

'DOWN UNDER' Newsletter

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April 2019



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Monthly General Meeting April 10th, 2019

The President, **Alan Jameson**, opened the Meeting with a Toast to Absent Friends.

Apologies: Ian Mackenzie, Frank Wilson, Bob Pitman, Pete Greenfield, Bob Wood, Ken Read, Dennis Williams. Jim Dandie, Tom Oates, John Reeve, Eoin Douglas-Smith.

Attendance: Mick Hannah, Alan Jameson, Buster Keating, Mick Hanlon. Paul Meakin, Peter Treen, Alan Thomas, John Harrison, John Manning, Ned Newcombe. Roy Steadman, Barry Grace, Rattler Morgan, Richard Drain, Tom Oates, Karl Campbell

Visitors: Lee Stedman, Terry Baker from the SAA (the Aussies) and Graham (Nobby) Clarke. Graham is possibly a new member as he's a former RN Submariner (VALIANT & RESOLUTION class SSBN's); he's also a new member of the HMS GANGES Association (he was there in 1968, the same year as Barry Grace) Nobby retired recently.

Ladies: Wilma Hannah, Pat Thomas, Eyvonne Newcomb, Pat Hanlon, Margaret Melville, Charlotte Keating, Morag Campbell.

Congratulations to our rum raffle winner **Pat Thomas!**

Treasurer's Report

At the meeting it was decided not to put our financial statement in future newsletters as other interests have no need to know our affairs. We will produce a separate Minutes to be given to members at the following meeting.

Secretary's Report & Membership Report

Our **Standard Bearer Ian Peter Mackenzie** is a busy man who works away a lot, so we are looking for a new Standard Bearer. Anzac day is going to be upon us shortly Thursday 25/April so volunteers required Barry has volunteered Anzac Day but due to work and other commitments this is not a full time offer.

A few members do not keep me up to date with their **change of address** either postal or email to keep in touch it is important that you do this.

Michael Hickie our oldest member is 96 yo and lives in the eastern states **David Woolterten** is getting a membership card made up for Mike He has also written a book which I have in my possession. This book must be returned to me after it has been read so all members can benefit. While on the subject of books In 2011 Wilma and I attended a **Dreadnought** reunion. In exchange for our plaque they presented me a book signed to the members of this branch. **Admiral Paddy RIORDAN** gave this to me to bring back here for the benefit of all members. It is an A4 sized hardback and features all Barrow built boats with photos and caricatures of each type. I would like it returned so the rest of the branch can benefit from it

While we have in the past used members with cheque books in GBP thanks to Buster And John I have found it is cheaper and easier to pay by PayPal for smaller amounts. I have a PayPal account and am quite happy to use that. The provider pays.

Regards,

Mick Hannah, Membership Secretary, Australia Branch.

Social Secretary's Report

It has been a somewhat 'un-social' period since the last newsletter with no events of note to comment on. Suggestions from the Pres for an unprogrammed 'social event' soon and another possible golf day by Ted (who pleaded ignorance of the previous golf event ...) would suggest that we'll be having more fun ...soon.

The **Anzac Day March** will take place on Thursday 25th April, mustering at esplanade Park at 09:45 ready for 'stepping off' at 10:15. A short memorial service will be held on completion.

Parking slots will be scarce, **Allan Thomas** has obtained a number of parking permits from Freo City Council which will be sent to those members who requested one. **Terry Baker** (SAA Pres) has suggested that it may be better to park at the Sailing Club early and use the 'shuttle bus' that goes to and from Esplanade Park every 10 minutes which seems like a damn good idea to me!

Courtesy of the SAA, we are invited to the **Fremantle Sailing Club** for lunch at 12:00. The lunch costs \$29.95 per person, the Menu is below:

Freshly baked baguette and butter
Beef lasagne
Butter chicken & Steamed rice
Grilled barramundi, white wine dill cream sauce
Garden salad
Butternut pumpkin, rocket, feta salad.

