



CHAIRMANS CHAT

Mr President Ladies Gentlemen

WELCOME Hope all got over the SNOW ok?

ZEEBRUGGE No Itinerary yet but there is another meeting later this month. **0800 from UJC. THERE is an 0830 start on SATURDAY.** I'll try to get one out BUT it may not be ready until you board the bus here at UJC. We will all have BRANCH ID to ensure the Feestcomite know who **WE ARE**. Due to numbers there is LIMITED SPACE at the ZEEEDIJK so we may have to adapt. NO IINDICATION what 'Social Events we can anticipate.

POPPY CROSSES for descendants to plant after the wreath laying..... In our Group we have THREE, Lt Cdr EAGLES, Stephen GILKES and Richard KINGSHOTT. 50 POPPY CROSSES have been acquired and **PAID FOR by CHAS TIMMS** our Standard Bearer, Thanks Chas.. He is happy that they go to other Descendants.
GERMANS MAY HAVE OWN – EMBASSY GDR

WE DO HAVE ANOTHER MEETING BEFORE THEN WHEN I HOPE TO HAVE MORE INFO

SUNDAY- Hopefully remains the same but the Feestcomite could not possibly cope with the numbers who may try to attend the usual luncheon.

COCKLESHELL HERO SERVICE 15TH+ ZEEBRUGGE BELL APRIL AT EASTNEY... NAMES TO TONY TONIGHT

23RD APRIL MONDAY DOVER TOWN SERVICE ST JAMES

1115 MARKET SQ 1130 RM BAND THE NUMBERS FULL – IF NOT ALREADY REGISTERED CANNOT MARCH.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

Next Meeting

Thurs 12th April 1900hrs
– At the Union Jack Club.

Fri 20th to Sun 22nd April – Zeebrugge.
Remembrance weekend.

Mon 23rd April – Dover
Town Council Zeebrugge
Remembrance Service

Sun 13th May 10.00hrs –
Graspan Parade. Buffet
reception afterwards back
at the UJC.

Editor's note:-

If you have any items for
'City Royal' please
email/contact me at:

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THEN CORPS FREEDOM OF DEAL & DEAL HERITAGE TRAIL 1500.

BEAT RETREAT 30TH – 31ST MAY HORSEGUARDS TICKETS VIA CENTRAL OFFICE.

NOT FORGOTTEN GARDEN PARTY THURS 7TH JUNE, TICKETS VIA CENTRAL OFFICE.

Dodgers Wedding Anniversary He's Sponsored a Port for everyone for a TOAST with him

Toast: DODGER & JAN 'Happy Anniversary'

Final Toast:

ABSENT COMRADES...



Jim Ellard writes:-

British Admiralty Statement on the Zeebrugge and Ostend Raids, 22-23 April 1918

The objectives were the canal of Zeebrugge and the entrance to the harbour of Ostend.

Three cruisers, *Intrepid*, *Iphigenia* and *Thetis*, each duly packed with concrete and with mines attached to her bottom for the purpose of sinking her, Merrimac-fashion, in the neck of the canal, were aimed at Zeebrugge; two others, similarly prepared, were directed at Ostend.

The old cruiser *Vindictive*, with two ferry-boats, *Iris* and *Daffodil*, was to attack the great half-moon Mole which guards the Zeebrugge Canal, land blue-jackets and marines upon it, destroy what stores, guns, and Germans she could find, and generally create a diversion while the block-ships ran in and sank themselves in their appointed place. Vice-Admiral Keyes, in the destroyer *Warwick*, commanded the operation.

There had been two previous attempts at the attack, capable of being pushed home if weather and other conditions had served. The night of the 22nd offered nearly all the required conditions, and at some fifteen miles off Zeebrugge the ships took up their formation for the attack.


Vindictive, which had been towing *Iris* and *Daffodil*, cast them off to follow under their own steam; *Intrepid*, *Iphigenia*, and *Thetis* slowed down to give the first three time to get alongside the Mole; *Sirius* and *Brilliant* shifted their course for Ostend; and the great swarm of destroyers and motor craft sowed themselves abroad upon their multifarious particular duties.

The night was overcast and there was a drift of haze; down the coast a great searchlight swung its beams to and fro; there was a small wind and a short sea.

From *Vindictive's* bridge, as she headed in towards the Mole with her faithful ferry-boats at her heels, there was scarcely a glimmer of light to be seen shorewards. Ahead of her, as she drove through the water, rolled the smoke-screen, her cloak of invisibility, wrapped about her by the small craft.

The northeast wind moved the volume of it shoreward ahead of the slips; beyond it, the distant town and its defenders were unsuspecting; and it was not till *Vindictive*, with her blue-jackets and marines standing ready for the landing, was close upon the Mole that the wind lulled and came away again from the southwest, sweeping back the smoke-screen and laying her bare to the eyes that looked seaward.

