

was used and when it was first prepared for use as a fleet base?

**QUESTION 18/84** by Dean Stehman, Hermosa Beach, Calif., U.S.A.

I am seeking data and illustrations for the following ships:

1. HMS *Fidelity*—former French merchant ship *Le Rhin* possibly used as an armed merchant cruiser or Q-ship during the early years of WW II.
2. *Kaiyo*—a large Japanese frigate circa 1866–1868.

**QUESTION 19/84** by George S. Schober, Victoria, B.C., Canada.

In mid-1941, during post-commissioning work-ups, the carrier HMS *Indomitable* ran aground in the West Indies. Details concerning this grounding and the damage sustained are requested.

**QUESTION 20/84** by Rob Cabo, Berg En Terblut, Holland.

Can anyone provide information on the camouflage designs carried by the French battleship *Richelieu* during WW II, including the colors used in these designs and the times in which they were carried?

**QUESTION 21/84** by Harold Johnson, Deep River, Conn., U.S.A.

The Imperial Russian battleships of the *Imperator Pavel I* class were the only non-US built battleships to ever carry lattice masts. During 1916–17 these ships were rebuilt with pole masts. What was the reason behind this rebuild, and what other changes, if any, were made at this time?

**QUESTION 22/84** by Gregory Chappars, Germantown, Texas, U.S.A.

The book *Miracle at Midway* (Prange, 1982) refers to a Japanese carrier, probably the *Soryu*, as having a flight deck painted dark red (page 268). Can this be confirmed, and what were the flight deck colors of the other Japanese carriers involved in this action? Did any of them carry 2 red recognition circles which were also mentioned in this book?

**QUESTION 23/84** by Paul Dixon, Atlanta, Ga., U.S.A.

Has it ever been determined why Sq. Cdr. F. J. Rutland was held prisoner by the British crown during WW II without any charges ever being brought against him? There were accusations that he was a spy for the Japanese Navy.

**QUESTION 24/84** by Robert H. Hays, Mt. Sterling, Ky., U.S.A.

Can anyone provide information concerning the USS *Aldebaran* (AF-10) ex-*Stag Hound*? I am interested in a photo of this ship before she was acquired by the USN, her wartime career, and present status.

**QUESTION 25/84** by W. David Dickson, Memphis, Tenn., U.S.A.

Does anyone know if the US Navy Department took the lines off the Confederate rams captured at Memphis and New Orleans, and if so where these may be found? I gather from various sources that *Bragg*, *Little Rebel*, *Price* and *Sumter* were all taken into the Federal Navy.

## ANSWERS:

**QUESTION 11/82** see *WI* 2/82 pages 188–189.

Answer by J. J. M. Jehes, Schagen, Holland  
 William B. McKinney, Ipswich, Mass., U.S.A.  
 Allyn D. Nevitt, San Diego, Calif., U.S.A.  
 Al Ross II, Millinocket, Maine, U.S.A.  
 N. A. Richards, Newport Beach, Calif., U.S.A.  
 L. L. Von Munching, Gravenhage, Holland.

Dec. 1941

British gunboats *Cicala* and *Robin*. *Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy* by Dull, page 35 says that these ships were sunk by gunfire from the light cruiser *Isuzu* and destroyers *Ikazuchi* and *Inazuma* at Hong Kong. Other sources, however, all state that *Robin* was scuttled to prevent capture on 25 Dec. 1941, while *Cicala* was sunk by Japanese aircraft on 21 Dec. 1941.

British auxiliary *Banka*. The 1945 *Jane's* lists *Banka* as missing in the South China Sea in Dec. 1941; however no other books even list this ship. If there really was a *Banka* in the South China Sea during this time frame, it could have been sunk or captured by Japanese ships or aircraft.

11 Jan. 1942

Dutch minelayer *Prins Van Oranje* was sunk on this date, not on 12 Jan., by gunfire from the destroyer *Yamakaze* and *Patrol Boat 38* south of Boengoc Island, near Tarakan. See *Battle of the Java Sea* by Van Oosten, page 18.

19 Feb. 1942

Dutch destroyer *Piet Hein* was sunk by the destroyers *Asahio*, *Oshio* and *Michishio* in Badoeng Strait off Bali. This ship was also probably hit by gunfire from the US destroyers *Ford* (DD-228) and *Pope* (DD-225).

