

**THE OUTSTANDING WW1 D.S.M., WW2 B.E.M. AND ARCHIVES GROUP RELATING TO THE 'NELSONIAN DUEL' BETWEEN THE ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER ALCANTARA AND THE GERMAN RAIDER S.M.S. GREIF IN FEBRUARY 1916. THE RECIPIENTS ORIGINAL ARCHIVE RELATING TO THE ACTION BEING OF PARTICULARLY NOTE**



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL, G.V.R. 'M. 10262 W. C. F. BOND, 3RD WR., H.M.S. ALCANTARA, 29 FEB. 1916', BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL, MILITARY DIVISION, G.V.I.R. 'C.P.O. WR. WILLIAM C. BOND, D.S.M., P/MX. 5371'

D.S.M. *London Gazette* 22 June 1916.

The original recommendation states:

*'H.M.S. Alcantara action with the S.M.S. Greif on 29 February 1916: When H.M. ship was listing at 45 degrees and sinking, he slid across the deck to the lee side to assist a badly wounded man. As it was impossible to bring this man up to the other side of the deck, he assisted him into the water and then jumped in after him. He himself was on the sick list at the time suffering from a hernia.'*

B.E.M. *London Gazette* 11 July 1940: *'In recognition of services in the war.'*

William Charles Francis Bond was born in Portsea, Portsmouth on 7 September 1896 and entered the Royal Navy as a Writer 3rd Class in November 1914, direct from his job in the Caledonian Railway. After service at Victory I, he joined the armed Merchant Cruiser H.M.S. Calyx on 19 December 1914, serving until 15 April 1915, before returning to Victory I. He subsequently served aboard the armed merchant cruiser H.M.S. Alcantara from 16 April 1915 until her loss on 29 February 1916, following a hotly contested action with the enemy raider Greif, *'an action which savoured of the days of Nelson, the two ships being engaged at point blank range'*: both were sunk. Despite being on the sick list during the action, whilst the ship was sinking, Bond would save the life of the severely wounded

Private Reed, R.M.L.I., assisting him to get off the ship and then jumping after him. His gallant actions were witnessed by Alcantara's Captain and he would subsequently be awarded the D.S.M. for this deed.



In an account left by Bond in his scrap book relating to the action, Bond recounts how he also saved the ships Ledger, which was the only item belonging to Alcantara to survive the sinking (this went on to be displayed in America) and unsurprisingly, as saving the ships Ledger from a sinking ship was one of the articles in King's Regulations, it was for this deed that Bond thought he was awarded the D.S.M. for until receiving a copy of his recommendation in 1918.

Bond goes on to tell how he remained in the water for at least half an hour before being dragged onto a raft. Losing consciousness, sometime after, he and the other survivors on the raft were picked up by H.M.S. Comus., as was Alcantara's ledger!

In June 1917, Private Reed, who had also survived his ordeal thanks to Bond, would write a letter from Haslar hospital to the man who saved his life. Reed was still recuperating over a year after the sinking but tells how his leg was improving (this letter is in the scrap book). Both men were 2 off the approximately 85 survivors from Alcantara's complement, the loss being approximately 47% of the crew.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action\\_of\\_29\\_February\\_1916](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_of_29_February_1916)

After a short spell at Victory I, Bond next joined the rescue tug and survey ship Seahorse in Portsmouth, in which capacity he served from 12 September 1916 until 17 July 1919. Having been promoted Writer II and then Writer I in January 1921, he would serve on a number of ships and shore bases until he was re-engaged as a Chief Petty Officer Writer (Pensioner) in November 1936. Further details of his service are unknown, bar that he was serving at the R.N. Barracks, Portsmouth on being awarded the B.E.M. in the summer of 1940. He died at Gosport, Hampshire in October 1965



The following are the circumstances under which the subject of this report was arrested and taken to the station...

Early in 1916 an A.P.C. was issued, a fore-runner to the present Articles in the King's Regulations, that every member was to be made to give the King's consent to his appointment...

The subject was arrested on the 13th October 1917...

It was gratifying to learn that my effort had not been in vain and that the subject had been found by "John" and it was turned over to my care again...

After being landed at Gravelly Ness, I saw Commander Captain Leslie Smith, P.O. and in the presence of the subject was arrested and voluntarily returned to the Senior Officer that I ought to have the case to hang by my own chain.

According to a letter I received from Captain Smith some 2 or 3 years since I recall that the case in which the subject was arrested was the only case, and I had some years later to America in 1917 in the examination of the subject...

At the time I received many congratulations for being instrumental in having the subject and no doubt may I say it was for this service that I received the D.S.O. I was not aware of the subject's return of the committee's report until some years and upon I read of the subject...

Dear Sirs, James E. Smith, B.C. (Retired),  
Commanding Officer of "Libraries".  
Asst. Payr. Robert Williamson, B.S. (Ret.),  
Commanding Officer.  
Asst. Payr. John Haffner, B.S. (Ret.),  
and Asst. Officer.

2nd Oct., 1920. J.W.G. WHITE.

13<sup>th</sup> October, 1917

Dear Sirs,

I wrote a long letter to the P.D.C. about Powell and sent him typewritten statement with it. The enclosed is the P.D.C.'s reply which is very satisfactory.

Mr Powell got passed for Levant duties - apparently not, but I strongly recommend him to get passed that as soon as to possibly can; it was quite evident from what Payne, Capt. Smith said that the earlier a C.P.O. writes passes easier, much weight the selection for promotion are

4243

Supplement

**The London Gazette**

Of TUESDAY, the 24th of JULY, 1920

Published by Authority

Registered as a newspaper

THURSDAY, 24 JULY, 1920

**CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD**

St. James's Palace, S.W.1.

24th July, 1920.

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following promotions in and appointments to the Most Honourable Order of the Bath in recognition of the distinguished services rendered by the following Officers:

To be an Additional Member of the Military Division of the First Class, or Knight Grand Officer, of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath Sir Charles Marcus Forbes, K.C.B., D.S.O.

To be an Additional Member of the Military Division of the Second Class, or Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath:

Vice-Admiral Charles Gordon Ramsey, C.B. Vice-Admiral Thomas Hugh Bruce, C.B. R.N.V.R.

Vice-Admiral George Hamilton D'Oyly Lyon, V.C. R.N.V.R.

Vice-Admiral George Lygon, C.B., D.S.O. V.C. R.N.V.R.

To be an Additional Member of the Military Division of the Third Class, or Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath:

Major-General Alfred Leonard Foster, D.S.O. Major-General Robert Samuel Hamilton Davies, D.S.O. Major-General Patrick Mackenzie, C.B.E. Major-General Alfred Leonard Foster, D.S.O. Major-General Robert Samuel Hamilton Davies, D.S.O. Major-General Patrick Mackenzie, C.B.E. Major-General Alfred Leonard Foster, D.S.O. Major-General Robert Samuel Hamilton Davies, D.S.O. Major-General Patrick Mackenzie, C.B.E.

11 Oct. 29

Dear Mr Dalt,

I will be very glad to hear noted in form of C.P.O. writer Bond your letter and enclosure, of (O.N. M. 0222 - 477) (note number) of October.

We have no record of his having taken the examination for Warrant Writer - would you please get this confirmed or give the date of our records on record.

Yours sincerely,  
Hullman



23 June 1918.

Dear Bond,

My hearty congratulations on the award of the D.S.M. I was delighted to see you had got it. I hope you are quite well now. There is a small note attached to this which you may find of interest.

