

SEPTEMBER 1940

Terence was married to Pamela Hope Syson on 7 Sept 1940 when he was on sick leave after leaving ECHO. They were married in Whitchurch Canonichorum in Dorset. It was, amongst other things the day that the bells were rung in error in the churches in Southern England, This being the signal for a German invasion.



Terence and Hope
outside the church - 7
Sept 1940



Left to right:
Charles Tibbits,
Mabel Syson,
Terence, Hope,
Nigel Tibbits,
Barbara Syson,
Alfred Syson

ISTDC BASE NORTHNEY – SEPT 40 TO SEPT 41

From 4 to 16 Sept he was appointed “VICTORY for j.p.s.l.u.t”

On 23 Sept 1940 Terence was appointed “VICTORY additional for ISTDC Base Northney” (on Hayling Island).

ISTDC stands for Inter-Service Training and Development Centre. The Centre was formed at Fort Cumberland, Eastney in 1936 (or 1938) to study a number of areas of amphibious warfare (it was probably called something else then) including Headquarters Ships, floating piers and amphibious raids. What had sparked it isn't entirely clear, but papers had been produced originally at Greenwich and then in the Admiralty and War Office (Watson in 1936 and Adam in 1938). The problems of the landings at Gallipoli had occurred 20 years before, but in 1932 the Japanese had used specially constructed ships, which were able speedily to discharge large numbers of landing craft full of troops. By 1938 the concept of floating piers, amphibious landings, beach organisation and the design of ships suitable for landing tanks was the subject of debate.

In 1938 the then Brigadier Montgomery, who commanded the Portsmouth Brigade/Garrison, landed his Brigade at Stokes Bay (presumably in ships' boats). There was also a similar landing at Slapton in July 1938. By 1939, construction of a few landing craft was authorised and these were used during the Norway Operations in 1940, the withdrawal from Dunkirk, the Narvik raid of 1941/2 and Dieppe in 1942. Of interest, while the landing craft used in the Normandy landings were largely built in the US, their design was British.

Originally the ISTDC had a very wide remit including:

- ♦ Dropping by parachute, air drop supply
- ♦ Amphibious warfare generally
- ♦ Landing water and petrol, landing tanks, underwater obstacles
- ♦ HQ ships
- ♦ Floating piers

The ISTDC was virtually closed down both at the time of Munich and then at the outbreak of war in 1939, but was then revitalised. Immediately after Dunkirk the focus was on repelling an invasion, but then emphasis on landings was restored.

At HQ level in the first instance a Commander of Raiding Operations was appointed, an RM Lieutenant General called AG Bourne, who was the RM Adjutant General. By July 1940 he had been superseded by Admiral Keyes who was titled Director of Combined Operations (DCO). Keyes was who was there until October 1941, when he was relieved by Mountbatten (originally as a Commodore, I think).

The ISTDC was put under the command of DCO. From late 1940, they had lost their responsibility for Air operations. Their main focus was on the development of both Material and Training. However once the base in Inverary in Scotland had been set up (again in late 1940), the responsibility for development of training went there. In August 1941 the ISTDC became the Combined Operations Development Centre. The ISTDC/CODC developed a large number of landing craft including the original LCA, LCT (1), (2) and (3), LST (1) and (2), LSD, Glen Ships and Maracaibo shallow draft tankers.

In June 1940, the ISTDC expanded to Hayling Island. The first base was set up in a Holiday Camp in Northney. It had been the first ever Warners camp opened in 1931 with

accommodation for 850 guests and occupying 36 acres. It was originally referred to as Northney Camp and then in 1941 became HMS NORTHNEY. Later in the war There were 5 establishments on Hayling Island, HMS NORTHNEY I (the original), II, III and IV and the COPP base. The last of these was set up in 1942 as the HQ of the Combined Operations Assault Pilotage Parties and located at the Haling Island sailing Club. As an example, the men from Hayling provided the crews for the X craft submarines which were to act as markers for the Normandy landings.

In addition to the ISTDC/CODC, Northney also operated as a training location for landing craft crews. The early training was done there and the more advanced in Scotland. It was also a base for operational landing craft.

All of the above is very interesting but doesn't give us much of a clue on what Terence was doing. It must though have been to do with amphibious warfare and was probably involved in the development of the amphibious vessels, though he could have been involved in the training of the crews. It was clearly this job that gave him the experience to command the Amphibious warfare Squadron 12 years later in Malta.

Terence left Northney in Sept 41, and Mountbatten became Chief of Combined Operations in the October, so they would not have met then.



Terence while at Northney. Presumably the photograph has been taken from his ID card. Hayling Island foreshore possibly in the Background

On 28 Sept 1940, Hope was writing to Terence at Northney Camp. They subsequently lived on Hayling Island at Moss Rose, Northney. James Robertson Justice lived next door and nicked their gramophone records. Juliana Selby (nee Snell) was the Secretary. Her parents lived at MENGEHAM on Hayling Island.

