

An Afternoon with the Great Jack Dempsey

by John Llewellyn Lloyd

My father, Reginald Sydney Lloyd, was born and brought up in Bryn Place, Seaside and attended Copperworks and Lakefield Schools. He worked at the Welsh Metal Tin Stamping Company, Seaside, where he met, and fell in love with, my mother, Helen Ada Llewellyn, who lived at Glanmor Villa, Glanmor Road. After a long courtship, they subsequently married at St Paul's Church, in 1936 and made their home in Denham Avenue where I was born, in 1938.

Following the outbreak of WW2, my father was conscripted for service into the armed forces and, in 1941, he was accepted into the Royal Navy. When my father joined the Navy, my mother and I went to live with her parents, my grandparents, at Glanmor Villa, where we spent the remainder of the war years. My brother, David Michael, was born there in 1945.

During these war years, my father served on a number of naval vessels including *HMS Redpole* which was a modified Black Swan Class Sloop and *HMS Queen of Bermuda* an armed Merchant Cruiser. He worked on board ship as an operator on Radar Systems, combating the threat of German submarines and other enemy ships. The Radar System at that time was revolutionary, a new technology that was classified "Top Secret". It proved to be an extremely important weapon in the Royal Naval armoury, saving many lives during the war.

In the course of his naval service, my father visited many countries all over the world and one of his countless interesting stories was when, in 1942, his ship docked in New York and the crew were allowed shore leave. He and two fellow shipmates made straight for a sightseeing tour of New York City and chanced upon the "Jack Dempsey Bar" on Broadway.

On entering the bar, wearing their distinctive Royal Naval uniforms, they were greeted by the former world heavyweight boxing champion, the legendary Jack Dempsey himself. He warmly welcomed them, shaking them by the hand and ushering them to the bar, where he proceeded to buy them a number of drinks throughout the afternoon. This was a wonderful experience for three sailors who had spent the last months in action at sea.

On leaving the bar to return to the ship, Jack Dempsey gave my father a Bar Drinks List which he autographed "To Reg, Good Luck Pal, Jack Dempsey". This

was a fantastic keepsake of a memorable afternoon. I still have this Drinks List in my possession and it is of great sentimental value to me as are all his wartime memorabilia.

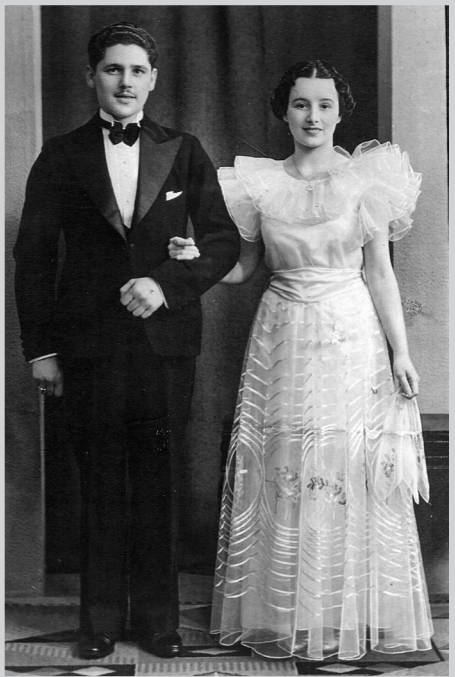
My father was discharged from the navy, in December, 1945 and was awarded the Atlantic Star, the Burma Star, the 1939-1945 Star and the King George VI medals. At last, in 1946, we were able to return, as a family, to Denham Avenue, to a normal life, once more, after the stresses of the war years.

After the 'Stamping', my father worked at Morris Motors until 1974 and, thereafter, enjoyed a happy and active retirement until he passed away, in 1997, at the age of 86-years.

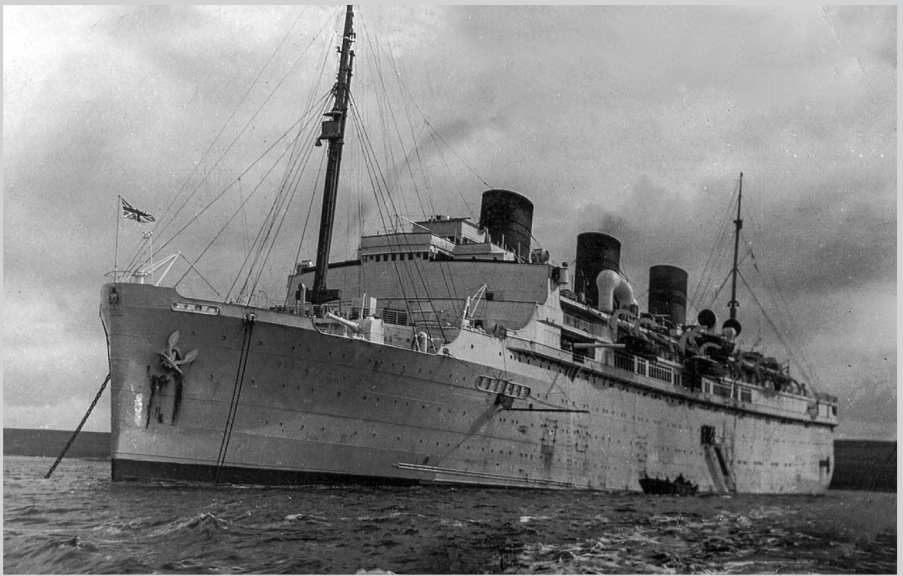
We are indebted to all those who served their country through the traumatic years of the war, some who paid the ultimate price, in order that we can live in comparative peace.



Reg Lloyd as a young man.



Helen and Reg Lloyd at a Ballroom Dancing Competition.



HMS Queen of Bermuda moored off the Falklands Islands, during WW2.



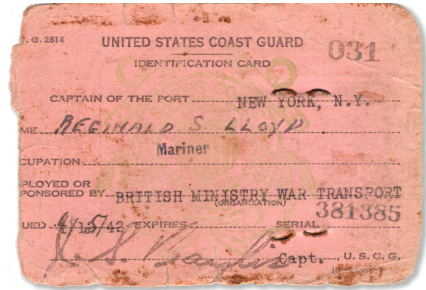
Reg Lloyd on Watch Duty, HMS Redpole, during WW2.



Watch Duty (WW2), Reg Lloyd (right) with fellow crew member, William Squire, the famous film and Shakespearean actor. William Squire performed at Stratford-upon-Avon and at the Old Vic. He replaced Richard Burton as King Arthur in Camelot at the Majestic Theatre on Broadway. One of his first film appearances was in the 1956 film, 'Alexander the Great', which starred Burton in the title role.

Addendum B

United States Coast Guard
Identification Card
For the Port of New York, U.S.



This is the pass card issued to my father when his ship HMS Queen of Bermuda docked in New York in 1942.

During this visit he had the pleasure, with two other ship mates, of spending an afternoon with the legendary former World Heavyweight Champion, Jack Dempsey, nicknamed 'The Manassa Mauler' at his Bar and Cocktail Lounge on Broadway, New York.

All photographs and memorabilia are the property of John L. Lloyd.