

**PRESS RELEASE – For immediate release**

**Babcock International Group Brings Shipbuilding and Engineering Prowess to St Nazaire Raid Memorial**

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026

Babcock International Group has built and generously donated a 1:10 scale model of the first HMS Campbeltown to the St Nazaire Raid Memorial Trust, drawing on decades of shipbuilding experience via its skilled tradespeople and apprentices at its Rosyth facility in Fife, Scotland.

The sculpture and a caisson, also built by Babcock – collectively weighing more than four tonnes – forms the central feature of a new memorial, now viewable at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, the nation's year-round place to remember.

It commemorates the heroism and sacrifice of the Combined Operations assault on the Normandie Dock in St Nazaire on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1942, in which HMS Campbeltown played the central role. The raid, codenamed Operation Chariot, became known as the 'Greatest Raid of All'.

Babcock has two key associations with HMS Campbeltown. Firstly, the HMS Campbeltown modifications required before the St Nazaire raid were performed at Devonport Royal Dockyard, the Royal Navy dockyard that is operated by Babcock.

Secondly, Babcock is building five Type 31 Inspiration-class frigates, one of which will be named HMS Campbeltown (third of that name). The fact that the new frigates are Inspiration class links nicely to the St Nazaire Raid Memorial Trust's Object, which is 'the promotion of good citizenship for the public benefit through the building and maintenance of a memorial and associated educational activities to perpetuate the memory of the men of all three services who mounted and supported the raid on St Nazaire on 28th March 1942.'

The Trust's patron, Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns KCB CBE DL, said:

"We could not have achieved the construction of this important memorial without the generous support of our many sponsors. The St Nazaire Raid Memorial Trust expresses its sincere gratitude to them and to Babcock and all their engineers and apprentices in Rosyth for building and donating the centrepiece of our memorial."

Sir Nick Hine, Chief Executive of Babcock's Marine Sector, said: "We are honoured to contribute to the St Nazaire Raid Memorial, commemorating an extraordinary act of courage and sacrifice. Building the scale model of HMS Campbeltown and the caisson allowed our engineers and apprentices to apply their skills to a project of deep historical significance, connecting our proud heritage with the future of naval innovation. It's a privilege to help ensure the memory of those who took part in Operation Chariot lives on for generations to come."

***Background information***

The Raid on St Nazaire, codenamed Operation Chariot, was one of the most audacious and daring raids of the Second World War. Seeking to deny Tirpitz use of the only dock on the Atlantic seaboard able to service her, six hundred and twenty five commando and naval personnel, aboard HMS Campbeltown (converted to resemble a German vessel and into a floating bomb), 16 wooden motor launches (MLs), one motor gunboat (MGB) and one motor

torpedo boat MTB), sailed up the heavily defended Loire estuary to ram (at 01.34 hours, just 4 minutes later than planned) and destroy the dock's outer caisson. The success of the raid depended on extreme secrecy and surprise, on deceiving the enemy until the last possible moment (it was 01.28 hours before concerted efforts were made to stop the flotilla), and on the heroism and sacrifice of the personnel involved. The plan worked. The dock was put out of action until after the war.

HMS Campbeltown's bow was packed with over 4 tons of high explosive. After ramming the caisson, the Commandos she was carrying dispersed across the dock area to silence gun emplacements and destroy key infrastructure, such as the dock's winding gear and pumping equipment. Meanwhile, the naval personnel scuttled the back end of the ship to prevent its being towed off the dock and abandoned ship with the expectation (along with the Commandos) of being picked up by the Motor Launches.

The rest of the fleet sought to harry or silence the enemy gun emplacements and land their Commandos in other parts of the dock (on the Old Mole and in the Old Entrance), but with less success due to extremely heavy and very close quarter gunfire which disabled or destroyed many of the boats. Only 8 made it back out of the estuary to rendezvous with supporting destroyers HMS Atherstone and HMS Tynedale, 5 of which had to be scuttled due to damage. A total of 239 personnel made the rendezvous and returned to the UK. Of the remainder, 169 were killed in action and over 200 taken prisoners-of-war. Only 3 of the MLs made it home.

Despite the losses, the raid was deemed successful in achieving its main objective – destruction of the Normandie Dock Campbeltown exploded at 10.30 hours on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1942 taking the caisson and a large number of German soldiers, who were on board or in the vicinity, with her. The operation earned its epithet of 'The Greatest Raid of All'. The heroism demonstrated during Operation Chariot is evident in the 140 awards for bravery, including 5 Victoria Crosses.

### **Organisation Information**


#### **Babcock International Group**

Babcock is a FTSE 100 international defence company, operating in the UK, Australasia, Canada, France and South Africa with exports to additional markets. We deliver complex support and product solutions to enhance our customers' defence capabilities and critical assets. We are driven by our purpose: to create a safe and secure world, together.

#### **The St Nazaire Raid Memorial Trust**

Established by the St Nazaire Society, the St Nazaire Raid Memorial Trust is a charity dedicated to honouring the legacy of all servicemen involved in Operation Chariot. Through memorial construction, education, and engagement, the charity aims to keep the memory of this pivotal moment in history alive for future generations.

#### **Media contact:**

 <p><b>OPERATION CHARIOT MEMORIAL PROJECT</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.stnazaireraid.org">www.stnazaireraid.org</a> A St Nazaire Raid Memorial Trust project Charity number: 1208309</p>	<p><b><i>For media inquiries, please contact:</i></b></p> <p>Dr David C Arnott Trustee – Marketing &amp; Communications</p> <p>Tel: 44 (0)1926-842110;</p> <p>Mobile: 44 (0)7483-810372</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:arnottd42@gmail.com">arnottd42@gmail.com</a></p>
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***Appended:–Photograph of the memorial.***