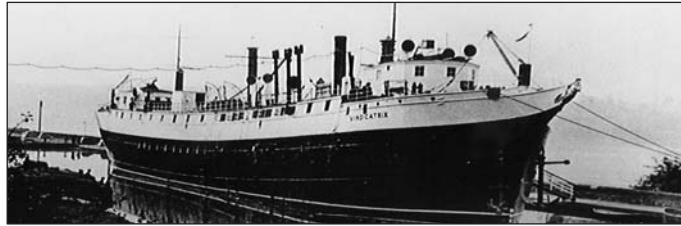




T.S. VINDICATRIX ASSOCIATION NSW-ACT

A part of the world wide Vindi family



December 2008

Issue no. 65

Yet though her splendour may have ceased to be she played her sovereign part in making me.-*John Masefield*

**Be Quick & Grab the last few places for
Thee Best Old fashioned
Christmas Party in Sydney Town
Book now 4237 5736 or 99053161
Come & Share the Spirit
AT THE VINDI CHRISTMAS PARTY
Saturday Dec 13 @ 12noon
The Pymont Bridge Hotel
Don't forget a \$5 present for Santa's Sack
RAFFLE prize donations appreciated.**

THE VINDI PICNIC DAY
Is now the 14&15th. February 2008
Come for one day or two or more!
Bring your Swag your tent or your Caravan
Don't forget to bring the wife the kids the grand-
kids and the dog ALL WELCOME.
At the Tumbi scouts camp on the central Coast.
Beautiful location come & hear the birds
A large undercover BBQ & dining area.
BYO everything.
See insert for more details & mud map.

RED ENSIGN

**CHRISTMAS
MUSTER
SAT 22 NOV
FROM 1030
LUNCH AT
NOON
REGENTS PARK
COMMUNITY
CLUB
AMY STREET
REGENTS PARK
Pay on arrival**

**Wherever you are now
A Merry Christmas**



And a Happy New Year

**A
LOVLEY DAY OUT
TO
HISTORIC
GARDEN ISLAND
'PICTURESQUE'
'PANORAMIC
VIEWS'
'HISTORIC
'GARDENS'
'NAVAL
HERITAGE
CENTRE'
11am ferry from
Circular Quay
Sunday March 22
[www.navy.gov.au/
ranhc/](http://www.navy.gov.au/ranhc/)**

The photo above copied from the book 'Vindicatrix' shows Mark Allen playing the piano in the 'new' Seamen's Mission in Sharpness. Mark, I believe, was the best known of all the people associated with Vindi, one of his prayer books was 'salvaged' from the famous tanker "Ohio" in Malta and returned to the home of its original Vindi Boy owner just a few months after Mark had given it to him.

He was awarded an BEM for his many years of self imposed work with the Vindi Boys, he lived on in Sharpness until his death in 1981.

In 1998 Colin Rodgers & I visited his grave in Berkeley cemetery it is inscribed simply with just two words, "Mark Allen".

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BRANCH NEWS

Please see front page for dates up & coming events.

Just a brief one lads for this issue. This will be our last Vindi newsletter for this year so I would like to once more wish you all the best for the Christmas season and for 2009. I hope to catch up with some of you before then at the Regents Park Community Club that the Red Ensign Association has planned for the 22nd of this month. It won't be the same without Gordon Solomon there to welcome us.

Still as the saying goes, and I know Gordon would subscribe, to it 'life goes on.'

Don't forget Lads, if you haven't done so already, send your yearly subs in ASAP so a smile can be on our treasurer's face for New Years Day.

Cheers for now.

John Mears

Gripes and Chokes on the Vindicatrix.

John Law (V64) sent me this cleverly written contribution going back to his Vindi days.

Monday night was fish and chip night. My first introduction to Vindicatrix cuisine. The plate I been served with had a damaged chip on it the size and colour of an old penny. Being hungry I pressed on and parted the fish to reveal a long hair in the batter. "Don't you want that "Jock my new table mate asked? So he wolfed down my rejected repast. before I could say no. I had my first and only inkling of what sea sickness would be like.

My lot soon was pig swilling jankers at the insistence of a miniature hitlerite Taffy who's quite nondescript life abruptly ended when they put him in charge of the billet.

Another whole week was added to my course with the compliments of Vindi flu that introduced me to Sister Gray.

