

## H.M.S. BYARD.

"Byard" was the name of the famous

horse of the four sons of Aymon, heroes of the time of Charlemagne. The name is also given to a horse in Scott's "Lady of the Lake" and is frequently applied to any spirited horse. (Everyman's Encyclopedia)

The name can also be applied to "H.M.S. Byard" as, until a certain re-distribution of weights was carried out, her movements, even in light weather, were certainly spirited, and, even at the present day, cannot be called subdued.

Possibly this spiritedness of horse and ship has a bearing on the Officers and Ship's Company as their behaviour in any weather, at sea or on shore, has never yet lacked that quality.

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## THE GROUP

It has been considered advisable to precede the story of the "Spirited Horse" (H.M.S. Byard) by a brief history of the Fourth Escort Group, of which she was a member.

The Fourth Escort Group consisted of :—

- H.M.S. "BENTINCK" . Group Leader and Senior Officer's Ship.
- H.M.S. "BYARD" . The Spirited Horse.
- H.M.S. "CALDER" . With the tallest Commanding Officer afloat.
- H.M.S. "DEURY" . With the record mileage of any frigate.
- H.M.S. "BAZELY" . Who left for a time and was relieved by :—

H.M.S. "PASLEY" . The "Baby", who stayed on "Bazely's" return to relieve :—

H.M.S. "BLACKWOOD" . Who was lost, just after "D" Day, while taking part in the Invasion of France.

H.M.S. "BURGESS" . Who has done Yeoman service in her new group.

The Fourth Group was formed in the Summer of 1943 and operated in the Western Approaches Command until the present time (June 1945). A lively period.

As perhaps not all of the Group may be required for operations in Eastern Waters and before the "Spirited Horse" or any of her comrades are relegated to the Knacker's Yard, it has been decided to compile these two short histories as a tribute to the men who manned the ships and to :—

"Their Sweethearts and Wives,  
May they never meet."

(The Saturday Night Toast  
of the Royal Navy)



(5) "THE HUNT"

# History of the Fourth Escort Group . . .

**C**APTAIN'S Class Frigates originally took their names from Captains of Nelson's period. This system was later extended.

The Captain Class Frigate (known to the U.S. Navy as Destroyer Escort) is today the most common ship in Western Approaches Command. At the time when this story begins only a small band of pioneers had seen one, and even today a D.E. is still something of a "rara avis" in the fleet, requiring special brands of electric current, diesel oil, lube oil and U.S.N. spares. (Even in 1944 Byard and Pasley were addressed as U.S. Ships in Malta).

During the Summer and Autumn, 1942, keels were laid in shipyards up and down the East coast of the U.S.A.; keels for a fast modern escort vessel, one equipped with the latest weapons, yet capable of being mass-produced. The best naval designs of Britain and America pooled with American technique to produce two types, the Turbo-Electric and the Diesel-Electric. And when the Americans produce they produce fast! Launchings for the Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy came one after another through the Spring of 1943. Among them commissioned Bentinck, Byard and Calder from Hingham, Mass., Blackwood and Bazely from Boston, Mass., and Drury from Philadelphia, P.A.

From Britain came officers and men in thousands to man this new construction. They made the most of their stay in the U.S., that oasis of food, skyscrapers, "old-fashioned" and pretty girls.

What ship has not still its regular mail to the States, tenuous bonds which two more years of war have not severed? Courses in New York, Schenectady, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Key West; parties in Boston, Philadelphia, Washington—commissioning time came all too soon.

On June 30th, 1943, after working up at Bermuda, Bentinck, (S.O.) with Drury, Burges, Berry and Blackwood, escorted Queen Elizabeth and Phoebe to Plymouth. On this trip Drury demonstrated one of the peculiarities of electric propulsion by losing main power twice when immediately ahead of "Q.E."

There followed first of class trials in the Clyde, and for Bentinck the honours of conveying U.S. Navy Secretary, Frank Knox and Admiral Stark, U.S.N., from Rosneath to Londonderry and back.

Meanwhile a Senior Officer, Fourth Escort Group, had been appointed, Cdr. E. H. Chevane, D.S.O., D.S.C., in Blackwood. With Bazely, Drury, Johan Maurits (D.S.) and others he escorted a convoy to Dakar,

returning to Belfast via Casablanca. As a goodwill mission to the Dakar French this expedition was an undoubted success (ask les girls cher Madame Lilly!).

As a defence to the convoy against 17 Focke-Wulf 200's in the Bay of Biscay, our guns had been less effective. Without the intervention of "Norfolk" we should have fared none too well: One M/V blew up, one calmed Lisbon with leaks, fifty others went on their way.

September saw us still discovering minor troubles. Byard (S.O.), Blackwood, Burges and Drury supported two Atlantic convoys. Wrote the S.O.: "There was no noteworthy incident, except the lamentable failure of the Group's Gyro compasses in moderate high seas." The beginners will remember the E.A.'s regular report: "Got mercury spilt on her sensitive element again, Sir!"

On 10th October, 1943, the Group sailed in strength to escort O.N. 529 (Bentinck (S.O.), Byard, Bazely, Berry, Blackwood, Burges and Drury). Full-scale battle was joined with a pack of U-boats making their second major attempt after re-arming with acoustic torpedoes. First blood went to Byard, who with a single pattern brought U841 to the surface and dispatched it with gunfire. Acoustic torpedoes were fired with abandon; Coastal Command fought gallantly and destroyed at least 3 U-boats in our area; Drury rescued 7 of the crew of a Sunderland shot down when pressing home its attack.

Bentinck, Bazely and Drury all drove off determined attacks to penetrate the screen. One M/V was lost in this two-day battle, and we returned to Belfast from Argentina, feeling ready for anything.

