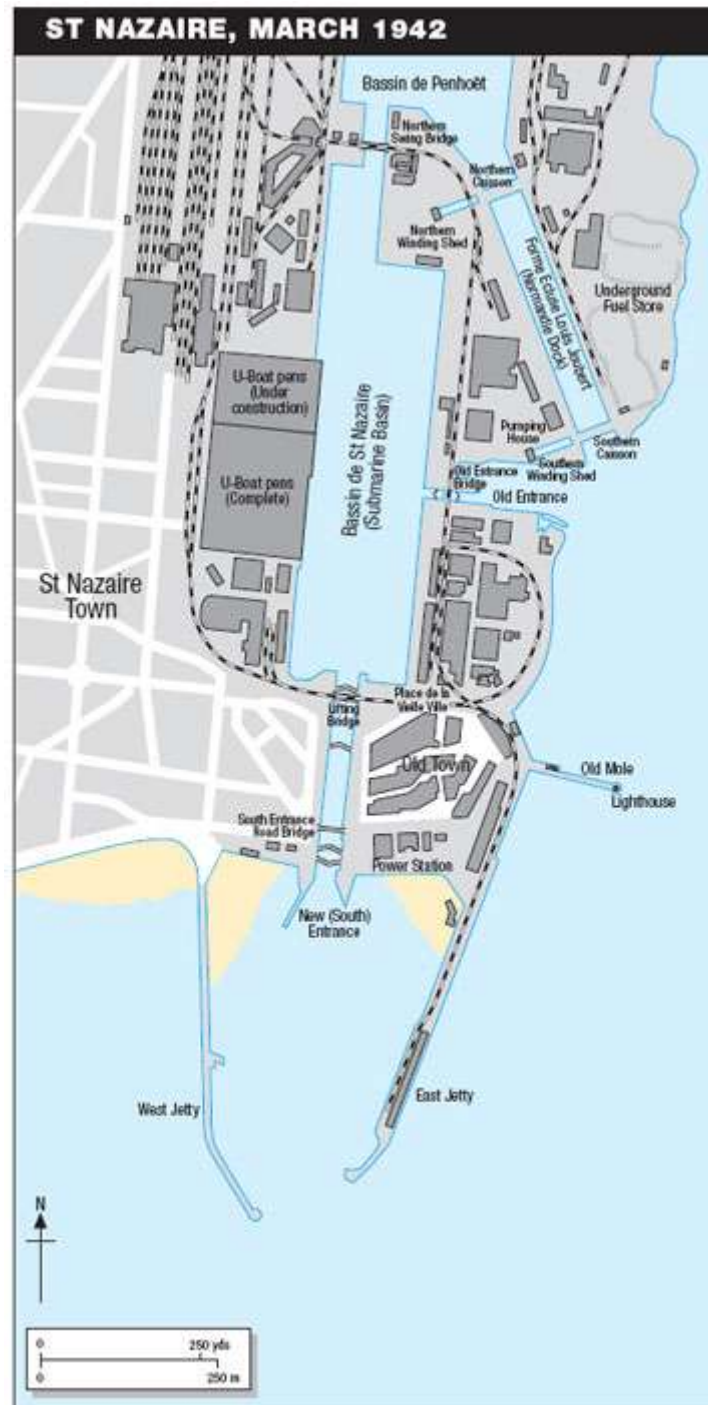
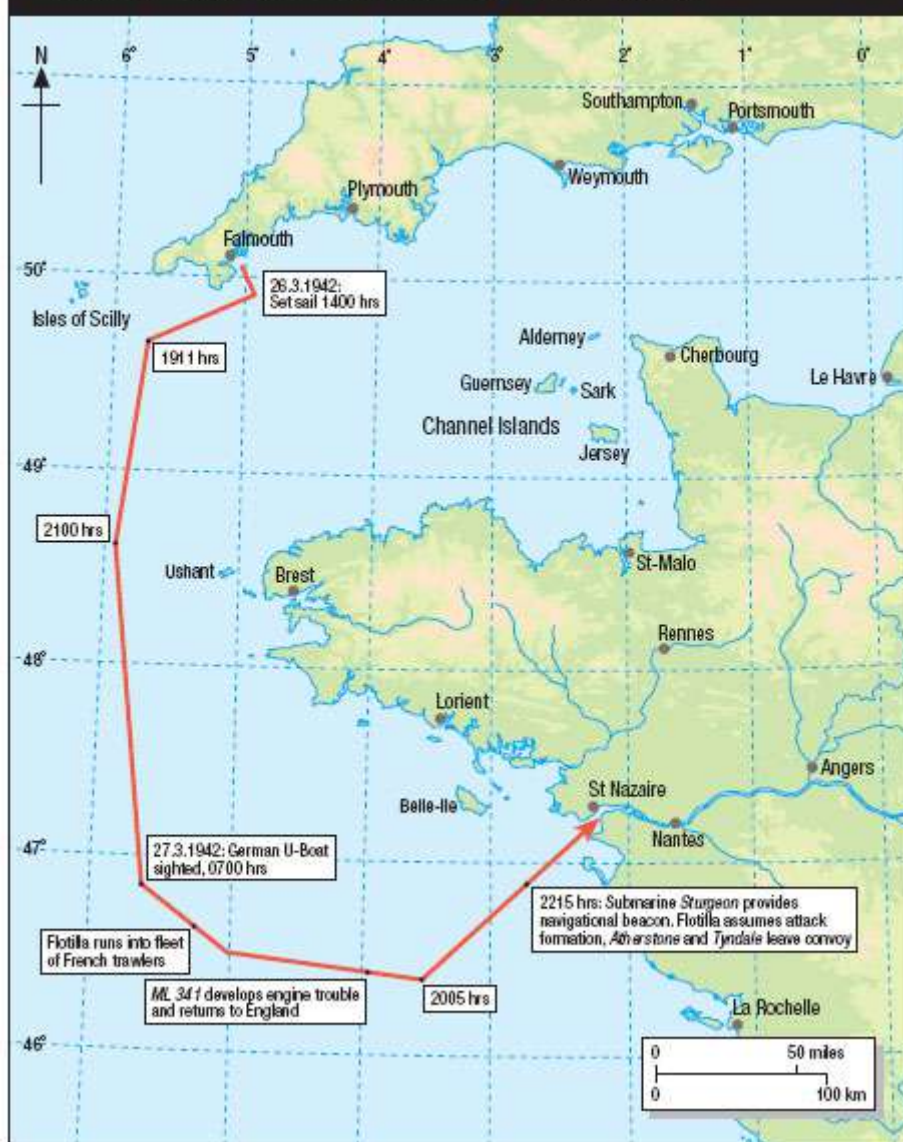


