

**A History of  
Commander Morris Moss Bright, DSC RN - in War & Peace  
By  
Simon Silver**

**I dedicate this book to the loving memories of**

**Mrs Gloria Zadek.**

My darling sister.

**And**

**Mrs. Shelley Bright.**

My dear cousin.

**A History of  
Commander Morris Moss Bright, DSC RN  
in War & Peace**

**Second digital edition 2026**

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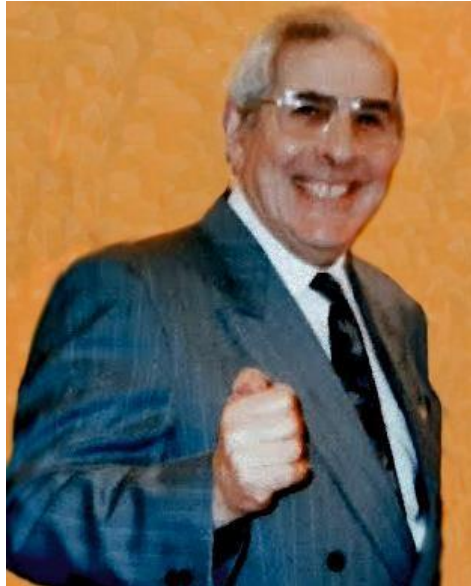
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Commander Morris Moss Bright DSC Royal Navy

1890 - 1965



Jule Warwick Bright

1930 - 1999

### **Introduction.**

In the 1990's my late Uncle, Jule Warwick Bright in conjunction with Geoffrey Green a famous historian who happens to be Jewish and a writer, researched and then wrote the Life and Times text of his late father Morris Moss Bright.

Morris became a Commander in the Royal Navy and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. My Mother, Minnie Sivia Silver (nee Bright) contributed to this story by keeping the documents and photographs, which today form the foundation of the Life site online, that I created. Many of my mother Minnie's memories and efforts to preserve the collection are contained within the text as well.

The original idea of the life text became a way of Jule to present and deliver his father's story in a structured and entertaining way. Jule gave talks on his father's naval career. He was a great personality in his own right. Jule was everything a person can be in life. Talented entertainer, do it yourself maestro and businessman. Above all he was a committed husband to Valerie and his family.

Seeing Jule delivering this story to an audience must have been a fascinating joy to witness. Few people in life have such talents. I can honestly say Jule used his to the full.

I am not by profession a writer or a historian! I have never served in the Navy or armed forces. I have been in electrical retailing for 46 years. Refrigeration and kitchen appliances are my speciality.

Refrigeration has a part to play in this story as you will see. You probably are thinking why would I bother to even write this story? Especially as Jule made such a good job of creating the original Life text years ago.

My life site online website can only last so long. Will it be here when I have gone? Doubtful really as no other family member has shown any interest in carrying it on! Therefore, a book is a forever keepsake that can span centuries. When writing this book, I felt that it was very important to have a section that was the actual text that Jule created, so that you can read this story the way it was originally written for presentation. After all, much that you read is pretty much from his original research and historian Geoffrey Green's tremendous knowledge of history and the Royal Navy.

I also felt that when I wrote this, I would use parts of Jule's original text to underline some of the amazing things that my grandfather had done. How grateful am I for this marvellous story. Without my Uncle Jule, would we even know half of it? Sometimes a gift has no financial value or cost, but Jule's gift to our family is beyond price. I am eternally grateful. I never made my life site online for financial gain. Again, like the online life site this book has not been created for my personal gain. The sheer thrill of writing this down for posterity is enough.



Minnie Sivia Silver

1923 - 1999

### **How it all started**

The Royal Navy was founded in 1546 by King Henry VIII. England had informal Naval forces centuries before this. Scotland had its own Navy long before England in the Middle Ages. The 1707 Act of Union linked the two Navies.

My Uncle Jule tells the story of my grandfather and the history of becoming an officer in the Royal Navy. This dates back much further than anyone would have imagined in fact Jews in the Navy were around even as far back as 1760 probably earlier. One of the first Jews who actually became an officer and Captain in the Navy was Sir Alexander Schomberg (1720-1804) in fact he was a son of a Jewish doctor and lived in England. He was a Jew by birth, but due to the Test Act of 1673 he had to give up being Jewish and adopt the Church of England to continue being an officer in the Royal Navy. This he did at the age of 23 which was late at the time. Because of the Test Act his whole family abandoned Judaism.



Captain Schomberg's painting is still owned by the National Maritime Museum Greenwich London. It reminds me so much of the story of Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) who became Britain's prime minister. Benjamin 'Dizzy' Disraeli was the son of Isaac, a Jewish Italian writer, and had an Anglican upbringing after the age of 12. With Jews excluded from Parliament until 1858, this enabled Disraeli to follow a career that would otherwise have been denied him. He was Britain's first and so far, only one from a Jewish heritage to become Conservative Prime minister. If you ever go to his home at Hughenden at Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, England, you can almost feel the great man's presence. I felt that most of all in his study.

In the 1980's I started to take a keen interest in my grandfather's life. I started by visiting The Imperial War Museum, Lambeth London and was granted access to their vast library. My ex-wife, Amanda, was very supportive and a big help. That continues to this day with her involvement in this book, I am delighted to say. At the Imperial War Museum, I found other documents and a photo of H.M.S Minerva which we did not have in our possession. I also visited The Old Royal Naval Collage at Greenwich London. There I stood in this magnificent Great Hall where my grandfather had dinner with the other Officers when he attended the Naval Collage. Perhaps even with H.M. the King when he visited. I also visited the beautiful Chapel at Greenwich. It was wonderful to be in a place so important to his life. The Old Royal Naval Collage Greenwich connects us to our past history of the Royal Navy brilliantly.



The Imperial War Museum London. I had done my original research there in 1980.

In 1999 both my Uncle Jule and then three months later my darling mother Minnie Silver passed away! All my mother's treasured documents and photos passed to me and a copy of Jule's brilliant Life text. In their memory I created my first Life site online in 2000. I still have it and it has grown immensely. I have never lost the passion for it ever.



Alan Derek Bright

1947 - 2015

My late cousin, Alan Bright, became its greatest supporter and contributor. He loved the thought of his grandfather's Navy career being a success! I adored Alan, he and I shared this massive deep sense of pride in our grandfather's achievements, but also in Alan's own father Burly Bright. Burly really continued his father's success in many ways. As this wonderful story unfolds you will see how and why. Alan would say "that looking at my Life site he would get misty eyed". The memories of all we loved and lost are there. It's always been that way with me as well. My other cousins have been supportive over the years. Adding intellectual additions and information. Particularly Philip and Graham Bright. They are the sons of Valerie & Jule Bright. I have often looked to their feedback and wisdom to improve the Life site I created online.

I got the opportunity to visit Portsmouth a number of times over the years. Aboard HMS Victory, I stood with great sadness near the spot Lord Admiral Nelson passed away. For me he represented all you can aspire to be in the Navy. Great at planning and a master tactician was the cornerstone of his brilliant leadership. His life was just as fascinating, and he was almost treated with a rock star status. To me he is the greatest of Britain's heroes and we have had many over the years. The technology of War has changed. However, the quality of the way a ship or fleet is run can make a big difference. The training and expertise of the crew are everything. No one person is perfect, but I like to think of my grandfather doing his service in the same proud way as Lord Admiral Nelson. I think that's true of most if not all that serve in our outstanding Royal Navy, even today. A wonderful statement came from the Carl Von Clausewitz a Prussian general and military theorist. "War is the continuation of diplomacy by other means ". Sometimes our governments have had little or no choice, but to go to War.

How does anyone really start to tell this story? This one is not fiction, but a story of a life. My grandfathers, Morris Moss Bright. In telling his story, it is also a wonderful thing to be able to tell his family's story as well. This is also a life that took place in a time when the free World fought for survival. Not once, but twice! Two World wars would redraw the map of the World.

Britain has opened its arms to many people from all over the World especially in the early part of the twentieth century. It still does to this day, but has found this overwhelming and is cutting back on immigration. Like America it became a refuge of safety for many. Although it was not always safe all the time here. Crime and poverty were just a part of everyday living on the streets of London. However,

compared to the pogroms of Russia against the Jews (Anti-Semitic attacks by the state ending in death, and destruction of property). Britain was a place to live, learn, and prosper. There was freedom to practice religion and a chance to better oneself. There is so much to be proud of about Britain.

There is no doubt in my mind that Britain has done a lot of good around the World. Many are ready to criticise Britain! Not me I am all for us, the British. That makes me patriotic and grateful. This is a brave nation. Standing quite often alone against evil in two World Wars and many others. With the good inevitably comes an awful mistake like Slavery in the past and Windrush in the twentieth century (immigrants were classified as illegal). At least nowadays, we realise these historical misuses of power and adopt diversity and equality as a modern nation. I believe that is the right attitude. Because of that, my ancestors were able to settle here.

### **A changing World.**

The World was about to change dramatically in the early 1900's. In those days Great Britain was a vibrant World leading power. It had a vast Empire and resources. Britain was considered as "the empire which the sun never sets" approximately 25% of the Earth's population was under British control. The British Army was at War almost constantly and as the century turned it found itself in a ferocious War against the Boers for a second time in South Africa. The Boer war went on until 1902. This War was brutal and cost 22,000 British and Imperial lives! The British government had paid £210 million (25 billion in today's money) to fight it. A War on a scale that had never been seen before was coming! It would engulf most of Europe and be fought across the globe. The First World War was an industrial technology War fought with weapons that had never been seen before.

Our Navy ruled the seas as it had done for over 200 years or more. The Jews of London, unless wealthy, which the majority were not, lived and worked in and around the East End. Those streets were hard and were full of crime and risk. They also represented freedom and opportunity for many.

I want to take you back to the year 1839.



Gershon & Rebecca Rosenthal

An important year in this story. This was the year my great-great grandfather on my mother's side, Gershon Rosenthal was born in Poland then a part of the Imperial Russian Empire. Rebecca Emanuel his wife in later years, and was born in 1843. Rebecca would give birth to eight children. Quite a lot by any measure. They had very big families in those days! By the 1870's the couple had emigrated to London, England.



