

June 09

TERENCE TIBBITS'S NAVAL CAREER



Terence was born on 17 Sept 1910, his brother Nigel in 1912.

Terence was at school at Stubbington between 1918 and 1923, based on his being there from ages 8 to 13.

In 1920, Terence's father was KHM at Portsmouth

Terence's father Charles
as a Captain



DARTMOUTH



RNC
Dartmouth
about the time
that Terence
was there

In May 1924 (aged 13), he was at a Training establishment, RNC Dartmouth. He gained no time on passing out, so he hadn't done very well in his exams

HMS RODNEY – JAN 28 TO JAN 30



HMS RODNEY

On 14 Jan 28 (aged 17), he was appointed to HMS RODNEY, one of the two NELSON class battleships. He was then still a Cadet, but was promoted Midshipman on 1 Sept 28, when gaining the age of 18.

RODNEY spent all her time in the Home Fleet prior to 1939. Terence appears to have left before the Invergorden Mutiny

On 29 Dec 28, he was assessed "Sat, Average. Promises well. Personal appearance against him – untidy. Willing to take charge and entirely to be trusted" (Captain Tottenham)

Terence as a
Midshipman on board
RODNEY



On 15 May 1930 he was reappointed to RODNEY on her recommissioning. On Dec 30, he was assessed thus, "Tries hard, will do well with more experience, rather slovenly but rapidly improving, small but fit"

SUB LIEUTENANT'S COURSES – JAN 31 TO APRIL 32

On 1 Jan 31 he was Promoted Acting Sub Lieutenant and appointed to Sub Lieutenants Courses. In July 1931 he completed the Greenwich Course, with a Third class pass. Overall the Certificates (I assume Sub Lts course rather than Dartmouth):

- Seamanship 2
- Greenwich 3
- Navigation 3
- Gunnery 2
- Torpedo 3

This in contrast to Nigel a bit later who got a string of First Class passes.

In August 1931, he was granted a certificate for Exam in French.

On 16 Sept 31 he was Promoted Sub Lieutenant, presumably at age 21.

HMS VEGA – APRIL 32 TO AUGUST 34

On 12 April 1932 he was appointed to HMS VEGA, a V and W class destroyer built in the First World War. He was awarded his watchkeeping certificate on 31 Dec 32 and recommended for promotion to Lt.

