

Lieutenant Commander Charles Graham Tanner G.M., R.N.V.R



By Chris Ransted
2013

Lieutenant Charles Tanner's 'gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty'.

Between March and October 1942 an unexploded parachute mine, buried in the Thames foreshore at Woolwich, threatened both the Royal Arsenal as well as the ships bringing vital supplies into London's docklands. The mine's recovery and its subsequent disarmament was the responsibility of Lieutenant Charles Tanner. This proved to be a particularly tricky operation earning Tanner the George Medal.

Lieutenant Charles Graham Tanner was no stranger to the muddy banks of the River Thames. A Mine Disposal Officer with the Land Incident Section, he had learnt his trade in the late summer of 1941 while assisting Australian Lieutenant Geoffrey John 'Jack' Cliff working on three mines that had buried themselves in the soft sludge on the northern banks of the river. In fact they had come to rest dangerously close to the oil storage tanks at Thames Haven. The importance of this fuel storage area to the war effort was obvious. The mines were buried at depths of up to 16 feet, so it required some considerable engineering skills in order to extract them. This involved the building of coffer dams and bridges. The Royal Engineers helped on occasions such as these and it was a Lieutenant Lombard of 22 Bomb Disposal Company and his men of 216 BD Section who undertook the excavating and timbering at these incidents.¹

Wally Fielding, a sapper with 22 BD Company, recalled that their unit had a number of conscientious objectors that helped to recover at least one of these mines. 'It was a long hard difficult job and a wet job. When the hook of the mine [parachute shackle] was uncovered, one of the lads got a hook on just in time as the shaft filled with water. One of the members of the Non Combatant Corps was an artist who made oil paintings of the whole event but they were impounded for the duration'.²

Each of these three mines that Tanner helped work on took between a fortnight and a month to recover.

A year later Tanner found himself in charge of an operation to recover another problem mine that was buried in the Thames foreshore by the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich.

It was on the 20th March 1942 that this mine fell in the Thames off Margaret Ness without exploding.³ Its discovery was as a result of the parachute being seen on the mud at low water. The parachute was swept ashore on the 30th March and removed by the Police who handed it to the F.O.I.C. London. The site was just outside the Woolwich Arsenal's fence, and the Thames was buoyed to seaward to warn shipping to keep clear of the danger area. The sea wall where the mine lay was a steep stone embankment rising some 20 feet above the mud level.

Each day there was a period of some five hours in which the site was uncovered, with an average depth of about 10 feet of water over it every tide, running at 4 knots up and down the river. It was assumed that the mine was an active magnetic type Mk.IV unit, as these mines were being dropped at the date of fall. This mine was a potential danger to not only shipping, but also the sea wall, and the Royal Arsenal. It was therefore decided to attempt to remove it and Lieutenant Tanner was given the job.

According to the war diary of No 25 Bomb Disposal Company, Royal Engineers, on the 5 October two steam sterilizers and eight men were loaned to the navy in anticipation of sterilization work on the mine.⁴ The next day operations were commenced to locate it.

The mine had been buried for the previous six months so it became a laborious operation of probing in soft mud in which the men sank over their knees. The area the search covered consisted of about 40 square yards per day.

After 10 days the mine was finally located with the tail two feet below the surface of the mud lying at an angle, with the bomb fuze underneath. It was therefore necessary to excavate to a depth of about 9 feet to deal with the fuze.

Lieutenant Tanner, in charge of the operations, was assisted by Lieutenant Roger Ernest Peers and seamen of the Land Incident Section. All of them were fully aware that this mine was most probably in a highly dangerous state, and that when the mud was washed clear of the clock, the mine would very possibly detonate.

The mine's fuzes were actually designed as a self-destruct mechanism to stop them from being recovered. A weight inside was thrown forward on impact. This started a clock that ran for about 17 seconds before detonating the mine. However, if the fuze was immediately covered by at least 8 feet of water (or wet mud), the water pressure would stop the timer before it had fully run down. A separate pressure switch would start another clock in operation that would arm the mine so that it would become sensitive to any changes in the surrounding magnetic field as a result of a ship passing.

The weights in the fuzes also had a tendency to jam in their groove. This could be because of a speck of dirt or the jolt caused by a mine hitting something solid, as opposed to water. Any subsequent disturbance, however slight, might then cause the weight to move again and start the brief countdown to detonation. This would certainly have been in the minds of those working on the foreshore that day. Lieutenant Tanner's intension was to render the mine safe without moving it. The plan was to make an eight foot hole, sinking all the runners to their full length in the mud in the form of a coffer dam before starting excavation, jettling the boards down by water pressure. The excavation was done by an ejector-pump, but mud was deliberately left under the mine to prevent it moving and the mine was also supported on a cross strut.

As soon as the detonator pocket, which was on top, was clear Lieutenant Tanner, with the help of Able Seaman Percy Fouracre, tried to unscrew the bung. However, it was jammed in tight and the tool broke when Tanner applied his full strength. The bung had obviously swollen and was for practical purposes immovable.

Excavation went on, and the following day the area for 400 yards was evacuated and shipping diverted to the Northern shore. Lt. Peers cleared away mud from the underside of the mine to the bomb fuze in order that Tanner could operate with clean hands. Lt Tanner then attempted to render safe the mine. The procedure was to remove a small access plate and insert a gag, which looked like a small pop-rivet. This gag was a brass rod that basically had the same effect as water pressure in stopping the timer from running. This could be a fiddly job at the best of times and often the timer would start as the access plate was removed. Speed was then of the essence as the mine would detonate in a matter of seconds if the timer was allowed to run down!

On inspection Tanner found that the bomb fuze was badly corroded right down to the hydrostatic valve which he could not move in spite of pushing on it with all his strength with a screwdriver. Owing to the corrosion he could not tell if it was already down.

As the only alternative to removing the fuze was burning or steaming out the explosives with the fuze ungagged, he decided he was justified in taking the risk of actually removing it ungagged. This procedure was approved by his superiors. He therefore carefully removed the keep ring and attempted to pull the fuze out from a distance. On five occasions the cord broke as the fuze was so firmly corroded in. The only way to get a straighter pull from the fuze was to move the mine into a vertical position. First Tanner removed the magnetic primer. This was in perfect condition and in fact fell out on his face as he lay under the mine. The mine was then pulled vertical and a 2 inch block and tackle fitted to the extension ring on the fuze. On pulling this from a distance, the extension ring came off and sheared the threads on the fuze. Fortunately a steel extension fitting with adjustable jaws was available in the Land Incident Section for this contingency. The next day this tool was adjusted to fit on what remained of the jammed fuze, the 2' block and tackle secured, and at a distance 16 men manned the rope and walked slowly away. The rope tightened hard and then something appeared to snap. On returning to the mine Lt. Tanner found that the fuze had come out and he'd at last successfully rendered the mine safe.

On removal of the clock, it was found that the soluble plugs had melted but the clock had not run off. To emphasise just how dangerous the mine had been, on pressure being applied to the clock it started immediately, and the battery was in perfect condition.

This operation, which appeared almost hopeless at the beginning, lasted for five weeks. The party worked under the most filthy and dangerous conditions, and there was no chance of getting away from the mine should anything have occurred. (The fuzes, once started, ran for up to 17 seconds).

In the book 'The Danger of UXBs', Lieutenant John Setchell of No 25 BD Company, recalled that once Tanner had rendered the mine safe he was given the job of steaming the explosives from its casing. This was not without complications in so much as matches were prohibited items within the Arsenal and had to be left at the gatehouse (you'll notice that none of the men in the photographs of the recovery are smoking, which is quite unusual in these type of photos). It wasn't until Setchell had got a letter of authority from someone of a very high rank that he could go ahead and light up the paraffin burner used for making the necessary steam. This he could only do while on the foreshore

and whilst under the supervision of a security guard, who incidentally chose to supervise through binoculars from half a mile away!

The London Gazette of 16th April 1943 read: "The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the George Medal, for gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty, to: Temporary Lieutenant. Charles Graham Tanner, R.N.V.R.". Gazetted at the same time was Fouracre's award of the British Empire Medal.⁵

Tanner's luck was not to last as a year later he was killed along with Able Seaman Fouracre as a result of working on another mine.