Anne Brightman

1872 -1958

Anne Rosenthal was my great grandmother, and was born in Bethnal Green London in 1872. She married a man called Samuel Brightman (Morris's father) sadly he passed away in 1902. Morris was born on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1890 in the East End. The family were poor and I expect life was hard for them. Morris's mother Anne Brightman (nee Rosenthal) had 5 children. Morris was the eldest. Anne was not what I would call an Orthodox Jew, but she definitely went to a Synagogue. They lived in Poplar. At

some point the family changed their name from Brightman to Bright. Anne remarried in 1904 to Barnet Ginsberg. Sadly Barnet 's daughter, Julia Ginsberg died due to a very bad fire at the Topical film studios in Wardour Street London in 1924!



Rare news clipping about the fire.

My thanks to Graham Bright for finding this!

Morris as a young boy liked to walk by the docks and see the many ships. He was rumoured to have had a conversation with an old sailor. This person must have convinced Morris to join the Navy. In 1905 he lied about his age by one year and then he got his mother to sign the documents to enlist. Anne who could not read or write thought he was joining the Post Office as a telegraph boy. Morris became a boy entrant to the Royal Navy. Morris originally signed for 12 years' service. On the entrance form he was confronted with two choices of religion. Church of England or Catholic. He put C of E! When Anne, his mother, heard about this mistake she contacted the Rabbi who then wrote to the Admiralty and requested the religion be changed. However, Morris would still have been expected to attend

Church services in the Navy. We know for a fact this happened as my late mother, Minnie, told me her father attended services at the Royal Navy Collage at Greenwich, London as an officer.



Acting Warrant Officer.

June 1914. HMS Minerva

Joining the Royal Navy at any time is a challenge even today. High expectations, discipline, training and standards are the things the Royal Navy is famous for. The Navy is called the Senior Service for a reason. Even in the early 1900's this was the way the Navy crewed its ships. Going from the streets of London's east end to the Royal Navy's premier English base, Portsmouth Hampshire it must have an experience in its own right. It was here that the skills you required were taught. The discipline was very strict. There is a mention about holy stoning where the boy sailors had to scrub the deck with a soft and brittle sandstone every day. The Officers beat the boys with rope ends. Standing over them was a Petty Officer. Morris said to himself "I will be like you one day ". The training included periods at HMS Ganges the old training ship. HMS Ganges the year Morris joined 1905 changed from sailing ship to a land base known as a stone frigate. The food was horrendous! Ships biscuits and pickled Pork from barrels where the food had gone off! It was a tough life. The Navy was changing too and evolving from a Victorian Navy to a more modern fleet. However, many traditions still existed of training and discipline. The best one had to be the daily tot of rum. The tot of Rum mixed with water started circa 1655 this tradition ended in 1970. The Navy had and still has many duties and functions to perform. The square bashing and marching would have been relentless. This was required for Ceremonial duties and for discipline in the massed ranks. The British services have a fine tradition of marching. I like to think we are the best in the World.

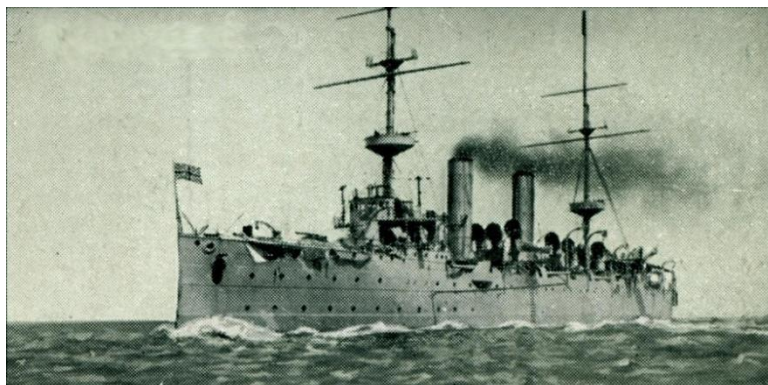
Morris's early years with the Navy also included being posted to four ships. HMS Euryalus, 1906, HMS Repulse, 1906 and HMS Pembroke, 1908 and HMS Falmouth, 1911. In the following years Morris saw service at a number of shore bases to learn more skills. From 1906 he started to rise through the ranks. Boy 1st class, able seamen, leading seamen, Petty Officer. In 1911 Winston Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty (a political appointment). He wanted able men from the lower decks to have the opportunity to become an officer in the Navy. It was quite unusual for a Jew to hold rank. This was different in the Army, where Jews had been successful at achieving high rank. Many before Morris had

to change their religion to become an officer in the Navy. This did not stop Morris at all in fact. It seems like this drove him to succeed. Morris was proud to be Jewish everything he did especially in later life shows this as I will explain later on.

However, his deep devotion to the King, the Royal family and Royal Navy was just as important as being Jewish. Like many including me, British first and everything else second. My mother wrote in later years and told me of having to stand for the National anthem on all occasions. It is a tradition that I do to this day, in honour of my grandfather and mother. Most of all it's the same adoration and loyalty I feel to our King Charles and our Nation.

Alec Guinness in the movie Lawrence of Arabia as Prince Faisal said a very famous line during a conversation with Lawrence. They were discussing England's ability to strike at enemies." Because it has a Navy. Because of this, the English go where they please and strike where they please. And this makes them great. Right." Although this is a line from a film, it was true Britain projected its power across the World. Very true and important words. Even today our great Navy stands ready to strike evil down across the World. They just need a few more ships that work!

In June 1914 Morris was promoted to Acting Warrant Officer. In July 1914 he was appointed to HMS Excellent & Vernon these bases had a focus on gunnery. Later that year he was appointed to H.M.S Minerva. She was very much a ship from the Victorian Navy, but she was well built. In 1903 long before Morris went aboard. She escorted Captain Robert Falcon Scott's ship the Terra Nova, on his South Pole Expedition. Minerva's very name was iconic and it had served the Navy since 1759. By the time Morris was appointed to her, this Minerva was already 17 years old, but she could pack a punch along with her sisters. Her class was Eclipse class protected Cruiser and she was built and launched 1897 at the historic dockyard at Chatham, Kent, England. Some of our greatest and most famous Warships were built there including H.M.S Victory. Minerva was no exception.



HMS Minerva

By the time Morris was appointed, Minerva was being made ready for War. Her exterior colour went from black to a more camouflaged neutral colour. This would make her less of a target. Fate and hindsight are a surprising thing. Out of all the ships Morris could have been assigned to, Minerva was one of the best. Minerva had a compliment of 450 men. Things must have got a bit cramped at times. No air-conditioning in those days and of course she was fuelled by coal. The engineers and men coaling

the ship must have had a hot hard job. It's easy to get lost in the romance of H.M.S Minerva, but I have to remind myself that she was a ship of war and not a cruise liner.

H.M.S Minerva would see action right at the start of World War 1. Britain declared War against Germany on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914. In October of that year Turkey joined Germany as an ally. The main reason was Turkey wanted money and Russian territory. The Ottoman Turkish Navy was a force to be reckoned with in 1914. The Ottoman army was originally 150,000 men, during the course of the War that became around 2.8 million.

Aboard H.M.S Minerva, Morris's main responsibility as acting WO was to act as a channel between the non-commission ranks and Senior Naval Officers. This was to enable communication between the sailors, and marines. This would include Senior Navy leadership. Quite an important position. My late mother, Minnie kept many of the reports on Morris's performance. They show that Morris was a competent and organised officer. However, gunnery would have been his prime concern. Preparing the ship for battle.

H.M.S Minerva was part of the 5th Cruiser squadron. In September 1914. There were a few events that I will explain shortly, but the big one was the shelling of Akaba Fort and barracks on the Red Sea. At 5pm, 1<sup>st</sup> November 1914 and 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, Minerva Fired 6 rounds each time! By 1915 The Allies had quite a battering at the Dardanelles, Turkey. During that battle Royal Navy ships were sunk by the Turks. There is no doubt they were a formidable country to fight. In 1914 all this must have seemed unthinkable, but that is the ever-changing nature of War. After H.M.S Minerva's shelling came the landing. Morris commanded one of the landing parties. Later on, he described the action to the Jewish Chronicle. He described Akaba as "mud huts and a fort ". It is hard to believe that Akaba would have such strategic value by 1917. Today it is a beautiful historic and tourist destination. My Uncle Jule visited the Fort many years ago. He said you could still see the holes Minerva's shells made! Morris got permission from his Captain and sent it to the Jewish Chronicle. This is the letter about the bombardment of Akaba. I felt as he was there his description was far better than anything else I could write or add.



The Fort at Akaba today.

## LETTERS FROM JEWISH SAILORS. BOMBARDMENT OF AKABA.

The following letter from Warrant Officer M. M. Bright, H.M.S. "Minerva," has been received by the Chaplain:—

