



## PLYMOUTH - FALKLANDS MARITIME MEMORIAL.

A short history by Tony Ray MBE

Around about 1985/86 the then secretary of the HMS Ardent Association, Len Yeatman MBE and I heard that Portsmouth City Council had erected a maritime memorial, at the Sally Port in Portsmouth, to honour the memory of those of the maritime forces that had given their lives in the Falklands conflict. As we appeared to be the only fully formed Falklands organization in being at that time we took it upon ourselves to subsequently lobby Plymouth City Council to do the same. However, if my memory serves, Plymouth City Council declined as the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce had already erected a small memorial in Princess street "to all those who had died in the Falklands", presumably meaning the opposing forces as well. HMS Ardent Association felt that, as in Portsmouth, a memorial listing the names of the fallen was important so that families, friends and shipmates could honour their loved ones. It was also felt important that the UK's other premier port should recognize the contribution made by the ships originating in Plymouth.

We set about raising funds for such a memorial and approached all the service messes in the West Country as well as corporate bodies who had close ties with the RN. The required funds were soon raised. I was serving at RNEC Manadon at the time as a CIO and used the college facilities to design the memorial and the plaques containing the names. We took great care to authenticate the names of the fallen and the design for the badges of the four arms to be represented. We decided that it would be for members of the Maritime Forces that gave their lives and thus included Royal Navy, Merchant Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Royal Marine units. We then commissioned a monumental mason and an engraving firm to carry out the work.

Meanwhile, we again lobbied Plymouth City Council for a suitable position to erect the planned memorial. After some time we were invited to meet with a representative from the City's Engineering Department to discuss suitable sites. It appears our request had prompted the City Council to consider gathering up all the scattered memorials in Plymouth, such as the Polish memorial that used to be outside Albert Gate at the Dockyard, and locate them all in one place. The Council had chosen the Old Bull Ring located below the Belvedere on the slopes of **Plymouth Hoe**. This seemed to be the perfect place and we made a few suggestions and asked if our memorial could be included in the centre of the Garden of Remembrance as it was to become known. Our suggestions were taken on board and we went away happy.

Our memorial was completed and we awaited the City Council's call to be able to erect it where we had requested. Imagine our dismay when we eventually found out that they had moved the Chamber of Commerce Falklands memorial into the place we had thought was to be reserved for us. There was no room for our memorial.

The Garden of Remembrance was dedicated by the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Mr. Gordon Draper, at 3.30pm on July 7th 1988. The event was followed by a march past of the Pipes and Drums of the 4th Royal Tank Regiment and the massed bands of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Royal Tank Regiments. We were not invited.

We went back to the City Council and showed them all the correspondence that had passed between us and they realized their mistake. They subsequently built a plinth, as an extension to the surrounding wall where we were finally able to erect our memorial. Our memorial was dedicated by, the then, Captain Alan West DSC RN, Commanding Officer of HMS Bristol representing the RN at the Plymouth Drake 400 Celebrations in 1988.

Representatives of the units depicted on the memorial were in attendance as were families of the fallen. Members of the Federation of Service Associations were also present and music was provided by the Band of Her Majesties Royal Marines, Dartmouth.

In November 1997 due to the poor quality of the original engraving work a new appeal was made again to Service Messes/Charities and Benevolent funds and to local companies to raise the estimated £4000.

(Final cost was £4063.15)

The money was again raised in a very short time and the work was completed in August 1998 by Lidstone and Dalton Engravers, who I believe have now ceased trading.

This Memorial lists the names of all those of the maritime forces who died during the Falklands War while serving on board Her Majesty's Ships "Ardent", "Antelope", "Argonaut", "Fearless", "Coventry", "Glamorgan", "Hermes", "Invincible", "Sheffield", the merchant ship "Atlantic Conveyor", Royal Fleet Auxiliary "Sir Galahad", and RFA "Sir Tristram" as well as Royal Marine units.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> May each year, the anniversary of the sinking of HMS Ardent, a floral tribute is laid by the HMS Ardent Association in memory of our fallen shipmates. Also, on Remembrance Sunday, members of the Association gather at the Garden of Remembrance at 1030, before the main service at the Naval War Memorial, to lay a wreath. We would welcome anybody from the Type 21 club who wishes to, to join us in this annual tribute to the fallen.

*Photographs provided by David Woollard*



*ROYAL NAVY  
HMS ARDENT*

AB(S) D D ARMSTRONG	MEM(M)2 A R LEIGHTON
LT CDR R W BANFIELD	AEMNI A McAULAY
AB(S) A R BARR	A/LS(R) M S MULLEN
POAEM(M) P BROUARD	LT B MURPHY
CK J S DUNKERLEY	LPT G T NELSON
A/LCK M P FOOTE	APOWEM(R) A K PALMER
MEM(M)2 S H FORD	CK J R ROBERTS
ASTD S HANSON	LT CDR J M SEPHTON
AB(S) S K HAYWARD	A/LMEM(M) S J WHITE
AB(EW) S HEYES	A/LMEM(L) G WHITFORD
WEM(R) S J LAWSON	MEM(M) G S WILLIAMS

*HMS ANTELOPE*

STD M R STEPHENS

*HMS ARGONAUT*

AB(R) I M BOLDY                      S(M) M J STUART

*HMS FEARLESS*

MEA(P) A S JAMES                      A/LMEM(M) D MILLER

*HMS COVENTRY*

MEM(M) F O ARMES	LT CDR G S ROBINSON-HOLTRE
A/CWEA J D L CADDY	LRO(W) B J STILL
MEM(M) P B CALLUS	MEA2 G L J STOCKWELL
A/POCA S R DAWSON	A/WEA1 D A STRICKLAND
AWEM(R) J K DOBSON	AB(EW) A D SUNDERLAND
PO(S) M G FOWLER	MEM(M)2 S TONKIN
WEM(O) I P HALL	ACK I E TURNBULL
LT R R HEATH	A/WEA2 P P WHITE
KYE BEN KWO	WEA/APP I R WILLIAMS
AWEM(N)1 D J A OZBIRN	

In memory of all the  
crew of HMS Ardent  
- Proudly remembered  
by the Br...



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