

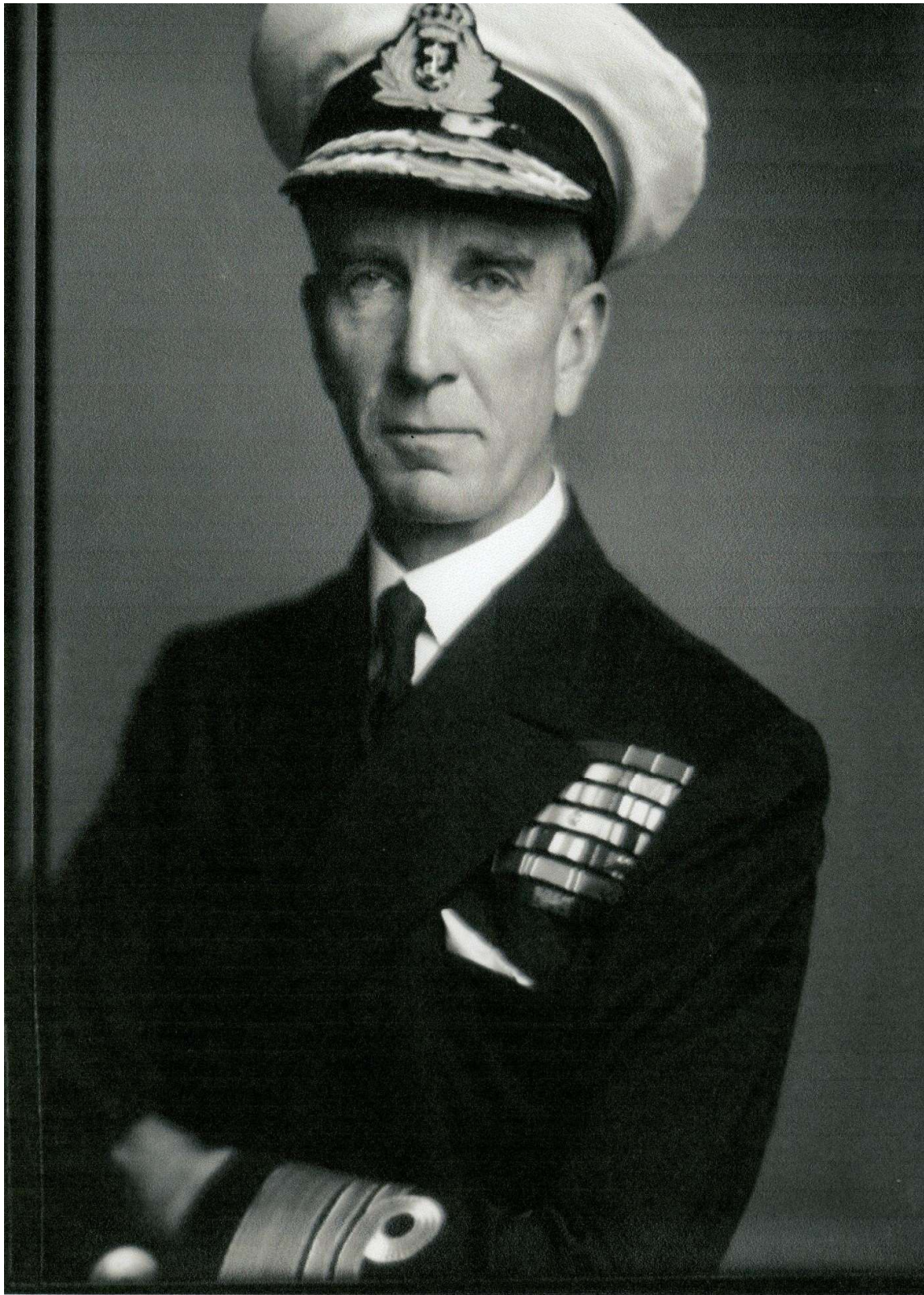
D-Day - 6th June 1944

Admiral Sir William Tennant

Bill Tennant and his wife Kitty were family friends who used to come and stay with my Grandmother, Mrs. S. G. Maudslay, at West Shinness Lodge between 1927 and 1959.

