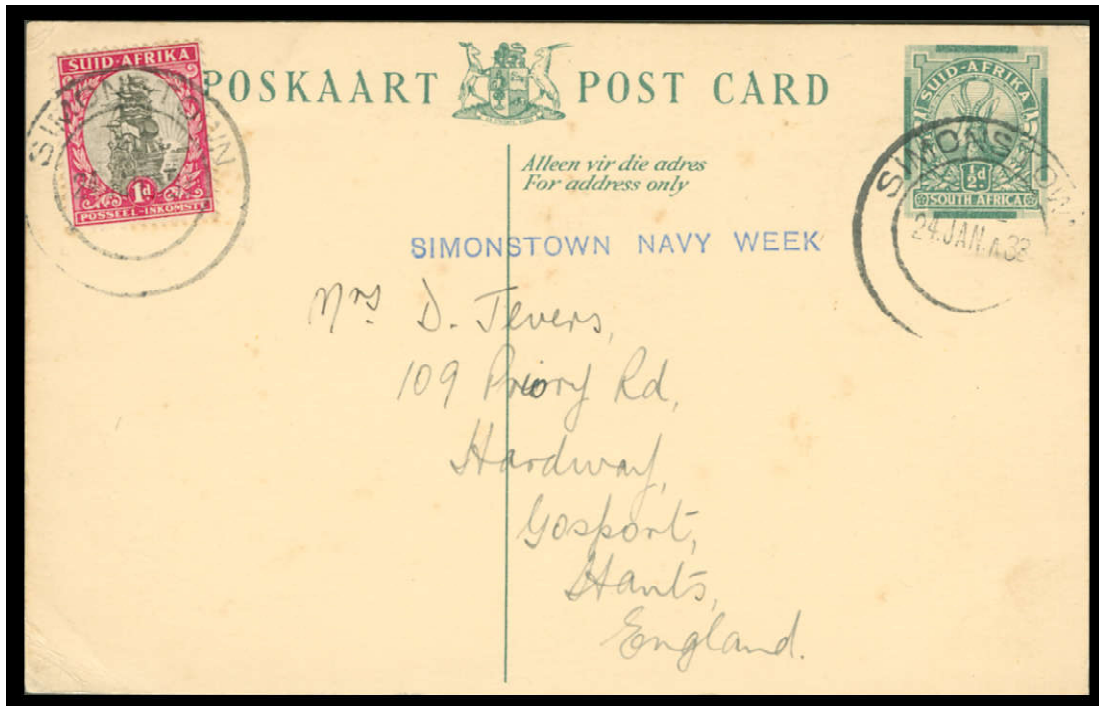


Simonstown Navy Week & HMS Neptune: 1938

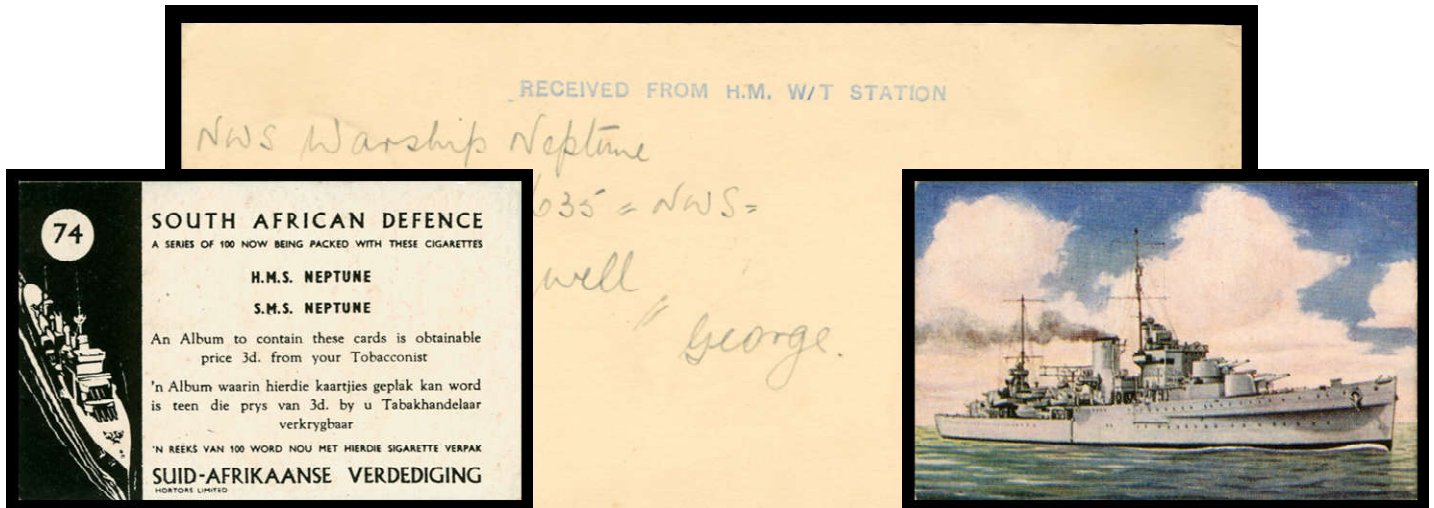
An annual Navy Week was held to encourage enlistment in the RNVR (Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve).



