

THE HOLMAN PROJECTOR

Cheap and easy to build, this innovative weapon was hoped to stem the deadly German attacks on British shipping

BY LARRY L. HOTHEM

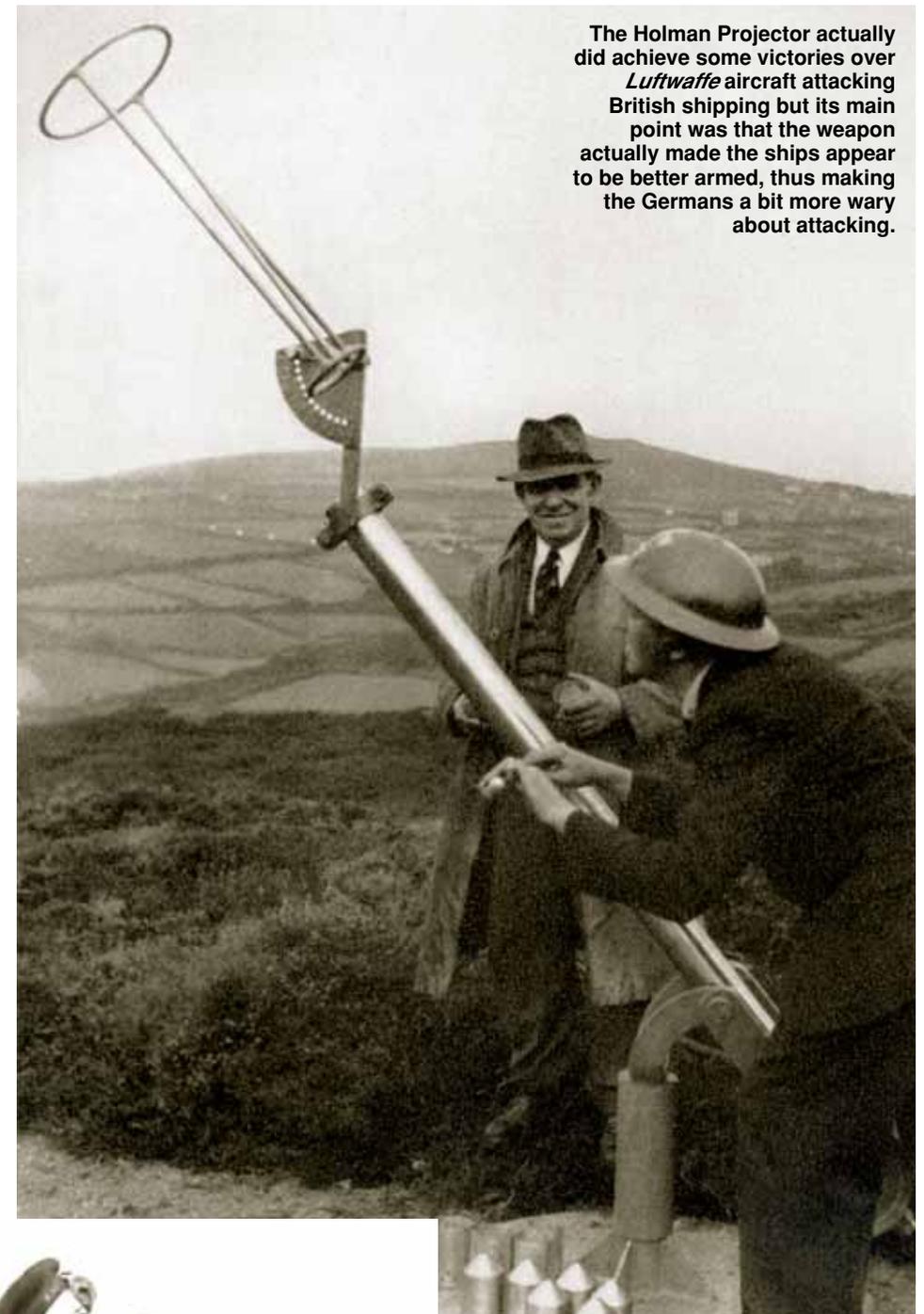
With a Holman Projector to his right, Prime Minister Winston Churchill waves at a departing Royal Navy ship.

Early in England's fight against Hitler's Germany, sailors aboard British coastal freighters had many chilling experiences. During daylight hours, German bombers sought the ships out. At night, a ship's frothy wake stretched far astern — a pale finger beckoning death from the skies.

Sharp-eyed *Luftwaffe* pilots, in Dornier, Heinkel, Focke-Wulf, and Junkers bombers, reacted quickly. A converging course was set, and bombardier and gunners alerted. Then, throttles forward, engines howling, the dark birds swooped in for one or more bombing and strafing attacks. Too often, bombs hit, or the small ships were badly mauled by shrapnel, machine gun, and cannon fire.

There was little protection. The Royal Air Force, preparing for the Battle of Britain, had no planes to spare. Night-fighters with airborne radar were only in the future. And the steamers were too small for conventional large caliber anti-aircraft guns, and lacked skilled gun crews.

The excellent 20mm Oerlikon and two-pound "pom-poms" were in short supply,



The Holman Projector actually did achieve some victories over *Luftwaffe* aircraft attacking British shipping but its main point was that the weapon actually made the ships appear to be better armed, thus making the Germans a bit more wary about attacking.



going mainly to warships. The coastal ships were left with only rifle caliber machine guns to counter the swastika-marked raiders of the sea-lanes.

Then one man, Treve Holman, had an idea. The engineering firm of Holman Brothers Limited had long manufactured pneumatic industrial and mining equipment. Their machinery had dug the London subway system and had lengthened the protective tunnels in the Rock of Gibraltar. Holman remembered the

The Holman Projector was promoted as being simple and easy to use. A WREN demonstrates its ease of use.