When they sang "you ain't never going home" I believed it as my peer group headed home clutching their rail warrants leaving me behind.

Sister Gray's forte in life was to embarrass as many young people as she could in front of as many young people as she could. In decibels that would drown out a Parade Sergeants Majors she shouts to everyone this side of Bristol "Mr. Law where are your Pyjamas?". Until then I thought having one pair of pyjamas in the drying room was a sure sign of working class affluence but not to be waylaid from her mission a louder question was asked.

"Where are your other pair of pyjamas"? "You mean you have only got one pair of pyjamas "

I never will believe in the theory of the Gulf Stream warming the British coast-line. How do I know this? Well if you have ever heard the command "give way together" on lifeboat training under the Severn Bridge in mid February you need know more proof than that. Further proof was parading on the Vindi deck at 6am waiting for an officer to grace us with his presence and say the words "Stand easy" By that time you felt like a skeleton on a meat hook with the wind blowing through you.

Mail was good, but food parcels were a focus of euphoric anticipation. An Aunt who I love to this day had a packet of Senior Service in every fortnightly parcel she sent me. It was a great treat my parents would not have considered appropriate for a 15 year old boy in their own alternate fortnightly efforts. One fella who asked the same question all the time like a gramophone record with the needle stuck "Hows about a cigarette Jock?" Did very well out of it. When he got a packet of his own I asked "how about a cigarette? His answer went approximately to this effect: Go forth and multiply you Scots person whose parents forgot to get married. If you need to know his name, Ash, I remember him ungraciously as cigarette ash.

The Vindi was an education for me. I had often wondered why my English Grandfather came to Scotland in 1920 and was never inclined to go back to where he came from

Inspection day was a day of dirty ginger nails buffing floors with a cloth and a tin of beeswax. One officer declined to use the hexagonal path leading to the billet and clip-clopped through my waxing efforts with his muddy boots. Ten minutes before inspection he came out again and told me my floor was dirty. Try getting a shine on a muddy floor buffing beeswax in ten minutes.

In our family we don't believe in failing courses but we do believe in murder. It was judgment call. Despite freezing cold, sick bay embarrassments, pig swilling jankers, beeswax in the finger nails, racial discrimination it was the first step to my name on the office door that said "Chief Purser".

Vindi boys get to see the world. .Maybe it was something they put in the cocoa that prevented blindness. John Law R796716.

WEDDING NEWS

Central coast member Len Britton (Vindi 1955) became our first Vindi boy to get married in the history of our branch when he and his partner Amanda were married by the Captain of the Barque "James Craig" On October 18th 2008.

Whilst the Captain was wearing his full naval uniform he was 'wearing his marriage celebrants hat' for the



**Congratulations
And best wishes
from all of us
For a long and happy
marriage**

ceremony.

I didn't hear were they first met but I do know they are both 'Scout' Leaders' so perhaps it was via 'The Scouts'

They arranged for themselves a rather unconventional wedding by having the ceremony onboard the ship then (*bravely I thought*) walking through the crowds with wedding dress blowing in the wind up to a hotel in Darling Harbour for the reception.

As they couldn't invite all their friends to the wedding in Sydney they threw a party at the Scout Camp in Tumbi on the Central Coast. And what a party it was!

A cast of 1000s turned up.



Top left—
Kevin Bedford V1957
& partner Anne get
their tent up
Right—the party gets
going.
Bottom left
Len Britton with a
Frozen problem.
Right— John & Marea
Mears, Kevin Bailey &
Anne with no prob-
lem.



THE CHRISTCHURCH VINDI REUNION

Congratulations to our hosts the South Island Vindi boys for putting on a very successful 8th. Annual Downunder Vindi reunion.

And our thanks for the way they looked after us, picking us up at the airport and running us about. I would like to say a special thanks to Ian Donald of Christchurch for meeting me at the airport with a bunch of flowers, we looked at each other rather warily for a while in the airport hall after the crowd thinned down, me looking for a Vindi Boy looking for a Vindi boy, he looking for a Vindi boy with wife. So when we finally approached each other, no one else left in the hall, I was relieved to find that the flowers were not meant for me and he didn't really want to kiss me either.

The Woolston Community Club and the Bowls Woolston Club was a good choice for the Reunion they looked after us well, of course having an 'IN' with John McLister the Bowls Woolston President was good thing to have.