A good turn out by the RN SA as always is requested to show our respects.

Myself (Barry) and Buster will attend the **Dawn Service on Monument Hill** and lay a wreath from our branch, UK Submarine Association Australia Branch. Barry will obtain the wreath; Buster will bring along the Standard (and the Banner for the march).

Preparations for the **USN memorial weekend in Albany** are underway with 16 members and partners signed up. Rooms have been booked at the Le Grande Motel. Both the SAA and the USN are in contact with me and we'll have a program of events worked out well in advance of the weekend.

Proposed Social Diary For 2019

Thursday April 25th

ANZAC Day March 10:30 @ Fremantle, Esplanade park.

See above for details

Rum Raffle will be held with proceeds split between SAA & our Association.

Wednesday May 8th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

Friday May 24th to Sunday May 26th

USN Memorial Weekend @ Albany.

Details above and will be added to as time progresses.

Friday 7th June to Monday 19th June

SUBCON Hobart (SAA)

Wednesday June 12th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

Sunday June 23rd

Mid-Year Lunch 1200 @ Mt Henry Tavern. Combined with the presentation of the Charles Costeau Trophy. Gifts for raffles welcome.

Wednesday July 10th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

Wednesday August 14th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

Wednesday September 11th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

Sunday September 15th

AE1 Memorial service at HMAS Stirling with lunch in chiefs mess afterwards (pay on the day).

Wednesday October 9th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

Sunday October 20th (27th)

Royal Navy Periscope Memorial Service 1030 @ Fremantle Memorial Park. Lunch afterwards at The Fremantle Navy Club.

Wednesday November 13th

SA **AGM** and Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

Sunday November 10th

SAA Remembrance Day Service 1030 @ WA Maritime Museum. A free tour of HMSm Ovens for those interested followed by lunch at the Fremantle Navy Club (12:00) courtesy of the SAA

Sunday November 17th

End of Year Picnic 1200 @ Kings Park Pines BBQ Area. Gifts for raffles welcome.

Wednesday December 4th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

Saturday December 14th

Christmas Luncheon 1130 for 1200 at Mt Henry Tavern (tbc). Gifts for raffles welcome.

Please contact Barry for any errors or changes. The calendar will be updated as required at each meeting.

barry_grace@hotmail.com

Regards,

Barry Grace, Social Secretary, Australia Branch.

Welfare

I spoke with **Geoff Arnold** the day before the MGM & he sounded not too bad; he's keen to pass on his set of 3 metal Bolle/Boche balls, for the use of our members at our Kings Park Picnic meetings, along with a bottle of Pusser's for the next winners (several of us plan on visiting Geoff in the near future, if that's OK with him & the family).

I also spoke to **Ken Read** before the MGM & said that they were both a little bit worse than before, but were hanging in there; Charlotte & I visited Ken at home yesterday (we were enroute to going home from visiting our Grandkids in Ellenbrook) & Ken said that Sonja is starting to not want to eat & drink!!

Dennis Williams sent me an Email before the MGM; his GP is much happier with his various results/tests, but Dennis is not able to attend our meetings.

