

## **JOHN (Jack ) DYER.**

On leaving school John became a clerk in a local government office. At the age of 19 he joined the Bristol City Police, registering during May 1939, in the Militia as a reserve Naval rating. On the outbreak of War, four months later ( September 1939), being a policeman, he was considered to be in a reserve occupation. Bristol, in the Bristol Channel, is on the West Coast of England, the same latitude as London. Like other cities of England, it was very heavily bombed during the early years of the War. John's wife recalls that her sister had two miscarriages because of the bombing, and that her Aunty lost three sons due to the war.

When the Germans decided to change the air raid s to other targets the younger men of the Police Force were released for the Armed Forces. John joined the navy and was drafted the Devonport (Plymouth). After initial training he was drafted to I-WIS Norfolk, a cruiser. During the winter of 1943 the ship in company with two other cruisers, HMS Cumberland and HMS Belfast, were engaged in convoy escort duties to Murmansk, in Russia. One cruiser was fitted with Asdic, the another had the new device of Radar. The Cruiser constantly circled the convoy to guard against attacks by sea and air. T

he Russians eventually recognised all the servicemen and merchant sailors who were engaged on the convoys. Although the medal was struck on the 27th September 1985, mention is made of John receiving it in the minutes of the Sub-Branch of November 1989. The medal bears the words <sup>N</sup> Yyacthhky Bohhbi?<sup>t</sup> and inter alia, on the obverse side, <sup>s</sup> 1941-1945' and literally the interpretation means <sup>x</sup> Forty Years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War 1943-1945'.

Later John undertook a course and passed through the ranks as a Sub-Lieutenant and eventually Lieutenant RNVR. On "D" day, 6th June 1944 John was in action as a 1st Lieutenant on a British Tank Landing Craft in Combined Operations. It was one of twelve in the only flotilla attached to the Americans, in the assault landing, at Omaha at the base of the Cherbourg peninsula, at the precise time of "H" plus 20 minutes. He recalls how on leaving the anchorage in the river Tamar, Plymouth, the home port, on 4th June the weather was so bad that the flotilla was ordered to return to Cawsands Bay, Plymouth. Hardly had his craft dropped anchor when a senior officer called on board to resume the assault. Note that there were no excessive radio signals! Although History records that the bad weather assisted the Allied attack, it also caused many casualties. Having completed eleven successful crossings of the English Channel the landing craft, because of further bad weather, sank 36 miles south of St Catherine's light on the Isle of Wight.

After a few varied appointments John became officer in charge of a tank landing craft at Falmouth and sailed to the Far East for the war against the Japanese. It was a long journey, first to Gibraltar because the little craft had to sail a long way west into the Atlantic Ocean to avoid enemy forces based at Brest. The journey to Cochin, India, took about six weeks, via Malta, Port Said and Aden. Thankfully the Japanese surrendered before the craft arrived, so it was used for ferrying supplies from ships to such places as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands groups in the Malay Archipelago.

John eventually arrived in Singapore and was given a travel warrant in order to reach England for discharge. It was an interesting journey, for he had to hitch a ride to Madras, thence proceed by train to Bombay. There he boarded an old ship, the City of London, which was returning to Scotland to be broken up, this carried him to Glasgow. After being demobilised on the 31st March 1946 he returned to the Police Force, but things were not quite the same, so he migrated to Australia, with his wife, in June 1964.

When he purchased an outlying block on a street near the coast at Sorrento, for a nominal amount, his brother in law, Fred Moore, rubbished him for buying a block in the wilderness and accused him of wasting his money. The quiet street became West Coast Highway, now West Coast Drive. The wind caused them to leave, with some profit, for a quieter and clean street in North Beach. John has been a regular and loyal member of this Sub-Branch, serving as an Auditor for over ten years, later a Trustee and on the successful Dinner Committees.