

SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



► WE'RE JUST SUCKERS FOR UCKERS!

Royal Marines put up a strong showing at Uckers World Championships in Portsmouth, organised by the Royal Naval Association.

The Championships were held at the Royal Maritime Hotel in Queen Street, Portsmouth, organised by the Royal Naval Association.

Teams came from all over the UK and Europe to compete in this friendly competition. Sponsored by Uckers ya Uckers, this year's tournament saw players from the

Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and the RAF compete.

The winner of the Singles title was Stan Patterson (RM), from Poole, and runner up was Brent Latham. The Doubles title was won by Kath and Trevor Dean, from Staffordshire, whose team was called the Burntwood Blobbers, who beat the Royal Marines' Peter Jones and Jimmy Greene, from Poole, by a whisker. Uckers is a board game played predominantly in the Royal Navy. It is similar to Ludo, but rather

more complicated. Competition is rife, and the popularity of the game has spread to other parts of the Armed Forces, creating healthy inter-Service rivalry. The World Championship is an annual event, with the RNA encouraging teams from across the world. It is also a friendly and fun event for everyone to enjoy, and even included a Best Dressed category.

See p3 for more images by RNA phot S/M Nigel Huxtable

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Semaphore Shorts and Semaphore Circular: The monthly Semaphore Circular appears on the first Friday of each month, notes for branch officers on the second Friday and Semaphore Shorts on the remaining Fridays of each month. On occasions the publication date might be delayed for operational reasons – if so we will endeavour to tell you in advance by email and/or through our social media channels.

The next Semaphore Circular will be published on Friday 6 December, notes for Branch officers will be published on 8 November, and Semaphore Shorts on 15, 22 and 29 November.



Scenes from the RNA's Uckers World Championships, as captured by our photographer S/M Nigel Huxtable. Clockwise from top left: The presentation of the certificate for Best Dressed team; singles champion Stan Patterson receives his trophy and prize from RNA General Secretary Capt Bill Oliphant; doubles runners-up Peter Jones and Jimmy Greene; doubles champions the Burntwood Blobbers - Trevor and Kath Dean; singles runner-up Brent Latham. At the foot of the page are two general shots of the action at the Royal Maritime Hotel in Portsmouth



➤ RNA CHOSEN AS CHARITY OF DAY FOR TWICKENHAM CLASH

The Royal Naval Association is delighted to announce that the Army v Navy Match Committee has chosen the RNA as the Charity of the Day for the annual showdown between the Royal Navy and the Army at Twickenham next year.

The Army v Navy rugby match will be one of the milestone events for the RNA's landmark year. RNA General Secretary Capt Bill Oliphant (right) said that everyone in the organisation is looking forward to being Charity of the Day at the Allianz Stadium, Twickenham. Bill said: "The RNA is honoured to be chosen as the Charity of the Day for the Army v Navy rugby match.

"Our thanks go to everyone involved, and we aim to make this event a huge part of our 75th anniversary celebrations. Occasions like the Army v Navy rugby

are fabulous opportunities to foster and reinforce comradeship within our organisation."

The RNA works hard to ensure its members are supported at key times throughout their lives. RNA Veteran Mentors support new recruits and their families during their initial training at HMS Raleigh; the RNA Thriving Together programme brings serving personnel and veterans together to promote wellbeing and resilience through peer support, sport and outdoor activities; the RNA's virtual activities make comradeship and connection accessible to all; and RNA Branches work tirelessly to alleviate loneliness and isolation through their 1,000 Good Deeds A Day pledge. It is these characteristics, as well as the 75th anniversary, which made it an easy decision for the Match Committee to make,



according to Chair, Capt Sarah Oakley. "Everyone in the Navy knows someone who has been supported by the RNA over the years, and over the next few months we will be working closely together to promote the fundraising opportunities at Allianz Stadium, Twickenham, and to showcase the fantastic work the charity does," said Capt Oakley. Members of the RNA can claim a £5 discount on their match tickets for Army v Navy 2025 if they book

through the RNA. To do so, go to the website, join up for free, and buy the tickets via the online shop, or see www.rnagizzet.co.uk
■ **Please note: the number of discounted RNA tickets is capped, and if any remain they will not be sold at a discount after 31 January. If you wish to buy any tickets after this time they will only be available through normal sales channels, at full price, and will not be in the RNA section of the ground.**

➤ FREE RAIL TRAVEL FOR REMEMBRANCE EVENTS

The rail industry is once again offering free travel for military personnel and veterans to attend Remembrance services across the country this year.

