



ROYAL NAVAL
ASSOCIATION



The Semaphore Circular

No 669

The Beating Heart of the RNA

May 2017



Flick Drummond MP who represents Portsmouth South visited Central Office recently for a brief on the Naval Associations Biennial Parade. She is seen pictured with Captain Bill Oliphant Royal Navy, Captain of the Base, the National President, Vice Admiral John McAnally and General Secretary, Captain Paul Quinn. Despite various interrogation techniques Captain Bill would not divulge the HMS Queen Elizabeth arrival in Portsmouth date!!!!

This edition is the on-line version of the Semaphore Circular, unless you have registered with Central Office, it will only be available on the RNA website in the 'Members Area' under 'downloads' at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk and will be emailed to the branch contact, usually the Hon Sec.

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“D’ye hear there” (Branch news)

Crossed the Bar – Celebrating a life well lived

RNA Benefits Page

Shortcast

Swinging the Lamp

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Glossary of terms

NCM	National Council Member
NC	National Council
AMC	Association Management Committee
FAC	Finance Administration Committee
NCh	National Chairman
NVCh	National Vice Chairman
NP	National President
DNP	Deputy National President
GS	General Secretary
DGS	Deputy General Secretary
AGS	Assistant General Secretary
CONA	Conference of Naval Associations

Throughout ☆ indicates a new or substantially changed entry

Contacts

Financial Controller	023 9272 3823	michelle@royalnavalassoc.com
Digital Media Assistant		suzanne@royalnavalassoc.com
Deputy General Secretary	023 9272 0782	andy@royalnavalassoc.com
Assistant General Secretary (Membership & Slops)	023 9272 3747	nigel@royalnavalassoc.com
S&O Administrator	023 9272 0782	chrissie@royalnavalassoc.com
General Secretary	023 9272 2983	paul@royalnavalassoc.com
Admin	023 92 72 3747	admin@royalnavalassoc.com
Project Semaphore		Sharon@royalnavalassoc.com
Branch Support Officer (North)	07964 721849	belfastblues_812@icloud.com



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Snail Trail Mail - Postal Address

RNA Central Office,
Room 209, PP70,
Semaphore Tower,
HM Naval Base,
Portsmouth
Hants PO1 3LT

Dear Shipmate,

As you might imagine the Dockyard here in Portsmouth is a-buzz with the final preparations for the HMS Queen Elizabeth. The security fence around the new Princess Royal Jetty is now secure and we expect the final dredging operations to finish next week. The Naval Base Commander has offered an Open Day for naval base staff to see the new facilities – more news next month.

We were very lucky to have a visit from Flick Drummond MP to come to Central Office to be briefed on the RNA. The new Captain of the Base, my old friend Captain Bill Oliphant came along and said they were very impressed with our work on Shipmates and Oppos, Project Semaphore and the LIBOR buses.

I have visited the 2018 Conference venue at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire and the venue for the Sunday service next door in the Maritime Museum (old naval church). The Dublin branch are in fine fettle and we are going to have a marvellous Conference. CONA travel has already negotiated a 40% discount on ferries and is in final preparations for the lower cost accommodation nearby.

We have had our first Open Day of the year, with a good, fun day for all. Shipmates were very interested in the arrangements for the new carrier, seen from the water. Our next Open Day is 12 May.

There are sometimes days in this job that are just the best ... one of them fell a couple of weeks ago when I drove to Essex with Project Manager Sarah Clewes – to have the build meeting for our new LIBOR buses at Stanford Coachbuilders. I was very impressed with them – highly professional and real skill-at-hand at work. They take ordinary panel vans and convert them into minibuses fitted for disabled access.



We had to choose everything from the headrests to the colour of the seats, carpet, deckhead lining – you name it. As you can imagine Navy Blue was a bit of a theme. We were able to see the very simple and reliable wheelchair lift and all the adjustments to make the minibuses comfortable. Ours will have satnav, air-conditioning, Navy Blue leather seats, electric wheelchair lift and a very flexible seating/load area. We have now agreed where the buses will be located (North, South East and West) and Sarah is working on the H&S and management issues.



We have now arranged the venue and dates for next year's Welfare Seminar. It will be in the Britannia Hotel in Stoke on Trent 20 to 22 April. We have negotiated a very good package with CONA travel and their booking form is at the back of this Semaphore Circular. There are various options available on the form. The usual seminar help with travel will be available. Hopefully the location will help our more northerly branches to attend.

A reminder to get your Delegate Registration form to us please for Conference. Preparations are very well advanced and it promises to be a great weekend. There is a booking form for a trip on Conference Day at the back of this edition.

I am delighted to announce our partnership with Motorfinity. They provide an excellent discount service and have their own RNA page. When challenged to find a discount on a new Mazda MX5 for me they found £2,500 off the list price, which is really excellent. For cars that don't drift around corners sideways the discount will be much more!!

Project Semaphore, we are getting some marvellous stories from shipmates who have received their Project Semaphore iPads to bring them on line. There is a strong theme of improved contact with families and feeling less lonely that is fantastic to hear. Please look to your local naval veterans to see if anyone can benefit and contact Sharon, the Project Manager, at sharon@royalnavalassoc.com. If you are a branch secretary and not on line with regular personal access to the internet please give me or Sharon a ring.

Some admin bits and pieces:

- The Charter, Rules etc have now been updated following lengthy approval by the Privy Council and are on the website. An e-copy has been sent to Area and Branch secretaries. Please use the May 2017 copy only.
- We are having two raffles this year – the normal one for Charity and a separate raffle for a cask of genuine Pussers Rum with proceeds going to the Jutland Wood project. Ticket sent out just recently.
- The Gala Dinner is filling up fast and we are now booking into the **overflow room**, close-by but separate. If you are not staying in the CONA Travel Service Hotels you must apply for the Gala Dinner separately, with no tickets on the door. **Last call.**
- Don't forget to get your Conference **delegate** booked in form at the back of this edition.
- Please pass the word on the Biennial Parade on **10 September** to your branch and any local naval associations. This is a day for all Naval Associations and is a great reunion too.

Kindest regards from the Central Office team

Paul



Our recent Open Day

Royal Marine
Hotel and
Maritime
Museum



Chairman's chat

Hello Shipmates.



Maureen and I are fresh back from three weeks leave in Thailand visiting her Son, David in Bangkok where he has lived for the past 14 years. We are fortunate to visit him and his wife every two years. With our batteries fully recharged we are both ready to face the challenges the RNA has to offer us, myself as your National Chairman and No 6 Area National Council Member. Just a bit about the holiday. Although based on Bangkok, we visited various locations, the most impressive being the famous River Kwai where we stayed on a floating hotel. With a hydro-dam up river, at night the river level would drop by approximately 5 feet, rising back up in the morning between 0700 – 0900 hrs. whilst we sat outside eating breakfast. Wearing a life jacket, guests are able to jump into the river from the far end of the complex and get carried to the downstream end, a distance of 500m with the river racing along at approximately 10 knots. You got one chance of catching the life line by the ladder to get out or you got carried away for a mile to the next hotel. Strange how Jack enjoys a challenge, I had seven goes! My thanks to Paul Quinn for his emails whilst we were in Thailand concerning the various species of deadly Cobra snakes to be found.

Project Semaphore. In February with my wife Maureen, I attended the London training session to learn about the project's iPads. Although I have an Android Tablet, Android Mobile Phone and dabble on my Wife's PC, (surely, the latter must qualify me as a digitally isolated naval veteran?) these iPads are amazing and make my kit look antique. That said, and not getting too technical, it is a must that we get these iPads out to all naval veterans aged 65+ who are simply watching the world go by. So, if you know someone that qualifies have a chat with them, allay their fears about technology by informing them that they will be trained on a 1–2–1 basis on how to use one. Candidates' names can be notified via phone/email to Central Office or fill in the online application found on the RNA main website. My thanks go to Sharon Brown our Project Leader, Sarah Clewes and all the RNA Members who attended the training session and gave up their Saturday morning to attend.

