

## Contributed by Dave Lowry

The following transcript was from a note typed by her captain at the time, Lt L H Dearne RNVR: (I have it with the kind permission of his daughter, Joan Randell.)

### H.M. L.C.I (L) 268.

#### OUTSTANDING INCIDENTS.

Longest Period at Sea – 24 days en-route from Bermuda to Gibraltar– 3,700 miles.

Longest Voyage – New York to Gibraltar via Norfolk Virginia and Bermuda – 4,800 miles.

Oceans and Seas Crossed – Atlantic, Mediterranean, Adriatic, Bay of Biscay, Irish Sea and English Channel.

Spent Christmas 1943 and New Year hiding in Yugoslavia, men living ashore in partisan hideouts while ship lay alongside shore completely covered by trees and camouflage nets.

During evacuation of Hvar crossed Adriatic Sea in 90 m.p.h. gale whilst carrying on board 627 women and children and 15 mortally wounded male and female Partisans who were tied to the decks with rope being given morphine injections by members of crew. During passage ship's maximum roll was measured and found to be 65 degrees.

During one observation patrol behind enemy lines in Italy we went so close into shore that people could be seen to board buses etc without the aid of binoculars.

At one period, during the Italian campaign, 1 Officer and 8 men were ashore in Hospital but the ship still carried on operations.

Once when returning to Malta, after sortie against Sicily coast, was shelled by Malta coastal defence who mistook ship for enemy submarine.

When entering La Goulette harbour, Tunisia, knocked starboard propeller shaft completely off on an Italian submarine which was lying submerged at the entrance.

Up to the end of the European war the longest period without suffering damage whatsoever was three months.

Ship was without mail from time of leaving to Sicily landing – 7 months.

Shot down 1 Heinkel and shared in 3 Focke Wolfe 190's.

Received congratulatory signals from Field Marshal Montgomery; U.S. Admiral Halsey; Admiral Cunningham; Senior Officer Secret Operations and others.

During the 24 day crossing of Atlantic crew lived for 13 days on corned beef and ship's biscuits the other food being unfit for human consumption due to dampness.

Whilst on night operation off North African coast a torpedo passed under bows whilst another crossed ship's wake 10ft from stern.

On "D" day three members of the crew were lost on beach-head. Six attempts had to be made to get to the beach then one ramp was blown away when launched.

On the night following "D" day, whilst lying at anchor in the Seine Bay, a scraping noises attributed to anchor cable were, when daylight came, found to be coming from a mine which had been lying alongside.

In all 6 members of the crew were decorated for distinguished service.

As you can see, LC(I) 268 was in the thick of it. I have copies of a few photos of Lt Dearne and the ship. I also have donated to me (Lt Dearne was my uncle) a painting which was commissioned to commemorate the storm after the evacuation of women and children and partisans from Hvar. (photo attached)

Best wishes

Dave Lowry

PS

There is more about the exploits of 268 in the book, The War of the Landing Craft. It's an anthology compiled by Paul Lund & Harry Ludlam of experiences with one written by Lt Dearne, 'An Island called Vis'.

As a very young person I have vague memories of going aboard 268 when she was visiting Liverpool. It was shortly after the war and Lt Dearne had since left her.

You may be aware, LC(T) 7074 is currently being renovated in Portsmouth UK. It is planned for her to do a landing on Southsea Beach.