27 Feb. 1942

Dutch destroyer *Kortenaer* was torpedoed by the heavy cruiser *Haguro* about 43 miles SW of Barvean. The fatal torpedo almost certainly came from *Haguro* and was launched at about 1622 hours at a range of 22,000 yards. Although there were 14 destroyers involved in this action, the last torpedo launched by a destroyer was at 1615 hours at a range of 10,000 yards. *Kortenaer* was hit at 1640 hours, and the difference of 25 minutes between the last destroyer firing and the hit rules out any destroyer torpedoes as they would have been well beyond *Kortenaer* at that point. The 1622 hours launch by *Haguro* fits the time frame perfectly since no other ships fired any torpedoes until 1718 hours.

Dutch light cruiser *De Ruyter* was torpedoed by the heavy cruiser *Haguro*.

Dutch light cruiser *Java* was torpedoed by the heavy cruiser *Nachi*.

British destroyer *Electra*. The British destroyers *Electra* and *Encounter* engaged the destroyers *Asagumo* and *Minegumo* at close range, 3,000 yards, at about 1730 hours. At about 1740 hours *Electra* scored 2 hits on *Asagumo* which brought her to a complete stop. At the same time, however, *Electra* also took 2 hits from *Asagumo* which set her on fire. *Electra* sank at 1746 hours and no other Japanese ships fired on *Electra* after 1715 hours.

28 Feb. 1942

Dutch tanker *Moesti* serving as munitions transport *Ben-2* was sunk 25 miles south of Banjoewongi by the submarine *I-53* and not by destroyers.

1 March 1942

Dutch destroyer *Evertsen* (not *Eversten*) was deliberately beached in a wrecked condition on Sebuku Besar Island in the Sunda Strait after being hit by gunfire from the destroyers *Shirakumo* and *Murakumo*. After losing contact with the task force that she was escaping to Ceylon with, the

- 1 July Attacked by about 50 B-24s, P-38s and P-40s.
- 2 July The ZOB Rendova Operation (ZOB - Chumphon Bay). Leading unit, sortied Buin for a point off Rendova in order to co-operate in operation.
- 3 July Returned to Buin. Anchored at readiness condition at Buin.
- 5 July While on route to anchorage, struck a mine. Upon effecting emergency repairs departed Buin for Rabaul. Attacked by 8 x B-24s. Attacked by 1 x P-38.
- 6 July Arrived Rabaul. *Yamabiko Maru* came alongside and inspected damages. Anchored at readiness condition at Rabaul. Underwent repairs of damages.
- 17 July Departed Rabaul for Truk.

However, *Yubari* was not fully operational until the end of Sept. 1943.

By Allyn D. Nevitt, San Diego, CA USA.

The Japanese raiding force which shelled Rendova Island on the night of 2/3 July 1943 was organized as follows:

RAADM Teruo Akiyama, ComDesRon 3, led the flotilla and wore his flag in the destroyer *Niitzuki*. He also directly commanded the screening unit composed of the destroyers *Niitzuki*, *Amagiri*, *Hatsuyuki*, *Nagatsuki*, *Satsuki* and *Mochizuki*. The bombardment unit comprised the light cruiser *Yubari*, and destroyers *Yunagi* and *Mikazuki* and was under the command of *Yubari*'s Capt. Yasuei Funagi.

The above information is taken from Volume 96 of the official Japanese history of the Pacific War, *Shenshi Soshu*. It lists only one cruiser and 8 destroyers, one less than previous sources have indicated. If there was a ninth destroyer, it could only have been *Minazuki* which was also in the area, but whose Tabular Records of Movement are among the missing. It is also interesting to note that this was an extremely venerable group. With the exception of the brand-new *Niitzuki*, every one of Adm. Akiyama's ships had been built during the 1920s. Just which four destroyers peeled off to intercept the PT boats is unclear, but *Mochizuki*, which claimed sinking two of them, was obviously among them.

By Gunter S. Jaffe, Oakland, CA USA.

According to *Maru Special Number 19*, page 35, on the night of 2 July the Japanese destroyer *Niitzuki* was attacked by small enemy warship(s) while carrying out a shore bombardment off Rendova harbor.

#### QUESTION 18/84 see WI 4/85 page 435.

By J. Caruana, Senglea, Malta.

There are some errors in this answer which ought to be corrected for the sake of accuracy.

a) The name *Le Rhone* for the ship and *Costa* for her commander were based on the book *HMS Fidelity*. I have just discovered that the author of this book, for reasons that I find incomprehensible, did not use the REAL names but rather an ALIAS. Thus the name of the French cargo ship that became *Fidelity* was not *Le Rhone* but *Le Rhin*. Similarly, the name of her commander was not *Costa* but C.A.M. Peri. This is based on Roskill's *The War at Sea* Vol. 2 page 216. Colledge's *Ships of the Royal Navy* also confirms the name *Le Rhin*.

