



**THE H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION**

(Official Website [www.hmshood.com](http://www.hmshood.com))

Message from your Chairman

November 2003

*Shipmates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

With the AGM and the Annual Reunion Dinner now well behind us we can all look forward to our Christmas and New Year festivities. Unfortunately the number of attendees has been falling in recent years as our veterans find it increasingly difficult to make the journey to Portsmouth. I ask all of you, both young and old; do please try to make the effort to attend. For our newer members who haven't yet attended this function, there is the golden opportunity to chat and mingle with the veterans and hear their marvellous stories. Believe me, they are all born raconteurs.

Unfortunately it is with deep regret, that I have to report that Den Finden has decided to retire from the Committee due to medical problems. All of us on the Committee wish to pay tribute to Dennis for his service to the Association over many years, during which time he has served as Chairman and as Standard Bearer. In this latter capacity, he represented the Association at many public occasions where he performed his duties faultlessly and with perfect dignity. His absence will be missed by all on the Committee, but he has stated that he intends to remain a member of the Association. We all wish him well.

The Association membership has notably increased in the last couple of years or so, and now stands at some 200 in spite of some losses. To a very large extent this has resulted from the worldwide publicity given to the Association by our Internet website. Our thanks for this are due entirely to the efforts of Messrs. Frank Allen and Paul Bevand who have designed, operate and maintain the website. If you have the opportunity, please visit the site at [www.hmshood.com](http://www.hmshood.com). You will not be disappointed.

Whilst on the subject of computer technology and in order to help reduce the colossal workload of our Treasurer, Mr Ken Clark, approximately two years ago the whole accounting and record keeping for the Association was transferred from the old manual system to Ken's new computer. Initially, as always with new technology, there were some teething problems, but hopefully the new software kindly written for Ken by Paul Bevand will result in more effective results. We can only apologise if you have failed to receive your Newsletters and other items in the past.

On behalf of the Committee may I send kind regards and best wishes to you all.

God bless you all.

*And now to business.....*

With the implementation of the fully computerised record system, may we remind you that any member who does not renew their membership by the end of May each year will not receive any Newsletters or other advices after that date?

### Remembrance Day 2003

As in previous years, we will be holding a small service at the Southsea Naval War Memorial on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November at 11:00 hours. It is anticipated that the Association Chaplain, the Reverend Ron Paterson, will lead the service and he will be ably supported by our President, Ted Briggs. We are also delighted to announce that Lord Hood has expressed his wish to attend. We would like as many members as possible to attend the service. After the service it has become customary to assemble at the Royal Sailors Home Club in Portsmouth for a social chat, get together, and of course to 'splice the mainbrace'.

### Boldre Church Service 2004

The Boldre Church Service next year will be held at 11:00 hours on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

**Please note that this is a change of date from the one indicated in this year's service sheet.**

This is due to a conflict with our own Memorial Service.

### 2004 AGM/Reunion Dinner/Memorial Service

- The AGM is at 16:30 hours on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2004 at the Royal Sailors Home Club, Portsmouth, followed by the Association Reunion Dinner at 18:30 for 19:00. Mr. Ernie McConnel, a Hood veteran and one of our longest serving members, has graciously accepted the Committee's invitation to be Guest of Honour at the Dinner.
- Our Memorial service will be held at St. Georges Church, Portsmouth, on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

### Slops

As a reminder to you all, the following is a list of all currently available Hood Association items. Each item features the HMS Hood crest. Prices include postage and packing to UK delivery addresses but please note that an additional charge of £2.00 is required for overseas addresses. Unfortunately no foreign currency cheques can be accepted.

Blazer badges	-	£13.00	
Ties	-	£13.50	
Broaches	-	£ 3.50	
Tie clips	-	£ 6.00	
Sweatshirts (all sizes)	-	£13.50	
T-Shirts	-	£ 7.00	
Baseball caps	-	£ 4.00	
Key rings	-	£ 2.50	
Fridge magnets	-	£ 3.00	
Commemorative envelopes	-	£ 5.00	(See picture on next page)

**(unfortunately there are only 15 envelopes available)**

Sweatshirts are available in the following sizes:

Medium (38): Large (40/42) and XL (44/46)

T-shirts are available in the following sizes:

Medium (38): Large (40) and XL (42/44).