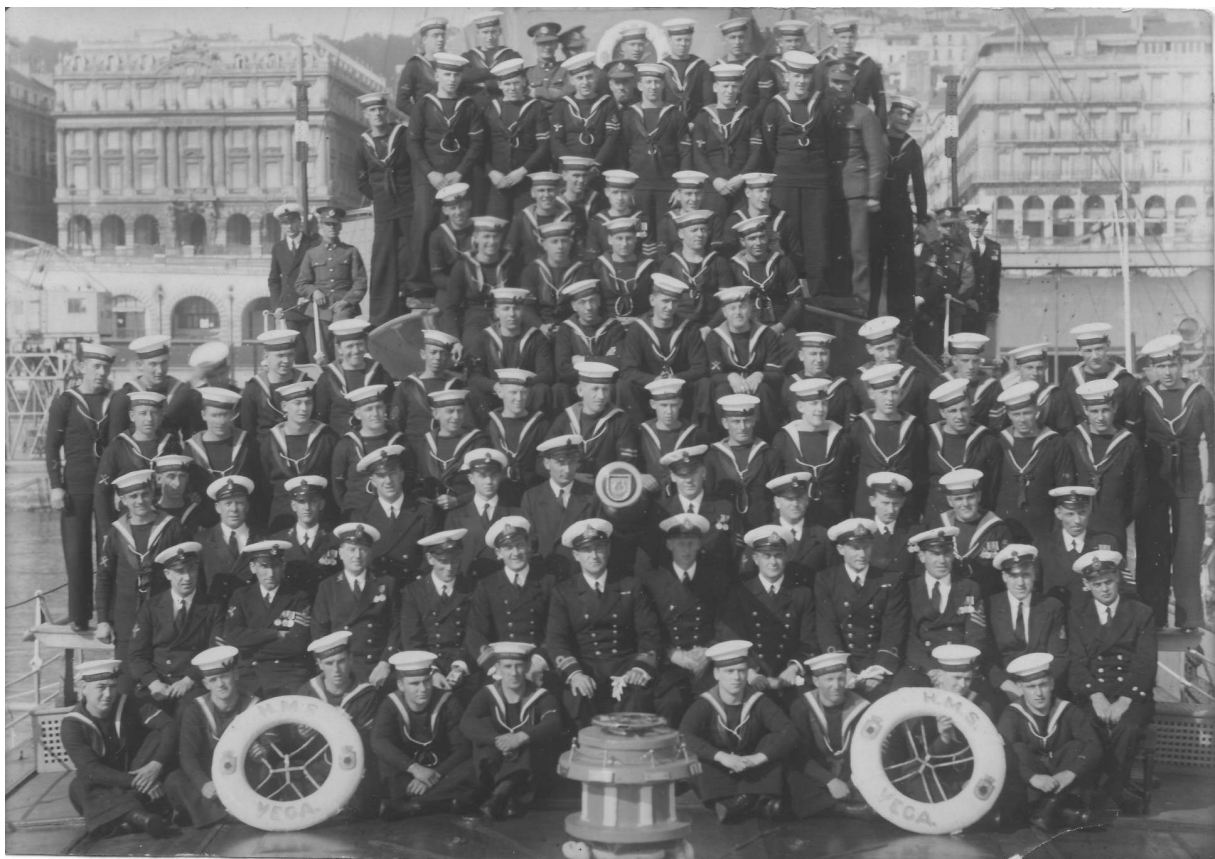


HMS VEGA – in Fowey



HMS VEGA

HMS VEGA Ships Company photograph, possibly in Malta. Terence seated in frock coat on the right





HMS VEGA Officers

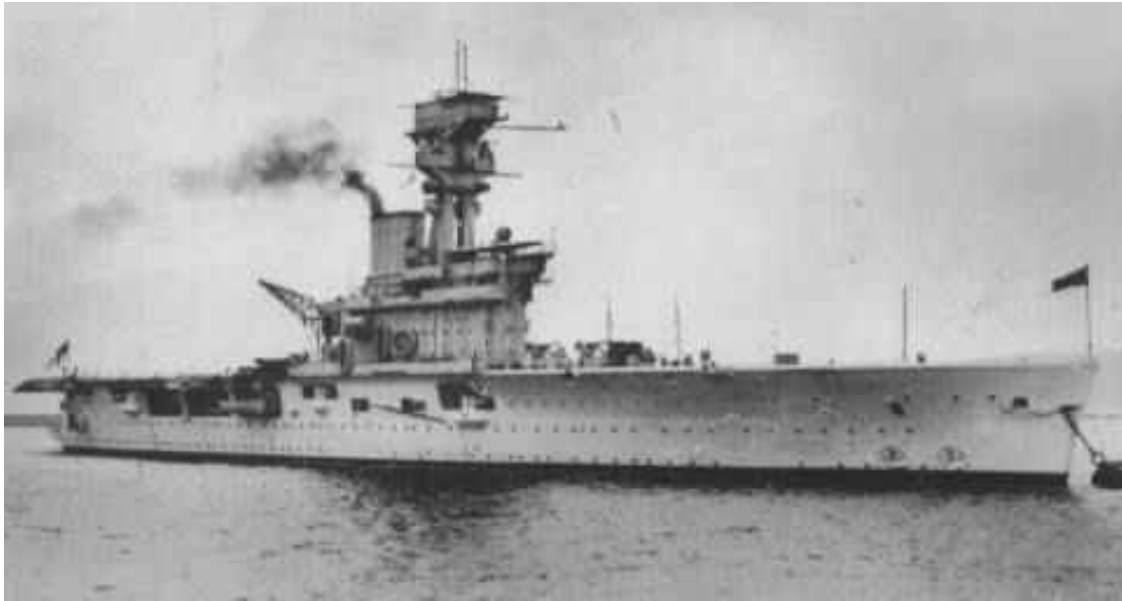
In Jan 33, he was assessed as "Sat, below average, keen somewhat slow, loyal, tactful, cheerful" by Lt Cdr Black, presumably the CO.

On either 16 March or 16 April he was promoted to Lieutenant. In 1934 he was assessed as, "very conscientious, extremely well read, good Torpedo Control Officer" by Lt Cdr MJ Thomas.

