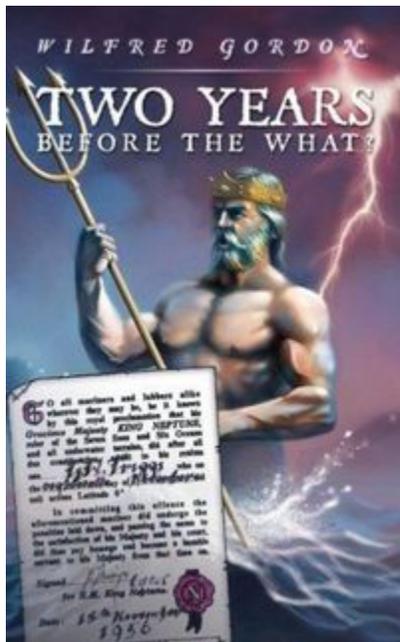


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‘Two Years Before the What?’ is the historically unique and epic story of a young sailor serving out his compulsory National Service by completing a voyage from Port Edgar in Scotland to Singapore on the last coal burning ship of the Royal Navy. The voyage took exactly six months with an average steaming speed of eight knots, each knot bought at the cost of the grinding labour of shoveling coal into roaring furnaces, raking out and pulling hot ashes, lifting them to the upper deck and pouring them over the side in to the sea. The ship, forced to go around the Cape of Good Hope, the southern most tip of Africa, by the action of Egypt's Colonel Nasser closing the Suez Canal during the British-French and Egyptian War; the route to Singapore was the longest possible. The story, set against a background of the closing days of the British Empire, continues with the fight against Communist Terrorists in the jungles of Malaya and then on to the turmoil of thwarting smugglers and pirates in the China Sea. The story is fact. Mostly hilariously funny. Sometimes frightening. Always alive.

