

The narative below is my recollection of HMS Dittany during WW2

As I understand it, the ship was built on the Great Lakes for the American Navy . However it was not launched until October 1943 with the result that it was frozen in over winter and not available, so the Royal Navy lent [? leased] to the American Navy one of our Corvettes. This meant that DITTANY was surplus to the Americans' requirements so it was then "Lease Lent" to the Royal Navy.

The ship's specifications were

HMS Dittany (K 279)

Corvette of the Flower (revised.) class

Built by: Collingwood Shipyards Ltd. (Collingwood, Ontario, Canada)

Ordered:

Laid down:

Launched: 31 Oct., 1942

Commissioned: ?

End service: 20 June 1946

History:

Transferred to the Royal Navy under lend-lease. Returned to the 20 June 1946.

United States Navy on

Former name USN Beacon

HMS Dittany

Displacement 980

Length 208 ft 8 inches

Beam 30 ft

Speed 16 knots

Armament one 4" Gun - 4 Oerlikons & one pompom

Builder Collingwood Shipyards Ltd

Build as USN Beacon

1943 Leased Lent to the Royal Navy as HMS Dittany

1944 - 45 Served in the 56th Escort Group based in

Freetown West Africa

1946 Decommissioned and returned to the Us Navy

1950 Balleneros Ltd SA converted her to a Whale

Catcher and renamed her Olympic Cruiser

1956 Sold to KYOKUYO HOEEI K K JAPAN AND

renamed OTORI MARU No.2

Ref A Dictionary of Ships the Royal Navy of the Second World War

Thanks to Jean Hedges { Lt. Hedges Daughter } I have obtained numerous photos of Dittany in Canadian waters. I believe that all the photos taken in Canadian Waters were taken by either Gil Hedges or Bob Grenier. However I am including one picture showing the full Corvette hull but it is of HMS Honesty K285 [a sister ship -identical --,I served on her for one week }

This Photo of HMS Honesty is from the internet



Dittany was commissioned on the Great Lakes and proceeded through the Welland Ship Canal [missing Niagara] to Toronto. and Montreal where I was transferred to HMS Dittany from HMS Honesty The reason for my transfer was it was my first Ship after my commission, therefore not qualified to keep watch. Each ship required 3 watchkeeping officers; Dittany had four, Honesty had two with the consequence that it was necessary to do some adjustment and I was the lucky [?] one . I spent the rest of my service on Dittany.

As yet I have not been able to trace any Crew Lists [for remembered names see appendix]. The Officers serving when I joined in Montreal were-

<i>Lt, Cdr.</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>RNR</i>	<i>Captain</i>
<i>Lt.</i>	<i>A.R.Lilley</i>	<i>RNVR</i>	<i>No. 1 now deceased</i>
<i>Lt,</i>	<i>G. Hedges</i>	<i>RNVR</i>	<i>apparently died 2000</i>
<i>Sub.Lt.</i>	<i>Owen</i>	<i>RNVR</i>	
<i>Sub. Lt.</i>	<i>S.P.Keeble</i>	<i>RNVR</i>	
<i>Sub. Lt.</i>	<i>R.Grenier</i>	<i>RCNVR</i>	

The Organization on HMS.Dittany [as remembered after 60 years]

The whole of the Ship's Company was divided into two Divisions -primarily for leave, but was also split into Messes for living. The Messes were more or less made up of the various categories on board , such as seamen,, communication ratings,, stokers etc. and one for the oddbods such as Officers' Stewards, Cook, Sick Berth Attendant and one or two others.

Each mess had a Leading Hand in charge who was responsible for the running of the Mess. Daily he designated a Rating as "Cook of the Mess"; this exempted him from general Ships maintenance work. but he then prepared the food that had been issued to the Mess and took it to the Galley for the Cook to cook . In addition the Ship's Company was split into 3 watches for sea duty.

Before I joined, Dittany had sailed from Collingwood through the Cornwall Canal to the St. Lawrence River and these photos had been taken of the journey to Quebec.