RNA National Fund Raising Day In previous Semaphore Circulars, Paul Quinn has talked about the Dos & Don'ts of Branch Fund Raising and what the collection Tin Labels should state, so as to keep branches on the right side of Charity Law. It goes without saying that Branches do a great job raising funds for all sorts of projects; be they local, or national. Many Branches are individually registered with the Charity Commission, others use the RNA's Registered Charity No 266982. May I appeal to Branches that when considering their fund raising events, you consider setting aside just one day to carry out a collection for the Association with proceeds going to the Central Charitable Fund especially if you are using the RNA National Charity Number. Remember, if you decide to carry out a Street collection, you need a License.

National Reunion and Conference Although everyone has been reminded about this year's National Conference which is being held in Perth (Scotland), it is not too late to nominate your Branch Delegate. If you are a Branch with limited funds and wish to send a Delegate, please contact Paul Quinn at Central Office. Such Branches may be assisted from the Branch & Clubs Support Fund. Several years ago when Conference was held in Perth, we were all made most welcome and received great hospitality not just from our Shipmates across the border, but also

from the people of Perth. So, let's see as many Delegates and Observers as possible attending Conference. Remember, your vote counts. There is no point dripping/moaning about decisions taken if you are not there to vote. All Ships & Establishments/Units are entitled to send a representative subject to the permission of your Commanding Officer and you can be assured of a warm welcome.

My thanks to RNA Rushden Branch for inviting me to their recent Dinner. It was a most enjoyable evening and their guest speaker was a local lad, born and bred in Rushden, Lt Cdr David Pickles RN, Air Traffic Officer, HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH who gave a very interesting talk about the first of new carriers.

Finally, the National Vice Chairman and I joined Area 10 Shipmates at their Conference in Blackpool. I had the opportunity to meet Shipmates and see how the Area is thriving.

This was a sad occasion for the Area since their long-standing President Cdr Harry Harley RN(Rtd) stood down. I had the privilege to thank him for his passionate contribution to his area and offer a heartfelt BZ for all his work and commitment during his tenure as Area 10 President. He was presented with a Certificate from the National Council and a print of the RNA painting of the new HMS DARING and her 1950s predecessor.



1. ★ RNA and Naval Associations Biennial Parade – 10 September 2017

The RNA / Naval Associations Biennial Parade will be held at Whitehall on Sunday 10 September 2017. The Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Jonathon Woodcock OBE has confirmed as the Guest of Honour and the VIP party will include the Minister for the Armed Forces, Rt Hon Mike Penning MP, Flick Drummond MP, (Portsmouth South), Captain Andy Jordan ADC Royal Navy, Commanding Officer HMS Collingwood and Mrs Gillian Molyneux and her daughter Bethany, Mrs Molyneux is the widow of Lt Cdr Dean Molyneux who was killed whilst serving in HMS Astute.

It is envisaged that that over 500 personnel both Veterans and Serving will be on parade. As well as representatives from the many naval associations, including from Belgium and the Republic of Ireland. Trainees from HMS Sultan and HMS Collingwood will parade, as will members of the Sea Cadet Corps. Music will be provided by the volunteer band from HMS COLLINGWOOD.

The programme for the day is as follows;

- 0900 RNA Central Office staff on site, meet with Met senior officer.
- 0910 Set security points
- 0915 Civil Service Club opens for coffee and toilets (80 metres from Coach parking)
- 0930 Parking for coaches and minibuses in Whitehall Place (pass required from Central Office) All coaches + Cars to be clear of Whitehall Place by 1300.
- 0945 All Vehicles to be parked,
- 0950 Whitehall Place and South Whitehall closes.
- 1010 **Standard bearers brief by NCA**
- 1025 Parade musters and is briefed by Parade Commander.
- 1040 Parade steps off, from Whitehall Place
- 1055 2SL, Min (AF), Flick Drummond MP, Capt Jordan, Mrs and Miss Molyneux +, VIPs join the parade
- 1100 Service starts, 2 minute silence
- 1102 Service at Cenotaph led by the Chaplain of the Fleet
- 1127 Parade steps off, review by 2SL
- 1140 Parade addressed by NP/2SL
- 1146 Issue of Standard Bearers 'Tots' outside Civil Service Club
- 1147 Bar opens in Civil Service Club – 2SL and VIPs meets Shipmates
- 1200 Sandwiches and Chips served at no cost to participants
- 1200 Parking restrictions restored in Whitehall Place



Dress Will be uniform for those serving and RNA / Association rig with medals or equivalent for everyone else, polished shoes. Berets for standard bearers and optional for marchers. Standards should wear the NSM pennant (if entitled).

Briefs Standard bearers should note the early brief for them at 1010 in Whitehall place by the National Ceremonial Advisor.

Security. Very Important - Everyone attending should ensure they carry photo ID and their RNA membership card.

Band The band will be the HMS Collingwood Volunteer Band

Wreaths. Any branch, Area or individual may lay a wreath during the ceremony, please let Nigel know if you would like to.

Mobility. The march is of the order of 450 metres there and 450 back with just over an hour on our feet. Those with mobility issues should make their way to the front of the FCO where an area will be reserved

** Parking Details will be advertised once confirmed with Met Police.

2. ★ Guess Where? An Establishment



This month can you name this establishment No hovering or looking on Google or Wiki!!

The answer will be in next month's edition.

Last month's answer: , HM Naval Base Portsmouth (Short Row next to St Anne's Church). Admiral Sir David Steel identified it within 7.5 minutes of receiving the SC – mind you he used to live there!

3. ★ Motorfinity Partnership



Shipmates should be aware that the Royal Naval Association and the Conference of Naval Associations (CONA) are delighted to appoint Motorfinity as their exclusive motoring partner offering discounts on cars,

commercial vehicles and motoring related products such as used cars and motorcycles for the benefit of members.

Motorfinity works with all of the top motoring brands in the UK offering great offers and discounts which are easily accessible.

- **Save £1,000s** on your next new car
- **All models** available from leading manufacturers
- Motorfinity only works with **manufacturer approved suppliers**
- All finance options are available including **cash, Hire Purchase (HP) and Personal Contract Purchase (PCP)**
- Part exchange service
- **No fees** or charges for using the service



Take a look at some of our offers and submit your enquiry online at the dedicated Royal Naval Association website – www.motorfinity.uk/rna

4. ★ FINANCE CORNER

Dear Shipmates,

Mainly because I have been on my Easter holidays there is no 'Finance Corner' this month, back next month. Please do not hesitate to contact the Finance Office if you need any advice or assistance.

Treasurers should have been passed their hard copy treasurer's guide sent out recently to your Branch Secretary

Yours Aye

Michelle



5. ★ RNVC Series - Chief Petty Officer George Henry Prowse VC, DCM



CPO Prowse served with the Royal Naval Division in the First World War and saw action in Gallipoli and the Western Front where he was awarded the VC and DCM.

Born in Gilfach Goch, Llantrisant Wales he enlisted in the RNVr for the Royal Naval Division in February 1915.

On completion of training at Blandford, he was drafted to Drake Battalion, which was then engaged in the Gallipoli Campaign. The Division remained engaged in the Gallipoli Campaign until May 1916 when it was transferred to France where it arrived in Marseilles on 7 June 1916, where, on 20 June, he was promoted to Petty Officer.

In November 1916 the Division was employed in the Battle of the Ancre, the final attempt to resolve the Battle of the Somme. PO Prowse was wounded in his left thigh on 13 November (the opening day of the battle) and after initial treatment in France was admitted to a hospital in Epsom on 17 November. Having been discharged from hospital, he went back to the base at Blandford on 9 January 1917, and eventually returned to his battalion in France on 28 March 1917.

Chief Petty Officer George Prowse was 32 years old on 2 September 1918 when he was cited for a Victoria Cross at Pronville France. His Citation read as follows;

“For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when, during an advance, a portion of his company became disorganised by heavy machine gun fire from an enemy strong point. Collecting what men were available he led them with great coolness and bravery against this strong point, capturing it together with twenty-three prisoners and five machine guns. Later, he took a patrol forward in face of much enemy opposition, and established it on important high ground. On another occasion he displayed great heroism by attacking single-handed an ammunition limber which was trying to recover ammunition, killing three men who accompanied it and capturing the limber.

Two days later he rendered valuable service when covering the advance of his company with a Lewis gun section and located two machine gun positions in a concrete emplacement, which were holding up the advance of the battalion on the right. With complete disregard of personal danger he rushed forward with a small party and attacked and captured these posts, killing six enemy and taking thirteen prisoners and two machine guns. He was the only survivor of the gallant party, but by this daring and heroic action enabled the battalion on the right to push forward without further machine gun fire from the village. Throughout the whole operations his magnificent example and leadership were an inspiration to all, and his courage was superb.”

Very sadly CPO Prowse was killed in further action in Anneux, France on 27th September 1918. His wife Sarah was presented with her husband's VC by His Majesty King George V at Buckingham Palace on 17 July 1919. His was the last VC presented with a blue Naval ribbon and can be viewed in the Lord Ashcroft VC collection at the Imperial War Museum.

6. ★ Donations received for the Central Charities

Central Charities

RNA – Dorchester	£200.00
RNA – Cromer	£200.00
RNA – Area 9	£70.00

T Tremlin	£14.00
Linnaean Lodge	£50.00
Hospital & Medical Care	£16.05

In memory of the late

Nelson Robert Ord	£57.00
Albert Thompson	£175.00
Isabel Heyburn	£10.00
Frank Swift	£27.10

Charter Challenge

RNA – Aldershot	£50.00
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7. ★ 2017 Conference Polo Shirt

Shipmates what about a souvenir from 'Bonnie Scotland', no not a deep fried Mars Bar or a pint of Heavy but a unique Conference polo shirt, as modelled by Shipmate Ally Stirton. (Fine figure of man as I am sure you will all agree!)

They cost £16 and can be pre-ordered ready for collection at Conference. If you would like to purchase a Conference Polo Shirt please contact Ally at;

allystirton@hotmail.co.uk or Mob No 07525760176



8. ★ Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC)

Shipmates would like to be aware that the Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines will be playing a concert at 1930 in the **Bournemouth Pavilion Theatre** on **Saturday 27 May** (May Bank Holiday), raising funds for the RNRMC.

Tickets are £21, £26.50 and £31.75. They can be purchased from www.bhlivetickets.co.uk or 0844 576 3000. Group 10+; group.sales@bhlive.org.uk

9. ★ Veterans UK Gateway



The Veterans UK Gateway is now open for business. It provides a single point of contact for veterans seeking advice and support. The Gateway puts veterans in touch with the organisations which are best placed to support their need – from healthcare and housing to employability, finances, personal relationships and more.

Please follow the link for more specific details;
<https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk>

10. ★ Joke – The Climbing Rose

Oh what a tangled language English is and how easy it is to misconstrue.....

'The Climbing Rose'

A man takes a lady put to dinner for the first time and later on to a show.

The evening is a huge success and, as he drops her at her door says, 'I have had a lovely time. You looked so beautiful, you remind me of a climbing rose. May I call you tomorrow?' She agrees, and a date is made.

The next night, he knocks on her door and, when she opens it, she slaps him hard across the face.

He is stunned. What was that for? He asked.

She said...I looked up "beautiful climbing rose" on Google last night and it said.....

Wait for it.....

"Best against a brick wall or fence, no good in an open bed".



11. ★75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea (4-8 May 1942) - Lt Cdr Desmond Woods RANR.

Lt Cdr Desmond Woods Royal Australian Navy forwarded this very informative article below to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea in 4 – 8 May 1942

On the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942 it is time to remember the 543 Americans who were killed in the battle. It is also time to remember the contribution made by Australian born Rear Admiral John (Jack) Grace Royal Navy who commanded the Task Force comprising the RAN and USN Squadron which blocked the Jomard passage to the Japanese ships planning to seize Port Moresby.

1942 – Year of trial

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the darkest year in Australia's modern history - 1942. November and December of 1941 were disastrous months for Australia. In November the cruiser HMAS Sydney was lost to the German raider and minelayer *Kormoran*. All 645 of Sydney's crew were lost with their ship. A week later HMAS *Parramatta* was sunk off Tobruk with 138 of her crew killed.

On 7th December, the date that President Roosevelt said 'would live in infamy,' the battleships of the USN Pacific Fleet were attacked and sunk in Pearl Harbour and suddenly the United States had lost its core strength in the Pacific Ocean and 2400 sailors.

Within days, off Malaya, the British capital ships HMS *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* were overwhelmed and sunk by Japanese air power. *Prince of Wales*, lost 327 and *Repulse* 513 - a grievous loss in ships, sailors and capability and proof that well defended capital ships at sea, manoeuvring at speed, could be sunk by airpower alone.

The British colony of Hong Kong fell to Japanese troops on Christmas day. Malaya was invaded and despite a fighting withdrawal Singapore surrendered on the 15th of February. This resulted in the deaths of unknown thousands of Chinese -Singaporeans and the imprisonment of 100,000 British, Indian and Australian troops, including 15,000 soldiers of the 8th Division.

Darwin was bombed by carrier based aircraft on 19 February and 235 Australian men and women, service and civilian, were killed on Australian soil. The USN lost USS *Peary* and 88 of her crew in Darwin Harbour in that attack. Australian Prime Minister John Curtin could not say in early 1942 what fresh catastrophes lay ahead and where Australians would fight for their freedom next.

Port Moresby – Japanese Objective

This year Australians will rightly honour the outnumbered troops who from August 1942 on, were making their heroic stand, fighting and dying, on all the jungle battlefields of the mountainous Kokoda Track in New Guinea.

This resolute fighting defence was one of Australia's finest actions in World War II. But the New Guinea campaign began at sea, and was sustained from the sea. It was a maritime campaign which began with the *Battle of the Coral Sea*.

The Japanese objective for early May 1942 was to seize Port Moresby with a convoy of 5000 battle hardened troops sent from Rabaul and to transform it into a major military and air base from which Japanese ships and aircraft could command Australia's northern seas and skies. Once that was completed the Japanese High Command's over ambitious plan was to take New Caledonia and Samoa as bases from which to attempt to sever the connection between Australia, New Zealand and the United States and to defend the resources they now controlled in the Dutch East Indies.

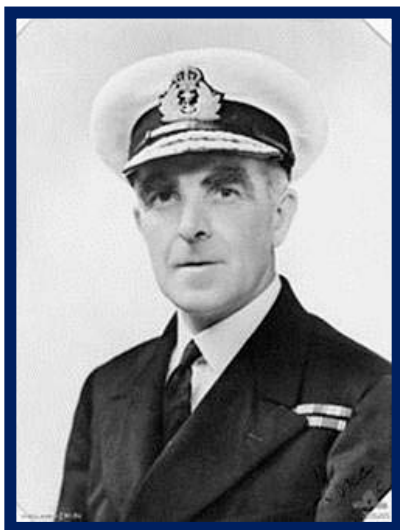


This entire plan was well known to the Allies from signal interception and decryption. It was critical that Port Moresby did not fall. To prevent it Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the US Pacific Fleet, ordered his only two available aircraft carrier groups, Task Force 17 commanded by Rear Admiral Frank Fletcher, USN, built around USS *Yorktown* and Task Force 11, Rear Admiral Aubrey Fitch, USN, centred on USS *Lexington* south into the Coral Sea. On 1 May they rendezvoused off Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides. They and their aircrew were all the strike power that the USN could muster in the Pacific just five months after Pearl Harbor to bring to battle an undiminished and highly confident Japanese Navy.