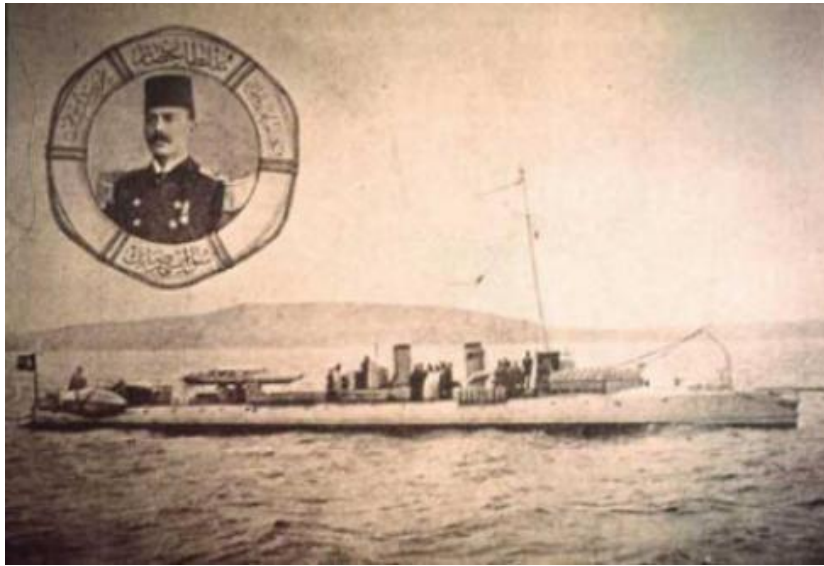
" . . . . . You see, Sir, I have been on active service since the war broke out and we have covered a good many miles, performing a duty which has many records and which will live in history when it is published. At present I am not permitted to mention the latter, but I have asked my Captain's permission to describe to you the bombardment of Akaba, where we proved a success. Akaba is a small town north-east in the Gulf of Akaba in Asia, and during our duty, which we were carrying on in . . . . . we heard that Germany was going to use the said place for a good purpose, such as mine stores, and also direct all her plans here for the destruction of our transports, which, as you know, have to go through the Suez Canal to get near the fighting line. Now we could not possibly touch Akaba because it belonged to the Turks, and at that time we were still friendly with Turkey. Of course we guarded the place until we were ordered to bombard it. Away we went at top speed expecting to see a nice big town with lofty houses and palaces, but alas! it was just the reverse, mud huts instead and a fort, and, in front of them, covering the whole show, an exceptional number of fir trees. Our fire was first directed at the fort, and after three rounds we reduced it to ruins; the next object that took our eye was the Post Office that came down with the first shot after we had finished with the fort. Night came on, and we had to wait for daylight before we could proceed. Well, the following day a landing party was told off. I was put in charge of a company of about fifty men, but two hundred landed in all. We got in boats, and whilst we were pulling for shore the guns again gave them a bit of fire which was very murderous. Now, when we landed we were in a very awkward position, as we were situated in a sort of a valley, so to speak. But that did not make any difference to us boys; our first thought was to inspect the town. We found three with arms, and they were promptly shot where they stood. No-one else could be found, and after seeing what damage we really had done, we were surprised to find that the only thing left standing and entrenched was the Mosque—of course, that is, the Mohammedan church. Very strange that, I must say, but it is the truth, and its position was about twenty yards from the fort; absolutely marvellous, don't you think so? Well, to go on, we made for the railway station, which was situated about ten miles away. When within two miles of it we were fired upon from the hills. Now just imagine our position in the open: not a soul could be seen, and ourselves left at the mercy of those who were trying to stop our intentions. Of course, we returned the fire. What at? Nothing, as far as I could see. But that silenced them all right. We did not venture any further, and so made our way back to the ship under fire all the time; fortunately no one was hit as their shooting was very poor. Now Sir, just a word about this town, it will surprise you to know that the meaning of Akaba is 'Obstacle,' and on an inspection of the place there were at least one hundred wells. You see, this town is situated in the Wilderness, and all the pilgrims come here for water and dates. Of course they use camels as the place is very sandy, and to walk—well, it's very uncomfortable. Pilgrims going to Mecca stop here just for supplies, but I don't think the place would agree with us, as I found it to be very filthy, and I can just picture what hardships they must have had two thousand years ago. Our men left everything untouched, although many ancient relics could have been taken away. But we are avoiding looting and so still keeping up the good name of the British Blue. . . . ."

In 2007, I visited Eilat in Israel. Sitting on the beach I could see Akaba and it was one of those moments. I could imagine the action there taking place. I think it's important to explain about Akaba. Today it is part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. By 1917 the Turks had built great guns. This was to control the Red Sea. By controlling the Red Sea this would restrict British shipping. Major T.E.Lawrence and King Feisal's Arab army crossed the Nefou desert and attacked Akaba from the land side. This was a spectacular piece of military genius. This action made Lawrence quite rightly a national hero. H.M.S Minerva got a mention in T.E.Lawrence's book the Seven Pillars of Wisdom. She would have had a role securing Akaba after its capture.



Akaba Fort around the time of the bombardment by HMS Minerva.

Here are some of the events that happened to H.M.S Minerva. She was originally attached to 6th Destroyer Flotilla in 1913 and was at Portsmouth until outbreak of war. For a short spell she was attached to the 11th Cruiser Squadron in Ireland in August 1914, but joined 5th CS in September, capturing an Austrian merchantman off Finisterre the same month. The story goes there was a female spy aboard that ship. Then Minerva sailed to Suez Canal in November 1914, and then on to the Dardanelles November 1915; Minerva was involved with the running aground and sinking of the Turkish torpedo-boat Demir-Hissar off Chios on 17 April 1915. The main ship involved in that action was HMS Blenheim.



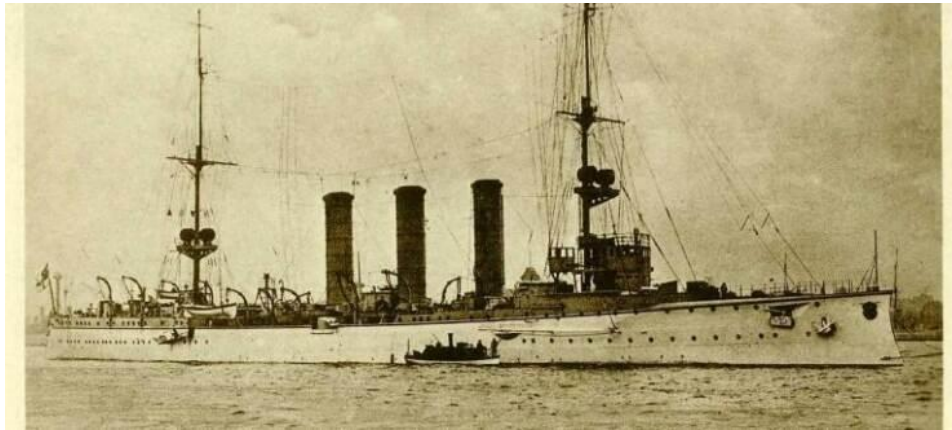
Turkish torpedo-boat Demir-Hissar

World War 1 raged on with some of the most horrendous suffering humans can inflict on each other, at sea, on land and in the air. Minerva's patrol duty was mainly around Suez and East Africa. The ship avoided the very worst of it. However, the Middle East was just as volatile as it is today. Africa although a side show to the main fighting in France was still important. The war at sea was very much affected by the war on land of course. In Jule's life text he writes about a German officer Colonel Paul Emil Von Lettow-Vorbeck (1870-1964). In 1914 he successfully invaded part of the British Empire and repelled a British landing at Tanga (Tanzania). He did this with 3000 Germans and 11,000 Askari (indigenous) Africans. In Jule's life text he is called Von Latto. I suppose this was a nickname. It seems that he was the British number one target on land. Just like Lawrence of Arabia showed what could be achieved with a small force, so did Colonel Vorbeck.



Colonel Paul Emil Von Lettow - Vorbeck. Outstanding German Commander in Africa.

The German Navy had a very famous and versatile ship called the SS (His Majesty's ship) Emden. Built in Danzig in 1906 and completed in 1909. She was a Dresden class light cruiser. Armed with ten 10.5cm (4.1inch) guns and two torpedo tubes. Captained by Karl Von Muller and his superb crew. She is a story in her own right and many books have been written about her. During the early part of the war, she sunk 21 ships. The Emden was known as the "The Gentlemanly raider". This was because she treated captured enemies with due care. She was able to disguise herself as a British battleship by adding a false funnel. This enabled her to have an element of surprise. H.M.S Minerva would have been alerted to Emden's importance and she was mentioned by Jule in his text. The Emden was finally disabled and run aground by HMAS Sydney off the coast of Cocos Islands on November 9th 1914. Much of her crew was taken prisoner, but they had sent a landing party ashore before the battle. They made it all the way back to Germany. Says a lot about them really. Where Morris & Gertrude are buried in Edmonton London there is a gravestone behind their grave. The name is Emden. It seems my grandfather finally caught up with it!



SMS Emden. The image below shows her beached by HMAS Sydney.



In 1916 there was a sea battle that would transform the way the Royal Navy would evolve in the future. The statistics of the battle of Jutland near Denmark to this day are absolutely frightening. Germany had

worked long and hard on what was important in making a modern fleet. The British Grand fleet relied on pretty much the same signal system that Nelson used at Trafalgar. The Germans had concentrated on gunnery as well. They also used more advanced ship to ship communication.

Morris was very lucky missing this battle it is because of the scale of loss of life! The British lost 6,784 and Germany 3,039. Compared to the Battle of the Somme on land in France. British 100,000 plus and Germany 300,000 plus. This loss of life at Jutland is small by comparison!! However, for Britain it was a shock and wake up call. The Grand fleet recovered and there was never a battle on Jutland's scale again in WW1.

History and hindsight are a wonderful thing. At the time the Commander of the British Fleet was Admiral John Jellicoe. He was criticised terribly for not delivering the knockout blow against the German fleet. I disagree and believe he was right to save the fleet. His correct decision saved many British lives and he was able to blockade shipping lanes. Ultimately causing the German grand fleet to never ever go to sea in the same way again. The decision helped Britain win the War.



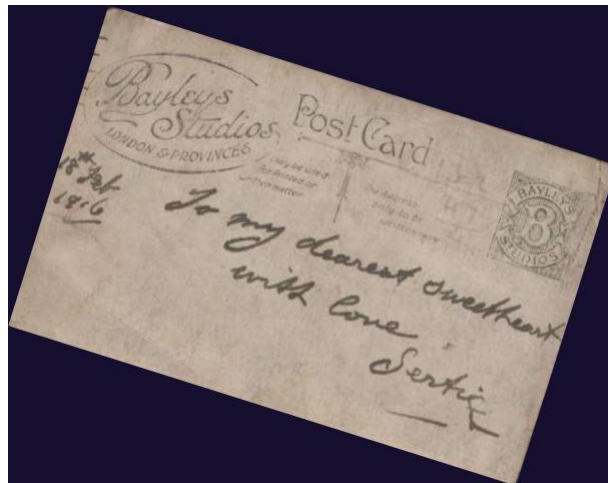
Admiral of the Fleet .The Right Honourable  
The Earl Jellicoe  
GCB OM GCVO SGM DL 1859  
- 1935



In 1918 Morris married my grandmother Gertrude Golda Wisberg. This took place at Dukes Place Synagogue in London. The bride and groom left the wedding under an arch of Navy swords, which is a military tradition. The photograph I possess shows Morris dressed in full Navy uniform at the rank of Lieutenant. My grandmother was very lovely in many ways. I can never forget my late sister, Gloria Zadek saying one day many years ago how beautiful our grandmother was!



