



GREETINGS SHIPMATES Welcome to this week's Semaphore Short and I hope that this finds you well. As usual, if anyone has anything that they would like to include in future Shorts, email me or the team [here](#). Whilst all contributions will be considered, please note that this is a short update newsletter and we can't publish everything. Some content may be used for inclusion in the next Circular.

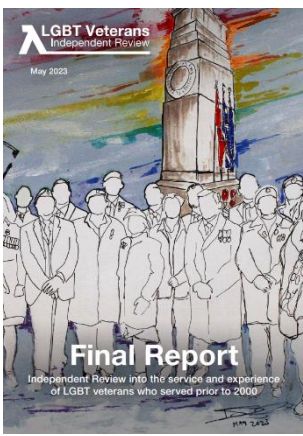
RNA LOTTERY – Win up to £25,000 and support the RNA at the same time. More details available via this [link](#). If you know of a Shipmate that may be interested and wants to enter, but has no internet access, you can download and print a form for them [here](#).

FIRESIDE CHATS Tonight's Fireside Chat will be given by Dr Jann Witt who will be talking about the German strategy in WWII for defeating the Royal Navy. Jann is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the German Society for Shipping and Navy History and served his national service for a short while in the German navy, serving later in the military reserves (attaining the rank of Frigate Captain). Next week's chat (TBC) will be presented by Hannah Prowse, the CEO of Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust, who will give us an insight into future plans for the Historic Dockyard. Fireside chats take place every Monday at 18:30 and to access the chats, log into zoom [here](#). The meeting ID is 288 830 5105 and the access password is Shipmate.



Picture – Jörg Wohlfromm/ZDF

LGBT+ VETERANS INDEPENDENT REVIEW In January 2022, the government published the 'Veterans' Strategy Action Plan: 2022 to 2024', which committed to '... deliver an independent review into the impact of pre-2000 practices on LGBT+ veterans'. To deliver this, Defence and the Office for Veterans' Affairs co-commissioned the LGBT Veterans Independent Review, chaired by Lord Etherton, in 2022. The review's final report provides the government with a better understanding of the experiences, impacts and implications of the policy and several recommendations for the government to consider. Up to 5000 veterans are estimated to have been affected both mentally and financially. Many were subjected to highly intrusive military police investigations, imprisoned and have lived with criminal records. Some were even put through conversion therapy; chemical and psychiatric. The findings of the review are hard-hitting and have resulted in the Prime Minister making a formal apology, on behalf of the state, to the Armed Forces LGBT+ community to whom so much wrong was inflicted. The full report can be accessed [here](#).



MALTA CEREMONIAL LIFE RING FINDS ITS WAY HOME In 1979, HMS London, the last British Warship to be based in Malta sailed, signifying the final withdrawal of British Forces from the Island. The coxswain of London, CPO Mike North, saw the two Gate Guardians, in the form of dedicated life rings were about to be left looking lonely at HMS St Angelo and set about rescuing them with one ending up in his garage (the other went to the OOD and has not been seen since!). At an Isle of Wight RNA meeting he and his shipmate (ex CEA1 – later Lt) Mike Waddleton happened to discuss the subject of the Life Ring and undertook to try and return it home to where it would be valued. After a convoluted and lengthy process involving defence and Naval attachés, the CEO of the Maltese Heritage Trust was contacted. Transport was arranged to collect it from the Isle of Wight and eventually, after going missing once, it was received, given a light preserving restoration, and is now on display. BZ to the two Mikes (Mike W left, Mike N right in the picture).



AFCS REVIEW – HEADLINE FINDINGS Every five years, the Government commissions a review of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS). The latest review commenced in 2022 and has just published its headline findings and some recommendations. The report can be accessed [here](#). Bear in mind that the independent review details observations and makes recommendation to the Government (MoD) which may or may not be taken forward. The findings at the link are mostly set out above Annex A and information thereafter covers the initial scope of the review.

AND FINALLY.....

LIEUTENANT RALPH 'GASSY' GASGOIGNE WISHES HE HAD NOT HAD DOUBLE BEANS WITH HIS BABY'S HEADS



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