

Dinton Roll of Honour



Lest we Forget

World War II



D/JX 161499 BOY 1ST CLASS

D. A. R. BACON

ROYAL NAVY

22ND MAY, 1941 AGE 17

Douglas Arthur Richard BACON

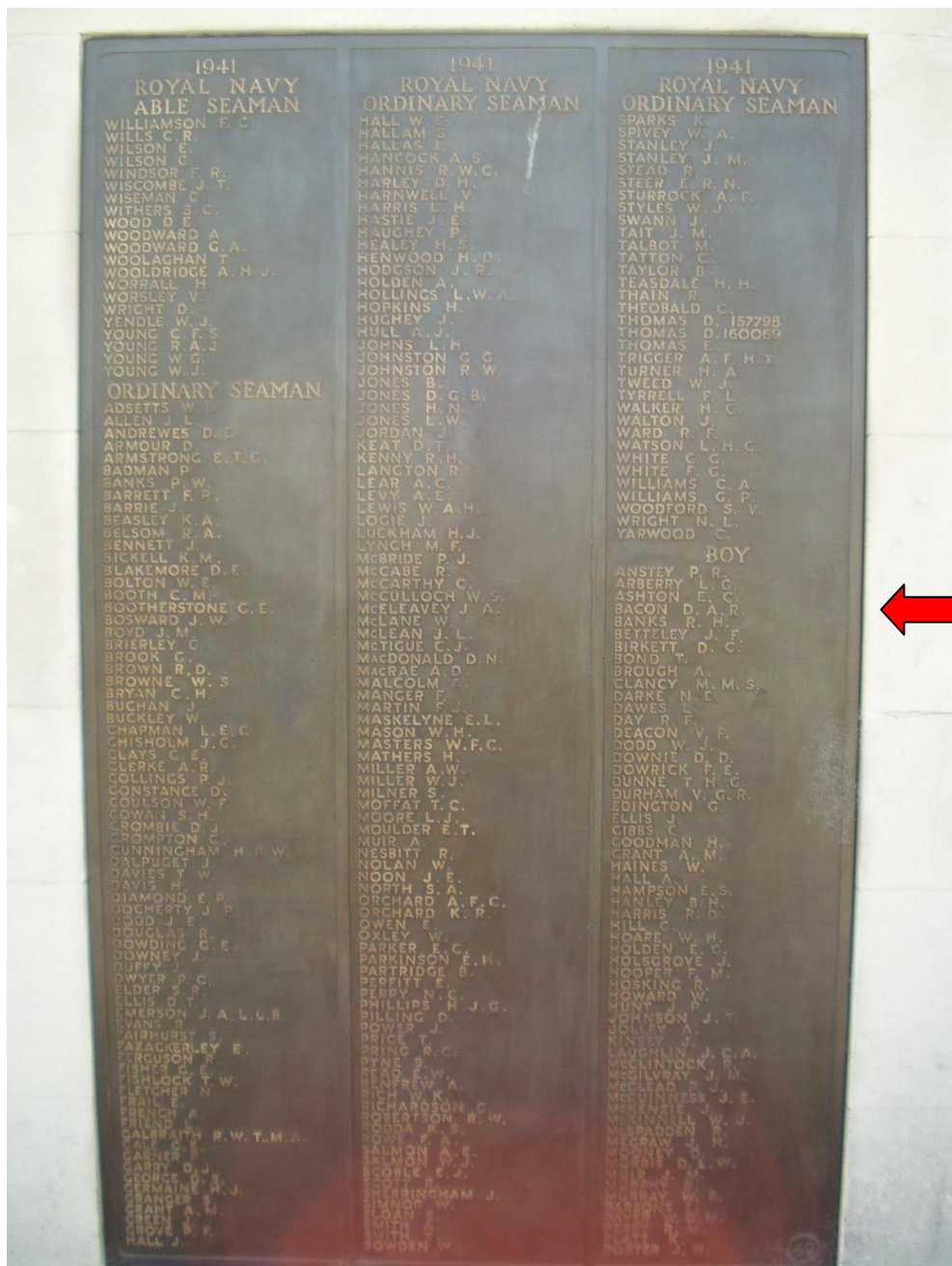
Douglas Arthur Richard Bacon was born in 1923 to parents Archibald Douglas Bacon & Florence Mary Bacon (nee Richards). His birth was registered in September quarter, 1923 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire.

