

OBITUARY

VICE ADMIRAL SIR ARCHIBALD DAY

Vice Admiral Sir Archibald DAY, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., died at Dover, Kent, England on Friday, 17th July 1970. He first went to sea in the Royal Navy on the mobilisation of the Fleet in August 1914 at the age of 15, after two years training as a cadet in H.M.S. *Conway*.

After being at sea throughout World War I, he volunteered for the hydrographic surveying specialisation in 1920. For 12 years he served in different Surveying ships of the Royal Navy, advancing through the Surveying grades until in 1932 he got his first command of H.M. Surveying Ship *Fitzroy* for operations in Home Waters, later taking H.M.S. *Ormonde* to survey in the Persian Gulf and Cyprus, where he was promoted Commander in 1934.

From 1937 he served for two years in the Hydrographic Department at the British Admiralty as Superintendent of Charts and in February 1939 commissioned a new Surveying Ship, H.M.S. *Scott*, for surveys of the East Coast of England.

In 1940, as a Captain, DAY was appointed as Chief Staff Officer to the Flag Officer in Charge at Dover, and was largely responsible for organising the withdrawal of the British Army by sea from the Dunkirk beaches. His intimate knowledge of the intricate channels through the sandbanks, and of the strong tidal streams in the Dover Strait, made DAY the ideal man to organise the vast fleet of small craft which were rapidly assembled for the evacuation from Dunkirk.

During 1943 and 1944 Captain DAY held the post of Assistant Hydrographer at the Admiralty at a time when the new Hydrographic Supplies Establishment at Taunton was printing seven million charts and chart maps annually for supply to the British and Allied Fleets engaged in the invasions of North Africa, Italy and North West Europe.

Towards the end of 1944 Captain DAY took command of H.M.S. *White Bear*, a large yacht converted into a surveying ship carrying chart production equipment. In this vessel, accompanied by a small fleet of surveying tenders, he carried out post war surveys around the Malay Peninsula and



in Indonesian ports in order that peace-time navigation could be rapidly restored.

He returned to normal peace-time surveying as Assistant Hydrographer, and later commanded the new Survey Ship *Dalrymple* in the Mediterranean.

In 1950 he took over from Vice Admiral Sir Guy WYATT as Hydrographer of the Navy, a post he held with very great distinction for five years.

Admiral DAY's period as Hydrographer will be largely remembered as one in which electronic methods of fixing the surveying vessels were introduced in the Royal Navy, superseding the laborious laying of moored beacons previously used to control offshore surveys. It was DAY who saw that the sea surveyor needed a two-range system using transportable shore stations with the master station installed onboard. The drawing of two sets of range circles rather than hyperbolae was within the capability of the surveyor at sea, whilst the transportable stations enabled the surveyor to plan the best coverage in the area to be surveyed. Collaboration between Admiral DAY and the Decca Navigator Company achieved great success in this dynamic new approach to hydrographic work.

Admiral DAY led the United Kingdom delegation at the International Hydrographic Conference of 1952, where as British Commonwealth delegate he also represented Australia and New Zealand. He served as Chairman of the Charts Committee.

Vice Admiral DAY retired in June 1955 and at once returned to active field surveying, taking charge of a small unit which he established for the survey of Lake Nyasa.

He returned to Europe in 1956 when he was appointed Co-ordinator of Operations for the International Geophysical Year, a post he occupied in Brussels for three years. His interest in promoting scientific work at sea fitted him uniquely for the I.G.Y. post and he travelled extensively around the world meeting, and co-ordinating the work of, the many scientists involved in this successful international scientific operation.

More recently he worked long and hard on a detailed and well documented history of the Hydrographic Department of the British Admiralty from 1795 to 1919, which was published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1967. This is a valuable work providing the background data for any study of British hydrographic history.

Archie DAY was an extremely charming but utterly determined man, under whose guidance the British Hydrographic Department began to make positive post-war progress. He built upon the consolidation achieved by his predecessor Admiral WYATT, who had recruited staff for a planned programme of chart modernisation which DAY was able to hasten on its way.