During the First World War Gertrude sent photographic postcards of herself to Morris. They are some of the best and most flattering images ever taken of her. This is how sweethearts stayed in touch during the dark days of the Great War. If the Navy gave Morris a life at sea. Gertrude gave him a truly marvellous family and life ashore. The photos I have shown such a deep love between them.



Gertrude came from a successful family. Her father was also called Morris and mother Minnie. He was a Turkish cigarette blender. Most likely they originally came from Turkey. There had been a terrible War with Greece in 1897. The family at some point relocated to Odessa then a part of Imperial Russia. Why Odessa? Makes sense if you are in the cigarette business Odessa was and still is an important seaport. However, being a Jew in Czarist Russia could not have been easy. There was great hatred of Jews (sadly this has not changed) eventually they moved again! This time to England. Some of the photos in my possession were taken in Newcastle upon Tyne. At that time Newcastle would have been a tobacco producing area. Newcastle is on the River Tyne giving access to shipping as well.



Minnie Wisberg

1861 - 1920



Morris Wisberg

1855 - 1929

How long the family stayed in Newcastle I am not sure. At some point they relocated to London. Morris & Minnie Wisberg had a vast family. I have researched as much as possible, but Morris had thirteen children! Most of that information came from Morris Weisberg's actual gravestone in Edmonton London. Were they all from one woman Minnie Wisberg? I am not sure. We know that both Gertrude's brothers Philip & Geoffrey served in the Army. Wonderfully they both survived the Great War. We do not know for sure if Gertrude's family had money. It is likely because the address gives it away. Hampstead Road, London.

Morris and Gertrude were truly blessed with three wonderful children. The first was born in Paddington, London in 1919, Cecil Burlington Bright (known by all as Burly). Followed by my mother Minnie Sivia Bright in 1923. Finally, Jule Warwick Bright in 1930. Each were gifted with different qualities, but they all shared Morris's pioneering spirit. Looking back, I can truly say that Morris and Gertrude would have really had great pride and pleasure in them. It would not be possible to tell Morris's story without including them.

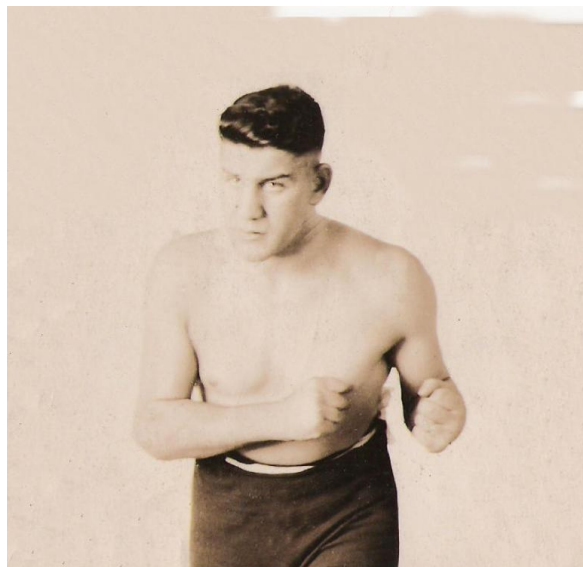
The First World War finally started to come to a close in 1918. Morris did a spell as a Lieutenant aboard H.M.S Marlborough. This was a battleship of the Grand fleet. Then in 1919, H.M.S Pembroke this most likely was renamed from H.M.S Achilles an actual ship. After the War ended, he continued with his studies at the rank of full Lieutenant. He studied at the Naval Collage in Greenwich. Jule also thought he attended H.M.S Dryad navigation school around this time.



Lieutenant Bright  
Wearing tropical white uniform

My grandmother Gertrude was disenchanted with his long absences from home. After fifteen years of Navy service Morris finally retired in 1920. He retired as a Lieutenant, but was promoted retired to Lieutenant Commander later on. He still remained on the Navy active list.

At the grand age of 30 there was much that lay ahead. Morris's siblings were moving and travelling abroad. He had a brother called Daniel Bright who was a boxer. He was known as Alf and had 450 fights. Daniel started at a young age and boxed for 27 years he ended his career in 1929. In the early 1920's he went to America. His career was going well and was being lined up for a fight with the great Gene Tunney. This would have given him a shot at the heavy weight championship of the World title. Sadly, an event would wipe this out! He saved two children from drowning in the river Dee here in England. This cost him his sight for two years in both eyes. One eye the sight slowly returned. I have always thought of him as the champ and to me he is a hero. Some things are not meant to be.



Daniel Bright  
Circa 1897 - 1960



Daniel Bright with his sons. Cecil  
(left) and Walter.

Daniel had two sons Walter (known as Wally) & Cecil. Cecil born circa 1920. He was 6ft tall at 12 years of age. During World War 2 he joined up as a territorial rifleman in 1939 and was demobilized in 1945. Like many he did his bit.

I met both Wally and Cecil at family celebrations many, many years later. I do not really know much about Wally and I'm sorry to say I can't seem to find much about him either. Cecil Bright was different because his daughters sent me a newspaper article about her father and I was able to find out a lot more about him because of that.



Bertha Bright Knapp

1899 - 1954

Morris had two sisters who emigrated to America. Bertha Bright Knapp (nee Bright) lived in Grosse Pointe Township, Wayne, Michigan. She in fact spent some time singing with the Doily Carte opera in London. But eventually she went to live in America and that would have been the early 1920's.



Leonard & Rose Bright.

1894 - 1969    1894 – 1979

Aboard the SS France 1960's

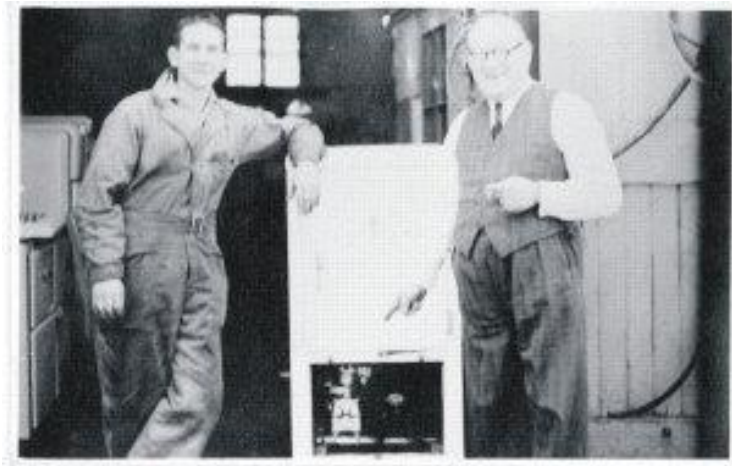


Morris became busy with the Jewish Friendly society movement and became President of the Tree of Zion Lodge in the order of Achei Brith and the shield of Abraham. During the early 1930s the World started to change yet again quite dramatically! Anti-Semitism again was becoming very rife everywhere in the World particularly in Nazi Germany. Not only there, but also in England. The Fascists were led by Oswald Moseley; he founded the British Union of Fascists in 1932. In 1940 he and his wife were imprisoned in Holloway Prison as a threat to the security of the nation. Morris was a forceful speaker in the platform of the anti-defamation committee and he was often to be heard at Speakers Corner Hyde Park London in their fight against the fascist element that started to raise its ugly head.

Morris's looks helped; he was fair haired with blue eyes. His powerful voice was an asset to his public speaking. Some of his friends at the time were Major Lionel Rose Frank Costin and Frank Renton all were outstanding fighters against Mosley and spoke all over London at street corners opposing the fascists wherever they were. There is still a Lionel Rose prize for public speaking today.

No one could have imagined the fate of the Jews of Europe at the brutal hands of Nazi Germany! In later years we would get to find out the truth. German Nationalism had thrown off the shackles of the agreements made at the end of World War 1. Then Germany started building up her forces throughout the 1930's. Air, sea and on land Germany prepared for War again.

Morris started to have an interest in refrigeration. He thought this was an up-and-coming market. The fridges in those days would quite often break down. Morris went into the repair business. Later on, he started selling them and small cold rooms. He would eventually be joined by Burly. My Uncle Burly turned out to be an entrepreneur of surprising proportions. Burly's story is as exciting and fascinating as his father's. Burly did an apprenticeship with Kelvinator. The business was doing well and in 1937, Morris and family moved to Park Avenue North, Willesden, London.



Burly and Morris  
Started repairing refrigerators

**World War 2 back in the Navy.**

King Edward VIII wanted to marry Mrs Wallace Simpson an American socialite, in 1936. Mrs Simpson was divorced from her first husband and was divorcing her second. This caused a constitutional crisis. In December of that year, he abdicated the throne. He was then known as His Royal Highness the Duke of Windsor. He visited Germany in October 1937. Historians believe he had dealings with the Nazi's. This was lucky? For Britain!



His Royal Highness the Duke of York (1895 – 1952) known to his family as “Bertie”, became King George VI. What a great King and fine man he was. Overcoming a difficult speech impediment. He was the right King that the country needed during desperate times during World War 2. He could never have imagined his daughter Elizabeth would become the longest reigning Queen in British history 70 years 214 days H.M 1952 - 2022).

Britain was sadly forced into War in 1939! Nazi Germany's hunger for land and power spilled over its own borders and they invaded Poland! Britain was Poland's ally and declared War against Germany on 3rd September 1939.



Lieutenant Commander Bright - 1939

In June 1939 Morris was asked to inspect fishing trawlers to see if they could be used as Minesweepers. Morris had attended courses and was kept up to date on Naval advancements over the years. Although Britain was ill-prepared for War, we had many that had served in their younger days in WW1. This experience and knowledge were invaluable to help secure the Nation. You need luck in a War as well as all the right tactics. One of the most incredible appointments had to be the superb Sir Winston Churchill as our Wartime Prime Minister. Volumes have been written about him. There is no doubt the difference an exceptional leader can make.

Shortly after War was declared. Morris was returned to active service at the age of 50! His role in this War would be very different to WW1. In this War he would command a Flotilla of mine sweepers, spend time at the Admiralty, London and be awarded the DSC for outstanding zeal and whole hearted devotion to duty. Later on, he was promoted to Acting RN Commander Equivalent to a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army.

