

1931 census

21, 421

1941 NO CENSUS

20, 000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census

19, 352

The Second World War in Shetland



1931 census

21, 421

1941 NO CENSUS

20, 000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census

19, 352

Second World War: Shetland

"In 1939 Shetland was flooded with more than 20,000 servicemen to garrison the islands. They found a friendly, hospitable race of Shetlanders living simple, reasonably contented lives but (in many places) without such facilities as electricity, piped water, drainage and good roads.

Suddenly Shetland was thrust into the 20th Century as Whitehall sought to remedy the situation, at least for the benefit of the armed forces, and millions of pounds were spent in improving roads and providing basic amenities. The islands began to enjoy full employment, wages ran at a level never before experienced and a dramatic rise occurred in living conditions."

Nicolson, James R., 1975. *Shetland and Oil*. p. 38



"At the outbreak of the Second World War, Shetland, a virtually forgotten backwater in the United Kingdom, was rediscovered by London and became the northern base of the war effort, playing a vital role in the North Sea blockade.

The influx of servicemen, with troops possibly outnumbering civilians, led to a welcome increase in well paid full- and part-time local employment, and thereby to an increased standard in living; even in rural areas, basic amenities like water, electricity and roads were gradually installed."

Fryer, L.G., 1995. *Knitting by the Fireside and on the Hillside*. p. 131

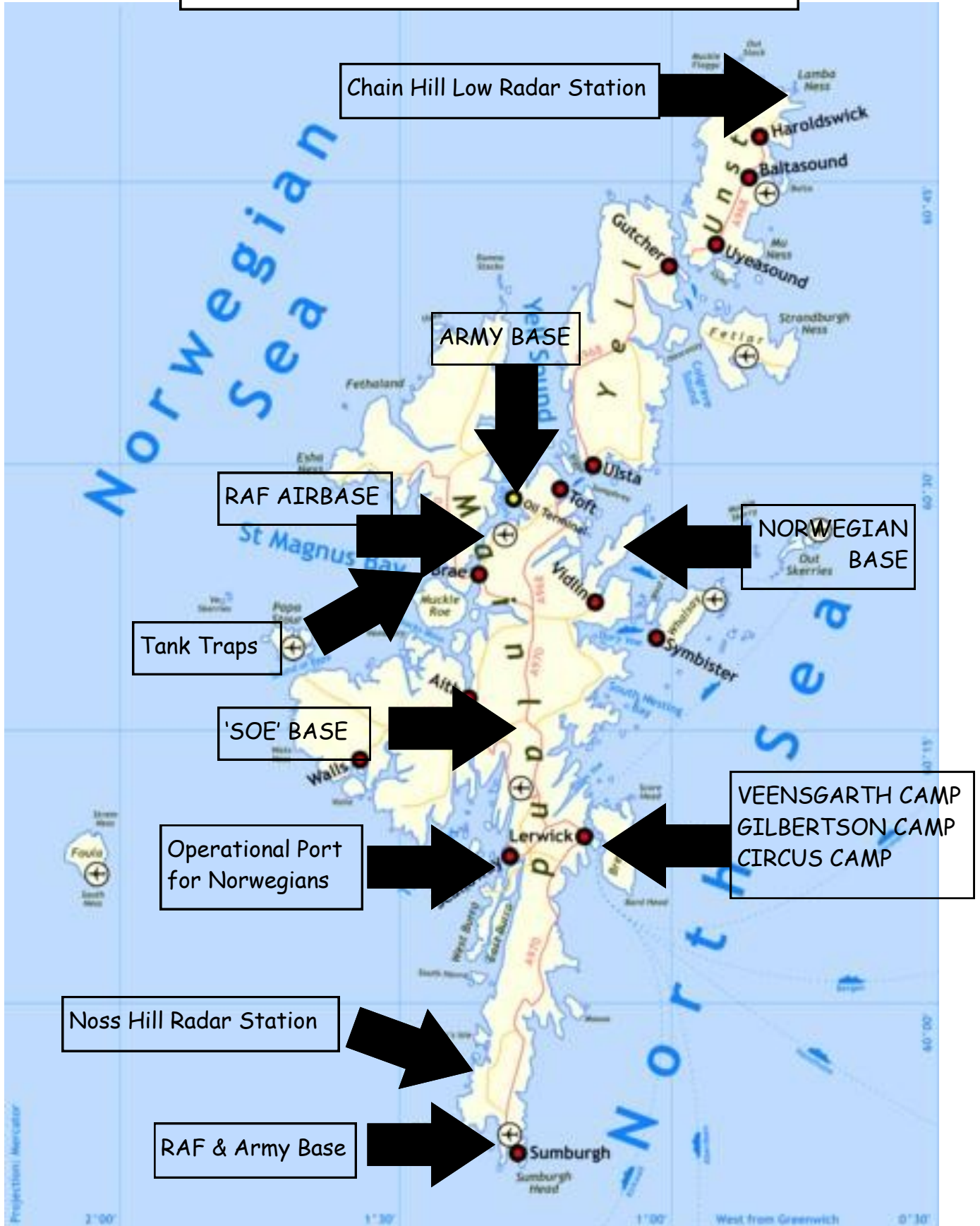


1931 census
21, 421

1941 NO CENSUS
20, 000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census
19, 352

Second World War: Shetland



1931 census
21,421

1941 NO CENSUS
20,000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census
19,352

Second World War: Shetlanders at War

Have you seen the World War Two 'Roll of Honour' which is kept in AHS Library?

The Roll of Honour lists the names of 357 Shetlanders who lost their lives as a result of the Second World War.

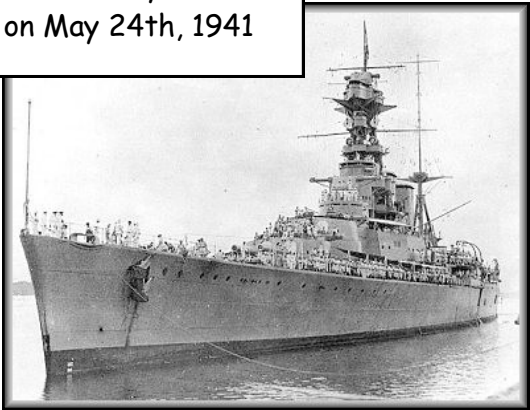
The Roll of Service lists those who served in the three Armed Forces and the Merchant Navy .

There are over 3,300 men and women listed on Shetland's Roll of Service.



A large amount of Shetlanders volunteered for the Armed services: many choosing the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy. Many were aboard the *Royal Oak*, the *Hood* and the *Rawalpindi* (all lost at sea)

HMS Hood was Britain's biggest battle cruiser: sunk by German Bismarck on May 24th, 1941



.....
"The two recent great wars resulted in very heavy casualties among Shetlanders serving in the forces. The loss of many young men through war has helped to reduce the population of every district in Shetland."
.....
Cluness, A. T. ed., 1967. *The Shetland Book*.p 22.
.....

The greatest majority of Shetlanders fought in the 51st Highland division

Pictured in 1942/43 Three soldiers of the 5/7th Battalion Gordon Highlanders, part of the 8th Army, and serving in North Africa; Lt. Jack Hunter (Burgh Road), ?, Jim Smith (King Harald Street).



As a percentage of the population Shetland suffered more heavily than any other part of Britain.

1931 census
21,421

1941 NO CENSUS
20,000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census
19,352

Second World War: Shetlanders at Sea

"Among Shetland seamen one in six failed to come home. Percentage-wise that was three times as many as were lost in the army, the navy or the air force."

Irvine, James W., 1991. *The Giving Years: Shetland and Shetlanders, 1939 – 1945*. p. 14.



Crew of the EARL OF ZETLAND I—1939

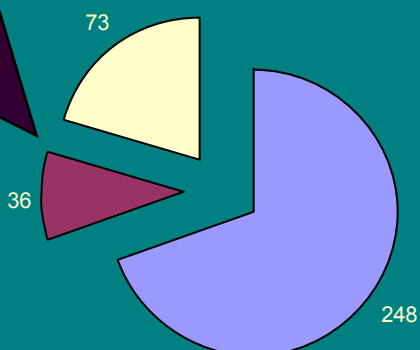
"By war's outbreak in 1939 there were large numbers of Shetland men at sea.....more and more Shetland men, on the edge of starvation as fishermen/crofters in their native islands, found a living in the merchant ships."

Irvine, James W., 1991. *The Giving Years: Shetland and Shetlanders, 1939 – 1945*. p. 5.

"Out of the 357 Shetland lives lost in the war 248 were merchant seamen, almost 70% of the total. Another 10% - 36 men - belonged to the Royal navy, so out of our total losses almost 80% were seamen."

Irvine, James W., 1991. *The Giving Years: Shetland and Shetlanders, 1939 – 1945* p. 14.

Shetland Lives Lost: 357 total



■ Merchant Navy

■ Royal Navy

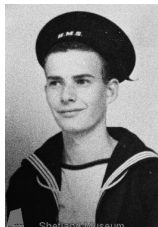
■ Others

1931 census
21,421

1941 NO CENSUS
20,000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census
19,352

Second World War: Shetlanders at Sea



George Angus Anderson, Signalman, Royal Navy HMS EUOPRA. From Lerwick. Died in Lowestoft 24th April 1945 aged 23 years.



James Andrew Cogle, Seaman, Royal Navy HMS ALTAIRE. From Lerwick. Died in Hospital 19th January 1944 aged 19 years.



Alexander Malcolmson, M.A. Ord. Seaman, Royal Navy HMS HOOD. From Quarff. Lost at Sea in action with 'Bismark' on 24th May 1941 aged 23 years.



William West Wiseman, Seaman, Royal Navy. From Lerwick. Lost at Sea through the torpedoing of his ship 11th April 1943 aged 32



Robert Malcolm Mail. 2nd Officer. Merchant Navy on DOGOMBA. From Virkie. Lost at Sea on November 3rd 1942 aged 28 years.



Peter Gray. Seaman. Merchant Navy on EMPIRE STATESMAN. From Lerwick. Lost at Sea on December 5th 1940 aged 20 years.



Gideon Thomas Bruce Robertson. Radio Officer, Merchant Navy on s.s. JURA. From Lerwick. Lost at Sea on Feb 9th 1941 aged 32 years



Peter Laurence Simpson. 3rd Officer, Merchant Navy on s.s. MISSANABIE. From Lerwick. Lost at Sea on May 19th 1944 aged 26 years



Charles Arthur Sutherland. AB Merchant Navy s.s. GIRALDA. From Bressay. Lost at Sea on January 30th 1940 aged 19 years



James Moffat Smith. AB Merchant Navy s.s. GIRALDA. From Aith. Lost at Sea on January 30th 1940 aged 29 years

This pictures are all from the Shetland Roll of Honour, you can also browse this online at the Shetland Museum Photo Library

www.shetland-museum.org.uk/photolibrary

1931 census
21, 421

1941 NO CENSUS
20, 000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census
19, 352

Second World War: Shetlanders at Home

The war and the 20,000 troops garrisoned in Shetland created a lot of work for Shetlanders.

- Building of military camps
- Construction and improvement of roads
- Laying cables
- Building Airports
- Fishing to feed troops

Scatsta Airport was constructed between 1940 & 1943 but was active in use from 1941

A positive effects of war in Shetland was improved roads: Roads from Lerwick to Sumburgh, Bixter and Voe now all had tarmac.



CURFEW

No one was to be outside between 11 pm and 4 am

Look at the Map to see where troops were based across Shetland

Prior to the War no troops were based in Shetland besides the TA. To aid the TA the Shetland Defence Company was formed, composed of WWI veterans. Later on over 1000 men were to enrol in the Local Defence Volunteers, afterwards to be known as the **Home Guard**.

Irvine, James W., 1991. *The Giving Years: Shetland and Shetlanders, 1939 – 1945*.p. 9.



3 Baltasound men in the Home Guard

"Unemployment had been an unhappy feature of the inter-war years, but war-time construction needs provided full employment for those who were left at home. Wages soared and the cost of living soared with this. A man engaged in "war work" could make as much in a couple of days as he would earn in a full week before the war."

Irvine, James W., 1985. *Lerwick: The Birth and Growth of an Island Town*. p. 239.

Numerous Shetland girls married Servicemen & many couples continued to live in Shetland after the war was over. This Shetland lass Married her fellow seaman in June 1944



1931 census

21,421

1941 NO CENSUS

20,000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census

19,352

Picture from 1940—Army Camp at North Lochside



MUSEUM
Shetland
Archives

Crashed German Heinkel, Vaassetter, Fair Isle: 17th January 1941



1931 census
21,421

1941 NO CENSUS
20,000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census
19,352

Second World War: Troops to Shetland

POPULATION FACT

During the Second World War over 20,000 troops were stationed in Shetland

British Forces considered Shetland to be extremely important and needed to be secured due to its proximity to Norway which has been invaded by Germany in 1940.

A huge battalion of men arrived in Shetland on May 29th & June 2nd 1940.

'CAESER' was the code word for troops across Scotland to move to Shetland.

MISSION:
Protect Lerwick & its harbour against attack from the sea

"They came from every corner of Britain and from many parts of the Commonwealth. Fleeing Norwegians arrived in their thousands; Polish, Dutch and other escapees swelled the military set-up. Soon Army, Navy and Air Force Personnel exceeded in their total the number of Native Shetlanders. Never before had there been such an influx of people into the islands."

Irvine, James W., 1985. *Lerwick: The Birth and Growth of an Island Town*. . p. 238.

Sketch pad drawing and watercolour of St Clair II at sea.

The St Clair II, built in 1937, was the last steamship of the North of Scotland and Orkney and Shetland Steam Navigation Company. She was requisitioned for the war effort, renamed HMS Baldur and served in Iceland and as a rescue ship.



Shetland eventually formed the Home Guard but this was not enough to effectively secure the islands. In November before the first contingent of regular troops arrived - 210 Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders arrived on the *St Clair*

1931 census
21, 421

1941 NO CENSUS
20, 000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census
19, 352

Second World War: Troops in Shetland

Shetland became an important base for military aeroplanes, ships and submarines

MISSION:
Protect Sumburgh
against attack
from sea and air



Throughout the war there were several air raids on Shetland

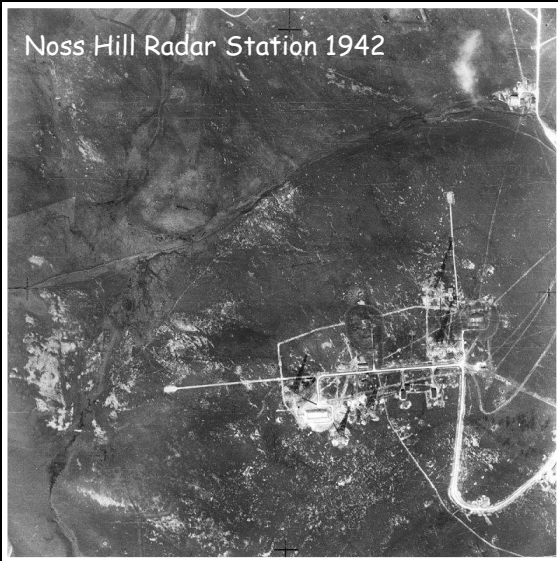


1941 Sumburgh:

"Local people could not help but be aware of the massive build-up that was taking place before their eyes, because as well as the large numbers of RAF personnel who were posted to Sumburgh, there was an even bigger army presence."

Irvine, James W., 1991. *The Giving Years: Shetland and Shetlanders, 1939 – 1945*. p. 127.

Noss Hill Radar Station 1942



Troops included

7th Black Watch
11th Argylls
Highland Light Infantry and Scottish Rifles
50th Battalion
7th Seaforth Highlanders
8th Gordons
9th Green Howards
11th ASH



Numerous Shetland girls married servicemen & many couples continued to live in Shetland.

Pictured in Lerwick is an American soldier, Jay Nicholls, with his Shetland bride, Laura Jamieson, on their honeymoon in 1946.



