and hamlets before I saw a sign stating M50 15 miles.

After getting back on track, I eventually reached Widnes via the M62 at about 0400 and then had to ask no less than six people for the road I was supposed to stay.

With M6 being shut north of M62, I had a long detour via M57 & M58 to get back to M6. Once in Scotland contracted a severe chest infection and had left emergency COPD kit behind. It hissed down with freezing rain for 9 days and I had to have a £110.00 emergency car repair not long after arrival. Ten hour, over 500 mile return with detours and with the thought, maybe maps aren't so bad after all!

*The way I see it anyway!*



## Chairman's Corner

By Shipmate John Soanes



Another New Year! And another day older, by the time you read this I will probably have started my 80th decade. My 15th birthday in 1952 coincided with the day that King George VI passed away, I was supposed to be going to the cinema, but as most of you will be aware, all such places were closed in respect. On my 21st birthday in 1958, I was at sea in the Mediterranean on passage from Cyprus to Gibraltar when the news came through that many of the Manchester United football team had perished when their plane crashed shortly after taking off from Munich. Every birthday since then there has inevitably been a mention of one or the other if not both in the newspapers, so I am never likely to forget.

The Festive Lunch went very well with 46 members and guests in attendance, Torbay branch were almost outnumbered by members from Newton Abbot and Brixham branches, plus a few from the Royal Marines Association. The food was very good, the company excellent and everyone enjoyed themselves, with many already agreeing to attend again next year.

"Your glass is empty O'Flaherty, will you be having another?" "And why would I be wanting two empty glasses?" replied O'Flaherty.

*A slice of Devonport Royal Dockyard's history;*

During most of the 18th century rates of pay never changed since first agreed in 1650 which up until 1788 ranged from 2s 1d per day for a top shipwright down 1s 1d per day for a labourer. Hours were long, In Winter, 0600 to 1800 with an hour for dinner; in summer, sunrise to sunset, with an hour for breakfast and 1½ hours for dinner. Overtime was worked freely and was paid as "tides" or "nights". A "tide" was a period of 1½ hours and qualified for a payment of 7½ d and a "night" longer periods of 5 hours for which 2s 1d was paid, Unfortunately the overtime was not always properly supervised or measured and left itself open to abuse. An example of this a clerk at Plymouth Dock in 1710 claimed for and was paid 94 nights and 151 tides in a single quarter. The Navy Board, in conducting an enquiry into overtime, came across this claim and remarked. "Now it is plain that 'tis impossible for him to attend so much extra time for that he could not have had above 2 hours in 24 to eat and sleep".

*At least he tried!*

## Joseph Watt - the fisherman who went to war and refused to surrender

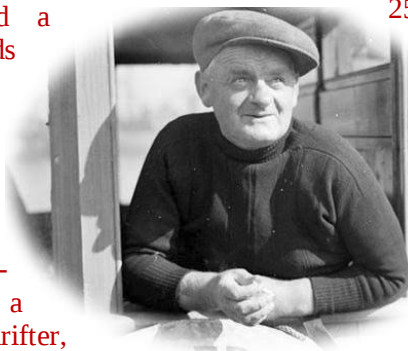
Submitted by Shipmate Mick Dowling

Joseph Watt, (a fisherman in the run-up to the Great War), earned a reputation for daring deeds because he would go out into the North Sea in the wildest of storms to make a living.

However, nothing he encountered as the part-owner of the Annie, a Dundee-built steam drifter, could ever have prepared him for the dangers he faced after volunteering for military service nor for the encounter that would enable him to earn the Victoria Cross (VC), Britain and the Commonwealth's most prestigious bravery award.

One of five children, Watt was born in the Scottish

fishing village of Gardenstown near Banff on June 25 1887. His father, also Joseph, had died at sea while fishing for haddock when Joseph Jr was just ten years old.



Determined to follow his father's career, Watt served an apprenticeship in the fishing boat White Daisy. After the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 Watt volunteered for the Patrol Service and was commissioned as a skipper in the Royal Naval Reserve on January 11 1915.

After a few months of patrolling the North Sea he was posted to Italy, along with hundreds of other fishermen. In the meantime, Watt had married on August 5 1915 to Jessie Ann Noble, a fisherman's daughter.