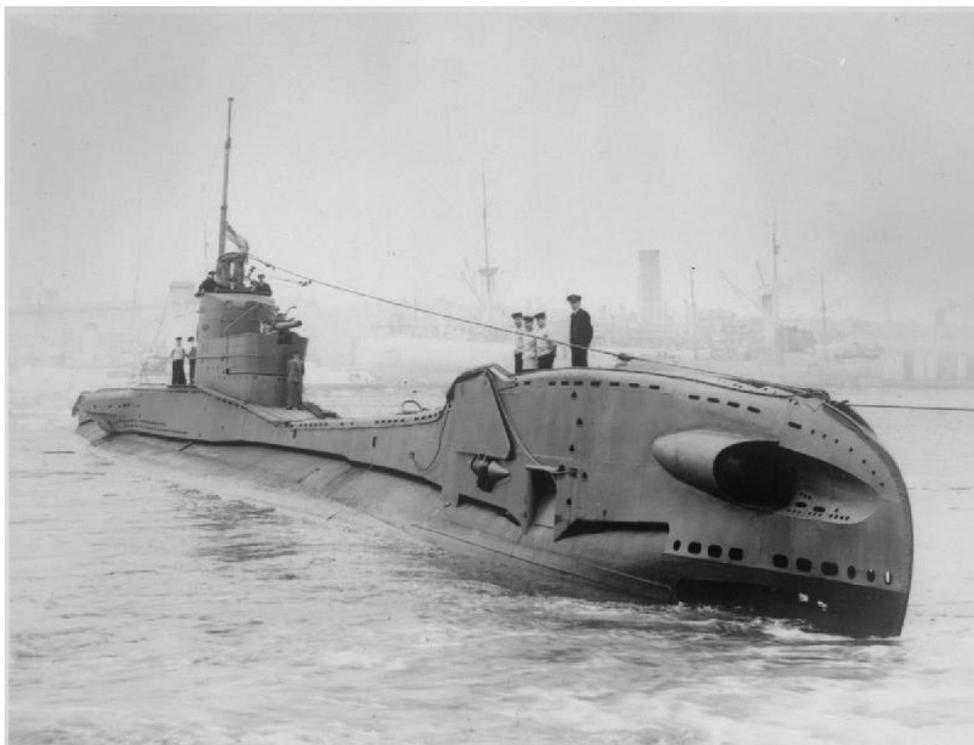
Margaret Melville, our late member George Melville's Widow, is now in a Nursing Home.

Regards,

John "Buster" Keating, Welfare Officer Australia Branch.

HMS THORN

Last month's Down-Under Newsletter featured the T class submarine HMS Thorn on the front page and is shown again below. HMS Thorn had a very active (8 war patrols) in the Mediterranean Sea during WWII. Her service was sadly cut short when she was lost in 1942. The following pages precis the life of HMS Thorn and her crew.



....continued after CTB's

Crossed The Bar

RN SM Association - CTB's for April 19 'Down Under' (from UK)

