

## HMS Malaya

Herbert Good served as a Commissioned Engineer on HMS Malaya from 28 October 1936 to 20 April 1939. The battleship was named in honour of Malaya because its construction was financed by the Federated Malay States (Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang). The Malayan Jack flag was flown at the foremasthead.



**MS Malaya, with HMS Warspite and HMS Nelson, March 1938.<sup>1</sup>**



**1937** – Portugal (February), Southsea, UK (May), Greece (Sept/Oct), Malta (Nov/Dec)



**In February 1937, HMS 'Malaya' collided with the Dutch steamship 'Kertosono' in fog off the coast of Portugal (near Porto). This photo shows the damaged anti-aircraft gun on HMS Malaya after the crash. A Lloyds Law report notes that Malaya was bound south, and Kertosono bound north. Both ships tried to take action to avoid each other, but there was a dispute as to the bearing of each vessel.<sup>ii</sup>**

Newspaper Report from the Kingston Gleaner (February 9, 1937): **'British Battleship Malaya in Collision' reports that Malaya will return to Portsmouth for repairs.**



**After HMS Malaya was repaired, it took part in King George VI's Coronation Review on 20 May 1937.** Since 1415, ships of the Royal

Navy have assembled at Spithead off the coast of Portsmouth to honour a newly crowned monarch with a Review of his or her fleet. When King George VI came to the throne in May 1937, he travelled down to Southsea to carry out a Naval Review in his honour, with thousands of spectators gathering on the shores of the Solent to watch. This photo shows sailors from four different countries during the Coronation review, Southsea, Hampshire, 20 May 1937 [Sailors from the USS 'New York' (USA), 'Asicara' (Japan), HMS 'Malaya'(UK) and the ARA 'Marat' (USSR) pose with a young girl.<sup>iii</sup>

**In September/October 1937, there are reports of HMS Malaya in Greece, around Kalamitza Bay (Skyros).<sup>iv</sup>** The Commander-in-Chief of the

Mediterranean Station notes there is an “extraordinary good feeling in Malaya” after a regatta on 20 September 1937:

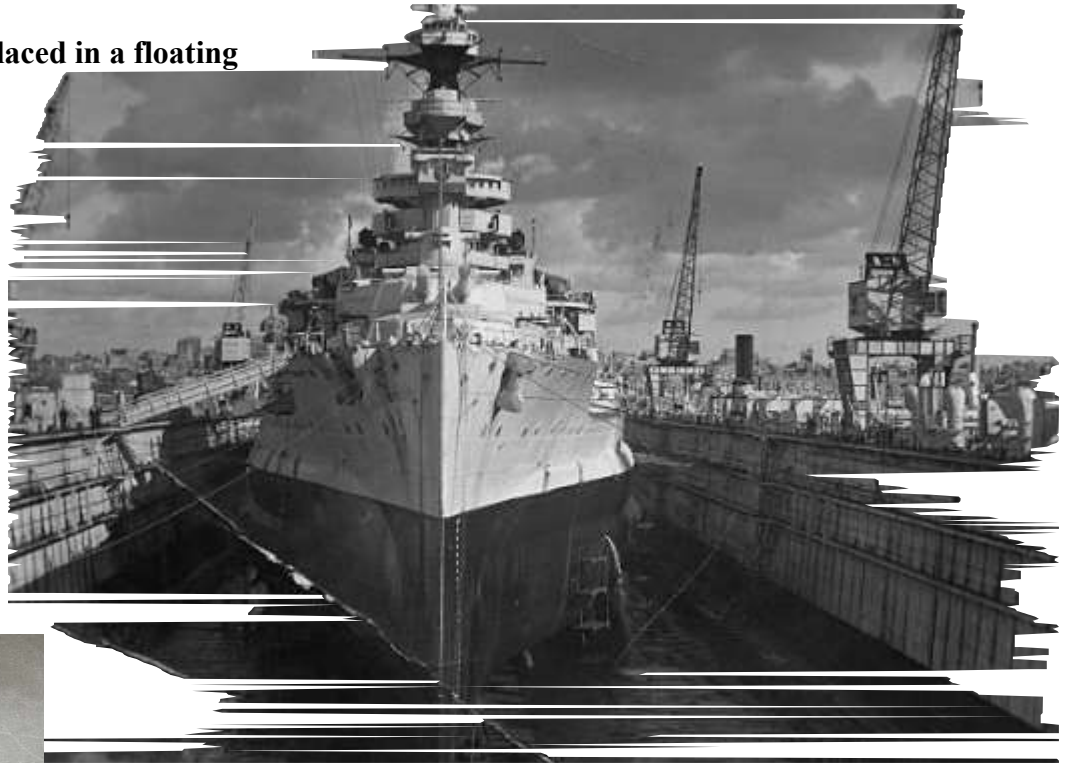
one afternoon at Mudros before I had to dash off. We had a very successful regatta between *Barham* and *Malaya* the day before we left Mudros – extraordinary good feeling in *Malaya* who were handsomely beaten by *Barham*, cheered the latter spontaneously as we left.