It was soon after 1 a.m. on 22nd September 1943, that a Dornier Do 217K-1 German bomber (U5+CM of 4/KG2) crashed at Out Newton, Yorkshire.⁶ The aircraft was on a mine-laying mission from its base at Deelen in the Netherlands and was flying very low, about 50 feet, when search lights from Kilnsea and Spurn caught it⁷. As a number of searchlight beams converged on the aircraft it fired a burst of machine gun fire at them, but to no avail. The aircraft, perhaps with pilot dazzled by the searchlights, flew into the ground at a shallow angle at Threefoot Lane approximately 400 yards west of Southfield Farm. It broke up with the wreckage being spread over 250 yards from the impact point. The crew comprising of pilot Fw. Helmut Rumpff, his observer, Fw. Siegfried Vomweg, the wireless operator, Gefr. Arno Ehemann, and the gunner, Obgr. Kurt Stiegler, were all killed. They were later buried in Hull North Cemetery.⁸

Found among the wreckage were two unexploded G-type mines and Tanner, who was by then a Lieutenant-Commander, and AB Fouracre were sent to deal with them along with another RNVR officer named Lt Frank Henry Edmund Price.

Lieutenant Price was another experienced mine disposal officer. Earlier in the year he had worked on a particularly difficult mine, his seventh, in the garden of house next to an ordnance factory in Cardiff. The mine in that instance had smashed its way through some concrete slabs, split open, and buried itself eight feet down. On impact the bomb fuze had been forced inside the body of the mine and the top of it had sheared off. An official report stated that the clock, firing lever, striker, etc., together with the explosive gaine and picrics, were jammed in the pocket. The fuze was therefore set to run on the slightest vibration and there was no method of gagging it. As the fuze pocket was exposed, Price immediately pushed his thumb on to the firing lever to prevent any movement, and then carefully removed the whole fuze pocket. He had to be lifted from the hole by two assistants while he maintained pressure on the mechanism. Plaster of Paris was then mixed up and poured into the fuze pocket. Until this had set Price was unable to let go without the risk of the fuze pocket exploding. Had it done so, it would have meant certain death for Price and those around him.⁹

Now at the site of the crashed bomber at Out Newton, the men were ready to make an attempt at disarming one of the mines.

Though G-mines looked like bombs they were actually mines. They were designed to be dropped in water and had a magnetic unit in the rear designed to detect shipping. As they had no parachute they could be aimed far more effectively, into the entrances of harbours for example.

These G-mines also contained a fiendish booby-trap. Hidden beneath the rear cover were photo-electric cells. If the cover was removed in daylight the mine would explode. Tanner would have been well aware of this fact. Standard procedure was to work on these mines in subdued lighting, for example at twilight or with the bomb disposal officer and the mine covered by a sheet of tarpaulin. Other booby-traps could also be found in mines, such as a mechanical switch that would operate if a stud holding the rear cover was unscrewed. The exact circumstances are not known, but it can be assumed that this mine had a booby-trap such as this, as at around noon on 22 September the mine suddenly exploded.

The Admiralty were informed of the bad news. Tanner was dead and Fouracre and Price were seriously wounded. They were taken to nearby Withernsea Convalescent Hospital for emergency treatment but Fouracre quickly succumbed to his injuries. Though Price was badly injured he did survive and was quickly transferred to the Beverley Base Hospital, an ex-workhouse, in East Riding, Yorkshire.

The same afternoon another mine disposal expert, Lt Cdr Ernest Gidden, was flown by the RAF from London (Hendon)¹⁰ to assess the situation¹¹ and deal with the remaining mine. He found the mine was lying about 200 yards from the enormous crater where the other one had been. Tanner's driver stated that he had been sheltering in a ditch at the bottom end of the field at the time of the explosion

but confirmed that Tanner had been carrying out standard procedure. He went on to say that Tanner appeared to have no inkling of trouble when the mine suddenly detonated.¹²

The explosion was also witnessed by a number of schoolboys. They had heard about the crash and had cycled five miles to the site and were walking across the fields towards the aircraft wreckage when the mine went up. One of the boys later described how there were "lumps of earth and shrapnel flying around". They ran away at this point but returned the following day and a group of about sixteen lads managed to steal a number of items from the wreck that they had approached by sneaking along ditches. They actually found no guards were present. Perhaps they had withdrawn to safe distance due the danger from the other mine that was still sitting in the field. At least one of the boys believed he had clambered over this mine while looking for souvenirs.

Items removed by the lads included a Luger, a machine gun and a cannon, along with some ammunition! These were hidden in bushes until another return trip after dark could be made. Later they were moved to another hiding place, the 'pulley room' in Withernsea St Nicholas' church tower above the bell ringer's chamber and below the belfry. Most of the boys were in the church choir and knew that the church bells would only have been used in the event of an invasion. Later they apparently test fired the guns on the beach taking the precaution of attaching a piece of string to the triggers and pulling from a safe distance. The intension was to take the guns to the top of the church tower at night and shoot down a German raider. However, before this plan could be put into action the authorities tracked down where all this missing weaponry had gone and the boys all ended up in court.¹³

On arrival at the crash site, Lt Cdr Gidden closely examined the second mine and found that the casing had some coloured paint marks that he had not seen before. He phoned his CO, Captain Curry, and it was agreed that the mine would be X-rayed as it was likely that it contained a booby-trap. George Cross holder, Lt Cdr Armitage, was sent with an X-ray van to undertake this task. It was while waiting for this van to arrive that the schoolboys possibly managed to access the crash site. It was another three days before the X-rays were completed and it was possible to analyse their contents. As a result of these, it was possible to dismantle the second mine without incident.¹⁴

Lt Cdr Tanner's remains were laid to rest near the family home at Tilford All Saints Churchyard close to Farnham, Surrey. A plaque was fixed close to the west door to the church which stated "This Porch and Door were restored in 1948 in Memory of Charles Edward Tanner MD FRCS Beloved Physician Born 1861 Died 1934 and of his son Charles Graham Tanner GM RNVR Aged 35 Killed in Action 1943 Undefeated".¹⁵ In 2011 a memorial plaque was also put up in the chapel of Tanner's old school, Marlborough College.¹⁶

Able Seaman Fourcare was also buried close to his family home at West Buckland St Mary's Churchyard in Somerset.¹⁷

Tanner's medals, a group of 4 including his George Medal, Atlantic Star, 1939-45 Star and War Medal, sold in recent years for £4,000.¹⁸

Lieutenant Price was also later rewarded, being appointed an MBE for great bravery and steadfast devotion to duty.

¹ National Archives ADM 1/11517.

² Correspondence with Wally Fielding 10 May 1990.

³ National Archives file ADM 1/14228.

⁴ National Archives file WO 166/8429.

⁵ <http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/35985/supplements/1813>

⁶ The Blitz Then and Now Vol 3, Page 295.

⁷ Correspondence from aviation historian Dick Barton.

⁸ Broken Eagles: Luftwaffe losses over Yorkshire, 1939-1945, by Bill Norman (2001).

⁹ National Archives file ADM 1/14438.

¹⁰ Lt Gidden's unpublished memoirs provided by the Gidden family.

¹¹ National Archives file ADM 358/1790.

¹² Lt Gidden's unpublished memoirs provided by the Gidden family.

¹³ Children of the Blitz-Memories of Wartime Childhood by Robert Westall, Penguin Books, 1985 and BBC WW2 People's War website – Article ID: A4421422.

¹⁴ Lt Gidden's unpublished memoirs provided by the Gidden family.

¹⁵ <http://memorials.rmg.co.uk/Memorialc3d7->

[2.html?Cause=13&MemorialPage=10&MemorialID=M2172&Full=Print](http://www.marlburiianclub.org/document.doc?id=215)

¹⁶ www.marlburiianclub.org/document.doc?id=215

¹⁷ <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2692372/FOURACRE,%20PERCY>

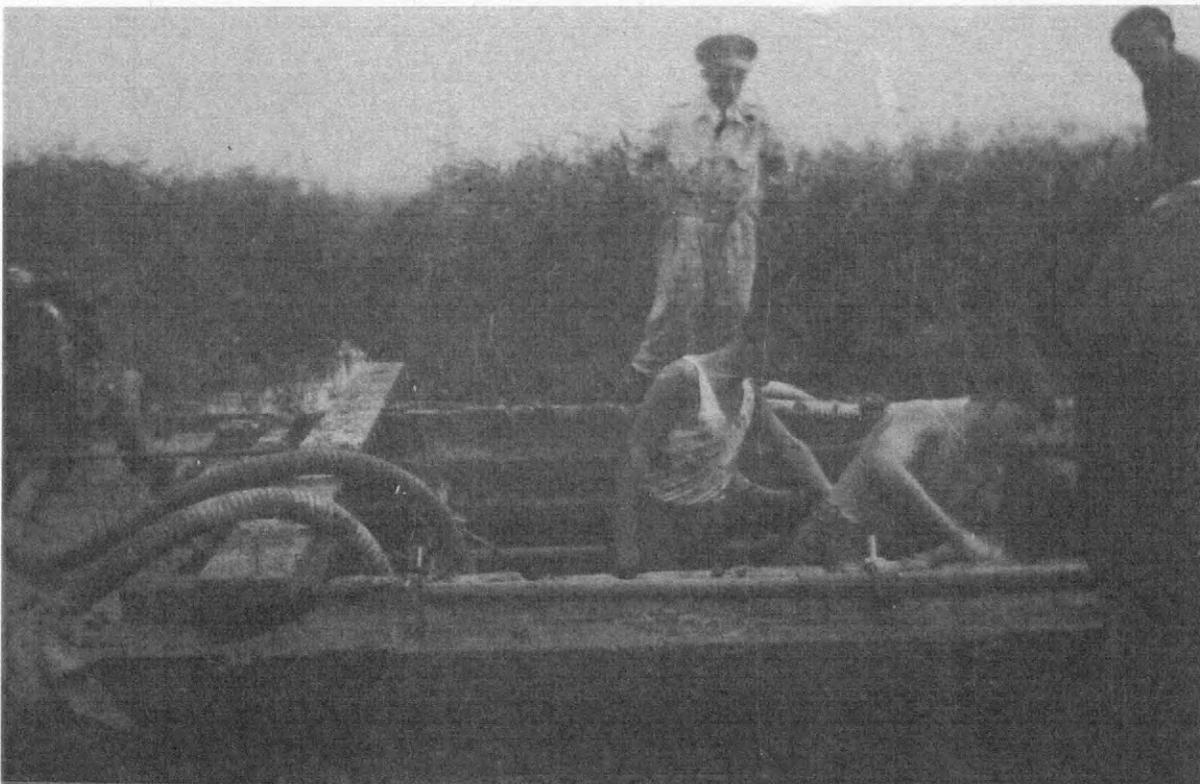
¹⁸ <http://s116009613.websitehome.co.uk/Medalnews.htm>



Lt Tanner working on a mine. Photo – Chris Gidden.



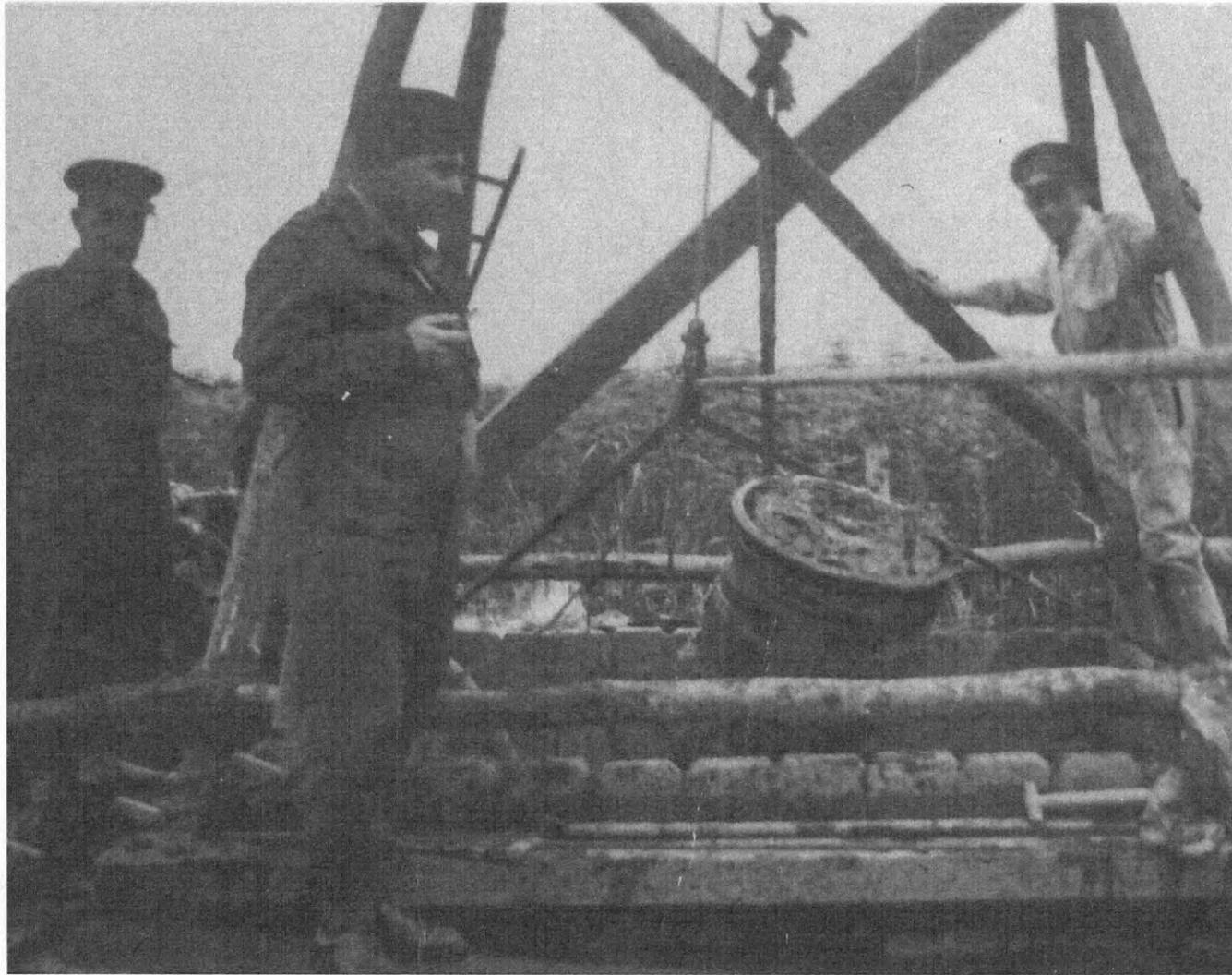
Lt Tanner received training in mine disposal from Lt Cliff at sites at Thames Haven. Lt Cliff is seen here at one of those sites directing operations. Photo – Imperial War Museum HU 58438.



Lt Tanner worked on three mines in the Thames Haven area in 1941. There was some major engineering necessary in order to reach the mines that had buried themselves in the mud. Here is one of the excavations. Tanner is the pipe smoker looking on. Photos - The National Archives - ADM 1/11517.



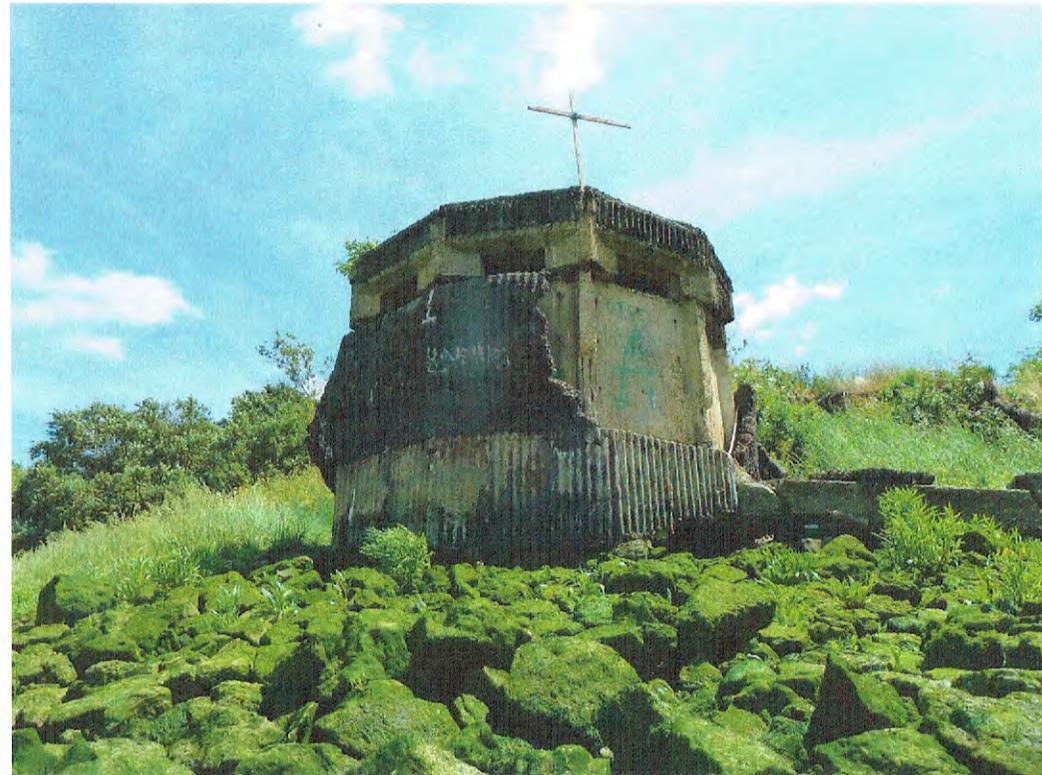
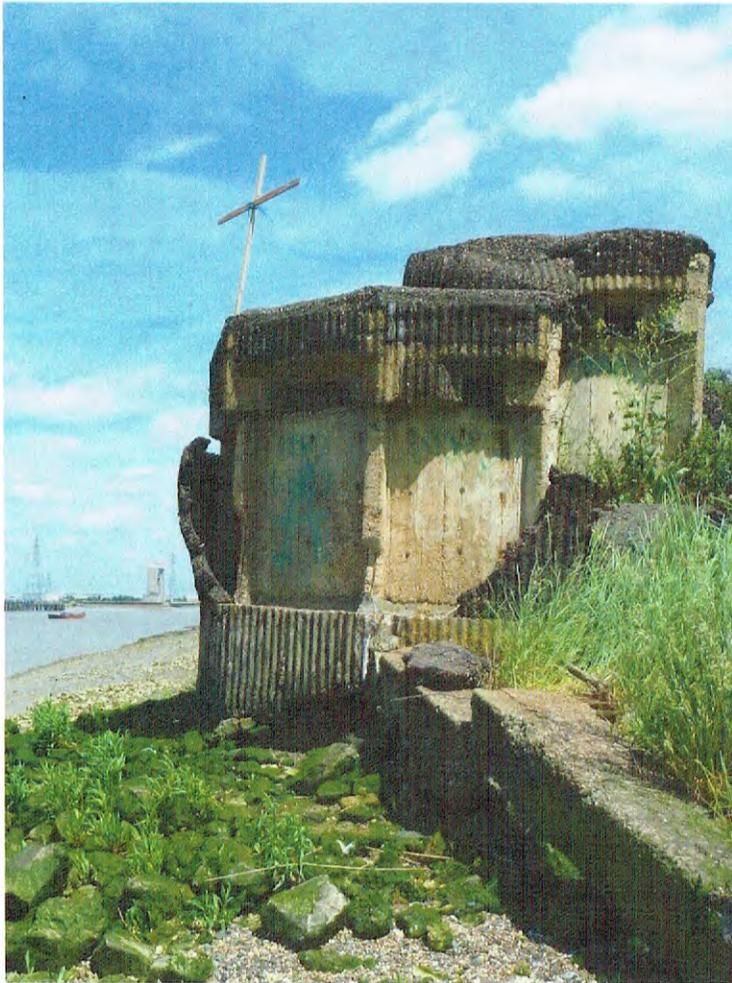
Lt Tanner working on a mine in the Thames estuary. Photo - Imperial War Museum HU 58442.



Lt Tanner (right) with officers of the Royal Engineers at the moment when one of the Thames Haven mines was finally recovered. The Navy relied on Royal Engineer Bomb Disposal companies to help with uncovering parachute mines so that they could disarm them. The army provided manpower, tools and a knowledge good engineering practices. Photos - The National Archives – ADM 1/11517.



Site of a mine disarmed by Lt Tanner in the Thames estuary. In the photo is Dick Crane and two un-named naval ratings. Note the essential mine disposal 'hammer'. Photo – Imperial War Museum HU 58443.



This mine-watcher post a little upstream still clings to the bank some 70 years after its construction, even though some of its protective layer, made of what appears to be a soft tarmacadam like substance, is gradually peeling off. This particular post, one of many, was positioned close to the entrance to the Royal Albert and King George V docks. A huge amount of traffic used the river to transport in vital supplies and mines were obviously considered a serious threat. From this vantage point any seen to drop could be plotted and then dealt with before any harm was done. The Barking Creek flood gate close to the site of the mine recovery is just visible in the background. Photos – Chris Ransted.



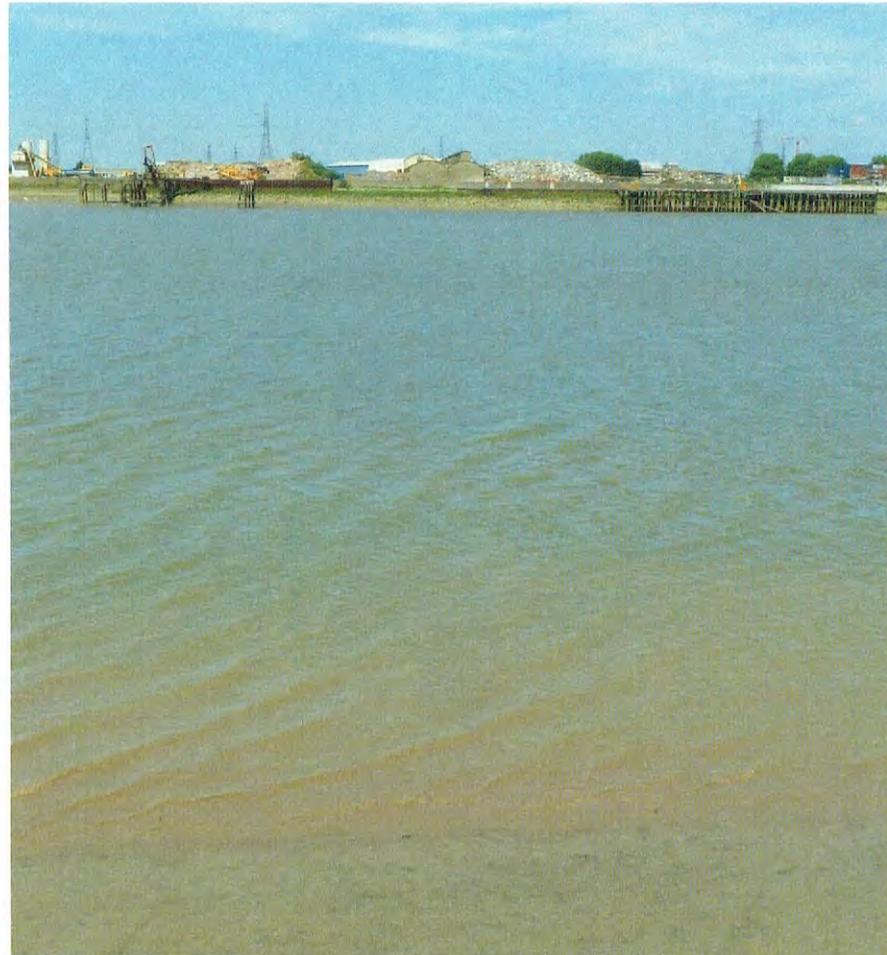
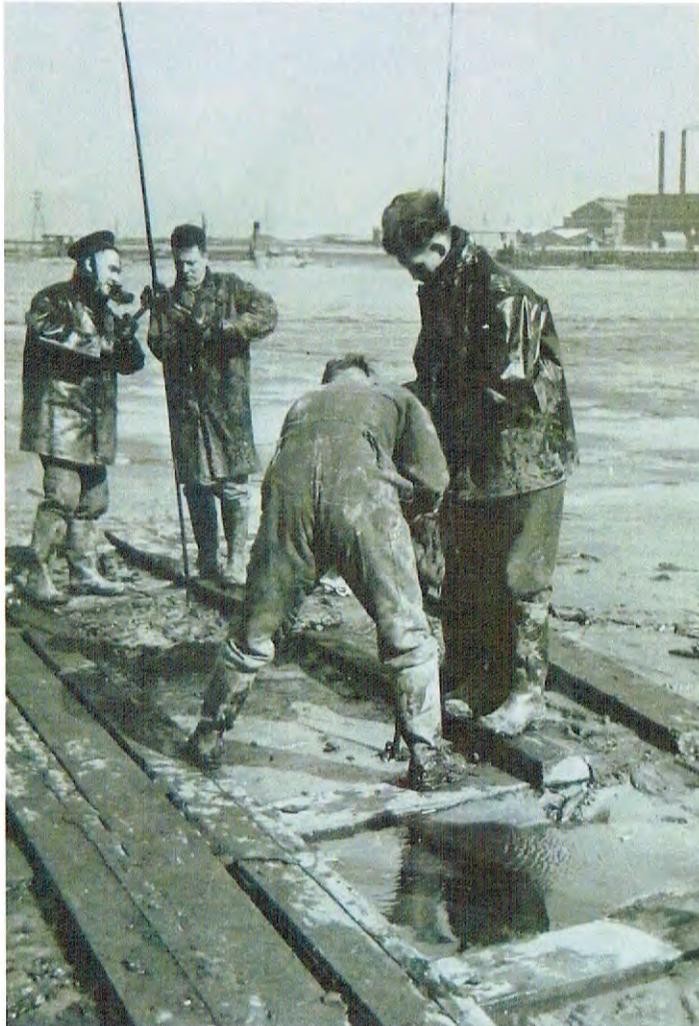
This pillbox opposite Barking Creek still stands. The mine recovery operation would have been clearly seen by its wartime occupants. However, with the re-landscaping of riverbank downstream from this point, the site of the mine is now just out of view, being a short distance beyond the curve of the extended portion of the banking in the photo. The spot is roughly where the new riverside path now runs. Incidentally, Barking Creek was another location where a mine was worked on. That mine was disarmed by Lt Cdr John Miller assisted by AB Stephen Tuckwell. They were subsequently both awarded the George Cross for their efforts. Photo – Chris Ransted.