CORNWALL CANAL



APPROACHING DETROIT



VIEWS OF DETROIT



DETROIT



DETROIT RIVER



DETROIT BRIDGE



CANAL LOCKS



SOME OF THE THOUSAND
ISLANDS



From now on I should have a personal recollection After Montreal we sailed by day to Quebec (I cannot recall anything about the trip). There does not appear to be any way to confirm any dates but we must have spent at least two weeks alongside at Quebec where it appears that somebody, probably Gil Hedges and Bob Grenier, were snap happy since there is a whole series of relaxed photos.

H.M.S. DITTANY





HMCS DITTANY
QUEBEC.



"DITTANY"

SOME OF THE SHIPS COMPANY - QUEBEC



Lt. LILLEY & S/Lt OWEN



Signalman YOUNG



L/sig Gardner & CPO Smith



? & S/Lt Owen



Mooring Quebec

S/LT OWEN





? ? S/LT KEEBLE S/LT GRENIER



LT HEDGES ? S/LT KEEBLE S/LT GRENIER



S/LT S.P.KEEBLE



Ch. ERA HAWES



*Signalman Young L/Signalman Gardner
Lt. Hedges Lt lilley { No 1}.*



*S/Lt. OWEN [Gunnery Officer}
Ammunitioning Ship [note cigarette}*

three picture nova scotia.

nova scotia nova scotia

Whilst in Canadian Waters it was found that we suffered from terrible vibration at twelve Knots and above , unfortunately this was never rectified during RN Service.

I have a recollection that we sailed from Sydney to St. Johns Newfoundland where we spent a couple of days before joining Convoy HX250 on the 5th August 1943 [a recorded date]

AT SEA AT LAST

Notes: from Convoy Commodore {attributed Public Record Office}

Commodore A. M. Hekking R.N.R. was in Maaskerk, Vice Commodore was Captain C. T. Dunn of Empire Emerald.

The convoy had 78 ships.
Average speed: 9.95 knots.

Escorts:

HMS Roxborough - parted company at 06:30 on Aug. 1 in 41 00N 65 39W, and was relieved by HMCS Columbia.

HMS Dittany joined at HOMP on Aug. 2 - detached at 19:00 same day with Asdic trouble.

HMCS Ottawa, Kootenay, St. Croix, Wetaskiwin, Dianthus, Kitchener, Arvida, trawler Sapper, tug Stormking and **Dittany, with support Group** Nene, Calgary and Snowberry joined at 11:30 GMT on **Aug. 5** in approx. 48 31N 46 21W, relieving Columbia, Kamsack, Blairmore and Kenora.

The support group parted company at 13:00 on Aug. 6 in 51 27N 41 05W, escorting fast section.

HMS Bayntun detached at 09:17 on Aug. 7 in 52 45N 36 20W, with Iceland

ships.
Wetaskiwin detached at 14:00 on Aug. 11 in 55 40N 09 00W, escorting the Loch Ewe section

Please note that there are no reports of any incidents in the above Official Report

As can be seen from the Commodore's report we had a quiet and peaceful crossing to the UK. I think it is a fair comment that quiet and peaceful sums up our Wartime Service. This is not to say we didn't have a few distractions which will be noted in order of occurrence



view Forward



view Astern



**Crowsnest and corner of
Bridge**



view of Bridge



No.1 relaxing at sea



No.1 still relaxing at sea



Capt. on convoy duty
the book is 'Dead or--'

