

GENAWAY, JOHN HENRY

RANK: QUARTERMASTER SERGEANT

DECORATIONS: BEM

YEARS OF SERVICE: 1943-1963

SHIPS:

OPERATIONAL SERVICE: WWII, LANDING CRAFT, NUCLEAR TEST SITE CHRISTMAS ISLAND

UNITS:

Served 1943 – 1963. Born Torquay, father RN. Joined Feb 1943 HO Squadron 272. Trained for sea service, gunnery training, though eventually landing craft specialist. Naval Party 2512 for Op GRAPPLE, UK nuclear tests based on Christmas Island in Pacific. Journey out via Fiji, setting up on the island.

(Whilst the base was on this island, the tests actually took place over Malden Island in 1957/58. Some 4k personnel were involved).

Limited fresh water supplies, building the airfield, facilities and accommodation. All incoming supplies and equipment were offloaded from freighters into landing craft - and a few DUKWs –(*amphibious trucks*) and taken ashore – the landing craft fleet controlled by Genaway, for which he subsequently was awarded the BEM. Assembling the “weapon” as it was called. Witnessing the explosion. Recreation on the island – one film a week. Aerial spray of DDT affect on health. His stay there was 14 months.

Returning to his RM service before GRAPPLE, towards the end of the War, he served in RENOWN (as Admiral’s orderly) and was part of the Pacific Fleet, spending some time in Trincomalee, Ceylon. Bombarding Japanese held islands. HMS NEWCASTLE, S Africa, (Nov 45), back to UK, then LC training. HMS ILLUSTRIOUS, Commando course at Bickleigh.

After the Corps, time in industry. Health issues, medical discharge.