17 Dec 40, he was recommended for 3 months Home Shore Service and was resurveyed on 17 Mar 41 – and assessed fit for duty.

He left Northney on 29 Sept 1941.

FORT CUMBERLAND, EASTNEY



Landing a light tank at the ISTDC in the 1930s, before Terence's time.



Landing craft probably off Northney with an ML

HMS CLEOPATRA – OCTOBER 1941 TO MARCH 1942



HMS CLEOPATRA – radar Type 960 and 5.25 Turrets in A, B and C turrets, so probably taken about Terence's time

On 14 October 1941, he was appointed "CALLIOPE additional for CLEOPATRA and for duty with Admiral Superintendent Contract Built Ships and for acceptance trials and service". HMS CLEOPATRA was a brand new Cruiser fitted with 10 5.25 inch dual purpose guns. CALLIOPE was a Naval Establishment on the NW coast of England, where Terence would have been based. We believe that Terence was the First Lt and may have been an Acting Lt Cdr.

CLEOPATRA was commissioned in Dec 41, 6 weeks after Terence joined, to become part of the 15 Cruiser Squadron. In Jan 42, they worked up with the Home Fleet based on Scapa Flow. Her service from Feb to mid March included:

- On 5 Feb 42 they sailed from the Clyde
- On 11 Feb she arrived Malta, with FORTUNE, after a call at Gibraltar. On entry to Grand Harbour she was hit by a 500kg bomb, which exploded after passing through the forward structure. She sustained flooding forward with splinter damage.
- Between 12 Feb and 10 Mar, she underwent repairs in Malta.
- On 10 Mar she sailed with KINGSTON to join Force B searching for Italian convoys
- On 11 March, the Squadron Flagship HMS NAIAD (Admiral Vian with the Flag Captain, Captain Grantham) was sunk by air attack and Vian and Grantham transferred to CLEOPATRA
- 15 Mar bombarded Rhodes with 15 CS



HMS CLEOPATRA . Photograph probably post WW2, Radar Type 293 and a different calibre gun in C Turret

On 16 March 1942 Terence was promoted Lieutenant Commander

On 20 March, CLEOPATRA provided cover for the Malta Supply convoy (MW10) during its passage from Alexandria with DIDO, EURYALUS (force B) plus PENELOPE and LEGION (Force K). On 21 March, CLEOPATRA joined the convoy escort.

On 22 March the Second Battle of Sirte took place when the ships were in action against aircraft and superior Italian Naval forces including the Battleship LITTORIO and 3 cruisers. After a brief engagement and a threat of torpedo attack by Destroyers, the Italian ships turned away. During the engagement CLEOPATRA was hit near the bridge by an Italian 6inch shell and about 16 were killed. It would appear that the shell killed a number of lookouts on the starboard side of the bridge and then exploded at the rear of the bridge. Terence was wounded with shrapnel in his foot and legs.

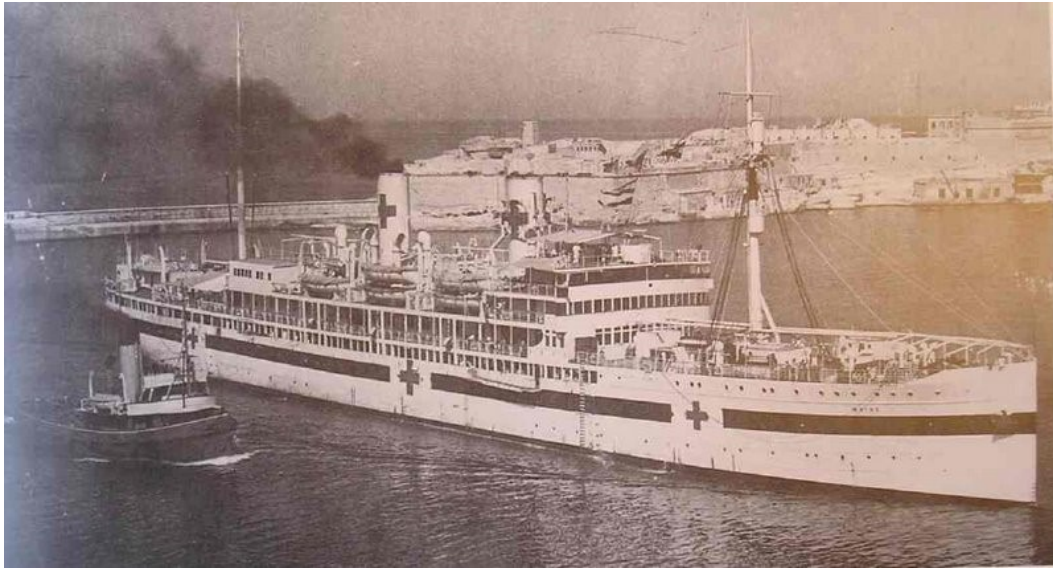
According to Hope, Vian had no time for the officers that he and Grantham inherited and didn't recommend any for promotion. A second source says that Vian felt that CLEOPATRA was very poorly worked up and was inefficient, so Slattery, the original CO was effectively sacked. Hope also said that Slattery (later MD of BOAC) was critical of Terence.