*Continued on page 11*

# Battle of Jutland May 31<sup>st</sup> ñ June 1<sup>st</sup> 1916

## Transcript of the Journal of Petty Officer (Writer) Albert Symonds

*Submitted by Shinmate Mike Seaward*

### PART II

About once a minute or perhaps thrice in two minutes a series of ear splitting reports would indicate that another salvo had burst around the ship.

*Journal transcribed by Ian Mackenzie,  
HMS Lowestoft Association*

Against my will I could never resist hanging over the edge and then I saw half a dozen or four muddy foamy looking circles in the water over which black smoke hung. Sometimes these pools were one side, sometimes the other. Some were literally absolutely alongside the ship and those threw masses of water onboard drenching us to the skin.

I should say (and this is a carefully reasoned and considered

estimate) that 40 large shells fell within 75 yards of us within the hour and many others at varying distances out. We seemed to bear a charmed life but it was obvious that such a position could not last forever. How we escaped for an hour amazes everyone from the Commander downwards but providence was with us.

We did escape until the arrival at 6.17 PM of Sir J. Jellicoe and the Battle Fleet, this caused the action to enter a 3<sup>rd</sup> phase. Before proceeding with the third phase of this unique and historic day (a very milestone if not turning point in Naval history) I must emphasize one highly important point which belongs of right to both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> phases of the action.

I refer to the question of light. This highly important factor was very greatly in the enemy's favour during

phases one and two. (i.e. Phase One: B.C. against German B.C. Phase Two: 5<sup>th</sup> B.S. and B.C. against German B.C. and High Seas Fleet).

The fact of this being so was of course due to our relative positions and the time of day. Though at 4 PM the sun was still high in the heavens it was to the N.W. of us and we were to the West of the enemy. As this wonderful afternoon drew on and the sun sank lower towards the N.W. horizon the British ships were silhouetted against the illumination in the sky. The enemy showed up indifferently against a mass of low lying dark

grey and purplish clouds.

Having stated this most important point I can now describe how at 6.17 PM I heard with the keenest satisfaction that Sir John Jellicoe who had been hurrying South with the Grand Fleet Battleships and armoured cruisers had been sighted right ahead. It is neither my place nor my province to discuss in a descriptive account such as this, the tactics employed on the 31<sup>st</sup> May ñ 1<sup>st</sup> June. But I cannot allow myself to go any further without expressing my admiration and delight at the masterly gunnery in which the Commander-in-Chief worked round the Germans to get good light, by putting them to the Westward of him. When one considers that he could not be considered as fully prepared for a General Fleet Action and that he had been obliged to come rushing South to get us



Writer Symonds



out of a hot corner his success is still more magnificent.

When the Battle Fleet deployed to the Eastward our B.C. passing across the bows of the Fleet took up their positions in the van where also to be found the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> L.C.S. and Destroyers. The 5<sup>th</sup> B.S. joined up quite naturally at the tail of the line and we remained astern of them with the *Faulknor* and her destroyers.

As our Grand Fleet deployed I saw a terrible sight, I saw a four funneled cruiser apparently steering down between the two Battle lines, she was moving surrounded by splashes and was in hell. At 6.25 that terribly familiar column of smoke rose over the spot where I had last seen her. It was the end of the *Defence* (armoured cruiser). From amidst the welter of confusion a second 4 funneled cruiser appeared steering about West at 7 knots, she was heavily on fire aft and seemed in a bad way. Painfully she crept across the end of our Battle Line and drew clear of the inferno which was still lashing the water where the *Defence* had gone down.

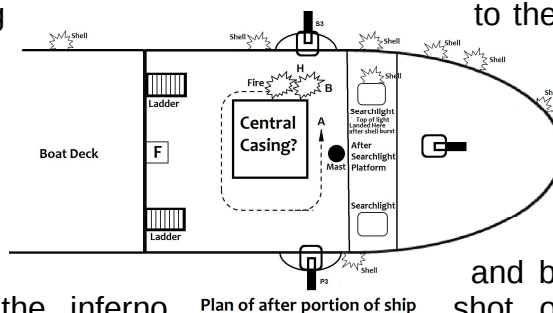
After we had seen the *Defence* go down and as the *Warrior* hauled across out of it, the line of battle became formed and action became general. Shortly afterwards we were amazed to see *Warspite* suddenly turn to starboard and steer towards the German Fleet. I guessed at once she had been hit in the steering gear. For three or four thousand yards she went towards them coming under a hail of huge shells as the German Battle Fleet or rather portions of it concentrated on her. I was prepared to see her go up at any moment as it did not seem possible she could survive, the more so as she seemed to be stopped. This lasted some ten minutes when to our astonishment she re-appeared again from amongst the cascades of splashes and smoke around