On 19th December, Bentinck, Byard, Calder, Blackwood, Bazely and Drury sailed for the Bay of Biscay, where the U-boats operating under air cover from France were concentrating against our Gibraltar convoys. On the evening of the 20th we were in the picture—two H.E. 177's attacked Drury with Glider Bombs, and one made a pass at Calder. Drury collected small bomb splinters but no damage, though the rest of us had fears for her as these primitive "Doodlebugs" came in. In the words of our Senior Officer: "The incident then terminated with honours easy and minor expenditure of ammunition on both sides."

But, for the next fortnight, our depth charge expenditure was heavy enough: night after night we were chasing and attacking surfaced U-boats. Bazely and Blackwood were awarded a "probable"—for the rest we were generally hurrying from one convoy to another and had little time to complete a kill. In all, twelve

U-boats were attacked, three convoys were supported across the Bay without loss, and we spent a happy day in Horta, Azores, topping up with fuel, depth charges and pineapples.

The enemy had used every trick in his bag—aircraft hunting U-boats or exuding glider bombs, U-boats releasing radar decoys and acoustic torpedoes. (One of these caused Bentinck to rise bodily from her natural element, but otherwise did no serious harm). We returned to the gentle ministry of our base staff, regretting missed opportunities. But Doeritz's great "Bay offensive" had been defeated.

After this trip Blackwood left us, and we went with sorrow shortly after "D" Day that she had been lost in the Channel. Burgess too changed groups later—early in 1944. Her place was taken by Pusey, who became leader of the "Diesel Division". In July 1944 Cdr. Chevaise went to the Staff of Commander-in-Chief, Western Approaches, and Cdr. R. C. S. Garwood became our Senior Officer.

From December 1943 to October 1944 we were almost out of Western Approaches, securing fast troop convoys to and from the Mediterranean—a job which at first excited our imagination but was later to bore us with its pleasant but cloying routine simplicity. Today when Alexander's armies stand triumphant in Italy we realise the part our laborious escort duty played in the build-up of a fighting army.

The first few trips had excitement enough. The danger of air attack was real; convoys ahead and astern of us along the North African coast were attacked by U-boats; smoke screens, fighter cover, cruiser support were our routine. Mainly, though, we remember the "Med." for its weather, for halcyon days in the Bay of Naples (while the rest of the Belfast Escort Force were facing an uncharitable winter in the North Atlantic), and for trips to Pompeii in trains crowded above roof level. The Group Regatta in Bala Bay deserves a line for itself. Rowed in perfect weather with fierce competition, Bazelzy triumphed amid scenes of wild enthusiasm—damped only when our tame bookie, First Lieutenant of Drury, discovered that by a slight error he had offered us all double odds!

Bentinck remembers too how close we came to firing on a target towing plane over Algiers; our aircraft recognition was saved only by a French Naval Pilot taking passage to Italy. Drury did at least one strenuous job, transferring a case of Delirium Tremens from a trooper and landing him at Gibraltar. Let us not forget Boxing Day 1943, celebrated in Algiers harbour after a busy Christmas Day at sea. We arrived at 11.00, commenced fueling and prepared to celebrate. To our dismay we were at sea again by 18.00, zigzagging manfully.

On one pretext or another we would slip into Gibraltar if the S.O. could be persuaded. Sherry graced the Wardroom wine lockers after these visits, and the Stranger leave trains were redolent with strange fruits. Bentinck even attempted a decking job in Oran by

claiming that her port "A bracket" had gone. An astern movement at the harbour entrance put paid to that, one large black fish, forced under the shaft by an earlier depth charge pattern, floated away, and Bentinck ruefully rejoined the convoy!

All good things come to an end, and with some relief we left the Mediterranean trimlines for the best job in Western Approaches, U-boat hunting on offensive patrols. Doeritz had commenced his last campaign with his last secret weapon, the "Schorkel". First seen in the Channel on "D" Day, his U-boats had taken advantage of their new immunity from air attack, and by December 1944 were operating close inshore along our Western Seaboard. Off Cape Clear in November, off Cape Wrath in December, Christmas 1944 in Scapa Flow (colder but less interrupted than the Algerian diversions), but no confirmed U-boat contact.

In January this year our chance came again. Off Liverpool Bay an ex-Belfast frigate, *Manners*, was torpedoed. The Fourth and Fifth Escort Groups were on the scene within an hour, Bentinck made contact, and attack followed attack until Calder brought the U-boat to surface. *Aylmer* (S.O.E.G.5) rammed, and *Manners* was avenged within six hours. Wreckage we recovered but no survivors appeared. A hospital ship providentially on the spot took off *Manners'* injured and she was towed into harbour by one of the Navy's veterans, P.C.74. We felt pleased with ourselves.

February and March were uneventful; we supported innumerable convoys, but the enemy avoided them—and us. In April, at the eleventh hour, we had our greatest success: two U-boats, complete with human remains and plentiful wreckage, but again no survivors. The first was rash enough to show his periscope to one of the Calder's look-outs. He was hunted down, and after several hours of attacks by Bentinck and Calder, large and satisfying explosions brought his career to an end. The second was quickly despatched. Within a short time of Drury's initial contact, Bazelzy fired one pattern . . . . . explosions, a human lung, and the usual debris came up. Fourth Escort Group to harbour to celebrate.

Following "VE" Day celebrations, of which no authoritative, unbiased account is available, the Fourth rounded off their European career with a trip to Murmansk with a North Russian convoy.

By this time Doeritz's crowd of unprincipled pirates were losing their grip, although strict vigilance was necessary for unaccounted U-boats and Norwegian-based German aircraft. The Group was greatly heartened by meeting first one or two surrendering U-boats and then a group of twelve on their way to British ports.