Jule wrote "that a day after War was declared Morris was posted to Harwich. My mother and brother took him to Liverpool Street Station and tearfully saw him off "The following weekend Burly suggested that they would motor up to Harwich". At the docks they were told he was at sea and would not return until early evening. When the Flotilla did eventually arrive, they were amazed that Morris had gone to sea wearing a lounge suit, bowler hat and a pair of shoes called spats. There had been no time to get his uniform ".

During World War 2 Morris's family went to War. My mother Minnie decided that rather than become a Wren in the Royal Navy. She would prefer not to be under her father's command and opted for the Army. She joined the ATS and served in the Army Pay Corp at Baker Street London. My Uncle Burly

joined the Merchant Navy and became a Lieutenant Engineering Officer. My Uncle Jule joined the RAF as ground crew after the War.



In 1941 came a moment that I and many members of my family will cherish forever. Morris was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross at Buckingham Palace by the King. This was announced in King George VI birthday honours list. The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) is a third-level military decoration awarded for gallantry during active operations against the enemy at sea. Jule found out the precise reason why Morris received this award. Whilst Morris was stationed at Great Yarmouth, a ship was hit by a bomb during an air raid. The ship was about to sink in the mouth of the harbour! This potentially could have put the port out of action. Morris went aboard with a rating and bunged up the holes with wooden spars and saved the ship from sinking. I am very proud of Morris and the crew for this brave action. This must have been quite dangerous I expect. My grandmother Gertrude and my mother Minnie accompanied him to Buckingham Palace. My mother joked that she wanted a souvenir from the occasion, so she took some toilet paper with the Royal coat of arms on from the ladies! My mother also kept the ticket issued and wrote a letter describing the events that day.

Minnie Bright's letter of the DSC investiture.

THE DAY MY FATHER WAS DECORATED

Many of you will have heard my brother Jules Bright giving a talk at JAC's recently on Commander Bright's life in the Royal Navy. I thought you would like to hear my account of the day he received the D.S.C.

In the King's Birthday Honours of June 1941, in "The Times", my father's award was announced and the citation read:-

D.S.C. to Lieut. Commander M. M. Bright RN(Ret).

"For outstanding zeal, patience and cheerfulness and for never failing to set an example of wholehearted devotion to duty without which the tradition of the Royal Navy could not have been upheld".

Excitement was high in the family, two invitations arrived from the Lord Chamberlain's office at Buckingham Palace. It was decided that my mother and I would have the honour, as my eldest brother (an Eng. Officer in the Merchant Navy) was in convoy and might not have leave. We set off to the Palace in July 1941 dressed in our best clothes. On entering the gates of the Palace, the sentry presented arms to my father. We walked through a courtyard and entered through a door with footmen in red and gold livery who looked at our invitations.

My father was taken to a special room where he received, with others, instruction as to what he had to do. Mother and I entered the Palace and went up a few stairs to a large magnificent room which I believe was a Ballroom. I learned, on my second visit to the Palace last week, that this was a temporary arrangement used during the war. There were magnificent

Cont. ../

- 2 -

paintings of Royalty, past and present, on the walls all round the room, and each full-length painting was almost the height of the walls. There were rows of red and gold chairs for the guests and a small military orchestra played soft music throughout the Investiture. Soldiers in battle dress flanked the dais in front of the audience. A high ranking officer in full dress uniform, resplendent with all his medals, then told us what we had to do.

Suddenly large double doors opened on the dais, and H.M. King George VI was standing there in the uniform of Admiral of the Fleet. Then the Investiture began. First the Knights who knelt, the King placing a sword on one shoulder. As they are the Senior Service, the Royal Navy were the first of the armed forces to be decorated. My father was the first D.S.C. the music stopped and the citation was read out to a hushed audience. Dad walked through a side door and stood in front of the King, he took a few steps forward and the King pinned a medal to his chest and congratulated him. My father stepped back, saluted, then turned and walked away. It was such an impressive sight as each member of the Armed Services, in turn, went through this ceremony, all heroes of the war who were honoured by their King.

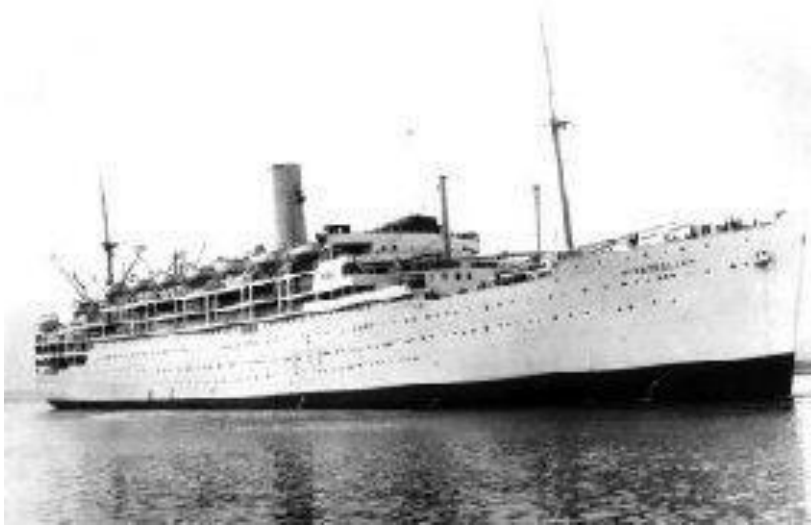
We came out of the Palace to find my brother, who had got last minute leave, waiting for us and we returned home to a wonderful party of family and friends, who had come to congratulate my father. Truly a wonderful and memorable experience, one that I shall never forget so long as I live.

Min Silver

**Morris & Burly are outstanding in WW2.**



Burly Bright was by this time a refrigeration officer engineer aboard merchant ships bringing meat from Australia and New Zealand. He was aboard the SS Strathallen in December 1942 when it was torpedoed by a German submarine off the coast of Oran. Burly told me that when it sank which took quite a while, 21 souls perished with it. My grandmother, Gertrude heard nothing from Burly for ages. One day she got a knock on the front door at Park Avenue North, Willesden. It was Burly in full U.S Navy officer's uniform! He had been rescued. It had taken him two weeks to get back after the rescue. Another classic Burly story was one day he turned up at the front door again. This time with a suitcase full of butter! There was rationing during the War! This must have been popular.



SS Strathallan



Soon after Morris receiving the DSC, Morris was posted to the Admiralty Minesweeping division next to Horse Guards parade In London. Morris was quite often in the map room when Sir Winston Churchill our great War time Prime Minister would visit. During this time, an officer walked into Morris's office. After the conversation the Officer was surprised! When Morris asked him "What are you doing for Pesach (Jewish Passover)" "The other officer was Captain Fredman Ashe Lincoln QC RNVR. Captain Lincoln had no idea Morris was Jewish! They became good friends. A few years later I was able to contact Captain Lincoln's son who was a Rabbi in New York at the time. It was wonderful to tell him how highly respected his late father was. Sadly, Rabbi David Lincoln retired of Park Avenue Synagogue New York USA passed away in 2024 aged 86.



Captain Freeman Ashe Lincoln

1907 -1998

Eventually Morris was posted to H.M.S Cabot, a shore establishment in Yorkshire. Morris by now was in his mid-fifties and the Navy needed younger men for sea duties. Jule wrote about Morris "finding a rating with a Jewish sounding name and sent for him". He asked the sailor if he was of the Jewish faith and after confirming this, Morris said he had better go to Synagogue for the high holidays in Leeds. The rating said he was not due a pass. Morris gave him one so he could attend. The rating had even more of a surprise when he saw Morris sitting in the Synagogue!

In the Jewish religion it is not permitted to have tattoos (din, law). Not long after joining the Navy, he had one done an anchor and peacock! Morris said from the moment it was done he regretted it. Jule thought that he did it not knowing about the law.

Jule tells, during his text, about visiting Stone frigates (shore establishments) with his father during WW2. He describes the rank Morris held was a wonderful way of life. Officers were waited on hand and foot. Morris even had a batman to prepare his uniform and ensure he looked smart. The officer's wardroom was like a select London club, pink gins were the order of the day. When Morris was promoted to Commander, the guards on the gates would present arms as he passed. This impressed Jule very much! He recounts at H.M.S Wildfire in Sheerness drinking Nelson's blood (diluted Navy rum). He describes it as potent and he wasn't surprised the Navy stopped issuing it. You need a clear head to work modern computers and systems.

A few years ago, I wanted to know what it was like to be aboard a Royal Navy ship. I had already been to Navy days at Portsmouth in the 1980's and had been on a submarine at Gosport. I went to visit H.M.S Belfast which today is a part of the Imperial War Museum London. H.M.S Belfast is a World War 2 battleship. Its size and complexity were absolutely incredible to me. The workshops for making parts for repair at sea, the engine rooms and even bathrooms are on quite a scale. Today the Navy has advanced ships which are massive like the H.M.S Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier and high-tech destroyers. Although Morris would be shocked at the size of today's Navy, I am sure however he would be impressed at the technology of today's fleet.



During my early research into Morris's life, I discovered that he served with an officer aboard H.M.S Minerva in WW1. This officer was a Lieutenant at the time. He became very famous by the end of WW2. Admiral of the fleet Bruce Fraser, 1st Baron, Fraser of North Hope GCB, KBE. He signed the surrender document of Japan on behalf of Great Britain, 3rd September 1945. He had an outstanding naval career and sadly passed away at 93 in 1981. Although Morris never attained this kind of advancement both men were successful.