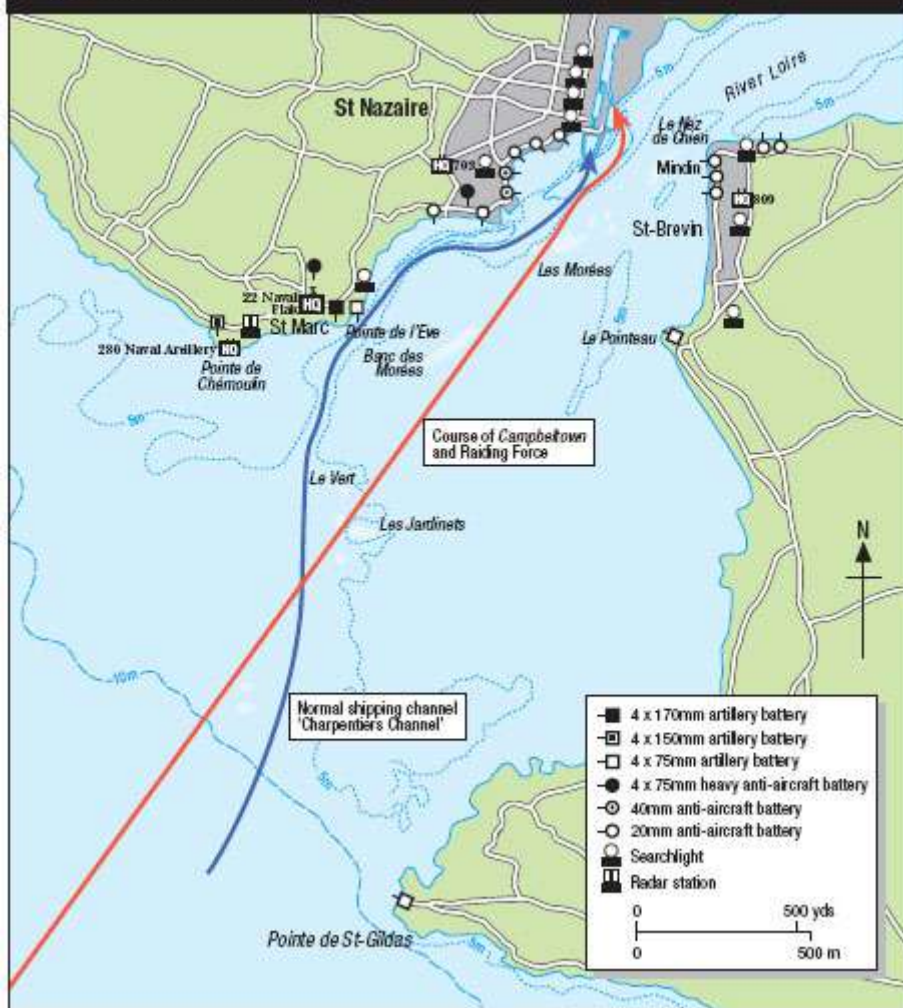
## Maps and Pictures:



# FROM FALMOUTH TO ST NAZAIRE



## THE RUN IN TO THE DOCKS



# THE FLOTILLA

## Spearhead Forward Protection

MGB 314 (Gun Boat)  
Lt D. Curtis  
Cdr R.E.D. Ryder  
Lt Col A.C. Newman + 7 ORs, HQ group

ML 270 (Torpedo)  
Lt C. Irwin

ML 160 (Torpedo)  
Lt T. Boyd

## Group 3

HMS Campbelltown  
Lt Cdr S. Beattie  
Demolition Groups:  
Lt R.J.G. Burtinshaw + 6 ORs  
Lt S.W. Chant + 4 ORs  
Lt C.J. Smalley + 4 ORs  
Protection: Lt H.G.L. Hopwood + 4 ORs

Demolition Groups:  
Lt G. Brett + 6 ORs  
Lt C.W.B. Pardon + 4 ORs  
Protection: Lt M.C. Denison

Assault Group: Lt J. Roderick, Lt J. Stutchbury + 12 ORs  
Assault Group: Capt D. Roy, Lt J.D. Proctor + 12 ORs

## Group 1: Port column

ML 447  
Lt T. Platt  
Assault Group: Capt D. Birney, Lt W.C. Clibborn + 12 ORs

ML 457  
Lt T. Collier  
Capt W.H. Pritchard, MC + demo control party  
Demolition Group: Lt P. Walton + 4 ORs  
Protection Group: 2nd Lt W.H. Watson + 4 ORs

ML 307  
Lt N. Wallis  
Demolition Group: Capt E.W. Bradley + 6 ORs

ML 443  
Lt K. Horlock  
Demolition Group: Lt A.D. Wilson,  
2nd Lt P. Basset-Wilson, Lt J.A. Bonvin + 12 ORs  
Protection Group: Lt J.B. Houghton

ML 306  
Lt I. Henderson  
Demolition Group: Lt R.O.C. Swayne + 8 ORs  
Protection Group: Lt J. Vanderwerpe + 4 ORs

ML 446  
Lt H. Falconer  
Assault Group: Capt E.S. Hodgson,  
Lt N. Oughtred + 12 ORs

## Group 2: Starboard column

ML 192  
Lt Cdr W.L. Stephens  
Assault Group: Capt M. Burn, Lt T.G. Peyton + 12 ORs

ML 262  
Lt E. Burt  
Demolition Group: Lt M. Woodcock + 8 ORs  
Protection Group: Lt R.F. Morgan + 4 ORs

ML 267  
Lt E. Beart  
Reserve: RSM A. Moss + 13 ORs

ML 268  
Lt A. Tillie  
Demolition Group: Lt H. Pennington + 12 ORs  
Protection Group: Lt M. Jenkins + 4 ORs

ML 156  
Lt L. Fenton  
Assault Group: Capt R.H. Hooper + 13 ORs

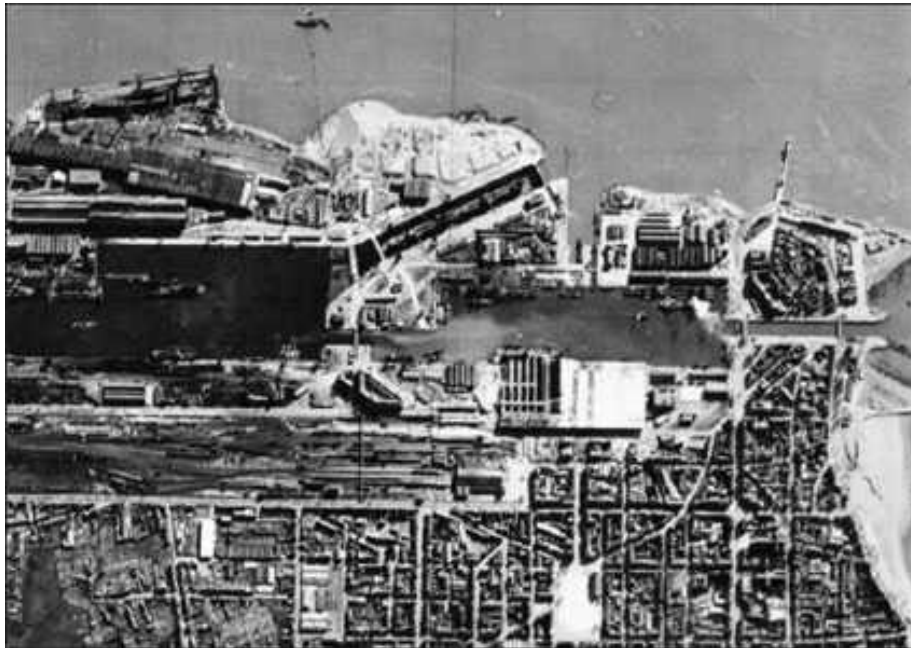
ML 177  
Lt M. Rodier  
Assault Group: TrpSM G. Haines + 13 ORs