b) The answer implies that the ship was requisitioned by the French Navy after the loss of the French naval tanker *Le Rhone* and given this name. This cannot be correct. Not only was the ship's real name *Le Rhin* not *Le Rhon*, but the French naval tanker *Le Rhone* was sunk on 19 Dec. 1940 (see *Jane's*, *Le Masson*, etc.) by which time the *Le Rhin/Fidelity* had already been chartered by the Royal Navy.

c) Neither *Le Masson* nor *Cornic* show any naval auxiliary of any type named *Le Rhin*. According to *HMS Fidelity*, the



The Coat of Arms  
designed by the College of Heraldry  
for

H.M.S. FIDELITY

ship was mercantile and there is no indication that she had ever been requisitioned by the French Navy. However, she was used by the Deuxieme Bureau as a secret carrier for maritime saboteurs (secret agents) led by Peri/Costa. These agents placed plastic explosives against the hull of the German merchant ship *Corrientes* at Las Palmas on 10 May 1940, and the subsequent explosion rendered that ship unseaworthy (Shades of Greenpeace and Auckland). I did not mention this in my original answer because the way it is described in *HMS Fidelity* is so much like a work of fiction (flashbacks) that I doubted its veracity, especially since I could find no corroborating mention of this incident in any other book.

By B. Eneberg, Gynea Bay, NSW Australia.  
Viktor Frampton, Brooklyn, NY USA.

An American edition of *HMS Fidelity* by Marcel Julian, translated by Mervyn Savill was published by W. Norton and Co. of New York in 1957 (Library of Congress Card Number 57-10631). This book was republished in paperback by Futura Publications of London in 1975 (ISBN 0 8600 72126).

#### QUESTION 27/84 see WI 4/85 page 426.

Both *Foch* and *Clemenceau* operated off the coast of Lebanon in 1983-84. *Foch* was only on station in Sept.-Oct. 1983 while *Clemenceau* was on station for the rest of the time. On 22 Sept. 1983 Super Etendards from the *Foch* destroyed 4 gun batteries in the Beirut area. A news release stated that this was the Aeronaval's first combat operation since the Algerian War. Have these ships carried out any other combat operations since then, ones in which guns were fired or bombs dropped?

#### QUESTION 35/84 see WI 4/85 page 427.

By Rene Greger, Prague, Czechoslovakia.

This answer is not quite correct, as the *Rus* did carry guns (a clear photo documenting this will be published in my book *The Russian Navy Between Tsushima and Sarajevo*, produced by Bernard and Graefe, Koblenz). Furthermore, the majority of the data given by *Moiseev* represents the projected armament of these armed merchant cruisers. The actual armament differed. Thus, *Ural* had two 120mm guns, and not four as stated in the answer.

overweight (1,630t design/1,836t actual) as were most of the prewar USN destroyers. Only in the *Fletcher* class (2,110t design/2,276t actual) was this defect finally overcome.

Having been designed for Baltic conditions, the Polish ships were top-heavy in the Atlantic, but this was later rectified. It should also be noted that most prewar destroyer designs were also top-heavy, and I seriously doubt that *Blyskawica* was rearmed to reduce topweight, as suggested. *Gorm* was still carrying her original armament when she was lost in May 1940, and when *Blyskawica* was rearmed she was given eight British 4in (102mm) guns in four twin mounts plus some 20mm Oerlikon guns, which means that her armament was actually increased, although one set of torpedo tubes was also removed at this time.

(Note by the Director: for more information about these British built Polish destroyers see "Thunder and Lightning: the Polish destroyers *Blyskawica* and *Gorm*" by Eugene Kolesnik in *Warship* No. 4 pages 2-11.)

QUESTION 17/83 see WI 2/85 page 214.

By Robert W. Thew, Severna Park, MD USA

Sometime about 30 years ago, someone in England bought up a large amount of artifacts and scrap from *HMS Ganges* and sold them both in England and the US. I have, on my desk, a small oak tub made from the timbers of the *Ganges* that my wife gave me for Christmas in the early 1950s. Attached to it is a brass plate with the following inscription:

HMS GANGES  
Later *Tendos III*, *Indus V* & *Impregnable*  
Built at Bombay 1821  
Broken up at Plymouth 1930  
The last sailing ship to serve  
as a seagoing flagship

Monomark BCM/Oketub, London W.C.1  
World address

QUESTION 6/84 see WI 3/86 page 317.