World War 2 was a very differently fought war to World War 1. There were so many unthinkable firsts that it defies belief that this could really have happened! War is horrid whichever one it is, but sometimes, regrettably, war has to happen. Germany and its Allies had to be stopped! America really did not want another War seeing its forces fighting in Europe again. That all changed with an event that had never been experienced before took place! The attack on Pearl Harbour, Hawaii base of the United States Navy Pacific fleet. The Empire of Japan launched an aerial attack from carriers at sea. 2343 U.S personnel were killed. 68 civilians. 960 missing and 1272 wounded! Seven ships sunk, eleven ships damaged and 151 planes destroyed. In a single action the U.S joined in World War 2. President Roosevelt spoke to the nation the next day: "Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan". From that moment on Nazi Germany and Japan would lose the War. By the end of World War 2 Japan would end up paying the ultimate price for its deceit. The dropping of two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Towards the end of the War, Morris was posted to Trincomalee in those days called Ceylon now called Sri Lanka. He had bought his tropical kit, but his health failed. Unfortunately, Morris enjoyed a smoke. I suppose like most people this started at a young age. In those days it wasn't frowned upon quite like it is today. I even have a photo with him smoking a pipe, but he smoked cigarettes mainly. I remember visiting him with my mother at Park Avenue North, Willesden as a child. I can remember the ashtray piled high! The smoking eventually caused lung cancer!

### Burly takes Bright's to the next level

After the War Morris returned once again aged 56 to civilian life. He restarted the refrigeration business in a small way with Burly. The business flourished when Burly started to manufacture Cryostats. These machines could freeze a biopsy specimen very thin. A Doctor or clinician could then view the specimen under a microscope. Burly eventually relocated the company to Huntingdon where it became a world leader in the industry.



The Bright instruments factory  
Huntingdon 1990

The heart of a cryostat is the Microtome (which slices the specimen microns thin). This device was invented by Charles Sedgewick Minot (1852-1914). Burly may not have invented the Microtome, but he certainly understood its potential. How proud and thrilled Morris would have been to see a purpose 43, 0000 Square foot factory open in 1990. The company was named "Brights Instruments". There are quite a few stories that are part of the history of Brights. I visited the first factory in the 70's with my late parents. I remember Burly saying that the Japanese would like to copy his cryostats. They even bought one! Afterwards the Japanese decided it was too expensive to copy the technology. Burly's son Alan joined his father at Brights just as Burly had worked with his father Morris. The years flew by and Burly stepped down as the boss at Brights and Alan became the CEO. Burly even into old age enjoyed keeping his eye on things and worked in the Post room at the factory. Burly was one-day talking to my dad and he told him that Brights had been very successful! In fact, Burly said he could have come to work in a Rolls Royce, but didn't because his workers would have asked for a pay rise. Both Burly and my Uncle Jule had great senses of humour.



Samuel & Minnie Silver and Valerie & Jule Bright. Attend  
the opening of the new factory.



Minnie Silver stands at the entrance of the new  
factory. Minnie was so very proud of both her  
brothers.



Burly Bright & Minnie Silver

### The end of an era.

Sadly, Burly's wife Priscilla Bright (nee Shenfield) passed away in 2006. Burly himself passed away in 2008. In 2014, Alan sold the company to fine people who continue Brights to this day from Luton. In 2015 my Cousin Alan Derek Bright passed away. He had been suffering from a brain tumour! I often think about My Uncle Burly, Aunt Priscilla and my cousin Alan. All gone, but together they created a marvellous company which I remain deeply proud of always. Nothing is forever, but it's wonderful to have such memories. The photographs of the dedication of the new factory in 1990 are some of my most treasured. Burly invited my parents Minnie and Samuel Silver and Jule & Valerie Bright. Sir John Major KG CH (former UK prime minister) and Mrs Major opened the new factory. Apart from Morris's being awarded the DSC it must have been one of our family's outstanding achievements.



Morris on parade at Jewish remembrance (second on the right).

After the War Morris continued with the Association of Ex Jewish servicemen (AJAX). He became National vice president and President of the East London branch. In 1948 came a very great honour for Morris. At the Jewish remembrance parade at the Cenotaph London. He was Aide de camp to Admiral Andrew Browne Cunningham, 1st Viscount Cunningham of Hyndhope (1883-1963). Admiral Cunningham had been Mediterranean Commander-in-chief during WW2. First Sea Lord (1943-1946). His reputation was as an outstanding combat officer.



Morris's Freemason Steward medal

Morris had been a Freemason for many years. My mother Minnie once told me she had seen her father's Masonic apron which is part of the apparel of being a Mason. Two medals are owned by the family. A 1942 Steward medal it reads (Royal Masonic Benevolent inst). The second medal is Masonic and shows the years 1914 to 1918. In 1965 Morris was due to be Admiral Frazer's flag officer at the Remembrance parade that year. Both men had served in Minerva and I am sure Morris would have considered it a great honour to be selected. Sadly, Morris became too ill to attend and one month later sadly passed away! At the time he was described as "One of the Great architects of Jewish peace". The truth is it seems, as Jews we long for peace. However, history shows that this probably will never happen.

In his lifetime Morris had seen the change from an almost Victorian run type Royal Navy to a more modern fleet. The defeat of the Kaiser's Germany and Turkey in World War 1, Anti-Semitism during the inter War years raged to new heights. Leading to the rise of Jewish defence against this evil. He found that there was life outside the Navy building a life with Gertrude and family. He again saw a War where Six Million Jews would be killed by Hitler! The State of Israel established in 1947. Then he saw the early start of Burly's refrigeration company Brights Instruments.



Gertrude Bright with her grandchildren.

Behind left to right. Stephen Bright, Alan Bright, Daniel Zadek, Graham Bright.

In front left to right.

Philip Bright, Simon Silver, Gertrude Bright & Gloria Zadek.

Like all things we are left with memories in the end. My grandmother Gertrude passed away in 1977. I had the very great honour of living with her at 89 Park Avenue North Willesden Green London, in the same house that she had bought with Morris back in the 1930's, during my teenage years. I know how delighted Gloria both Gertrude & Morris would have been to see the generations of their family develop. This was mainly because Valerie & Jule had almost created the perfect blueprint for the continuation of the Bright's. So much I have seen over the years is like history repeating itself. My Cousin Stephens's brilliant technical knowledge of electronics, Graham's Doctorate, Magistrate, acting, singing, entertaining and business presentation skills and Philip also again has a great personality, been outstanding in Jewish community support, acting and business acumen. Each of my cousins have so many of Morris's and Jule great qualities.



Gertrude Bright holds her great  
grandson Mark Zadek born in  
Cologne Germany 1975.

My grandmother Gertrude had that pleasure of seeing her granddaughter Gloria Silver marry Daniel Zadek in 1969 and they went to live in Cologne, Germany. She saw her great grandson, Mark. And even went to Cologne to visit the family. After all the awful Wars with Germany, things had moved full circle and we had a German family. Gertrude was never, until the end, held back by her age. She lived with a young heart.

### Remembering the past looking to the future

The World changes and moves on! Does it or really has it? We like to think that things have or will improve, but in reality, the same hatreds manifest themselves time after time. The dangers of the World and individuals' lust for power still exist. Many of the things' Morris stood against are still around. The attacks and killing of Jews including Synagogues and property outrages are all too common place! Serious attacks on Jews around the World have taken place costing many lives. The State of Israel is in a perpetual state of war against Iran, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza & Yemen. Rockets capable of great destruction have been fired by Iran even at Arab states! The UK has had to make tough decisions. Even at a cost of offending our most important Allie the United States. Our economy is fragile and our Royal Navy will take time to modernise. So, it is not like in Morris's day where the Navy had hundreds of ships and massive man power at its disposal.

You would have thought the need for War by now would be over and a lasting peace found. Far from it! Royal Navy ships main threat is much closer to home than the Middle east. Russia has the ability to undermine and threaten. However, Morris's would be delighted in the excellent choice of an outstanding First Sea Lord General Sir Gwyn Jenkins KCB OBE Royal Marines. Given the tools and support he will truly make the Royal Navy great again. Personally, I still get a real kick out of hearing a member of the Royal Navy has got an award and the passing out at HMS training bases. I still love to hear about our ships. I am in awe of our two Great aircraft carriers, ships and our latest submarines. I think Morris would have been excited by their technology. I even think he would have liked today's practical dress for Navy personnel. Because we are an island nation our Navy is very vital to us. It always was and I believe will always be so. We must give it all it needs to continue to be the fine service we all know and respect.

Morris, I think, would be proud that Britain has maintained its Monarchy. Even though there have difficult times lately! Health and some scandals. The King has maintained his dignity and has ensured the strength of the throne and future. The UK and continues our international identity on the World stage and is ready to stand up still for democracy and freedom. Even though we are a bit later for the party these days

In the summer of 2023 on a scorching hot day. I visited the graves of Morris & Gertrude in the Jewish Western cemetery in Edmonton London. On that day I visited the graves also of many family members including Morris Wisberg my great grandfather who is in the same cemetery. It was clear that many of the graves need cleaning. I do hope the family read this and we can come up with a plan?

This is a story I hope that is never lost in time. It is about all you can be and never giving up! It is about loving your country however imperfect. It is about loyalty to our King and Royal family. Morris Moss Bright was a patriot and was proud of Britain and being Jewish. I share his values. It is about standing up for our right to exist as Jews in a democratic proper way. It is about loving your family and wanting good things for them. In my working life some of the best people I have ever known are Muslim. I will never believe in giving up the quest for lasting peace. However, you cannot have peace at any price

and all sides must work towards it. We must in my view stand with the United States they are our most important Allie and trusted friend.

On the next page is Jule amazing text! When you read it be very proud of Morris Moss Bright's service to the nation and his devotion to freedom and equality. The wonderful family Morris & Gertrude have left behind. I pray all will continue to be successful always with the Almighty's help.



Commander Morris Moss Bright, DSC, RN

## The Life and Times of Commander Morris Moss Bright D.S.C R.N by Jule Warwick Bright

### THE LIFE AND TIMES OF COMMANDER M.M.BRIGHT D.S.C. R.N.

1890 to 1965

#### Early history of Jews in the Royal Navy,

In the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich there is a painting by Hogarth of Captain Sir Alexander Schomberg dated 1760. He in fact was the son of a German Jewish doctor, living in England. He was a Jew by birth and due to the Test Act of 1673, was obliged to publicly receive sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England. So we find him giving up his Jewish faith just to become an officer in the Royal Navy. This was when he was twenty three, rather late at the time, and because of the Test Act all his family abandoned Judaism.