Rear Admiral John (Jack) Crace, Royal Navy

Sailing from Sydney on 1 May was Task Force 44 under the command of Rear Admiral Jack Crace, Royal Navy, the RAN's Squadron Commander. He was an Australian by birth whose rural childhood was spent at Gunghalin near present day Canberra, on his family's sheep farm. His

father accidentally drowned when young Jack was five. In 1902 aged 13 he succeeded in getting into Britannia Royal Naval College. He served for three years in the ill fated HMS *Good Hope* and in 1913 Lieutenant Jack Crace was a torpedo specialist in the RAN's new battle cruiser HMAS *Australia* when she entered Sydney to the cheers of hundreds of thousands of ecstatic Australians.



He remained with her when she joined the Grand Fleet in 1915. He was selected for the commissioning crew of HMS *Hood* in 1918. He avoided the Geddes axe of 1922 which destroyed so many promising naval careers. In 1924 he commanded the cruiser HMS *Danae* and returned to Sydney as part of the RN's Special Service Squadron and witnessed the scuttling off Sydney Heads of the now obsolete HMAS *Australia*. He wrote essays for the Naval Review and gained reputation as an innovator. He commanded a destroyer in the Home Fleet and a cruiser in the East Indies. In August 1939 he was promoted to flag rank and when war broke out he was offered, and accepted, command of the Australian Squadron.

Crace's squadron in May 1942 consisted of the heavy cruiser HMAS *Australia* and the light cruiser HMAS *Hobart*. The heavy cruiser USS *Chicago* and destroyer USS *Perkins*, joined him from Noumea in New Caledonia as he took his ships into the Coral Sea to join the USN carriers and provide them with cruiser protection and add to their much needed anti-aircraft firepower.

The Strike on the Japanese at Tulagi

On 2 May Admiral Fletcher steamed his force north-west to take up a position south of Guadalcanal. Meanwhile, Admiral Takagi's force was sailing from the Japanese fleet base at Truk Lagoon, and by 3 May both his strike carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* were north east of Rabaul. Each side remained uncertain of their enemy's exact movements, but on receiving an Australian coast watcher's report of the Tulagi Invasion Group, Admiral Fletcher determined to proceed north at high speed to catch the Japanese by surprise. On the morning of 4 May USS *Yorktown* launched three strikes on the Japanese at Tulagi, destroying a number of small warships at a cost of three of her own aircraft. More significantly for the evolving battle, the Japanese lost several long range flying boats, severely reducing their reconnaissance capability.

The carrier fleets gather

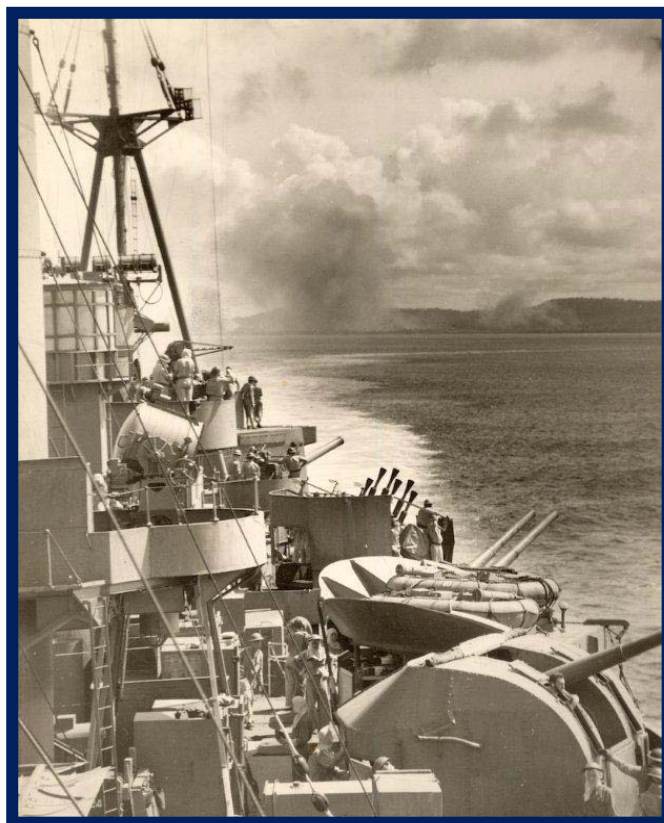
On 6 May the entire Allied force was amalgamated as Task Force 17. Admiral Jack Crace, commanded the Support Group, which was now designated Task Group 17.3. Admiral Fletcher then headed for the Louisiade Archipelago where he expected to catch the main Japanese invasion force as it passed through en-route to Port Moresby. The Japanese had their own thoughts, however, and their Carrier Striking Force moved rapidly down the eastern flank of the Solomons covering what Admiral Tagaki anticipated to be the US carriers' line of retreat. Having rounded the southern Solomons, the Japanese carriers entered the Coral Sea behind Crace's Task Force 17.

The weather was poor and the inexperience of searching air crews made reconnaissance doubly difficult. At one stage the opposing forces were only 70 miles apart, but all through 6 May the fleets remained ignorant of each other's whereabouts.

The troop ships of the Japanese Port Moresby invasion force continued moving south, and by the evening of 6 May were just north of the Louisiade Archipelago. The covering force, the light carrier *Shoho* and her accompanying cruisers, then moved south-westwards heading towards the Jomard Passage, the vital sea lane which led to Port Moresby. The accompanying troop ships were sighted and unsuccessfully attacked by US Army Air Force B-17 bombers based in Australia. Fletcher steamed westwards through the night in preparation for launching search flights at dawn. The fleet tanker USS *Neosho* and her escorting destroyer USS *Sims* were despatched to steam southwards to a new refuelling position.

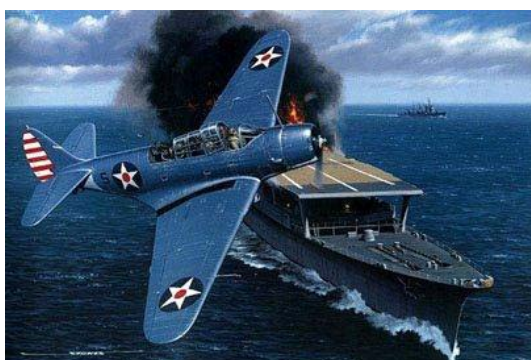
Crace is ordered to block the sea lane to Port Moresby

Before dawn on the morning of 7 May Fletcher sent an order by flashing light to Crace which read: *Proceed at daylight to destroy enemy ships reported passing through the Jomard passage and threatening Moresby. Conserve fuel, Fuel destroyers from cruisers.* As ordered Crace's Task Force sped to the north-west. Fletcher had made an extremely risky decision and perhaps the most important in the entire battle. Not only had he weakened his own air defences by denying himself the three cruisers anti-aircraft guns, but he had also exposed Crace's cruisers to the possibility of air attack without hope of friendly fighter protection from US carriers. Crace's RAN and USN ships were on their own and they knew it.



The Battle of the Jomard Passage

Crace arrived off the Jomard Passage at 1400 on 7 May, and ordered his ships to take up an anti-aircraft formation. Japanese reconnaissance aircraft soon sighted the three cruisers with their destroyer escort and just after 1500 a dozen Japanese land-based torpedo bombers began their attack. Crace altered course so that his ships were heading directly towards the oncoming aircraft and each ship then began violent evasive manoeuvres. Captain Harold Farncomb, one of the Australian Navy's first 1913 intake of cadet midshipmen, now repaid his decades of training as he threw HMAS *Australia* around at high speed, avoiding bombs, as though his heavy cruiser was a destroyer.



Heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire from multiple barrelled 'pom pom' guns downed at least six enemy bomber and encouraged others to release their torpedoes early. Some casualties in the Allied ships were caused by strafing of their upper decks but there were no fatalities. Due to excellent and vigorous ship handling and some luck none of the lethal Japanese 'long lance' torpedoes struck home.

Immediately following this first wave another 19

Japanese aircraft subjected *Australia* to an accurate low level-bombing attack which was only avoided by more skilful ship handling. Heavy columns of water from near misses drenched men on the bridge and sailors at their open guns and forced them to their knees.

Captain Bode on the bridge of the USS *Chicago* saluted HMAS *Australia* when we saw her disappear behind a curtain of bombs thinking that she must surely be destroyed. She came through without a single direct hit but many very near misses.