her and steaming strongly came up to the rear of the fleet again. As a matter of fact, she was ordered shortly afterwards to repair to Rosyth for Repairs.

Action may now be said to have become general. Our long line of Battleships stretching away literally for miles to the N.E. and gradually curving around the Germans. (Though the speed of the fleet was only 17 knots) they presented an inspiring and heartening spectacle as they proceeded majestically along.

Salvo after salvo belched out from the long line of these great ships now confronted for the first time in their careers with the enemy they had waited to see for so many weary months. Firing was not very rapid to begin with as the light was still very poor but as the boat was shifted to the other leg and the Germans became outlined against the western sky the Battleships warmed to their work and an almost continuous succession of jets of flame and brown balls of cordite smoke shot out from the British Battle Fleet.

At 6.47 PM we observed a 3 funneled German Battleship lying between the tail of our line and the German line, she was stopped and on fire. Having nothing particular at that moment on his hands our Commodore Goodenough decided to run over towards her and work our wicked will on her. The fleet at the time was only steaming at 17 knots so we saw that we should have no difficulty in rejoining the rear of the Battle Fleet. At 6.50 we turned to about S.E. and ran down at high speed supported by our squadron to where this 3 funneled German Battleship (probably the *Pommern*) wallowed in her agony. As soon as we got within range the Squadron opened fire and we could see several shells, in fact a very large number burst on her, the six rear ships of the German line had in my opinion preserved an ominous



silence whilst we advanced to batter their helpless brother.

It was the calm before the storm for when we were about 6,000 yards from the 3 funneler and 12,000 yards from the German Battle line they opened a very heavy fire on our Squadron, we fled helter skelter to get back to the rear of our own lines pursued by a perfect shower of 11 inch shells which crumped down alongside us in astounding precision.

As an instance of what we had for ten minutes I may mention that Booth and myself were in the After Control together making feeble jokes about the shells which were greeted by our Control Party with hysterical laughter of a somewhat forced nature, and at 7 PM we observed 3 salvos of 3 or 4 shells in each strike the water together. We agreed that 2 salvos aggregating 7 shells fell alongside the starboard side of the ship, distance about 15 to 50 yards and one bunch of 3 fell 40 yards on the port side at the same time. A regular stream of about one every 15 seconds was falling just ahead of the ship on either bow drenching people on the bridge with their spray.

At 7.15 we were out of range astern of the 5<sup>th</sup> B.S. (The Q.Es) who were loosing off steady salvos from their 15 inch guns. Although the sea was flat calm the surface was heaving with a sullen swell simply due to the tremendous number of ships of every size and speed which were moving about, it was very difficult for us to steer due to this. Over the whole scene hung brown clouds with the vapour from hundreds of funnels pouring smoke spread over the 100 miles of sea (10x10) in which the main action was being fought.



**Petty Officer Albert Symonds in happier days visiting Spain in 1911.**

At about 7.15 the Commander-in-Chief had managed to get to the East North East of the enemy, which later in order to avoid having his track crossed and as he was also being menaced by a destroyer attack turned to the South East. The light was now in our favour and during the next 10 minutes the enemy Battle Fleet must have suffered very heavily from our Fleet.

I had an impression at the time that German T.B.Ds (Torpedo boat destroyers) endeavoured to attack our van. The distance was so great that I could not be sure. I have since heard it was so and that they were beaten off. At 7.30 PM the Germans had experienced enough for I suddenly saw the rear ships of their line alter course 8 points together. So apparent was this manoeuvre that I sent a written message to the Commodore drawing his attention to it. At the same time his destroyers at the S.E. end (or van) of his line started a smoke screen which by 7.35 was effective having drifted the length of their line. Under cover of this, they retired.