## Rear Protection

MI 298 (Torpedo)  
Lt N.R. Nock

MTB 74 (Torpedo)  
SubLt R. Wynn

ORs = Other ranks



The town and port of St Nazaire lying on the western side of the River Loire, six miles from the sea. The Normandie Dock (Forme Ecluse Louis Joubert) is seen lying at an angle near the mid-top of the picture. At the top right, jutting out into the river, is the Old Mole. The section of water in the middle of the picture is the Submarine Basin, with the incomplete submarine pens below and the Southern Entrance to the docks on the right.



The German battleship BISMARCK after she had been damaged by HMS PRINCE OF WALES during the action in which HMS HOOD was sunk. BISMARCK's fo'c'sle is lying low in the water and she is making for the great dry dock at St Nazaire on the French Atlantic coast for repair.





The existence of this German battleship, the TIRPITZ, was the prime reason for the raid. The mere threat of the ship breaking out into the north Atlantic was enough to keep several British battleships idle, waiting to react should such an event take place.



It was known that bombing raids on port installations were not a very effective way to eliminate the vital workings of a dock. Such raids could destroy large areas of buildings and sheds, but were less likely to hit and destroy such things as lock gates, cranes and pump houses. Here high-level bombers attack the port of St Nazaire.



The liner NORMANDIE, the pride of the French maritime fleet, in the massive dry dock in St Nazaire before the war. In the foreground is the winding shed with the long water-filled camber linking it to the outer caisson of the dock. The dock was opened by pulling the caisson on its rollers back into the camber. Immediately behind the camber is the pumping house. The dry dock also served as a lock, linking the Penhoët Basin with the River Loire.



The newly built luxury cruise liner INFINITY sits in the Normandie Dock being fitted out before delivery to her owners. The view is looking towards the southern caisson, which was rammed by the CAMPBELTOWN during the raid.



A tug manoeuvres a submarine from 7th U-boat Flotilla in the Submarine Basin at St Nazaire. The picture was taken in the summer of 1942 after the raid. The submarine pens in the background have been completed ready to receive 6th U-boat Flotilla into the port.



LtCol Augustus Charles Newman VC, known as 'Colonel Charles' to his men. He commanded 2 Commando and was designated Military Force Commander for the raid. The majority of the commandos who took part in Operation Chariot came from 2 Commando.





Commander Robert Edward Dudley Ryder, VC, Naval Force Commander for Operation Chariot. Prior to the raid he had been occupying a desk job at Wilton House in Wiltshire as a result of incurring the Admiralty's 'displeasure' after having lost his last ship in a collision.



The model used during the planning and training for the raid, now on display in the Imperial War Museum, London.



The cruise liner INFINITY now occupies the Normandie Dock, with the southern caisson to her stern in the middle of the picture. The steel lock gate offered a very small target for Beattie in CAMPBELTOWN to aim at, his task being made more difficult by enemy fire and blinding searchlights. That he found the gates at all seems to be a minor miracle of seamanship.



The motor room of the pump house in the King George V Dry Dock in Southampton. The commando teams learned their demolition techniques on these giant motors and made themselves familiar with the layout of the machinery in the port.



A naval officer and his wife pose with the officers of 2 Commando. LtCol Newman is in the centre with his pipe and stick. On the extreme left of the front row is Major Bill Copland, Newman's second in command, whilst on the extreme right of the front row is Captain D.W. Roy.



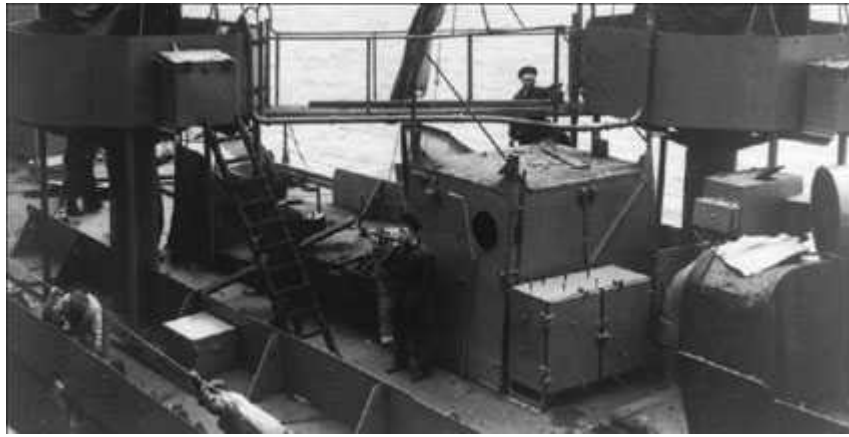
HMS CAMPBELTOWN alongside in Devonport dockyard having arrived from the USA in September 1940. As yet unmodified for the Royal Navy, she is still showing her US Naval identity (DD131) as USS BUCHANAN.