A few minutes later, three US Flying Fortress high level bombers from Townsville, failing to recognise that the ships below were friendly, began their own attack, fortunately without result. Crace was not happy about this breakdown in basic ship recognition skills and communication but noted in his diary that fortunately the Americans' aim was worse than the Japanese !

Japanese false reporting causes rescheduling of invasion plans

On their return to Rabaul, the over optimistic Japanese airmen reported that they had sunk one allied battleship, and damaged both a second battleship and a cruiser. They were seeing ships that were not there and sinking them!

As a result of this misinformation the Japanese High Command launched no further strikes against Crace's ships but due to uncertainty about what ships remained afloat Admiral Inoue ordered the Port Moresby invasion force to reverse course while the situation with regard to the 'battleship' sightings and other reconnaissance reports was clarified. The invasion of Port Moresby was 're-scheduled.' Then late on the 7 May reconnaissance confirmed the continued presence of the three RAN and USN cruisers in the sea lane that led to Port Moresby. This combined with bombing attacks from aircraft based in Australia, convinced the Japanese Commander-in-Chief to turn back his Port Moresby bound landing ships. He could not risk sending his vulnerable troop ships into a narrow passage which his ships did not control and which was, effectively, blocked by Allied warships.

Shoho and USS Sims are sunk and USS Neosho crippled

Meanwhile, both the Japanese and US carrier forces had launched searches for each other at dawn on 7 May. At 0815 American scouts sighted and reported two carriers and four cruisers 225 miles to the north-west. At 0926 *Lexington* launched her first strike, followed 20 minutes later by



one from *Yorktown*. Ninety three USN aircraft were now in the air. *Zuikaku* disappeared into a rain squall but the small carrier *Shoho* stood no chance. Hit by at least 20 bombs and torpedoes she sank at 1135 with the loss of 638 of her crew. This was the first time that USN pilots sank an enemy carrier.

By 1335 the Americans had recovered their aircraft, but rather than launching another strike against *Shoho*'s remaining escorts Fletcher elected to await

more precise news of the other enemy carriers which were his primary targets.

Further to the east the searches launched by the Japanese Carrier Striking Force sighted the detached oiler *Neosho* and her destroyer escort *Sims* at about 0830. They were mistakenly reported as a carrier and light cruiser and Takagi launched his own 78 plane strike. The two American ships were attacked by dive bombers at noon with *Sims* quickly sunk with most of her crew and *Neosho* heavily damaged and barely afloat.

With the strike beyond the range of recall, Tagaki at last received accurate intelligence on the position of the two American carriers, now some 280 miles to the north-west. To his chagrin he

was unable to launch another strike until late that afternoon. Because the aircraft would be returning in the dark Tagaki selected his most experienced aircrew, and at 1630 launched 12 dive bombers and 15 torpedo bombers in three groups.

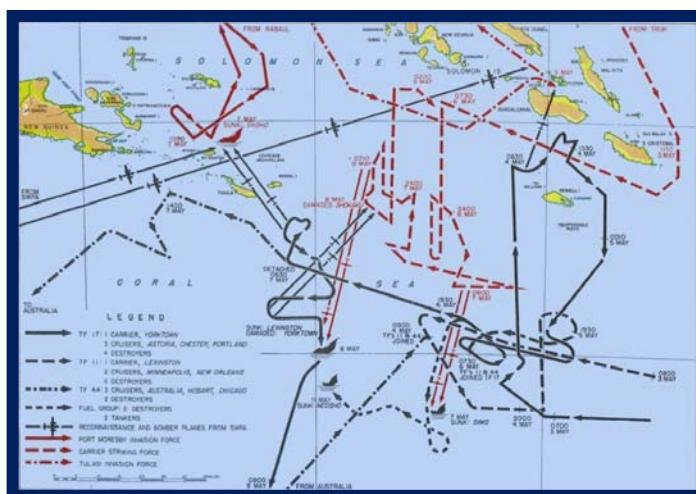
Not only did this strike miss seeing Task Force 17 in squally weather, but on their return flight the Japanese aircraft were intercepted by US fighters and badly mauled with 10 shot down. Further heavy losses resulted from the pilots' inability to find their own carriers in the dark. Eleven aircraft ditched and only six of the 27 Japanese aircraft returned safely. Some had attempted in the dark to land on *Lexington* mistaking its landing lights for those of a Japanese carrier. A fatal error!

That night the two carrier forces drew away from each other. Both commanders contemplated sending their surface ships out to attack the opposing carrier force, but both rejected the idea because they expected attacks the next morning and needed the ships to provide additional anti-aircraft firepower. With the odds almost even the Battle of the Coral Sea was about to reach its zenith on 8 May.

Prime Minister John Curtin waits and wonders in Canberra

Back in Canberra Prime Minister John Curtin waited anxiously for news. He addressed the Parliament saying:

.... At this moment nobody can tell what the result of the engagement may be. If it should go advantageously, we shall have cause for great gratitude and our position will be clearer. But if we should not have the advantages for which we hope from this battle, all that confronts us is a sterner ordeal, a greater and graver responsibility. Our front line is the sea. Men there are fighting for Australia today



At 0600 on 8 May the Japanese, launched air patrols to cover a 200 mile arc from south west to south east. At 0625 the US carriers launched their own search. Some two hours later the two opposing carrier forces were detected at almost the same time.

The Main Battle Commences

Yorktown's aircraft made the first attack at 1057; concentrating on *Shokaku* because *Zuikaku* had again disappeared in a rain squall. *Shokaku* managed to avoid all the slow torpedoes fired at her, but was struck by several bombs which started fires preventing her from launching and recovering aircraft.

Lexington's strike had difficulties locating the targets, scoring only one further hit on *Shokaku* and causing little additional damage. In all, the Japanese carrier lost 150 men killed and wounded while the Americans lost 33 aircraft.

The Japanese strike group then delivered similar treatment to *Lexington* and *Yorktown*. The two carriers were steaming together in the centre of a circular formation with cruisers and destroyers forming inner and outer rings with fighter aircraft patrolling above. They faced 69 Japanese aircraft, many of which flew so low that they had to rise to pass over the defensive rings of destroyers to press home their attacks.

The loss of the USS Lexington

Yorktown successfully avoided all the torpedoes aimed at her, and though a single bomb hit killed 37 men and started fires, these were soon brought under control. The slower *Lexington*, however, was hit twice by torpedoes on the port side. The Japanese dive bombers consolidated this success, scoring at least two more hits and several near misses. The attack had taken less than 20 minutes, and although the damage at first appeared under control,



Lexington's aviation gasoline tanks were leaking. Just over an hour later a spark from a motor generator ignited built up fumes. The resulting series of violent internal explosions forced the carrier to be abandoned shortly after 1700. The Lady Lex was torpedoed and sunk by the destroyer USS *Phelps*. *Lexington* lost 216 of her crew. Japanese losses amounted to another 30 aircraft in combat and another 13 to other causes. The result was that fully 50% of the Japanese pilots and their aircraft engaged had been destroyed in three days of operations.

Withdrawal of the Fleets

Both carrier forces were now too battered and in need of repair to continue the fight. The *Zuikaku* low on fuel and with only 40 aircraft remaining, escorted the damaged *Shokaku* back to Japan. Left without carrier aircraft to protect the Port Moresby invasion Admiral Inoue had no choice but to cancel it or risk it being sunk from aircraft based in Australia or by Crace's still elusive cruisers with catastrophic loss of life. In fact Crace had no choice but to withdrawn to refuel but the Japanese did not know that.

Admiral Fletcher likewise had cause to husband his forces and withdraw. The damaged *Yorktown* recovered *Lexington's* remaining aircraft and then the Task Force turned towards Pearl Harbor to receive urgent repairs. Due to a miraculous repair effort would *Yorktown* would fight again at Midway.