In June 1944 Bill was placed in charge of the naval side of the transport, assembly and setup of the two Mulberry Harbours that provided port facilities for the coming invasion of Normandy. For his efforts in the success of the Normandy invasion, he was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire by King George VI, and also received the United States Legion of Merit.

Annette Parrott



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Admiral Sir William Tennant KCB CBE MVO



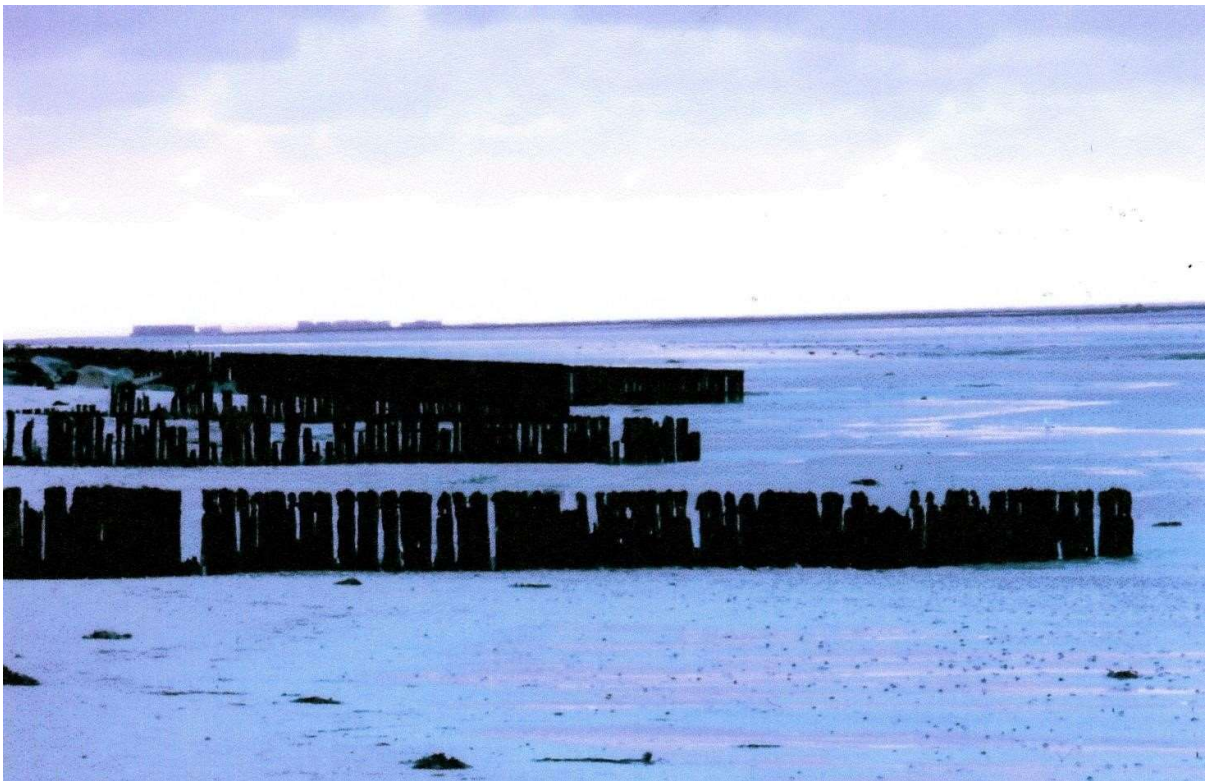


Admiral Sir William Tennant
Admiral Commanding the Mulberry Harbours

Normandy Beaches



Remnants of Mulberry Harbour on the horizon





William Tennant (Royal Navy officer)

Admiral **Sir William George Tennant** KCB CBE MVO DL (2 January 1890 – 26 July 1963) was a British naval officer. He was lauded for overseeing the successful evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940. Tennant subsequently served as captain of the battlecruiser *HMS Repulse*, when she searched for German capital ships in the Atlantic. He remained in this capacity when the *Repulse* was sunk by the Japanese along with *HMS Prince of Wales* in the South China Sea on 10 December 1941, three days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He later aided in the setup of the *Mulberry* harbours and the *Pluto* pipelines, a crucial part of the success of *Operation Overlord*. He died in 1963.

