

My dad

From *Mandy Holland* - Art teacher- Churchfields Primary School



My dad, Geoffrey Newey, joined the Royal Navy in 1937 when he was 15. He trained on the training ship HMS Caledonia as a telegraphist using Morse code to send and receive messages. When war started dad was sent out to sea on a ship called HMS Galatea. On the 14th December 1941 they were sailing off the coast of Alexandria in Egypt when, just before midnight there was a terrible explosion, the ship had been hit by a U-boat, (German submarine) and immediately it started to sink.

My dad got himself to the deck and could see straight away what was happening. Although he wasn't wearing his lifebelt he jumped overboard and swam away from the ship quickly. Within three minutes it had disappeared under the water. The sea around him was full of fuel oil that has leaked from the ship so it was hard to swim. After some time a ship called the HMS Griffin arrived – it was looking for survivors and they took my dad and the others they could find on board and back to Alexandria. It took several weeks for him to make his way back to his home in Liverpool. His family did not know if he had survived the sinking until he arrived home. The U-boat that had sunk them, U-557 was itself damaged and sunk 2 days later by an Italian ship that had mistaken it for a British submarine. On the HMS Galatea it was believed there had been about 480 men, only around 100 of them survived. Dad later joined a ship called HMS Challenger.



Although he rarely spoke about it my dad wrote a detailed and moving account of the event and a copy of this is held in the archives of the Imperial War Museum.

After my dad left the navy he used his training there to help him become a radar engineer.



HMS Galatea, 1941