Outcomes and lessons learned

The Battle of the Coral Sea was famously the first great naval action fought between carriers-borne aircraft – the two fleets' vessels never actually sighted each other and neither fleet fired salvos at the other. The outcome of the battle bought the time needed to being the process of applying American industrial might to building the ships which would eventually over match the Japanese Imperial fleet and in 1943-44 drive it from every one of its defensive positions. The sinking of three US ships made it clear that the USN was in urgent need of a torpedo to match the speed and range of the Japanese ones which crippled *Lexington*.

The Japanese C-in-C's verdict on who won the battle ?

Admiral Yamamoto the Commander in Chief in his battleship *Yamato* at the Japanese fleet base at Truk Lagoon was preparing for what he regarded as being the decisive battle with the US Fleet in the Central Pacific. He had regarded the Port Moresby operation as something of a side show and had failed to concentrate the decisive force that he possessed, including his flagship

Yamato, in the Coral Sea. He was preparing for the main event which was to seize Midway and force the US carriers to give battle to defend it on his terms. Now he was in no doubt as to the strategic reverse that Japan had suffered. He read the reports on the Coral Sea and wrote ruefully:

The dream of a great victory is gone. As I feared it was impossible. The battle belongs to the enemy.

After the Coral Sea Yamamoto convinced Navy High Command that the destruction of what remained of the American Pacific Fleet was the single greatest priority to be placed ahead of further efforts at territorial acquisition for defensive purposes. That strategy led Japan to the decisive defeat at Midway.

Tactical draw but Allied strategic victory

Rather like the Battle of Jutland both sides at the time claimed a victory. At the time the fact that the battle was not a clear defeat was used for morale-boosting value to the hard pressed Allies. But Prime Minister Curtin was in no doubt that an opportunity for a clear victory had been missed. He wrote to his envoy to President Roosevelt in Washington Dr Herbert Evatt:

I hope that there is full appreciation in London and Washington of the grave threat we confronted last week. We knew the strength of the enemy's concentration, we knew his intentions and we knew the date of the attack, yet we were unable to marshal the superior strength to deal him a heavy blow and the whole of his convoy of twenty four troop transports escaped unscathed.



Curtin was right to be concerned at how the battle had been conducted. It had been fought in the area under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, based in Brisbane, but as a naval action it was under the strategic control of Admiral Nimitz. This bifurcation of responsibility had caused a serious breakdown in the coordination of US and Australian land based aircraft assigned to attack the Japanese fleet. This partially accounts for the attack on Crace's cruisers by US bombers in the Jomard passage which had the potential

for being a first class disaster.

However, if the battle was fought less than optimally and can be seen as a tactical draw it can also be seen retrospectively as a strategic victory of enduring significance. This judgement of history is true for three principal reasons.

Firstly, the Japanese Navy's effort to secure a southern defensive anchor point on New Guinea for their newly acquired Empire in South East Asia had failed. Had they occupied and fortified Port Moresby and operated ships and aircraft from there in mid 1942 the war in the South West Pacific might have taken much longer for the Allies to win. The battle to clear Australia's northern approaches, and re take Port Moresby would have become a strategic priority which would have distracted effort and resources away from other theatres particularly the crucial campaign in the Solomon Islands at Guadalcanal.

Secondly, the Battle of the Coral Sea broke the long series of Japanese land and sea victories which had started at Pearl Harbor in December 1941. It demonstrated that their Navy, and particularly their strike carriers, could be held and forced to withdraw without achieving their objective. Easy Japanese victories over the Allies were not inevitable.

Thirdly, the consequence of the loss out of service of three carriers in May 1942 mattered. One converted carrier, *Shoho* was sunk with her aircraft. More importantly the fleet carrier *Shokaku* was seriously damaged and in need of repair in Japan and her sister ship *Zuikaku* had lost all but 40 of her aircraft and pilots. This loss of the Air Group seriously weakened the strength of the Japanese aviation capability available at the critical Battle of Midway on 5 June. Defeat there swung the tide of the war at sea against Japan.

New Guinea and the South West Pacific Maritime Campaign

But no campaign is won in a single battle. Japan's determination to achieve a southern base in New Guinea did not end when their unscathed troop transports returned to Rabaul. Since they could no longer achieve a seaborne invasion of Port Moresby, the Japanese were confident that they could capture it by crossing the mountain ranges from the northern coast of New Guinea.

For Australian, and later American soldiers, the result of this overconfidence would be the epic and bitterly fought struggle on land which began at in the highlands of New Guinea at Kokoda.



The Japanese landed on the north coast on 21/22 Jul 1942 and began to make their way overland to Port Moresby via the Kokoda Track. This was a single-file track running some 60–100 km through the Owen Stanley Ranges to Port Moresby. It crosses some of the most rugged and isolated terrain in the world, reaching an elevation of 2,250 m at Mount Bellamy, and combines hot humid days with intensely cold nights, torrential rainfall and endemic tropical diseases such as malaria. The track was passable only on foot, and as the campaign developed this had extreme repercussions for logistics, the size of forces

deployed and the type of warfare that could be conducted.

A war correspondent of the time wrote: 'Surely no war was ever fought under worse conditions than these.'

The Japanese advance was resisted initially by Australian militia soldiers who saw themselves as the last line of defence before mainland Australia. At its height, the Japanese advance reached as close as just 32km from Port Moresby. But it was an over extended and spent force and did not have the capacity to continue to advance. They had been fought to a standstill by Australian 9th Division desert veterans of El Alamein hastily returned to Australia to relieve the militia. The New Guinea campaign would in late 1942 see the Japanese army turned back, cut off from re supply by sea and air, and then comprehensively defeated on land in northern New Guinea in 1943 by Australian and American troops fully supported from the sea.

Maritime Sustainment

That is the salient point. It was Allied warships and merchant ships which maintained the sinews of war in New Guinea and the South West Pacific through 1942 and 1943. They kept the vital supplies flowing from Australia to the Allied troops. Sustaining troops efficiency and fighting spirit in battle depended on supplies getting through to them. After the war US Army General Douglas MacArthur reflected on the ships and men of the Merchant Navies and their performance in sustaining Australian and American soldiers in 1942. He said:

They brought us our lifeblood, and they had paid for it with their own. I saw them bombed in New Guinea's ports. When it was humanly possible, when their ships were not blown out from under them by bombs or torpedoes, they delivered their cargoes to us who needed them so badly. The efficiency and the courage they displayed marked their conduct throughout the entire campaign in the southwest Pacific area. They have contributed tremendously to our success. I hold no branch in higher esteem than the Merchant Marine.

Many of the men he was speaking about were Australian merchant seamen sailing under their Red Ensign who doggedly returned to sea in the face of mortal dangers from which they had no defence

Starving the Japanese Army by maritime blockade

It was USN and RAN warships which cut the maritime supply lines of the Japanese army on the Kokoda Track and blunted their aggression. It was those same ships that escorted vast quantities of military stores and equipment into Port Moresby to be carried to the front line where every 'digger' was dependent on what came up that precipitous jungle track.

Seaborne supply lines carrying food, fuel, vehicles, weapons and ammunition gave them their chance to turn their long fighting retreat from Kokoda, into an advance to victory in 1943.

Conversely, without resupply the Japanese effort to reach Port Moresby by land was doomed. At the Battle of the Bismarck Sea the RAAF and US Army Air Force sank eight troop ships sent to replace and re supply the Japanese army which had been defeated and was starving at Lae in Northern New Guinea. It was an exhausted, bleeding, and above all hungry, Japanese army, being hit by land, sea and air, that was finally defeated in 1943.

Naval Gunfire Support to Pacific landings

USN and RAN and later RN Naval Gunfire Support (NGS) became the normal prelude to every landing by US Marines and Australian Army troops in the Pacific. It softened up the opposition and wherever possible degraded the fixed positions designed to defeat the invading forces. Well placed naval salvos saved innumerable allied lives as men fought to make a lodgement on a new beach

The war in Australia and the arrival of the British Pacific Fleet

At home in Australia men and women heeded Prime Minister Curtin's demand that they work as never before. They built corvettes and destroyers in ports large and small. Australian men and women built modern fighter aircraft in hastily built factories. Spitfires flew in defence of Darwin which became a major logistics base and port.