Biography

Born in *Upton-upon-Severn* and educated at nearby *Hanley Castle Grammar School*, Tennant joined the Royal Navy in 1905 at the age of 15, as a naval cadet at *Britannia Royal Naval College*.^[2] He was eventually appointed an acting sub-lieutenant, being confirmed in that rank on 15 December 1909,^[3] and was promoted to lieutenant on 30 June 1912,^[4] eventually specialising in navigation in 1913.^[2]

During the First World War, Tennant first served aboard the destroyers *Lizard* and *Ferret* as part of the *Harwich Force* until 1916, then aboard the cruisers *Chatham* and *Nottingham*, as part of the *Grand Fleet* in 1916, surviving the sinking of the latter during the action of 19 August 1916. He then returned to the *Harwich Force* to serve aboard the cruiser *Concord* until 1919.^[2]

Sir

William Tennant



Vice Admiral Tennant visiting
HMS Colossus, May 1945

Birth name	William George Tennant
Nickname(s)	"Dunkirk Joe" ^[1]
Born	2 January 1890 <div>Upton-upon-Severn, Worcestershire, England</div>
Died	26 July 1963 (aged 73) <div>Worcester, Worcestershire, England</div>
Allegiance	 United Kingdom

Tennant was promoted to lieutenant-commander 30 June 1920,^[5] and served as Navigating Officer aboard the battlecruiser *Renown* during the royal tour to India and Japan by Edward, Prince of Wales, between September 1921 and June 1922.^{[2][6]} He then served as an instructor at HMS *Dryad*, the navigation school at Portsmouth, before returning to sea in late 1924 to serve as navigating officer of the *Repulse* for another tour by the Prince of Wales the following year, this time to Africa and South America.^{[2][6]} For his services Tennant was made a Member of the Royal Victorian Order (Fourth Class) by King George V in November 1925.^[7]


Tennant was promoted to commander on 31 December 1925,^[8] and spent the next two years posted to the Admiralty, serving in the Operations Division. He served as Executive Officer of the cruiser *Sussex* in the Mediterranean from March 1929, then on the staff of the Royal Naval Staff College at Greenwich from December 1930.^[6] He was promoted to captain on 31 December 1932.^[9]

From May 1935 he served as commanding officer of the cruiser *Arethusa* as part of the 3rd Cruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean, then from July 1937 was an instructor at the Imperial Defence College, London.^{[2][6]} In August 1939 he was appointed Chief Staff Officer to the First Sea Lord.^[6]

Second World War

Dunkirk Evacuation

On 26 May 1940 Tennant was appointed Senior Naval Officer ashore at *Dunkirk*, and ordered to Dover, where he took command of a naval party of eight officers and 160 men.^[10] Tennant's party was dispatched on board the destroyer *Wolfhound* to aid in the evacuation of more than 300,000 British and French troops left stranded when France fell to the

Service/branch	 <u>Royal Navy</u>
Years of service	1905–1949
Rank	<u>Admiral</u>
Unit	<u>Force Z</u>
Commands held	<u>HMS <i>Arethusa</i></u> <u>HMS <i>Repulse</i></u> <u>America and West Indies Station</u>
Battles/wars	<u>First World War</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Battle of Jutland</u> <u>Second World War</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Operation Dynamo</u> <u>Hunt for the <i>Bismarck</i></u> <u>Sinking of <i>Prince of Wales</i> and <i>Repulse</i></u> <u>Operation Overlord</u>
Awards	<u>Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath</u> <u>Commander of the Order of the British Empire</u> <u>Member of the Royal Victorian Order</u> <u>Legion of Merit (United States)</u>
Other work	<u>Lord Lieutenant</u>

Nazis.^[2] Tennant's task was to organize the men and get them onto the ships waiting to take them. Tennant stayed right up until the last ships left on 2 June, patrolling the beaches of Dunkirk with a megaphone searching for British troops.

