

Overseas Arrivals

A British Port – Attacks by enemy aircraft and u-boats...bombardment of enemy coasts...Mediterranean convoys...troop evacuations – were just routine day-to-day jobs for Lieut. Frederick Bunberry, R.C.N.V.R., of Quebec, during his three years service on loan to the Royal Navy.

After foreign service leave at his home in Canada, he has arrived back here to resume his duties with the R.N.

Already an old veteran – although only 23 – Bunberry saw most of his action on a 5,000-ton cruiser. It started during the battle of Crete and Greece in 1941 when his ship evacuated more than 8,000 troops.

“The Mediterranean was a pretty hot spot at that time,” Bunberry said. “We made several trips back and forth to Egypt, evacuating about 1400 troops a trip. We didn’t have a single casualty.

“I manned an anti-aircraft gun,” he continued. “We were continuously being attacked by aircraft. I lost count after the 50th attack. They generally came at us in bunches of 10 to 15 but we always drove them off. There were several near misses, but not a man was hit.”

When the Allies took over Syria in June, 1941, Bunbury’s ship bombarded the Syrian coast, this time fighting off enemy u-boats as well as aircraft. But again, there were no casualties.

“That went on for about a month and we were nearly always at our action stations,” he said. “Our success was partly due to luck, but mostly to the efficient operating of the ship. Brian (Sub. Lieut. Earl Brian, R.C.N.V.R., of Ridgetown, Ont.,) and I were the only Canadians aboard.”

It was on a convoy run to Tobruk that their luck finally ran out. They were attacked by four torpedo bombers. The ship was hit below the bridge and 12 of the crew were killed. But the ship crawled into port for repairs.

“Our next trip was in a Malta convoy,” Bunbury continued. “We made one trip from the Gib (Gibraltar) to Malta and then headed for patrol duty south of Cape Town. We thought we were in for a rest but soon found out differently.

“I was standing watch on the bridge while patrolling off the west coast of Africa. It was a quiet and peaceful sort of day and nothing was in sight. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion. A torpedo had hit us amidships. About 50 men were killed.

“We crawled back to port while our sister ship chased after the sub and sank her. I was afraid of another sub attacking. I knew she could stand up to one, but that another torpedo would finish us. But we made port.”