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Subject: **ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION: Semaphore Short**

SEMAPHORE SHORT

MONDAY 20th DECEMBER 2021



ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION



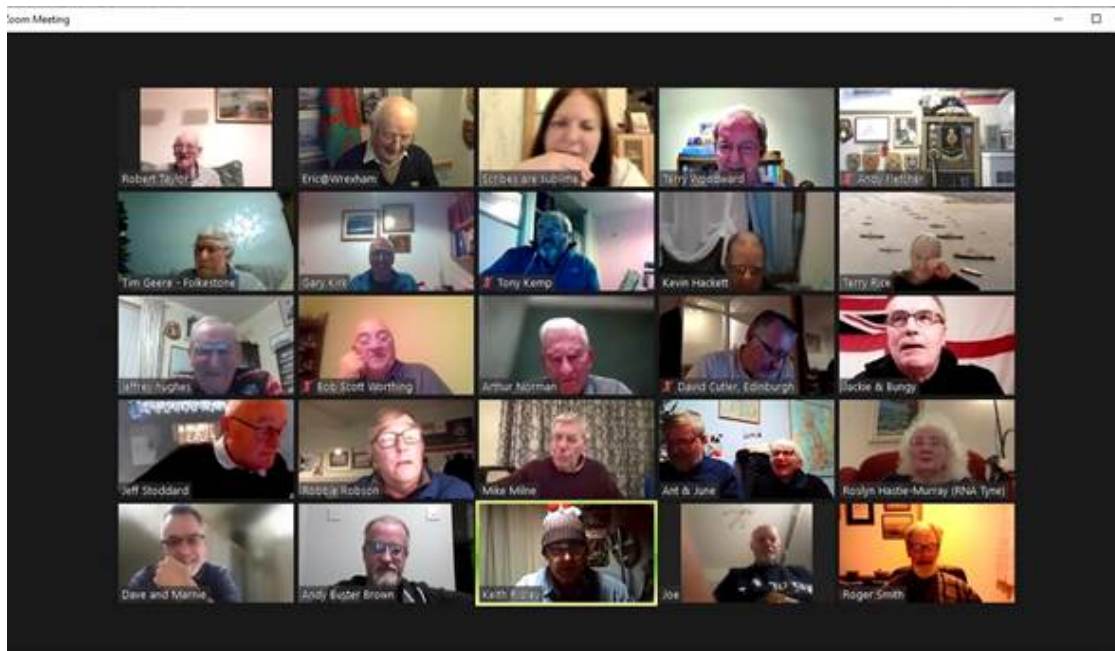
A very Merry Christmas to you all...

As we wind things down for Christmas and catch our breath before what is going to be a very busy and exciting 2022, we'd like to take this opportunity to wish all of our members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Despite the ongoing international challenges, 2021 allowed us to finally host larger events again and bring Shipmates back together. At the beginning of the year, we were able to do away with our £14 membership subscription and move to a donations-based model, allowing people to join the RNA for free. The success of this has been overwhelming, and we have, for the first year in many years, changed the direction of the membership curve and can proudly announce we have grown by 3000 new members since January 2021, taking our total membership to just over 13,000.

Next year our big focus will be on the 40th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict with the Conference weekend taking place in Portsmouth over the immediate weekend after the end of the conflict, 17-19 June. We'll be announcing more details of what's in store that weekend in the Semaphore Short on 10th January, so watch this space!

Please be aware that RNA Central Office will be closed from 1600 on Wednesday 22nd December until 0830 on Tuesday 4th January. There will also be a break with the Fireside Chat's for a couple of weeks, returning at 1830 on Monday 3rd January with a talk about Piracy with Angus Constam.



Virtual Christmas Tot Time!

Every Saturday Night, for almost 2 years now, members from the Wrexham Branch have been hosting a Virtual Tot, inviting members worldwide to join in with them over Zoom. And they will be gathering at 1845 on Christmas Day to continue with the fun in a festive fashion! It's hoped that Shipmates will be able to show off their Christmas Jumpers, and include their families in the weekly tot.

What originated as a Wrexham based gathering at the beginning of the pandemic has quickly grown into an international gathering, with Shipmates from around the world logging in via the Royal Naval Association Community Facebook Page. They welcome faces from every branch and arm of the RNA.

We would like to extend a huge thank-you to the Wrexham Branch for all their hard work in keeping this fantastic initiative going. The last couple of years have been particularly lonely for many people in and around our community, and we know that these Saturday night get togethers have proved a real life line to so many.

To join on Christmas Day, click the link below to find out more or email Eric Holmwood: ericholmwood@msn.com

[Find out more](#)



Watch the Royal Navy's Admiralty Carol Service 2021

This year's Admiralty Carol Service is available to watch now on Youtube, after it was recorded especially for the wider Naval community. It's hoped they will be able to invite far more people next year, but we think you'll agree that even with a smaller congregation it still sounds beautiful. Our National President and General Secretary were amongst those lucky enough to be invited – perhaps we need to sign them up to lead an RNA Carol contingent next year?

[Watch here](#)



A Sailor's Christmas poem

Twas the night before Christmas, my reindeers running free, over the ocean, a warship I could see.

I went down the funnel with presents to give, and to see just who, in this warship did live.

I looked all about, a strange sight did I see, no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stockings were hung, just No8's close at hand. On the bulkhead hung

pictures of a far distant land.

A sobering thought came into my mind, for this place was different, it was so dark I had found the home of a sailor.

The sailor lay sleeping, silent and alone, curled up in his bunk, dreaming of home.

I realised the families that I've seen this night, owed their freedom to these sailors who were willing to fight.

Soon round the world the children would play and grown-ups would celebrate a new Christmas day.

They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year, because of the sailors like the one lying here.

I could not help but wonder how many lay alone, on a cold Christmas eve on a sea far from home.

The very thought brought a tear to my eye, I dropped to my knees and started to cry.

The sailor awoke and I heard a rough voice, 'Santa don't cry for this is my choice'.

The sailor rolled over and drifted to sleep, I could not control it, I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours so silent, so still, and we both shivered in the cold nights chill.

I did not want to leave on that cold dark night, this guardian of honour, so willing to fight.

Then the sailor rolled over, and with a voice soft and pure, whispered.

" Carry on Santa its Christmas day and all is secure ".

THE ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

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