

# Halifax Herald



October 2018

## Menace from the deep

WWII U-Boat operations around the Cape

**Awesome!**

We visit Warrior's Gate

## We will remember them

Why every Moth should attend the  
Remembrance Day Parade





From the  
**editor's**  
desk

Last week this time I was in hot, sunny and humid Durban. Naturally it was raining.

I was down there to shoot video footage and take photographs for a planned video tour of Warrior's Gate that will feature on the Moth website.

I don't know if you've ever been to Warrior's Gate, but it is well worth a visit. In fact I think that every Moth should pay a visit at least once. While there I met some really great people.

Please read the article on page 12 of this edition. It is something that I really believe in.

Do you realise that it is only two months to Christmas. It's time that we got together as a Shellhole and did something besides sit and stare at each other. Any suggestions from you guys?

Listen, I trust that you'll all have a good month and that you'll all be in good health and spirit.

Until next month. YUTTH.

*Matt*

### What's in this month's issue?

Once again, thanks to Servaas for another interesting article.

On page 3 this month there is a story from Servaas on U-Boat operations around the Cape during World War II.

On page 7 we have the answers to last month's 'Local is Lekker' quiz.

On page 8 there is an article about my recent trip down to Durban where I was honoured to visit Warrior's Gate. It's something that all Moths should do.

On page 12 there is an article that is very near and dear to my heart. Please read it, take note of it, and follow up on it.

Finally, on page 14 there is another cartoon from the late Len Lindeque.

Trust you will enjoy this month's read.

### FRONT COVER

Warrior's Gate. Taken during a recent visit to Warrior's Gate in Durban.

## U-Boat operations around the Cape

*Some facts about World War II U-Boat operations around the Cape.*

*By Servaas van Breda.*

During 1942 the Germans were having huge success with their U Boats in the Atlantic. They decided to send four U-Boats to the Cape Town area.

Prior to this decision intelligence that was supplied in Cape Town and Saldanha indicated that this area was ripe for the pickings, as conveys scheduled stop for re-victualing.

It was decided by U-Boat headquarters in France to deploy four submarines to the Cape Area. At this time there were three Royal Navy anti-submarine corvettes on the Cape Town Station of which at the time was one. Two others would follow later from 11 October. Two Australian ships arrived for refit and an additional two Royal Navy from Freetown had arrived.

Cape waters were not as unprotected as most believed. Although the U-Boat commanders had been instructed not to begin operations until 10 October, U-172 commanded by Kapitanleutnant Carl Emmerman was personally frustrated at having to wait.

He penetrated Table Bay during the night 5/6 October and lay off Robben Island. The U-boat submerged at 03:13 with its Metox detector registering the waves of a powerful radar on land and settled gently on the seabed until 06:30

the next morning.

Coming up to periscope depth he moved to as far as the line Robben Island/Green Point, which he estimated as 6 miles apart, and also noted that two small vessels were on patrol.

Quite undisturbed, Emmerman was able to take bearings of the entrance and exit channels and also study the harbour installations. The grain elevator stood out prominently.

At 16:00 U-172 moved away at high speed in a south-westerly direction and surfaced at 19:45 to recharged batteries.

Even at this distance, 45 miles out, her Metox still recorded radar transmissions. Emmerman signaled Bdu after 22:00

"Roadstead empty. Request freedom of action".

This request was refused, but he was told that if the roadstead was empty on the night of the 10th October, U-172 and U-88 would be free to attack individually, but only in the open sea. Korvettenkapitan K.F. Merten in U-68 had been cruising in the approaches to channel no2.

After 23:00 he noted a blue funnel moving out and reported that anti-aircraft exercises and numerous searchlights noted by Emmerman. He also suggested that to Bdu that group be allowed freedom of action. The signal sent by Bdu

was received in mutilated form but the gist appeared to be that Emmerman and Merten were free to attack.

At 05:02 the Chickasaw City fell to U-172, 65 miles west-south west of Green Point, and 08:15 sunk the Panamanian Firehorn. That night at the entrance of the channel U-172 sunk the Greek ship Pantelis.

Korvettenkapitan Helmuth Witte in U-159 claimed his first victim, the British vessel Borginga close to midnight on 8 October and Merten in U-86 sank the Greek Koumoundouros at 03:15. At the first light of dawn on 8th October U 68 added the Dutch ship the Gaasterkerk to her tally.

By dawn the three U-boats sunk 11 ships with a total tonnage of 33,000 t off the Cape Peninsula.