With great wishes for your future success,

Yours truly,  
 R. H. S. [Signature]

THE DEATH IN THE NORTH SEA

**A MOEWIE RAIDER CAUGHT.**  
**Disguised German Vessel Tries To Evade Our Patrols.**  
**SUNK BY GUNFIRE; 180 PERISH.**  
**15,800 Ton British Armed Merchant Cruiser 'Hunt' Torpedoed.**  
**GOES DOWN WITH 74 OF HER CREW.**

Officer Hunt was captured in the early hours of the morning, and the vessel was sunk by the British patrol. The British vessel was captured by the German raider, and the crew was taken on board. The German raider was then sunk by the British patrol.

**DAILY SKETCH.**  
 GUARANTEED DAILY BEST SELLER THAN LONDON CORNER.

**THE LAST SCENE IN THE NORTH SEA FIGHT.**

**The Daily Mirror**  
 LARGEST CIRCULATION LARGER THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER DAILY PAPER.

**A FIGHT TO A FINISH IN THE NORTH SEA: CAPTURED HUNS' ADMIRATION FOR BRITISH CHIVALRY.**

**ALIN SHEDS ON GERMAN COAST.**  
**FULL STORY OF BRITISH VENGEANCE ON RAIDER.**  
**Sister Ship of Moewie Tackled By Sinking Vessel.**  
**A PERSONAL ACCOUNT.**  
**First Personal Narrative By Officer of Hunt's Crew.**  
**SEEN FROM H.M.S. ANDES.**

The German raider was seen from the British vessel, and the British vessel was then sunk. The German raider was then captured by the British patrol.

**SIXTH SUPPLEMENT TO The London Gazette**  
 OF THURSDAY, 22nd JUNE, 1918.

Published by Authority.

THURSDAY, 22 JUNE, 1918.

GENERAL ORDERS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN.

dear bond, but I could not get any more. Yesterday's news in the paper that you were knighted, which I was very pleased to hear. I hope you will have heard that you have been accepted for the D.S.M. I have been very glad to hear of this. I am returning to London in a few days.

Yours truly,  
 R. H. S. [Signature]

**Agreement!!**

The Court found that the ship was a German raider, and the British vessel was then sunk. The German raider was then captured by the British patrol.

ROYAL NAVAL BARRACKS, PORTSMOUTH

Dear Sir,

I have been instructed by the Board of Directors to offer you their congratulations on having been awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and to express their profuse thanks for the services of a member of the Caledonian staff who has been judged worthy of such a mark of appreciation by His Majesty.

Yours faithfully,  
 W. H. S. [Signature]

**Caledonian Railway**

Dear Sir,

I have been instructed by the Board of Directors to offer you their congratulations on having been awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and to express their profuse thanks for the services of a member of the Caledonian staff who has been judged worthy of such a mark of appreciation by His Majesty.

Yours faithfully,  
 W. H. S. [Signature]

23 Seybott Road, Duthess.

29th June 1918.

Dear Mr. Bond,

At a General Meeting of the Members of the R.N. Farwell Writers and Writers Club held on the 27th inst. I was instructed to convey to you on their behalf, their congratulations on being promoted with the Distinguished Service Medal, and further to state we record with pride the honor conferred upon you and which also naturally reflects to the credit of the class to which you belong.

Yours sincerely,  
 L. Lloyd Evans  
 Secretary, R.N. Farwell Writers and Writers Club.