4" Gun with
Snowflake Rocket
attachment on gun
shield



Officers 1943

S/Lt Owen LT Lilley Lt Cdr Page LT Hedges S/Lt Keeble

U.K. WATERS

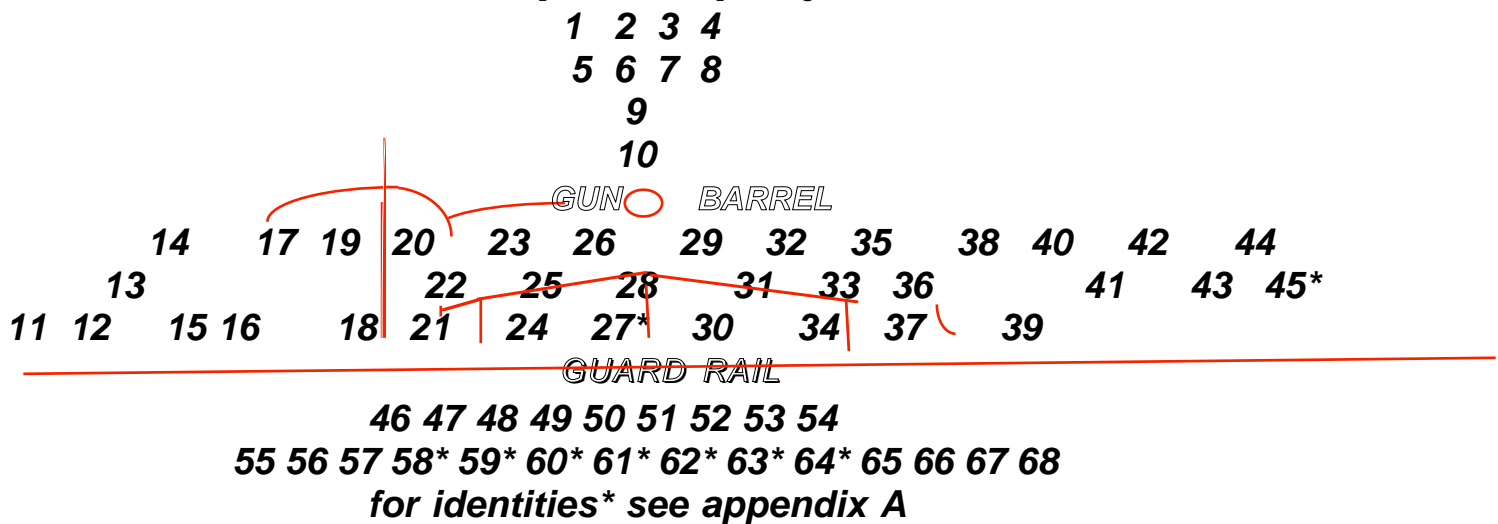
On arrival in the UK [Liverpool] we had minor Crew changes and the Dockyard tinkered with curing the vibration to no avail. After being in Dockyard hands we had to do acceptance trials and while we doing these we had our first mechanical failure. We were steaming near the Bar Light Vessel when the steering engine broke down and it was necessary to go full astern--no disaster.

After Liverpool we sailed to Greenock on the Clyde where we moored alongside the Jetty whilst a floating Crane removed our prop shaft in order to machine and realign it--still we did not lose the vibration which we kept it the whole time Dittany was in the RN. I think it was while we were in Greenock we were fitted with a Hedgehog. [see internet--hedgehog weapon] When a submarine was attacked with depth charges the explosions and the high speed wake broke Asdic, whereas with the Hedgehog the idea was that it threw 24 grenades in an oval ahead whilst maintaining contact and the grenades only exploded on contact with the submarine thus keeping Asdic contact. I don't remember it being fired in anger,

Ships Company 1943



Ships Company 1943



It surprises me that there are only 68 in this Photo our total complement was over one hundred, perhaps they were on watch or we were undermanned for passage to the UK

Whilst the Prop Shaft was out I relinquished responsibility for Signals and Confidential Books and became Navigator, Asdic and Radar Officer. When the Shaft was refitted we were obliged to carry out steaming trials again. Once again we had a near disaster when the Boiler Feed Valve shut. This resulted in both Boilers running dry and both Safety Valves lifting - a rather scary shock when you were on the Bridge less than 10 feet away. Fortunately SPO Selby shut off the fuel in time to prevent serious damage. However we had no steam and the Dockyard Engineers would not allow us to re-light the Boilers so we had to break W/T silence and request a Tug. Meanwhile I had established our exact position and calculated. our tidal drift., Our situation was nail biting since it was a toss up which would come first - us hitting the Headland [400 feet] or the arrival of the Tug. As a result No. 1 ordered the Ch. Bos'n mate to [a] prepare to tow for'd

[b] disconnect both Anchors and manually get the port cable from the cable locker and then connect to the starboard cable and starboard Anchor. This would give us maximum anchor length since there was no holding ground close to the Headland.

Fortunately a small Loch Fynne Fishing Boat appeared round the Headland {Commandos on board} and gave us a tow which was sufficient to slow our drift allowing the Tug to win the race.