Only U-504 under Korvettenkapitan Fritz Poske which had been cruising in the north-west approaches to Table Bay had failed to sight anything during the night and had submerged west off Dassen island.

The U-179 which had made a fast crossing from Europe was approaching in the same direction. The Eisebar group had struck the first blow, but had failed to secure the complete surprise the Bdu intended.

It was not finished; U-159 sank the British Clan Mactavish at 10:05 on 8th October as she rescued survivors from the Boringa. The-U boat had to dive hastily when an aircraft was sighted, and when she surfaced 45 minutes later the U boat had to dive again for a further air-

craft alarm.

Orders were given that day to extinguish all coast and harbour lights, discontinue radio beacon signals and fog signals and ships were warned not to approach within 70 miles of Cape Town during the hours of darkness. Sea and air patrols covered the areas of the sinking's.

That afternoon U-504 gained her first success, north-west of Table Bay. At 14:30 she made an emergency dive after sighting an aircraft but at 16:52 she sighted the City of Athens which she sank with one torpedo.

Because an aircraft appeared Pokse dived immediately to 80 metres. U-68 added to her success at dusk by sinking the American tanker Swiftsure, after surfacing about 40 miles south of Cape Point. Then at about 23:00 she sank the British freighter Sarthe with two torpedoes.

At 03:26 while re-stowing her torpedoes, U-68 sighted the American freighter Examelia and sank her with one torpedo. Three hours later the Belgian Freighter was sighted and sunk.

The other U-boats spent less profitable night and 'learned what it was like to be the hunted rather than the hunter'. When dusk arrived on 8th October U-159 was about 150 miles south-west of Table Bay and proceeded south-east without incident.

U-504 (Poske) was cruising west of Saldanha, and 21:30 dived abruptly when the Metox detected 'position finding noises - probably from shore stations'.

Poske, after surfacing an hour before

midnight, saw 'explosions, reflection of fire and searchlights' to the south so left the area and moved north-west. U-172 had a narrow escape.

From other sources it is to be noted that the U-boat was detected by the underwater detection devices. The order was given to detonate the underwater explosive devices. Leading Swan Sue Laubushange set these under water off. No sign of any U-boat was found.

70 miles west of Hout Bay, Emmerman was approaching the coast at 15 fathoms to have another look at Table Bay when he recorded Asdics (sonar) impulses, 17 minutes later was depth-charged which 'came a little too close for comfort'.

HMS Rockrose was hunting the U-boat and the search went on for a long time before being abandoned. Emmerman did not venture to the surface but while he lay submerged heard the sounds of the depth of another submarine.

While U-172 was being hunted by Rockrose the Nizam, Foxhound and Active were 60 miles west of Dassen Island steaming two miles apart on a course roughly south by west. Active had just collected the survivors from the City of Athens when at about 23:30 she obtained a radar contact 2,500 yards away and, shortly after, at a range of 1,600 yards an Asdics contact. Speed was increased and a U-boat was sighted on the surface at about 800 yards the target was illuminated by searchlight and fire was opened by B gun.

Active altered course, the U-boat passed down its port side at close range

and was attacked with a 10-charged pattern of depth charges set 50 and 150 feet.

The depth charge party reported that the U-boat was blown to the surface and then disappeared. No further contact was obtained nor was any wreckage sighted, but at dawn a spread of diesel oil three miles long and half wide was noted. The victim was U-179. T

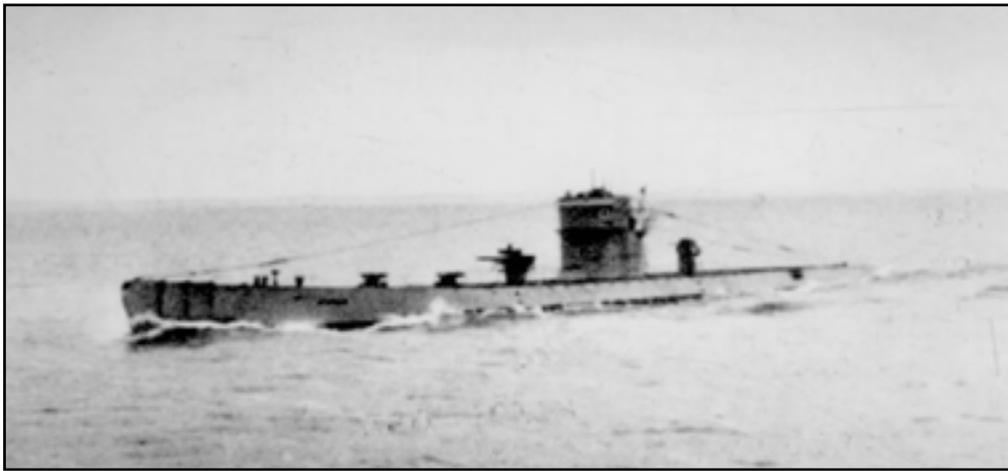
he surprise attack on Table Bay envisaged by U-Boat Headquarters, with an indiscriminate massacre of anchored shipping had not come off.

