



e-DEFENCE ELECTRONICS NEWSLETTER

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RHEINMETALL ACQUIRES BAE TANK DIVISION

In the current tidal wave of Brexit news, the fact that Rheinmetall has acquired a majority stake in BAE System's tank division (for £28.6m) seems to have achieved rather less column inches than the move of the HQ of Dyson (of vacuum cleaner fame) to Singapore. The new joint venture, Rheinmetall BAE Systems Land, will have a 55% Rheinmetall stake, with BAE owning the rest, and will be based at the UK firm's factory in Telford, Shropshire, where about 400 people are employed, and at sites in Washington, Filton and Bovington. The UK operation, which also maintains the Warrior armoured vehicle, generates revenues of about £60m a year. Rheinmetall already leads a consortium, called Artec, that will build the new Boxer armoured vehicle for the British Army. eDEN will be keeping a watchful eye on the ownership of defence assets in the coming years.

We are delighted, in our present issue, to mark the honour of the OBE being awarded to our member **Professor Hugh Griffiths** specifically for his work on radar; in addition to his ground-breaking radar developments, Hugh has of course built a name, and awards, in the field of radar history, and merits our highest congratulations.

We mark also, this time with a tinge of sadness, the retirement of **Jacky Hodgson**, Head of Sheffield University Special Collections, who among many other professional achievements, aided the late **Don Tomlin** to establish Sheffield's radar collection; we wish Jacky a long and happy retirement.

Discussions on topics raised in earlier issues continue with renewed strength in 2019, and an especially interesting letter comes from **Michael Ellis** regarding both the **Channel Dash** and the radar on the **Graf Spee**, while **David Robertson** provides more information on the **1930s STC 'micro-ray' cross-Channel link**. This last prompted your Editor to reprint as an article the interesting and insightful recollections of **STC's Maurice Deloraine** from his memoir **When Telecom and ITT Were Young**, which give both a French and a US multinational insight into many aspects of developments in the period from the First World War to the 1930s, closing with ominous descriptions of events in the German sphere.

We follow this with an astonishing account by **Norman Hill, the pilot of a Cierva autogyro on radar calibration duties, of his duel with an Fw190 fighter**; radar calibration could have its moments! Next, we explore the relatively little-known official history of the **OSRD's American-British Laboratory ABL-15**, initially at Malvern and later in many continental locations. Note, **this is not the much better-known Rad Lab BBRL at Malvern**, but a unit with a specialised EW focus about which little accessible has been published. Obscure also is information about the **'Woodbridge Ju88'** whose comprehensive radar equipment provided the Allies with a shock in 1944; here, easily accessible for the first time in print, the pilot's view of *why* he landed at Woodbridge.

We next move on to modern concerns; **John 'Jacey' Wise** kindly provides us with food for thought on recent radar developments, following which we look at the preliminary report on the sad loss by the Norwegian Navy of the **frigate Helge Ingstad**, and then more happily note the 2018 **Autonomous Warrior exercise** and some participants.

Thales announcements this month cover two new products – sensors for the Dassault Rafale F4, and kit for a new Mexican OPV, while in **Tailpiece Prof Simon Watts** offers reflections on the **2018 Ipsos Mori Veracity survey**, which we published last month, and which showed engineers to be the fourth most trusted to tell the truth after nurses, doctors and teachers.

Part II covers a rare subject for DEHS – an account of the history of a battleship after it had ceased to be a battleship! The electronics connection is that the WW1 **HMS Centurion** was saved from the scrapyards by being modified as a **radio-controlled target ship**, and served as such throughout the late 1920s and the 1930s – but then came again into commission during WW2 and, “held together with string and sealing wax” (including different propellers on each of its 4 shafts!) served in a variety of roles, including the extremely active Malta convoy, **Operation Vigorous**, finishing as part of a **Mulberry** breakwater – read, and marvel at the ingenuity of its crews during this “Life after Life after Life”!

As always, many thanks to **Mike Dean** for his invaluable help, and suggestions for improvements, offers of articles and all general comments to me at philjudkins@btinternet.com or info@dehs.org.uk.

Phil

Dr. Phil Judkins, DEHS Chairman.

BURNS LECTURE DAY 2 MAY 2019

GWR STEAM MUSEUM SWINDON

JONATHAN AYLEN, President-elect of the Newcomen Society and DEHS 2019 Burns Lecturer, will at 2pm deliver the Burns Lecture under the intriguing title “Cold War to Coal Trains”; there will be two lectures in the morning – “Choosing System Batteries” by **Peter Butcher**, DEHS ‘Transmission Lines’ Editor; and “The last Franco-British War”, by DEHS Chairman **Dr Phil Judkins**, who will describe the little-known war of Britain with Vichy France, the destruction of the French fleet, the landing at Dakar, the campaigns in Lebanon and Syria, and the invasion of Madagascar. During the day there will also be a display of equipment under restoration.

BOOK NOW – FORM ATTACHED!

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