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NO TIME EMBARGO

31st JULY 2019

FURTHER UPDATE 23rd AUGUST 2019

THE YANGTZE INCIDENT 31ST JULY 1949

The 31st July was the 70th Anniversary of the escape of H.M.S. Amethyst from Chinese Communist Incarceration. Will justice finally prevail and the 1949 crew of H.M.S. Concord finally receive their Yangtze Clasp for entering the Yangtze on the night of the 30th July 1949 to meet H.M.S. Amethyst and escort her to safety past the massive guns of the Woosung Forts. At the time of her escape Premier Attlee gave orders to Sir Ralph Stevenson to signal the C in Cs ashore and afloat on the Far East Station along with all Far East Embassies that H.M.S. Concord had entered the Yangtze River to escort Amethyst to safety was to be suppressed WHY ??? Premier Attlee having backed the Nationalists (including giving them two warships) was deeply concerned about future Trade with Communist China to such a degree that he was even planning to hand

Hong Kong back to China had Mao demanded it. (I wonder what the present Residents of Hong Kong would think about that).

The lies continued to be perpetrated. We were informed that when the 1949 Medals Committee met in late 1949 they would have considered Concord along with all the other four ships involved. THEY COULDN'T HAVE AS CONCORD'S INVOLVEMENT HAD BEEN EXPUNGED AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT.

In 1996 evidence of Concord's true involvement began to emerge. The rumours continued and in 2009 I went to the Records Office at Kew to review the 1949 July Log of H.M.S. Concord only to be informed that it had been removed by the M.O.D. which turned out to be Mr R.J. Spear Secretary Medals and Awards at Whale Island but it would be recovered and be available in two weeks it wasn't and only when I threatened to make the matter public and implement T.F.O.I Act was it returned. I learned that Spear was continuing to deny that Concord had entered the Yangtze a lie he continued to compound for several years until proof was produced and he had to acknowledge it but further compounded his lies by stating Concord was still not entitled because she wasn't in a war zone and had not been fired on. The whole of the Yangtze river was in a war zone. What did he think the Communists and the Nationalists were firing at each other tennis balls !!!.

By far the worst culprit in manifesting the lies was Hett the Navigating Officer of Amethyst what a disgraceful culpable liar he proved to be. (When Amethyst after her escape moored alongside Concord. Hett was asked by John Roe 1st Lieutenant of Concord what he would like to eat. Hett replied a steak which was forthcoming.) I know what the 1949 crew would like to do to Hett now with that steak) Prior to 2009 Concord Associations founder wrote to Hett raising the question of Concord's involvement. In the last paragraph Hett stated that Concord had met Amethyst in the South China Sea a lie he continued to perpetrate(I have that letter).

Until finally proof was produced that Concord had indeed entered the Yangtze on the night of the 30th July on the orders of the C in C Admiral Brind and on the morning of the 31st July having sailed 57 miles up the Yangtze met Amethyst and escorted her to safety.

Move forward to 2012 and Premier Cameron under pressure from various sources institutes and Awards Committee under Sir John

Holmes a former Diplomat to review Bomber Command, the Arctic Convoys and H.M.S. Concord. I wrote to Sir John Holmes in June 2012 setting out all the facts including the proof that Concord had entered the Yangtze sped 57 miles up river met Amethyst and escorted her to safety passed the Woosung Forts which, for whatever reason did not open fire. Maybe there was a sea mist which hid the ships, The Nationalists had spiked the guns before departing or was it simply that the Communists wanted shot of Amethyst without their further involvement perhaps we shall never know.

He finally wrote back six months later in January 2013 and he stated that although Concord was technically entitled to the Yangtze Clasp the Committee would not be recommending it. What the Hell ! If they were entitled to it technically then it should have been awarded. What you may ask prevented this. It was history repeating itself. A few weeks later Premier Cameron was off to China to negotiate further Trade Deals. Now we know why he didn't want the Clasp awarded.

Perhaps the last word should be given to the late Don Redman, Chairman of the Amethyst Association who along with members of the 1949 crew attended our 2000 Reunion in Bridlington (with the exception of Hett I couldn't guarantee his safety). Don said " I could never understand why your 1949 crew never received the clasp, you entered the Yangtze at the risk of your own lives and ship knowing full well that if the forts opened fire some of you would be killed or wounded and the ship damaged."

POSTSCRIPT

We now know that under strong pressure Premier Cameron was forced to implement an Awards Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir John Holmes a former Diplomat who was probably well used to cover ups !.

Brian Izzard the author of the Yangtze Showdown produces the true story of the Yangtze Incident. In his book he quotes from my correspondence with Sir John Holmes and his reply. Apparently Sir John was not well pleased. I wonder why ?. Had Cameron knowing that he would be visiting China to institute Trade Talks made it clear to Sir John that although the Concord Crew were entitled to the Yangtze

Clasp they were not to receive it. Having been presented with irrefutable facts that Concord had been in a war zone and had been at risk and rigour he must have been in a quandary so in the end he had to admit in his words that although the Concord Crew were technically entitled to the Yangtze Clasp his Committee would not be awarding it. Come, Come Sir John they were entitled to it and you knew it. Had Cameron's instructions been complied with ?. Yes I think they were. What a disgraceful man you are Sir John. Do you ever sleep at night ?.

PRESS RELEASE ENDS

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FOOTNOTE:

If your paper has the courage to print this please ask your Readers if they feel the 1949 Concord Crew should receive the Yangtze Clasp for their untold bravery to write to the Prime Minister or their MP and tell them so.