The experiences of that night warned U boats that the anti-submarine defences at the Cape were effective and alert and all idea an attack on Table Bay was abandoned.

The group had sunk 14 ships in four days mostly within sight of Table Mountain, but the opposition had proved much stronger than expected.

Emmerman, well away from Table Bay, was heading due west, when at dawn on 10 October sighted a large ship 'coming out of a rain squall'. It was the 23,456 P&O liner Orcades, en route to London from Egypt with 1,300 souls, including including women and children, onboard.

Because of the heavy seas Emmerman had difficulty getting in position to attack but at 11:28 he launched two torpedoes at a difficult angle. Orcades was hit, after which she stopped and lowered her life boats. Although one boat capsized in rough sea and all 35 were drowned, the rest got clear towed by the ships launches and disappeared into the mist.



**MENACE OF THE DEEP:** A rather rare photograph of the German U-boat U-159. This was one of the boats that operated off the coast of Cape Town.

A third torpedo hit the ship at 11:45. Nevertheless the Orcades, with 52 volunteers on board, managed to make sufficient temporary repairs to move off at 6 knots.

Once again the U-boat lost her in the mist but Emmerman followed the course taken by the boats, the periscope bumping against hundreds of oranges blown out of the ship's hull. Orcades covered 15 miles and was about 250 miles WSW of Cape Point when she was hit by three more torpedoes.

The volunteers managed to get clear in a boat as she turned slowly on her starboard side and sank. The day before the attack Witte in U-159 had sunk the American vessel Coloradan in a possession almost due south of the last attack on the P & O liner.

Gruppe Eisbar had been harassed by naval vessels, tracked by radar and had been made to dive by sighting aircraft and this caused the BdU to order the U

boats to move east of Durban area from whence, in a similar circumstances, were moved to Delagoa Bay. There after Eisbar's offensive ended and they were back in Lorient, France, between mid-December and 5 January 1943.

#### Point of Interest

While the German U-boat fleet achieved great success during World War II, it came at a high cost.

Only one in four crews that served on U-boats managed to survive the war. In other words, 75% of them were killed.

## Local is lekker answers

Last month we had a quiz called 'Locak is Lekker'. We gave you 35 songs by South African artists and you had to name them.

Well, here are the answers (as well as an interesting fact or two). Ten of these artists were from the Cape.

Trevor Rabin, the lead guitarist for Rabbitt, would go on to write music for many successful Hollywood movies.

Gwyneth Ashley-Robins (real name Gwyneth Joubert) tragically died in a light aircraft crash at the age of only 15.

The Dealians were from East London and took their name after the Deal Hotel were they often used to perform.

1. Taximan - éVoid.
2. Clowns (See Yourself) - Ellamental.
3. Johnny Calls The Chemist - Falling Mirror.
4. Charlie - Rabbitt.
5. Substitute - Clout.
6. Mammy Blue - Charisma.
7. Venus - Stockley Sisters.
8. Give Me The Good News - Crocodile Harris.
9. Buccaneer - McCully Workshop.
10. ZX Dan - Radio Rats.
11. The Spaniard - Lesley Rae Dowl- ing.
12. When Love Comes Knocking At Your Door - The Dealians.

13. Celebrate! - Julian Laxton Band.
14. My Kind Of Girl - Cinema.
15. Man on the moon - Ballyhoo.
16. Picking Up Pebbles - Cornelia.
17. Sunglasses - Hilary.
18. Seagull's Name Was Nelson - Des & Dawn Lindberg.
19. Put Your Hand In The Hand - Alan Garrity.
20. Kentucky Blue - Lauren Copley.
21. Little Jimmy - Gwyneth Ashley- Robins.
22. Hello A - Sharon Tandy & Billy Forrest.
23. A Million Drums - Dennis East.
24. Whisper Your Secret - The Helicopters.
25. Paradise Road - Joy.
26. The Wonder Of Your Love - Jody Wayne.
27. How Do You Do - The Rising Sons.
28. Master Jack - Four Jacks and a Jill.
29. One More Angel In Heaven - Richard Loring.
30. Toy Train - John Edmond.
31. Ag Pleez Daddy - Jeremy Taylor.
32. Better The Devil You Know - Stingray.
33. Weeping - Bright Blue.
34. The Wonder Of Your Love - Jody Wayne.
35. Exclusively Yours - Dickie Loader & The Blue Jeans.

# Warrior's Gate

*Matt Tennyson gets to visit Warrior's Gate in Durban.*

Shortly after I arrived in South Africa in 1974, I went to watch a cricket match at Kingsmead in Durban. Natal was playing Transvaal.

It was a one-day game and was still known as the Gillette Shield back then. During the lunch time break I took a walk across the road. I had spotted an interesting building that was called 'Warrior's Gate'.

To my delight, I discovered that it was a military museum. It was run by a group known as the 'Moths'.

At that time I had no idea that just two years later I would be in uniform and would end up spending eight years in the military. I also had no idea that one day I would also become a Moth.

Fast forward to 44 years later and once again I found myself at Warrior's Gate. I was honoured to be

asked to put together a video walk-through tour of Warrior's Gate for the Moth website.

On Tuesday 2 October I was at Cape Town International airport way before dawn had any thoughts of breaking.

After a two hour flight I landed in Durban and was met by Moths Brian Porter and Luddie Vos,

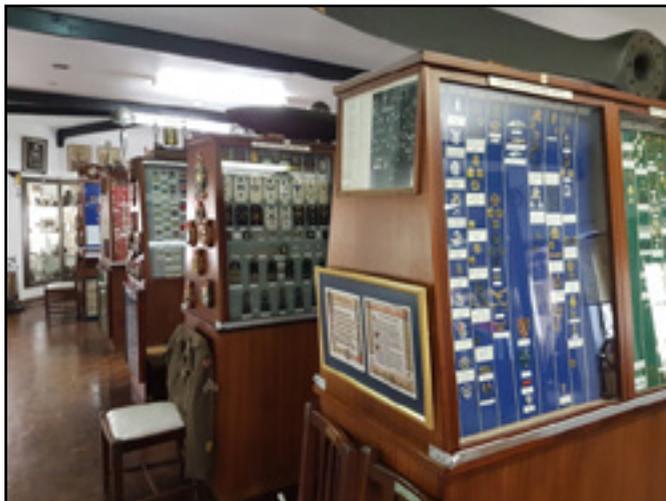
the Chairman of Warrior's Gate.

We went straight through to Warrior's Gate and I spent the morning taking a walk about and planning on how I would shoot the video. I also met Cedric Carr, the custodian at Warrior's Gate.

Walking around I was like the proverbial kid in a candy store. For any one with even the slightest interest in military history, Warrior's Gate is like Aladdin's Cave.

It was opened in 1937 and the building is in the form of a Norman Gatehouse. It houses an interesting collection of militaria that goes back as far as the 11th Century.

Many famous and high ranking persons have donated all or part of their uniforms and equipment to the museum.



**MOTH SHRINE:** Every Moth should visit Warrior's Gate at least once in their lifetime.

There is just so much to see that it will take a good few hours to give it justice. The collection of uniforms, medals, badges, swords, weapons and equipment is priceless.

Fixed on the exterior walls of the building are stones gathered from battlefields around the world. These include stones taken from places such as El Alamein, Tobruk, Arnhem, Gallipoli, Halfaya Pass, and Delville Wood.

Outside is a World War I howitzer that was used in France and Belgium between 1914 and 1918. Only six of these guns still remain in the world.

Upstairs, in the long room, is where the National Executive meet. It is off limits to the general public, but is open to all Moths. Displayed on the walls

are the plaques of shellholes both existing and defunct. And yes, Admiral Halifax's plaque is there.

On the Wednesday morning I filmed interviews with Luddie Vos and Cedric Carr. As the Chairman and Custodian of Warrior's Gate they were able to provide me with really useful information.

I also had the privilege of interviewing Tony Munnik, the National Vice-Chairman of the Moth Executive. Tony is a gold mine of information and his knowledge of military history and of Warrior's Gate is incredible.

On the Thursday I spent time shooting video and taking photographs of some of the items on display.