By Harold Johnson, Deep River, CT USA

The British "commandos" who attacked the 4 Axis merchant ships interned at Goa were actually members of the Calcutta Light Horse (14) and Calcutta Scottish (4) regiments. These were part-time, auxiliary reserve units composed of overage and essential occupation volunteers, somewhat similar to the British Home Guard units of WW II. They were chosen for this mission on the grounds that regular troops could not be used for fear of compromising Portuguese neutrality, which was considered to be of greater value to the Allies, especially in regards to the use of air bases in the Azores, than to the Germans. Had this attack failed, the British were prepared to disown it as a drunken prank carried out without official sanction by "irregular" troops anxious to see some action. When the attack succeeded, the British press spread up the "cover story" that the ship's crew had mutinied when ordered to make a dash for Japanese waters. To foster this illusion, the British troops used German 9mm ammunition, captured in North Africa, in their sub-machine guns so that the empty cartridge cases would give no indication of British involvement in the attack.

The four Axis ships involved were the *Ehrenfels* (7,742t), *Drachenfels* (6,324t) and *Braunfels* (7,847t) of the German Hansa Line and the *Anfora* (5,452t) of the Italian Lloyd-Triestino Company. Only the *Ehrenfels*, which was known to contain a concealed radio transmitter, was actually attacked; but the other ships scuttled themselves in order to prevent their possible capture and removal by the British.

Details of this action may be found in the book *Boarding Party (The last action of the Calcutta Light Horse)* by James

Leasor (Boston, 1979). The movie *Sea Wolves* starring Roger Moore and Gregory Peck was also based on this incident, and is available on VHS video cassette for home viewing.

QUESTION 18/84 see WI 3/86 page 318.

By Rodger B. Haworth, Wellington, New Zealand.

*HMS Fidelity* did indeed start life as the passenger/cargo ship *Le Rhin*, of 2456 gross tons, Official Number 27356. She was built in 1920 at Garston, England and owned by Cie de Navigation Paquet of Marseille. Her dimensions were 264.8 ft x 41.3 ft. Until June 1940 her Captain was named Passemontton, and she worked for the French Colonial Intelligence Service. In March 1940 she was boarded by Claude Costa (born 7 April 1900 at Hanoi, and a trained radio operator of great physical strength and strong personality). On the night of 9-10 May 1940, the ship lay off Las Palmas while Costa went by launch (swimming the last part) and placed a limpet mine on the German freighter *Corrientes* (4565 grt, built 1921). On 17 June was in Marseille. About this time Costa called himself Lt. de Vaisseau Peri. He was accompanied throughout these exploits by his girlfriend Mlle Madeleine Guesclin (born 1910). Her husband had been killed in Somaliland by the Italians and she went to Indochina where she met Costa.

In June therefore, Costa/Peri took over the ship, loaded about 1500 tons of supplies (230 tons rice, 300 tons sugar, 10 tons coffee, 750 tons cement, 200 tons clothing) and with his crew of 20 volunteers set sail for Gibraltar. There half of the crew mutinied because of Costa's violence; but with 12 Belgians added, the ship sailed on 21 July as part of a convoy escort for Liverpool. On 5 August she left the convoy and entered Barry, South Wales. Costa and his crew then claimed prize money for the cargo, which they eventually received.

In Sept. 1941, *Le Rhin* commissioned into the Royal Navy as *HMS Fidelity*. Costa changed his name again, becoming temporarily RN commissioned Commander Jack Langlais. The French and Belgian crew also assumed new names. The first officer was temporarily RN commissioned Madeleine V. Barclay WRNS (actually Guesclin). Surely *Fidelity* must have been the first RN warship to sail with a woman as second-in-command.

*Fidelity* spent some months landing agents in the south of France, and was overhauled at Southampton. At the time of her loss, her complement was 334, consisting of 20 RN, RNVR and RNR officers, 2 Royal Marine officers and 312 other ranks and ratings. The only survivors were from *MTB 105* launched earlier under the command of Temp. Lt. J. H. O'Neill (a Belgian) and his seven man crew. Also lost were about 50 survivors of the *Empire Shackleton*, including VAdm. Egerton, who had been picked up from boats by *Fidelity*.

The above information is taken from *The Convoy That Nearly Died—The Story of ONS154* by Henry Revelly (London, 1979) pages 38-40. The author was third officer on the *Zarian*, one of the ships lost in this convoy which also included the *Fidelity*.

QUESTION 43/84 see WI 1/86 page 97-101.

By Professor F. W. Hoepke, Bielefeld, W. Germany.

There is a nasty misprint in my answer to this question. The title of Junker's paper should read "Studien und Experimentelle Arbeiten zur Konstruktion Meines Grossdieselmotors" (i.e. Studies and Experiments concerning my big Diesel Engines). The quotation in its misprinted form would be rather unpronounceable, even for a German, aside from being entirely cryptic.

16-17 June 1968: The Swift boat *PCF-19* was attacked and sunk by USAF F-4 Phantom aircraft just south of the DMZ when it was mistaken for a low flying helicopter. 5 of the 7 crewmen aboard were killed.