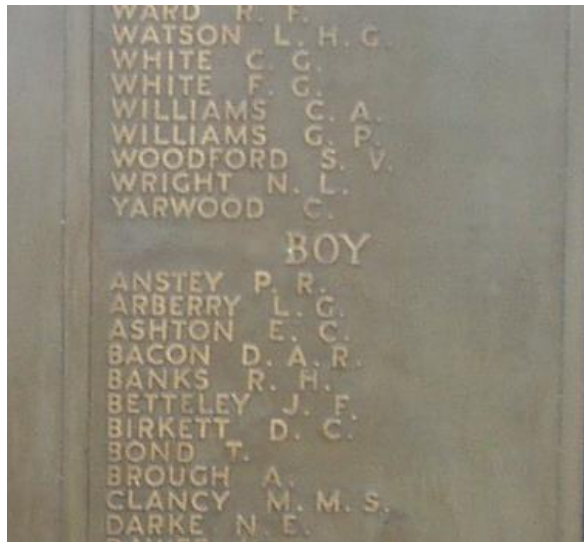
Douglas Arthur Richard Bacon enlisted in the Royal Navy with the rank of Boy 1st Class and service number D/JX 161499.

Douglas Arthur Richard Bacon was listed as Missing Presumed Killed on 22nd May, 1941 at the age of 17 years. He was serving on the crew of H.M.S *Gloucester*. Douglas Bacon is remembered on Panel 49, Column 3 of the Plymouth Naval Memorial as his death occurred at sea.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Douglas Bacon as the son of Archibald Douglas and Florence Mary Bacon of Dinton, Wiltshire.

Panel 49 of Plymouth Naval Memorial





(Photos used with kind permission of [Chris Goddard](#))

The Plymouth Naval Memorial

The Plymouth Naval Memorial is located in Devon. The Memorial commemorates 7,251 sailors of the First World War and 15,933 of the Second World War, who have no known grave, with the majority of deaths having occurred at sea where no permanent memorial could be provided.



(Image supplied courtesy of [Chris Goddard](#))

HMS GLOUCESTER



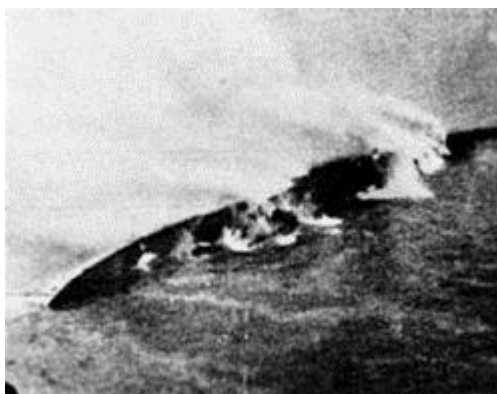
HMS *Gloucester* formed part of a naval force acting against German military transports to Crete. On 22 May, 1941, while in the Kithera Channel, about 14 mi (12 nmi; 23 km) 14 miles (26 km) north of Crete, she was attacked by German *Stuka* dive bombers and sank, having sustained at least four heavy bomb hits and three near-misses. Of the 807 men aboard at the time of her sinking, only 85* survived. Her sinking during the Battle of Crete is considered to be one of Britain's worst wartime naval disasters. HMS *Gloucester* got 'The Fighting G' nickname after earning five battle honours in less than a year at the outbreak of the Second World War.



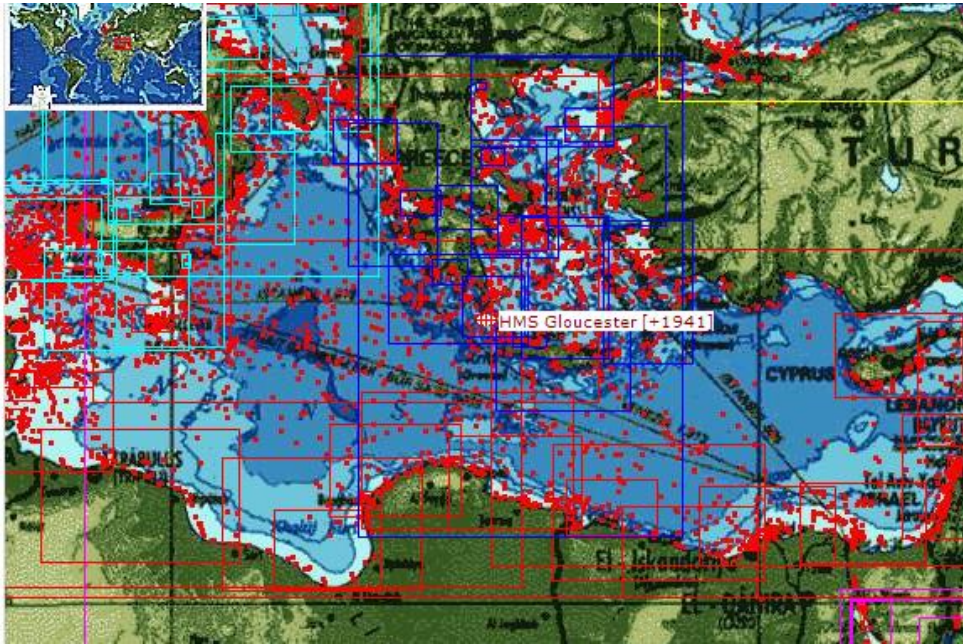
The events on 22nd May, 1941 of HMS Gloucester:

HMS *Gloucester* came under a series of heavy air attacks with HMS *Fiji*, HMS Destroyers *Greyhound* and HMS *Griffin* during withdrawal from Kithera Channel. HMS *Greyhound* was sunk by dive bombers west of Crete. HMS *Gloucester* was hit by bombs which caused internal explosions and major flooding. Major fires broke out and could not be controlled. The crippled ship lay dead in the water, on fire and listing to port. The 'Abandon Ship' order was given and she sank at 5.15pm. The Gloucester's commander, Captain Rowley, 45 officers and 648 crew members were lost.