After this we sailed to HMS Western Isles Tobermory to work-up under the beady eye of Vice Admiral Sir Gilbert Stephenson KBE, CB, CMC

The Book

[The Terror of Tobermory

- Vice Admiral Sir Gilbert Stephenson KBE, CB, CMC

By Richard Baker]

gives an insight into his character and training methods. Additional reading from the internet is --HMS Western Isles-CHAPTER THREE the middle section .

Our time in Tobermory was no more eventful than described in the above except for one incident

which could have occurred anywhere . We were peacefully at anchor when a Canadian Frigate tried to show everybody how to anchor at speed. It dropped anchor and went astern, rather fast and for too long. It clouted our Bow installing a permanent dent. The dent was still there when we returned her to the USN. I often wonder whether it was ever straightened. I don't think we passed out with flying colours but pass we did. then as I recollect we sailed to Londonderry for leave . Whilst half the ships Company were on leave we had to sail down the River Boyne to refuel. Refueling is normally an easy operation but in this case it was far from simple .The River was running fast, it was pitch black, the Jetty seemed to be on a bend in the river and all the experienced people seemed to be on leave. Once we were alongside the refueling went smoothly

When leave was completed we waited to join a Convoy for passage to a Foreign Station, I don't think we knew where until we received Sailing Orders. What I do know is that we had a full set of Charts for anywhere in the world. When we knew we were due for West Africa it was a case of sorting out the unneeded charts to land at Freetown We joined a Convoy as an additional escort and were stationed 2 or 3 thousand yards astern of HMS Berkley Castle. Somewhere in the Bay of Biscay on a miserable murky day one of our Rocket Flares fired (see picture) and burst over HMS Berkley Castle. .We waited for reaction but there was none. We held an investigation but could not find a reason for firing , the safety switch was still on. The only reason we could think of was that the Gun look-out [I think it was A.B.. Brown had taken shelter in the Gun Shield and leant against the switches and his damp duffle coat had caused a short circuit. We kept mum ; it was only when we visited Gil Hedges in Gibraltar whilst refueling that we heard all about them having a Flare overhead and going to Action Stations.

And so to our quiet, peaceful and boring time on the West African Station.

WEST AFRICA

From Gibraltar we sailed to Freetown, probably as an additional Escort. We then became an official member of the 56th Escort Group and our Senior Officer was HMS Lowestoft [?]. Some time in the next six months she returned Home and was replaced by HMS Wellington. From then on we were fully operational which meant escorting Convoys Freetown to Lagos [Nigeria} and back via Takoradi {Ghana}. Approximately every six weeks we tied up alongside HMS Edinburgh Castle and Boiler cleaned --rather unpleasant in the heat since we had no power for ventilation only for lighting.



R.M.S.EDINBURGH dCASTLE (2) was built in 1910 by Harland & Wolff at Belfast with a tonnage of 13362grt, length of 570ft, a beam of 64ft 5in In 1945, Since towing back to England would not be cost effective, she was towed 60 miles out to sea by the tug Empire Lawn and sunk by gunfire and depth charges from the armed trawler Cape Warwick, HMS Porchester Castle and HMS Launceston Castle. The sinking took place after we had left Freetown. [Ihe above information was extracted from

the website "union castle line"]

Several incidents happened while we were in Freetown but there does not appear to be any way they can be dated except from the Ship's Log. (Small Ships Logs aren't kept at either the Public Record Office or at the Naval Museum Portsmouth.) On the West African Station Officers were permitted to carry

Umbrellas during the Rainy season but there was no definition of size or colour--I think the result is best left to the imagination. Also the Wardroom was permitted to employ a D'hobi Boy which we did. The Lad we employed was first class. He was a half caste - ie his Father was English who had been an Army captain in the first world war and as far as we could gather had stood by his Mother but had died when the Lad was small. He was an exceptionally pleasant lad - so much so the Ships Company allowed him to join them on the Mess Deck and not have to manage under the 4 inch Gun Deck. Any trips ashore had to be by Liberty Boat as there was no jetty in Freetown other than for small boats and it was on the liberty boat that the tragedy occurred. Some of the ships Company had been ashore with the Dhobi Boy [visiting his Mother] and were returning on the Liberty Boat when a drunken stoker from another Ship said 'You Black Bastard' and pushed him overboard. He didn't stand a chance - there was a 5 knot current. The whole of our Ships Company was devastated. He was replaced by the standard native dhobi boy who slept under the 4 inch Gun Deck.