Other USAF Phantoms fired Sparrow missiles at the *USS Boston* (CAG-1) and the Australian guided missile destroyer *Hobart* operating north of the DMZ when their "look down" radar identified the ships as low flying helicopters. 2 crewmen were killed and 7 wounded aboard the *Hobart*. A USCG cutter was also strafed on this date under the mistaken impression that it was an enemy helicopter.

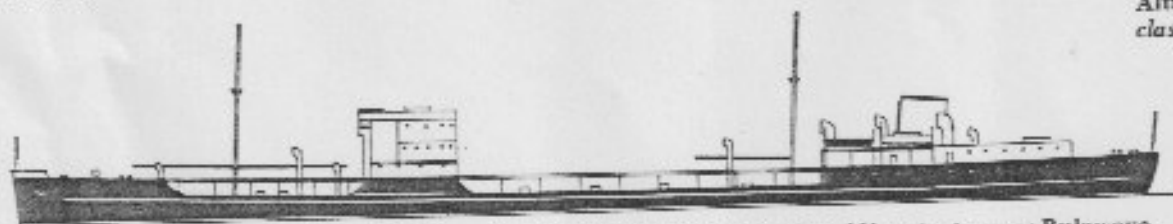
The numerous reports of Soviet built North Vietnamese helicopters operating near the DMZ were later dismissed as radar "ghosts"; but USMC radar operators believed them to be real and one of the survivors of the *PCF-19* stated that his ship was sunk by a rocket fired from an enemy helicopter.

Sources: Cockburn, *Inside the Soviet Military Machine* (Random House, NY, 1983), page 149.  
*WI* 4/78 page 356-57, 3/81 pages 299-300.

15 April 1972: During the course of a major air strike against Haiphong harbor, the *USS Worden* (DLG-18), operating in the Gulf of Tonkin, was hit by 2 Shrike anti-radar missiles inadvertently fired by USAF aircraft. These missiles homed in on the ship's radar transmissions and exploded some 80-100 ft above it. Fragments of the missile body and warhead (50 lb explosive charge) showered the superstructure, killing 1 crew member and seriously wounding 9 others as well as putting the ship out of action with no power, light or communications for some 30 minutes. When the ship was again able to get underway, it was estimated that she had lost some 60% of her combat effectiveness. Following a 10 day repair period at Subic Bay, the ship returned to active duty on 11 May 1972.

Sources: *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Vol. VIII, pages 472-473.

D. K. Brown, "Into the 21st Century," in *Warship* (not *WI*) No. 22, page 118.



Note: *Altmark* was supply ship to *Graf Spee* in 1939. *Nordmark* served in Royal Navy post-war as *Bulawayo*.

27 March 1940 arrived at Kiel, Germany.  
 March 1940 name changed to *Uckermark*.  
 April-June 1940 under repair at Kiel.  
 14 Sept. 1940 mine explosion, port side.  
 18 Jan. 1941 to 23 March 1941 supply ship for *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* in the Atlantic.  
 9 Sept. 1942 put to sea from La Pallice, France in company with auxiliary cruiser (Hilfskreuzer) *Michel*. The two ships separated in the Indian Ocean, with *Uckermark* (ex-*Altmark*) proceeding to Yokohama, Japan where she would serve as a floating depot ship for German commerce raiders operating in the Eastern Pacific and Indian Oceans.  
 30 Nov. 1942 the auxiliary cruiser *Thor* (Schiff 10) was berthed alongside for minor repairs. While coolies were cleaning one of the oil tanks on the *Uckermark*, a tremendous explosion took place, probably caused by inadequate ventilation of oil vapors. This explosion damaged both ships beyond possible repair and it is believed that they were finally scrapped by the Japanese.

QUESTION 4/84 see *WI* 1/84 page 114.

Answer by Marc Blackburn, Palo Alto, California, USA.  
 Alvin H. Grobmeier CDR USN (Ret.), La Mesa, California, USA.  
 Alex Morton, Whitby, Ontario, Canada.  
 Nikolaus A. Sifferlinger, Wolfsberg, Austria.  
 Joachim Wiesemann, Pfaffenhofen, W. Germany.

The *Altmark* was built as supply ship (trossschiff) "A" for the German Navy by Howaldtswerke, Kiel (yard number 750). Laid down in 1937, she was launched 13 Nov. 1937 and commissioned 14 Nov. 1938. Sisterships included *Ermeland*, *Dithmarschen*, *Nordmark*, *Franken*, and the cancelled *Haveland*.

Details of this ship, especially the displacement and dimensions, vary greatly between different sources, but the following is a general consensus:

Displacement: 12,000t nominal, 10,698 GRT, 12,670t tdw, 22,500 gross.