Date/Name:	Rank (if known):	SM Service:	SM's Served On;	Branch/Age:
13 Mar - John Robert Styles	LCdr	WW2	Selected for X craft midget SM trng in Mar 1944; he was later based in Australia with XE type midgets & was later involved with the surrender of Hong Kong from the Japanese	NN. Age 93
15 Mar - Mike Chapman	RN Chaplain	NN	RN Chaplain at HMS DOLPHIN & NEPTUNE in the 60's & 70's	Lincoln; Age 79
Mar 19 - DJ Derek Anthony MBE	R/Admiral	Sept 1970 - Dec 90	WALRUS, OPOSSUM, REVENGE (S), ANDREW, OXLEY (75/76 as Sonics, on exchange with the RAN), OBERON, ONSLAUGHT (CO), SOVEREIGN (XO) & WARSPITE (CO); then HMS CUMBERLAND as CO in 91; DIR Naval Service conditions in MOD in 93; Deputy to FOSM in 96; Naval Attache in Washington DC in 97, before becoming FO Scotland & Northern England & Ireland in 2000; he retired in 2003	West of Scotland; Age 71
Mar 19 - Henry Stuart 'Lofty' Sibbit	LOEM	1962 - 69	WALRUS (June/Sept 63) & ORPHEUS (Mar 64 - April 67)	Barrow; Age 79
19 Mar - Paul Cripps	CPOUW	1962 - 83	ONSLAUGHT (62/65), TALENT (66/68), GRAMPUS (68), ACHERON (68/70), VALIANT (75/77), RN SETT (77/80), HMAS PLATYPUS (80/83), as RN Exchange SM Escape Coxn (as CPOUWSM); O/C, return to UK & discharged from RN Joined RAN in 1983 & became a CPOCoxn & later served in OTWAY (84/86 & 87/90), ONSLOW (92/94), OTAMA (94/97) & PLATYPUS in 98	NM; Age 75
22 Mar - Orme Oliver	Leut	1954 - 59	AUROCHS, ALARIC, ARTFUL & SCOTSMAN - he was a long serving member of the 'Friends of the SM Museum'	NN; Age NN
27 Mar - AH Tony Edge	CPO Mech	1960 - 76	GRAMPUS & NARWHAL	Gosport; Age 84
28 Mar - Ian Watson-Smith	MEM1	1962 - 70	ASTUTE (2) & TALENT	Welsh; Age 75
5 April - JS 'Jim' Johnson	LOEM	1961 - 67	NARWHAL, SEALION & VALIANT	Blyth & Wansbeck; Age 75
15 April - John 'Jack' Henry Billington	CPO Elec	1942 - 47	SCORCHER, SEASCOUT, AMPHION & METEORITE (former U-1407)	Merseyside; Age 96
19 April - Donald James Morgan	CPO COXN	NN	NN	NN; Age NN
April 19 - Dave 'Cyril' Davis	LStoker	WW2	NN; He was believed to have been onboard HMS MEDWAY (1st SM Flotilla depot ship), when she was sunk in the Eastern Med on 30 June 1942, by U-372; he was rescued by a destroyer & later landed at Haifa, where he was hospitalised with a broken jaw.	NN; Age 97
April 19 - David Gunter	CPO MEA	08/79 - 08/93	CHURCHILL (11/79 - 06/86) & RENOWN (90/91)	Beds & Herts; Age 65

No April edition of the RN Navy News yet (I'm in the process of renewing my Subs)!

HMS THORN ...continued

For more details, I thoroughly recommend the website www.uboat.net. The book 'The T-Class Submarine: The Classic British Design' by Paul Kemp and the book 'The Hunting Submarine: The Fighting Life of HMS Tally-Ho' by Ian and Mark Trenowden, are also an excellent read and worthy of adding to your book shelf.

HMS Thorn was built by Cammell Laird Shipyard (Birkenhead), she was launched in March 1941 and commissioned in August the same year with the Pennant number N11. Lt.Cdr. Robert Galliano Norfolk commanded HMS Thorn for her entire service.

23 Aug 1941, HMS Thorn departed her builders' yard at Birkenhead for Holy Loch, arriving at the Holy Loch on 24th August to begin a period of trials and training.

In late September, after a short period of trials and training on the West coast of Scotland HMS Thorn departed from Holy Loch for Gibraltar. She was then to proceed to Alexandria to join the 1st Submarine Flotilla.

While on passage to Gibraltar, on 25 Sep 1941, at 2130 hours, HMS Thorn was informed of the presence of a U-boat in 45°59.5'N, 09°37'W and attempted to intercept but nothing was seen. Arriving in Gibraltar on 29 September, she remained until 3rd October when she departed to take part in exercises before heading to Malta.

While on passage to Malta, on 8 October, HMS Thorn attacked an Italian convoy of one merchant ship and one escorting destroyer about 50 nautical miles West-North-West of Isola di Marettimo. All torpedoes fired missed their intended targets.

From Admiralty Records - 1838 hours - Sighted a merchant vessel of about 3000 tons escorted by a destroyer of the Sauro or Sella class bearing 120°, range 8000 yards. The course of the merchant vessel was 055°, speed 8 knots. The destroyer was zig-zagging ahead but shortly afterwards steadied on the same course as the merchant vessel. Started attack.

1856 hours - Fired two torpedoes against the destroyer from 6000 yards.

1858 hours - Fired two torpedoes against the merchant. Range was also 6000 yards.

No explosions however followed and both ships continued on their course as if nothing happened.