2nd Dhobi Boy

We had one other unfortunate occurrence whilst on the West African station - I believe it happened in Freetown.. We were practising Action Stations when one of the for'd Oerlikon Guns fired one round, unfortunately it exploded by the after gun platform wounding one of the Ratings {A.B. Seaman Crampin ? }. He had to be Hospitalised and left the Ship. I am pretty certain that it was not a serious injury but I have no recollection of the outcome. We never understood how this occurred since there were railings to prevent the gun pointing in dangerous directions.

During our visits to Lagos the Wardroom had become friendly with an English family living there and we were invited to relax in their Garden,, which we did and we reciprocated by inviting them on board for Drinks.



S/Lt Keeble Lt Lilley S/Lt Gardiner



S/Lt Keeble S/Lt Gardiner Lt.Cdr. Locke

This had a very pleasant outcome for the Ships Company. Over Christmas 1944 we were in Lagos tied up third ship out from the Jetty. On Christmas Day we invited the family aboard and they brought with them an Army Officer, an entertainer, Phyllis Robbins, and her Pianist. During the course of conversation it turned out that Phyllis Robbins was with ENSA entertaining the Troops. We said how unfair that was since the Navy never got involved in anything like that. Phyllis Robbins said that she would give us a show providing we could light her well and have a Piano. The lighting was no problem - there were available six 20 inch searchlights and the same number of 10 inch signal projectors. The snag was no Piano; the Army said they would lend us one but how did we get it aboard that evening over 20 yards of grass, along a wooden Jetty, across three ships and onto our Foc'sle. We passed the problem to the Ch. Bos'n Mate. The Piano duly arrived (how I don't know) and the three Ships Companies (probably over 200 people) had a Christmas Day Concert. Unfortunately, Phyllis Robbins had made the mistake of asking the audience to come closer, which they were very glad to do - but came rather TOO close. Also she found the lights a bit excessive and had them turned down.

The evening was a great success

Earlier in the day we had the traditional event where the Captain changed places with the Junior Rating (Ord Sea Tierney) on board. The new? captain then carried out Captains Rounds. The following is a record of the event.



Friend O.S Tierney

[Capt for the day]



Lt.Cdr Locke

{ junior rating for the day }



Lt. Lilley L.Sea Howells Friend ? Ord Sea. Tierney L.Cdr. Locke ?.

After Christmas we resumed our humdrum existence escorting Convoys. to and from Freetown but there were two exceptions to our normal routine. It was probably early 1945 we docked in Freetown's Floating Dock. It was a most unpleasant experience - minimal power , hot and very humid , smelly and confined. There may have been a slight advantage since each watch had a few days leave in a Rest Camp.

Round about the time we came out of Dock the Group was instructed to escort the Tug Zwarte Zee and the damaged RMS Asturius to Gibraltar. The journey to Gibraltar was uneventful:



Zwarte Zee

More information about the Zwarte zee and RMS Asturias ii is available on the internet



R.M.S. Asturias (II)

Interestingly, before being broken up, she was lent by the breaker, Thomas W. Ward, to the Rank Organisation for use in the film "A Night to Remember". Asturias' port side was used to depict Titanic in the lifeboat-lowering scenes of the film even as the shipbreakers were at work on the starboard side. Once filming was completed, demolition was as well.