Dimensions: 179m loa x 174.65m lwl x 22.0m x 8.80m (582 ft x 72.5 ft x 30.25 ft).

Armament: three x 15cm (fitted in summer of 1940), two to four x 20mm, 1 aircraft.

Machinery: 2 x Wagner turbines, 2 x Wagner boilers (45 atu), 4 x MAN 9 cylinder Diesel engines with DDM Vulcan gear, 24-28,000 HP, 21 knots, 12,800nm at 15.5 knots, 10,000nm at 18 knots, 1720t fuel.

Misc.: complement 133.

Career: 5 Aug. 1939 left Wilhelmshaven for Port Arthur, Texas, USA to take on diesel fuel for the pocket battleship *Admiral Graf Spee*. Until 21 Jan. 1940 on station in the South Atlantic to supply German warships.

16 Feb. 1940 intercepted by British destroyer *Cossack* (Capt. Vian) in the Joessingfjord, Norway (inside Norwegian waters). The British released 303 prisoners taken from various ships by the *Admiral Graf Spee* in the South Atlantic. The *Altmark* (Capt. Dau) was run ashore to prevent capture and 8 members of her crew were killed.

**Altmark class**

Sources: Bennett, *Battle of the River Platte* (Ian Allan).  
 Blundell, *German Navy Warships 1939-1945*.  
 Ciupa, *Die Deutschen Kriegsschiffe* (1979).  
 Ellis, *Famous Ships of WW II* (Arco).  
 Fechter/Schomaekers, *Der Seekrieg 1939-45 in Karten* (Preetz, 1967).  
 Muggenthaler, *German Raiders of WW II* (Prentice-Hall).  
 Rassenack, *Panzerschiff Admiral Graf Spee* (Herford, 1957).  
 Rohwer/Hummelchen *Chronik des Seekrieges 1939-1945 Tanker und Versorger der Deutschen Flotte 1900-1980* (Motobuch Verlag, Stuttgart).

QUESTION 18/84 see *WI* 2/84 page 224.

Answer by Joseph Caruana, Senglea, Malta.  
 Alex Morton, Whitby, Ontario, Canada.  
 Aryeh Wetherhorn, Gush Etzion, Israel.

*HMS Fidelity* was built as a merchantship by M and C

Grason Ltd. in 1920. She was 2,450 BRT, measured 270 ft x 41 ft x 20 ft (82.2m x 12.5m x 6.1m), with 2 coal fired boilers and triple expansion engines developing 1,100hp - 9.5 knots. She had 2 holds, 2 masts, one funnel, a derrick for heavy cargo and accommodations for 20 passengers in 7 cabins.

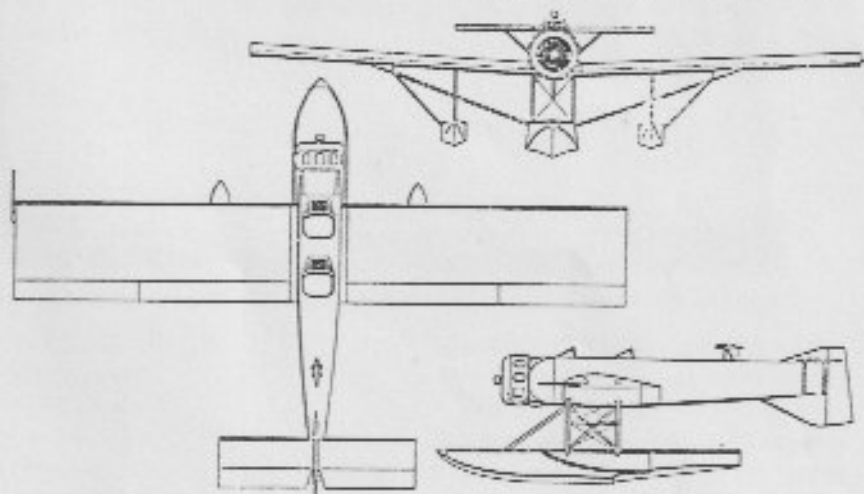
Following the loss of the oiler *Le Rhone* to U-37 at the beginning of WW II, she was apparently taken into service by the French Navy for special missions (Q-ship?). She was armed with one x 100mm and two x 20mm guns, plus some of the first "plastique" (plastic explosive) and was renamed *Le Rhone*.