Our Battle Fleet held on a Southerly course as the enemy had been obliged to retire to the S.W. and there seemed a good chance of cutting them off from Germany. A minor incident which now took place deserves recording..A German destroyer was left in a disabled condition the wrong side of the smoke screen from its own point of view. As we passed at 7.45 we fired a salvo at 6,400 yards and hit it just in time. The Faulknor and a number of destroyers went over to administer the coup-de-grace

It has just occurred to me that if the Marlborough was torpedoed it might have been this little hornet that did it, for she must have been closer to our line than any other German T.B.D. However, this is only a surmise.

At 8.25 "Birmingham" sighted a submarine, perhaps this got the "Marlborough". At 8.30 the Fleet was in columns of divisions, we the 2<sup>nd</sup> L.C.S. were in line ahead on the starboard beam of the three remaining ships of the 5<sup>th</sup> B.S. ("Warspite" had gone home) At 8.50 PM we sighted four German T.B.D.s on our starboard bow apparently intending an attack on the Battle Fleet, probably the 5<sup>th</sup> B.S. We opened fire at once and hit the leading one, though the dusk made shooting very difficult. We drove the others off and they vanished with their tails down.

At 9 PM heavy firing and flashes ahead and to the S.E. I found out afterwards this was the 3<sup>rd</sup> L.C.S. and our B.C. who had been feeling their way to the Eastward to see if our Fleet was trying to get between the Germans and their base. At this stage of the proceedings only 3 German B.C. were going about together. At about 9.15 or 9.30 we eased to 17 knots, we were astern of the Battle Fleet and course South.

At about this time I drank a little tea which I found, it had no milk or sugar but it was good. Booth also found a slab of chocolate in his cabin At approx. 9.40 we suddenly saw a flotilla of destroyers rushing at us, just as we were about to open fire we saw they were our own. As they dashed past our line (how we cursed their haphazard behavior), one of them fired a 40 at us, but didn't hit anyone. I imagine a Gun layer lost his head. At 10 PM searchlights were suddenly switched on, away on our starboard beam.

I notice that I keep on using the word "suddenly" I can only plead that during these slow dragging hours most of the events did happen "suddenly" In the glare of these searchlights we saw a number of destroyers making an attack which apparently failed as the ships with the searchlights opened a very rapid fire and scored at least one hit as a big explosion took place on one T.B.D. We

thought they looked like our own T.B.D.s but were not sure. (Was this the flotilla that passed us half an hour before and did we see "Tipperary" sunk?) In a few minutes the lights went out and we were once more straining our eyes in staring out on all sides.

In this account of the great action I take up the threads of the story where we have just left off. In case the reader has become confused by the times I will briefly state that up to the moment when Part II begins, this Squadron and especially this ship had been under very heavy shell fire most noticeably from 5 - 6 PM when astern of the 5<sup>th</sup> B.S. and again from 7 - 7.10 PM when running away from the rear ships of the German line. During all this time from 2.30 - 10.00 PM May 31<sup>st</sup> which is the time Part I ends we had been at Action Stations

When it became dusk we went to night Defence Stations and I went to the bridge as our arrangements are that the Gunnery Lieutenant should control one side and that I control the other. In conversation with him (Burroughs) we had agreed that as in the event of a night action it was improbable, or at all events devoutly to be hoped that we should not be engaged both sides at once, that if we did get into action

I should go down into the battery and preferably the waist, quarterdeck and after end generally, as owing to their distance from the bridge, communication to these positions and the guns there are precarious. It is therefore advisable to have an Officer on the spot if possible, for coolness in a night attack is obviously essential.

The time of which I am now writing is 10 PM on 31<sup>st</sup> May having watched the night action described at the end of Part I, I decided to rest for a little. I was on the bridge at the time and looking round I discovered the canvas cover of a searchlight, curling myself up in this I lay down at the base of the steering compass.