There was a moment immediately afterwards when it seemed to those in the ships as if the dim coast and the hidden harbour exploded into light. A star shell soared aloft, then a score of star shells; the wavering beams of the search-lights swung round and settled to a glare; the wildfire of gun flashes leaped against the sky; strings of luminous green beads shot aloft, hung and sank; and the darkness of the night was supplanted by the nightmare daylight of battle fires.



Guns and machine guns along the Mole and batteries ashore woke to life, and it was in a gale of shelling that *Vindictive* laid her nose against the thirty-foot high concrete side of the Mole, let go an anchor, and signed to *Daffodil* to shove her stern in. *Iris* went ahead and endeavoured to get alongside likewise.

The fire, from the account of everybody concerned, was intense. While ships plunged and rolled beside the Mole in an unexpected send of sea, *Vindictive* with her greater draught jarring against the foundation of the Mole with every plunge, they were swept diagonally by machine-gun fire from both ends of the Mole and by heavy batteries ashore.

Commander A. F. B. Carpenter (afterward Captain) coned *Vindictive* from her open bridge till her stern was laid in, when he took up his position in the flame-thrower hut on the port side. It is marvellous that any occupant of the hut should have survived a minute, so riddled and shattered is it.

Officers of *Iris*, which was in trouble ahead of *Vindictive*, describe Captain Carpenter as "handling her like a picket-boat."


Vindictive was fitted along the port side with a high false deck, whence ran the eighteen brows, or gangways, by which the storming and demolition parties were to land. The men were gathered in readiness on the main and lower decks. The gangways were lowered, and scraped and rebounded upon the high parapet of the Mole as *Vindictive* rolled; and the word for the assault had not yet been given when both leaders of the assault were killed by the machine-gun fire which swept the decks.

"The men were magnificent." Every officer bears the same testimony. The mere landing on the Mole was a perilous business; it involved a passage across the crashing, splintering gangways, a drop over the parapet into the field of fire of the German machine guns which swept its length, and a further drop of some sixteen feet to the surface of the Mole itself.

Many were killed and more were wounded as they crowded up to the gangways; but nothing hindered the orderly and speedy landing by every gangway.

The lower deck was a shambles as the Commander made the rounds of his ship; yet those wounded and dying raised themselves to cheer as he made his tour. The crew of the howitzer which was mounted forward had all been killed; a second crew was destroyed likewise; and even then a third crew was taking over the gun.

In the stern cabin a firework expert, who had never been to sea before, was steadily firing great illuminating rockets out of a scuttle to show up the lighthouse on the end of the Mole to the block ships and their escort.



The *Daffodil*, after aiding to berth *Vindictive*, should have proceeded to land her own men, but now Commander Carpenter ordered her to remain as she was, with her bows against *Vindictive's* quarter, pressing the latter ship into the Mole.

Iris had troubles of her own. Her first attempts to make fast to the Mole ahead of *Vindictive* failed, as her grapnels were not large enough to span the parapet. Two officers climbed ashore and sat astride the parapet trying to make the grapnels fast till each was killed and fell down between the ship and the wall.

Iris was obliged at last to change her position and fall in astern of *Vindictive*, and suffered very heavily from the fire. A single big shell plunged through the upper deck and burst below at a point where fifty-six marines were waiting the order to go to the gangways. Forty-nine were killed and the remaining seven wounded.

Another shell in the ward-room, which was serving as sick bay, killed four officers and twenty-six men. Her total casualties were eight officers and sixty-nine men killed and three officers and a hundred and two men wounded.

The storming and demolition parties upon the Mole met with no resistance from the Germans, other than the intense and unremitting fire. The geography of the great Mole, with its railway line and its many buildings, hangars, and store-sheds, was already well known, and the demolition parties moved to their appointed work in perfect order.


One after another the buildings burst into flame or split and crumpled as the dynamite went off.

A bombing party, working up towards the Mole extension in search of the enemy, destroyed several machine-gun emplacements, but not a single prisoner rewarded them. It appears that upon the approach of the ships, and with the opening of the fire, the enemy simply retired and contented themselves with bringing machine guns to the shore end of the Mole.

And while they worked and destroyed, the covering party below the parapet could see in the harbour, by the light of the German star-shells, the shapes of the block ships stealing in and out of their own smoke and making for the mouth of the canal.

Thetis came first, steaming into a tornado of shell from the great batteries ashore. All her crew, save a remnant who remained to steam her in and sink her, had already been taken off her by the ubiquitous motor launches, but the remnant spared hands enough to keep her four guns going. It was hers to show the road to *Intrepid* and *Iphigenia*, who followed.