Two of the CAMPBELTOWN's four funnels were removed and blanked off, whilst the two forward stacks were modified to help give the outline of a German Möwe class destroyer. These funnels were shortened and cut at an angle, with the front stack enlarged to give it greater width. The picture shows the details of these modifications and two of the eight Oerlikon guns that were added to her armament.



Steel plating has been welded to CAMPBELTOWN's wheelhouse to give some protection from smaller calibre weapons. The forward 4in. gun has been replaced by a quickerfiring 12-pdr.



HMS CAMPBELTOWN's fire power was boosted for the raid by the addition of eight 20mm Mark I Oerlikon guns. Four were mounted amidships, whilst four more were installed on these elevated platforms called 'bandstands'. In the foreground, work is continuing to install the long steel plates behind which the commandos would shelter during the run up to St Nazaire.



Part of the deception plan was to refit CAMPBELTOWN in a way that made her resemble one of the German Möwe Class destroyers such as the one shown here. The most distinctive feature of this class of warship was the two raked funnels, the forward one having a much greater girth than the rear.





Lt Commander Stephen Halden Beattie, VC, captain of the CAMPBELTOWN during the raid. Beattie was a contemporary of Commander Ryder, the men having been shipmates during their days as cadets.



Fairmile 'B' Class launch, the most numerous of the small vessels used in the raid. This illustration shows the type of motor launch, but not one that actually took part in the St Nazaire operation. Its forward armament is a 3-pdr Hotchkiss, whilst aft is a 20mm Oerlikon. On the bridge are two twin Lewis .303in. machine-guns.



MGB 314 was from 14 Motor Gun Boat Flotilla and was a Fairmile 'C' Class launch. Her three Hall-Scott engines gave her a maximum speed of 26 knots. She was quite strongly armed for a small craft, with a very exposed hand-operated Vickers 2-pdr pom-pom forward (the position from which Able Seaman Savage won his VC), amidships were two twin power-operated 0.5in. machine-guns, and aft was another 2-pdr, a Rolls semiautomatic. MGB 314 was used as headquarters vessel for Newman and Ryder during the run up the Loire.



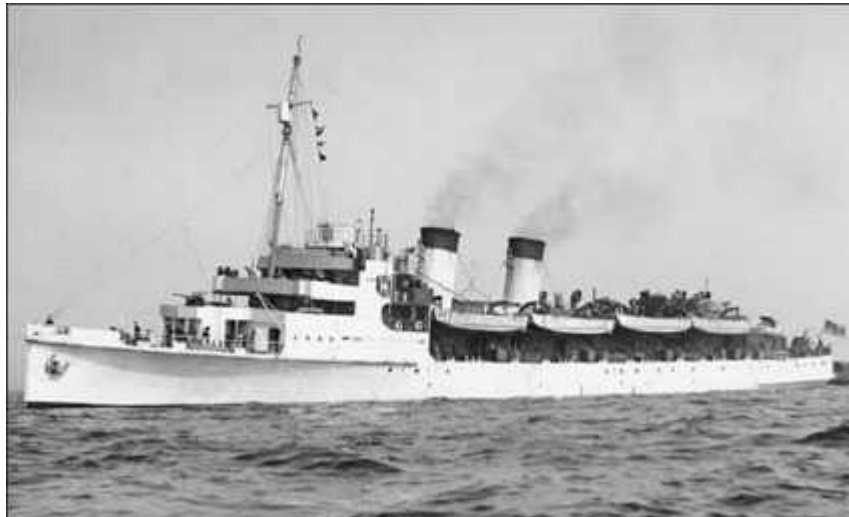
MTB 74 alongside in Portsmouth Harbour after its special modifications for the proposed attack on the battle-cruiser SCHARNHORST at Brest. The operation did not take place because the German warship, along with the GNEISENAU and PRINZ EUGEN, broke out of the port and made their way back to Germany.