It means serving military personnel and veterans attending services of Remembrance on the weekends of 2-3 and 9-10 November can travel to and from the events by train for free. This applies to the Submariners' Remembrance Service in London (3 November), the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in Whitehall (10 November), and all other services of Remembrance taking place nationwide on 10 November.

The offer is open to serving military personnel in uniform or in possession of a current MOD90 Ministry of Defence-issued identity card. Veterans travelling on these dates will need to show a Veterans Railcard, Veterans Oyster card, MOD-issued Veterans ID or other

appropriate proof of service. Jacqueline Starr, Rail Delivery Group chief executive, said: "The railway has always been closely connected to Remembrance commemorations, with so many rail workers having given their lives during the two World Wars. "As an industry, we are proud to continue helping people to mark this important national occasion by once again offering free travel to our serving personnel and veterans across the country." Transport Secretary Louise Haigh said: "It's only right that the rail industry, which played its own part in our nation's war effort, marks Remembrance Day by paying tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and those who continue to protect our country. "Remembrance services are a vital time for our nation to come together, and this important initiative will make it easier for

veterans and serving personnel to do exactly that." Lucy Inskip, Director of the Poppy Appeal at the Royal British Legion said: "The Royal British Legion is immensely grateful that British train companies continue to recognise the significance of Remembrance and offer free transport for veterans and service personnel to attend the commemorations that mean so much to them." For those attending either event in London, travel is permitted to any London Terminal station either on the day before or the day of each service and returning on the day of the service. For those attending events elsewhere, return travel is permitted on the day of the service. Train companies also supported Royal British Legion fundraisers by extending the free return travel offer to volunteers raising money in London on 31 October.

➤ CONTACTS



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Find Semaphore Circular online at

<https://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/document-categories/semaphore-circular>

or

RNA Website / Membership / Downloads / Semaphore Circular

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► FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Ahoy Shipmates!

As we recover from the Trafalgar season and shift into Pickle evenings, I want to thank both the Frome Branch and the Liskeard Branch for their kind invitations to their Trafalgar night dinners last month. It was lovely to meet new shipmates at both dinners, so thank you both for your hospitality and conviviality. The Liskeard event, held in the beautiful Hannafore Point Hotel in Looe, was slightly extended as we were all trapped in the hotel until about 1000 the following morning!

A storm surge had added to the already high spring tide and the road was closed due to the flooding. It made for a very relaxed breakfast!

I know that branches have celebrated and commemorated Trafalgar up and down the country, and it is great to see that tradition being preserved and using that important event in our maritime history to bring people together to enjoy our special comradeship.

It was certainly good to see both branches in rude health and clearly enjoying themselves.

If the fostering of comradeship is our raison d'être, then commemoration of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the protection of our way of life also ranks right up there.

As we turn our minds towards Remembrance weekend, please can I urge you to look to support poppy collections locally and to support local services in your respective areas.

This request goes out to our many younger members of our Association as well as the more senior.

It is reported to me that attendances at local Remembrance events have been dwindling in recent years so, rather than watching proceedings on telly, please put your blazer - or, indeed, your rig - on and get out there. It will be appreciated. You can always watch Whitehall events on catch up. Be proud!

This leads me to the Biennial Parade of Naval



Associations to mark the 75th anniversary of the RNA.

It will be held at the Cenotaph on Whitehall on Sunday 14 September and it is our ambition to have 1,000 members of the RNA attend.

Central Office will be supporting the funding of buses from all points of the compass to make this a spectacular event, so please raise this within your Branches and Areas soon. Details to follow.