At 10.15 I heard someone say that a line of

[illegible]

*This is what we all have to look forward to!*

## For sailors, our warships become part of us

*Submitted by Shipmate Mick Dowling*

**PETER ROBERTS**

*Daily Telegraph December 12<sup>th</sup> 2016*

*The final voyage of HMS 'Lusty' is a sad event for all those who made the ship - and were made by her.*

As HMS Illustrious departed Portsmouth yesterday for a breaker's yard in Turkey, even hardened sailors felt real grief. Having dined on board with Captain Mike Utley and his officers some years ago, I could understand that. The relationship between matelots (sailors) and their ship is a special feeling that never dies.

When warships deploy, sailors often do not know where they will end up or what mission they will end up performing - delivering aid to communities devastated by natural disasters, deterring aggressive states in far-flung seas, or going to war where shipmates will die. The world has a habit of changing quickly and events rarely allow ships to return home to make additional preparations. Ships sail ready for almost every contingency, as do the sailors in them. Those matelots also embark on these deployments together. No one is a spectator - no one stays back on an

airfield, or commands from a bunker miles away from the action.

The naval ethos is: "All of one company" Every sailor accepts the same level



of danger, the fame highs and lows, and the same separation for months at a time. The bond between the people on board is based on trust-that your "oppo" will protect **you** when needed, fight alongside you when called upon and share in your troubles and woes. When you are thousands of miles from a friendly port, there is no fire brigade to fight a fire, no repairman to fix the engine, and no one else to protect you from enemies. Everyone in the ship runs out of milk and fresh food (or loo roll) at the same time.

Lusty was a special kind of home and place of work, but without those things that we usually associate with such environments. No space for ornaments, gadgets, double beds or even a large wardrobe - warships are designed

around function and equipment crew quarters are one of the last elements squeezed into any vessel That can feel claustrophobic, but at the same time allows a focus on what is absolutely necessary. Sailors understand that what they really need are human qualities not physical objects; comradeship, humour, resilience and grit.

Ships' companies pride themselves on finding no task too great or too difficult. Whether rescuing fellow seafarers from the oceans in Force 12 gales, hosting world leaders for peace talks, or evacuating British citizens, captains are able to drive their people with a single purpose, and to change that purpose at a moment's notice.

This flexibility and agility is one reason why national leaders often have a real affinity with aircraft carriers. Many of these tasks are performed by the Royal Navy ships out of the public eye, but when a carrier is called upon, it sends a very public message - not to allies, but to adversaries. Successive prime ministers called for Lusty, and her sister-ships from the Invincible class, more than others.

Unusually, Lusty was commissioned at sea en route to the Falkland

Islands in 1982. She spent much of the Nineties in the Adriatic Sea off the former republic of Yugoslavia, and later enforcing the no-fly zone in Iraq. In 2000, she was the linchpin for military operations in Sierra Leone, inserting Special Forces two years later into Afghanistan. By 2006, she was evacuating civilians from Lebanon and came to the public eye again in 2014 delivering aid after a hurricane in the Philippines. Those who served in Lusty might recall some of these operations, but it is more

likely that they will remember the people they served with. The landing of a damaged ("convertible", as he is said to have called it) Harrier jump-jet by Lieutenant Commander Jack London in 1998 will have been a defining moment in Lusty's history for many, but the identity of the crew is more than any single event.

Neither is it as simple as the people making the ship. For many, the ship also made the people. The sense of loss that many sailors felt yesterday was because they

recognised how fundamental Lusty was to their own sense of identity. The next generation of sailors will undoubtedly feel a similar bond with the Royal Navy's new carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth. We can only hope that the next generation of the British public can feel a similar sense that the new ship is part of the nation's identity, as we did with Lusty.

*Peter Roberts of the Royal United Services Institute retired from the Royal Navy in 2013*

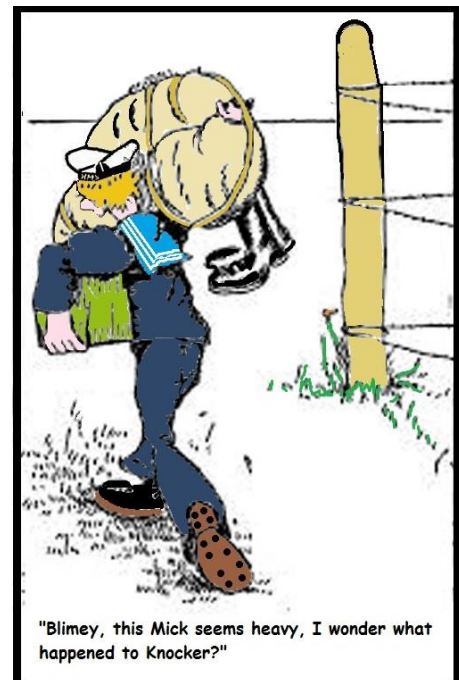


A young 12-year old girl, looking after her dying grandfather in a local Devon hospice, was inspired to write this poem below. This appeared in a local newspaper and has now been set to music. I think you will be moved as much as I was.

## HOS-PEACE-CARE

*It's like a slice of Heaven  
When you find yourself in hell  
The dying given dignity  
The living treated well.  
In a world fraught with emotion  
It's a place for finding peace  
A place of calm and loving  
Where the fears you've had  
can cease.*

*It's quiet, not depressing  
Like a haven in a storm  
Thou' focused on the dying  
It's atmosphere's still warm  
When at the edge of reason  
When life's its most unfair  
Be thankful and be grateful  
Thank God for Hospicecare  
Josie Sanders Age 12*



Murphy dropped dead the moment he arrived home from a vacation in the tropics. He was laid out in the coffin for friends and neighbours to pay their last respects.

"He's got a great tan," Mrs Doolan from next door mused. "The holiday did him the world of good." "And he looks so calm and serene," said Mrs McGuinness. "That's because he died in his sleep," explained Mrs Murphy, "and he doesn't know he's dead yet, but when he wakes up, the shock will kill him!"

## HMS 'TEMERAIRE' MUTINY.

*Submitted by Bob Styants Engineroom Association*

HMS *Temeraire* was a 98 gun second rate ship of the line launched 1878. She was the second royal naval ship to bear the name. Commissioned 21<sup>st</sup>. March, 1799 under captain Peter Puget.

Puget was only in command until 26<sup>th</sup>. July 1799 during which time he oversaw the fitting of *Temeraire* for sea: he was superseded by captain Thomas Eyles 27<sup>th</sup>. July 1799.

The ship was serving in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, mostly on blockades or convoy escort duties.

Built at Chatham, she entered service on the Brest blockade with the Channel Fleet.

Missions were tedious and seldom relieved by any action with the French fleet.

Many of the crew had been serving continuously in the navy since the start of the Revolutionary War 1793, and had looked forward to returning to England now that peace seemed imminent.

The first incident of note came when several of her crew heard rumours they were being sent to the West Indies, and agitated with the rest of the crew to refuse to obey orders to sail anywhere but England.

Rear Admiral Campbell and Captain Eyles assured the men they did not know the ship's destination, and the men dispersed.

However, about a dozen ringleaders remained determined, and made discreet inquiries amongst the rest of the crew.

Eventually having determined that the majority of the crew if not supporting a mutiny, would not oppose it, and that it would be supported by the ship's marines, as well as the crews of other ships in Bantry Bay: they decided to press ahead with their plans.

The mutiny began with the crew closing the ship's gun ports, effectively barricading themselves below deck.

They refused orders to open them again, jeered the officers and threatened violence.

Discipline began to break down among the mutineers, some became drunk, and officers were struck by rowdy seamen.

When one of the marines who supported the mutiny was placed in irons for drunken behaviour and violence, a crowd formed on deck and tried to free him.

Rear Admiral Campbell gave orders for the marines to arrest those he identified as ringleaders: the marines hesitated, but then obeyed the order, immediately placing a number in irons.

Deprived of their leaders the mutiny collapsed, though the officers were vigilant for some days afterwards.

News of the mutiny created a sensation in England, and the admiralty *Temeraire* to sail immediately for Spithead while an investigation was carried out.

Vice Admiral Mitchell was granted extraordinary powers regarding the death sentence and *Temeraire*'s marine complement was hastily augmented for the voyage to England.