On Friday afternoon I flew back

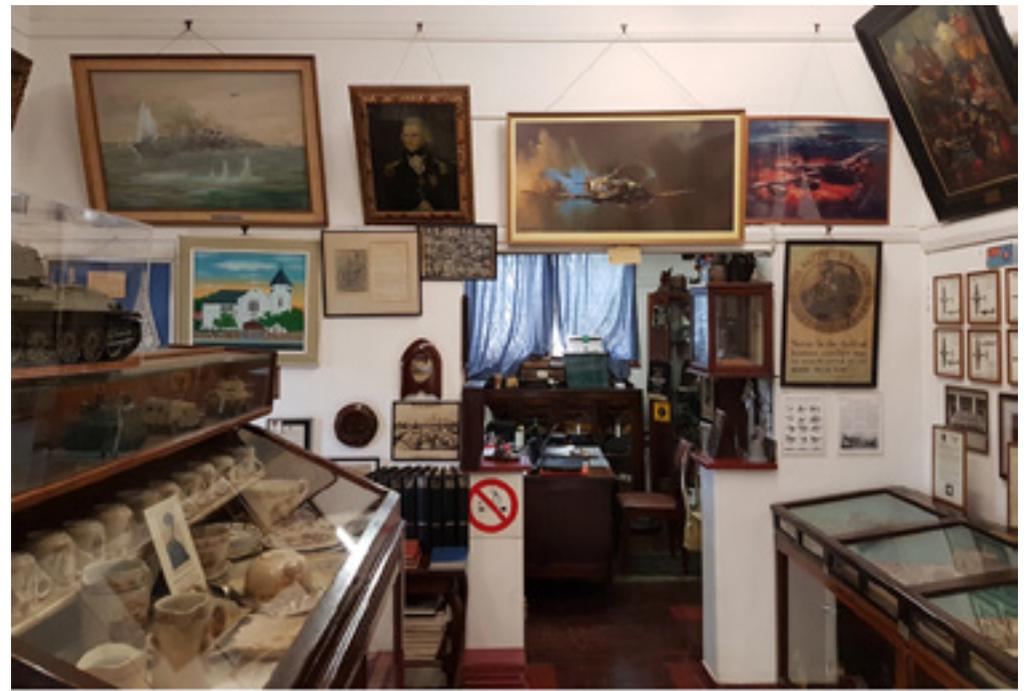
to Cape Town. I would like to thank Brian Porter, Luddie Vos, Cedric Carr and Tony Munnik for making my stay memorable, interesting, and an absolute treat.

I am currently working on the video tour and it should be ready by the end of the month, so you'll be able to check it out on the Moth website.

Personally, I think that every Moth should visit Warrior's Gate at least once in their lifetime. Maybe we should look at putting together a tour down to Durban. If anyone is interesting, let me know and we can look at putting something together.



**WE'RE THERE:** If you don't know which Shellhole this is, you will be taken out and shot at dawn - no excuses.



# We will remember them

I would like to ask, if I may, a rather personal question. Why did you become a Moth?

Now I'm sure that all of us have various reasons as to why we became a member of the Order.

Yet no matter why we became Moths, there are a few things that we must remember. First of all we always need to bear in mind our three ideals - Mutual Help, True Comradeship and Sound Memory. But above all there is something else that we need to remember.

At some stage each and every one of us stood in front of a Shell-hole and made an oath.

The last part of the oath says, "At the going down of the sun,

and in the morning, We will remember them."

Next month, on Sunday 11 November, it is Remembrance Day. There will be parades in all the major centres and this is a parade that every Moth should attend.

This year sees the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice. If ever there was a time when we should remember them, it is this year.

Something that has really saddened me over the past few years is seeing just how few Moths attend the Remembrance Day Parade.

Look, I know that some people have a really good reason



**SERIOUSLY:** This was the Moth turn out for a Remembrance Day Parade a few years back. I've seen more people in some Shellhole pubs.

as to why they cannot attend a parade. Yet many do not.

"I forgot", "I had to go to lunch with my in-laws", "I didn't have transport", and so on are not acceptable excuses.

We all made an oath to remember them every morning and every evening. It is too much to ask to remember them once a year?

This year in particular is special. As I mentioned, it will be 100 years since World War I came to an end.

This year let's turn out in force for the Remembrance Day Parade. Each and every Shellhole should make a special effort to ensure that their members attend this parade.

If you have someone that 'forgets' about parades - remind them. If they

don't have transport - arrange for someone to pick them up (remember that part about mutual help and true comradeship).

More than 16 million people died in World War I, and this parade remembers them. More over, it remembers those that died in every war, including the war that some many of us fought in. It also remembers all of the Moths that have answered the Sunset Call.

I really hope to see each and every one of you at this years parade. Let each and every one of us honour that oath we once made - "We will remember them."

**DOPPIE**  
LEN LINDQUE



Another cartoon from the late Len Lindque that appeared in Paratus magazine.