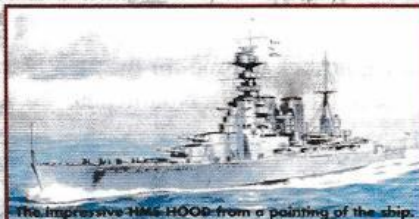


COMMEMORATING THE ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE LOSS OF THE BATTLECRUISER

# HMS HOOD

IN THE BATTLE OF THE DENMARK STRAIT 24/5/41.

**HMS HOOD** was built by John Brown, Clydebank & completed 5/3/20 a 42,000 ton battlecruiser. She had a length of 861ft, a beam of 104ft, a draught of 28ft & a crew of approx 1,400. For 20 years she was the World's largest warship and her first cruise was to Scandinavia in 1920. The following year she was in Gibraltar & Spain and visited Brazil and West Indies in 1922. Denmark and Norway were brief visits in early 1923 before she was flagship for an 11 month cruise around the world with the smaller battlecruiser Repulse & several light cruisers. In 1925 she was in Lisbon to commemorate Portugal's contribution to navigation and exploration. For the next ten years **HMS HOOD** was assigned to the Home/Atlantic Fleets but did visit the West Indies in 1932. She served with the Mediterranean Fleet 1936-39 and protected British interests during the Spanish Civil War. She then served in the Home Fleet from mid 39 operating in the North Atlantic/ North Sea, receiving minor damage in a German air attack on 26/9/39. **HMS HOOD** found herself in the Med in June/July 1940 as flagship during the Messelberg battle on 3/7, a series of attacks to seize, intern or destroy French warships to stop them falling to the Germans. **HMS HOOD** spent the remainder of her service operating from Scapa Flow covering the North Sea/Atlantic from the threat of German surface units. In May 1941 in company with the new battleship HMS Prince of Wales she was sent to search for the German battleship Bismark, which had left Norway for the Atlantic. On the morning of 24th May the two British Capital ships found the enemy west of Iceland. In the resulting Battle of the Denmark Strait one or more of Bismark's 15in shells found her after magazines, which erupted in a massive explosion. The great ship sank in minutes with the loss of all but three of her 1,400 crew, an event that shocked the Royal Navy, the British Nation & the entire World.



The impressive HMS HOOD from a painting of the ship.

Royal Naval Crest

Series Seven No. 2



24 MAY 03

*Ted Briggs*

Ted Briggs, last remaining survivor  
of the Loss of HMS HOOD

Chris Hockaday,  
37 St Gabriels Ave,  
Plymouth PL3 4JG

## COMMEMORATIVE ENVELOPE

All orders for 'Slops' should be sent to: The Treasurer, HMS Hood Association, 57 Berewecke Avenue, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 6BL. Please make all cheques payable to 'HMS Hood Association'.

### First Day Cover - 'Farewell the Hood'

800 copies of this cover envelope depicting the painting 'Farewell the Hood' by Simon Attack, have been signed by our President Ted Briggs and he has received 100 copies in recognition of his efforts. Copies will be available shortly from our Treasurer. A further 100 copies are being signed by Simon Attack, David Mearns of Blue Water Recoveries (who discovered the wreck of the Hood), and Ted Briggs will be available commercially and will retail at a premium price.

### Presentation of 'Farewell the Hood' Prints

Limited edition prints of the painting 'Farewell the Hood' by Simon Attack and signed by Ted Briggs have been presented by our Vice-Chairman, Mr Keith Evans, to the following establishments with which he previously had connections:

- **Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.**  
(Keith was Deputy Supply Officer on the staff of the College from 1946 to 1951)
- **Pangbourne College (formerly Nautical College)**  
(Keith attended here from 1933 to 1937)
- **The Royal School, Haslemere, (formerly Royal Naval School).**  
(Keith served as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors from 1984 to 1991).