The lower part of the photo shows the old line of the river bank as it was in 1945. Photo – Google Earth.



Probing for the mine in the soft mud. The old timber yard in the background was on the edge of the River Roding in a part known as Barking Creek. The large flood gate now marks the river's exit into the Thames. Note - the large pylon has been relocated since the war. Photos - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245 and Chris Ransted.



More prodding to locate the mine. If the mine had a malfunctioning fuze, then the slightest tap on the casing might cause it to detonate. The jetty in the background is one of the few surviving wartime era features from this part of the river. Photos - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245 and Chris Ransted.



The building on the bank behind was built well before the turn of the century as a gun powder magazine as part of the Royal Arsenal. It has now gone and the banking has been extended out over the spot where the mine was located. Photo - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245.



In order to get to where the mine was buried it was necessary to build a walkway out across the soft mud. The long building in the background (top left) was Sherry's wood yard. It has been patched up over the years and is one of the few wartime era buildings in the area to survive. Rather ironically it now belongs to McGrath's, a company involved in the demolition business. The large pylon that was once behind it has been relocated in front and the original replaced by two smaller ones. Because the banking has been extended, the spot where the mine was located is now somewhere under the river bank close to where the lower photo was taken. Photos - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245 and Chris Ransted.



Lieutenant Roger Peers assisted Lieutenant Tanner with the Woolwich mine. Peers is seen here (far left) with a group of mine disposal officers at the Greenwich College. Centre is George Cross holder Lt Harold Newgass wearing his distinctive monocle. The mine disposal officers were a close knit group and the sharing of information and experiences between them was crucial to their survival. One man with plenty of experience is seen far right. He was an American, Lt Draper Kauffman. He could not get in the US Navy due to poor eye sight, so instead joined the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps resulting in him being captured by the Germans in France. He escaped to the UK where he joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve and was employed working on numerous unexploded bombs and mines. In November 1941 he reapplied to join the US Navy and this time, due to his wealth of experience in bomb disposal, he was accepted. In fact he was immediately sent to Pearl Harbour after the attack to deal with a 500lb Japanese bomb. Photo – Imperial War Museum HU 58461.



Author stands in for Roger Peers in 2013.



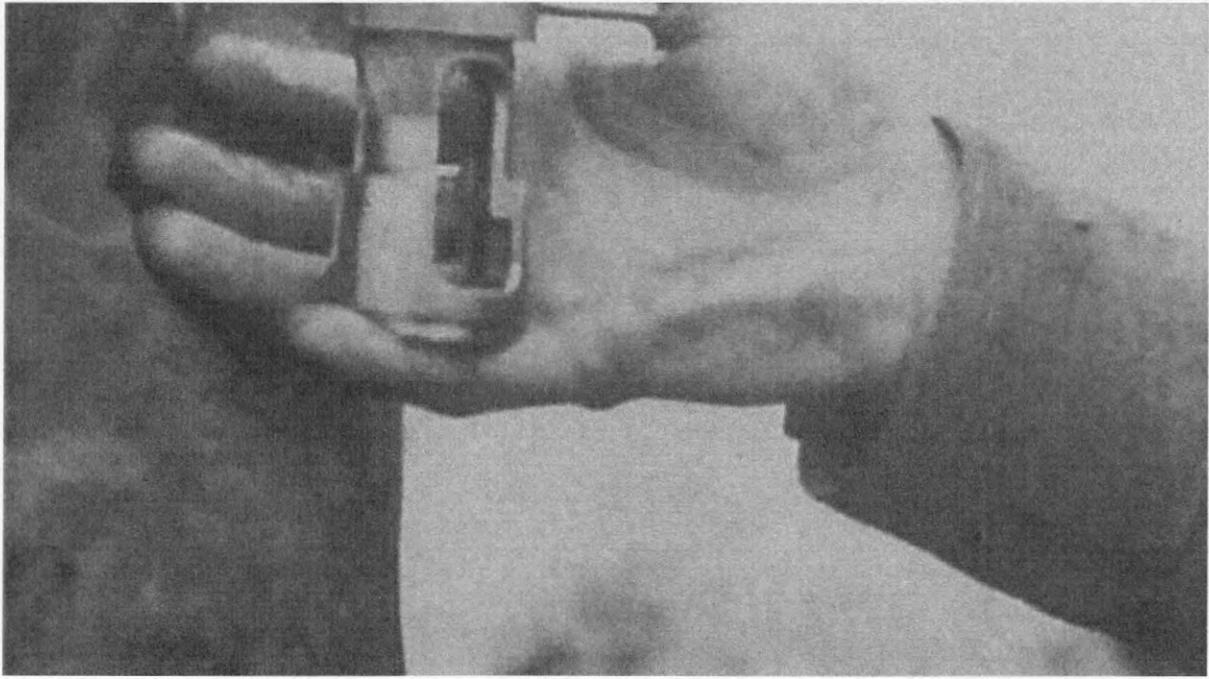
Lt Roger Peers looking into the water filled hole with ratings looking on.



Lt Charles Tanner, left, getting his hands dirty a long with an un-named rating (possibly AB Percy Fouracre?). Photos - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245.