In naval dockyards Australian and British skilled shipwrights repaired the battle damage to those ships that had been in action and prepared them to return to war. The British Pacific Fleet's carriers and battleships started to arrive in 1943 and came in force in 1944 to operate with the USN and RAN. RN Fleet Air Arm pilots and submariners attacked Japanese oil refineries and then went on to avenge *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*. RN battleships and carriers with their cruisers and destroyers, working with the USN, contributed in firepower to the Allied victory over Japan.

Remembrance of the USN's Coral Sea dead

In May 2017, 75 years on from these epic battles of 1942 we remember Admiral Jack Grace, the Australian born RN Admiral who took his RAN and USN ships into harm's way, fighting hard and driving off the aircraft capable of sinking them all. Grace and his RAN and USN cruiser captains

brought them all through unscathed. In doing so he contributed a vital element to a definitive strategic victory with great significance for the course of war in the Pacific.

We remember our American allies and their losses. At least 543 USN sailors and airmen were killed and remain in the Coral Sea. Their ships, *Lexington*, *Sims* and *Neosho* are now designated as protected sites under Australian law.

Those lost with their ships and in the air battles of the Coral Sea forged a link between the RAN and the USN in a chain of friendship and alliance which endures and has been added to in every one of the last seven decades.

Ensign Leslie Knox USN – Australian - American USN pilot

One of the USN pilots who died in the air battle was Ensign Leslie B. Knox. His life and death is symbolic of that relationship. He was born in 1916 in Brisbane, to Scottish immigrants. Why and when the family moved from Australia to America is not clear, but he gained his US Navy wings on 10 May 1940 and exactly two years later was flying his Wildcat fighter from the *Yorktown* in the Coral Sea.

On the night of 7 May 1942, a formation of six Japanese torpedo bombers emerged from a cloud and flew beneath the Wildcats, going in the opposite direction. Flying as the rear-guard aircraft, Knox had the best opportunity to attack, and broke formation to chase the Japanese. He was seen to destroy a bomber with his first machine-gun burst and dispersed the formation which was then attacked and mauled by the rest of his squadron. But Leslie Knox did not return to the *Yorktown* and no trace of his aircraft was found.

Posthumously, the USN promoted him to Lieutenant for his actions on 7 May 1942 and awarded him the Navy Cross, the second-highest gallantry award for USN personnel after the Medal of Honor. Exceptionally a new USN destroyer was named after him.

Coral Sea 75 - Commemorative Dinner USS Intrepid New York Harbor.

On 3 May a dinner for 2000 guests will be held in the hangar deck of the USS *Intrepid*, the WWII carrier berthed in New York, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle in May 1942.

Five RAN veterans of the Battle of the Coral Sea and their carers will be at that dinner where they will meet their USN counterparts. These Australian veterans are now all in their nineties and this will be the last major public reunion with American veterans, who, like themselves, three quarters of a century ago, made their contribution to the most important battle in Australia's maritime history.

12. ★ Joke Time – Paddy Millionaire

Apologies to my Irish Friends but we have not had a Paddy one for ages and this tickled me!

How about this for Irish loyalty.....

Paddy is going really well on Who Wants to be a Millionaire. He's got to £125,000 with all his lifelines.

Chris: OK Paddy, for £250,000 which of the following was one of the Great Train Robbers was it:

Ronnie Biggs

Ronnie O'Sullivan

Ronnie Corbett



Ronnie Wood

Take your time

Paddy: I'll take the money Chris

Chris: Are you sure, you've still got 3 lifelines

Paddy: I'm sure Chris, I'll take the money

Chris: OK audience give him a big round of applause, but before you go Paddy I'm sure you'd like to know the answer.

Paddy: I know the answer Chris.

Chris: You know the answer? You've just turned down a quarter of a million quid, are you mad? are you mental?

Wait for it.....

Paddy: I may be mental Chris but I'm no feckin grass

13. ★ Request for assistance – Tigress Productions

Central Office received the following request for assistance from Gemma Greene at Tigress Production.....

Hello

I work for a television production company based in Bristol called Tigress Productions (www.tigressproductions.co.uk) and I'm hoping you might be able to help me with some research I'm doing for a potential TV series.

In an ideal world I want to find a group of men, retired from the Navy, could be 60s/70s/80s in age, who all served on the same ship at the same time (would be nice if they knew each other but not essential) then we would gather their stories of where that ship visited, different ports, drinking dens, important missions etc. We could pick one particular tour of duty that the ship did – or the most interesting route memory-wise.

Then take the general idea would be to take them back to see how things have changed since they were there whilst hearing their stories.

I think it would be good to start at grass roots – so any reunions, retired navy clubs/pubs/societies where we could actually go and meet people and hear their stories. Do you have such a thing as an alumni association from a particular ship? Where people who served together stay in touch? I'm hoping there will be quite a few organisations like this but would you be able to point me in the direction of any? As we're Bristol based it would be good to concentrate on the South West/M4 corridor/ South Wales to start with...

If you can assist please contact Gemma at the contacts below

Gemma Greene | Development

tigress productions | 2nd Floor | Embassy House | Queen's Avenue | Bristol | BS8 1SB| UK

T: +44 (0)117 933 5620 **F:** +44 (0)117 933 5666

E: gemma@greene@tigressproductions.co.uk

W: www.tigressproductions.co.uk

14. More Biennial Parade Stuff... RNA Uxbridge Invitation.



Any RNA Member who is attending the Biennial Parade in Whitehall London on the 10th September are most welcome to visit RNA Uxbridge after the parade on your way home , we will lay on a free buffet and Tots to all that pop in !!!

So shipmates instead of getting ripped off with London Bar prices (average £4--£5 a pint) come and join us at a proper RNA Club where you can purchase properly discounted beers for example Draft Tiger at just £2 a pint, Real Ale at £3 a pint and all other beers from £2.70 a pint.

All the Club asks is that you let us know in advance that you intend to visit for catering purposes. Tel 01895 230071 e-mail rna.uxbridge@hotmail.co.uk web site www.uxbridgernna.com

For non navigators the post code is UB10 9PG. The Club is located west bound just off the A40 at Hillingdon 14 miles from the west end turn off junction after RAF Northolt and is on the left at the end of the slip road , Nearest tube station a 2-minute walk from Hillingdon Station on the Metropolitan and Piccadilly lines. Chairman RNA Uxbridge Kevin (Slinger) Wood would be delighted to welcome you there.

15. National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN)

Shipmates will be interested to know that NMRN has written to Central Office to inform us that they are launching a new NMRN Membership scheme. Please see the details below;



This is an exclusive invitation to those with whom we have a close relationship and we are delighted to be able to offer your members **a 50% discount** on the new membership scheme by using the special promotional code **Family50** on the sign up page - <https://directdebit.nmrn.org.uk/galaxy-tools/nmrn-membership>.

The NMRN membership provides great days out as we tell the stories of real people and bring history to life. As a registered charity, the funds we raise enable us to carry out our projects and continually deliver new information and experiences to our members through our work.

National Museum of the Royal Navy members will be able to enjoy an enhanced experience, with many benefits including:

- Unlimited entry to all National Museum of the Royal Navy museums and ships (detailed below)*
- 25% discount into National Museum of the Royal Navy museums for friends & family – up to 4 people*
- 25% discount on all National Museum guidebooks*

10% discount on all National Museum cafes and restaurants

10% discount at all National Museum shops

Dedicated Members' e-newsletter

Access to our exclusive Online Members' Area

Discount and early bird tickets to selected NMRN events

Special tours of maritime interest in conjunction with National Museum Friends of Museum schemes

Exclusive invitations to behind the scenes NMRN museum tours and previews



Entry to all our museums is included in the membership, they include,

HMS Trincomalee in Hartlepool and its historic quayside, known as The National Museum of the Royal Navy, Hartlepool

The Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton, Somerset

The National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth

HMS Victory, Portsmouth

First World War Gallipoli campaign survivor HMS M.33, Portsmouth

The Royal Navy Submarine Museum and Explosion, Gosport

The Museum of Naval Firepower, Gosport

HMS Caroline, the last survivor of the battle of Jutland, Belfast.