Jewish immigrant traders came to the various Naval towns-Portsmouth, Chatham, Plymouth and Sheerness and started to trade with the Navy selling everything from old clothes to trinkets and cheap jewellery to the seamen. It is quite probable that some of these traders were taken by the Press Gangs and forced unwillingly into the Royal Navy. Needless to say, the number of Jewish traders and their families in the naval towns were the beginning of the Jewish communities and the building of Synagogues. Plymouth Synagogue has the privilege of being the oldest Ashkanazic Synagogue in the English speaking world, built in 1763. Miraculously it was saved from destruction when the centre of Plymouth was destroyed during an air raid in 1941.

There is an interesting story about a warden of the Penzance Hebrew Congregation called Lemon Hart. He was a spirit merchant in partnership with his brother Jacob. The firm became purveyors of rum to the Royal Navy when they moved to London in 1811. In 1849 Hart supplied 100,000 gallons of rum for the matelots' daily "tot". Lemon Hart Rum is still on sale today although the original firm no longer exists.

There is a record of a Moses Benjamin on board the Victory at Trafalgar, but he was discharged on the orders of Lord Nelson as "he was a Jew". It seems that the navy did not mind who served on the lower deck, but to be an officer they had to relinquish their Jewish faith. Not so in the case of my father as you will hear later. Moses Benjamin was a "Landsman" and was probably also pressed into the navy. The "Jewish Chronicle" believe it or not has a link with the Royal Navy, as the paper's founder Isaac Vallentine was pressed into the service in about 1812, eventually obtaining his release with the aid of the Canterbury Jewish community. The Jewish Chronicle incidentally, was founded in 1841.

I am indebted to Geoffrey Green who is a naval historian, and also happens to be Jewish, for some of this information.

#### Early life in the East End.

My father, Morris Moss Bright was born in the East End of London on August 9th. 1890 to poor Jewish parents, both of whom were born in

England. He was the eldest of 5 children, and lost his father when he was thirteen.

As they lived in Poplar, he often walked to the docks where he loved to see the many ships that were berthed there. He really longed to go to sea and see the world. One day he asked an "old salt" how he could get on the ships and was told "when your'e old enough join the Royal Navy"!

Two years later in 1905 his dream became a reality. His mother, although born in England, could not read or write but was able to sign her name. My father told her that he wanted to become a telegraph boy with the GPO and needed her signature on the form. Little did she know that this was the enrolment form for joining the Royal Navy as a boy entrant.

One of the questions on the enlisting form asked if he was Church of England or Church of Scotland? As there was not the usual question of religion on the form he thought that as he lived in England, he must be C of E. It was later, when they wrote to my grandmother to ask if he could be confirmed, by a visiting Bishop, that the truth was revealed. She took the letter to her Rabbi and told him that she was alarmed that they wanted to "confirm her Morry". The Rabbi wrote to the Admiralty, and his original entrance certificate was duly altered from C. of E to Jew. This matter of religion, however, did not hinder his career at all, and his determination to get on in the service was uppermost in his thoughts.

His early days as a boy entrant were really tough. He was sent to the old training ship, H.M.S. Ganges where the overseeing Petty Officers beat the boys with rope ends, and holystoning the deck was a daily chore. He told me that when rubbing the decks with the stone he looked at the feet of the P.O. standing above him, and on each stroke of the stone said to himself "I'll be like you one day".

Needless to say the food was atrocious. Ships biscuits and pickled pork from barrels that were well past their sell by date was the normal fare of the day.

Eventually after going through the ranks of Ordinary Seaman, Leading Seaman, Petty Officer, Chief P.O. he then became Warrant Officer. We have in our possession copies of all his "flimsies", which are the various Captains' reports during his service.

In 1911 Winston Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty, and as a new broom effected drastic changes in the administration of the Navy. One was, that certain outstanding men from the Lower Deck should have the opportunity for commissioned rank, and in 1913 my father was selected for a commission at the age of 23. This fact made him the very first Jew to go from the Lower to the Upper deck, an honour of which he was justly proud. His college courses were interrupted by the outbreak of the First World war.

The Fleet was mobilised in July 1914, and he was posted to HMS Minerva (a Light Cruiser) and saw action in many parts of the world including the Far East and the Med. While in Singapore, he told me, that he had had a "Singapore Sling" in Raffles. Not so many years ago I had the pleasure of visiting Raffles myself, which was still in its original Colonial state, and as I walked through the door I

had an uncanny feeling as I remembered him passing through the same place so many years before. You know that tingle factor.

As I wanted more information about the exploits of HMS Minerva I recently went to the Public Records Office in Kew. There I was able to inspect the actual Ships logs. These show the day to day activities on board H.M.S. Minerva and some of the entries put a different light on the Akaba incident, for instance:

1st August 1914 Mobilising Ship, All hands preparing ship for war and the continual entry "Coaling duties"

Later Off Akaba

1st November 1914 5.00 pm Stopped off Akaba, shelled fort and barracks with 6" Shells(6)

2nd November 1914. Landed flag of truce to demand surrender of Akaba. 9.30 Shelled fort and barracks and demolished them.

Landed armed party of seamen and marines Searched town and destroyed all stores.

On reading through the logs it appears that they went up and down the Red Sea from Suez to Akaba at least eight times over a period of two months.

The logs continue and on 16th December 1914 They sent off their Hydro-Aeroplane. This was a seaplane that could be lowered over the side by derricks and it went off on reconnaissance. On its return it was hoisted up on to the deck again

At 11.45 Rifle fire at ship from shore was reported

24th December 1914 Off Akaba enemy opened fire with 12 pounder, Sent off seaplane but returned due to engine trouble.

31st December 1914 9.45 am Capt. Suepp Royal Marines and escort landed in N.W. corner of Gulf to examine the beach, Turks concealed in sand hills opened fire. Landed Marine detachment to rescue and opened fire with shrapnel. Enemy driven off. 1 Private Royal Marine killed and Capt Suepp seriously wounded.

5.p.m. Stopped ship for burial service for the RM private.

8.p.m. Seaplane wrecked 15 miles away Observer slightly injured and unable to walk.

Next day sent landing party of 150 men to search for pilot and went about 6 miles inland. No sign of pilot.

2nd January 1915 Returned to head of Gulf and found pilot on beach and embarked him uninjured but exhausted.

On the 8th January 1915 Auction of Pte Wards' effects.

In a letter to the Jewish Chronicle dated November 27th 1914 my father describes the bombardment of Akaba and I quote.

#### LETTERS FROM JEWISH SAILORS

" You see, Sir, I have been on active service since the war broke out and we have covered a good many miles, performing a duty that has many records and will live in history when it is published. At present I am not permitted to mention the latter, but I have asked my Captain's permission to describe to you the bombardment of Akaba, where we proved a success. Akaba is a small town north-east in the Gulf of Akaba in Asia, and during our duty, we heard that Germany was going to use the said place for a good purpose, such as mine stores, and also direct all her plans here for the destruction of our transports which as you know have to go through the Suez Canal to get near the fighting line. Now we could not possibly touch Akaba because it belonged to the Turks, and at that time we were still friendly with Turkey. Of course we guarded the place until we were ordered to bombard it. Away we went at full speed

expecting to see a nice big town with lofty houses and palaces, but alas!, it was just the reverse, mud huts and a fort and, in front of them covering the whole show, an exceptional number of fir trees.

Our fire was directed at the fort, and after three rounds we reduced it to ruins. The next object to take our eye was the Post Office, that came down with the first shot. Night came on and we had to wait for daylight before we could proceed. Well the following day a landing party was told off. I was put in charge of a company of about fifty men, but two hundred landed in all. We got into boats, and whilst we were pulling for shore our guns gave them a bit of fire which was very murderous. Now, when we landed we were in a very awkward position, as we were situated in a sort of valley, so to speak. But that did not make any difference to us boys; our first thought was to inspect the town. We found three with arms and they were promptly shot where they stood. No one else could be found and after seeing what damage we really had done, we were surprised to find that the only thing we had left standing and entrenched was the Mosque-- of course that is, the Mohammedan church. Very strange that, I must say, but it is the truth, and it's position was about twenty yards from the fort; absolutely marvellous don't you think so?

Well, to go on we made for the railway station which was about ten miles away. When within two miles from it we were fired upon from the hills.. Now, just imagine our position in the open: not a soul could be seen and ourselves left at the mercy of those who were trying to stop our intentions. Of course we returned the fire. What at? Nothing as far as I could see. But that silenced them all right. We did not venture any further, and so made our way back to the ship under fire all the time; fortunately no one was hit as their shooting was very poor.

Now, Sir, a word about this town, it will surprise you to know that the meaning of the word Akaba is "Obstacle" and on inspection of the place there were at least one hundred wells. You see this town is situated in the Wilderness, and all the pilgrims come here for water and dates. Of course they use camels as the place is very sandy, and to walk-- well it's very uncomfortable. Pilgrims going to Mecca stop here just for supplies, but I don't think the place would agree with us, as I found it to be very filthy, and you can just picture what hardships they must have had two thousand years ago. Our men left everything untouched although many ancient relics could have been taken away. We avoided looting and so keeping up the good name of the British Blue.

.An additional story about the landing parties that were sent, was that the other party put a camel down a well for devilment. On returning to the ship, the Captain hearing of this escapade, ordered them to go back at once to get it out. The leader of the other party was Lieutenant Bruce Fraser who eventually became Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser of North Cape. Admiral Fraser was better known for masterminding the sinking of the Scharnhorst in 1943. In the biography of Frasers life he states " Thanks largely to the compelling story told in "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom" Akaba and T.E. Lawrence became synonomous. The capture of Akaba by Laurens with Arab irregulars in July 1917 after an agonising approach march through the desert is the first point of greatest excitement of that great book. But readers of "The Seven Pillars" will, search in vain for any mention of the fact that British sailors were playing

football in Akaba two years before Lawrence even set foot in Arabia.

I often wondered what would have happened to my father if he had gone to Dartmouth instead of the Jewish Free School.

He also took part in the landing and at the eventual evacuation of Gallipoli. Later they fought against the German force under Von Latto in East Africa. It was about this time, whilst on leave, that he had met my mother, and they were married at Dukes Place Synagogue in February 1917. He wore his Lieutenant's uniform and carried his ceremonial sword. There was a guard of honour of his fellow naval officers forming an arch of swords.