## H.M.S. ALCANTARA VS THE GERMAN RAIDER GREIF

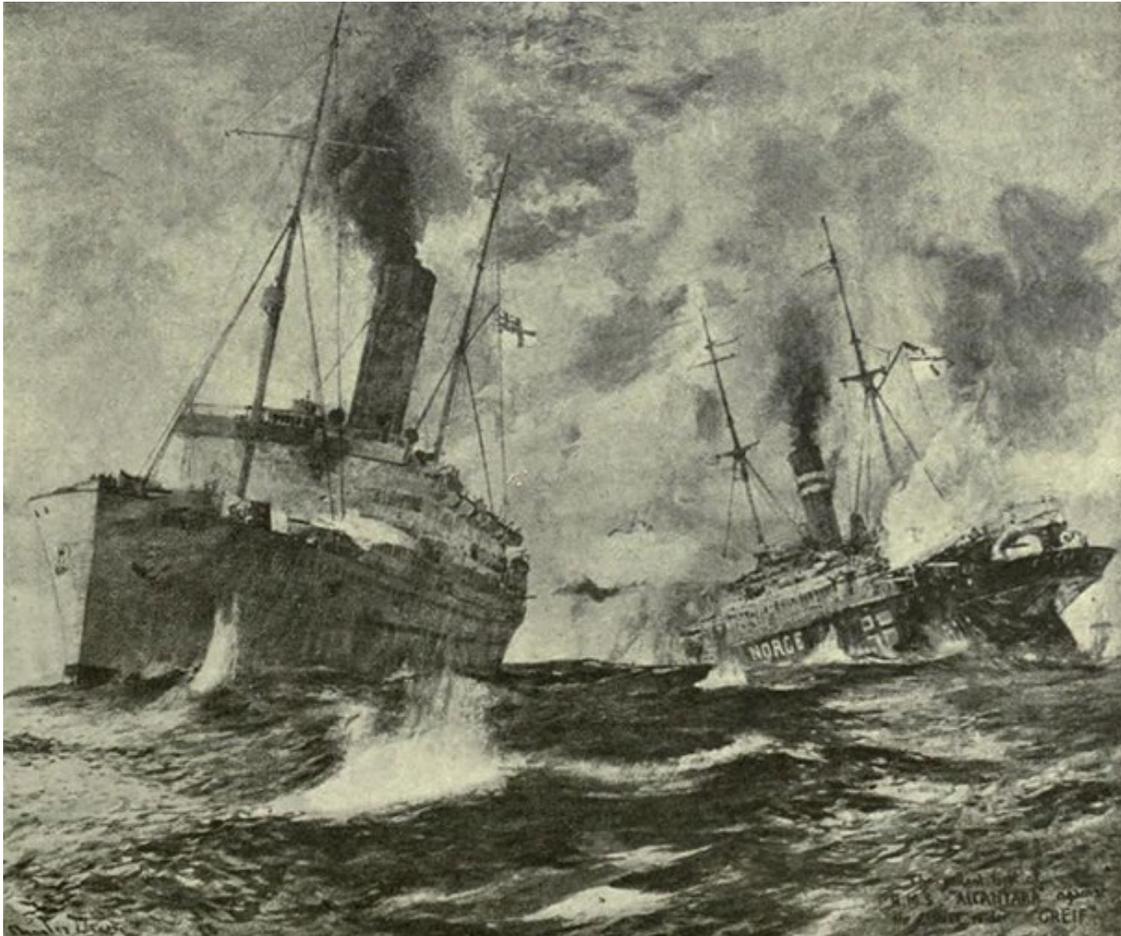


“At about midday on 28 February 1916, in a position of 60 miles E. of the North of the Shetlands, the Alcantara was due to rendezvous with her relief ship, the Andes, when a wireless message instructed her to remain thereabouts and keep a sharp lookout for a suspicious steamship coming out of the Skagerrak. But it was not until about 8.45 a.m. on the following morning that Captain Wardle spotted smoke on the horizon on his port beam. During the course of making passage to this unidentified steamship, he received a wireless warning from the Andes that this was in all probability the vessel he was seeking, so Wardle signalled to the latter to stop, and fired two rounds of blank ammunition. By this stage the two ships had approached to within 1,000 yards of each other, the Alcantara coming up astern and lowering a boarding boat. At that moment, however, the "stranger" - which had Norwegian colours painted on her side and the name Rena-Tonsberg - dropped her bulwarks and ran out her guns. She was, in fact, the enemy raider Greif. The point-blank nature of the ensuing 20-minute duel is best summarised in Deeds That Thrill the Empire:

'From the very first the British gunners got home on the enemy. His bridge was carried away at the first broadside, and then, systematically, our guns searched yard by yard along the upper works of the enemy, seeking out the wireless room from which were emanating the meaningless jargons that "jammed" the Alcantara's wireless. This had been set to work at once to call up assistance - a proper fighting precaution in any event, but doubly so in this case, seeing that it was quickly apparent the Greif carried considerably heavier ordnance than her own. Before long the enemy's wireless was smashed, and our guns promptly turned themselves upon the hull and water-line of their opponent. In a few minutes the Greif had a great fire blazing aft; a few more, and she began to settle down by the stern; and as the Alcantara's guns methodically and relentlessly searched her from stem to stern her return fire grew more and more feeble until, after about fifteen minutes' fighting, it died away almost entirely. On paper, judging by the difference between the armaments, the Alcantara ought to have been blown out of the water by this time; but, although she was hit frequently, the actual damage she sustained was almost negligible. The Greif was already a beaten and doomed craft when other vessels came up in answer to Alcantara's wireless. The first to arrive was the Andes, Captain George B. W. Young (another converted unit of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Line), and a few rounds from her apparently completed the enemy's discomfort. Not long after, a "pukka" cruiser appeared on the scene; but it is reported that, seeing the Alcantara had already made a hopeless mess of her opponent, this cruiser clicked out the signal "Your Bird" and went about her other business!

<https://lostinwatersdeep.co.uk/hms-alcantara.html>

But the fight was not yet over. The Greif had again begun to blaze away with the one or two guns that remained intact when there happened one of those misfortunes that are apt to occur to the most efficiently handled ships. An unlucky shot carried away the Alcantara's steering-gear, and her captain was immediately robbed of the weapon upon which he had chiefly depended for the destruction of his enemy - his seamanship. The Alcantara, though nearly all her guns were intact, became unmanageable, and for the first time in the action she was swung round by the seas into such a position that her full broadside was exposed to the enemy. There had, too, been no half-measures in fitting out the Greif for her work. She carried not only a powerful equipment of guns, but also torpedo tubes, and, although she was fast settling down in the water, she was able to bring them to bear now on a most favourable target - a big ship lying broadside on with disabled steering-gear. The first two torpedoes that were fired missed - in spite of the short range. The third caught the Alcantara squarely.



Whereby it happened that after some twenty minutes of the most fierce and closely contested fighting the naval campaign had seen, the two principal combatants found themselves making headway towards the bottom in company. The Greif was the first to go. It is believed that, like the Moewe, she carried a big cargo of mines to be strewed where they would be most likely to entrap our warships. However that may be, she blew up with a tremendous explosion and went to the bottom, just a few minutes before the mortally injured Alcantara turned over on her side to find a resting place within a few hundred yards of her ... '

From a complement of approximately 160, Alcantara's loss amounted to 5 officers and 69 men, of whom nearly all were killed by the final torpedo, and of the 321 officers and men with which the Greif entered the fight, five officers and 115 men were rescued from the sea and taken prisoners by the British destroyers that came upon the scene."

<https://lostinwatersdeep.co.uk/hms-alcantara.html>

M.M. DANIE  
40 G.P.O.  
LONDON  
March 1919

Dear General

I am very glad to hear from you and to know that you are all well and happy. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible.

Dear General

I am very glad to hear from you and to know that you are all well and happy. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible.

To Mr. Reed, R.N.S.

I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible.

Dear General

I am very glad to hear from you and to know that you are all well and happy. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible.

COMMANDER R.N.S.

Death of Southsea Officer who Earned War Distinctions.

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of a young officer of the Royal Naval School, who has earned War Distinctions.



Dear General

I am very glad to hear from you and to know that you are all well and happy. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible.

Dear General

I am very glad to hear from you and to know that you are all well and happy. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible.