All good luck and kindest regards to Lady Chatfield.



**By the end of 1937, HMS Malaya was in Malta's Grand Harbour<sup>v</sup>.** The Mediterranean island of Malta was part of the British Empire and hosted the Royal Navy's shipping station. The British battleship HMS 'Malaya' can be seen in the distance.<sup>vi</sup>

**HMS Malaya was placed in a floating dock in Malta** for cleaning and coating bottom in December 1937.<sup>vii</sup> Malta's Royal Navy dockyard had the most extensive docking and repair facilities outside the British Isles.<sup>viii</sup>



**Malta's well-equipped base was the headquarters for the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet until 1940 when the decision was made to abandon the base** due to the threat from

the nearby Italian Air Force, based in Sicily. The Mediterranean Fleet relocated to Alexandria in Egypt.<sup>ix</sup>

## 1938: Venice, Italy (early August) and Haifa, Palestine (August/September)



**Bert visited Venice in August 1938.** HMS Malaya was part of a Royal Navy courtesy trip to Venice's International Film Festival, where Britain was showing the world the latest from her film studios.<sup>x</sup>

**American actor and film director Douglas Fairbanks, Sr (1883-1939) on board the battleship HMS 'Malaya' during its visit to Venice, Italy 1938.** He was best known for his swash-buckling roles in silent films such as *The Thief of Baghdad*, *Robin Hood*, and *The Mark of Zorro*.



His son, the actor Douglas Fairbanks, Jr starred in the 1938 American comedy film *The Rage of Paris*, which won the Venice Film Festival for Special Recommendation (8-31 August 1938). Perhaps this is why he was in Venice at the time?

**While in Venice, the crew of HMS Malaya did some sightseeing.** Photos show British sailors from the British battleship HMS 'Malaya' visiting the Doge's Palace, Venice, Italy, 1938, during the warship's visit to the city.



**Greek boy from Pylos being nursed in the sick bay of the British battleship HMS 'Malaya', 1938 (no date).**



**August-September 1938: 1936-39 Arab revolt in Palestine**

**From August to September 1938, Herbert served on HMS Malaya in the port of Haifa during the Arab Revolt in Palestine, for which he received the Palestine Medal issued to all service personnel in Palestine. On the rim of the medal is written: CMD ENGR H.GOOD RN. On the ribbon there is a bar with the writing: PALESTINE 1936-1939.**



The



**revolt was a nationalist uprising by Palestinian Arabs**, demanding independence from the British administration and an end to Jewish immigration and land purchases. It was partly prompted by nationalist protests in nearby Egypt and Syria.<sup>xi</sup>

**This period is interesting in the development of modern-day Israel** as it became clear to the British after the Arab Revolt that the two communities (Arabs and Jews) could not be reconciled and the idea of partition was first developed.