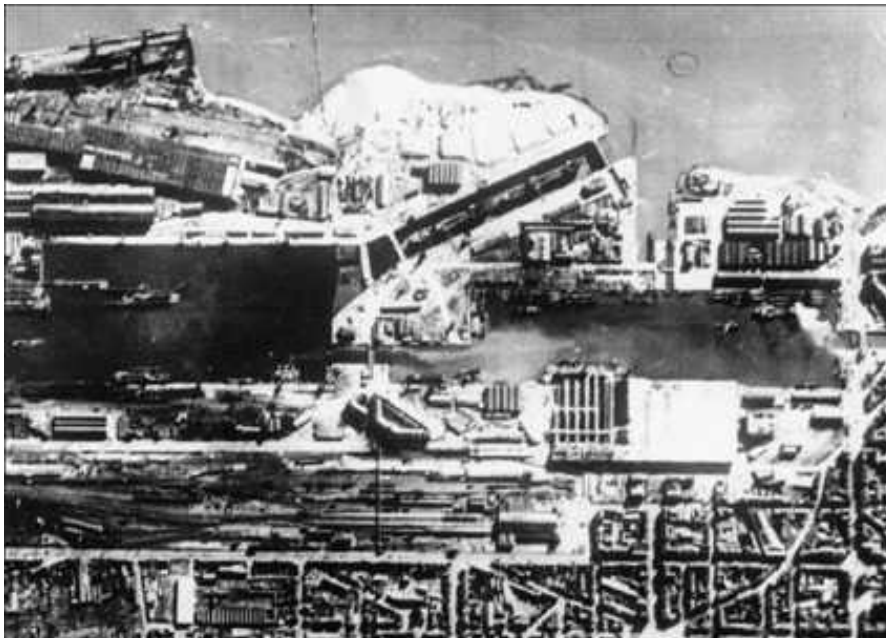
Two of the four gun emplacements that housed the 170mm guns of Dieckmann's 280th Naval Artillery Battalion on the headland at Pointe de l'Eve. The whole site together with its magazines, command post, troop shelters and fire control post is in remarkably good condition.



Two U-boats in the Submarine Basin at St Nazaire. In the background, looking south, is the lifting bridge which links the Old Town with the new. The chimney of the power station can be seen above the houses of the Old Town.



HMS PRINCESS JOSEPHINE CHARLOTTE, a converted Belgian cross-Channel ferry used by the commandos as a landing ship. It was also an accommodation vessel for the troops whilst in Falmouth harbour.



The last aerial reconnaissance picture taken immediately before the raid, showing German ships in harbour and two tankers in the Normandie Dock. The photograph shows the dock to be dry and the outer caisson at the southern end closed, a combination that was necessary to allow the gate to be rammed by CAMPBELTOWN.



The destroyer HMS TYNEDALE was assigned to the operation along with HMS ATHERSTONE as protection vessels during the voyage to St Nazaire. The two ships then waited during the night 25 miles offshore, to shepherd home those vessels that survived the raid.



The Submarine HMS STURGEON lay in wait off the mouth of the River Loire in order to provide a very precise navigational beacon for the raiders. At 22.00hrs, STURGEON's light was spotted dead ahead. Operation Chariot was exactly on time and on position—the final run into the jaws of death could now begin.





Kapitän zur See Karl-Conrad Mecke, commander of 22nd Naval Flak Brigade, after he had been presented with the Knight's Cross by Grand Admiral Dönitz. It was Mecke who, suspicious of the erratic behaviour of the RAF aircraft during their diversionary raid on St Nazaire, alerted his coast defences that some 'devilry' was afoot.



Two enemy sailors display a German flag to the camera as a trophy from the raid.

This picture dated the day of the attack creates something of a puzzle. The German flag flown by CAMPBELTOWN was supposed to have been cut up as souvenirs immediately it was hauled down, during the run into the port. Was CAMPBELTOWN flying two German flags?



Stuck fast on the southern caisson of the Normandie Dock, HMS CAMPBELTOWN displays the scars of its confrontation with the German coast defence guns. In the water in the foreground can be seen the remains of the anti-torpedo net that CAMPBELTOWN tore through before hitting the dock. The square building in the right background is the second of the three gun emplacements attacked by Lt Roderick and his team.



The only surviving part of the CAMPBELTOWN is this forward 12-pdr gun, which is now located in St Nazaire alongside the memorial to the raid.



Lt Curtis in MGB 314 leads the flotilla of ships through the barrage of enemy fire past the Old Mole before turning to starboard to give CAMPBELTOWN a clear run at the southern caisson of the Normandie Dock. On board the destroyer its captain, LtCmdr Beattie, gives his last orders to the helm and prepares the ship for ramming. Out on the river all of the small escorting craft are taking hits from the countless German guns surrounding the port. Close behind CAMPBELTOWN, the leading troop-carrying launch of the starboard column, ML 192 commanded by LtCmdr Stephens, has been set alight by a direct hit in the engine room and veers out of control towards the shore.



The southern steps at the Old Entrance alongside which Lt Rodier brought ML 177 to land Troop Sergeant-Major Haines and his party. The submarine pens are in the background located on the opposite side of the Submarine Basin. In the centre of the picture are the lock gates to the Old Entrance successfully torpedoed by Lt Wynn in MTB 74. To the right of the photograph, the large concrete monolith is a post-raid submarine pen with lock gates at each end which provided an alternative entrance into the Submarine Basin.