She cleared the string of armed barges which defends the channel from the tip of the Mole, but had the ill-fortune to foul one of her propellers upon the net defence which flanks it on the shore side. The propeller gathered in the net and rendered her practically unmanageable; the shore batteries found her and pounded her unremittingly; she bumped into a bank, edged off, and



found herself in the channel again, still some hundreds of yards from the mouth of the canal, in a practically sinking condition.

As she lay she signalled invaluable directions to the others, and here her commander blew the charges and sank her. A motor launch raced alongside and took off her crew. Her losses were five killed and five wounded.

Intrepid, smoking like a volcano and with all her guns blazing, followed; her motor launch had failed to get along-side outside the harbour, and she had men enough for anything. Straight into the canal she steered, her smoke blowing back from her into *Iphigenia's* eyes, so that the latter, blinded and going a little wild, rammed a dredger with a barge moored beside it, which lay at the western arm of the canal.

She got clear though, and entered the canal pushing the barge before her. It was then that a shell hit the steam connections of her whistle, and the escape of steam which followed drove off some of the smoke and let her see what she was doing.

The commander of the *Intrepid* placed the nose of his ship neatly on the mud of the western bank, ordered his crew away, and blew up his ship by the switches in the chart-room.

Four dull bumps was all that could be heard; and immediately afterwards there arrived on deck the engineer, who had been in the engine-room during the explosion and reported that all was as it should be.


The commander of *Iphigenia* beached her according to arrangement on the eastern side, blew her up, saw her drop nicely across the canal, and left her with her engines still going to hold her in position till she should have bedded well down on the bottom.

According to latest reports from air observation, the two old ships with their holds full of concrete are lying across the canal in a V position; and the work they set out to do has been accomplished. The canal is effectively blocked.

The whole harbour was alive with small craft. As the motor launches cleared the canal, and came forth to the incessant geysers thrown tip by the shells, rescuers and rescued had a view of yet another phase of the attack.

The shore end of the Mole consists of a jetty, and here an old submarine, loaded with explosives, was run into the piles and touched off, her crew getting away in a boat to where the usual launch awaited them.

Officers describe the explosion as the greatest they ever witnessed - a huge roaring spout of flame that tore the jetty in half and left a gap of over 100 feet. The claim of another launch to have sunk a torpedo-boat alongside the jetty is supported by many observers, including officers



of the *Vindictive*, who had seen her mast and funnel across the Mole and noticed them disappear.

Where every moment had its deed and every deed its hero, a recital of acts of valour becomes a mere catalogue.

"The men were magnificent," say the officers; the men's opinion of their leaders expresses itself in the manner in which they followed them, in their cheers, in their demeanour to-day while they tidy up their battered ships, setting aside the inevitable souvenirs, from the bullet-torn engines to great chunks of Zeebrugge Mole dragged down and still hanging in the fenders of the *Vindictive*.

The motor launch from the canal cleared the end of the Mole and there beheld, trim and ready, the shape of the *Warwick*, with the great silk flag presented to the Admiral by the officers of his old ship, the *Centurion*. They stood up on the crowded decks of the little craft and cheered it again and again.

While the *Warwick* took them on board, they saw *Vindictive*, towed loose from the Mole by *Daffodil*, turn and make for home - a great black shape, with funnels gapped and leaning out of the true, flying a vast streamer of flame as her stokers worked her up - her, the almost wreck - to a final display of seventeen knots.

Her forward funnel was a sieve; her decks were a dazzle of sparks; but she brought back intact the horseshoe nailed to it, which had been presented to her commander.

Meantime the destroyers *North Star*, *Phoebe*, and *Warwick*, which guarded the *Vindictive* from action by enemy destroyers while she lay beside the Mole, had their share in the battle.

North Star, losing her way in the smoke, emerged to the light of the star-shells, and was sunk. The German communiqué, which states that only a few members of the crew could be saved by them, is in this detail of an unusual accuracy, for the *Phoebe* came up under a heavy fire in time to rescue nearly all.

Throughout the operations monitors and the siege guns in Flanders, manned by the Royal Marine Artillery, heavily bombarded the enemy's batteries.

The wind that blew back the smoke-screen at Zeebrugge served us even worse off Ostend, where that and nothing else prevented the success of an operation ably directed by Commodore Hubert Lynes, C.M.G.

The coastal motor boats had lit the approaches and the ends of the piers with calcium flares and made a smoke-cloud which effectually hid the fact from the enemy

Sirius and *Brilliant* were already past the Stroom Bank buoy when the wind changed, revealing the arrangements to the enemy, who extinguished the flares with gunfire.



The *Sirius* was already in a sinking condition when at length the two ships, having failed to find the entrance, grounded, and were forced therefore to sink themselves at a point about four hundred yards east of the piers, and their crews were taken off by motor launches.

Source: *Source Records of the Great War, Vol. VI*, ed. Charles F. Horne, *National Alumni 1923*



David Harris writes:

