

ALBERT CHARLES “JOE” CAKE, DSM, G3CNO

by Bill Mahoney, G3TZM

Many of you probably know Joe for his running of the 40m nets in the mornings. He did this for many years up until fairly recently. Sadly, he died on the 19th August 2007 at 92 years of age.

Albert Charles Cake was born in Dorset and was the youngest of eight. He joined the Royal Navy at 16 in 1930. He went into the Submarine Service in 1937 and served variously in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Indian and Pacific Oceans. Although I have known Joe for over 40 years I had no idea until this week that he received the DSM (Distinguished Service Medal) whilst on submarine operations in the Mediterranean. The Germans were reinforcing Rommel in North Africa with a supply route from Tarranto in Italy. The submarine on which Joe was serving detected a number of ships heading for North Africa. The Captain asked for a bearing which would yield the greatest score after which he fired a salvo of torpedoes. Two ships were sunk as a result of this salvo and the reason for the success was put down to the sonar operator, none other than Joe Cake. The Captain was rewarded with a medal and Joe received the DSM. Having read the detailed description in Alistair Mars book “British Submarines at WAR 1939-1945”, I have come to the conclusion that it was in HMS Unbroken under Alistair Mars’s captaincy that this event occurred.

In 1937 he married his Scottish wife and they had three children Jim, Ray and Margaret. In turn, Joe became a grandfather and great grandfather. Among the family he was famous for his non-stop drives from Portsmouth to visit family in Campbeltown, on the Mull of Kintyre. Apparently, he would only stop for comfort breaks but would travel self-sufficient by taking his own flask with hot drink. He continuously tried to beat his record time for the journey, some 630 miles.

He had a knack of remembering all the family birthdays, children, grand children and all. On his own 90th birthday the family were gathered on the London Eye when he announced to all that if it wasn't for him none of them would be there!

He was a keen gardener even though the garden in his house of 60 years was described as "a postage stamp" but he managed to maintain it to be always full of colour and a variety of plants.

He had a lifelong interest in radio and as G3CNO was a skilled CW operator. He worked in television rental and repairs in the Portsmouth area for many years. According to his grand daughter: "he could make and fix anything". She added that he had a dart board in the kitchen which he used to use when waiting for the kettle to boil. He also had a television installed on its side so that he could watch it comfortably whilst lying in bed!

Other radio members in the family include son-in-law Gordon, G7IUE and cousin Jamie MM0BED in Campbeltown.

His funeral took place at Portchester Crematorium on the 29th August 2007 on a beautiful sunny day and was attended by a large number of family and friends and included some members of the Horndean Radio Club and other amateurs.

R.I.P. Joe.