On 17 June 1940, when France sued for an armistice, the *Le Rhone* was at sea in the western Mediterranean as part of a French convoy from Marseilles to Senegal. Claude Costa, a French Secret Service agent who was on board, seized control of the ship and brought her to Gibraltar, where she arrived on the 20th. When France surrendered on 22 June, Costa offered the ship to the British, although most of the crew opted for repatriation to France. With a crew made up of various European volunteers, and flying the British RNR (Blue Ensign) flag she left in convoy for England, arriving at Barry, Wales in late August. She was then chartered by the Admiralty effective 24 Sept. 1940 under the command of Claude Costa who had managed to obtain an acting Lt. Cdr.'s commission in the RN. During Jan-Feb 1941 she was refitted by Baileys at Barry into a special service vessel (Q-ship) with the pendant number D 57. Renamed *HMS Fidelity*, her armament consisted of three x 100 mm, two x 75mm and three x 25mm guns. In July 1941, she also received one of the Besson MB-411 floatplanes previously carried by the giant French submarine *Surcouf*. This aircraft had been damaged during the course of a German air raid on Plymouth where it was being stored, and as a result had been left behind by the *Surcouf* when she sailed from Plymouth on 10 May 1941.

Between April and Sept. 1941 she accompanied 2 convoys as a Q-ship (shooting down a Ju-88 off the Irish coast in early April); but in both instances she was diverted to land secret agents on the French Mediterranean coast. From the fall of 1941 to the summer of 1942 she was employed in the clandestine landing and recovering of secret agents. However, by mid-1942 parachute drops and an effective escape line in Europe diminished her usefulness, and it was decided to convert her into an assault-ship for commando operations. This conversion took place at Portsmouth from early November to mid-December 1942, and her armament was changed to four x 100mm guns (in twin or single mounts, sources differ), four x 20mm AA guns, four x 21 in torpedo tubes, depth charge throwers, radar and Asdic (sonar). She also carried two Kingfisher floatplanes, a small 10-ton MTB (*MTB-105*), and a few landing craft. With a full contingent of 150 commandos and a mixed French/British crew, she left England in late Dec. 1942 with convoy ONS 154 bound for the far east (an area in which Lt. Cdr. Costa may have previously worked for the French Secret Service).

The convoy came under continuous U-boat attacks from the night of 26/27 Dec. to 1 Jan. 1943. On 28 Dec., in spite of heavy seas, *Fidelity* tried to fly-off one of her aircraft for convoy protection. However, the plane collided with the ship and was destroyed, although the crew were rescued by an escort. The crash also caused some damage to the ship's condensers, and *Fidelity* came to a virtual halt and had to be abandoned by the convoy. Emergency repairs enabled *Fidelity* to move slowly on the 29th, and she changed course for the Azores. Late that evening she was unsuccessfully attacked by 2 U-boats (*U-225* and *U-615*) and lowered the *MTB 105* into the water for a combined attack on the U-boats. The MTB dropped depth charges without any results, but the concussion apparently damaged the boat itself because the engines began to run rough and then stopped. Visual contact with *Fidelity* was lost during the darkness.

BESSON MB-411



*H.M.S. Fidelity* was a special service vessel with a concealed armament which eventually included two aircraft and an M.T.B. Photo I.W.M.

and on the morning of 30 Dec., the ship was no longer in sight although radio contact was maintained until that evening. After that, nothing more was ever heard from *Fidelity*; but *U-435* reported sinking a small British auxiliary between 1600 and 1700 hours on 30 Dec. 1942, and from the description of the ship and its position, this could only have been *Fidelity*. *MTB 105* was found by the *HMCS Woodstock* on 1 Jan. 1943, and after the crew had been rescued, the boat was scuttled.

The above information is mainly taken from the book *HMS Fidelity* by Marcel Julian and translated into English by Mervyn Savill (Futura, London, 1975). The style of this book is not adapted to serious research, but the data from the appendices is in general agreement with *British Warships of WW II* by Lenton and Colledge. (page 279).

**QUESTION 23/84** see *WI 2/84* page 224.

*Answer by R. D. Layman, Corte Madera, California, USA.*

The detention of Frederick J. Rutland is discussed at length in Desmond Young's biography *Rutland of Jutland* (London: Cassell & Co., 1963) and this book must be read for the complete story. Briefly, however, Rutland was interned under Section 18B of the British Defense (General) Regulations of 1939, which ungrammatically reads: "If the Secretary of State has reasonable cause to believe any person to be of hostile origin or associations and by that reason thereof it is necessary to exercise control over him, he may make an order against that person directing that he be detained."

The action against Rutland was debated in Parliament in 1942, one of his champions being Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes, but no satisfactory answer to the question of why he was detained was given—then or later. The then-Secretary of State, Herbert Morrison, would state only: "The grounds for the order are that he is of hostile associations and by reason thereof it is necessary to exercise control over him." That simply parroted Section 18B, and Morrison pleaded the necessity of military secrecy for giving no details.

