Liverpool Naval Memorial

At the outbreak of the Second World War, it was evident that the Royal Navy would not have enough sailors to crew all the auxiliary vessels that would serve with it. As a result, more than 13,000 officers and men of the Merchant Navy agreed to serve with the Royal Navy under the terms of a special contact called T.124. This made them subject to Naval discipline while generally retaining their higher Merchant Navy rates of pay and other conditions. The manning port established to administer these men was at Liverpool.
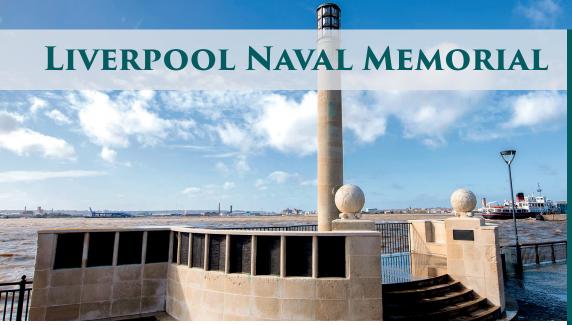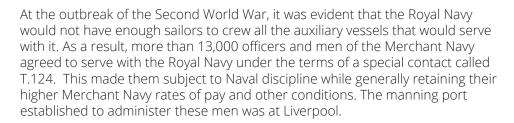
The Liverpool Naval Memorial commemorates 1,400 of these officers and men, who died on active service aboard more than 120 ships, and who have no grave but the sea.

The men commemorated on this memorial came from across Britain, the Commonwealth, and beyond. Over 90 individuals named had family living in Singapore, while others had connections with China, India and many other parts of the world.

The memorial was designed by C. Blythin and S.H. Smith and was unveiled by the Admiral of the Fleet, The Viscount Cunningham of Hyndhope, KT, GCB, OM, DSO, on the 12 November 1952.

Points of interest...

Commemorations: 1,408

Casualties from the following nations;

Australia
Canada
China
Malaya
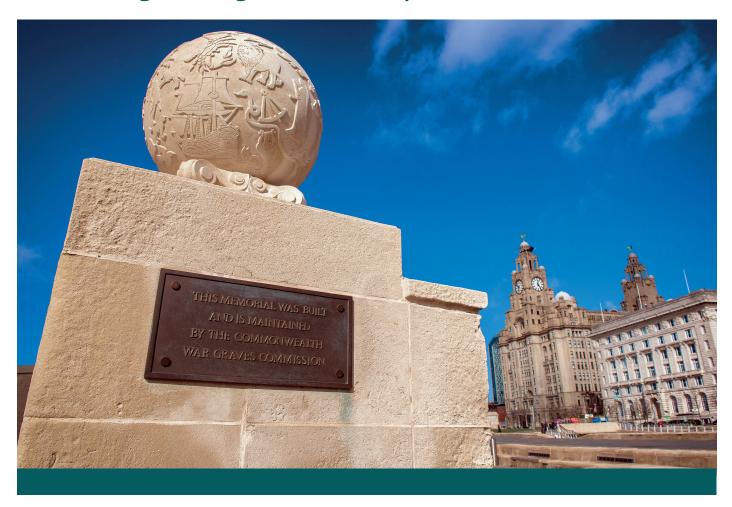India
Newfoundland
New Zealand
South Africa
UK

Things to look out for...

The most senior officer -
Admiral Sir Studhome Brownrigg KBE, CB, DSO (Panel 1)

England Rugby International
Norman Wodehouse (Panel 1)

The oldest sailor commemorated here – Donkeyman **John Atteney**, aged 68 (Panel 20)

Key CWGC features to look out for:

Situated at the front of the memorial are two half-tonne Portland stone globes. These were carefully recreated after decades of exposure to the elements. Without blueprints the Commission's stonemasons spent two weeks carefully tracing every millimetre of the intricate designs to hand-carve like for like replacements. Following more than four months of stonework they were installed on 22 January 2020.

Discovering CWGC graves at Liverpool Naval Memorial

The Memorial is situated on the Mersey River Front at the Pier Head, Liverpool, close to and behind the Liver Buildings and the end of James Street.

An England Rugby International

Vice Admiral **Norman Atherton Wodehouse** joined the Royal Navy in 1904 at the age of 17. Having successfully represented the Royal Navy at rugby union, Wodehouse then gained 14 caps for England, including six as captain between 1910-1913. He served in the First World War seeing action at the Battle of Jutland. In 1915 Wodehouse was awarded the Royal Humane Society Silver Medal for diving into the sea to save a drowning seaman. After the war, he served as the aide to camp to the future King George VI and then commanded the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth in the early 1930s. Wodehouse was recalled to active service in 1939 and was put in charge of convoy safety. On 4 July 1941, Wodehouse was killed when the merchant ship he was aboard was torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine U-69. He is commemorated on Panel 1.

Norman Atherton Wodehouse

The Crews of HMS *Laurentic* and HMS Patroclus *Patroclus*

The passenger ships HMS *Laurentic* and HMS *Patroclus* were both requisitioned by the Royal Navy and converted into armed merchant cruisers in 1939. On the evening of 3 November 1940, the German submarine U-99, commanded by the notorious Kapitanleutnant Kretschmer, was patrolling off the coast of Northern Ireland. Kretschmer saw what he thought was a lone merchant steamer and attacked but HMS *Laurentic* and HMS *Patroclus* were nearby and went to the aid of the torpedoed ship. *Laurentic* was next to be attacked, forcing the crew to abandon ship. *Laurentic* was hit by two more torpedoes before Kretschmer attacked *Patroclus*. 66 men from HMS *Patroclus*, and 49 men from HMS *Laurentic* lost their lives. 26 men from each ship are commemorated on this memorial. (Panels 15 and 18)

HMS Patrolus

HMS *Li Wo*

Lieutenant Thomas Wilkinson

In 1942 HMS *Li Wo*, a coal fired paddle steamer, became the most decorated small ship in Royal Navy history. Originally built for a passenger riverboat service on the Upper Yangtse, in 1940 the *Li Wo* was requisitioned by the Navy and put on patrol duty in Malayan waters. Just before the British surrender at Singapore, *Li Wo* was sent to Batavia in the Dutch East Indies. She left Singapore at dawn on the 13 February 1942 and was attacked several times by Japanese aircraft. On 15 February 1942 she was sunk by a Japanese cruiser after she encountered and single-handedly attacked the entire Japanese invasion fleet that was heading for Sumatra. Her captain, **Lieutenant Thomas Wilkinson**, was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his part. He is commemorated on Panel 1. Of the 84 crew only seven survived and were taken prisoner. Eleven of the crew are remembered here including several Chinese casualties including 62-year-old **Loh Chung Chu** (Panel 15, column 2).

The Rooney brothers and HMS *Jervis Bay*

Like many merchant liners, the *Jervis Bay* was requisitioned for use by the Royal Navy shortly after the outbreak of war in 1939. On 5 November 1940, HMS *Jervis Bay* was the sole escort for a convoy crossing the Atlantic which was attacked by the German pocket battleship Admiral Scheer. The captain of HMS *Jervis Bay* immediately ordered the convoy to scatter and to buy them time, ordered his ship to engage the enemy. Hopelessly outgunned, the crew of the *Jervis Bay* fought the German ship, sacrificing themselves to save the convoy. In the engine room of the *Jervis Bay* were two brothers from Liverpool, **John and Thomas Rooney**. Both men were lost when the ship sank and are commemorated with other members of the crew on Panel 14.

COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES