

= Bill King (Royal Navy officer) =

Commander William Donald Aelian " Bill " King , DSO & Bar , DSC (23 June 1910 ? 21 September 2012) was a British naval officer , yachtsman and author . He was the oldest participant in the first solo non @-@ stop , around @-@ the @-@ world yacht race , the Sunday Times Golden Globe Race , the only person to command a British submarine on both the first and last days of World War II . At the time of his death , he was the last surviving British World War II submarine commander .

Brought up by his mother and grandmother , King went to the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth . He was first assigned to the battleship Resolution , and later became commanding officer of the submarine Snapper . He served on three separate vessels in World War II , and was promoted to commander and awarded seven medals during the war . King not only survived World War II , but succeeded in a singlehanded circumnavigation in 1973 on his third attempt . During the latter journey , he managed to reach port despite a collision with a large sea creature 400 miles (640 km) southwest of Australia .

= = Family background and childhood = =

William Donald Aelian King was born to William Albert de Courcy King and Georgina Marie MacKenzie in 1910 . King 's grandfather , William King , was Chair of Mineralogy and Geology at Queen 's College , Galway . He was appointed when the College first opened in 1849 . Grandfather King was the first to argue that neanderthals were a species separate from modern humans .

King 's father , William Albert de Courcy King , was born in 1875 . He married Georgina Marie , daughter of a " Mr. D. F. MacKenzie , of Collingwood Grange , Camberley , Surrey " in June 1908 . De Courcy King attended Royal Military Academy , Woolwich , and then the School of Military Engineering , Chatham . He received his commission as a second lieutenant in the Royal Engineers in 1894 . Prior to World War I , his postings included Saint Lucia in the 1890s , where the Engineers constructed gun emplacements and fortified coal stations , and South Africa , where the Engineers built blockhouses (designed by Major S. R. Rice , RE) during the Anglo Boer War . De Courcy King was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) in 1916 while a major . During the First World War Lieutenant @-@ Colonel De Courcy King served with the 36th (Ulster) Division in Belgium .

De Courcy King was killed on 27 May 1917 at the age of 42 , and lies buried at Dranoutre Military Cemetery in Belgium . In April the Engineers had helped prepare for the Battle of Arras , primarily tunnelling and mining of enemy positions .

As a result of his father 's death , Bill King was brought up by his mother and grandmother . His MacKenzie grandmother was a formidable woman who learned to ski at the age of 75 and still sailed in her eighties .

= = Early naval career = =

After preparatory school , at the age of twelve , King was sent to the Royal Naval College , Dartmouth , in Devon . In the 2006 documentary about the disastrous 1968 round @-@ the @-@ world yacht race ; Deep Water , King said that he had been a boxer and a " champion long @-@ distance runner " in his youth .

From December 1927 to April 1930 , King was posted to the battleship Resolution , which served in the Mediterranean . During this time he became a midshipman . From June 1932 to January 1934 , he was posted to the submarine Orpheus , which served near China . He was promoted to lieutenant in 1932 . In April 1935 , King was appointed first lieutenant of the service vessel Pigmy , formerly the Polish sailing vessel Iskra , used by the Royal Navy at Gibraltar to supply the 8th Submarine Squadron . After seven months , he was transferred to Starfish , then to Narwhal , before being sent to Portsmouth for a commanding officers ' course at HMS Dolphin . A four @-@ month stint aboard the submarine depot ship Titania followed , before King was appointed commanding officer of Snapper .

= = World War II = =

During World War II , King served in three submarines of the Royal Navy : Snapper , Trusty , and Telemachus . He patrolled the North Sea , the Mediterranean , and the Far East .

At the outbreak of the war , King and Snapper were sent to patrol the North Sea . King was commanding officer on Snapper from 16 April 1939 to April 1940 . On 3 December 1939 , Snapper sustained a direct hit from a British aircraft while returning to Harwich after a patrol , but without taking damage . Between December 1939 and July 1940 , Snapper sank six ships , mainly in the Skagerrak Strait . These include the tanker Moonsund , the merchant ship Florida , the minesweepers H. M. Behrens and Carsten Janssen , and the armed trawlers Portland and Cygnus . Snapper was later lost under command of Lieutenant Geoffrey Vernon Prowse , either in a minefield or sunk by German depth charges .

In 1941 , King served on the T @-@ class submarine Trusty in the Mediterranean Sea . On 4 December 1941 Trusty unsuccessfully launched torpedoes against a boat which may have been the Italian torpedo boat Orsa . From 21 July 1943 to August 1945 , King was commanding officer of the T @-@ class submarine Telemachus . Telemachus dropped off a special forces unit in western Malaya in October 1944 .

Operating from a joint British @-@ Dutch base at Ceylon , Telemachus sank the Japanese Kadai @-@ class submarine I @-@ 166 in the Strait of Malacca on 17 July 1944 . Telemachus tracked I @-@ 166 for 30 minutes , then fired a spread of six torpedoes . One torpedo hit , and sank the Japanese boat with 89 lives lost ; five men on bridge watch survived to be rescued by the Japanese .

During the war , King was promoted to commander , and awarded seven medals , including the DSO on 9 May 1940 for " daring , endurance and resource in the conduct of hazardous and successful operations in His Majesty 's Submarines against the enemy " , and the Distinguished Service Cross on 6 September 1940 " for bravery and determination during arduous and successful patrols in H.M. Submarines " both whilst in command of Snapper . A bar was added to his DSO on 16 January 1945 " For outstanding courage , skill and determination in one of H.M. Submarines in successful patrols in Far Eastern waters " (specifically the sinking of I @-@ 166) . In 2006 , he received an eighth medal , the Arctic Emblem .

King ended his Royal Navy career as executive officer of the submarine depot ship Forth , an appointment he held from 1 September 1945 to April 1946 . His formal retirement came on 9 May 1948 .

= = Post @-@ war life and marriage = =

On 1 January 1949 , King married divorceé Anita Leslie (Anita Theodosia Moira Rodzianko King 1914 ? 1984) . She was the eldest child of Sir John Randolph Shane Leslie , 3rd Baronet and his wife Marjorie Ide , the Vermont @-@ born daughter of the US ambassador to Spain . Bill and Anita probably met in Lebanon in 1943 , where King served for 5 months as executive officer of the submarine base at Beirut . She was on a skiing trip after doing duty in Africa in the Motor Transport Corps in 1940 ? 42 , although a letter mentions her being in Beirut in 1941 ? 42 . Leslie @-@ King then became an ambulance driver in the French Army from 1944 to 1945 . For the latter , she was awarded the Croix de Guerre in 1945 by General Charles de Gaulle . As Anita Leslie , she wrote over a dozen books , including Love in a Nutshell (1952) , The Remarkable Mr. Jerome : The Life and Times of Leonard Jerome , Sir Winston Churchill 's American Grandfather (1954) . In 1974 she wrote the biography of Francis Chichester , the first person to sail around the world single @-@ handedly with only one stop . The Kings had two children , Richard Tarka Bourke King (b . 1949) , and Leonie Rose King (b . 1951) .

After the war , King took up farming and was an avid fox hunter , as was his wife . In 1946 , the Kings bought Oranmore Castle , a 15th century Norman keep built on Galway Bay in county Galway , Ireland for ? 200- . Other sources report that Anita Leslie @-@ King was given the castle by her

mother , who had bought it in 1946 . For a while , the Kings lived in a hunting lodge outside Oranmore village , designed by Bill , and built while he and Anita went on a " world sailing cruise . " To help combat his wife 's asthma , King developed an organic farm and garden to feed his family . Both Anita Leslie 's mother and grandmother had suffered asthma .

= = Solo circumnavigation = =

By 1967 , King was intent on sailing around the world by himself . He had a boat built for this purpose at Souter 's yard at Cowes , on the Isle of Wight .

King 's boat , the two @-@ masted Galway Blazer II , a cold @-@ molded plywood schooner , was specially designed for him by Angus Primrose . It is not certain whether the boat was named after The Galway Blazers , a local fox hunting club in Galway , Ireland , which dates to 1839 . Based on boats he had seen in China , the 42 @-@ foot (13 m) schooner had a junk rig (a sail stiffened by battens) . In this regard Galway Blazer II was similar to Jester , the junk @-@ rigged Folkboat used by former Royal Marine Colonel Herbert Hasler in the first single @-@ handed cross @-@ Atlantic race (OSTAR) . King , Hasler and Primrose had " teamed up " to design the boat , which was displayed " at the London Boat Show in January 1968 . "

King 's intention to sail around the world was overtaken by the institution in March 1968 of the Sunday Times Golden Globe Race . Aged 58 , King became the oldest participant in what was the first organised round the world solo yacht race . In Deep Water , King explained that he joined the race as a means of recovering psychologically from fifteen years of service in submarines . This , he said , had left him " a nervous wreck " . He had planned to sail around the world before he heard of the race , which " sort of caught up with me . " An aunt 's legacy provided him with the means to finance the boat .

King was sponsored by the Daily Express and Sunday Express newspapers . One of the shortcomings of the boat was that it had neither guard rails or shrouds to hold on to . King solved this problem with a steel wire that stretched from bow to stern , to which he clipped a harness . His method was then copied by fellow racers Loïck Fougeron and Bernard Moitessier .

King started the race on 24 August 1968 . During the race , King lived on raw food , such as dried fruit stirred into almond paste and green sprouts that he grew on board . He read through the New Testament , the Qur 'an , and Edwin Arnold 's 1880 Buddhist writing , The Light of Asia , as well as " all the best novels , such as Tolstoy . " He said that he did not get depressed during the journey , because of the beauty surrounding him . " You are ... alone with God ... there 's no opportunity to sin " .

King lost radio contact during the race . On 31 October , Galway Blazer II capsized in 50 @-@ foot (15 m) waves northeast off Gough Island while King rested , breaking both masts . King had to be towed to Cape Town , South Africa .

In 1969 , King again tried and failed to circumnavigate in Galway Blazer II . In 1970 , he was ready for another attempt , again using Galway Blazer II . Ill @-@ health and hull damage forced him to put ashore at Australia . After departing on 12 December 1971 , a large sea creature (a whale or shark) damaged his boat about 400 miles (640 km) southwest of Fremantle . " Only his skill and heroic efforts were able to keep the vessel afloat until jury repairs could be made " . King was below deck when he heard a shattering sound and saw the hull below the water line bulge inward and splinter . He rushed upstairs and heeled the boat so that the hole was lifted out of the water . He had to hang over the side and submerge himself to carry out emergency repairs with material that included thirteen ropes , sticky tape , collision covers , sheet copper , and sponge rubber . Then he had to fix the inside of the hull as well . After three days of work , he was able to return to Fremantle , " barely able to limp into port " .

The 1970 journey was eventually successful , with King completing his global circumnavigation on 23 May 1973 . In 1975 the Cruising Club of America awarded King the Blue Water Medal in recognition of his feat . The same year Galway Blazer II was sold to Peter Crowther , landlord of a Devon pub . Crowther wrote a book about his experiences with the boat , which was lost on 24 June 1996 during the tenth Singlehanded Transatlantic Race from Plymouth , England , to Newport ,

Rhode Island in the USA .

= = Later life = =

In September 2007 , King and his daughter Leonie , still lived at Oranmore Castle . His life 's experiences continue to attract media attention , from film to music to art installation .

He was filmed for two documentaries about the Golden Globe Race ; the 1960s BBC short Golden Globe ? Lone Sailor Round the World Race and 2006 's Deep Water . His war experiences still fascinate documentary film makers . King was interviewed for two planned productions , a 24 minute episode entitled " To Honour and Peace " for the proposed series entitled Bravery Beneath the Waves , and for The Stick & The Stars : The Life & Times of Commander Bill King .

Most recent attention arises from King 's interaction with Akira Tsurukame and Katja Boonstra @-@ Blom ? the subject of print media articles , an exhibition , and video interviews . Tsurukame , son of the chief engineer who perished with I @-@ 166 , in 2004 sought out King . King , Tsurukame , and Katja Boonstra , whose father was killed when I @-@ 166 sank the Dutch submarine K XVI , together planted a tree at Oranmore Castle to honour the fathers of the latter two .

The local paper , The Galway Advertiser , dubbed their threeway meeting at Oranmore Castle a " reconciliation " . Subsequently Akira Tsurukame released video material of his interviews with Bill King on the internet . Two installations in July 2006 at the Project 06 art exhibition in Galway referenced King . Response to Japanese Peace and Reconciliation was arranged in Swan House , and featured art @-@ works by his daughter Leonie King and grand @-@ daughter Heather Finn . The Lost at Sea installation was a collaboration between Galway @-@ based Cane 141 , who set stories told by Bill King to electronic music , and visual artist Roisin Coyle . The latter installation has since been exhibited in Dublin , and in May 2007 at Grace Exhibition Space in New York City .

In 2009 , Bill King 's great nephew Luke Leslie produced the short film King of the Waves , which dramatised King 's solo circumnavigation and encounter with the great white shark . It also included interviews with King himself . It was screened before King and his family in Oranmore Galway on his ninety @-@ ninth birthday shortly before premiering at the 2009 Galway , Cork and Kerry film festivals .

King died in September 2012 . At the time of his death , he was the oldest surviving World War II submarine commander .

= = Published works = =

1958 : The Stick and the Stars . (Hutchinson) .

1969 : Capsize . (Nautical Publishing

1975 : Adventure in Depth . (Putnam Publishing) .

1983 : Dive and Attack . Revises and updates The Stick and the Stars , describes author 's experiences during World War II . (W. Kimber / Hutchinson)

1989 : The Wheeling Stars : A Guide for Lone Sailors . Boston , London : Faber & Faber .

1997 : Kamikaze : the Wind of God (Minerva Press)