Indeed, please get these dates in your diary now to support the Association nationally and remember our mantra- Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship:

- **03 May:** Army v Navy rugby, Twickenham
- **21 June:** AGM/Annual Conference, Portsmouth
- **14 September:** Biennial Parade, Whitehall
- **22 October:** 75th Anniversary Concert, Portsmouth

Finally, we announced last month that my predecessor's predecessor, Paddy McClurg, had slipped his moorings and crossed the bar, and he was joined at the Pearly Gates by recently-retired NCM for No1 Area (London), Maurice Foley (pictured left), who sadly was taken too quickly early last month by an aggressive cancer.

Ann, our thoughts are with you. By a quirk of fate, both Paddy and Maurice's funerals landed on the same day, providing me with a rather comforting image of them spinning dits as they waited in the queue about what they were going to tell St Peter in order to gain access!

Don't worry, I'm led to believe there's a special place in heaven for ex-Naval types, and the chippies have fitted it out nicely with a bar!

I trust St Peter's Pusser ordered extra Guinness for their arrival.

Bill



HMS Trooper. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 29870)

➤ HMS TROOPER FOUND AFTER 81 YEARS

The wreck of Royal Navy submarine HMS Trooper has been discovered in the Aegean Sea 81 years after she disappeared during a war patrol. Trooper, commanded by Lt John Wraith, sailed from Beirut on 26 September 1943 on her eighth sortie, landing three agents and supplies to Kalamos on Euboea (now Evia) as planned overnight on 30 September-1 October.

Shortly afterwards, the Allies learned that a German invasion force was gathering in the Greek ports of Piraeus and Crete, possibly destined for the Dodecanese island of Leros.

Trooper was ordered to patrol the area between the islands of Naxos and Ikaria, unaware that a German minelayer, Drache, had been setting new minefields in the area.

Nothing more was heard from the T-class boat, which had only been in service for a year. When she failed to return to Beirut on 17 October she was considered to have been lost.

So she and her crew of 64 lay on the seabed somewhere in the Mediterranean for decades, until a search began in the archives in 1998 and a first underwater sweep was carried out two years later. Since then, 14 more searches were carried out around the minefields of Leros and, Kalymnos and Kos, but the searchers were looking in the wrong place, deceived by a simple mistake in a memoir published after the war.

In this book, an officer in the Levant Schooner Flotilla encountered a British T-boat that surfaced alongside his caïque off Leros, and the officer took the boat to be Trooper as he thought he recognised Lt Wraith's booming voice. Add this 'fact' to the minelaying pattern in the area, and it became established that Trooper had been mined off the island.

But Greek researchers Kostas Thoctarides and Spyros Vougidis, while studying the war logs of British submarines operating in the area, discovered an account of exactly that meeting with the Levant Schooner Flotilla, but it was by the commanding officer of Torbay, not Trooper.

There was also the fact that Trooper went silent on 4 October, despite the fact that the area was busy with enemy shipping, suggesting the boat never reached Leros at all.

Accordingly, armed with the knowledge that Drache



Lt John Wraith, pictured on board depot ship HMS Maidstone in Algiers on 4 April 1943. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 16032)

had laid mines in Trooper's proposed patrol area, the 15th search for the lost boat began in the Icarian Sea, which features strong winds and currents and often rough seas.

The new theory proved correct when it was announced last month that the wreck of Trooper had been found more than 250m deep north of Donoussa, in one of five German minefields laid after the submarine left Beirut. The identity of the wreck was initially determined by sonar, then confirmed by an unmanned submersible.

Kostas Thoctarides said Trooper was probably sunk on the morning of 7 October, and now lay in three sections. The fact that the foreplanes are folded and the periscopes down indicates that the boat was cruising on the surface when it struck the mine, detonating 350kg of high explosive.

The son of the CO of Trooper, Capt Richard Wraith RN (Retd) said: "I have

been aware for many years of the strenuous effort by the Greek research team to locate the wreck of the submarine and am now very pleased and excited that their endeavours have been rewarded. I hope that any family members of those lost with my father may be able to use the definitive location of Trooper as a focal point to help lay to rest any memories of their loved ones."