1931 census

21,421

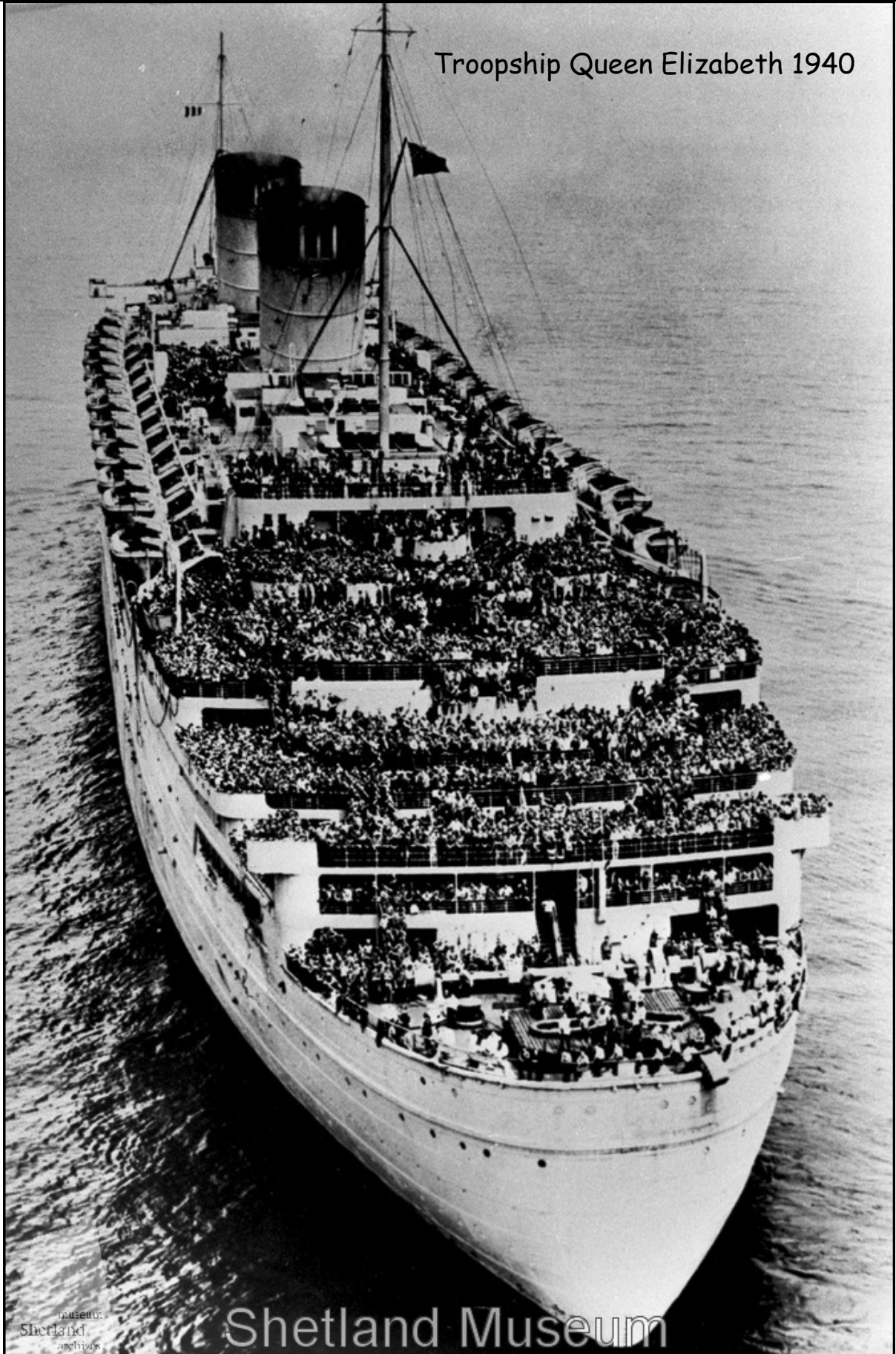
1941 NO CENSUS

20,000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census

19,352

Troopship Queen Elizabeth 1940



museum
Shetland
archives

Shetland Museum

1931 census

21, 421

1941 NO CENSUS

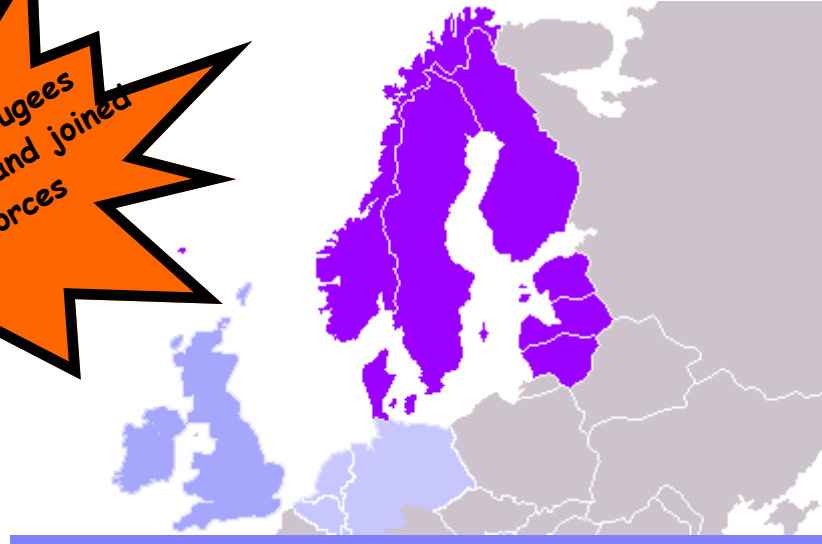
20, 000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census

19, 352

Second World War: Norwegian Refugees

Many Norwegian refugees were well trained and joined the Allied Forces



Norwegian Refugee Timeline

- 9th April 1940: Invasion of Norway by the German Army
- May/June 1940: Groups of Norwegian Refugees start to arrive in Shetland
- End of 1940: 30 ships brought over 200 refugees to Shetland
- September 1941: 518 Norwegian Refugees passed through Lerwick

NUMBERS

Approximately 5000 Norwegians escaped.
The vast majority came to Shetland.
In 1941, 1881 Norwegian refugees passed through Lerwick.