HMS *Fiji* was ordered to withdraw because of the continuing air attacks but left rafts and boats for survivors. HMS *Gloucester* sank after ninety minutes with the loss of all but 82* of the ship's company. (Note: HMS *Fiji* was later sunk by air attacks with heavy loss of life.) (*Discrepancies exist in the exact number)



(Photograph taken by a German airman recording the sinking of Gloucester off the coast of Crete, 22 May 1941)



(Location of HMS Gloucester wreck from [Wrecksite](#))

The wrecksite is a protected place under the Protection of Military Remains Act.

The circumstances of the sinking were featured by a BBC programme. According to this, the despatch of *Gloucester*, to HMS *Greyhound*, alone and low on fuel and anti-aircraft ammunition (less than 20% remaining), into danger was a "grievous error". Furthermore, the failure to attempt to rescue HMS *Gloucester* survivors after dark was "contrary to usual Navy practice". A survivor commented "*The tradition in the Navy is that when a ship has sunk, a vessel is sent back to pick up survivors under cover of darkness. That did not happen and we do not know why. We were picked up by Germans.*"

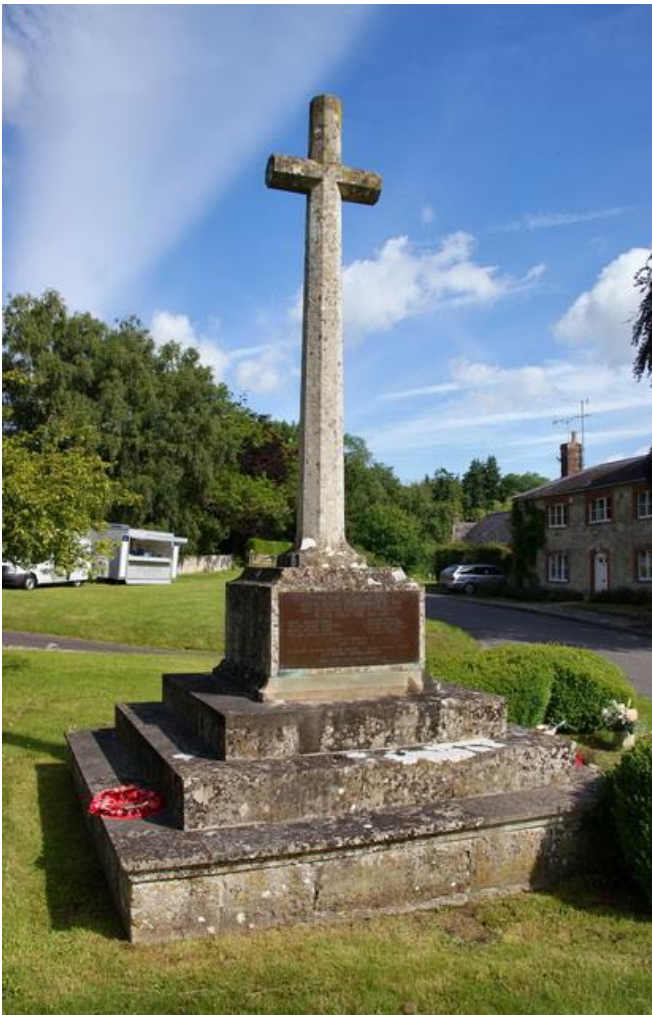
Another account of the sinking differs from, and adds to, the BBC report. In this, *Gloucester* and *Fiji*, both already low on ammunition, had been sent to support the rescue of survivors from the destroyer *Greyhound*. Fierce air attacks further depleted their ammunition and they were given permission to rejoin the main fleet. It was during their return that *Gloucester* was sunk. *Fiji* was sunk later the same day.

On 30 May, 1941, in a letter to the First Sea Lord, Sir Dudley Pound, Admiral Cunningham wrote, "The sending back of *Gloucester* and *Fiji* to the *Greyhound* was another grave error and cost us those two ships. They were practically out of ammunition but even had they been full up I think they would have gone. The Commanding Officer of *Fiji* told me that the air over *Gloucester* was black with planes."



Memorial Stained Glass window in Gloucester Cathedral dedicated to the memory of the 723 Officers and Ratings of H.M.S. *Gloucester* which sunk off Crete May 1941.

Douglas Arthur Richard Bacon is also remembered on the Dinton War Memorial, which is located at the northern end of the Churchyard.



(Photos by Andrew Stacey)



They Died That We Might Live