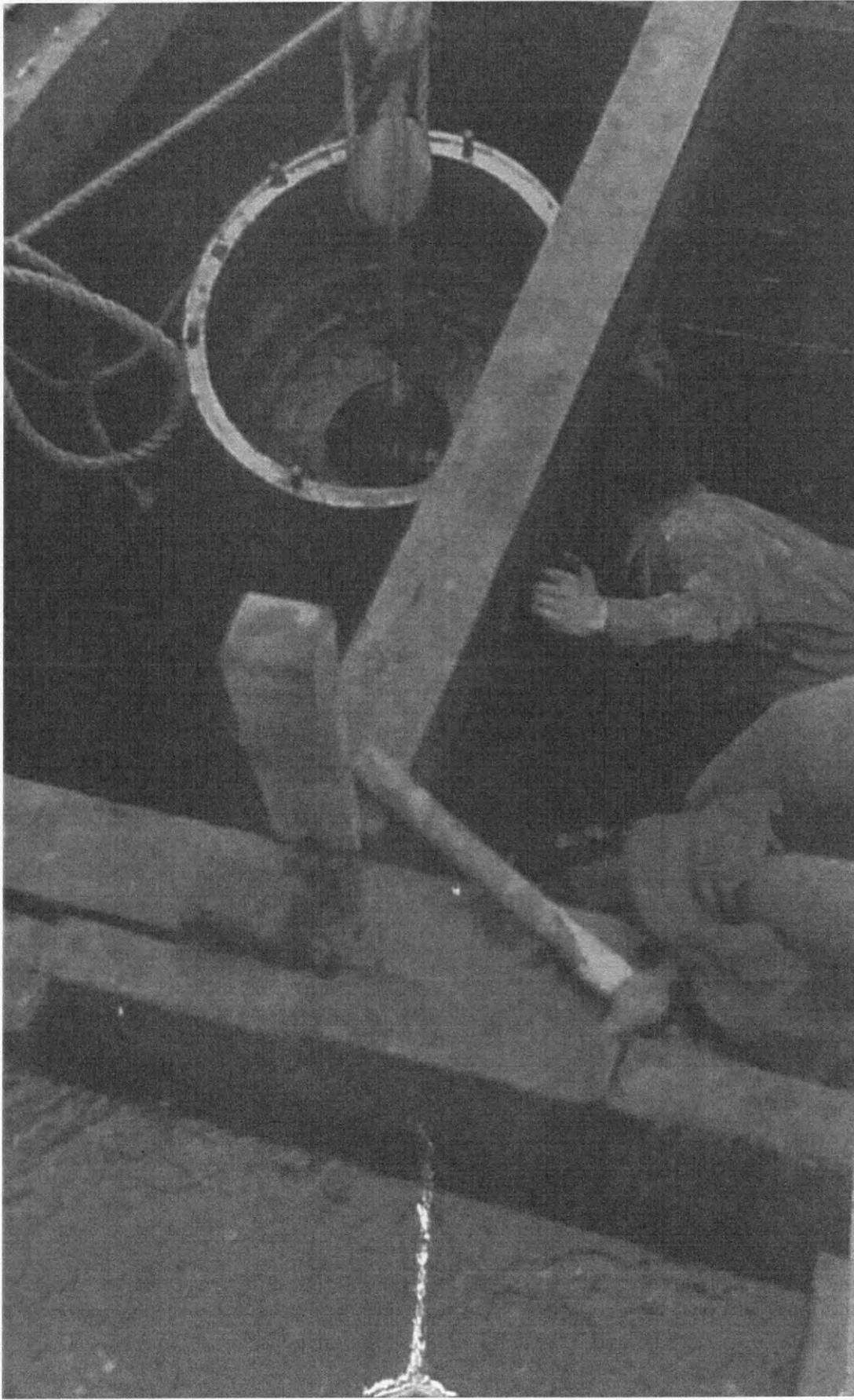
Join the Navy and see the world! – Some joined the Navy because they thought they would be sailing the seven seas, with visions of exotic far off locations with palm trees and dusky maidens - not ending up in a muddy hole in Woolwich with an unexploded mine! Not a pleasant working environment. Bottom photo - Lt Tanner (left) and Lt Peers. Photos - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245



The gadget that got the fuze out. Photo – The National Archives – ADM 1/16245.



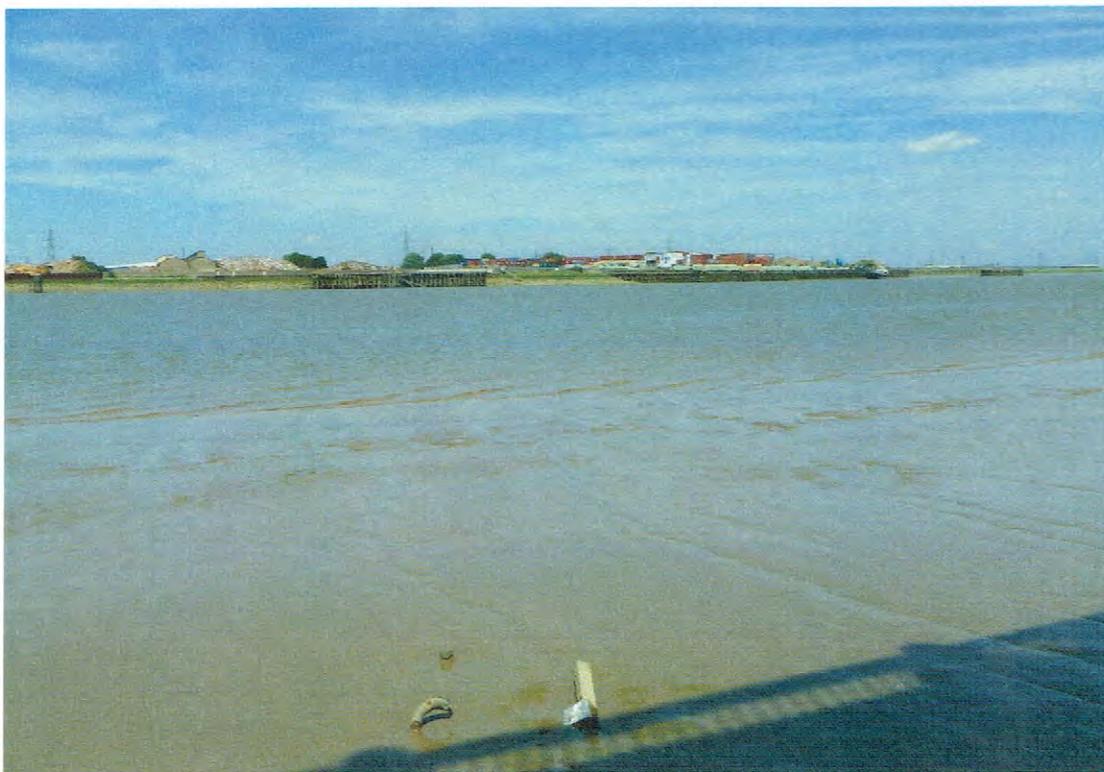
Getting a line on the mine. Photo - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245.



Preparing to lift the mine. Photo – The National Archives – ADM 1/16245.



Preparing to lift the mine from its muddy hole. In the background is the Creekmouth Power Station. Opened in 1925, it produced power until its closure in 1981. Most of the buildings have since been demolished and part of the empty site is now the home of the weekend Dagenham Market. Photos - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245 and Chris Ransted.



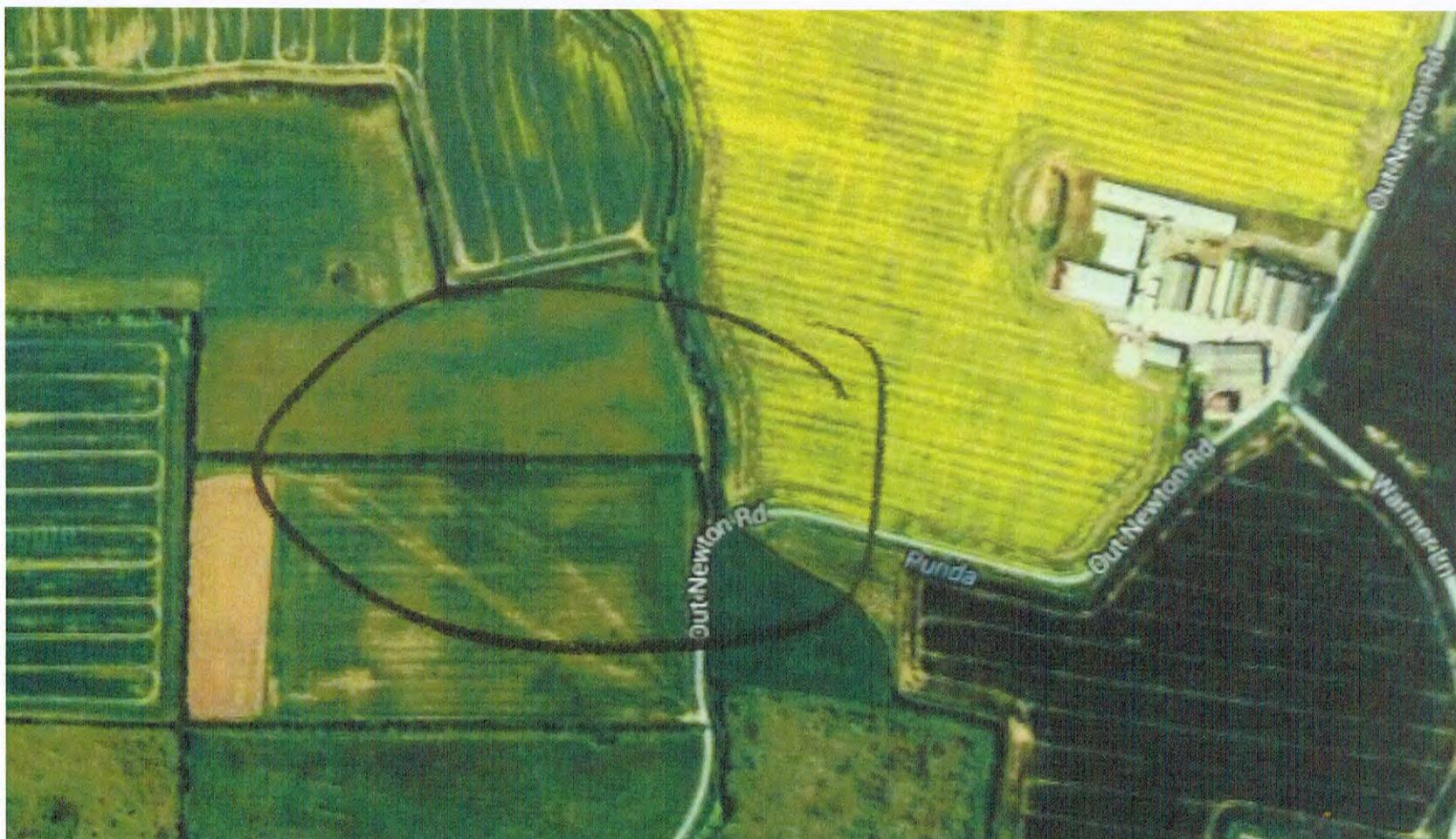
Mine nearly out. The mud is now home to nothing more lethal than rusty shopping trolleys and the odd stolen moped. Photos - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245 and Chris Ransted.