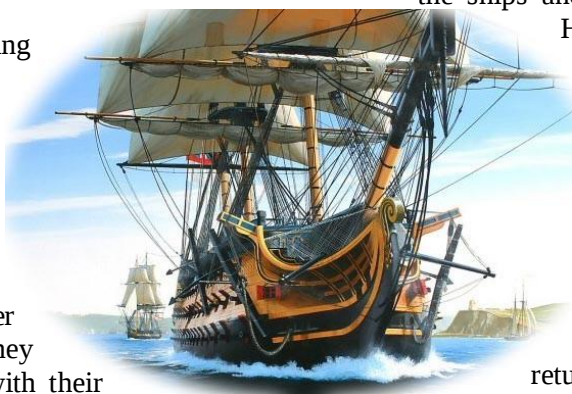
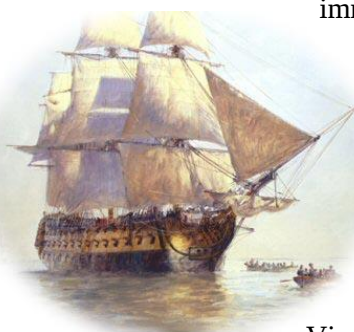
On the ship's arrival, the fourteen ringleaders were swiftly court martialled in Portsmouth aboard HMS *Gladiator* some on 6<sup>th</sup>. January 1802, and the rest on the 14<sup>th</sup> January.

After deliberations, twelve were sentenced to be hanged, the remaining two to receive two hundred lashes each.

Four men were duly hanged aboard *Temeraire* and the remainder were hanged aboard several of the ships anchored in Portsmouth, including HMS *Majestic* HMS *Formidable* *Achilles* and HMS *Centaur*.

After the executions *Temeraire* sailed immediately on the delayed voyage to the West Indies, remaining there until *The Peace of Amiens* was signed and finally ratified, then returning to England.

Laid up during *Peace of Amiens* *Temeraire* returned to active service with the resumption of the wars with France, again serving with the Channel Fleet, and joined Horatio Nelson's blockade of the Spanish-Franco Fleet in Cadiz 1805.



She fought only one fleet action – The Battle of Trafalgar – but became so well known for her actions, and subsequent depictions in art and literature, that she has been remembered as the – Fighting Temeraire –

At – The Battle of Trafalgar – 21<sup>st</sup> October, the ship went into action immediately astern of Nelson's flagship HMS – Victory –

During the battle – Temeraire – came to the rescue of the beleaguered – Victory – and fought capturing two French ships, winning public renown in Britain.

After undergoing substantial repairs, – Temeraire – was employed blockading the French fleets and supporting British actions off the Spanish coasts.

She went out to the battle 1809 defending convoys against Danish gunboat attacks and by 1810 was off the Spanish coast again helping to defend Cadiz against the French army.

Her last action was against the French off Toulon, when she came under fire from shore batteries.

The ship returned to Britain for repairs, but was laid up: converted to a prison ship and moored in the River Tamar until 1819.

Further service brought her to Sheerness as a receiving ship, then a victualling depot, and finally a guard ship.

The Admiralty ordered her to be sold in 1838, and she was towed up the Thames to be broken up.



Once in Italy, Watt was appointed to the command of HM Drifter Gowanlea, an 87ft wooden vessel. With its crew of nine and armed with a solitary and tiny six-pounder gun, the Gowanlea was part of a flotilla of commandeered steam drifters based in the heel of Italy.

The crew, mainly Scottish Fraserburgh men, were a close-knit team. As part of the so-called Otranto Barrage, the task of Gowanlea and her crew was to prevent Austrian submarines operating out of Cattaro, 140 miles to the north, entering the Mediterranean via the straits separating Italy from Albania. No fewer than 120 drifters provided a 24-hour net barrier across 44 miles of water, supported in their task by an Allied fleet of motor-launches, destroyers, cruisers and aircraft.

On December 22 1916 four enemy destroyers and a light cruiser from the Austro-Hungarian Navy attacked the barrage, taking the drifters by surprise.



The Gowanlea was hit by an enemy shell that blew away the funnel. Watt gave the order to prepare to abandon ship and as the lifeboat was being lowered, with their only compass aboard it, a second shell hit and sent the lifeboat down. A third shell hit the boat at the waterline but fortunately the enemy was driven off by the timely arrival of six French destroyers.

However, Gowanlea was a wreck and several members of her crew lay dying among the debris. Eventually Gowanlea caught up with another drifter and she was led back to the safety of the port. After being repaired, Gowanlea returned to her patrol duties in early 1917.