**The role of the Royal Navy in the Arab Revolt was to patrol the coast to prevent gun running.** The navy searched up to 150 vessels per week for arms, which proved to be an effective preventative measure although no culprits were found. In the early stages, naval platoons formed the *Haifa Town Force*, freeing up army troops for mobile duties elsewhere in Palestine.<sup>xii</sup>

**By the time HMS Malaya arrived in August 1938, the situation was increasingly tense.** The British published the Peel Commission Report in July 1938 which recommended partition of Palestine. The government study was rejected by the Arabs, had a mixed reaction from Jews, and levels of violence in Palestine dramatically increased.<sup>xiii</sup> A large bomb had exploded on 6 July 1938 in the Arab market at Haifa, most likely placed by a Jewish faction. The High Commissioner requested additional naval support, and HMS Repulse arrived in July 1938, and then was later relieved by HMS Malaya a month later in August 1938. The navy took control of Haifa again, and soldiers were freed to patrol the countryside.

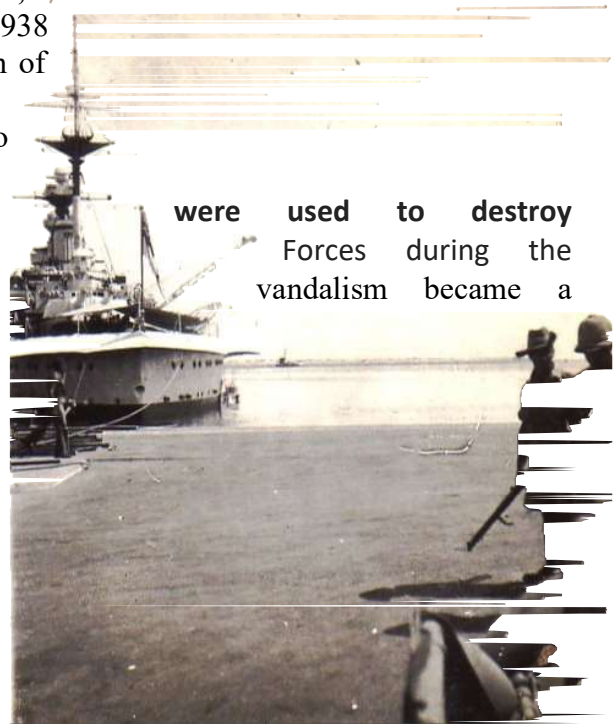


**British marines patrol Haifa during riots<sup>xiv</sup>. This picture of the British troops looking in every direction shows the tension in the aftermath of an Arab "incendiary" attack in a Jewish Quarter in Haifa in July 1938.<sup>xv</sup>**

**HMS Malaya arriving at Haifa,** photographed in 1938 during the Arab uprising. It is watched by men of the Royal Ulster Rifles.<sup>xvi</sup> Following the arrival of the British in 1918, Haifa had developed into the only significant port on the Palestine coast.

**Sea mines from the battleship HMS Malaya houses.<sup>xvii</sup>** In Hughes' study of the British Armed Arab Revolt, he notes that "destruction and systematic, systemic part of British counter-insurgency operations during the revolt".<sup>xviii</sup> The British blew up Arab villagers' houses, often the most impressive ones in the village. Sometimes the charges laid were so powerful that neighbouring houses collapsed or flying debris hit bystanders.<sup>xix</sup> Occasionally, entire villages would be destroyed, as was the case with Mi'ar village in October 1938. During Malaya's stay, there were 67 fires, 36 bombs, 24 stonings or stabbings, and 8 shootings.<sup>xx</sup>

Photo of HMS Malaya in the port of Haifa in August–September 1938 during the Arab revolt in Palestine.<sup>xxi</sup>