1938. Postcard from SIMONSTOWN '24 JAN 38' to GB.

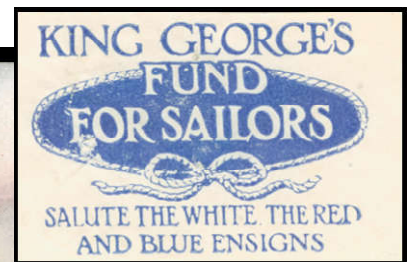
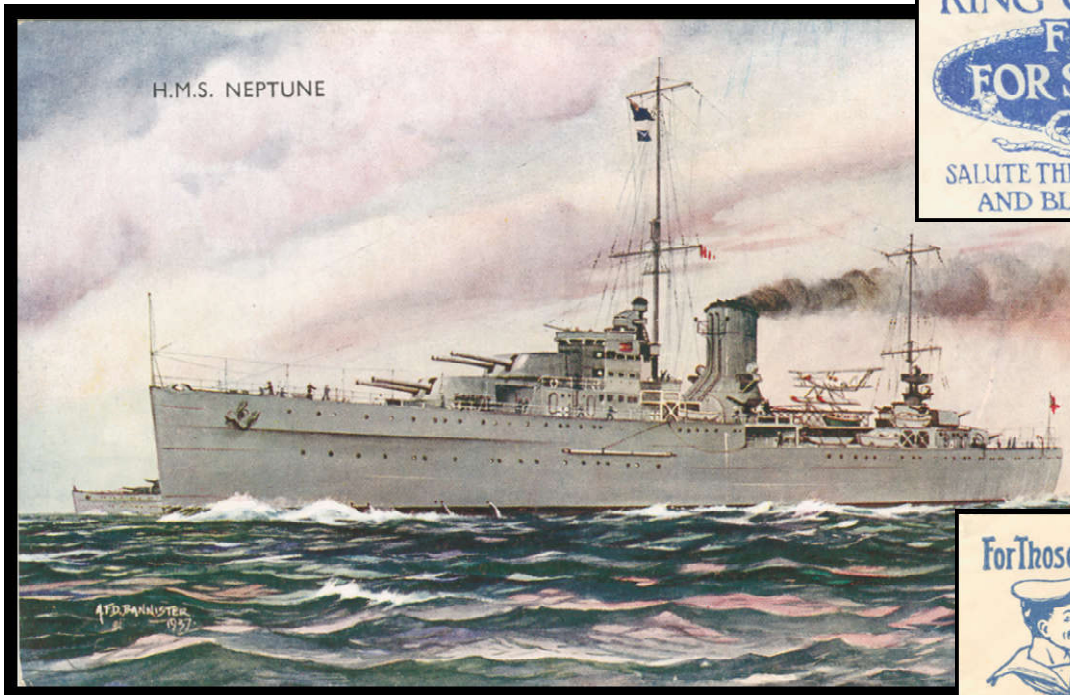
The front above states 'SIMONSTOWN NAVY WEEK', the rear below 'RECEIVED FROM H.M. W/T STATION'.

Below: A 'South African Defence' Series Cigarette Card from the late 1930s shows HMS Neptune.

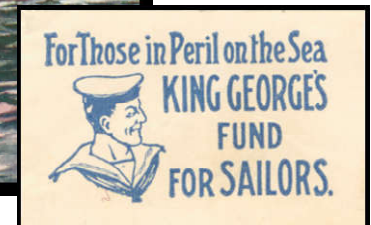


Circa 1930 - 1947. South African NAVY DAY / WEEK labels encourage interest in Naval service.

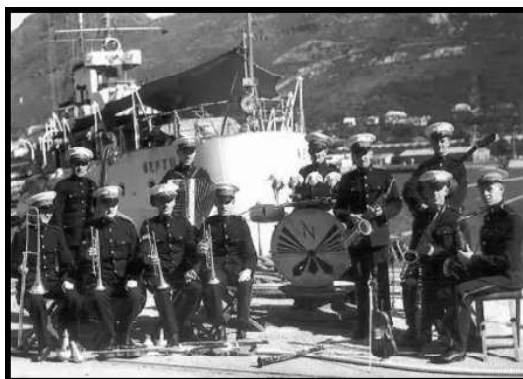
The Loss of HMS Neptune: 1933 - 1941



*Circa WW2.
Above & below,
Adhesive Charity
Labels for Sailors -
King George's Fund
For Sailors - as sold
in South Africa.*



*Circa 1936. Postcard. HMS Neptune. (J. Salmon Ltd, Sevenoaks).
Reverse. Length 554½ feet. 7,000 tons. 8-6 inch guns & 4-4 inch guns. 72,000h.p. 35.5 knots.*



Neptune's Royal Marine Band, Simonstown.



Flying the Flag. Cape Town Docks.

HMS Neptune was a Leander-class light cruiser manned by a large contingent from the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy, as well as men seconded from the SANF (South African Naval Forces).

She arrived in Simonstown in October 1937 to relieve HMS Amphion, the Flagship on the Africa Station, while she underwent a refit in Simonstown. Amphion departed Simon's Town in October 1938, leaving Neptune the only cruiser in the 6th Cruiser Squadron deployed in the South Atlantic.

In December 1939, Neptune was ordered to Uruguay in the aftermath of the Battle of the River Plate. She arrived after the German heavy cruiser Admiral Graf Spee was scuttled off Montevideo. Dispatched to the Mediterranean, Neptune was the first to spot the Italian Fleet before the start of the indecisive Battle of Calabria in July 1940. She suffered damage while hitting the heavy cruiser Bolzano who led the Italian line. Neptune's salvo jammed Bolzano's rudder forcing her to turn in a tight circle and withdraw.

In December 1941, Neptune led Force K, a raiding squadron sent to intercept and sink a German and Italian convoy en route to Libya with supplies for the Axis forces. After a brief engagement off Tripoli at sunset, Neptune was sunk after she entered an uncharted Italian minefield and exploded four mines. She quickly capsized with the loss of 737 crew. There was only one survivor. The dead included 150 New Zealanders and 17 South Africans from the SANF, as well as two South Africans enlisted in the RN.