The return trip was far from routine, HMSs Cowslip and Kilhampton had minor defects so stayed in Gibraltar for a few days whilst Wellington and ourselves returned to Freetown. On the first afternoon the Senior Officer decided to exercise towing- no problem, more or less routine , The second afternoon was sheer chaos.. HMS Lowestoft passed us fresh water whilst underway--absolute bedlam but great fun. We developed a Gyro fault { it wandered about 5 degrees either side of the true course } and had to divert to Dakar where it could not be corrected so we rejoined HMS Wellington and the rest of the Group only to find

that Cowslip had broken down. [her distillation equipment had ceased functioning]. We had no problem towing Cowslip with our wandering Gyro but it was rather different the next day . The defect was made good but Cowslip had insufficient water to flash -up her Boilers . So HMS Wellington decided to pass fresh water whilst we were towing [wonky Gyro and all }. All went well , a well rehearsed operation, the only snag was a few rude signals about our steering..

The next notable occasion was on 8th May when the German surrender was announced but it was still routine as usual since the Area had not been declared clear of Japanese U Boats or even Germans who had not received the signal. However I believe it was our last escort duty.

After VE. Day I don't think the F.O.I.C , knew what to do with us.

Then it seemed as if somebody on his Staff had the bright idea of using us as a Pleasure Boat to give some of the shore based staff a day at sea . So we became the Banana Belle for the day and welcomed aboard 50 or so shore based personnel and sailed for the Banana Islands [5-10 miles sw of Freetown}



The person who dreamt up the idea had no idea of the implications. Firstly we didn't really have any facilities for the skylarking passengers. Secondly they didn't appreciate our disembarking facilities- -two 16 foot Dinghies with one unreliable Outboard Motor. Thirdly the fact that there was no Jetty and that there was a fairly heavy sea that day. Despite the problems we landed around half, the rest decided to stay on board. There didn't appear to be anything to do {In fact today the Tourist information only mentions it as somewhere to camp and explore} When it was time to return the sea had got up a bit more making re-embarkation more difficult than the landing . If I remember correctly L.Sea Howells was in charge of the Boats. We returned with everybody in one piece and think there was some residual pleasure in the different day

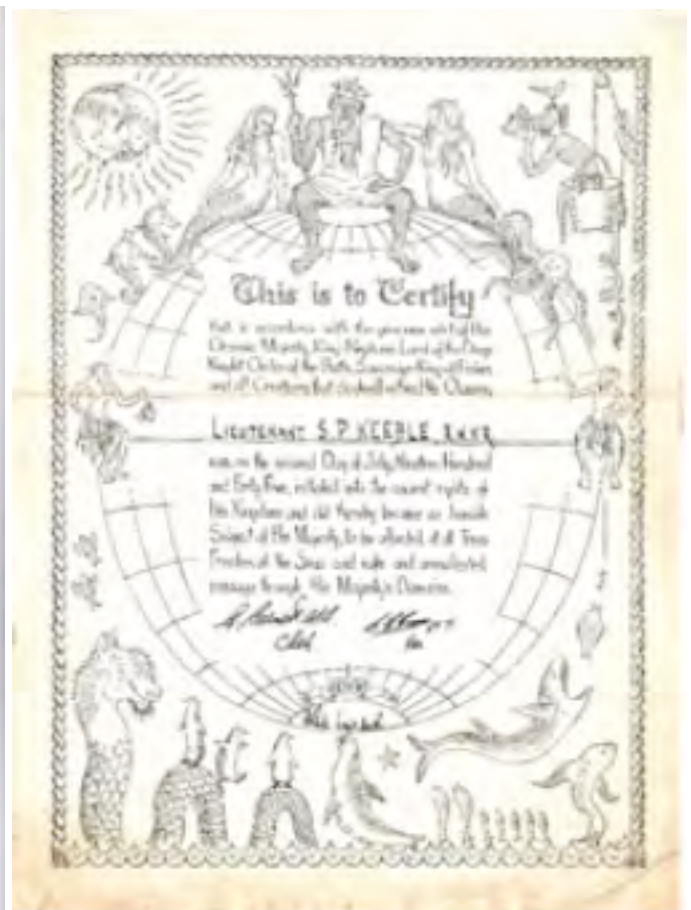
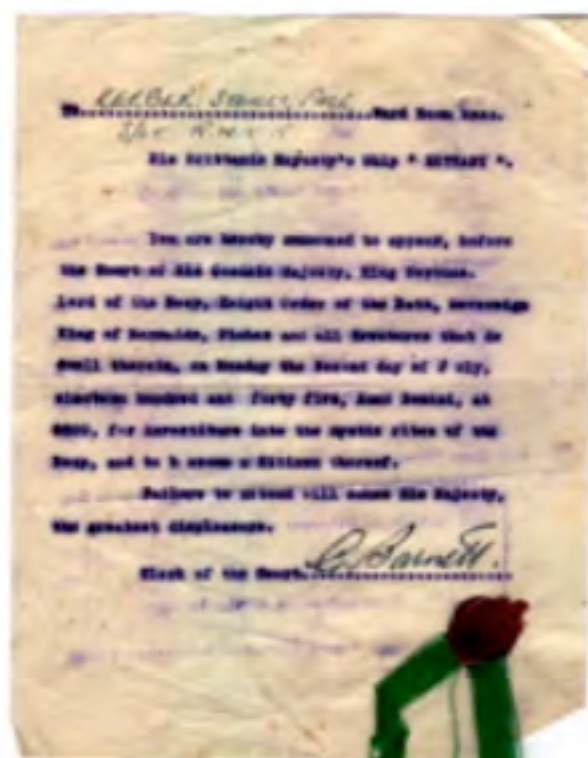
There was still another job to fill in time before returning home after VE Day . The Americans had started to return their Aircraft to the States via W. Africa and Brazil so to cover any emergencies they wanted an Air Sea Rescue Boat. Guess who_ yes HMS Dittany despite the fact we were not able to receive Aircraft frequencies. We duly departed for two weeks on the Equator maintaining our position within a 10 mile radius. This was a very boring operation. There was one thing which broke the monotony for a couple of days and that was Crossing the Line for well over half the Ships Company on the second July 1945. . It always amazes me how the Navy always seems to cope well with any situation thrown at it - witness the Costumes and the Bath.

