

Michael Dounis HINDE

Born: 1922

Parents: Arthur Reginald and Gladys Hinde- Lymington, Hampshire

School Admission Year: 1930's

Civilian Occupation: Unknown

Civilian Service Record

Merchant Navy



Merchant Navy Rank – First Radio Officer

Service Record: British steam merchant ship - 5.850 tons

Service Vessel – S.S. Caledonian Monarch

Date of death: 14.1.1942?

The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest military campaign in WW2 and lasted from 1939 to the surrender of Germany on 7th May 1945. The Battle pitted U- boat submarines of the Kriegsmarine (German Navy), the aircraft of the Luftwaffe (German Air Force) and later the Italian Navy against the Royal Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, United States Navy and allied Merchant Shipping. The U-boats, nicknamed 'grey wolves' as they often worked in packs, were part of Hitler's plan to starve the UK of food, raw materials and equipment.

An island nation the UK was dependant on imported goods; Britain required a million tons per week to survive. The Battle of the Atlantic became a 'tonnage war'. A convoy system using code words was put in place; they often exceeded forty ships. Bad weather and enemy action often dispersed their lines and many ships often strayed.

The Account

On 7th January 1942, the Caledonian Monarch (Master James Valentine Stewart), sailing from Rosirio – Halifax- then en route to Loch Ewe, Scotland with a cargo of 8,075 tons of wheat had strayed from Convoy No. SC-63 and was reported missing thereafter. A week later the convoy encountered severe weather and was dispersed.

At 04.11 hours on 22nd January, U-588 (Commander Kapitanleutnant Victor Vogel) fired a torpedo at an unescorted steamer and observed a hit amidships thirty miles north-west of Lewis, Outer Hebrides. As the vessel only settled slowly in the water, he waited for the crew to abandon ship and then fired a coup de grace which caused the steamer to sink fast by the bow. The Germans reported five fully occupied lifeboats but were not able to identify the vessel.

A counterclaim - An earlier claim that the ship had been sunk by U-333 (Commander Korvettkapitan Peter-Enrich Cremer – Knights Cross) on 18th January 500 miles east of St Johns, Newfoundland was discounted by Lloyds who ruled that the neither could have been in the same position on that date. So the victim of Cremer, if any, is still unidentified?

Curiously although Vogel recorded that he was not able to identify the ship at the time his personal 'hit' list includes Caledonian Monarch as his first sinking. Further analysis links him with the ship, but, unlike hundreds of other U-boat entries, the reason for the sinking (torpedo) is omitted?

Whatever its fate no trace of the ship or crew was ever found and she was considered lost either by enemy action or by marine causes on 14th January. The master with 40 crew members including first Radio Officer '*Old Boy*' Michael Dounis HINDE plus six gunners were listed as lost.

Commemorated

Chichester War Memorial

Merchant Navy War Memorial – Tower Hill

Michael Dounis Hinde was the brother of '*Old Boy*' Lawrence Rex HINDE - RAFVR who died in a flying accident at RAF Finningley, Yorks on 18 June 1941.

Note:

Aftermath - On 31 July 1942 Vogel's U-588 was attacked in the North Atlantic by Royal Canadian warships Corvette HMCS Wetaskiwin and destroyer HMCS Skeena using depth charges. He was lost with his entire crew of 46. During four patrols (total 130 days at sea) he had sunk 7 ships and damaged 2 others.