In 1918 he was appointed to the Grand Fleet and saw further action with both HMS Ramilles and Marlborough against the German High Seas Fleet. It seems at this time one of the Fleets preoccupations was to destroy the German battleship Emden which was chased all over the high seas.

The Emden was a light cruiser and was known as the "Gentlemanly Raider". First she would fire a single warning shot- then send a boat over. The object of this was to ensure whether or not the vessel was carrying contraband and did not belong to a neutral power. The captain, Karl von Muller, was very sensitive on this point. When the Emden's officers were satisfied that the merchant ship was fair game they scrupulously took off all the crew to safety before sinking her.

Among the Emden's many talents was an aptitude for disguise. She could actually alter her outline. The secret was an extra dummy funnel made of canvas and stretched over a wood frame. When erected the ship could look like an English "County" class cruiser. At the end of her career there were 78 British ships looking for her. The Emden was subsequently sunk by an Australian ship H.M.S. Sydney.

After the war, as a full Lieutenant, he continued his naval studies at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich and then to HMS Dryad Navigation School.

My father used to love to relate an incident at the College. On a special occasion there was a banquet in the Great Hall. All the gold plate was laid on the tables, and among the distinguished guests was Lord Derby. At this point I would like to say a few words about my mother. Her father was a tobacco blender and worked for Markavitch Cigarettes. My mother learned to make hand made Turkish cigarettes and very special ones with rose petal tips. For this special banquet she had given some to my father to smoke after the Queen had been toasted. My father offered one to Lord Derby who refused bringing out a packet of Weights and said " I prefer these".

In 1920 the navy was being axed ( the usual round of defence cuts) and he was given the choice of staying on for a few more years with a full pension, or leaving the service with a lump sum of £1950. This was a colossal amount at the time.

My mother had by now become disenchanted with his long absences from home, and as by now, they had a son( my brother Burlington named after one of the Captains he had served under) she asked him to take the money and leave the service. So in 1920 he retired from the Navy as a Lieutenant (Retired). He was later promoted to Lieutenant Commander (Retired), but still remained on the active list.

Between the war years.

The years between the wars were nearly as eventful as those during wartime. He could turn his hand to almost anything except make money, and within a year most of his severance pay had been spent on various schemes. They had a shop in Hampstead Road and as he knew and liked fish they tried a wet and Fried fish shop. One evening when they were at the theatre, he heard someone remark "What an awful smell of fried fish". That was enough of that for him, and the next day the Fish shop became a Fruit and Vegetable shop. Not long after he decided to buy a lorry and start a transport business and managed to pick up the contract to cart Paderewski's grand piano around the U.K. when he was here to play on tour.

He was also busy in the Jewish Friendly Society movement and became President of the Tree of Zion Lodge of the Order of Achei Brith and Shield Of Abraham. He was a forceful speaker on the platform of the Anti-Deformation Committee. He was often to be heard at Speakers Corner in their fight against the Fascist element that had started to raise its ugly head. I think that my father's looks helped his oratory. He was fair haired, with blue grey eyes, and his powerful voice was an asset to his public speaking. Some of his friends at this time were Major Lionel Rose, Frank Austin and Frank Renton. All were outstanding fighters against Mosley and spoke all over London at street corners, opposing the Fascists wherever they were. There is still the Lionel Rose prize for public speaking today.

Later on, my father thought that an up-and-coming market would be Refrigeration. He then started to sell refrigerators and small cold rooms, and my brother was apprenticed with Kelvinators. He later joined my father in his small business as he knew how to repair them as they often went wrong. The business flourished and in 1937 we moved to Willesden. Things were becoming very good until the outbreak of the second world war.

During the wars, as my father was still on the reserve list, he had to go on various courses to keep up with the latest developments in naval warfare.

In June 1939 he was asked to inspect fishing trawlers to see if in the event of war they could be used to sweep mines. As a child I went with him to Lowestoft to see the ships.

Service during the second World War. War was declared on September 3rd 1939 and a day later he was posted to Harwich. My mother and brother took him to Liverpool Street Station and tearfully saw him off. During the following weekend my brother suggested that they would motor up to Harwich to see him. They asked for him at the docks and were told that he was at sea, and would not return until early evening. When the small flotilla did eventually arrive, they were amazed to see my father had gone to sea wearing a lounge suit, bowler hat and spats. Why spats I shall never know! Of course there had been no time to get his uniform.

He was given a flotilla of minesweepers in the North Sea. This was particularly dangerous work, and in July 1941 he was awarded the D.S.C. in the Kings Birthday honours list. The award was made for "outstanding zeal and whole hearted devotion to duty without which the high tradition of the Royal Navy could not have been upheld".

I eventually managed to find out exactly how he won his D.S.C. He told me, that whilst at Great Yarmouth, a ship was hit by a bomb during an air raid, and was about to sink in the mouth of the

harbour. This of course would put the port out of action for some time had it sunk. My father and a rating went on board and literally bunged up the holes with wooden spars and stopped the inevitable happening.

My mother and my sister (who was in the A.T.S. at the time) accompanied him to Buckingham Palace for the investiture by the King. The tingle factor was as work again last year when Valerie and I visited the Palace and went into the Throne room, where King George VI had given the medal to my father.

In the meantime, my brother was in the Merchant Navy as a Refrigeration Officer Engineer and was on ships engaged in bringing meat from Australia and New Zealand. Later on in the war, his ship the P & O liner Strathallen was torpedoed and sunk off Oran.

Soon after his award my father was posted to the Admiralty, Minesweeping Division and was often in the map room when Churchill came in to see the war maps. During his time at the Admiralty, an officer came into my father's office, and after he had finished and was about to leave, he was surprised to hear my father ask "What are you doing for Pesach"? The other officer was Ashe Lincoln who had no idea that my father was Jewish. They later became firm friends. After a time at the Admiralty, he went to HMS Cabot, a shore establishment in Yorkshire. You must remember that he was at this time in his mid fifties, and they obviously wanted younger men for sea duties. The story has been told that whilst at HMS Cabot, he found a rating with a particularly Jewish sounding name and asked for him to be sent for. The seaman was asked if he was a member of the Jewish faith and on confirming this, my father said that he had better go to the synagogue in Leeds for the high Holydays. The sailor said that he was not due for a pass and my father gave him one to attend the synagogue. The rating was even more surprised to see my father sitting in the synagogue a few days later. This same seaman had a rather sad story to tell. It seems that whilst in port in Egypt, a few of the men went ashore and he was either drugged or knocked out, but on waking found that he had been tattooed on his arm. The boy was from a very orthodox family and he knew that there was law concerning the defacement of one's body which says "Ye shall not imprint any marks upon you" the word "imprint marks" means one that cannot be erased, and that his very orthodox father would react badly. On returning home he kept the tattooed arm covered, until one day his father became suspicious and tore off his shirt. He was so incensed by the tattoo he apparently would not speak to his son for two years.

Soon after joining the Navy my father was tattooed ( he had an anchor and a peacock on his arm) and he said that from the moment it was done he regretted it. I am certain he did not know of the din. (Law)

Occasionally as a young boy during the war I was taken to some of the "Stone Frigates", and realised that the rank he held entitled him to a wonderful way of life. Officers were waited on hand and foot and had a batman. The wardroom was like a select London club, pink gins were the order of the day, every day. Later when he was promoted to Commander I was very impressed when they used to present arms as he passed the guards on the gates. At HMS Wildfire at Sheerness, I had a tot of Nelsons Blood. Even in its diluted form it was a very potent drink. I'm not surprised that the Navy

stopped this a few years ago, especially with the clear head that is required to operate modern computers on ships.

My father was a strict disciplinarian. This is probably why my brother joined the Merchant Navy rather than the Royal Navy and my sister joined the A.T.S., instead of the WRENS. They thought they might be posted under his command! Once when I was coming home from my school in Suffolk by train, I entered a carriage full of sailors going to London from Lowestoft. They were beefing about how strict my father was, and what a "\*\*\*\*". Needless to say I stayed very quiet in the corner of the carriage.

His sense of humour was rather old fashioned. I can remember his favourite Navy story about Chatham. It seems that a number of ratings were late in returning to the dockyard. On being asked why he was late the first one said that he hired a horse and carriage to take him up Chatham Hill and half way up the hill the horse had dropped dead "and that sir is why I'm late". "Very well" said the Captain "case dismissed". The next one in front of the Captain told the same story. This happened 5 times, all being dismissed. The next one came in and the Captain said rather sarcastically "I suppose you also hired a horse and carriage to take you up Chatham Hill and the horse dropped dead half way up the hill?". "No Sir" replied the rating "the horse was fit and well sir, We couldn't get up the hill because of all the dead horses". Towards the end of the war he was posted to Trincomalee in Ceylon. He was ready to go, having bought all his new tropical kit at Cieves, but his health had failed and he could not go. He had chronic bronchitis which prevented him doing so, and soon after this the war ended and my father left the Navy.

After the war on his return to civvy street, he restarted his refrigeration business in a very small way with my brother. Later the business flourished when my brother started to manufacture medical Cryostats (these are used for taking very thin biopsy specimens). The company moved to Huntingdon and is now the world leader in its field. I am certain my father would have been as thrilled as I was to see the name "Bright Instruments" in 8 foot letters on the side of the 43,000 sq ft purpose built factory. This is a success story in itself.

During the years after the war my father continued with AJEX and became National Vice President and President of the East London branch. One of his delights was the annual Jewish Remembrance parade. In 1948 he was Aide-de-Camp to Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Cunningham. Later in 1965 the inspecting officer was Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser, the same one from the Minerva fifty years before. At this time my father was in hospital too ill to attend the parade at Whitehall, and he was so disappointed that he could not be the Admiral's "Flag Lieutenant" on that occasion as they had been through so much together in the First World War. My father died a month later.

It is rather ironic that at the Western Synagogue cemetery in Edmonton where my father was buried, there is a large black tombstone near to his grave with the name "Emden" engraved in gold letters. It seems that they caught up with each other at last!

A memorial service was held during which Rev. Berberman described him as a "member of AJEX who through war, became one of the great architects of the Jewish peace in many ways".

G.K. Chesterton said "Adventure is the Champagne of life" and I really think Morris Moss Bright had plenty of Champagne.



