



William James Munday - born 31/12/1907

Bill Munday was one of five children whose father volunteered for service in the First World War. He was killed in the Dardanelles. Bill was "persuaded" to join the R.N. as a boy seaman on the 29th May 1923. His brother was similarly "persuaded" to join the M.N.

He (Bill) began his naval career at the Greenwich Naval School and from there he went on to HMS Ganges, the boys training establishment. As with all boy entrants, he found on attaining the age of 18 years that he was committed for a further twelve. In fact he served until 1948 at which time he retired with the rank of Acting Gunner, a commissioned Warrant Officer. His pension on retirement after twenty five years' service was £2.50 per week.

He told me that in 1951 he was working as an inspector at British Cellophane at Bridgewater when he saw an advertisement for a seamanship instructor at the Flying Fox. This was the way the RNVR recruited the permanent staff at that time. It seems that Jim Moses Steve and Jan Govey were recruited in the same way. His service documents showed that he joined on the first of May as an OD, was rated AB the next, L/S the next, then PO then Chief on consecutive days. Thus he was in the interesting position of being paid full service pay as a Chief and a service pension as

a Warrant Officer at the same time. The Pusser was not over keen on this state of affairs and he was offered various alternatives, one of which was to pay back some £3700. He took this course and tells me that his index linked pension is now in excess of £700 per month. He retired from the Flying Fox at the age of sixty five and is now eighty two. His wife died in 1985 aged 67 and is buried in the cemetery of Clevedon Church on the other side of the point from Poets' Walk. Bill was made Leading Seaman in 1935 and Petty Officer in 1937. He was made Chief in 1940. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Bill married late on in 1937 after he became a Petty Officer and he was quite well off. He had a few hundred pounds saved and was able to buy a bungalow at Plympton and run a Morris "Eight" which he bought from a supply officer in Drake which at that time was called Vivid. His wife was a WRNS driver and they met at a dance in Plymouth.

Before the war Bill did 2½ commissions in the Med and one in the West Indies. He recalled that 2½ years away in one stretch was a very long time and for the married members of the ship's company and their families it could be a very difficult time. It was the rule that if any man wanted compassionate leave for any purpose he had to pay his own fare. When this is viewed in the light of an AB's pay was four shillings (twenty pence) per day then the chances of paying his fare home and back again were somewhat remote. It seems that everyone paid into the ships fund by way of insurance but there had to be a very good reason for the fund to pay the fare.

For the first three years of the war he had a somewhat unusual berth on a merchant ship which laden with all sorts of ammunition was sent off by way of Malta to the Great Lakes where it re-ammunitioned ships as required. Bill as a Chief G.I. was in charge of this ammunition and accountable for it. The merchant seamen acted as stevedores and were very well paid for this task in comparison to Bills rate of pay. When they were loading the various sorts of ammunition at Priddy's Hard there was considerable speculation as to their destination. They were loading torpedoes marked TEO MALTA and when asked by one of the seaman where they were bound. Bill said "look at the label on this torpedo box". He was then asked what TEO meant and pointed out that it was Torpedo Engineer Officer Malta. The hand apparently went down to the mess deck and said Bill had told him that the ship was bound for Malta. The crew refused to sail to Malta and Bill was brought up before the Port Admiral who threatened him with six months imprisonment for disclosing classified information. Bill protested that he had not given any information other than to interpret the letters TEO. Nevertheless he was given a severe reprimand and sent back to the ship. As he was waiting on the jetty for the pinnace, the Admiral drove past, stopped the car and called Bill across. Petty Officer, he said, "In future don't tell them anything at all".

When Bill left the navy in 1948 and things were difficult, his wife took a job in a school canteen as an assistant cook. Within a short while, she was promoted to cook and then to supervisor. Later she decided to go to training college for two years to train as a domestic science teacher. This she completed successfully and after various jobs she ended up as the supervisor of school meals for the whole of Gloucester. She then did quite a lot of catering but one day as they were driving through Yatton she said that she would like to take one of the new shops in the Yatton precinct that was under construction so as to open a fashion shop. This was a great success and she retained the shop until her death in 1985. Sometime in 1984 she was driving Bill in their minivan through Yatton when the van was struck by a falling tree. Mrs. Munday was struck on the head but with no apparent ill effect. However shortly afterwards she suffered a stroke then over the next year a series of strokes culminating in one attack when she was out in her battery car from which she did not recover.

Bob Baxter - 19 Oct 1990