Not much fraternisation was possible during the Group's short stay in North Russia. Two Russian concerts however were thoroughly enjoyed by those fortunate enough to attend.

No palates were tickled by strange spirits as there appeared to be a local famine of the much-vaunted Vodka . . . . . recourse was had to that solace of the Royal

Navy—gin. This resulted in an impromptu victory party, unduly prolonged, as with 24 hours daylight no one realised it was time to turn in. A photograph of a number of Group Officers was taken at 02.30.

An uneventful trip home was enlivened by a revival on Captain (D) 17's part, of that old naval game of "Evolutions" to celebrate the news that we were no longer in an official combat area.

We now face the parting of the ways, some to carry

on and finish off the Asiatic Fascists, a lot to "Civvy" Street, and, eventually, the "Caretakers" to keep the Navy going until required again. But, although life at sea in wartime has been described as 90% boredom (which includes discomfort) and 9% fright, none will forget the 1% thrills (ashore as well as afloat), nor the genuine goodfellowship of the Fourth Escort Group who were but one of many well-led, efficient groups of the Western Approaches Command who beat not only the U-boats but the weather as well.

## H.M.S. "BYARD"

### Her Name

The ship takes her name after one of Nelson's Post Captains, Robert Byard, who is believed to be descended from the famous French Knight, *PERREAU DU TERRAIN, BAYARD*, "le bon chevalier, sans peur et sans reproche" (1475-1524), who was born at the Chateau de Bayard in the Dauphine. A branch of the family settled in England during the 17th Century. The name later became corrupted to its present form.

"Le bon chevalier" accompanied Charles VIII of France against Naples in 1494 and served in the Italian wars of Louis XII. The ship named after his descendant first visited Naples in 1944. The good knight was of such peerless renown that even his enemies considered it an honour to be vanquished by him in combat.

Another branch of this family settled in America and, retaining the original spelling of the name, produced Thomas Francis Bayard (1828-98), a famous American statesman who was U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain 1893-97. It is through this statesman (but the Americans insisted on calling the ship *BAYARD* while building her, and a reproduction of an old map, in the Wardroom at present, bears the same form of spelling in the printed inscription.

### Her Birth

"Byard" was born at a small town called Hingham in Massachusetts, about 17 miles south-east of Boston.

In 1941 there was only a small polo ground and one small yacht building slip at Hingham. In February 1942 the United States Navy commissioned the Bethlehem Steel Company to build and operate a modern shipyard. By February 1943 not only was the shipyard built but it had already completed 40 L.S.T.'s and launched the first D.E. (U.S.N. Destroyer Escort). Twenty-six building slips and 26 fitting-out jetties were ready to start the first contract of fifty D.E.'s (Nos. 51 to 100).

Britain arranged to take over through lease-land every

third ship commencing with D.E. 52 (H.M.S. Bentinck). H.M.S. Byard was D.E. 55 and H.M.S. Calder D.E. 58.

The Spirited Horse was launched on 6th March 1943 by Lady Doring, the wife of Admiral T. C. Doring, R.N., who was at the time holding an appointment with the British Admiralty Delegation, Washington.

The ship was launched in a blinding snowstorm and commissioned on the 18th June 1943 in extremely hot sunshine, the Ship's Company, after frantic (and not too scrupulous) efforts wearing No. 6 Uniform. The time lag in the supply of British stores, a handicap which has continued to the present day, was such that it was necessary to borrow the White Ensign of H.M.S. Burgess over in Boston.

### Her War Activities

As previously stated, Byard was the second turbo-electric D.E. (H.M.S. Bentinck, the leader of the Fourth Escort Group, being the first), and was commissioned on 18th June 1943 at Hingham, Mass., U.S.A.

The remainder of June 1943 was spent in fitting various secret apparatus.

At the beginning of her active career, during the first week in July 1943, the Spirited Horse distinguished herself by kicking up her heels and wiping off both her rear shoes (screws) on the Boston D.G. Range, then charging half-way through one of the Charleston Navy Yard jetties amid a shower of sparks, steam and water from the ruptured mains.

The U.S. Navy reaction was to thank the Commanding Officer for a long-awaited excuse to rebuild that particular jetty. If those officials had been aware of how the Byard might just as easily have rammed U.S.S. "Constitution" (the U.S. Navy's equivalent of H.M.S. "Victory"), perhaps a different view would have been taken of the incident!

After a short working-up period at Bermuda, with its attendant blood, sweat, tears and cursing, Byard

## THE SPIRITED HORSE

joined E.G.B.8 at Argentia, N.F., for her first convoy duties.

The trip home was attended with the usual alarms and excursions of that period, as the U-boat pack attack system was then at its height. However, evasive manoeuvring gave a comparatively easy passage, and on the 21st August 1943 the Spirited Horse arrived at what was to be her base for the remainder of the European war, viz. Belfast. Here she became and still is the experimental animal for the various Base Departments. The officers and ship's company are now anti-vivisectionists.

After various alterations and additions to conform to British Standards, including the abolition of the cafeteria, landing of dishwashing machine, ice-cream freezer, etc., Byard sailed in the newly formed Fourth Escort Group on their first two-way Atlantic Convoy in the early part of October 1943. The U-boat pack attack system was then fully into its stride.

At 15.50, Sunday, 17th October 1943, Byard contacted U841, and having been brought to the surface with depth charges the U-boat sank at 16.20 while being attacked with gunfire. Twenty-seven survivors were rescued, and Byard became the first D.E. American or British to sink a U-boat. This is described in detail in "Her U-Boat Attacks".