"in May and June 1940 was the influx of Norwegian refugees... it was doubtful if anyone in the beginning foresaw just how big the influx would be."

Irvine, James W., 1991. *The Giving Years: Shetland and Shetlanders, 1939 – 1945*. p. 67.

Familiar with visitors the Shetland people were very welcoming to the refugees

"The excellent reception which has been given the refugees at Shetland has been indicated by every newcomer who has passed through Shetland.

They have met with kindness and understanding by everyone they have been in contact with and for this we are very grateful."

A letter written by Norwegian government in exile on 30th May 1940

1931 census

21,421

1941 NO CENSUS

20,000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census

19,352

Second World War: Norwegian Refugees

It was very dangerous crossing from Norway to Shetland: as well as the military threat, many people came on very small ill equipped boats with little or no means of navigation.

"In the space of a few days ten bodies were picked up"
Irvine, James W., 1985. *Lerwick: The Birth and Growth of an Island Town*. p.

A camp for Norwegian refugees was set up at the bottom of Brown's Road in Lerwick, managed by Mr and Mrs James Adie

"7 young men arrived in Baltasound after a 2 day sail from somewhere north of Bergen with no compass, no log, but a good watch and just enough fuel for a straight run"

Balneaces, Elizabeth., 1977.
The Windswept Isles: p. 232

A great many refugees found husbands & wives in Shetland



LK 432 ROERWATER

This boat came to Shetland on 10th October 1941 with 16 refugees from Norway onboard.

Standing on the bows is the skipper, Willie Mulla.



1931 census

21, 421

1941 NO CENSUS

20, 000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census

19, 352

Second World War: 'The Shetland Bus'

206 MISSIONS

TO NORWAY	OUT OF NORWAY
192 men	73 agents
383 tons of military stock	373 refugees

Vessels

Fishing Boats were used between 1940 and 1943, after which Submarine Chasers were used

Base for Operations:

Lerwick (1940—1941)

Lunna Voe (1941 1942)

Scalloway (1942 +)



The Special Operations Executive (SOE), based at Weisdale, was central in the organisation of the 'Shetland Bus'

Defensive weapons were added to fishing boats, disguised in lots of ways: under tarpaulin, or inside customised oil drums.



The submarine chasers were impressive vessels: fast, strong & well armed. They were also very comfortable for the crews: with showers, fridges and toasters!

The 3 used for the Shetland Bus came from America

"Scalloway became the safe operational base for the free Norwegians who, using disguised fishing boats, regularly ran arms to the underground resistance movement in Norway and brought back refugees and volunteers and frequently extremely valuable information."

Cluness, A. T. ed., 1967. *The Shetland Book*. p. 43.

"Extensive use of informers and infiltrators led to crucial losses for the Shetland Bus."

Sorvaag, Trygve., 2002. *Shetland Bus: Faces and Places 60 years*

Shetland Bus boat
H 120 B JAKK

This boat left Helles/oy on 9th September 1941 with 15 people on board and arrived in Lerwick the next day



Shetland Museum

1931 census

21,421

1941 NO CENSUS

20,000 troops garrisoned in Shetland

1951 census

19,352

Second World War: Bibliography

Balneaves, Elizabeth., 1977. *The Windswept Isles: Shetland & its People*. Butler & Tanner Ltd.

Cluness, A. T. ed., 1967. *The Shetland Book*. Lerwick: The Shetland Times Ltd.

Fryer, L.G., 1995. *Knitting by the Fireside and on the Hillside*. Lerwick: The Shetland Times Ltd

Irvine, James W., 1991. *The Giving Years: Shetland and Shetlanders, 1939 - 1945*. Lerwick: The Shetland Publishing Company.

Nicolson, James R., 1976. *Lerwick Harbour*. Lerwick: Lerwick Harbour Trust

Nicolson, James R., 1975. *Shetland and Oil*. London: William Luscombe Publisher Limited.

Ramsey, Winston G., 1990. *After the battle: The Shetlands*. Battle of Britain Prints International Ltd.

Sorvaag, Trygve., 2002. *Shetland Bus: Faces and Places 60 years on*. Lerwick: The Shetland Times Ltd

PHOTOS FROM THE SHETLAND MUSEUM

PHOTO LIBRARY AND SCRAN

www.shetland-museum.org.uk/photolibrary

www.scran.ac.uk