

James Malcolm 'Jim' Simonds Sub Lieutenant (A), RNVR, FAA
Born 28th May 1932, London. Died 5th January 1953, Korea



Father: [Cmdr Henry 'Harry' Duncan Simonds](#) (1886-1948)

Mother: Mary Zillah 'Molly' Simonds (née Ramsden) (1898-1986)

James came from a long line of distinguished Naval Officers. His father was one of only 233 survivors from the sinking of the heavy Cruiser HMS Formidable when she was torpedoed in the English Channel on January 1st 1915.

James was always known in the family as Jim. His family home was at Gaddeshill House, Eversley.

In 1939 the family followed his father's appointment as Naval Attache to Portland, Maine. Then in 1940 to Ottawa, where his father spent 3 years responsible for routing Allied convoys to the UK, before they returned to Eversley in one of those convoys in 1944, then aged just 12.

The family spent their summer holidays at Seagulls, Forelands Rd., Bembridge, on the Isle of Wight which they built in about 1936. They were keen sailors and members of the Bembridge Sailing Club with shed no2 on the quay.

He was educated first at Boxgrove, then Eton.

On leaving Eton he elected to do his National Service in the Royal Navy, training to become a Midshipman at Lossimouth & at the HMS Indefatigable training centre amongst others. At the end of his service, he volunteered to stay on for the Korean War, being posted to No.801 Squadron of carrier based Sea Furies.



James was trained to fly the Hawker Sea Fury the last propeller-driven fighter to serve with the Royal Navy, and one of the fastest production single reciprocating engine aircraft ever built. Although designed as a fighter it could also be armed with either two bombs or four rockets with drop fuel tanks in both cases. The aircraft were mainly used in the ground attack role with both bombs and rockets, but they were also engaged in air-to-air combat with the much faster MiG-15.

The Korean War started when North Korean troops invaded South Korea on 25th June 1950 and ended with the ceasefire of 27th July 1953. This ceasefire still stands today in 2021 as there has never been a peace agreement.

A British aircraft carrier combat patrol during the Korean War consisted of eleven days on station, four days on, three days off for replenishment, another four days on before returning to Japan for rest, relief and re-supply. During this period each aircraft would fly an average of two or three sorties per day, although that could rise to much higher levels on occasion.

Their aircraft carried out a mix of combat air patrols and ground-attack missions, both armed reconnaissance behind the North Korean lines and close air support near the front line. Armed reconnaissance missions were controlled by a central Joint Operations Centre, while close air support was controlled by twelve Tactical Air Command Posts.

HMS Glory returned to her battle station off Korea for her 3rd tour of duty from November 1952 to May 1953, with No.801 Squadron. By the end of this third tour of duty the Glory had completed twenty-five combat patrols, the most carried out by any British carrier.

On January 5th 1953, they targeted bridges near Chaeryong. Lt Derek 'Pug' Mather, in WF626, reported later: "We'd been dive bombing some bridges. We attacked the first bridge with bombs, and staying in the area was a bad idea, so my wingman, Ted Anson and I went off on an armed reconnaissance. We had some secondary targets, one of which was another bridge. I led the second attack in, but they were waiting for us. It was a flak trap. I released my bombs and suddenly there was a bang from a 76mm shell." Mather managed to extricate himself as the aircraft broke up and parachuted down into the snow. He was captured by the North Koreans and entered a cruel captivity. The other pilots in his section could not see where he landed but searched for him for 90 minutes without success. A USAF helicopter escorted by two Sea Furies also went to the scene but bad weather forced it to turn back.

The incident later ended in tragedy when WE689, flown by Sub Lt James Simonds and searching for the missing Mather, spun from 3000 feet and exploded on hitting the ground. It is not clear if his plane was hit. Also combing the area was Sub Lt Brian E. Rayner whose aircraft was hit by flak and he crashed into a hillside near Chang Yang Don.

James has no known grave and is commemorated on wall 20, UN Memorial Cemetery Busan Wall of Remembrance, Korea. Also with 26 others, on the HMS Glory Roll of Honour, mounted on a plaque. Both Eton & Boxgrove also have memorials.

Sea Fury FB.11 launches from [HMS Glory](#) in 1951



HMS Glory was a Colossus-class aircraft carrier, laid down on 27 August 1942 by Harland and Wolff at Belfast and launched on 27 November 1943. 13,400 tons and 698 feet long, she carried 48 aircraft and 1,300 crew.



With acknowledgement to his younger brother, Sam Simonds.
Raymond Simonds. January 2021. www.simondsfamily.me.uk