A period as a Support Group followed in the Bay of Biscay, and during this operation the Fourth Group had their first taste of the then new German radio-controlled Flying Bombs. H.M.S. Drury and H.M.S. Calder had particularly unpleasant "near misses".

In December 1943 the Group started their first Mediterranean Convoys, spending a hectic Boxing Day in Algiers.

Afterwards came ten "Club Runs" in succession, to Naples with Troop Convoys. More than one hundred and fifty liners of 3,000 to 30,000 tons were convoyed during this period without serious incident or loss except for the Canadian Pilot's beard during a friendly evening on board H.M.C.S. Prince Robert.

Leaving this duty in November 1944, the Group were then switched to the English Channel and the Irish Sea, where the Inshore Offensive by the Schnorkel-fitted U-boats had started. The duty continued until VE Day. During this period the Group had two "kills" and a number of "probables".

### Her Captains

Lt.-Com. (now Commander) L. H. Phillips,  
D.S.C., R.N.  
18th June 1943 to 3rd January 1944

The first Commanding Officer, a very able, experienced and Senior naval officer who served a long period in submarines and saw considerable active service in "Curacoa" in the North Atlantic and Norway. His foresightedness and ability, as well as "drive", put Byard

on her toes from the day she was commissioned. He was awarded the D.S.C. for the sinking of U841, and on his promotion to Commander was appointed to the Staff of the C-in-C. Med. Fleet. He was relieved by:

Lt.-Commander E. M. Ferris, R.N.V.R.  
3rd January 1944 to 9th June 1944

The second Commanding Officer was one of the dozen or so Americans who joined the Navy, via Canada, at the beginning of the war. Previous to his appointment to Byard was in command of F.F.S. "La Melpomene".

He was the first U.S. citizen to command one of His Majesty's ships by appointment. The previous one, Paul Jones, was not appointed by "My Lords".

On being invalided from sea service he was promoted to Commander, and is now serving overseas. He was succeeded by:

Lt.-Commander John Ivor Jones,  
D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N.R.  
9th June 1944 to date

The present Commanding Officer, who commenced the war in "The Little Ships". Had the fortunate experience of capturing and taking into port an Italian submarine intact. He has had extensive experience in command and was through the Crete and Dodecanese "sticky" periods. A proud father, and a Master Mariner in his own right.

### Her Officers

#### The first First Lieutenant

Lt. J. W. Edwards, D.S.C., R.N., was appointed to L.S.T.'s in America but, on arrival in that country, was re-appointed to Byard and was one of the pre-commissioning party at Hingham. An energetic young gentleman, he had a great deal to do with the successful commissioning and, later, smooth running of the ship. He was and is a great favourite with the ladies. In fact it is on record that the Stores Officer, Boston, requested the Commanding Officer to ask No. 1 not to walk through the Stores Dept. during working hours as his presence prevented the female staff concentrating on their work. (For the U.S. Navy).

His D.S.C. was awarded for good work in the sinking of U841.

#### The Engineer Officer

Mr. J. H. Hathaway, Temp. Wt. Engr. R.N., affectionately known to all as "Herry". His escapades are legion and his influence can be traced throughout every exploit of the Byard, be they good or bad. In spite of his "Gilded Bootlace" he has really seen the war from a sea angle, having served in the valiant ship "Jervis" throughout her period in the Mediterranean, including Matapan and a year in "E" Boat Alley in "Lewes". Words cannot describe the man who, if one and the

to have started a run of R.N.R. Officers. However, they are liked despite this, and it is considered that the Byard Line will soon have a quorum.

Pilot : during his short time here has already left a sore spot in a few feminine hearts. His activities, which have extended as far afield as Newtownards in County Down, are described in the Trophies chapter. His imaginary dog threatens to rival "George".

With all the newly-fitted gadgets he now knows that the green stokes he saw previously were not imaginary.

### The present First Lieutenant

**LT. A. Klessey, R.N.R.**, who completes the R.N.R. Officers, is of the direct acting type as befits a merchant man. A gentleman of strong likes and dislikes. His likes are work, drink, women, and music, in that order. His idea of post-war reconstruction is to hang a ship-owner on every hump-post.

No. 1 has an amazing knowledge of serious music, is well read and plays the clarinet. It has been necessary, therefore, as a safeguard against the last activity to have a door fitted to his cabin. The Wardroom Officers are extremely grateful to the B.E.O. Belfast for this humane act.

Since the present First Lieutenant's high-seas language has been felt, as well as heard, there has been a marked decline in the number of defaulters. (Overheard on the Messdecks : "That b—— Jimmy knows too f—— much.")

### The newly-appointed Senior Engineer

**Sub-Lt. (E) J. Duncan, R.N.V.R.**, was appointed to the ship additional a short time ago. He was really sent for experience in Frigates but on arrival was immediately made Senior Engineer by the Engineer Officer and since then has been doing all the Chief's work for him. Being a Belfast man and very popular since he has been here, he is invaluable as a local guide to the lesser known haunts when the ship is at her base.

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Those are "HER OFFICERS". Not good-looking, perhaps ; but they have always been a happy and high-spirited crowd—and always will be as long as she is afloat.

What's in a name ? Quite a lot—if it's a good one !

## Her Ship's Company

In the Spring of 1943 a motley collection of gentlemen and sailors were ferried across the Atlantic by various ships, including the *Queens Mary* and *Elizabeth*.

After a brief but hectic stay in New York this collection, except for a small advance party selected to stand

by the ship at Hingham, was lodged in the U.S.N. DRYDOCK Barracks at Boston.