The Buffet dinner table on Saturday night was groaning under the weight of all the good food the club put on for us and the same again on the Sunday afternoon BBQ.

And I can't not say a special thanks to the one poor Gravesend Training School Boy Terry Knight who had to put up with a bunch of Vindi boys on his reunion organizing team.



The party gets under weigh on Friday evening Below centre Two lovely ladies from the Bowls Woolston club Who sang & played for us all the old songs



The orders for Saturday morning was board an old London Bus to Port Lyttleton, it just fitted through the tunnel, first stop the old den of inequity "The British Hotel" the first pub and usually one's last pub out of the dock gates.



2008 REUNION cont.

Second Stop the Maritime Museum which is housed in the old Seamen's Mission.
It's a great museum three floors just packed with local & maritime history.



Left a 3 metre model of QM1 –right the British Hotel, now unrecognisable inside.
Then it was board the 104 year old Steam tug SS Lyttelton that working in the Port in our days.

The weather threatening in the morning brightened up and gave us a beautiful day for a Harbour cruise.
On the cruise some of us were treated to see a pod of the endangered “Hector’s Dolphins” playing

around the bow. The nearly \$300 raised in the raffle for the Vindi in a bottle was donated to help save them.



LEFT –boarding the tug

RIGHT -down aft,
Below right
2 deck hands & a Cook
from NSW.
Below left– On the bow
With Trevor Castleton &
Kim Cohen that I can
name at the moment.
Bottom right
Terry Knight



2008 Reunion Cont. Saturday night



LEFT-Alan & Brenda Creasey WA & Alex & Catherine Dilworth.NSW

RIGHT- Eric & Betty Hitchen Ballina NSW. A group of 8 delectable Belly Dancers enhanced the evening. I wasn't able to get a good look -all these old guys kept getting in front of me!



Above right L-R ?? John & Mrs Baskott, Casino NSW-Trevor & Beverley Castleton Wellington NZ



Above clockwise.
 The CAKE
 The crowd waiting for the COOK.
 The COOK Mick Kingcott Tameit, Vic.
 The TASTE PANEL
 The CAMERAMAN Jack Secker
 The THINKER Vic Rother.
 The VINDI BOYS, unfortunately quite a few had left by the time these were taken

NEW NAVY SHIPS *sent in by John Law V64*
HMS ASTUTE



Britain, not to be outdone, has the world's latest & most sophisticated submarine. Launched (Wheeled out) on June 7, 2007 at Barrow-in-Furness by the Duchess of Cornwall accompanied by the Prince of Wales.

The specification of this black behemoth and the cost involved in building it are mind blowing. The Astute is the first of four vessels of this class. The cost to build each one was estimated to be 960 million pounds (AU\$24 billion) Astute to date is coming in at 900 million pounds over budget. No real surprises there I am sure!

It has been seven years in the making and this 7400 ton monster has drawn on the skills of a workforce of thousands of men and woman since the project to build it began. She was built in sections each one fully fitted with all it's equipment before the whole was joined together. The same system will be used for major overhauls.

It is more complex than the space shuttle; is able to circumnavigate the world without surfacing; and its sonar capabilities are so advanced it can detect the presence of another submarine 3000 miles away. She can truly be described



as the largest and deadliest hunter-killer ever built. For all her cost though, a launching tradition was dispensed with and instead of champagne being used, a bottle of beer was smashed against her giant hull brewed by the sub's crew.

Nice to see at least one cost saving idea was successful!

After the launching ceremony was completed she was gingerly rolled out of the massive building shed she had been built in at the stately speed of one metre per minute to the roars of delight of the 10,000 guests. They included dockworkers and officials, their children, VIPs, and navy personnel..

She is as wide as three four double deck buses and a third longer at 318 ft than any submarine in the world. Her nuclear powered engine, that will never require refueling, can propel her through the water at more than 20 knots, yet the noise from it is less than a baby dolphin would make frolicking about, making her impossible to be detected.

With the submarine's ability to make oxygen and drinking water out of salt water it could stay under water for its entire 25 year lifespan were it not for the needs of its crew. Once she is completely operational in 2009 her 98 crewmen will stay at sea for 12 weeks on routine patrols.