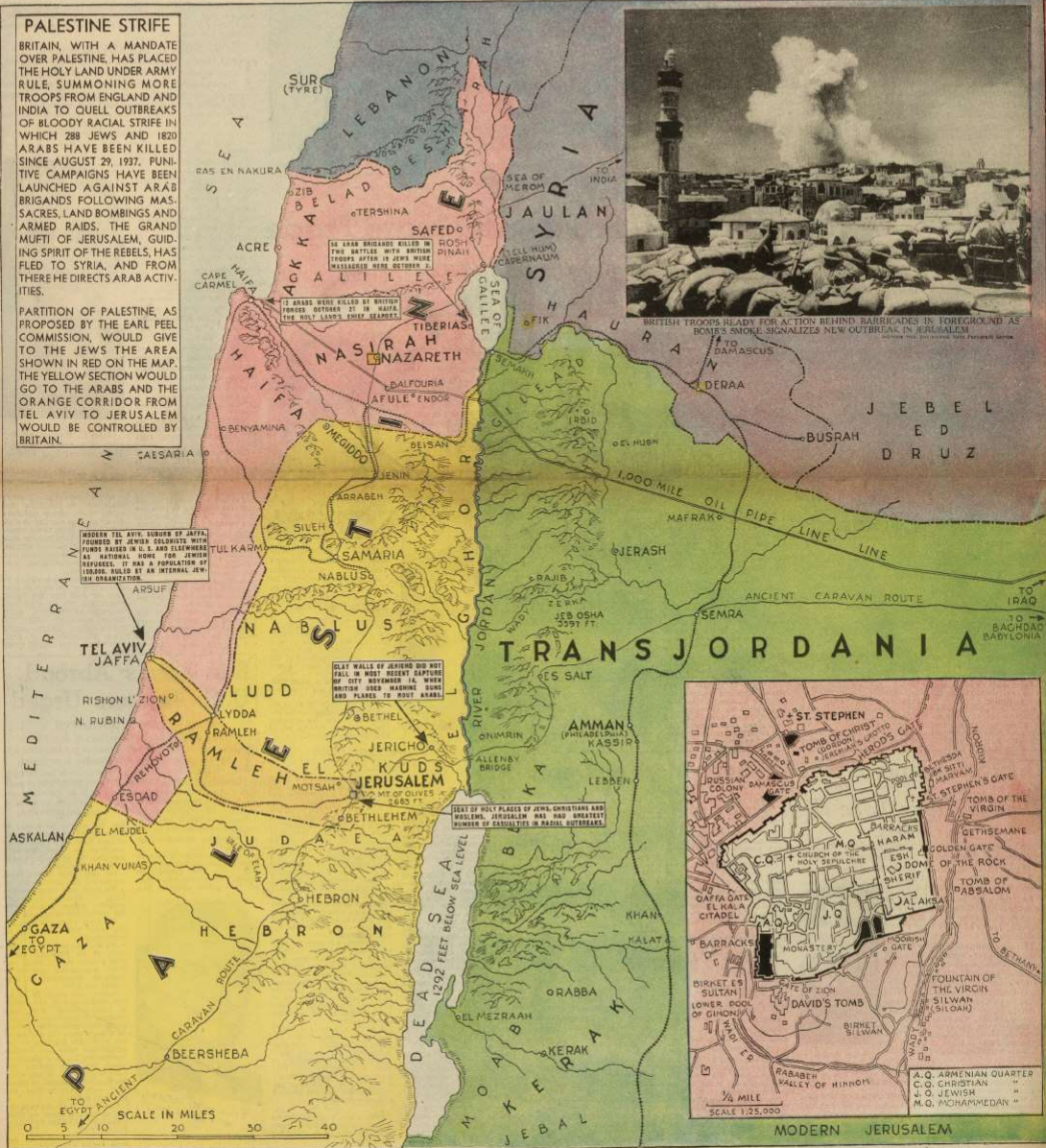
**were used to destroy Forces during the vandalism became a**



**MARCH OF EVENTS** *San Francisco Examiner* **SCREEN DRAMA**  
 SUNDAY, DEC. 13, 1938

**Holy Land in Turmoil From Terrorism**

*Palestine, sacred birthplace of great religions and haven for Jewish refugees of the world, continues to be convulsed by disorders, massacres and outrages that shock civilization.*



BRITISH TROOPS READY FOR ACTION BEHIND BARRICADES IN FOREGROUND AS BOMB'S SMOKE SIGNALIZES NEW OUTBREAK IN JERUSALEM

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## 1939 – Malta

Newspaper clipping of 'Men Of HMS Malaya giving their ship a new coat of paint in Grand Harbour Malta'<sup>xxiii</sup>