The pumping house alongside the Normandie Dock, the target of Lt Chant and his demolition team.



The pump room deep underground the King George V Dry Dock in Southampton. Lt Chant and his men practised over and over on these pumps, perfecting the skills needed to carry out their demolition tasks during the raid. The layout of this pump room differs from that in St Nazaire in being smaller and more confined. Note the long shafts which connect the pumps with the motors in the power room 40 feet above.



The northern winding shed after Lt Purdon and his demolition team got to work on it. The remains of the great wheels providing the momentum to draw the caisson along its camber can be clearly seen in the centre of the photograph. The background to the picture is the Submarine Basin.



Modern picture of the roadway over the northern caisson of the dry dock. Lt Burtinshaw's men were unable to get inside the hollow dock gate to plant explosives through the inspection covers seen in the middle of the road. The low square white building in the rear is the modern winding shed. (Author)





British commandos lying where they fell. The background shows the Penhoët Basin, and so these soldiers are lying in the area of the northern caisson and are probably from either Purdon's, Brett's or Burtenshaw's teams. The white webbing worn that night by all commandos to aid identification can be clearly seen on the bodies.



A dockyard fire-fighter tackles the aftereffects of the raid. The port is littered with damaged and smouldering buildings.



Forty feet below the pumping house floor in near darkness the commandos begin their destructive work. By the light of their small torches Lt Chant and his team of four sergeants begin wiring the massive impeller pumps for demolition. Weeks of training in Southampton and Cardiff docks have given them the confidence to carry out their tasks swiftly and accurately in the poor lighting conditions. Next to the ramming of the Normandie Dock, the blowing of the dry dock pumps was the most important task of the raiding force.



This aerial photograph was taken some months after the raid when Allied bombers had destroyed most of the Old Town and surrounding area. The southern road bridge across the New Entrance to the Submarine Basin has gone, but the lock gates and lifting bridge remain intact. The narrow streets and densely packed houses of the Old Town can be clearly seen in ruins in the mid-left of the picture.



A German soldier with his submachine-gun keeps watch in a doorway as the net tightens on the British commandos in St Nazaire.



Taken on the morning of the raid, this picture shows German soldiers using a mobile 20mm cannon against a house opposite the waterfront. It was said that the stubborn lone commando inside refused all attempts to get him to surrender and was finally subdued by this quick-firing gun at around 07.00hrs.



The Old Mole at low tide. The pill boxes are gone but the remainder of the structure and the lighthouse appear as they were on the night of the raid. The steps alongside which Collier brought his motor launch to land his commandos can be seen in the centre of the picture.



Lt Wynn's MTB 74 at speed. The two massive high-mounted torpedo tubes give the boat a powerful profile. Capable of almost 40 knots, it was easily the fastest craft on the raid.



Bodies of those killed during the attack. The soldier in the background is German and the photographer has covered his face out of respect. The body in the foreground has been rolled over on his back and had his boots removed, suggesting that he was British, but why is he wearing a greatcoat for the raid? This would have restricted movement and covered his white webbing worn by all of the British as an aid to recognition in the dark. If he was German, why remove the boots?



Able Seaman William Alfred Savage, VC, who won his high award for the valour he showed whilst acting as gunlayer on the forward pom-pom of MGB 314. Throughout the raid he remained at his post, completely exposed and under heavy fire, engaging enemy positions ashore with steady accuracy. He later died of his wounds.





The body of a lone commando corporal lies dead, close to a group of German troops from 679th Infantry Regiment. The lack of any dockyard details in the background suggests the location may be just outside the port installations and the unfortunate commando may have lost his life during the escape. It appears that the railway truck in the background may be at the end of a line. This might suggest an alternative location of the area just to the east of the southern caisson, with the underground fuel storage behind the fence to the right.



Two German naval troops help a wounded commando. The picture is looking towards the lifting bridge and the new part of St Nazaire town. To the left of the bridge is the square hut behind which Pritchard and his men sheltered and alongside which Lt Walton's body was found.



Modern picture from the same viewpoint, with the lifting bridge and the hut alongside appearing unchanged after almost 60 years.



The Germans begin to count the cost of the raid in human terms. This wounded soldier is helped by two naval troops, near the lifting bridge on the edge of the Old Town. In the right foreground, Lt Stuart Chant lies wounded on the ground alongside other commandos; in the left background, two French civilians return to their homes.



The commandos begin their breakout from the dockyard. Throwing caution to the wind the survivors of the raid make their determined bid for freedom, firing as they go. The charge, straight at the enemy defenders who were covering the bridge, took just a few moments. On the left of the picture Capt Roy leads his CO, LtCol Newman, on the mad dash across the lifting bridge, throwing grenades as he goes. On the right, Newman's second in command, Maj Bill Copland, empties his Colt pistol through the embrasure of the German pill box covering the bridge. Most of the commandos were later captured in and around St Nazaire, but five managed to escape and trekked right across France and Spain to freedom in Gibraltar.