Her armaments consist of spearfish torpedoes, UK Trident missiles and various other weapons of defense and offence still on the classified list. She will not be armed with nuclear weapons.

An after dinner speaker at recent Lions Club dinner I attended was a retired RN nuclear submarine tactical Officer, one item from his talk that struck me strongly was about the torpedoes they had, they can be wire guided from 8 miles away or programmed with the targets acoustic signature and fired from 30 miles away.

And most devastating they are programmed to explode 15 metres directly under the centre of the ship the explosion removes the water from under the ship breaking it's back. terry hales Ed.

USS REAGAN

The Reagan 95,000 tons, has speed of 30 knots plus, powered by two nuclear reactors driving four screws, and can sail for over 20 years before needing to refuel. She is 1,092 feet (333 m) and is 134 feet (41 m) wide at the beam and has a flight deck 252 feet (77 m) wide. The flight deck covers over 4.5 acres. She carries more than 5,500 sailors and over 80 aircraft.



Heeling under full helm on trials

Alongside fitting out berth



Leaving San Diego for trials

The Strange Fate of the Morro Castle.



The small American luxury liner, Morro Castle, for all its advertised elegance was far from being a happy ship. Captain Wilmott and his First officer William Warms had been together on the ship since her maiden voyage four years ago in September 1930. In that time their mutual dislike for each other had grown with each passing voyage. They were essentially different in their outlook. Warms had gained his masters ticket starting his sea career as deck boy on sailing ships and had found little time or reason to cultivate any social graces. He was convinced he should be in command of the ship, not the urbane Captain Wilmott who each voyage until the last had

proved himself to be the very epitome of a dashing captain to depend on in the stormiest of seas; one who could equally have his dinner table guests spellbound with tales of his adventures and misadventures of days long past. This changed outward bound on the last voyage when, after falling ill from fish that had been served, he became convinced that a Cuban Communist cell on the ship was 'out to get him'. After all it was hard to hide the fact his ship carried regular "unofficial" arms shipments to Havana to bolster the police force that supported the corrupt pro American government that ruled there. A personality change now came over him. He had become, much to the glee of the chief officer who was sure he couldn't 'handle stress', almost a recluse taking all his meals, personally cooked for him, in his cabin and only venturing out of it for the essential running of the ship.

His sense of well being was further eroded when a lightning strike had nearly cancelled the sailing of his ship on this voyage. The shipping company had to capitulate to the crew's demands for higher wages. Wilmott believed that not only were the members of the communist cell out to get him but some of his officers who had shown some sympathy to the crew's demands had joined them as well. Strangely by the time the ship sailed, the only crew member who Captain Wilmott would allow in to his cabin was the newly appointed chief radio operator, George Rogers. A less likely bonding of trust would be hard to imagine. This flabby 250 lb man, born with a pituitary gland disorder, whose parents had died when he was in 5th grade and whose subsequent carers wanted only to be rid of this giant school boy who delighted in calling attention to himself by trying to stay just ahead of the police causing as much trouble as possible. How he filtered through the system to joining the Morro Castle is a tale in itself. Suffice to say the police did keep a dossier on him as a suspected arsonist. Moreover, just before the ship was due to leave Havana for the fatal homeward bound voyage, Wilmott was informed by the agents that Rogers was to be fired on docking in New York for pocketing money paid to him for sending passengers' telegrams to America. The next time he tapped on Wilmott's cabin door to be let in, he told him to go away and not bother him anymore. Rogers once more friendless, sensed soon he was about to be jobless as well: and had more pent up hate inside him than ever.

Space of course only allows me to go into the bare bones of the events that led up to the nightmarish end of this 11,250 ton ship. She was already battling against an Atlantic storm in the early hours of September 8 1934, with her bridge officers in blinding rain anxious to make the succor of New York Harbour. It was 2.51 am, when the bridge watch was alerted that late night revelers had discovered a fire had broken out. Five short minutes elapsed before it was found that smoke was coming from the steward's clothing locker.

