

Tower Hill Memorial

Commemorates men and women of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who died in both World Wars and who have no known grave. It stands on the south side of the garden of Trinity Square, London, close to The Tower of London.

Surgeon Emanuel Unger (Ungr) panel 30

born 5.11.1887 Tábor died at sea 11.08.1943

From 1908 to 1914 he studied at the medical faculty of Charles University, Prague graduating in 1915.

World War 1

He then entered military service as a doctor in the No.2 Tyrolean Land Rifle Regiment and, with his unit, served on the Russian and Italian battlefields. In 1916 he was reassigned as a ship's doctor with the rank of lieutenant and worked on various vessels of the Imperial Navy. Unger was promoted to the rank of captain in August 1917 and from then until March 13, 1918 worked in the surgical clinic of Professor Eiselberg in Vienna.

Inter-war service

After the war he started his own practice but resumed military service in January 1921 as captain of the medical service and head of the surgical department at the reserve hospital in Plzeň. From there he moved on to serve in Komárno from (1923-6) then transferred Bánská Bystrica (1927-1933) before serving as chief of staff of 42nd Infantry Regiment in Terezín until 1935 when he became commander of the invalid hospital in Hořice v Podkrkonoší. Following the Nazi occupation he was dismissed from the army on May 31, 1939.

World War 2

Unger left Czechoslovakia on November 14, 1939 via the Balkan route and he joined the Czechoslovak Army in Agde, France from where he reached England. From February 5, 1941 he served as a ship's doctor for the Merchant Navy; according to records he served on both the SS Clan Forbes and SS Clan Macarthur, which was a refrigerated cargo steamship.

In June 1943 Clan Macarthur left Glasgow bound for Mauritius and its main port, Port Louis, with 5,500 tons of military stores, ammunition, and mail. Emanuel Unger was the ship's surgeon. Originally, the Clan Macarthur was part of Convoy S 31 that left Liverpool on 20 June and reached Freetown, Sierra Leone on 4 July. From here she continued to South Africa and joined Convoy DN 55 at Durban. They left there on 6 August and sailed on into the Indian Ocean on 9 August.

It was reported that Clan Macarthur started to be tracked by a German submarine, U-181, from noon on 11 August. The ship tried to avoid them by taking a zigzag course at full speed, but at 03:32 on 12 August the submarine managed to hit her port side with two torpedoes. The first blew her twin propellers off and caused all the lights to go out. The second split her foredeck. Most of the crew were below decks in their quarters and became trapped.

At 03:47 U-181 hit her with a third torpedo just as the crew who could reach boat stations were lowering her lifeboats. It hit in front of the bridge causing the bow to go nose down and the stern to rise up. As she sank at 03:55 there was a large underwater explosion, which swamped several lifeboats and slightly damaged U-181. 50 crew members, one gunner and one passenger were lost. The Germans questioned the survivors before they left the area. The master, 84 crew members, 15 gunners and five passengers were picked up by Free French ship, the Savorgnan de Brazza, and landed at Port Louis, Mauritius.

Three survivors and three of the dead were honoured for their conduct. This included ship's surgeon Emanuel Unger (Ungr) who was posthumously awarded the Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea. He had refused to evacuate and assisted crew in rescue operations until the last moment. He was also awarded the King's Commendation Medal for Brave Conduct which acknowledges brave acts by both civilians and members of the armed services in both war and peace, for gallantry not in the presence of an enemy. He was also awarded the Czechoslovak War Cross 1939.

Paul (Pavel) Deymel panel 33

born Prague 15.06.1895 died at sea 12.1.1942

World War 1

In 1915 Deymel was drafted as a one-year volunteer in the Austro-Hungarian army. After basic training, he was sent to Russia and later Italian battlefields, where in 1916 at Asiago he suffered severe injuries. Following his release from hospital,

Inter-war service

During the early post war years, he graduated from the medical faculty of the German University in Prague as a gynaecologist and surgeon.

World War 2

After the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939 Deymel left for Italy crossing into France where he enlisted to the Czechoslovak Army. He served in the 2nd and 1st Infantry regiments and the reserve. After the defeat of France, he was evacuated aboard the Viceroy of India and landed in Liverpool on July 7 1940. Deymel is on the list of troops that arrived in Cholmondeley as first lieutenant in the medical section but was discharged from the Czechoslovak Army for medical reasons.

In March 1941 he joined Alfred Holt and Company as a ship's doctor for the cargo steamship SS Cyclops which on 12 April joined Convoy OB-209 bound for South Africa and then on to Aden. After this Cyclops sailed to the Far East, Western Australia and New Zealand. The return route across the Pacific and through the Panama Canal aimed for Halifax, Nova Scotia with the intention of joining an eastbound convoy to Liverpool.

At 01.49 on 12 January 1942 the unescorted Cyclops was hit by a torpedo from a German U-boat, U-123, 125 miles south east of Cape Sable, Nova Scotia. The order was given to abandon ship as she could not be saved. Deymel went with the chief steward to do a final check even as the ship was sinking. A second torpedo was fired 29 minutes after the first attack hitting Cyclops' port side exactly where Deymel and the chief steward were standing; both were killed instantly and within five minutes the ship had sunk. The captain, 55 crew members, six gunners and 31 passengers were picked up by HMCS Red Deer and landed at Halifax.

For a fuller account see posts dated 24 & 27 March 2021

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