As Byard was American-built she was equipped with a Cafeteria Messing System (including an ice-cream freezer and a dishwashing machine, both subsequently borrowed by the Supply Staff, Belfast), a ship's laundry and various other domestic amenities. It was soon apparent that, in addition to teaching many the rudiments of seamanship (their only previous experience being the trip across from Britain), it was also necessary to arrange specialist courses to train men to operate this unfamiliar gear.

As the Commanding Officer, First Lieutenant, and Engineer Officer, were away on other duties at Hingham and elsewhere, the onerous duty devolved on Lieut. Coates and Sub. Lieut. Carewell to organise some very intensive and varied training during the short pre-commissioning period.

This training was so well conducted that, for instance, the three ratings sent to a Boston Laundry for training returned with a diploma and a letter of thanks from the Vice-President. By a curious coincidence this laundry



(3) "THE KILL"

was owned by the father of the gentleman who later became the second Commanding Officer.

While this training business was being carried out the Engineer Officer and the "KEY" men of the Engine Room Department were at Syracuse, N.Y. (near Niagra Falls), learning the intricacies of Turbo-Electric Drive.

With their usual thoroughness, and regardless of cost, the U.S. Navy had established a complete D.E.'s Engine Room with attendant class rooms for instructional purposes. This was on the premises which the General Electric Company had specially set up to build the engines for the D.E.'s.

The school was christened the U.S. Land Ship "Knox", and was equipped, like Hingham Shipyard, down to the last detail, including ice water and central heating, as no self-respecting American will work in a class-room with a temperature of below 70° Fahrenheit.

The training proved invaluable, as with the usual R.N. foresight all the Engine Room ratings for this Turbo-Electric ship had been given a special course in Diesel-Electric Drive.

The hospitality was marvellous, although this part of America is mainly populated by people of German extraction.

To most of the party, being 400 miles inland was the farthest they had ever been from the sea in their lives.

While this process of fusing the motley collection into a homogeneous whole was going on, it soon became apparent that Byard was blessed with a "good crowd", who quickly made themselves at home with some excellent friends in and around Boston. It is true there was a certain amount of mischief, but there is not one recorded vicious incident. The relations with the U.S. Navy were good. The following true story is typical.

Two British sailors were "adopted" by a lady whose son was away in the American Army. They spent many delightful hours off-duty at her bungalow in the outskirts, and a lot of this time was spent on the verandah overlooking a lovely bend of the Charles River, but the view was rather reduced by a medium sized tree.

The lady of the house went on a fortnight's visit to her son, leaving them the run of the house, and the use of the car. The pair, after spring-cleaning the furnace and basement, digging the "Victory" garden and tidying up generally, were at ease on the "porch" with a bottle of Rye, when halfway through the bottle they came to the conclusion that something ought to be done about the tree, and decided it should be cut down.

So, with cries of "Timber", etc., they felled the tree. Three hours later they realised how much wood there is in a tree. However, finishing the Rye gave them enough strength to finally dispose of the timber, and stack up the cellar with enough logs for two Winters.

There came then the question of how to explain the lack of forest on the lady's return. They obtained the necessary leave, met her at the station, and escorted her home. Their efforts in the house and garden having been appreciated, the party then adjourned to the porch, and much to the gentlemen's consternation my lady exclaimed: "Thank you so much for cutting down the sycamore. I've always wanted to get rid of it. How clever of you!"

As recently as 4th May this year (1945), leave until 23.00 was given in Bangor. It was the night when an ambiguous B.B.C. news at 21.00 gave rise to a rumour that Germany had surrendered. There was a certain amount of celebrating before this rumour was corrected, and two Officers of the ship were informed that there had been complaints from every licensed premises in Bangor, and from every mother with a daughter. (Perhaps the mothers had been neglected). A mother had had her pram and baby stolen, and a ladder had been stolen from a shop. On investigation it was found that a sailor had simply helped push a pram up a steep hill and had left some chocolate in the pram. A ladder

had been borrowed from a shop to help a woman opposite clean her windows. The shop being locked up, the ladder could not be returned that night. The rest of the complaints were entirely unfounded, while every single man returned to his leave, and the ship sailed at 01.00.

Byard is lucky, in that the Chief and Petty Officers and the leaving of experienced ratings have been in the ship since she commissioned, and although they have taught the youngsters how to play hard (not a heavy job), they have also taught them how to work hard.

It is not possible in a short account of this nature to mention individuals, but the sinking of U841 gave a chance to recognise various people for their sterling work, as a glance at the honours list will show.

## Her Honours and Awards



To date, June 1945, the following Honours and Awards have been earned by the Officers and Ship's Company.

### The London Gazette Supplement, 22/2/44:

"For outstanding bravery, enterprise and devotion to duty in actions with enemy submarines while serving in H.M.S. *Hynd*."

### The Distinguished Service Cross

Lieutenant-Commander L. H. PHILLIPS, R.N.  
(Crapstone, Devon).  
Lieutenant C. J. T. EDWARDS (Falmouth).

### The Distinguished Service Medal

Chief Engine-room Artificer H. H. MOORE (Cosham).  
Petty Officer W. L. TAYLOR (Plymouth).  
Electrical Artificer 4th Class T. PATTISON (L'pool).  
Able Seaman W. JAMSON (Richmond, Yorkshire).

### Mention in Despatches

Temporary-Lieutenant B. L. COATES, R.N.V.R.  
(Rawdon, Leech).  
Chief Stoker J. H. BENNS (Stroud, Kent).  
Leading Sick Berth Attendant J. LUCAS (M'chester).  
Able Seaman T. F. COOPER (Dublin).

### Commendations by the Commander-in-Chief, Western Approaches March 1945:

"For good service and devotion to duty during the whole commission."