William Warms, only hours into his captaincy, (seven hours earlier Captain Wilmott had been found dead in his bath succumbing to an apparent heart attack) allowed himself a few minutes of complacency, believing that it could be contained. This quickly dissipated when one of the junior officers sent to access the



situation came storming back on to the bridge house. Deciding this was no time to mince words, he told the acting captain that the fire was getting out of hand and the ship should head for the coast in case the need arose for the passengers to be put ashore. Warms could hardly believe what was happening around him. Nevertheless he managed to choke out the words for the general alarm bells to be rung. Mindful of the fact that there had been a lot of last night voyage carousing, he ordered that the stewards were to 'use tin pans, anything they can get hold off, to wake them up, to go to their lifeboat stations,'

The Strange Fate of the Morro Castle. *continued*

Ken Abbott, the chief engineer, wakened from a troublesome sleep, conscious one of the ship's boilers had had to be shut down the previous day, sent his chief assistant down to the engine room instead of leading the way. It was apparently his way of coping with the problem that meant less pressure was available for the hoses should there be a fire on board. He could also have wanted to ponder on how passenger Maritime Safety Rules had been relaxed on the ship. Only one lifeboat drill had been held at the beginning of the voyage when passengers barely knew their way round the ship. As for fire drills here again only one had been hurriedly ordered by the first officer just enough to comply with regulations. Maybe Abbott knew what was coming! Minutes later, to the deck hands' dismay, when they did find where the hoses were they discovered the hydrants were severely clamped to stop unsightly water drips on the passenger promenade decks. The scene was set for a tragedy to unfold and with it, panic set in.

Like all tales of this nature there were just as many acts of bravery as instances of abject cowardice; though I must say the horrific setting of this tragedy would be hard to beat: a partly crippled luxury liner fitted out with all the most expensive combustible fittings created by man, with a fire out of control in a storm-tossed ocean. One wonders how any of the 553 passengers and crew survived. Steering was soon lost, though not before the ship had been headed into the wind in an effort to steady it so that the life boats could be launched. This only helped the flames to roar the length of the ship at a quicker pace. The ship's cruise director, who many of the crew had written off as a bit of a light-weight with his glib repartee, endless supply of jokes and flirtatious manner, proved himself to be fearless, rescuing passengers about to be trapped in the ensuing flames and directing others on the verge of panic to lifeboat stations.



The burned out Morro Castle drifted ashore at Astbury Park beach New Jersey

A second unlikely hero was the chief wireless operator, Rogers, who when alerted to the fact there was a fire on board took charge of the wireless cabin sending one of his assistants to go to the bridge to seek permission to send out SOS's, a procedure he was bound to keep by the shipping rules of the day. It took two attempts for Roger's assistant to make it to the bridge. When he got back all he had to tell Rogers that it was a mad house 'up there' and no one seemed capable of giving the order. Twenty valuable minutes had been lost. The deck plates in the cabin were so hot, Rogers, with his feet propped on the desk took it on himself to send out the S O S's. There was no shortage of rescue ships in the vicinity. Already messages that a ship had been sighted on fire had been entered in ships' logs.

Confirmation that help was needed had them closing in and a mass rescue began. Of the 533 passengers and crew on the ship, counting those who made their own way ashore, there were 397 survivors, 87 passengers and 49 crewmen perishing. However, for all his apparent bravery., research by the co-authors Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan-Wills of the book who I have borrowed the title for this summation, place the wireless operator under 'suspicion', when the captain succumbed to what was presumed to be a heart attack half a day's sailing from the ship's home port New York. The reader is also asked to believe that he could have started the fire on the Morro Castle to assume the role of hero. This proves not to be too big an ask, when the author's research also reveals the warped psychotic mind of a man who was to die in prison. He had been found guilty of bludgeoning to death a retired 83 year old printer and his elderly daughter who had first befriended him; they cooled towards him when they sought the return of \$7,500 he had borrowed from them. He died at 6am January 10th 1958 of a heart attack. He was four years into his life sentence.

HELP WANTED

Our branch's website www.vindicatrix-originalnswact.org I hope to bring this up to date shortly. And I am hoping to create a better website for us I did a course recently at the local community college to learn how to create a website using the Microsoft 'Front page' program, unfortunately I didn't learn how to transfer what I had made onto the new website that I have got lined up.

Does anyone know anyone who could show me how to do this?

Kids/Grandkids/friends or relatives.

I don't mind travelling to meet them as I am unable to learn it by reading the computerspeak instructions.

