

But how to find those relatives? Jane quickly hit on the idea of contacting the H.M.S. Hood Association to try to trace them. The Association team rapidly got to work: information and photos on Tommy's memorial webpage on our website had been supplied, over twenty years ago, by Michael Barker, Tommy's younger brother; membership secretary, Mike Ware confirmed that Michael was a very long-standing Association member;

and Jane and Michael were put in touch with each other.

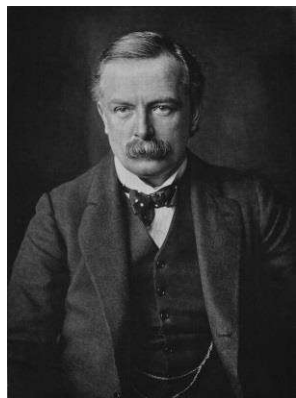
Tommy's memorial page on our website bears witness to his personality, and to the helpful information supplied by both Michael Barker and Jane McIvor. Most poignantly, there is a stark contrast between Tommy's humorous letters and the official letter telling the Barker family of Tommy's loss in action on 24th May 1941.

Articles

The Washington Naval Treaty Part III

David Chessum concludes his series of articles examining the Washington Naval Treaty which had a profound effect on the development of navies of the major powers in the inter-war years. Here David examines how the Treaty has been assessed in the 100 years since it was signed.

Assessments of the WNT have varied widely over time. Contemporary assessments by politicians tended to be wildly favourable, in contrast to naval observers who were less positive. British Prime Minister Lloyd George called the treaty "*one of the greatest achievements for peace that has ever been registered in the history of this world*,"¹ the Australian Prime Minister stated that "*The Washington Conference has achieved great things. ... The Conference has borne fruit abundantly, and has achieved much more than even its most ardent advocates believed possible*."² At the 1923 Imperial Conference, The South African Prime Minister, General Smuts, said of the Washington Conference that "*it marked greater advance for peace than any other Conference which has been held after the war*,"³ while Beatty's biographer called it "*a diplomatic achievement unparalleled in history*."⁴



Prime Minister David Lloyd George^A and former First Sea Lord Admiral of the Fleet Sir Rosslyn Weymss^B expressed differing views about the outcome of the Conference.

In contrast Wemyss, former RN First Sea Lord said of America at the WNC: "*They have rid themselves of a vast and ruinous shipbuilding program without giving up the object for which it was projected; they have secured a general ratio of naval strength which leaves them free from anxiety in all quarters and they have attained an equality with the first naval Power with a minimum of effort*."⁵ An intelligence report in 1924 concluded that "*a dispassionate review of the results of the Washington Conference forces one to the conclusions that ... the Conference has not even stopped preparation for war, let alone prevented the possibility of war*,"⁶ while Admiral Richmond would later write that the WNT "*constituted a complete departure from the traditional principles of British security at sea*."⁷

The ultimate failure of the arms limitation process and the subsequent outbreak of World War Two saw the expression of even more adverse opinions. In 1988, the US CNO described the WNT as "*one of those misguided policies, so seductive in the present, so harmful to the future ... that have led us step by descending step into the abyss of war*,"⁸ while historian Corelli Barnett called it "*one of the major catastrophes of English history, whose effects were to be soon felt, and which was to exercise a cumulative and decisive effect on the future of English power*."⁹

Other commentary has adopted a more balanced view, highlighting the role that Britain's appeasement of the US at Washington played in defusing potential rivalry and competition between the US and the British Empire, clearing the path for the special relationship between those nations that eventually yielded victory in World War Two. Kennedy has written that with the pressure from the Treasury, the Royal Navy would scarcely have been larger in the absence of a Treaty¹⁰, and Lacy asserted that it was rather doubtful whether "*the United States would have spent more on its navy in the 1920s than it did*."¹¹ On the overall impact of the WNT, Grove would write: "*It is often said, as a criticism of Washington, that Washington didn't prevent Pearl Harbour, ... Well of course it didn't, but it perhaps prevented the great Anglo-American war of 1928*,"¹²

while Pelz wrote that the WNT “*established a stable political arrangement that was to preserve the peace for more than a decade.*”¹³

The WNT represented an unprecedented experiment in mutual disarmament amongst the major naval powers, and the delegates succeeded where previous negotiations, such as the Hague Conferences, and pre-World War One Anglo-German Naval conversations had failed. Tooze wrote of the WNC:

*Despite the failure to deliver a truly comprehensive disarmament deal, there was no doubting the significance of the Washington conference. America had resumed a role of leadership in global affairs, Japan’s political class had responded constructively to the American line. Britain had accepted a profound realignment of its strategic position. Balfour described it as an event unparalleled in world history. This was no exaggeration. Never before had an empire of Britain’s stature so explicitly and consciously conceded superiority in such a crucial dimension of global power.*¹⁴



Arthur Balfour who, as Lord President of the Council, led the British Empire Delegation at the conference^c and Rear-Admiral Alfred Chatfield^d, as Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff was the senior naval adviser following Beatty’s return to the United Kingdom