CROSSING THE LINE





I have made no attempt to name the people -too difficult and too few readily identifiable



Somehow I seem to have 2 certificates for the one event
 Also sometime during our stay on station on the Equator we had a Swimming session in the Atlantic -only people who had passed their swimming test were allowed to swim. We lowered a dinghy and a great time was had by those who swam. Our support for the Americans was the end of our time in West Africa. I think it was around the middle of July that we left Freetown .



After eighteen months in West Africa we were due to return Home for refitting and leave , then what = the Far East - the Japanese war was still on-going. So we left Freetown for the last time with an intermediate stop at Gibraltar. This meant that we would be able to send Bananas home since there was a Shop in Gib that packed green Bananas in tins and posted them to the U.K. Fine, but a couple of days before we were due to sail the Fleet Mail Officer came on board and told us we were the first ship leaving for the U.K. so we would be taking the Mail. The Mail was duly received and stowed in the Ammunition lockers. We were then ordered to take a Merchant Navy Crew to Vigo but we said we had no room due to the Trawler Crew, the order was cancelled and a Destroyer [HMS Malcomb I think] took the Crew to Vigo. But we still had to go to Vigo in order to escort an ex German Supply Ship, manned by the M.N. ,to the U.K.

We then duly sailed. .However, off Lisbon -outside territorial waters - we picked up an Asdic echo [we were still at war with Japan] so we duly investigated. It was decided it was only a wreck but to be safe we dropped one depth charge. The only result was a shoal of stunned or dead fish,too good to leave!. L.S. Howells took away a sea boat to collect. In his enthusiasm to collect a large Conger Eel he was bitten [not seriously] much to the amusement of those on deck. Guess what this meant - a fresh fish meal for all. There were no more incidents before we reach Vigo

On arrival at Vigo we anchored off the harbour. This was not really convenient since we understood that we would be there for over a week but Beggars can't be choosers. As a matter of courtesy we invited the Mayor on board for a drink, it turned out that that he appreciated spirits but couldn't stand water, so we finished up moored alongside in what I believe is now the " Fishing Port".. It turned out that there was a Regatta of some sort due to take place and there were the immaculate Portuguese and Spanish Warships in the main Harbour showing up our sea stained state.