Tennant was lauded for his efforts at Dunkirk, and was appointed Companion of the Order of the Bath on 7 June 1940.^[11] The ordinary sailors under his command took to calling him "Dunkirk Joe".^[1]

Captain of the *Repulse*

On 28 June 1940 Tennant became captain of the battlecruiser *Repulse*,^[2] taking part in battles against the German battleships *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and later in the hunt for the battleship *Bismarck*.^[12]

Loss of the *Repulse*

Tennant and *Repulse* joined Admiral Sir Tom Phillips' Force Z, sent to Singapore to counter Japanese advancement in the Pacific, in December 1941. On 8 December, the day after Pearl Harbor, Singapore came under attack by Japanese air units, and Force Z departed for Malaya to attack a Japanese convoy, an operation that was cancelled shortly thereafter. Upon returning to Singapore, they received word of Japanese landings on Malaya, and Force Z - without air cover - made for Malaya to counter them.



Repulse sails from Singapore on 8 December 1941

On 10 December, the Japanese attacked Force Z. Tennant ably managed to avoid nineteen torpedoes dropped from Japanese aircraft, but *Repulse* eventually succumbed to a pincer attack, taking five torpedoes; she sank within twenty minutes, taking a great deal of the crew with her. The survivors, including Captain Tennant, were rescued by *HMAS Vampire*, one of the destroyers in Force Z.^[13]

On 6 February 1942 he was promoted to rear-admiral,^[14] and in February 1943 received a mention in despatches for his part in operations on Madagascar.^[15]

Normandy

In June 1944, Tennant was placed in charge of the naval side of the transport, assembly and setup of the two Mulberry harbours that provided port facilities for the coming invasion of Normandy.^[2] In August, he supervised the laying of the Pluto pipelines between France and England, which provided much



Rear Admiral Tennant (centre) with his officers on Mulberry B, Arromanches, July 1944

needed fuel supplies for the ongoing conflict. For his efforts in the success of the Normandy invasion, Tennant was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire by King George VI,^[16] and also received the United States Legion of Merit.

Post-war service

Tennant was promoted to vice-admiral on 27 July 1945,^[6] and upgraded to Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath in December 1945 for his war service.^[17] Appointed commander of the America and West Indies Station in 1946,^[2] he was promoted to admiral on 22 October 1948,^[18] and remained there until he retired in August 1949.^[2] In 1950, he was named Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, in which

capacity he served until his death at the Worcester Royal Infirmary in 1963.

In film and fiction

In the 2004 BBC series *Dunkirk*, Captain Tennant is played by Adrian Rawlins. In the 2017 Christopher Nolan film *Dunkirk*, the character of "Commander Bolton" draws on the accomplishments of Captain Tennant during the evacuation.^[19]

Honours

United Kingdom

Honour	Abbreviation/Title	Date Awarded
Member of the <u>Royal Victorian Order</u>	MVO	16 October 1925
Companion of the <u>Order of the Bath</u>	CB	7 June 1940
Commander of the <u>Order of the British Empire</u>	CBE	28 November 1944
Knight Commander of the <u>Order of the Bath</u>	KCB	18 December 1945

Award	Country
Croix de guerre 1939-1945	France
Légion d'honneur, Officier	France
Grand Cross of the Order of George I	Greece
Commander of the Legion of Merit	USA

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External links

- "William George Tennant" (<http://www.forcez-survivors.org.uk/biographies/repulsecrew/tennant.html>). *Force Z Survivors Association*.
- "Upton-upon-Severn's memorial to Tennant" (<http://www.upton.uk.net/history/tennant/tennant.html>). *Upton.uk.net*.
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From: Cilla L
Subject: Bill Tennant
Date: 26 Apr 2024 at 11:07:54
To: Annette Parrott

Dear Annette,

I hope these are clear enough to be fun

Col. Bill Williams. Hubert Blount (my Dad). Admiral Bill Tennant. Me
behind the camera.