Stoker Petty Officer E. J. COX.  
Able Seaman SNOW.

## Her Particulars

H.M.S. Byard is of 1,946 tons displacement when stowed for sea; 306 ft. long; 37 ft. beam, and with a main draft of 11 ft.

She is powered by Turbo-Electric machinery of 12,000 horse-power, capable of driving her at over 24 knots.

The armament consists of three 3"/50 calibre guns, 8 20 m.m. A.A. Guns and one twin Bofor. 160 Depth Charges are carried, more than any other convoy escort's.

Byard completed 100,000 miles on Active Service steaming by 5th March 1945—an average of 5,000 miles a month since commissioning, at an average speed of 13.4 knots.

To date, 1st June 1945, she has steamed 110,928 miles and spent 424 days at sea since 1st July 1943.

## Her Wardroom Trophies

Early in the commission the Officers decided that as opportunities for the winning of sporting trophies were rare in war time, other means would have to be developed to adorn the rather austere Wardroom.

The first acquisition was a copy of an old (1776) map of Boston and District presented by the State Street Trust of Boston. As already mentioned the donors insisted on the "Byard" variation in the inscription.

Next came "The Red Coach". This is a small scale model of an old stage coach which used to adorn the mantelpiece of "The Red Coach Restaurant" lounge at Hingham. As all legitimate efforts failed, the acquisition called for careful planning and unorthodox methods. The mosquito screen of the nearest window having been previously removed the operation was timed for closing time plus five minutes.

With the First Lieutenant on the light switches, the Navigating Officer at the piano playing loudly even if a trifle inaccurately, and the Engineer Officer leaning against the mantelpiece in an alcoholic daze, when the lights went out the coach was quickly transferred through the open window into the waiting arms of the Correspondence Officer. When the lights came on again, although the coach was through the window, the electric lead and plug were caught in the cleft of the piano leg. However, a lucky wrench freed the lead and the Pilot's burst of discordant song effectively drowned the profane language from the two officers arranging transport. An American Officer and his girl friend on a near-by settee were quite unaware of anything unusual.

The coach with its inside illumination and red curtains effectively adorns a bare corner and has certainly brought luck to Byard.

On the occasion of the sinking of U841 a note of

thanks and an offer to return the coach, after the war, was sent to the original owner.

On arrival in Belfast a visit to the Officers' Club proved to the Pilot and the Chief that the dining-room sign would blend admirably with the Wardroom colour scheme. A slight difference of opinion with the management about the proper time and place to sing "Come Landlord Fill The Flowing Bowl" brought matters to a head. As a reprisal the sign was removed. This presented no difficulty as it was only secured on two open hooks. (This defect was remedied when the replace spurs were fitted).

The "Bar and Lounge" sign was removed and placed in its present position on board as a further protest against the interference with personal rights of the American Commanding Officer and his Pilot to express their enjoyment in their own manner.

A certain coolness has since been noticeable against the whole group. In fact, E.G.4 himself was asked on a recent occasion to remove his group officers from the bar—a most ridiculous request on a first night in from sea, which was quite convincingly and rightly refused.

A visit to Pompeii by the A/S Officer and Pilot produced an earthenware urn (Clatty) which is either 2,000 years old or was buried the previous day by the Italian Government. The small charge was not paid as it was not demanded, as the urn was useful in that a certain rating aspiring to become a junior 5th Class was given a preliminary trade test of making a shell. He is now a junior 4th Class.

The Canclabea over the Wardroom dining table was bought in Naples and, having survived an afternoon ashore in use on the Navigating Officer's head as a sunshade (the standard being used meantime as a walking stick), was added to the other amenities.

"George" was neither bought nor borrowed. He was developed by the Group Electrical Officer and the Chief. When it was decided to remove the loud-speaker from the S.R.E. set to a wooden box on the after bulkhead, for better reproduction, it was realised that brother Officers from the Group would immediately inquire, on noticing the change, what had been done.

On opening the small door, fitted in lieu of the speaker, they immediately find the answer and meet George.

George is a small reproduction of Rodin's "Thinker", in a small tiled compartment. A small cistern with chain attached completes the upper level. George is in that most comfortable attitude of meditation observed by all good living people daily, holding a small piece of paper in his disengaged hand, and is represented as saying: "Shut that b——— door!"

From a Group joke this has now become a ritual for all visitors before signing the visitor's book. For George, if the atmosphere is well worked up beforehand with references to the steam and electricity being switched on, produces quite a reaction from strangers, especially the ladies and Air Force Officers. Most ladies come back



for a detailed look later. One wanted to know if the cistern would work if she pulled the chain. It was pointed out tactfully that this would hardly be the thing to do considering the seat was already occupied.

The visitors' book, a handsomely bound tome, was presented by Mrs. E. M. Ferris, the wife of the second Commanding Officer. The first entry is of one H. R. Knickerbocker, the eminent American Foreign Correspondent, who was given a lift home from Naples along with the bearer of the second name, Cdr. The Lord Amphill, R.N.—a most intriguing pair of characters. Another interesting name is that of Colonel R. Frantz, of the U.S.A.F., "back-room boy", and an inventor of repute in private life, who learnt to play exceedingly good bridge in two evenings and presented the mess with a year's subscription to the "New Yorker". It is usual to insist that ladies record their telephone numbers in the book (time in harbour in the Fourth Group being very limited).

Mr. R. H. Knickerbocker's right and left boots adorned the mess for a few days as after an exceedingly good send-off he was not using his feet when he left to catch the Heysham boat. As these boots had landed in New Guinea, N. Africa, Sicily and Italy, they were highly prized by the owner, so "Byardism" demanded that they be returned.