*Most likely the ship was the Italian merchant **Una** (1395 GRT, built 1904). She had left Tripoli around 1245 hours on the 6th and arrived at Naples around 2330 hours on the 9th. She was escorted by the destroyer **Euro**.*

HMS Thorn arrived at Malta on 10th October.

From 13 October to 27 October, HMS Thorn having departed from Malta, carried out for her 1st war patrol. She was ordered to patrol in the Ionian Sea off the West coast of Greece. The patrol ending in Alexandria.

On 10 Nov, HMS Thorn, departed from Alexandria for her 2nd war patrol. She was ordered to patrol in the Aegean Sea and to perform two special operations.

On 13 Nov, at 2050 hours, a torpedo was fired accidentally from No.2 tube with the bow cap door closed, fracturing it. The torpedo was heard to explode but damage was limited, and Thorn was able to continue her patrol.

The following day HMS Thorn carried out the first part of her special operation. During the evening personnel and stores were landed on Despotiko Island, Greece.

From Admiralty records - 1945 hours (14th) to 0115 hours (15th) - Landed Captain Grammatikakis, Lieutenant J.G.P. Atkinson and Sergeants J.A. Redpath and A.B. Empson with three tons of stores, this was an operation for M.I.9, to arrange a pickup of escapees.

On 16 Nov, HMS Thorn made a torpedo attack on the Turkish relief ship Kurtulus South-East of the Gulf of Athens. The torpedo fired luckily missed its target as the Kurtulus had been granted safe passage.

From Admiralty records - 2043 hours - Sighted an illuminated vessel bearing 310°, distance 5 nautical miles. Closed to attack.

2143 hours - Fired one torpedo from 700 yards. As Thorn was yawing due to the heavy weather conditions the torpedo missed. Just now the ship was identified as a Turkish relief ship that was not to be attacked.

Shortly after noon on 20 November 1941, HMS Thorn sighted a convoy leave the Gulf of Athens proceeding South. The convoy was thought to be making for either Suda Bay or leave the Aegean to the West.

Lt.Cdr. Norfolk could not reach a favourable attack position during the night if the convoy was to proceed towards Suda Bay. Therefore, course was set to the Anti-Kythira Channel to intercept if the convoy was to leave the Aegean to the West. The convoy however was not seen again and was most likely en-route to Suda Bay.

During the night of 23/24 November 1941, HMS Thorn carried out the 2nd part of her special operation. 21 Escapees were picked up from Despotiko. Captain Grammatikakis and Sergeant Redpath remained behind to prepare for another batch of escapees (by HMS Triumph). That night, HMS Thorn shelled a power station in Voudia Bay, 25 rounds were expended, 17 hits were claimed.

HMS Thorn ended her 2nd war patrol at Alexandria on 27 November 1941.

On 18 Dec, HMS Thorn departed from Alexandria for her 3rd war patrol. She was ordered to patrol off the West coast of Greece.

On 20 Dec, between 0001 hours to 0200 hours - HMS Thorn attempted to carry out a bombardment of the harbour of Spinalonga (near Candia, Crete) but the target was hardly visible, and it was abandoned. Later that day, Thorn was examining the harbour from about three cables from the entrance and her periscope came under fire, forcing her to retire.

On 22 Dec, HMS Thorn was in position 12 nautical miles from Cape Drepano when she was depth-charged by two torpedo-boats. Five depth-charges were dropped singly, the first was a small depth charge but very close.

These torpedo boats belonged to a convoy made up of the Italian merchants **Citta di Alessandria**, **Citta di Agrigento** and **Citta di Savona** escorted by the armed merchant cruiser **Brioni**, the torpedo-boats **Lupo**, **Sirio** and **Lira** and the submarine chaser **Drache**.

On 28 Dec, HMS Thorn makes a torpedo attack on the Italian tanker **Volturno** about 10 nautical miles West-South-West of Cape Dukato, Greece. All torpedoes fired missed, so Thorn surfaced and engaged the target with gunfire. This action had to be broken off due to Thorn not being able to decrease the range.