On dry land at last - Photo - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245



The large narrow gauge railway system within the Royal Arsenal site was utilized to move the hefty mine. The riverbank has been extended out into the river since the war and the original line of the railway is now in a fenced off area to the left of the lower photo. This was the closest comparison shot possible. Photos - The National Archives - ADM 1/16245 and Chris Ransted.



The bomber crashed about 400 yards west of Southfields Farm, Out Newton, scattering parts over a wide area. The second mine is thought to have come to rest somewhere around the middle of the hedge that runs east to west (circled above). On arrival at the scene, Lt Cdr Gidden found the crater from the mine that killed Tanner and Fouracre some 200 yards from the second mine. Despite having studied satellite photos, and individuals having walked the fields searching, no obvious sign of the crater is visible today. The 'crater shaped' pond seen in the top left portion of the image can be ruled out as it can be found on pre-war maps. Farm land is precious, especially so in the war years, so the crater would most likely have been filled in soon after the event. Photo - Google Maps



The Dornier smashed into the ground, scattering pieces of aircraft, the bodies of the four crew, and two unexploded mines across this farmland. In the distance are the buildings of Southfield Farm. In fact another Dornier crash-landed near this spot earlier the same year but remained pretty much intact. The crew of that bomber subsequently set fire to it and all walked away. They were captured by a solitary member of the Home Guard who happened to live at Southfield farm. They were taken to the farm and given a cup of tea. Photo – Paul Johnson.



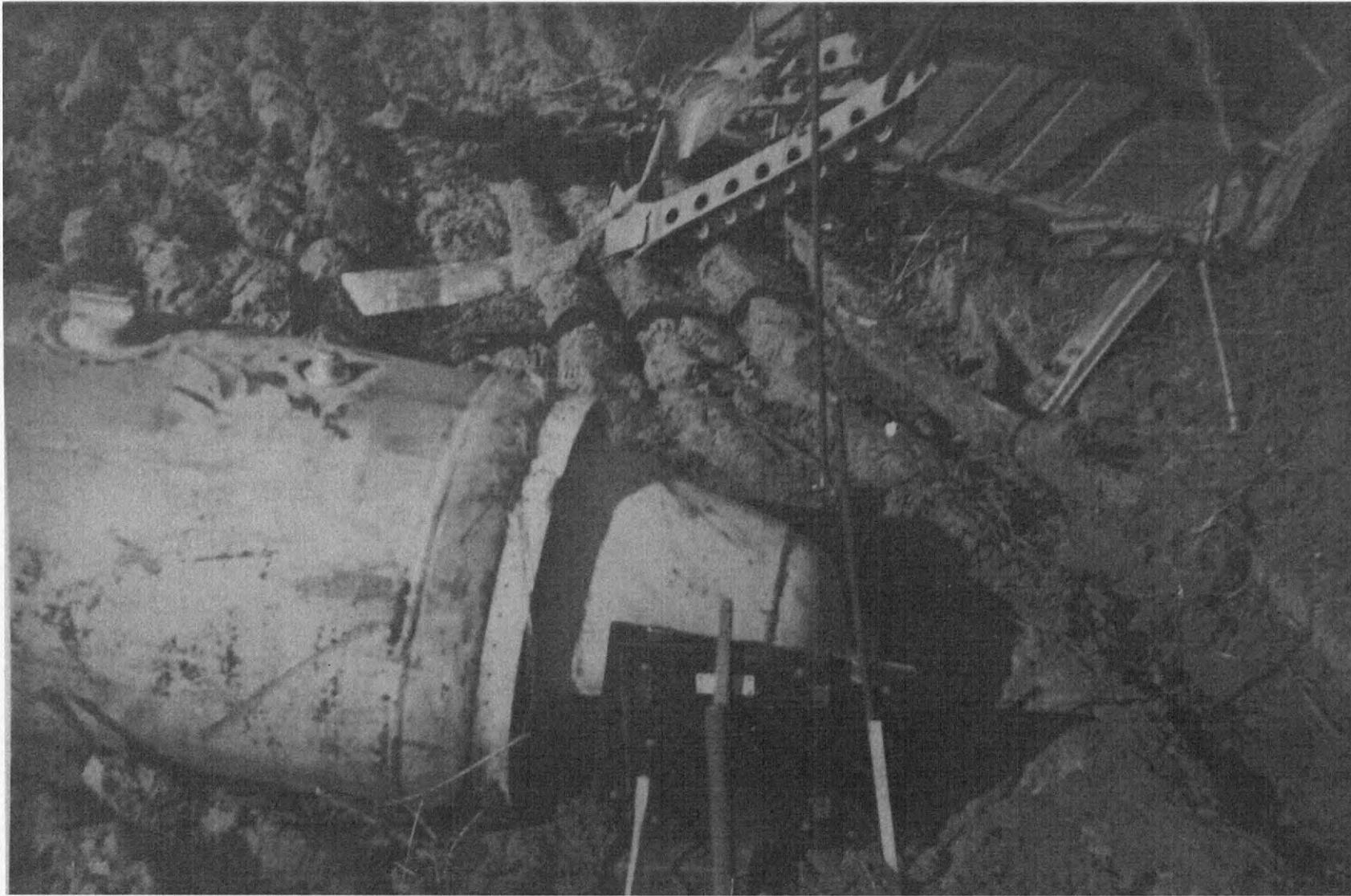
When the mine Tanner was working on exploded pieces of aircraft would have been thrown in all directions. Seventy years later, crumpled ally at the crash site bears witness to the tragic events of the past. Photo – Paul Johnson.



After Tanner and Fouracre had been killed. Lt Gidden was sent up to Withernsea to render safe the remaining mine (seen here). Looking at the camera is Australian, Lt Hadlow. Photo – Chris Gidden.



Without some good points of reference in the background it is quite difficult to match photos in rural areas. However, this is thought to be close to the spot on the same hedgerow where the second mine was worked on. Photo – Paul Johnson.



Second mine with its lifting lug and fuze extension cap visible on top. Photo – Chris Gidden.

