

Leading Writer Walter Ashworth Pilkington

Born 10 May 1919 in Wadebridge to James and Evelyn Pilkington (nee Gill) who married in June 1918.

Mother - Evelyn Pilkington (nee Gill) of St Tudy. Evelyn was born in in Plymouth in 1899. By 1901 Evelyn was living in Trelill and in 1911 was living in St Kew Highway. She probably moved to St Tudy sometime after 1911.

Father - James Walter Pilkington. James was born in Chorley, Lancashire in 1893. James died in WWI Serbia in September 1918.

After her husband's death Evelyn Pilkington re-married a Hooper and had another son, Derek Hooper, who was born in September 1924. The Hoopers continued to live in St Tudy.

Leading Writer Walter Pilkington was lost at Sea 17 September 1939. He is remembered on the village War Memorial and also on the Plymouth Royal Navy War Memorial on the Hoe where his name can be found on Panel 35, Column 1. He was serving aboard **HMS COURAGEOUS**, an aircraft carrier during the opening stages of WWII. **COURAGEOUS** had been built as a Cruiser but was converted to become an aircraft carrier in the mid 1920s.

HMS COURAGEOUS was sent to her war station, at Portland Dorset, on 31 August 1939 - three days before war broke out, where she embarked two squadrons of Fairey Swordfish aircraft. She departed harbour on the day war broke out for an anti-submarine patrol in the Western Approaches, escorted by four destroyers. On the evening of 17 September



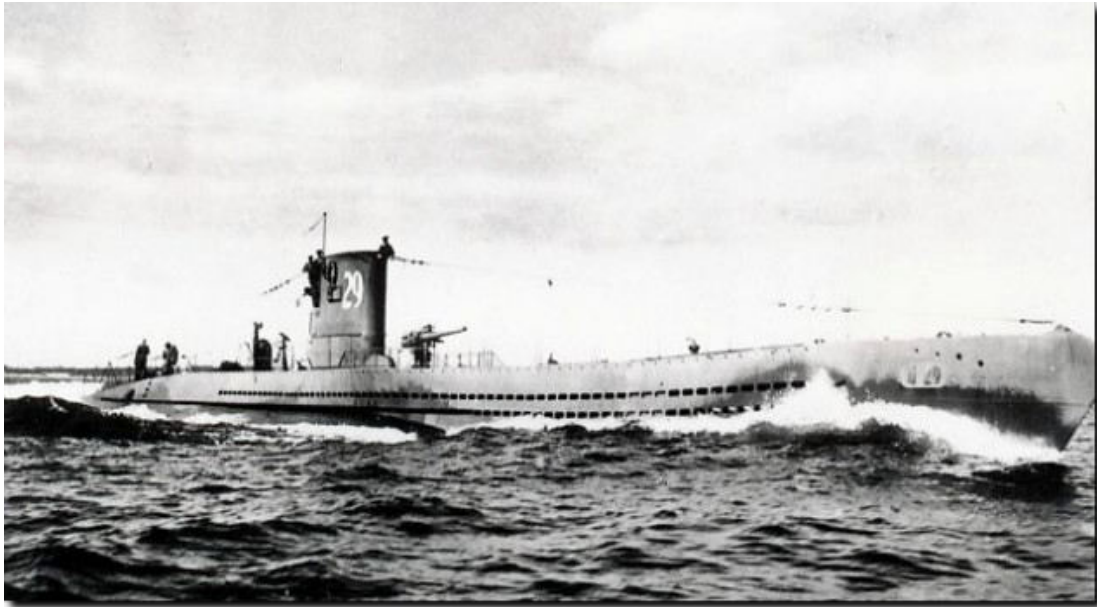
two of her four destroyer escort had been despatched to assist merchant ships under attack and all her aircraft had returned from patrols.

REPORT ON THE ATTACK & SINKING

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| Name | HMS Courageous (50) |
| Type: | Aircraft Carrier |
| Tonnage | 22,500 tons |
| Completed | 1916 - Sir W.G. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co Ltd, Newcastle-upon-Tyne |
| Date of attack | 17 Sep 1939 |
| Fate | Sunk by U-29 (Commanding Officer: Kapitan Lieutenant Otto Schuhart) |
| Complement | 1259 officers and men (518 dead and 741 survivors). |
| Route | Plymouth (16 Sep) - patrol area |

