

LORD MOUNTEVANS

EVANS OF THE BROKE

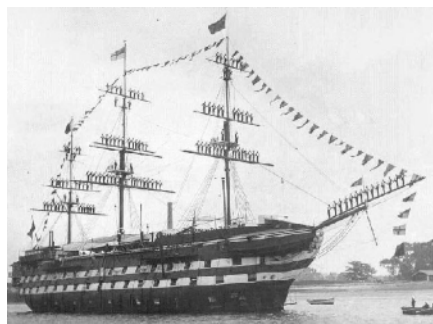
By Tony Maskell OW 49-51

[My comments in blue, OW Colin Thurlow 62-65](#)

Possibly the most famous of all Old Worcester's was Edward Ratcliffe Garth Russell Evans who became a Full Admiral just before WWII. [Link HERE](#)

He wrote his auto-biography in 1946, living in Norway, where he died and is buried.

I have just finished reading his biography, which incidentally had to be recovered from the archives of Newcastle University at my request. a couple or so observations.



He was on the Worcester from 1895 to 1896; under Captain Sir David Wilson-

Barker RNR, along with his term mates Air Chief Marshall

Sir Frederick Bowhill RAF and Air Vice Marshall Tom Ince Webb-Bowen RAF, and latterly; Lieutenant James Gerald Doorly RNR – he ended up as a Pilot in Melbourne.



He swam across the Thames one night to Purfleet, but never made Cadet Captain, though his friend Doorly did and won the Gold Medal. He won 5 golden Guineas for the best essay on a naval subject, He was an advocate for a Convoy system even in 1896.

As we all know he went with Scott to the Antarctic, firstly on the Morning the relief ship for the Discovery. He was an Acting Sub-Lieutenant RN for the National Antarctic Relief Expedition, but was made the 2/O on the Morning captained by Colbeck, and Doorly on his recommendation, was the 3/O. He did two trips on the Morning, restocking at Christchurch in New Zealand, where he married Hilda Russell his first wife, who sadly died on the way to the UK onboard ship.



Returning to the RN he became a "dagger N" and on the 1909 Scott's last Expedition, which he gave up his attempt to raise sponsors for a trip himself, he was put in as 2nd in command to Scott and in command of the Terra Nova. In 1910 he very nearly dies of scurvy, and was only saved by one of this team of three making a 35 mile march through blizzards to a store base, where fortunately the Surgeon Lieutenant Aitkinson with two dogs teams just happened to be. He was invalided back to UK, but after recovering went back to New Zealand and command of the Terra Nova.

On his way back from New Zealand he went to the USA and Canada, this being 1912 to 1913. But he then had to take up his slot in the RN and 1914 was given command of HMS Mohawk on the Dover Patrol. Some of



the Destroyers were capable of 37 knots which ran out of Dover, in those days the early part of the "great War" warships hulls were painted black. He had a succession of commands in the Dover Patrol, culminating in the one for which he was famous, HMS Broke. The actual engagement was with HMS Swift who started the action but the HMS Broke torpedoed one amidships and at 27 knots rammed the German destroyer G42. [Link HERE](#) [and HERE](#) [and HERE](#)



After the 1918 armistice, he was sent by the Admiralty as the Senior Naval Officer Ostend, to clear and salvage the coastline of Belgium of booby-traps and mines and sunken ships.

He married his second wife Elsa Andvord who came from Oslo, who he said he fell in love with after 7 seconds, in 1916, she came across the North Sea for the Wedding, they had two boys.

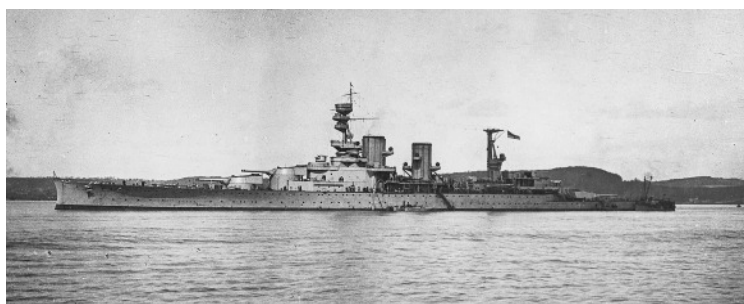


He was sent to the China Station as Captain of the HMS Carlisle they were dispatched to save lives of passengers on the Hong Moh, and in severe storm conditions he personally swam to the ship with a rope, the ship had run aground on rocks and was breaking up and save a great number of Chinese passengers. [Link HERE](#)

In 1923 he was appointed to command the Auxiliary Patrol, really the Northern Fishery Protection Service, with a fleet of 18 small vessels, 2 sloops, 7 minesweepers and a number of trawler gun boats.