He left on 31 Aug 1934

Between 31 Aug and 17 Sept he was "VICTORY for U.T" whatever that means

HMS HERMES – AUG 34 TO JUNE 37



HMS HERMES



On 18 Sept 1934 (he was 24), Terence was appointed to the Aircraft Carrier HMS HERMES on commissioning for trials and service. She was completing her 1933/34 refit at Chatham.

HERMES was the first purpose designed aircraft carrier completed in 1923 and was lost in 1942 – off Ceylon. Until 1938, she served mainly on the China Station but did refits at Chatham in 1928 and 1934.

Terence must have gone to the Far East and the China Station in HERMES , sailing out there from UK after she had recommissioned. Jane says they went to Wei Hei Wei and that

he served with Ginger Weir who was ex RFC and a mate. By now (since 1918) he would have been RAF. The RAF provided the aircrew for the Fleet Air Arm.



Terence in the Kyoto Hotel in Japan in 1936 with an RM officer Frankie somebody

He left HERMES on 11 June 1937, we don't know where the ship was then, presumably on the China Station still, in which case he would have spent a month or so coming back by sea.

There is an entry in Terence service record about him serving the Yangtze gunboat GANNET, but this is an error, it was Nigel who served in GANNET

HMS ANTELOPE – AUG 37 TO APRIL 38



HMS ANTELOPE

Terence served as First Lt [?] of the destroyer ANTELOPE from 15 Aug 37 to 3 April 38. ANTELOPE had been completed in 1934

It isn't clear why he transferred from ANTELOPE to ECHO, maybe ANTELOPE had to be paid off for some reason

HMS ECHO – APRIL 38 TO JULY 40 (or thereabouts)



HMS ECHO



HMS ECHO

He joined ECHO on 4 April 1938 (vice Somerville). Again we assume he was the First Lt

Maybe she was part of the Portland Squadron because that is where he met Hope? But by 1940 she seemed to be based in Scotland, maybe at HMS LOCHINVAR on the Firth of Forth opposite the Dockyard of Rosyth.

The Second World War started in August 1939. ECHO appears to have served in the Atlantic and then in the Norwegian Campaign.

On 19 Nov 1939, the British Merchant ship PENSILVA was torpedoed and sunk NW of Cape Ortegal in posn 46 degrees 51N, 11 degrees 36W (off Portugal). ECHO later picked up the survivors. The CO Cdr Stanley Spurgeon RAN got a DSO, awarded on 22 Dec 39.

In April 1940 (just before the Norwegian Campaign), Hope went up to Edinburgh for a week (was the ship doing a boiler clean?) and they got engaged. I assume that the ship had been transferred from Portland to Port Edgar (HMS LOCHINVAR) on the Forth near Edinburgh.

Terence was awarded a Mention in Despatches. It is in the London Gazette 26 Sept 1940. It is shown in two places in his Naval Record, one as "for services in Norway" and the other for "service in the Narvik area". The Norwegian campaign took place between 9 April and 8 June 1940

There is no indication that ECHO took part in the First (11 April) or Second (13 April) Battle of Narvik, however Hope refers in a letter to ECHO and the Second Battle of Narvik. But we do know that ECHO was in Norway In May 1940, when she was part of a force including EFFINGHAM, COVENTRY, CAIRO and MATABELE operating in the Harstad- Bodo area when they were due to land a Company of SOUTH WALES BORDERERS at Bodo. During this operation, EFFINGHAM hit a rock and sank and the Ships Company were taken off by ECHO. Maybe he got his MID for that?

Jane and Pamela are convinced that Terence took part in the Russian convoys at some stage. Only two possibilities are ECHO in 1940 and Emperor in say 1944. But there were no Russian convoys in 1940, the Russians were not then on our side. Maybe he was just operating off North Norway, which he was, but that was in summer 1940 so wouldn't have been that cold

HOSPITAL SHIP – ISLE OF JERSEY



Hospital Ship ISLE OF JERSEY

On 26 July or so Terence went sick with a duodenal ulcer and turned over his job to "Francis" (presumably another of the ship's officers). He was admitted first to the Hospital Ship ISLE OF JERSEY (a former Channel Island Ferry) and then subsequently on 10 August to the Naval Hospital at Kingsneat near Aberdeen. He was discharged on 26 Aug with 21 days sick leave, went south and was married to Hope in Dorset on 7 Sept. His appointment to ECHO was terminated on 27 Aug, but he appears not to have rejoined after July.