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SERVED UNDER TWELVE ADMIRALS

Over 25 years ago young John Johns, of Looe, Cornwall, had to make two attempts before he was successful in joining the Navy, but he had good reasons for wishing to make the sea his career.

His father served in the Royal Navy, one grandfather served in the Merchant Service and the other in the Royal Marines, and his father in-law was a fisherman.

"What chance had I of remaining a landlubber with such an ancestry? he said.

Today, Warrant Mechanician John Johns, R.N., is Chief Engineer of H.M.S. KITTIWAKE, a ship with a record of some thousands of miles wartime steaming to her credit and with millions of tons of shipping safely escorted through E-boat alley.

"My father joined the Navy as a boy and served for 29 years," said Warrant Mech. Johns. "There was always a friendly rivalry between us, because he was an Upper Deck man, and I belonged to the 'Black Squad'."

Warrant Mech. Johns has never regretted that he forsook the plough for the shovel 25 years ago, and if he had his time over again he would "join the Navy tomorrow."

"But, mind you," he added, "I plump for the modern Navy every time. I had five coal-burning ships - I did a full commission on two of them - and that's when stokers 'sweated drops of blood', especially in the tropics. Today you can keep boiler-rooms and engine-rooms spotless, and you need more brains than brawn to be a First-class Stoker in every sense of the term".

Warrant Mech. Johns claims that he has served under no less than twelve Admirals in different ships.

"I was in H.M.S. HOOD under Admiral Sir Roger Keys and Admiral Sir Walter Cowan. In the cruiser H.M.S. SOUTHAMPTON I served under Admirals Richmond and Clinton Baker. I returned to the Hood when Vice Admiral Fuller was in command. I then served in H.M.S. Delhi on the west Indies station with Admiral Haggard on board. In the Queen Elizabeth I served under two Admirals and a Rear-Admiral, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound and Rear-Admiral St. Leger Moor. Later I was on the Royal Oak with Admiral Ramsey in command. In my last ship H.M.S. Illustrious I served under Vice Admiral St. George Lyster and Rear Admiral Dennis Boyd."

H.M.S. Kittiwake is adopted by Pentypool.