Fishing and camping in the north of Lapland in 1960.

Much love,

Cilla





North of Lapland 1960



"West Shinness Lodge"

Home of Mrs S G Maudslay, 1927 – 1959 Grandmother of Annette Parrot

Visitors book 1931

26 Aug 1931 Catherine & William Tennant

1931.		
DATE	NAME	ADDRESS
May 23 - June 6	J.R. Herbert	Spring Cottage, 15 mile work
May 27 - June 11	W. Howard	Barford, Warrick
Aug: 11 th - 16 th 19	M. P. Forward	Stanford near, 1 st Pa
Aug: 11 th - 22 nd	Mary Chance	Radford Manor House
" "	Renneth M. Chance	"
Aug: 11 th - 25 th	Mary Pear-	Hillside, Merryhill Rd
Aug 26 th - Sep 2.	Catherine Tennant	Tye Lane House Hertford
" "	William Tennant	"
Aug 12 th - Sep 3 rd	Montague Denney	Garboldisham Norfolk
Aug 26 th - Sep 5 th	Joan S. Sanderson	Elvel Grange, L. Lane
Aug 26 - Sep 8 th	Heidi Morris	Elizabethan House W.

Visitors Book – West Shinness Lodge 1958

24 Aug 1958 Catherine & Bill Tennant

1958			
DATE	NAME	ADDRESS	DATE
Aug 24 th - 31 st	Catherine Tennant. Bill Tennant -	McEade, Upland - where lives.	June 13 th
Aug 25 th - Sep 1 st	London Barker	Pasture Farm, Odellington	June 9 th
Sep 3 rd - 9 th	June Pilkington	Flexford, Highclere, Newbury	Aug 7 th
Aug 25 th - Sep 1 st	Tila	Perfect weather all the time - no rain - no Pasture Farm Sport. Went to Old Sturgeson ranch, went to Dorchester, on the road by Tongue & Melville. Sheila died	Aug 15 th
Aug 25 th - Sep 1 st	Victoria.		Sept 3 rd
Sep 9 th - Sep 19 th	Annette		Sept 1 st
Aug 21 st - Sep 9 th	Debbie & H		
Sep 20 th - Oct 1 st	Tila	Returned after running car through at Inverness. Good weather - walked to base Blinn	Sept 11 th
			Aug 27 th
			Sept 11 th



**DURING THE ASSAULT ON POINTE DU HOC,
THE RANGERS CLIMBED THESE CLIFFS
UNDER ENEMY FIRE.**

Some used ladders or rocket-launched grapple ropes. Many used bayonets or knives to improve their grip. The Allied bombardment collapsed some parts of the cliff, creating piles of debris that helped many Rangers in their climb. A few ascended behind a damaged anti-aircraft gun bunker where the cliff face had fallen away, close to the area which later became Rudder's command post.



POINTE DU HOC WAS DEFENDED BY A DETERMINED ENEMY.

The Germans relied on small arms, machine guns, and 37mm anti-aircraft guns, as well as heavy artillery based further inland, to stop the Rangers' advance. Most defenses faced inland, since the Germans had not thought the Allies would attempt a cliff assault. They included a ring of minefields and barbed wire, as well as a network of trenches linking bunkers and firing positions.



SUPPORT FROM THE AIR AND THE SEA PROVED CRUCIAL TO THE RANGERS' SUCCESS.

Allied bombers struck Pointe du Hoc five times in the weeks before D-Day. The raids destroyed one 155mm gun and caused the Germans to move the surviving guns inland. Accurate gunfire from British and American ships – including the USS *Texas*, USS *Satterlee*, HMS *Talybont*, USS *Thompson*, USS *Harding*, and others – helped the Rangers overcome German defenses and defeat fierce counter-attacks. Craters made from Allied aerial and naval bombardment, smoothed over by time, can still be seen across the landscape.



Normandy Beaches



Mulberry Harbour remnants on the skyline