Commanding Officers:

Capt. Matthew Sausse Slattery, RN 10 June 1941- 17 March 1942

Capt. *Guy* Grantham, DSO, RN 17 March to Aug 42

HOSPITAL IN ALEXANDRIA – MAR TO APRIL 1942



Hospital Ship MAINE

Presumably CLEOPATRA returned straight to Alexandria, because Terence was admitted to the Hospital Ship MAINE on 23 March, suffering from multiple wounds from enemy action, not serious.

On 30 March he was discharged to the 64th General Hospital, presumably still in Alexandria. He was in the same ward as Jack Ainger and an American who had a bottle of whiskey. Jack was suffering from double pneumonia after his evacuation from Malta

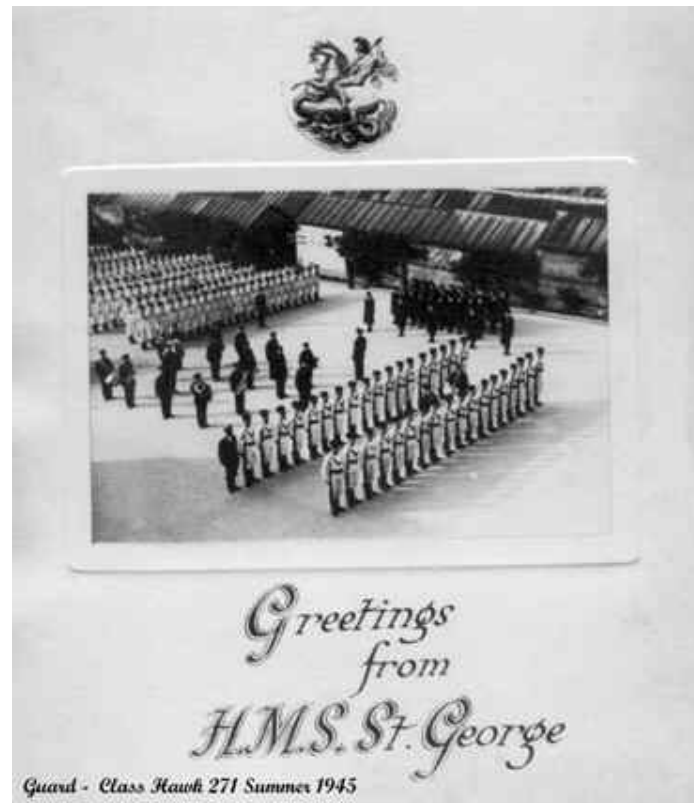
On 23 April, he was appointed NILE additional for disposal. HMS NILE was the Naval Base at Alexandria. He appears to have left 64 General Hospital on 17 June. He then must have made his way back to UK, presumably via South Africa. By August he must have been back in UK, because Jane was conceived in August in Claridges or the Berkeley.

On 28 Aug, he was at Haslar and was recommended for 21 days sick leave, with resurvey on 10 Sept. On 10 Sept he was recommended for 6 months Home Service.

Between Sept 42 and Mar 43 he was assessed medically for 6 months shore service.

Between 6 Aug and 9 Sept he was appointed "VICTORY for F.P.S.L". Maybe this stands for: Foreign Posting Sick Leave.

ISLE OF MAN – SEPT 42 TO NOV 43



On 19 Sept 42 he was appointed ST GEORGE additional and vice Alexander. ST GEORGE was a Training Establishment for ratings (presumably New Entry) in the Isle of Man.

H.M.S. St. George was commissioned on the 9th September 1939 at Cunningham's Holiday Camp, on the outskirts of Douglas in the Isle of Man, with Commodore Forster as Commanding Officer. The camp was on a continuous slope down towards the sea not far from Onchan Head. A main road ran through the camp dividing the two into upper and lower sections so safe access between the two camps was through a long underground passage (subway), which led to a glass-roofed and paved patio in Lower Camp. This subsequently became the quarterdeck.

St. George had not only absorbed the whole of H.M.S. Ganges but was taking in boys from a number of other training ships such as the St. Vincent, Caledonia, Exmouth, Arethusa, Royal Hospital School, etc. As a result, another holiday camp was taken over on the Isle of Man. This was Howstrake Camp nearer Onchan Head, which was used to provide the first six weeks Induction Training.

Terence was resurveyed on 13 Mar 43 at Haslar and recommended for a further 3 months home shore service. On 10 June he was considered fit for General Service.

Hope lived with him there and Jane was born there on 17 May 43.

He left ST GEORGE in December 1943.



Terence as a Lieutenant Commander. The date of the photograph isn't known, but it must have been 1942/1943 or so