The 1-16"—foot scale model of the ship, true in every respect, was made and presented the Mess by Mr. R. Love, the son of Mr. R. H. Love, R.N., the first gunner of the Byard. It took four months to make.

The Skilleagh, a unique blackthorn foot, three feet long below ground, with a carved head, was presented by Lieut.-Commander Woodhead, R.N.R. It is a specimen of County Donegal's finest work.

The Water-colour of the ship is by Augustus J. Robinson of Boston, Mass. Being keen to get into some form of war work he presented himself at Charleston Navy Yard saying he was a painter, and has since been quite happily employed painting ships' sides and bottoms.

A small brass shovel of no intrinsic, but great moral, value hangs by the side of the fireplace. This is the original Byard B-S-Shovel and is handed to any person considered to be "shooting a line", who must thereupon kiss the shovel twice and go through the motions of shovelling-up the hull.

The Wardroom Head's door is adorned with a notice :

### SAVOY CLUB

SECRETARY - - - Miss M. KELLY

Telephone No. 12145

The compartment is known as MISS KELLY'S CLUB. So far Miss Kelly has not been able to visit the ship, so it has not been possible to judge the lady's reaction at seeing the club notice displayed in this unorthodox position.

On a recent occasion due to plumbing repairs two sister ships alongside Byard in harbour were taking advantage (intermittently) of Miss Kelly's hospitality when it became necessary owing to a slight defect to put the senior member of Miss Kelly's club out of action from 08.00 to 10.00 (an awkward time as this is what is known as a "peak" load period in Power Stations). Accordingly a signal was made to the neighbours as follows :—

"Regret Miss Kelly will only be able to provide hot peas for the next two hours."

The "Chickens", a novel and ingenious ornament, was made and presented Christmas 1944 by Byard's "chummy ship" and partner H.M.S. Drury. As the ship rolls, the chickens' necks, actuated by a weight suspended below, bob up and down. The more the ship rolls the faster the chickens feed. They are not often hungry.

The sign "NO ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR IS TO BE BROUGHT INTO THIS HALL" was presented by the present Navigating Officer. While attending a dance, i.e., at the time carrying a certain amount of unconsumed liquor, did not feel justified in entering the hall until the notice was removed. This was done. As two policemen were standing under the vacant spot it was not possible to replace the sign at the end of the dance without a wrong construction being placed on the purpose of the act, by the local constabulary.

A short time ago Pilot and Chief, quietly walking along a street, were surprised to find a heavy sign "MR. COATES, DENTIST" lying on the pavement, presumably blown down by the wind, as on investigation the soundings proved to be quite inadequate. While Pilot stood on Chief's shoulders trying to replace the sign two policemen came in sight. The repair gang, thinking the police would form the opinion that some sort of an immoral act was taking place, decided not to stay and try to explain, but to bring the sign on board for safety. The sign has been put into Lt. Coates' custody as it presumably belongs to the family.

## Her U-Boat Activities

Byard's biggest, best and most satisfying was her first, when U841 was attacked and sunk in half-an-hour and 27 survivors picked up afterwards.

In mid-Atlantic, about 300 miles south of Iceland, the convoy—a slow Transatlantic one—had been the subject of a U-boat pack's attention for some days and all the escorts had been busy wading off these attacks.

Byard was returning to her station after chasing a U-boat reported by aircraft to be some 17 miles away,

when about 8 miles from the convoy an asdic contact was made. Mr. Love, R.N., the gunner, on watch at the time, turned the ship to investigate. The presence of a U-boat was established, a tin-charge pattern dropped, and preparations were being made for a second attack when U841 broke surface right ahead.

To quote the Commanding Officer's report: "I was in an ideal position to ram but a long way from home, and knew the convoy was threatened, so turned and engaged her with gunfire."

A duel with the U-boat now developed on the surface and she was engaged with gunfire. Everything the Byard had was brought to bear. The U-boat's conning tower and deck were swept by Oerlikon fire and Bofors fire, and the 3-inch scored a direct hit at the base of the conning tower at a range of three hundred yards with the

first round. The Hun, prevented from reaching their guns, soon had enough and started to abandon their ship as it sank by the stern. One officer, five petty officers, and twenty-one other ratings were picked up. They were not truculent as the temperature of the water was 40° Fahrenheit. The officer, a young German of 23, whose wife was expecting her first baby that day, had swum over supporting a wounded man and was the only prisoner not distressed.

To quote the official report again: "It was nearly dark by now. All the Germans in the water appeared to be dead, and I was some distance from the convoy so I proceeded to re-join the escort."

One dead Hun was a nuisance after he was dead as he had tied himself on the end of a rope and then proceeded to drown and got himself into the main circulating pump inlet where he was a source of annoyance until he was washed clear.



(4) "HOLDING THE BABY"

During this period the remainder of the escort and the covering aircraft had been busy, as the following signal from the Admiralty shows:—"Aircraft of No. 15 Group and surface Escorts of ONS 20 destroyed six German U-boats on 16th and 17th October for the loss of one Merchant Ship. It is requested that you will convey our congratulations to the forces which achieved this outstanding success." H.M.S. Drury in addition to many attacks on U-boats rescued seven of the crew of a ditched Liberator.

The prisoners were stripped and given sufficient survivors' clothing to cover themselves. One Hun seemed to think he was about to be tortured, and it was not until the Chief Stoker made motions threatening to put the Hun's head in the vice in the Engineer's workshop that he refrained from struggling. The Officer could speak fair English, but not one on Byard could speak German. The prisoners were lodged in the Tiller flat under guard, a refined torture as the Germans had just started using the Acoustic torpedo. The only casualty was when one of the sentries shot himself through the foot.

