



Gibraltar: Challenge, Change & Continuity

The Friends of Gibraltar Oral History Project (1930 to 1970)

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Object description

British telegraphist served aboard HMS Shikari in English Channel, 1939-1940; served aboard HMS Prince of Wales in Atlantic, 1940-1941; served aboard submarines HMS Clyde, HMS Safari and HMS Ultor in Mediterranean, 1942-1944

Content description

REEL 1 Background in Truro, 1922-1936: family; education. Aspects of enlistment and training as boy seaman with Royal Navy in GB, 1936-1938: enlistment in Royal Navy, 1936; character of training and punishments at HMS Impregnable at Devonport; training as boy telegraphist at HMS St Vincent. Period as boy telegraphist aboard HMS Furious and HMS Courageous, 1938-1939: on board HMS Furious in GB coastal waters; accidents with Fleet Air Arm Fairey Swordfish pilots; transfer to HMS Courageous, 12/1938; high speed capability of HMS Courageous; leaving HMS Courageous, 5/1939; return to HMS Furious, 8/1939; question of reasons for heavy loss of life when HMS Courageous was sunk, 1939 including lack of life-boat drill. Recollections of operations as telegraphist aboard HMS Shikari in GB coastal waters, 1939- 1940: joining ship, 9/1939; reaction to hearing declaration of Second World War, 3/9/1939; role of ship taking British troops to France; captain's concern about magnetic mines; catching fish as result of depth charging; character of destroyers in his flotilla; duties during Dunkirk evacuation, 1940. REEL 2 Continues: reaction to sight of dead bodies in water at Dunkirk; second trip to La Panne; loss of ship's whaler at La Panne; German Air Force attacks at La Panne; sending emergency signal at La Panne; probable hit on German Air Force bomber; final duties off Dunkirk, 6/1940; psychological effect of operating off Dunkirk beaches; escorting block ships to Dunkirk, 6/1940; patrolling in English Channel; leaving ship 25/7/1940. Recollections of operations as telegraphist aboard HMS Prince of Wales in Atlantic, 1940-1941: drafting to stand by ship at Cammell Laird's Navy Yard at Birkenhead, 9/1940; practice shoot at Scapa Flow; in action against Bismarck, 5/1941; reaction to loss of HMS Hood, 5/1941. REEL 3 Continues: impressions of HMS Hood during visit prior to Bismarck action; breaking off of engagement; damage and casualties on board after Bismarck action, 5/1941; reaction of crew on hearing news of Bismarck's sinking; burial of dead crewmen at sea; reasons why Supermarine Walrus did not take part in the action against

Bismarck, 5/1941; friction between ship's crew and crew of HMS King George the Fifth at Scapa Flow. Aspects of training with Submarine Service in GB, 1941- 1942: reaction to drafting to Submarine Service, 10/1941; using Davis Escape Equipment during training at HMS Dolphin. REEL 4 Continues: submarine training on board submarine L23 at Blyth; question of nervousness during dives; taking passage to Gibraltar aboard submarine HMS Taku, 2/1942; role of telegraphist aboard submarines. Recollections of operations as telegraphist aboard submarines HMS Clyde and HMS Safari in Mediterranean, 1942-1943: character of voyage to Malta on board submarine HMS Clyde carrying vital supplies including submarine's diving capability; discharging cargo in Malta; joining submarine HMS Safari in Malta, 9/1942; characteristics of HMS Safari; patrolling into Adriatic and Aegean, 9/1943-3/1943; commando landings on Yugoslavian coast; story of failure to rescue Italian survivor of sinking caique; memories of Captain Ben Bryant. REEL 5 Continues: Recollections of operations as telegraphist aboard submarine HMS Ultor in Mediterranean, 1943-1944: joining submarine at Algiers, 10/1943; use of Maddalena as base; contact with US servicemen; successes on patrol; return to GB via Gibraltar, 1/1944; drafting to submarine HMS Vulpine on return to GB based on HMS Cyclops, 1944-1945. Reflections on service as telegraphist in submarine service, 1942-1945: flood lighting of Gibraltar by Spanish from Algeciras; paint scheme of submarines; storing up rum issue for time ashore; reputation of crew of HMS P45. Recollections of operations as telegraphist of HMS Prince of Wales, 1940-1941: bombing of ship at Birkenhead, autumn 1940; attitude of Liverpoolians to publicity London received about bombing. REEL 6 Continues: escort duties in Mediterranean, summer 1941; amusing story of casualties aboard HMS Nelson; voyage taking Winston Churchill across Atlantic to sign Atlantic Charter, 8/1941; arrival of President Roosevelt aboard ship to sign Atlantic Charter.

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