Thanks terry hales

BLETCHLEY PARK MISTAKE

Revealed: the careless mistake by Bletchley's Enigma code-crackers
Independent, The (London), Jul 14, 2002 by Claudia Joseph



Bletchley Park

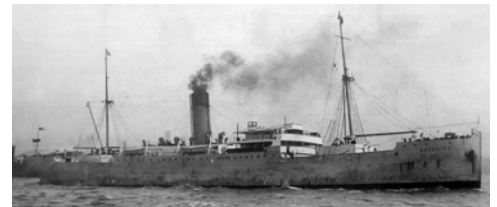
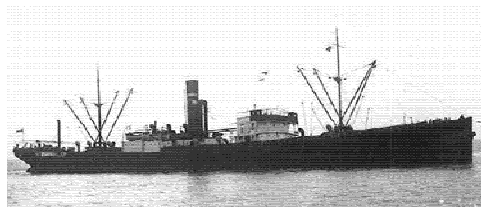
For 60 years the codebreakers at Bletchley Park have been credited with the greatest achievement in British intelligence history. Churchill described the men and women at the Victorian mansion in Buckinghamshire, who cracked the German's Enigma cipher, as "the geese who laid the golden eggs and never cackled".

Now it can be revealed that a catastrophic breakdown of communications between Bletchley Park and the Admiralty enabled the Germans to read the Allies' trans-Atlantic messages for 10 months at the height of the Battle of the Atlantic, putting thousands of lives at risk. The Americans warned Rear Admiral John Godfrey, the head of Naval Intelligence, in 1941 that British codes were insecure.

By August 1942 Bletchley had discovered that Naval Cipher 3, which was set aside for Anglo-American use, had been penetrated. But the Admiralty did not change the cipher until the following June, leading to thousands of deaths at sea.

Meanwhile Admiral Karl Donitz, commander of Germany's U-boat fleet, was worried about Enigma's security and changed the Nazi codes, hampering Britain's own intelligence.

Naval Cipher 3 was introduced in October 1941 but was broken by the Germans the following March. Two months later, on 12 May 1942, they sank seven merchant ships on the Atlantic convoy ONS 92, which was heading to Halifax, Nova Scotia.



The USS KEARN escort leader on convoy ONS92– Llanover & Cristales (Elders & Fyffes) both sunk in ONS92

By 1 November 1942, when convoy SC 107 (*Story in last issue*) came under attack, Bletchley Park had already discovered that the Germans had cracked the codes but the Admiralty had yet to change them.

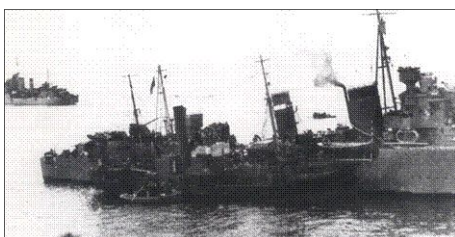
But it was in March 1943 that the breaking of Naval Cipher 3 proved its most catastrophic as Allied losses amounted to 120 ships, the fifth highest monthly loss in the war.

The revelations were broadcast in the BBC2 series *The Battle of the Atlantic*. Ralph Erskine, editor of the authoritative book on codebreaking at Bletchley, *Action This Day*, said: "The people who were experts in codes and ciphers were at Bletchley Park. They have to take some responsibility. They ought to have banged the drum more.

"[The British military] found out in August 1942 that the Germans had broken into Naval Cipher 3 but it just took an age to get it changed. The Admiralty knew it was vulnerable but was unable to rush something into production and distribute it. Logistics was a very big part of it, plus poor organisation and divided responsibility. It shouldn't have been about money. It was just a printing job to change the codes. Compared to the cost of a ship that's buttons."

The Admiralty's Operational Intelligence Centre was based in the Citadel, hidden by London's elegant public buildings on the corner of Horseguards Parade, just yards from Trafalgar Square. In a bunker, 20 feet below ground level, was the Submarine Tracking Room where naval intelligence was compiled against the enemy.

Until 1941 the Royal Navy was losing the battle for England's survival. In the first 18 months of the war the Germans sank more than 1,500 merchant ships. However, in spring 1941, an Enigma machine and cipher books were recovered from the captured U-boat U-110 and two ships, Krebs and Munchen, leading to a change in fortune for British intelligence. The captured equipment was delivered to Bletchley Park, or Station X, where cryptographers worked night and day to crack the daily wheel settings.