### Durness Primary School

On behalf of the HMS Hood Association, the Committee sent a cheque for £100 to the children of Durness Primary School. We asked that this donation be spent on some leisure activity for the children as a treat for all their hard work keeping the stones at Loch Eriboll in such a good condition. The committee has since received a postcard from the boys and girls saying that your donation was put towards paying for a day out at Landmark Forest Park near Inverness. The children said that they had a wonderful day and asked us to pass on their thanks and regards.

**HMS Hood / Bismarck**

Mrs. Silke Hagemann, who has lived in this country for almost 20 years, has advised us of an event she is organising in Germany next year. The following is an extract from the Invitation letter she has sent to HRH Prince Philip:

*I am writing to you on behalf of a friend of mine – Mr Hubert A. James of Birmingham, Harry to his friends. Harry served in WWII in the Royal Navy. Harry's achievements have been recognised by his country for what he did during that war.... Harry's efforts to reconcile both Nations are outstanding. Like a lot of people of his generation he worked endlessly and selflessly to win peace. As far as I am aware, this has not been recognised enough by my (presumably her native) countrymen, but I am determined to do something about it. I cannot do it for everybody who deserves it, but I can do it for those I know. Harry will be donating his collection of plaques, some documents and photographs to the Naval Memorial in Laboe in Germany on Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2004. It will also be an occasion to remember those who did not survive. The display will remember altogether four men; two of them deceased, honouring them is long overdue.....*

We will publish any further information if it arrives in time for the next Newsletter. Otherwise, you may wish to contact Mrs. Hagemann at 78, Dunstan Street, Netherfield, Nottingham, NG4 2NZ.

Mr. John England, our member living in Germany, has been requested to liaise with Mrs Hagemann on our behalf.

**Webmasters Report** (from Paul Bevand)

Having visited the Public Records Office in May this year, Frank Allen and I have been busy typing all the records we examined. These included the Hood's logs for September 1939, June 1940 and April 1941. These logs show where the ship was on a day-to-day basis and record any incidents which took place. We also now have copies of the Admiralty's 'Fighting Instructions' on-line as well as transcripts (with names suitably removed) of the Surgeon Commander's Journal. All these documents build up a picture of what life was like onboard. I visited the Public Records Office again a few weeks ago. Researchers are now allowed to use digital cameras to photograph the records. This allows me to get a great deal more on each visit without having to pay for copies. On that day, I took over 1,000 photographs. So the cycle of typing and posting to the website continues. Our appeal for photographs of crew lost with the ship continues to make steady progress, with the current total standing at 438. Special thanks are due here to Mary Mochan who undertook quite considerable research into the local archives in her hometown of Dundee, and was able to supply us with several new photographs and information about men who came from that area.

For some years we have been trying to create an on-line "Crew database" – a resource which would record any information known about any man who served in Hood from commissioning to loss. Due to various technical difficulties this has not proved possible until now. However, thanks to Mr. Andrew Yates, a work colleague of mine with the requisite computer programming skills, we are now well on our way to having a searchable on-line database.

**Mr. Douglas Reeman/Alexander Kent**

Many of you will be familiar with the work of Douglas Reeman, the UK's foremost WWII Naval fiction writer who also writes historical naval fiction under the pseudonym of Alexander Kent. Your newsletter producer, Mr Mike Ware, is an avid reader of Mr Reeman and during an email conversation with him on his Internet website, it transpired that during his Royal Navy service Mr. Reeman served aboard HMS Starling, a ship then commanded by Mr. Bill Dundas. As you know Bill Dundas was one of the three survivors from Hood's sinking, together with Ted Briggs and Bob Tilburn. Mike has asked Mr Reeman if he has any anecdotes, stories, etc regarding Bill Dundas he may wish to share with the Association. Obviously we will respect Mr. Reeman's decision should he not wish to do so out of respect of Mr Dundas's family, as Mr Dundas unfortunately passed on several years ago.

**This Newsletter has been compiled by Peter Heys, and edited and produced by Michael Ware**