To understand why this occurred, it is only necessary to consider what each of the participants stood to gain from the WNT. The British Empire successfully appeased the US demands for a navy second to none, and avoided a costly arms race that there was no political will to fund. At the same time Britain retained the freedom to build the number of cruisers she considered necessary for the defence of maritime trade, and also locked in a two-power standard covering Japan and the largest European naval power. The British delegation had “*cleverly defused a potential US bid for naval supremacy without jeopardising any vital British interests.*”¹⁵ While British naval advocates might grumble at the sacrifice of Britain’s supremacy of the seas,¹⁶ the reality was that Britain could not have resisted an American drive for parity, and a negotiated

solution provided an amicable settlement of what could otherwise have been a divisive and acrimonious competition.

The US achieved formal recognition from Britain of the right to battle-fleet parity. She also found an elegant solution to the problem of having commenced construction of a large fleet of capital ships which Congress were unwilling to fund completion of, and which were also obsolescent. By making the apparently magnanimous gesture of offering to scrap ships which (unbeknown to the other participants) would probably never have been completed, the US was able to achieve her desired strategic objectives at little real cost. The containment of the Japanese battle-fleet to a ratio of 60% was a significant victory, and the non-fortification clause prevented Japan from fortifying the Mandates that sat astride the American transit route from Hawaii to the Philippines, in return for sacrificing the right to increase the fortification of American possessions which realistically was never going to be funded in any case.

While the Japanese provided probably the most hostile reception to the WNT, there was a realisation – at least in political circles – that the 8-8 fleet that was sacrificed at Washington was not affordable, and that Japan stood to gain by negotiating the sacrifice of these ships. While the 60% ratio was a blow to Japanese pride and prestige, giving rise to a ‘ratio neurosis’ about being outgunned in the Pacific,¹⁷ the reality was that the WNT did provide Japan with relative security in Asian waters. Without secure fortified bases for a transit of the Pacific, and battle-fleet operations from the Philippines, the USN did not have the strength to dominate Japan in her home waters.

That all of the participants stood to gain real benefits from the WNT in its final form goes a long way to explaining the success of the Conference in achieving agreement. Two key factors not conspicuously evident at the time can now be seen to detract from those benefits. First, in the years following the WNC, successive American administrations mistook the apparent security offered by the agreement for genuine security, and starved the USN of the funds needed to fill out the fleet. This would directly impact on the negotiating power of the US at follow-on negotiations, and ultimately weakened the strength of the fleet that had to fight the Pacific War. Second, the pointless sacrifice of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in order to address unwarranted American concerns removed one of the key instruments which might have moderated Japanese behaviour in the interwar period. Thus while the WNT may have reduced tension and the likelihood of conflict between the US and Britain, it arguably increased the likelihood of conflict between Japan and the democratic powers.

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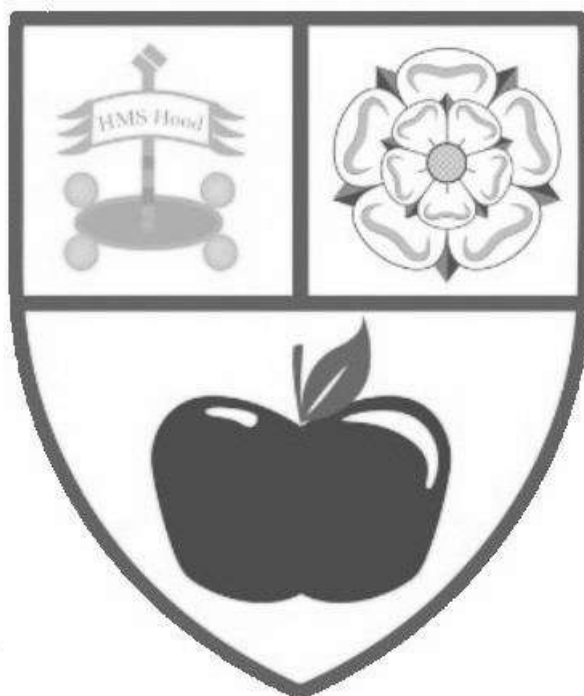
From Our Archive

By Barry Roberts

Applegarth Primary School in Northallerton, North Yorkshire, was linked to H.M.S. *Hood* during the Second World War through her pupils sending gifts and writing to the crew.

This was part of the Royal Navy War Comforts Committee who, we think, allocated various schools to Royal Navy ships. The week of 17th October was the Heritage Week for the school and it was decided they would spend the whole week investigating this link. (See story above).

The school badge has "*Hood*" named in it to indicate that this strong link still exists, of which the School is justifiably proud



The School badge features H.M.S. Hood in the upper left section.

After speaking to the school, I offered to travel up with some archive material to display to Years 5 & 6 (ages 9-11). We displayed some medals, service records, desk calendar and flower vases from the archives plus a signal flag, "Crossing the Line" certificate and a Special Service Squadron Album, various photographs of *Hood* throughout her years and a set of plans