Prefix	Handed In	Charge	 POST OFFICE GOVERNMENT TELEGRAM	Counter No.
Office of and Service Instructions O. H. M. S. ADMIRALTY,	Chargeable words A	Actual words 34		I certify that this telegram is sent on the service of the ADMIRALTY, LONDON
Signed Jw Kemp			Muller	

The Name and Address of the Sender, if to be telegraphed, must be written at the end of the Telegram

TO { **PRIORITY C.C. MRS. M. L. TANNER FRIARS WAY
TILFORD - SURREY**

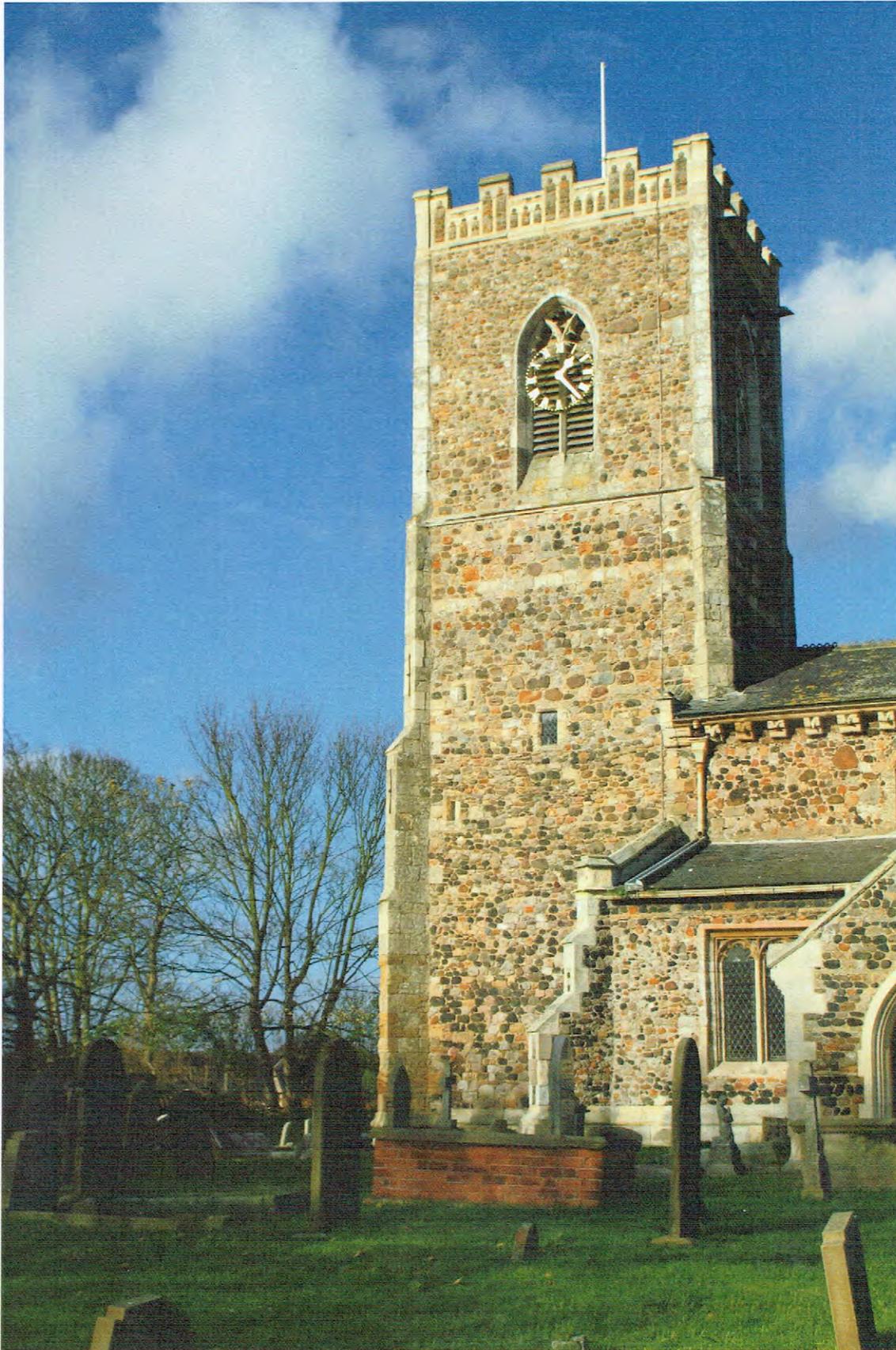
**FROM ADMIRALTY DEEPLY REGRET TO
INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON ACTING
LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER C. G. TANNER
G. M. R. N. V. R. HAS BEEN KILLED ON
ACTIVE SERVICE**

**Tel Clerk
CW(C)**

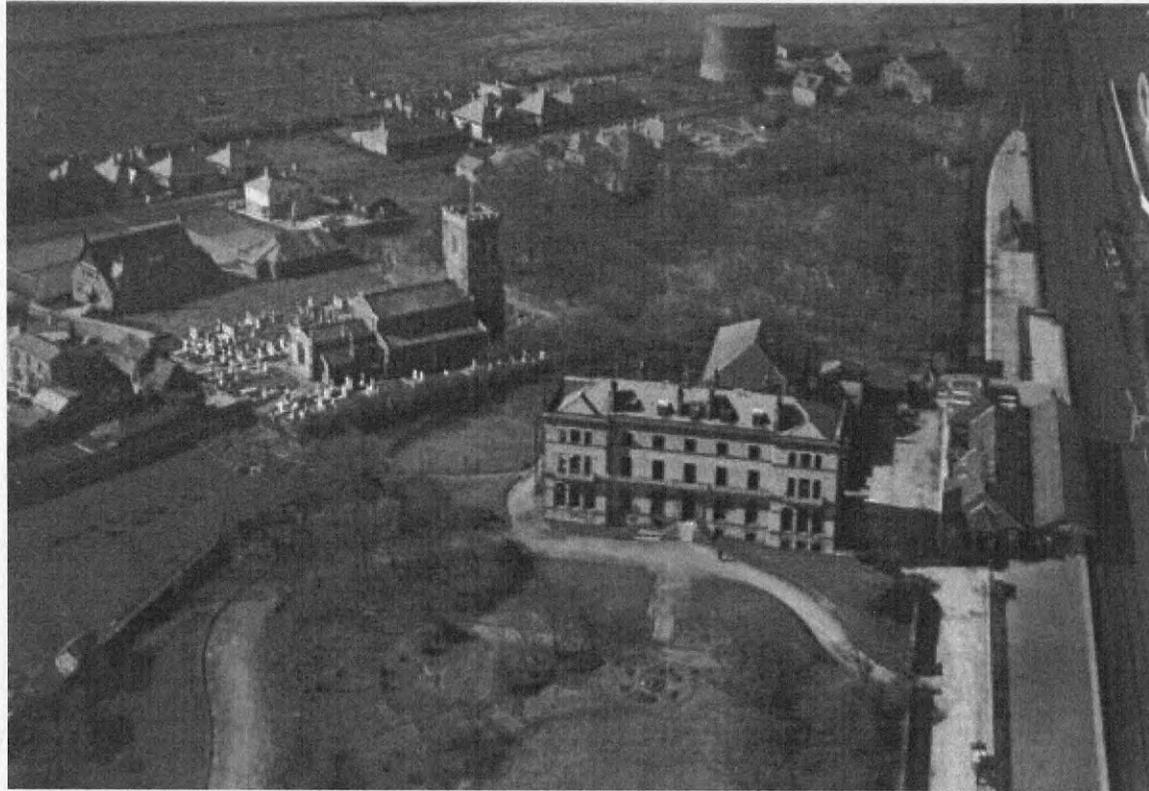
Name and Address of Sender (FOR REFERENCE ONLY) {

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The telegram that every mother dreads. Photo – The National Archives ADM 358/1790



A machine gun and cannon from the Dornier were taken from the wreckage by teenage members of the choir of St Nicholas Church, Withernsea. The guns were subsequently hidden in the church tower until the authorities tracked them down a couple of weeks later. Photo – Paul Johnson.



Pre-war photo of Withernsea Convalescent home and St Nicholas Church. Photo – www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/EPW012684 Copyright English Heritage



The old Withernsea Convalescent Home where the casualties were taken (seen here just before the War) has been knocked down and a modern hospital built on the site. Note the church tower next door where the guns taken from the wreckage were hidden. Photo – author's collection.



The outer wall from the original hospital still survives. Seen here by the main entrance. Photo – Paul Johnson.



Charles Tanner's final resting place in the churchyard at All Saints Church, Tilford, Surrey.
Photos Chris Ransted.



Percy Fouracre's grave at West Buckland's St Mary's Churchyard. Photo – Steve Fouracre.