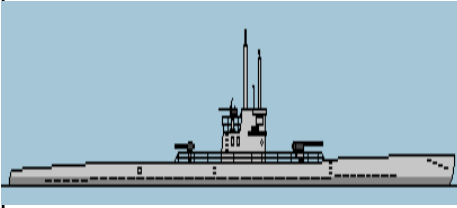


LEFT HMS Somali with the captured German weather ship alongside.

The German crew threw the enigma machine overboard but the Brits were able to seize instruction & maintenance manuals for them. The capture was hidden by releasing information that the 'Munchen' was sunk in the attack.



THE BLETCHLEY PARK MISTAKE *continued*



type IXB u-boat, same as U110 -Captain Lemp –HMS Bulldog—Captain Creswell who lived on to 1997 "The Secret Capture"

(From the U-Boat website)

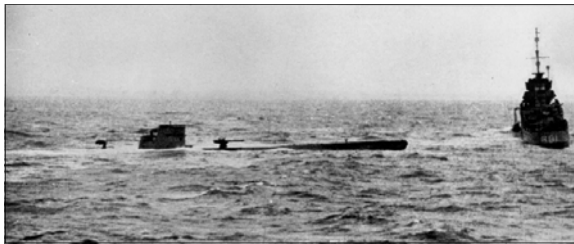
U-110 met its end on May 9, 1941 when it was captured. This is what most people view as the most important capture of the entire war and it was so secret that even the crew of U-110 did not know of it! U-110, under the command of Kptlt. Fritz Julius Lemp, had been attacking a convoy along with U-201 (Oblt. Adalbert Schnee) when Lemp left his periscope up too long (probably to confirm a kill, he sank two ships on that day amounting to 7500 GRT) and the escort HMS Aubretia spotted it and rushed to the scene dropping depth charges.

U-110 survived the first attacks but then HMS Bulldog and HMS Broadway came and joined in the hunt. U-110 was forced to surface and HMS Bulldog immediately went onto ramming course (its commander realized at the very last moment that a capture might come off and tried to avoid hitting U-110 which he almost did) which Lemp noticed and ordered "Abandon Ship". Lemp figured that since the boat was going to be rammed (and presumably sunk) its secrets were safe within it. Only when he was in the water did he realize that the boat was not sinking and attempted to swim back and prevent capture and that was the last seen of him. Many say he was shot in the water by a British sailor but that may not be at all true.

The British made several journeys between U-110 and HMS Bulldog to collect whatever they could get their hands on inside the boat. This must have been a real treat as U-110 was abandoned in a hurry and being a IXB class she did not sink as rapidly as VIIC would likely have done. It is very likely that numerous U-boats were sunk using the material found inside U-110.

The day after the boat was captured someone realized that the allies already had the most important part of U-110, namely the secret documents and Enigma machine and that the Germans might find out that the British had the boat soon and, assuming the worst, change all codes and cipher system. The boat thus "accidentally" sank when being towed to Britain. 15 men were killed in the action and 32 captured.

Below the capture of U110 by HMS Bulldog



By July that year, a flood of decrypted signals was flowing down the secure teleprinter lines from Bletchley to the Admiralty and the German hit rate had dropped from 58 ships to 17. Beneath a portrait of Admiral Donitz, Commander Rodger Winn, a former barrister, compiled U-boat situation reports based on intelligence from Bletchley Park.

However the flood of intelligence was to last just six months. By February 1942 the Germans had added a fourth wheel to the machine and changed to a new cipher, Shark. And in March the Germans managed to crack Naval Cipher 3, which they dubbed the Convoy Cipher.

The breach in British intelligence was not discovered for five months, even though the Admiralty's Operational Intelligence Centre had set up a special division to protect the security of British naval ciphers. Its 10 staff were totally reliant on Bletchley Park for their expertise yet Bletchley assigned only two people to the task, one the head of GCCS, Commander Edward Travis, who had little spare time for the role. It took the two codebreakers five months to discover that the Germans had cracked Cipher 3. Even then it was not changed until June 1943. The delay cost lives. At its worst 80 per cent of the messages were read by the Germans, who sank a staggering 1,100 ships in the Atlantic in 1942, causing 10,000 deaths and forcing 30,000 seamen into lifeboats.