Rutland had joined the Royal Navy at the age of 15 and transferred to the Royal Navy Air Service early in World War I. He gained renown for piloting a Short 184 floatplane from the seaplane carrier *Engadine* at the Battle of Jutland and was awarded the Albert Medal, First Class, for lifesaving work when *Engadine* went to the rescue of the heavily damaged armored cruiser *Warrior*. Later he became one of the greatest pioneers of deck takeoffs, contributing significantly to the development of shipboard aviation.

In 1923 Rutland resigned his RN commission and took a job with the aviation division of Mitsubishi Nainenki Seizo K.K. in Japan. This was completely normal; a British aeronautical mission had helped organize and train the Japanese naval air service in the early 1920s and Mitsubishi during the same period employed a number of British aeronautical engineers including Herbert Smith, former chief designer for the Sopwith Aviation Co. Rutland returned to Britain in 1928 and in the 1930s moved to Beverly Hills, California, where by 1937 he had established a stock brokerage firm.

This business was primarily a cover for his work as a Japanese agent, in which capacity he gathered information about U.S. naval aviation. This was undoubtedly espionage under the strict definition of the word, but as Young points out, there is a considerable difference between "agent" and "spy." It appears that much if not all the information Rutland gleaned came from publicly available sources, in the same manner in which such information is gained legitimately by an embassy's air or naval attaché. As a Caucasian, he could obtain information far more inconspicuously than could a Japanese in the then-highly racist United States.

In November, 1941, Rutland returned to Britain by air,

at a time when such flights were highly restricted. Much mystery surrounds this trip, which was obviously officially authorized since it involved both U.S. and British service aircraft, and which apparently was made at his volition. His motives for returning also are unclear, but it is presumed he intended to place at British disposal information about Japanese naval aviation he had gained while working for Mitsubishi. One would assume that this information would have been accepted gladly, but instead he was arrested under Section 18B on Dec. 16, 1941, and was held until late 1943. After his release he remained in Britain, under rather obscure circumstances, and on Jan. 26, 1949, committed suicide by gas inhalation.

In retrospect it seems clear that Rutland's detention was simply a case of guilt by association despite the facts that his employment in Japan was entirely normal and innocent at the time and that his undercover work in the United States was never directed at his own country.

Much of the mystery surrounding Rutland's detention remains unsolved. Young's researches in the United States and Britain were as thorough as possible in the 1950s and early '60s, but there were areas he could not penetrate. It is possible that with subsequent loosening of some British security strictures, and the passage of the Freedom of Information Act in the United States, more details could be obtained. It is also conceivable that some information may be contained in Japanese archives that Young was unable to investigate. However, I have been given to understand that the Rutland family has actively discouraged any further investigation, fearing painful publicity.

**QUESTION 27/84** see *WI 3/84* page 323.

*Answer by Thomas E. Aris, Middletown, New York, USA.  
Donald E. Horton, Bryan, Ohio, USA.*

The French aircraft carriers *Foch* and *Clemenceau* had a designed capacity of up to 60 planes, but by 1960 the increased size and weight of jet aircraft had reduced this figure to 40. These consisted of two 12 plane fighter squadrons, one 12 plane ASW squadron and 4 helicopters.

The fighter squadrons have included Etendard IV-M, Etendard IV-P and Crusaders. The Etendard IV-M is a single seat, supersonic interceptor and ground attack aircraft, while the IV-P is a photo recon/tanker version. Originally designed for the French Air Force, they were produced for the French Navy by Dassault. The IV-M entered squadron service in Jan. 1962 with all deliveries completed in 1964. As a temporary measure, these ships operated the Aquilon (Sea Venom) interceptor; but in 1963 the French Navy purchased 42 F-8E Crusaders from the USA. Delivered in 1964, one squadron of these planes was embarked on each ship in 1966. Designated F-8U-2NE (FN) they differ from their USN counterparts in having a modified wing which results in a lower landing speed.

The ASW squadrons were composed of Brequet Br.1050 Alize (Tradewind) turboprops, while the *Foch* carries 2 Alouette III and 2 Super Frelon helicopters.

In the late 1970s the Etendard IV was replaced by the Dassault Super Etendard; but the small size and light construction of these ships has made it difficult to find a suitable replacement for the Crusaders. The Sepecat Jaguar had been intended for use onboard these ships, but was found to be unacceptable. (Note by the Director: In light of their performance in the Falklands/Malvinas War, Sea Harriers might be suitable aircraft for these ships.)

*Sources: Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships 1947-82, Part I, page 28.*

*Jane's Fighting Ships 1974-75, 1976-77.*

*Polmar, Aircraft Carriers.*