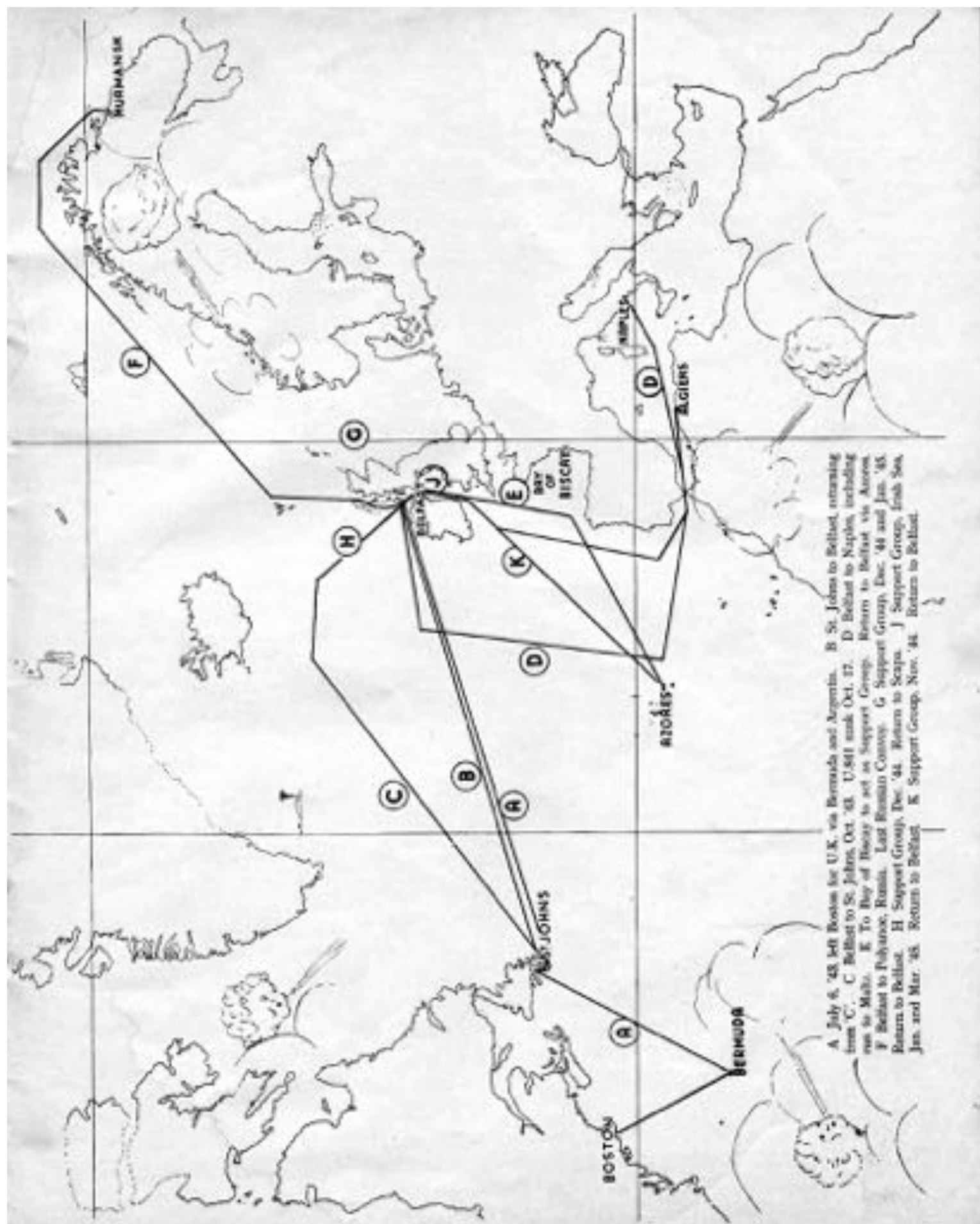
U841 had sailed from Trosheim Fjord on her second trip (her first was abortive), on 16th October and had been frequently attacked by aircraft—a tribute to Coastal Command. She was of the 740-ton class.

The two investigators found the love life of one, Hans Franke, extremely interesting. An exceedingly virile Hun, he had four girl friends, and although all his visits to these bodies, and their immediate object, were recorded in his diary, no details of his technique or any clue to the secret of his staying power were recorded, much to the chagrin of the amateur detectives.

On Byard's return to the base a deep depression descended on the ship when it was learned that "the powers that be" could not repeat nor approve the "splicing of the main brace", which had been reserved for that auspicious occasion rather than celebrate in Argentina. In fact, the Group returned from that trip unboasted and unring.

The remainder of Byard's many attacks produced no concrete evidence except occasional bits of wreckage of no real value and some oil fuel; but as My Lords have decided, and very rightly too, the only certainty of having destroyed a U-boat is at least one Hun, dead or alive, whole or in part. No more successes can be recorded.

In some cases U-boats, when illuminated, have been seen to dive and were then attacked with depth charges and other means without any visible result. It will never be known if any of these were actually killed, but at least they will have had as big a fright as their attackers.



A July 6, '43. Left Boston for U.K. via Bermuda and Argentina. B St. Johns to Belfast, returning from C. C Belfast to St. Johns, Oct. '43. U.S. 811 sank Oct. 17. D Belfast to Naples, including run to Malta. E To Bay of Biscay to set up Support Group. Return to Belfast via Azores. F Belfast to Plymouth, Russia. Last Russian Convoy. G Support Group, Dec. '44 and Jan. '45. Return to Belfast. H Support Group, Dec. '44. Return to Scapa. J Support Group, Irish Sea, Jan. and Mar. '45. Return to Belfast. K Support Group, Nov. '44. Return to Belfast.