In 1926 after 20 years in small ships he was ap-

pointed the Captain of the Battle Cruiser HMS Repulse.



In 1928 he was promoted to Rear Admiral, and the following year became the C-in-C of the Australia Squadron, he arrived in Syd-

ney with a wife two boys and a Norwegian governess, and his RN retinue, to fly his "flag" on HMS Australia; for some reason in his book he refers to Koala's as Australian Tree Bears! [Link HERE](#)



In 1932 promotion to Vice Admiral, and the C-in-C of the Africa Station, based in Cape Town. for 2 1/2 years. During this time he was also the High Commissioner for the Protectorates of Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland. It was here that he took the executive decision to send armed sailors and marine 200 miles inland to prevent what could have been a serious disturbance.

Apparently, a scotch settler who lived in Bechuanaland had a local native lady living with him, and a local lad (dark) made approaches to this lady, and got beaten up by Mr Macintosh. The local Bechuanaland Chief, Tscheke-

di Khama, had this Scotchman brought in front of a native court which ordered him to be flogged in public. Which was done, the said gentleman collapsed. The arrival of Marines and Sailors quietened things down, The Chieftain went down to apologise to the Admiral, the outcry in the Media, was basically set up by London Missionary Society; The British Government

thanked him for his action at the time. [Interestingly, the Chief's nephew, Seretse Khama, married a white woman from Britain in 1948. Link HERE](#)

In 1936 He became the C-in-C The Nore as a full Admiral and also voted in as the Rector of Aberdeen University, twice again in 1939.

In 1939 as he puts it "His Majesty" commands him to be one of two Regional Commanders for the 740 sq. miles of London, setting up the Civil Defence force.

However he was sent in 1940 to Norway, as the Germans were invading, to contact King Haakon VII, going by air to Stockholm the road or rail to where the King was as well as his Cabinet. He went back the way he came, though dressed as a agriculture worker to get across the Swedish border, then flying to Perth.

After he got back he was utilized as Lord Beaverbrook's "Mr Fix it" in setting up protection for all the aircraft and parts factories in the UK which came under Beaverbrook's can do attitude. In 1941 he was heavily involved in the saving, rescue, of London and Liverpool during the bad raids in 1941 and 1942.

He retired with his wife to Norway where he wrote his memoirs, his two boys served in the RN and the RNVR, and his wife predeceased him, they both buried in Norway.

He was always supremely fit, and thought nothing of walking 50 miles in a day, and fifty miles back if needs be.

The two arrears that have always bothered me, were the little I could uncover about the Bechuanaland episode, and why he wasn't used in a Naval capacity in WWII, after all he was only 60 years old then.

Tony Maskell

**"Evans of Broke"
Dies in Norway**

OSLO, August 21.— Admiral Lord Mountevans ("Evans of the Broke), British naval hero of the first world war and Antarctic explorer, died yesterday while holidaying in his cottage at Golea in the mountains of Central Norway.

Admiral Evans, who was 75, was in the centre of one of the most famous British naval actions of the 1914-18 war. He commanded the destroyer Broke, which, accompanied by only one other destroyer, the Swift, launched a full-blooded attack on six German destroyers in 1917. Two of the German warships were sunk, one of them rammed by the Broke. Frenzied Germans from the rammed destroyer jumped on to the Broke's deck, and Admiral Evans, then a commander, gave an order believed to be unique in 20th century British naval history: "Prepare to receive boarders." This action won him promotion to captain and the nickname "Evans of the Broke."

Admiral Evans, the son of a Welsh barrister and an Irish mother, was already famous as an Antarctic explorer when the first world war started. He was second in command of Scott's ill-fated Antarctic expedition from 1909-13 and, with two companions, was sent back to their ship, the Terra Nova, after the expedition had split in two because supplies ran short. Scott and his party, who pressed on, perished. But Evans and his men survived after an almost superhuman overland trip of 900 miles to the Terra Nova, during which Evans was stricken with scurvy.