THE BLETCHLY MISTAKE *continued.*

A secret report written for the Admiralty after the war warned that the intelligence failure would have to be rectified "if disaster in a future war was to be avoided". The document, written by Commander Tighe of the Admiralty's Signals Division, was considered so "disturbing" that only three copies were ever made. A digest of the report by RT Barrett, stated: "Minor economies in this detail of code and cipher security not only cost us dearly in men and ships but very nearly lost us the war."

Mavis Batey, a Bletchley worker, said that there could have been a breakdown in communication between the codebreakers and administrators which delayed changing the cipher. "It's so much about personalities," she said. "The people who understood what to do and the people who were putting it over were on different wavelengths. The codebreakers were down-to-earth mathematicians and didn't talk the same language as the administrators, who probably didn't understand what they were saying."

But Sarah Baring, 82, who worked at Bletchley before being transferred to the Admiralty's Operational Intelligence Centre, laid the blame at the door of the Admiralty. "We all admired Commander Travis very much," she said. "I think it would have been out of character for him not to have picked up the telephone and talked to the First Sea Lord, with whom he had direct access.

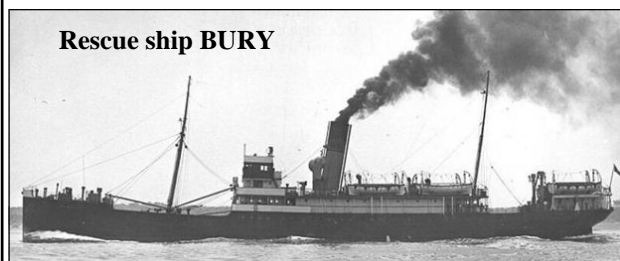
"I am not defending Bletchley just because I worked there. But in my experience this was very unlikely, whereas the Admiralty was a shambles at first. The admirals really didn't want to believe any information we told them. They found it very, very difficult to accept Ultra because we couldn't tell them where or how we got the information. They didn't care for that very much."

Gunther Hessler, Admiral Donitz's son-in-law and first staff officer at U-boat Command, revealed what he called the "game of chess" played before the British cipher was changed in June 1943.

In his official History of the U-boat War, published by the Admiralty, he wrote: "We had reached a stage when it took one or two days to decrypt the British radio messages. On occasions only a few hours were required. We could sometimes deduce when and how they would take advantage of the gaps in our U-boat dispositions. Our function was to close those gaps just before the convoys were due."

Captain Raymond Dreyer, deputy staff signals officer at Western Approaches, the British HQ for the Battle of the Atlantic in Liverpool, found out the extent to which the codes had been broken only after the war. "Some of their most successful U-boat pack attacks on our convoys were based on information obtained by breaking our ciphers," he said.

****End.****



Rescue ship BURY

The Rescue Ship for convoy ONS92 the "Bury"
1686 tons, built 1911, in rescue service from 27 December 1941,
sailed with 48 convoys, rescued 237 survivors.

Convoy ONS92-Bury was on her 4th voyage as Rescue Vessel, having been requisitioned as such on Aug. 14-1941. The very first rescue of her career took place when Llanover was lost. Arnold Hagues says "45 men were rescued from this ship although Lloyd's state that all 46 crew were saved, the discrepancy might be accounted for by either a miscount by Bury, or work by one of the escorts." (R. W. Jordan says 65 survived). Bury also rescued 21 of Empire Dell's 61 survivors. There's another discrepancy here in that Hague says "The Llanover was then sighted and the possibility of re-boarding her and salvage was considered. However, as the convoy was still under attack, and she appeared to be slowly foundering, the idea was not followed up and the wreck was despatched by HMCS Shediac."

After having rescued the survivors from Tolken, Bury had 178 survivors on board, which was in excess of her available accommodation, so she was permitted to leave the convoy to land the survivors in St. John's. Bury later returned to Clyde with Convoy SC 85.

Ships sunk in ONS92

Date	Ship	Weight	Country	Sunk by
12 May	Empire Dell (CAM)	7,065	UK	U-124
12 May	Llandover	4,959	UK	U-124
12 May	Cocle	5,630	PA	U-94
12 May	Mount Parnes	4,371	GR	U-124
12 May	Cristales	5,389	BR	U-124
13 May	Batna	4,399	BR	U-94
13 May	Tolken	4,471	SW	U-94

7 merchant ships were sunk for a total of 36,284 grt.



SS Tolken