

Dear Shep,

I was interested to see your request for old shipmates from H.M.S. WISHART in the Navy News.

You do not know me, but I have reason to be exceedingly grateful to the ship's company of the 'Wishart' as I am one of the survivors from the Hunt class destroyer 'H.M.S. BLEAN' which was on convoy duty with your ship when we got sunk by two torpedoes by U Boat and were rescued by your ship the 'WISHART'. I well remember climbing the scrambling net on to your quarterdeck, being stripped of all clothing, given a ciggy then taken for a clean up and eventually going to the forward

mess deck. I think N°1 Mess starboard side where the Wickham boys delved in their lockers for any old shorts, shirts or anything to cover our naked bodies, then cups & cups of tea. I remember nothing after that until the following morning entering Gib. We were then put aboard "H.M.S Rodney" for a few days before sailing home on an empty troopship arriving on the Clyde Christmas Eve 1942 an overnight journey to Batham by train, then on my way home for 14 days survivors leave arriving home midnight Christmas Day.

You are the first person from the Wickham that I have come across since then, so when you find your old shipmates which I'm sure you will, please give them my everlasting thanks for all they did for us.

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For your interest here are a few details
'H.M.S BLEAN' was sunk on 11th Dec 1942
60 miles west of ORAN at 4.30 PM
by U443 (LT VON PUTTKAMER). On
23 Feb: 1943 U443 was depth charged
by HMS BICESTER, HMS LAMERTON and
H.M.S. WHEATLAND 30 miles WNW of
Algiers and lost with all hands.
I am enclosing a newspaper cutting
of the only other shipmate off the
'Blean' that I have ever come across.

Yours in deep gratitude

Many thanks
Best wishes

Ex 6x357655

Jim Watson