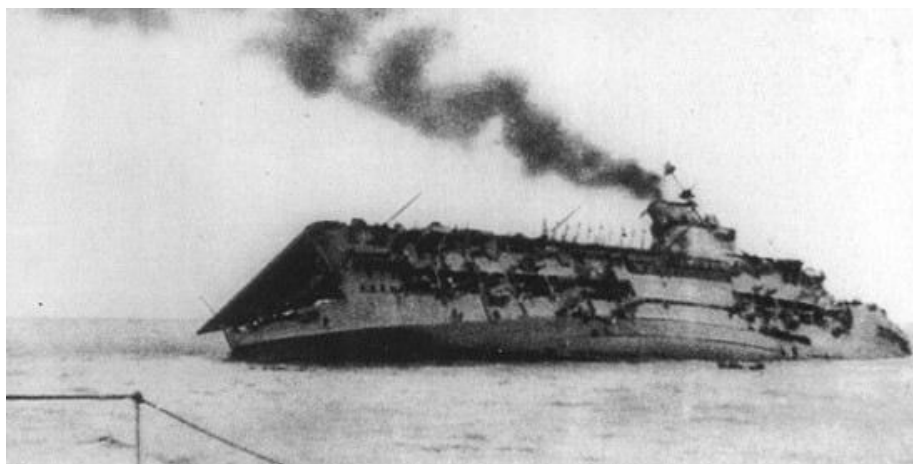
On 17 Sep 1939, HMS COURAGEOUS (Capt W.T. Makeig-Jones, RN) was on anti-submarine patrol about 350 miles west of Lands End, escorted by HMS ENGLEFIELD (Capt A.G. Talbot, RN), HMS IVANHOE (Cdr B. Jones, RN), HMS IMPULSIVE (LtCdr W.S. Thomas, RN) and HMS INTREPID (Cdr J.W. Josselyn, RN). At 14.45 hours, the group picked up a distress call from MS KAFIRISTAN being attacked by U-53 (Heinicke) about 350 miles west of Cape Clear. The destroyers HMS Inglefield (D 02) and HMS Intrepid (D 10) were detached and the carrier launched four Swordfish aircraft, one of them forced the U-boat to dive without damaging it at 17.00 hours. About 18.00 hours, U-29 spotted the carrier group and began chasing it, but had no chance to get into a favorable attack position until the carrier turned into the wind to recover the four Swordfish returning from the search for U-53. She was now heading on a straight course at 18 knots towards the U-boat which attacked only five minutes after the last aircraft landed. At 19.50 hours, U-29 fired a spread of three G7e torpedoes at HMS Courageous (50) and hit her with two of them on the port side abaft the bridge. She almost immediately took a heavy list to port and sank after 17 minutes about 190 miles southwest of Dursey Head, Ireland.

The Commanding Officer - Capt W.T. Makeig-Jones, Royal Navy, reportedly last seen on the bridge, saluting the White Ensign, was lost along with 17 officers and 501 ratings, including 36 RAF service crewmen. All Swordfish aircraft of 811 and 822 Sqdn FAA were lost with the ship. Leading Writer Walter Pilkington's Action Station was probably below deck, so at the time of the attack he would have had little chance to escape



U-29

HMS Ivanhoe (D 16) attacked U-29 with depth charges and **HMS Impulsive** began to rescue the survivors and was soon joined by the American steam merchant **Collingsworth** the British steam merchant **Dido** and the Dutch steam passenger ship **Veendam**, which launched 14 lifeboats and also saved the ship's log. The rescue work proved difficult due to the heavily oiled sea. Further help arrived when **HMS Kempenfelt** (Capt C. Caslon, RN) and **HMS Echo** (Cdr S.H.K. Spurgeon, RAN) joined **HMS Ivanhoe (D 16)** in the submarine hunt together with the returned **HMS Intrepid (D 10)**, but the U-boat escaped during the night. Also, the two light cruisers **HMS Caradoc** (Capt E.W. Longley-Cook, RN) and **HMS**



Ceres (Capt E.G. Abbott, AM, RN) arrived at the scene together with **HMS Kelly** (Capt L.F.A.V.N. Mountbatten, RN), but the cruisers were soon ordered

away. **Dido** had picked up 23 officers and 195 ratings and was escorted to Liverpool by **HMS Intrepid (D 10)**. The survivors rescued by the neutral merchants were transferred to **HMS Inglefield (D 02)** and **HMS Kelly (F 01)** and arrived at Devonport on the evening of 18 September.

After this loss and the unsuccessful attack of U-39 on HMS Ark Royal only three days earlier, carriers were withdrawn from anti submarine patrols.