From Admiralty records - 0759 hours - In position 38°31'N, 20°22'E sighted the funnel and masts of a merchant vessel bearing 130°, range 8000 yards. The course of the vessel was 250°.

0812 hours - The contact was seen to be a tanker of about 3000 tons. Started attack.

0820 hours - Fired three torpedoes from 2000 yards. The first torpedo was seen to break surface and then ran off to the right. The other two torpedoes missed.

0850 hours - Surfaced and engaged the target with the deck gun from 4000 yards. The enemy replied with gunfire from 2 guns 3" or 4" calibre. After 10 minutes the range had increased to 5000 yards. Two hits were obtained but the range could not be closed. The attack had to be broken off.

On 30 Dec, HMS Thorn torpedoed and sank the Italian tanker Campina about 5 nautical miles west off Cape Dukato.

From Admiralty records -1608 hours - In position 38°37'N, 20°28'E sighted two vessels bearing 135°. Range was 13000 yards. Closed submerged at high speed. The vessels were later seen to be a passenger / cargo ship of 5000 tons and a tanker of about 6000 tons. Both were steering a course of 290°. Started attack.

1641 hours - Fired six torpedoes from 1400 yards at the tanker. Three explosions were heard about 1min30sec after firing. An escort thought to be a torpedo boat was seen about 2000 - 3000 yards on the tankers quarter.

1646 hours - Thorn was counter attacked with in all 61 depth charges, but none was close.

According to Italian sources the ships in this convoy were the above-mentioned Campina. She was escorted by the Armed Merchant Cruiser Egitto. Campina and Egitto were joining up with another convoy bound from Patras for Taranto. This convoy was escorted by the torpedo-boat Pegaso and the submarine chaser Spanedda (the latter from X Gruppo Antisom). Spanedda fired four rounds at the periscope and dropped 10 depth-charges.

HMS Thorn ended her 3rd war patrol at Alexandria on 5th January 1942.

On 17 Jan 1942, HMS Thorn departed from Alexandria for her 4th war patrol. She is to patrol in the Adriatic. Two special operations are also to be carried out.

HMS Thorn attempts to carry out special operation ' Hydra '. A party of four was to be landed at Petrovac, Croatia, but due to the worsening weather conditions the attempt had to be abandoned. It was decided to proceed towards Mljet Island to carry out operation ' Henna '. A party of two had to be landed.

In the early morning hours of 27th January, HMS Thorn carries out special operation ' Henna '. Yugoslav Lt. Rapotec and former police agent Steven Shinko and stores were landed on Mljet Island, Croatia near Saplunara.

The following day, HMS Thorn torpedoed and sank the Italian merchant **Ninuccia** off Cape Planka, Yugoslavia. Before being sunk with a torpedo the ship had been missed with four other torpedoes. She had then been engaged and damaged with gunfire. Shortly afterwards Thorn grounded at a depth of 80 feet. Some damage was inflicted, and several torpedo tubes could not be used anymore.

From Admiralty Records: 1030 hours - Sighted a merchant vessel bearing 120°, range 12000 yards. Started attack.

1121 hours - Fired three torpedoes from 800 yards. All missed. Two torpedoes were heard to explode on the shore.

1129 hours - Surfaced and engaged the target with the 4" gun from 600 yards. The first round appeared to have disabled the ships steering gear.

1137 hours - 30 Rounds had now been fired. All were hits. The enemy was slowly proceeding towards the shore. Another torpedo was fired but was seen to run off track and it missed. Meanwhile the gun action had continued.

1146 hours - Thorn was now taken under fire from a shore battery and dived after firing 71 rounds at the target. Most of these had hit. The target was riddled with holes amidships and on fire. She showed no signs of sinking.

1155 hours - Fired one torpedo from 500 yards. It hit near the funnel.