French dockyard worker having his identity checked by a German naval bluejacket on the morning of the raid. French civilians pass by on the other side of the road. In the mid-background the white railings line the southern entrance into the Submarine Basin, with the power station chimney beyond.



Moments before she exploded HMS CAMPBELTOWN sits high on the southern caisson of the Normandie Dock. On striking the gate, the forward part of the ship has crumpled back to a point where the four tons of explosive she carries rests right against the caisson wall. The positioning of this charge was perfect; it could not have been better set if it had been placed there by hand.



Sergeant Thomas Frank Durrant, VC, posthumously received the ultimate honour after his brave and stubborn fight 'against overwhelming odds' at the gun of ML 306 during its naval battle with the German destroyer Jaguar. Sergeant Durrant is buried at the war cemetery of Escoublac close to La Baule.



A view of the stranded CAMPBELTOWN from alongside the Normandie Dock shortly before she exploded. The picture clearly shows the enormity of the southern caisson and just why simply ramming the dock gates would have been insufficient to do lasting damage. On the left is one of the two tankers present in the dry dock at the time of the raid. When the destroyer exploded, both tankers were swept against the dock walls by the inrush of water and sank.



French firemen tackle one of the blazes caused by the exploding CAMPBELTOWN. The firemen appear to be working with some urgency, perhaps to free people trapped in the damaged building.



A squad of smartly turned out regular troops from 333rd Division, with a flamethrower in the rear, moving forward through the narrow streets of the Old Town. The debris on the road suggests that the CAMPBELTOWN has already exploded, sending broken roof tiles crashing to the ground. The area is saturated with Germans, with other troops and naval personnel seen on the pavements and at the end of the street.



The squad closes in on an enemy. Real or imagined we have no way of knowing. In the aftermath of the raid the German forces were in a state of high tension.







The German squad is now in action in the Old Town. The enemy, if they existed, were almost certainly French and local. However it is just as likely that this is an example of the panic and nervousness that seems to have spread through the Germans in St Nazaire. The flamethrower has been in use and has left a blazing path towards its target. Other troops take cover whilst the 'enemy' is flushed out with grenades and small arms fire. The photos are sequential and capture a brief but poignant episode in the aftermath of the raid.



Everywhere in the dockyard there was destruction, whether caused by the demolitions and sabotage of the commandos, or from the blazing debris scattered by the exploding CAMPBELTOWN.



The wounded Lt Stuart Chant waits for his German guards to take him away into captivity. On his left is Sergeant Dick Bradley, whilst on his right the kilted figure of Private T. McCormack endures the wounds that were to cause his death a few days later.



Captain Michael Burn and Private Paddy Bushe of 2 Commando are marched through the streets of St Nazaire by German naval troops. Burns and Bushe were found holed up in the engine room of a vessel in the harbour and were flushed out of their hiding place later on in the day. Burns is attempting to give the 'V' for victory sign with his outstretched fingers, knowing he was being photographed for German propaganda purposes.



A Charioteer survivor wrapped in a blanket emerges from the German Harbour Commander's HQ. Judging by the wet footprints that mark the floor around him, he is one of the many who were rescued from the water.



An aerial photograph taken some months after the raid shows just how successful Operation Chariot was. The Normandie Dock has been sealed and work is in progress restoring the facility. In the middle of the picture, the stern half of the Campbeltown sits on the bottom, the forward section having blown to pieces. The two winding sheds have gone completely and the pumping house, although standing, contains just broken machinery. At the bottom of the picture,

Lt Roderick's targets can be clearly seen, as can the mounds of earth covering the underground fuel dumps.



This photograph was taken just after the raid with the Normandie Dock open to the tidal waters of the Loire. The annotated print highlights some of the successes of the attack, with the concrete dam on the left being built to replace the lock gate blown by Wynn's torpedoes.



The British Commonwealth War Graves cemetery at Escoublac. Here lie many of the fallen participants of Operation Chariot. It also contains graves of some of those troops lost in the sinking of the LANCASTRIA off St Nazaire in 1940 and British airmen whose aircraft were shot down in the area. (Author)





The grave of Sergeant Durrant, VC, in Escoublac Cemetery near La Baule. Durrant's VC was the only one issued to an army recipient for a naval battle. Add to this the fact that the initial recommendation came from a German naval captain and the award is doubly unique. The memorial to those who took part in Operation Chariot is situated just a few hundred yards along the sea front from the South Entrance to the docks. It lists all those who were killed during the raid.



The observation post at the 170mm gun site on Pointe de l'Eve. The Germans made use of the French fire control post which was itself built on the site of a nineteenth-century coast defence fort.

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