

BATTLE OF CRETE – ROLL OF HONOUR

More than 50 British and Australian warships were caught up in the maelstrom of Crete. The following ships all lost men during the battle.

Battleships

Warspite (damaged) – 19 dead, 24 missing, 69 wounded

Barham (damaged) – 7 dead, 6 wounded

Carriers

Formidable (damaged) – 12 dead, 10 wounded

Cruisers

Gloucester (sunk) – 725 dead

Fiji (sunk) – 5 dead, 271 missing, 24 wounded

Orion (damaged) – 116 dead, 5 missing, 77 wounded

Ajax (damaged) – 11 dead, 38 wounded

Perth (damaged) – 4 dead, 3 wounded

Dido (damaged) – 27 dead, 10 wounded

Naiad (damaged) – 7 dead, 31 missing

Coventry (damaged) – 2 dead, 7 wounded

Calcutta (sunk) – 9 dead, 108 missing, 40 wounded

Carlisle (damaged) – 14 dead, 25 wounded

Destroyers

Kingston (damaged) – 1 dead, 2 wounded

Kashmir (sunk) – 82 missing, 14 wounded

Kipling (damaged) – 5 dead, 1 wounded

Kelvin (damaged) – 1 dead, 4 wounded

Kelly (sunk) – 3 dead, 127 missing, 17 wounded

Jervis (damaged) – 4 wounded

Juno (sunk) – 12 dead, 116 missing, 21 wounded

Jaguar (damaged) – 2 wounded

Nubian (damaged) – 15 dead, 6 wounded

Imperial (sunk) – 1 wounded

Hereward (sunk) – 5 dead, 165 missing

Havock (damaged) – 15 dead, 10 wounded

Griffin (damaged) – 1 wounded

Greyhound (sunk) – 1 dead, 83 missing, 23 wounded

Decoy (damaged) – 1 dead, 8 wounded

Diamond (sunk) – 155 missing, 1 wounded

Wryneck (sunk) – 108 missing, 5 wounded

The above was sent to me with the following remark, ‘I don’t see the Phoebe mentioned.’ You don’t have to be included in a Roll of Honour to possess a Battle Honour. Yes, the Phoebe was fortunate to come through that ordeal with no casualties caused by enemy action. The more our skipper, Captain Guy Grantham, and our pilot, Navigating Officer, Lieutenant Lumsden, worked the ship *the luckier we got*.

Towards the end of the evacuation from Crete, Phoebe was the only workable cruiser left in Admiral Cunningham’s fleet. In a last ditch effort to save the remaining troops on the island it was necessary for her to return ASAP after disembarking her present evacuees. In order to do that, the crew of the damaged HMS Naiad was recruited to re-provision, re-ammunition and re-fuel Phoebe in order that the Phoebe’s crew could get some well-earned rest before returning to what was becoming a veritable graveyard.

The months of May and June have proved to be the chosen times for anniversaries, not always commemorating pleasant memories. (If my wife reads this - I am referring to wartime events and not our May time wedding).

Dunkirk (May/June 1940), Greece/Crete (May 1941), D Day (June 1944).

One year after the Dunkirk Veterans held their last pilgrimage to Belgium and France, saw the last official commemoration of the sacrifices that the Royal Navy made to evacuate allied troops from Crete.

It had been the practice for warships passing in the vicinity of that part of the Mediterranean to lay wreathes near the sites of wrecks. On the 60th anniversary of the campaign, 2001, the privilege of carrying out the last act of homage was given to HMS Richmond. Over 1500 people attended a service of remembrance, and a lone bugler played The Last Post.

I write this as one of those shipmates who experienced those days and nights in May 1941 aboard HMS Phoebe, one of the *luckiest* ships to participate in The Battle of Crete.

Oh, lucky ship! – Oh, happy crew!

(Vic Chanter)