On the night of May 14/15 1917 the Austro-Hungarian Navy launched an all-out attack on the Otranto Barrage with the aim of wiping out so many Allied vessels that their U-boats would be able to access the Mediterranean and Allied shipping lanes. Nine ships, including light cruisers, sailed from Cattaro, confident of causing massive damage to the Allied flotilla because of their vastly superior size and guns.

The enemy ships separated before beginning their attack on the barrage at 3.15am. At the time, 47 drifters were stretched across the straits in seven groups, with the Gowanlea on the far western side of the barrage. Watt was on board with a crew of eight and their dog. As soon as firing was heard, Gowanlea slipped her nets and made for the Italian coast.

However, within minutes she ran into the Novara, one of the light cruisers taking part in the attack. When the two vessels were only 100 yards apart, the Novara signalled to the Gowanlea – by dipping her flags and blowing hard on her siren – to abandon ship. – Surrender – was not, however, a word in Watt's personal vocabulary and the offer was refused.

Instead, calling for full steam ahead, Watt encouraged his crew by shouting: – Three cheers, lads, and let's fight to the finish! –

As the Gowanlea made straight for the enemy ship, the drifter's gun team opened fire with their six-pounder gun, with menacing accuracy.

The enemy response was both swift and predictable: they brought their nine 3.9-inch guns to bear on the Gowanlea and two shells caused instant and significant damage.

One blast carried away the port railings and smashed the boat's bulwarks while the other plunged through the deck, disabled the gun and detonated a box of ammunition. In the second explosion, one member of the crew was blown away from the gun and severely wounded. Two further shells landed on the drifter: Watt, whose cap had been ripped by shrapnel, narrowly escaped death when one of these shells struck the wheelhouse.

But Gowanlea was able to limp away under her own steam as Novara moved on, convinced that the Gowanlea was sinking. The raid lasted just over an hour, during which 14 of the 47 drifters were sunk and several more damaged. As the cruisers withdrew, they left behind a scene of destruction and chaos.

Gowanlea, despite being badly damaged, even joined in the rescue effort and managed to help the wounded from the drifter Floandi before making for port. Watt's VC is the only one for the action to be announced on August 29 1917.

Watt, who was aged 29 at the time of his VC action, was also rewarded with the Italian Al Valore Militare and the French Croix de Guerre. In total, the action also led to the award of two Distinguished Service Orders, six Distinguished Service Crosses, five Conspicuous Gallantry Medals, 18 Distinguished Service Medals and 31 Mentions in Despatches.

Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, the First Sea Lord, delivered a speech in praise of the crew of the Gowanlea and other small British ships: "The enemy has been up against the grit of the British sailor. It is this spirit which will win the war and I hope win it quickly."

Watt fell ill shortly after his VC action and spent six weeks recuperating in hospital on Malta. After his release he was promoted to chief skipper but he refused to discuss his VC action, even with his wife. His VC was presented to him by George V at Buckingham Palace on 6 April 1918.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

His name was Fleming, and he was a poor Scottish farmer. One day, while trying to make a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog.

There, mired to his waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself. Farmer Fleming saved the lad from

what could have been a slow and terrifying death.

The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman's sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy Farmer Fleming had saved.

"I want to repay you," said the nobleman. "You saved my son's life."

"No, I can't accept payment for what I did," the Scottish farmer replied waving off the offer. At that moment, the farmer's own son came to the door of the family hovel.

"Is that your son?" the nobleman asked.

"Yes," the farmer replied proudly.

"I'll make you a deal. Let me provide him with the level of education my own son will enjoy, if the lad is anything like his father, he'll no doubt grow to be a man we both will be proud of." And that he did.

Farmer Fleming's son attended the very best schools and in time, graduated from St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London, and went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of Penicillin.

Years afterward, the same nobleman's son who was saved from the bog was stricken with pneumonia.

What saved his life this time? Penicillin.

The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph Churchill. His son's name?

Sir Winston Churchill.

Someone once said: What goes around comes around.



"THIS ONE IS FOR SERVING 27 YEARS IN THE NAVY WITHOUT ANYONE FINDING OUT I'M GAY."