HMS Malaya crew featured on a cigarette card in 1939, engaged in the traditional 'Make and Mend' activity. The tradition of 'Make and Mend' was introduced by the Government to prepare the British public in another war came. It was based on lessons learned during WW1. Issued by W.D & H.O. Wills in 1939.<sup>xxiv</sup>





i A large image size 10" x 7" approx, is available. Reproduced from the original negative / photo under license from MPL, the copyright holder. <https://www.worldnavalships.com/malaya.htm>

ii <https://www.i-law.com/ilaw/doc/view.htm?id=142436>

iii [http://www.artres.com/C.aspx?VP3=ViewBox\\_VPage&VBID=2UN365BBX6EOP&IT=ZoomImageTemplate01\\_VForm&IID=2UN86IXU6Z1K&PN=9&CT=Search&SF=0](http://www.artres.com/C.aspx?VP3=ViewBox_VPage&VBID=2UN365BBX6EOP&IT=ZoomImageTemplate01_VForm&IID=2UN86IXU6Z1K&PN=9&CT=Search&SF=0)

iv Halpern, P. (2016) *The Mediterranean Fleet, 1930-1939*. Navy Records Society Publication.

v [https://www.maritimequest.com/warship\\_directory/great\\_britain/battleships/malaya/hms\\_malaya\\_page\\_2.htm](https://www.maritimequest.com/warship_directory/great_britain/battleships/malaya/hms_malaya_page_2.htm)

vi [http://www.artres.com/C.aspx?VP3=ViewBox\\_VPage&VBID=2UN365BBX6EOP&IT=ZoomImageTemplate01\\_VForm&IID=2UN86IXU6OGX&PN=7&CT=Search&SF=0](http://www.artres.com/C.aspx?VP3=ViewBox_VPage&VBID=2UN365BBX6EOP&IT=ZoomImageTemplate01_VForm&IID=2UN86IXU6OGX&PN=7&CT=Search&SF=0)

vii Halpern, P. (2016) *The Mediterranean Fleet, 1930-1939*. Navy Records Society Publication.

viii Noppen, R (2018) *Malta 1940-42: The Axis air battle for Mediterranean supremacy*.

ix <https://www.naval-history.net/WW2CampaignsRNMed.htm>

x <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/destroyers-visit-venice>

xi A United Nations document from June 30, 1990 titled "The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem: 1917-1988, Part I 1917-1947"

xii Stewart, N (2002) *The Royal Navy and the Palestine Patrol*. Routledge.

xiii <http://www.israeldailypicture.com/2012/08/why-did-these-british-forces-look-so.html>

xiv <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/photographs-of-historic-haifa>

xv <http://www.israeldailypicture.com/2012/08/why-did-these-british-forces-look-so.html>

xvi <https://www.flickr.com/photos/63057595@N06/11674135783>

xvii Hughes, M (2009) 'The Banality of Brutality: British Armed Forces and the Repression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-39', *English Historical Review*, Vol CXXIV, No 507, pp.314-354.

xviii Page 10 of Hughes (2009).

xix Hughes, M (2010) 'From Law and Order to Pacification: Britain's Suppression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-39', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Winter 2010), pp. 6-22

xx Stewart, N (2002) *The Royal Navy and the Palestine Patrol*. Routledge.

xxi Stewart, N (2002) *The Royal Navy and the Palestine Patrol*. Routledge.

xxii From David Rumsey's Historical Map Collection  
<https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~226356~5505250:Map-of-Palestine>

xxiii Source: Regional Newspaper published in 1939. <https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/1939-Men-Of-Hms-Malaya-Painting-Their-Battleship-Grand-Harbour-Malta/332843580083?hash=item4d7f05fab3:g:gfWAAOSwredbx0qj:rk:57:pf:0>

xxiv <https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/HMS-Malaya-Royal-Navy-Battleship-Make-and-Mend-Original-Vintage-Card-/323485641159>