

Memorial Service for the Loss of Wellington HF168 of RAF Chivenor and Loss of H.M.S. Warwick of C in C Plymouth's Command.

Very recently, and in connection with a Memorial Service being arranged to mark the 50th anniversary of those lost in H.M.S. Warwick, it has come to light that on 20th February 1944 Wellington aircraft No. HF 168 of 172 Squadron based at R.A.F. Chivenor in North Devon, England and whose aircrew were:

Sergeant Benjamin Cohen

Pilot Officer Lloyd Remington Joseph Meech

Flt. Sergeant Arthur Frankland Moore

Sergeant John Richardson

Flt. Sergeant Lindsay John Stephens

Flt. Sergeant Joseph Wendolin Torscher

Was posted as overdue and at about 11.00am an Air/Sea Rescue was started, and an Anson aircraft loaded with inflatable dinghies began searching the sea area off Padstow in Cornwall which is some fifty miles south west of Chivenor.

On the same day and at the same time the destroyer H.M.S. Warwick was on patrol in the same area but just before midday she was torpedoed and sunk in about three minutes with very heavy loss of life. The pilot of the Air/Sea rescue Anson actually saw the destroyer blow up and immediately came down above the survivors swimming in the chilling water and dropped among them the dinghies which he had ready for the crew of the Wellington for which he was searching.

This action by him saved the lives of a number of H.M.S. Warwick's ship's company.

Sadly the airmen were never found but their deaths are very much connected with those of us who survived the sinking of H.M.S. Warwick because, if their aircraft had not been posted overdue, then no Air/Sea Rescue operation would have taken place, and the warship's casualties would have been much higher.

Lieutenant Commander David Harries, R.N. (ret)

Navigating Officer

H.M.S. Warwick: 20th February 1944