1202 hours - The enemy was seen to sink by the stern with a list to Starboard in position 090°, Mulo Island lighthouse, 1000 yards.

1205 hrs - Thorn grounded accidentally east of Mulo island but managed to free herself.

On 30 Jan, HMS Thorn sank the Italian submarine **Medusa** in the Adriatic near Promontore, Istria, Italy

From Admiralty Records: 1354 hours - Sighted a submarine bearing 050°, range 5000 yards.

1402 hours - Fired four torpedoes from 3500 yards. One hit was obtained. Enemy HE ceased immediately.

Three wounded and four corpses were picked up by the Italians. The submarine had sunk in 35 meters of water and rescue efforts were organized immediately. Tapping was heard from the hull and 14 men were still alive but all attempts to rescue them failed and in all 58 perished and only two survived.

On 3 Feb, HMS Thorn carried out the previously abandoned special operation ' Hydra '. Major Atherton, Corporal O'Donovan (wireless operator), Flying Officer Medelkovic and Sergeant Djekic were landed near Petrovac, Croatia.

HMS Thorn ended her 4th war patrol at Alexandria on 11th February.

On 25 Feb. HMS Thorn departed from Alexandria for her 5th war patrol. She was ordered to patrol off the West coast of Greece.

While at Alexandria, divers had inspected the damage from the grounding on 28 January. Thorn had to be docked for repairs, but this was not possible at that moment, all docks were in use for other ships. Thorn therefore proceeded on patrol with 4 of her bow torpedo tubes out of order.

Even so, on 5 March, HMS Thorn sank the Italian auxiliary patrol vessel AS 91 / Ottavia with gunfire, off Cape Ortholiti.

From Admiralty Records: 0915 hours - In position 205°, Cape Gheroghambo, 2.5 nautical miles sighted a sailing vessel bearing 070°, range 5 nautical miles. Course of the enemy was 260°, speed was only 3 knots. Lt.Cdr. Norfolk decided to follow and to engage with the gun when the enemy was far enough from Argostoli to be unobserved.

1115 hours - Heard Asdic impulses bearing 080°.

1130 hours - Sighted a two-funnelled destroyer thought to be of the Confianza-class. in position 38°06'N, 20°22'E. The course of the enemy was 190°, speed 12 knots.

1200 hours - The destroyer was seen to alter course to 120°. She was soon lost out of sight bearing 125°. Meanwhile the sailing vessel was seen to be a brigantine of about 200 tons. She was armed with a 12pdr gun forward. She was now proceeding Northwards.

1454 hours - Surfaced for gun action in position 38°16'N, 20°20'E. Range to the target was 500 yards.

1505 hours - The enemy was now well on fire aft and all her sails were down. Her hull was a shambles and she was well down by the stern. Thorn then dived as it was expected that the destroyer sighted earlier would be rushing in.

1535 hours - The target blew up and sank. Shortly afterwards the destroyer was sighted coming from the South along with an aircraft. Two depth charges were dropped but these were way off.

On 17 Mar 1942, HMS Thorn ended her 5th war patrol at Alexandria.

On 28 March, HMS Thorn is docked at Port Said before returning to Alexandria on 12th April. HMS Thorn arrived at Alexandria; however, she returned to Port Said immediately. As no logs of HMS Thorn are available for April 1942 onwards it is not known why Thorn had to go back to Port Said but most likely she had to be docked again.

On 20 April, HMS Thorn departed from Alexandria for her 6th war patrol, ordered to patrol in the Gulf of Sirte. No log is available.

On 7 May, HMS Thorn fires four torpedoes against an Italian convoy in the central Mediterranean about 180 nautical miles north-west of Benghazi, Libya. All four torpedoes missed their intended target.

From Admiralty Records: 1732 hours - In position 34°34'N, 17°59'E sighted smoke bearing 335°. Turned towards.

1802 hours - Sighted masts and funnels of three merchant ships. Range 10000 yards, course 170°. Five escorting aircraft had also been sighted.

1815 hours - Sighted two destroyers, one ahead of the convoy and one on the Port beam.

1822 hours - Fired four torpedoes at the leading merchant ship from 3000 yards. A counter attack followed that lasted about one hour. 35 Depth charges were dropped. Two patterns of five each that were dropped in the beginning were fairly close but caused no damage.

*According to Italian sources this convoy was made up of the Italian merchants **Anna Maria Gualdi, Trapani and Capo Arma** escorted by destroyers **Ugolino Vivaldi and Turbine** and torpedo-boat **Pegaso**. The interception had been achieved following an ULTRA signal.*

HMS Thorn ended her 6th war patrol at Alexandria on 14th May 1942.

HMS Thorn departed from Alexandria for her 7th war patrol on 27th May. She was ordered to patrol in the Gulf of Sirte and the Ionian Sea.

On 15 June, HMS Thorn was ordered to intercept a battleship, two cruisers and two destroyers in position 37°30'N, 19°35'E, steering 190°, 20 knots. At 0747 hours she sights the masts of a battleship at 12000 yards but cannot get within attacking range.

HMS Thorn ended her 7th war patrol at Alexandria on 26 June 1942.

On 29 June, HMS Thorn departed from Alexandria for Haifa. Her arrival date at Haifa is not known but was most likely 30 or 31 June. It is likely she was docked at Haifa before she proceeded to join the rest of the 1st submarine flotilla that was now based at Beirut.

On 21 July, HMS Thorn departed from Beirut for her 8th war patrol. She was ordered to patrol off Tobruk. Later she shifts her patrol area to the North-West of Crete (Cape Matapan area).

On 26 July 1942, the small German merchant vessel **Ostia** (former Spanish Nere-a-Metza) reported being missed with two torpedoes close to Bardia. If this is a genuine attack, then the culprit must have been HMS Thorn.

HMS Thorn had encountered many targets in the Tobruk area and requested permission to stay in that area. This was approved. Thorn had to vacate the area by around 5 August as HMS Taku was to arrive in the Tobruk area on the 6th.

It is often stated that HMS Thorn had torpedoed and sank the Italian transport ship Monviso, 8 nautical miles from Sidi Sueicher, Libya. This is however unlikely. Thorn had orders to operate near Tobruk until 6 August and then to patrol off Cape Matapan before returning to base. Monviso was most likely mined.

HMS Thorn (Lt.Cdr. *Robert Galliano* Norfolk, DSO, RN) was most likely sunk on **6 Aug 1942** while attacking a convoy about 30 nautical miles south-west of Gavdos Island in position 34°25'N, 22°36'E. At 1255 hours one of the escorting Ju-88 aircraft was seen to machine-gun the surface of the sea about 5000 yards ahead of the convoy and the Italian torpedo boat **Pegaso** moved in to investigate. Four minutes after the aircraft attack, Pegaso picked up a contact and carried out seven depth charge attacks. At 1345 hours an enormous air bubble was seen, followed by a large oil slick. Pegaso was escorting the transport **Istria** on passage from Benghazi to Piraeus.

HMS Thorn was declared overdue on 11 August 1942 when she did not arrive at Beirut.

Sub Note: With 53 T (Triton) Class submarines being built before and during WWII they played a major role in RN submarine operations. The last operational RN 'T boat' serving until 1969 and then becoming an 'alongside' training submarine until 1974. The last surviving T boat (HMS Truncheon) serving with the Israel Navy (as INS Dolphin), was scrapped in 1977.

Acknowledgments to the Imperial War Museum, British National Archives, Wikipedia, and www.uboaat.net, for the information and photograph above.

Meeting shut at approx: 12:55

END OF APRIL MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING

The next Monthly General Meeting will be at *The Flying Angel*, Fremantle on

May 8th, 2019 commencing at 1200