The cost of membership:

Ticket Type	National Museum of the Royal Navy Membership
Adult	£45 With 50% discount £22.50
Adult Joint	£70 With 50% discount £35.00
Child	£30 With 50% discount £15.00
Family (1 adult)	£60 With 50% discount £30.00
Family (2 adults)	£90 With 50% discount £45.00
Senior	£35 With 50% discount £17.50 (over 60)
Senior Joint	£60 With 50% discount £30.00 (over 60)
Student	£35 With 50% discount £22.50

The photo above shows General Secretary, Paul Quinn with Paul Elgood from the NMRN on a glorious sunny day in March with HMS Victory in the background.

(Editors Note; What more can you say, what a great deal!)

16. Update of RNA & Naval Associations Deployment to Ireland on the MV Marco Polo (Renamed HMS Marco Polo) - 'Mini Cruise' 29 Sep -02 October 2017

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

Just a quick update on the Naval Associations Irish Sea Deployment on HMS Marco Polo 'Mini-Cruise'. The ship is under sailing orders from Liverpool at 1900 on Friday 29th September 2017, full details are available below.

The cruise is currently exclusively booked for RNA and CONA shipmates which can only



continue for a limited period Shipmates who would like to attend are required to place a deposit of £100. However, to encourage more Shipmates to book early and ensure the exclusivity the RNA have successfully negotiated with CONA Holiday Service to reduce the deposit so it can be paid in two sums of £50, one now and the other by 31st January.

Come along and get the feel of the sea under your feet and have a 'stonkingly' great time. The drinks package alone is worth it! Look;

Why not add a '*Drinks Inclusive Package*' at a supplement of £15 per person per night*. This includes: House wine, draught beer and soft drinks by the glass during meal hours in the restaurants: Draught beer, house wines, cocktails and other alcoholic drinks by the glass from all bars during opening hours (excluding premium brands): Soft drinks and juices by the glass from all bars during opening hours.

* *The drinks package is only available if all occupants of the cabin book it in advance for the 3 night duration. (Exclusions apply).*

So Shipmates what are you waiting for please book up as early as you possibly can so that the cruise remains as a 'naval deployment'. Full details of the cruise and the booking form can be found at the rear of this Semaphore Circular.

So why not come along and swing that lantern.....

RNA Longcast

2017	
06 May	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting - Harwich
12 May	Open Day
02-04 Jun	RNA Conference – Perth
02 Jun	AMC /FAC / National Council Meeting/SOC
03 Jun	SOC (Wash up)
04 Jun	Parade and Church Service
17 Jun	6 Area Meeting – 1300 Chesham and Amersham
22 Jun	Trustee training for NCM - Portsmouth
24 Jun	National Armed Forces Day - Liverpool
30 Jun	Open Day
01 Jul	RNA Dublin Summer BBQ
27 Jul	Mid-year Budget Review
05 Aug	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting - Stowmarket
11 Aug	Open Day
18 Aug	FAC
19 Aug	AMC
01 Sep – 31 Oct	Possible arrival window of HMS Queen Elizabeth in Portsmouth - TBC
06 Oct	Open Day
09 Sep	National Council Meeting
10 Sep	Biennial Parade
29 Sep - 02 Oct	CONA Cruise (Liverpool –Dublin- Bristol)
30 Sept	Chichester Branch 70 th anniversary event
20 Oct	RNA Dublin- Trafalgar Night Dinner
21 Oct	RNA Chard -30 year Commissioning Anniversary and Trafalgar Night Dinner
04 Nov	Area 5 Quarterly - Harwich
17 Nov	FAC
18 Nov	AMC
25 Nov	6 Area Meeting – 1300 Royston RNA (Eternit Sports & Social Club)
09 Dec	National Council Meeting
2018	
03 Feb	Area 5 Quarterly – Southend RNA Club
05 May	Area 5 Quarterly – United Services Club Harwich
04 Aug	Area 5 Quarterly – United Services Club Harwich
03 Nov	Area 5 Quarterly – RBL Club Rayleigh

RNA Members Benefits

UK Holiday Group /CONA Holiday Service

- Variety of special deals for both Groups and Individuals. 1% of turnover thorough CONA Holiday Service is returned to the RNA. <http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/news/323/members-holidays-service>

Coleman/Ansvar Insurance

- Discounted Branch and House hold Insurance - 01323 744149
<http://bit.ly/RNACona>

Funeral Service

- Significant discount form Veterans UK www.veteranfunerals.co.uk Tel 07889 009393

Portsmouth Historic Dockyard



- RNA member entry just £10 plus four guest at £10 each provides access to the all attractions including the Submarine Museum, RM Museum and Explosion!.

Legal Services



Free 30 minute legal advice with Coffin Mew.
armedforces@coffinmew.co.uk 0800 827168

Breakdown Service



- RAC Breakdown and recovery service
asec@arno.org.uk or 0207 4025231



Organisers of Reunions should be aware the CONA Travel will match or better any other 'like for like' Reunion/Group Trips bookings so why not give them an opportunity to impress you. 0844 264 2122

conatravelservices@justforgroups.co.uk



- Discounts on a large range of new Cars www.motorfinity.uk/rna

Delegate to Annual Conference 2017 Perth

Branch secretaries should note the following before submitting their application.

- a) **Each Branch which has complied with Rule 16(c)**, (*No Branch shall be permitted to send a delegate to the Conference unless it has observed the regulations of the Association in regard to the return of balance sheets, the payment of subscriptions and the formation of Branches. This provision has no application to the right of, and expectation for, ships and establishments to send a delegate to the Conference.*) but subject to Rule 10(c), (*Associate members are eligible to act as a Branch Delegate at Area meetings and Conferences, provided that they have completed three years continuous membership of the Association immediately prior to election as Delegate*) and has been in commission for at least three months by the date of a Conference shall be entitled to nominate one eligible Association Member as its Delegate to attend a Conference.
- b) Each Branch nominating a Delegate shall send details to the Council to arrive not less than one week before the date of Conference. A Branch may change its nominated Delegate provided the Council is notified not less than twenty four hours before the Conference.

Branch		Area	
Name of Delegate			
Car registration		Passenger Name	
Delegate's Address			
	Telephone No	Post Code	
e-mail			
Number of Observers			
Name of Branch Hon Secretary			
Contact telephone No: (if not branch Hon Sec)			
Contact e-mail address			
Name and Address for correspondence (if not branch Hon Sec)			

NB: A Delegate will not be confirmed as such unless or until the Branch Balance Sheet for 2016 and Annual Subscriptions for Branch Members for 2017 have been received in RNA Central Office (Rule 12 C). Should either not have been received the Delegate's Status will be deemed to be that of an Observer.

A letter confirming a delegates attendance will be sent prior to Conference. This letter should be brought to Conference to confirm eligibility to be a Delegate. There will be no additions to the delegate list on the day.

CONFERENCE TRIP – Saturday 4 June 2017

Finally for those Shipmates, wives, boyfriends, girlfriends, partners and guest who will not be attending the Conference on Saturday!

We're planning a trip to Balhousie Castle for a tour of the Black Watch Museum (*the entrance fee has been waived for this*) and a spot of lunch/afternoon tea (cost approx.: £10 – *TBC dependent on numbers*) for Saturday 3rd June 2017. Visitors will be taken to/from hotels and Balhousie Castle by minibus.

This trip needs to be pre-booked. Please return the attached booking form, there is a blank form at the rear of this edition, if you would like to book any place(s) for this trip.

BALHOUSIE CASTLE / BLACK WATCH MUSEUM TRIP BOOKING FORM

NAME:	
RNA BRANCH:	
NUMBER OF PLACES:	

Please return completed form, by no later than 15th May 2017, to: S/M Ally Stirton. A: 63 Brahan Terrace, Perth, PH1 2LN. E: allystirton@hotmail.co.uk