We had an unfortunate incident whilst at Vigo, one of the Trawler Ratings [on our books for passage] was taken seriously ill. and was hospitalised where he died. The Consul in Vigo arranged the Funeral but the Ship had to supply the Guard of Honour which meant the frantic training of six volunteers { we only had six rifles } .I feel it is wrong to refer to the unfortunate Rating just as a rating so I have tried to identify him. I have written and Emailed the British Consulate for full details but they are not forthcoming as at May 2006. However on contacting the Imperial War Graves Commission they were exceedingly helpful and indentified him from an approximate date and location. The following is a copy of the information supplied--He was Able Seaman Kidson and he was buried in the Vigo Civil Cemetery but it appears that he was reburied in the Bibao British Cemetery. If he had been left at Vigo it would have been impossible to maintain the grave properly but the removal to Bilbao means that the Graves are named , laid out, and maintained on the lines of the war graves in France.

The following is a cutting from the Times 2 June 1953--

**BRITISH WAR DEAD
IN SPANISH SOIL**

DEDICATION SERVICE

The bodies of 43 Sailors and Airmen, who lost their lives in the War and who were buried in scattered Spanish cemeteries, have been exhumed by the War Graves Commission and taken to the British cemetery at Bilbao where a dedication service was held recently by the Ven. James Johnston, Archdeacon of Gibraltar.

Before we left we played the local Hockey Club and made it into the Vigo press. [FARO DE VIGO]



When we arrived in West Africa we only had 5 or 6 people who could play Hockey but by now we could easily raise two teams.

On the right is a Photo taken after a game in Lagos

*LSea Howells Lt Lilley Cpo Evans ? tel Brunskill
? S/Lt Keeble S/Lt Gardiner
Stoker Ryder ? ?*

Eventually the German Supply Ship was ready to leave and plod slowly across the Bay of Biscay to Falmouth. We moored alongside for the night. and landed the Mail which still included our Bananas. The next morning we sailed alone for Chatham and Leave. However on arrival at Chatham we received a very friendly Signal from the

Fleet Mail Officer Falmouth with a complaint about our Banana parcels, apparently some of the tins were oozing liquid - with result her staff had had to empty the tins, insert a note and repackage. But that was not the end of the story even though my tin was not involved. I had addressed it to Dorothy (my fiancé). { She and her Father had been evacuated to Llandudno with the Civil Service}. She was in London arranging our Wedding. Her Father collected the parcel and stored it in his billet until he went to London. After several days his Fellow Billetees complained of a smell coming from his bedroom [he had no sense of smell] which was then traced to the parcel. I believe it was then unceremoniously dumped in the sea.

After Leave the Ship paid off into the Reserve Fleet and I remained on board as senior Officer. of 3 Corvettes moored together in the Medway with a Care and Maintenance Crew. After about 6 months our crew was augmented in order to return to the U.S. [we were still a lease lend vessel] In due course we sailed and were joined by a sister ship for passage to the States. All went well until after we had left the Azores, where we had called for fresh provisions,

After leaving the Azores all went well for 2-3 days when she reported she had lost power No problem - we just took her in tow, but it did not work out so simple when our W/T transmitter failed. But there was really no problem, because we were in visual touch with our companion [unfortunately I cannot recall her name] but she then said she had a suspected case of Appendicitis and her W/T batteries were flat. We weren't apparently on a well frequented Shipping Lane but we kept an extra special lookout for Ships' Lights. We were at our wits' end until we decided to try a very unconventional method which in this day and age would probably have everybody on board Court Marshalled if not imprisoned for life for infringing Health and Safety. All we did was join our shore electric cables { waterproof joint } and passed her enough power [using the Ocean as a return] to transmit for help and enough to give a certain amount of lighting below decks. Her transmission raised an USN Weather Ship [Air Sea Rescue] who had a Doctor on board . We converged and then transhipped the Patient for Medical attention whilst we continued our slow tow to Bermuda. [We heard later that it was nothing serious] We left our tow at Bermuda and proceeded to New York. After a couple of days in the Naval Dockyard we had a Boiler failure and had to move alongside to get Power for light and Ventilation.

That is the Saga of HMS Dittany. We then returned to the UK in style on board RMS. Queen Mary for Demob or reappointment --in my case Demob .

If after sending this Saga additional information or corrections are necessary I will add supplements rather than trying to modify.