5, Globe Barracks, Southampton, Hants.

27th February, 1935.

Sir,

H.M.S. ALBANYA W. S.M.S. 2087 - 20th Feb. 1935.

The 27th February, 1935, being the 20th (Leap Year) anniversary of a sea battle in which a remarkable number of our countrymen were killed, it is to be hoped that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible. I am sure that you will find the time to write to me as often as possible.

By the Commissioner for the Office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom.

To Mr. William Charles Bond, D.S.M., R.N.S., formerly appointed a Temporary Barrack Writer in the Royal Navy.

Authority is given by His Majesty the King, that you are hereby appointed a Temporary Barrack Writer in the Royal Navy.

By the Commissioner for the Office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom.

To Mr. William Charles Bond, D.S.M., R.N.S., formerly appointed a Temporary Barrack Writer in the Royal Navy.

Authority is given by His Majesty the King, that you are hereby appointed a Temporary Barrack Writer in the Royal Navy.

## SOLD WITH THE FOLLOWING ORIGINAL ITEMS

- 1) Bond's aluminium identity tag
- 2) A rare H.M.S. Alcantra cap tally
- 3) Portrait photograph of P.O. Bond in uniform, ribbons show he was also entitled to the Great War Trio and LS Medal.
- 4) Bond's superb Great War scrap book, the contents comprising period letters, accounts and newspaper cuttings relating to the Alcantara action and Bond's part in it. This unique item adds much to the events. Each page has either a letter, Official correspondence, Gazette, or newspaper page/cutting that folds out. The preceding page describing what the letter was, who it was from etc. Content includes:
  - a) Letter from Assistant Paymaster James Duffill, R.N.R.; *'I was delighted to learn yesterday that you came out of the ordeal safe ... hoping you are not the worse for the experience'*
  - b) From the captain of the Seahorse, dated 18 September 1918, providing a requested copy of the recommendation for Bond's D.S.M.. Plus, the original recommendation
  - c) Several other letters of a congratulatory nature on news of the award, among them examples from Alcantara's C.O., Captain T. E. Wardle, D.S.O., R.N., dated 23 June 1916; *'I was delighted to see that you got it and hope you are quite fit now'*
  - d) From the Secretaries of the Caledonian Railway and the R.N. Warrant Writers' Club. Bond notes the irony of this congratulation in that he had been sacked without pension by this company in 1914 from joining the Royal Navy!
  - e) A letter from the man he saved: Private A. A. Reed, R.M.L.I., dated at Haslar Hospital in June 1917
  - f) Details of Alcantara Court Martial for loss of the ship
  - g) London Gazette Supplement 20 June 1916 listing Awards for the Alcantara action
  - h) Numerous wartime newspaper cuttings relating to the Alcantara action
- 5) A most interesting, typed account by bond of his part in the Alcantara action in particular relating to the saving of the Ledger. Here Bond makes note of how important the saving of a Ledger from a sinking ship was, according to King's Regulations. Attached to this is a 1929 letter relating to promotion
- 6) 1929 Admiralty letter regarding Bon's examination as Warrant Writer
- 7) Original supplement to the London Gazette 9 July 1940 (B.E.M. Award)
- 8) Bond's Admiralty promotion Warrants as Temporary Warrant Writer, dated 25 February and 17 May 1943. These both rolled in tube
- 8) A 1956 hand written double page account by Bond, sent to a newspaper relating to the Alcantara action. This along with the 1956 newspaper article (a cutting) relating to the action based on Bond's notes and featuring a photograph of 3 survivors, including Bond
- 9) Various loose newspaper cuttings, Marriage, Birth Certificates etc



Condition GVF/NEF 'd' of '3<sup>rd</sup>'officially corrected on first. Sold with copy service, etc (digital).

The documentation and accounts of the action kept by this man add much to what is already  
A fine group to an iconic Great War naval action