George Malcolmson, former Archivist at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, said: "I am very pleased to learn that the renowned Greek explorer Kostas Thoctarides and his team have solved an 81-year-old mystery and have discovered the whereabouts of the wreck of HMS Trooper. The only information previously known was that the submarine was believed to have been mined in the Eastern Mediterranean in 1943.

"Knowing the location of the last resting place of our submariners will help bring closure to surviving relatives and descendants, and serves as a timely reminder of those special breed of men who made the ultimate sacrifice. Resurgam!"

Throughout the exploration, no intervention or disturbance of any kind was made to the wreck, as it is the last resting place of 64 brave souls.

A private Facebook page has been set up for families of the crew of Trooper and others with a close personal interest in the boat – see <https://tinyurl.com/5n7rhyzn>.

➤ MONUMENT TO BATTLESHIP IS DEDICATED

A monument to 835 men and boys killed in the first weeks of World War 2 has been dedicated with full military honours in Portsmouth.

Swathed in White Ensigns which Royal Navy divers had recovered from the wreck in the depths of Scapa Flow, the flags were removed by the descendants of those lost to reveal a new memorial to the battleship HMS Royal Oak (pictured right).

Families, veterans' groups, serving sailors – including a Guard of Honour – musicians and cadets gathered on The Hard, outside the gates of the Historic Dockyard, to take part in a ceremony to bless the obelisk honouring the ship's crew and remember those lost in a tragedy which shook the Navy and the nation in 1939.

Royal Oak was torpedoed in the Navy's supposedly-secure wartime anchorage of Scapa Flow in Orkney after U-boat ace Gunther Prien in U-47 evaded the base's defences and fired two salvos.

The first did little damage, but the second volley of three torpedoes tore the 31,600-ton vessel apart. She began to roll over and sank in under 15 minutes, while Prien returned to Germany where he was hailed a hero.

Of the 1,259 men and boys aboard the battleship on the night of 14 October 1939, two out of three were lost – 835 in all.

Some 134 of the victims were boy seamen, aged under 18, prompting a national outrage and questions in Parliament.

Though built in Devonport and based at Scapa Flow during the war, HMS Royal Oak is heavily associated with Portsmouth, with many of the wartime crew based in the city which, like Orkney, became a focal point for commemorations in later years as former sailors remembered their lost shipmates. Although it is nearly a decade since the last survivor of the tragedy passed away, there remains a very active Royal Oak Association which strives to keep the memory of the ship and her crew alive.

Having already erected a memorial at Scapa



Flow, the association has now installed a similar monument in the South.

A guard drawn from HMS Nelson personnel, HMS Collingwood's Volunteer Band and Sea Cadets from TS Alamein gave the unveiling a suitable backdrop.

Wreaths were laid by the Commanding Officers of HMS Nelson and Excellent, Capt Lee McLocklan and Cdr Simon Gale, German Naval Attaché Captain Volker Gelhausen, as well as numerous veterans' associations, not least the Royal Oak itself.

➤ APPEAL LAUNCHED FOR WAR MEMORIAL

A public appeal has been launched to cover the cost of refurbishing Newent's war memorial and adding 'missing' names.

A stone cross in St Mary's Churchyard, with the names of the fallen engraved around its base was dedicated at Newent in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, on 3 November 1920, paid for by public subscription. When the fog of war had cleared, and records became more accurate, it became apparent that the memorial was missing 21 names from both World Wars.

An appeal has been launched to fund the refurbishment and add the names of those who gave their lives for their country. The project will cost around £10,000, and any financial help would be gratefully received – payments can be made to 'The Newent War Memorial Project', c/o Newent Initiative Trust, Sort Code: 30 98 90, Acc Number: 20714860, using ref: NWMP (followed by your name).

➤ HOSPITAL ACCREDITED

King Edward VII's Hospital has received the NHS Veteran Aware accreditation in time for its 125th anniversary, reaffirming its long-standing dedication to the military community.

Since its founding in 1899, the London hospital has been synonymous with providing the best medical care to serving personnel, veterans, and their families. Accreditation is only awarded to providers who demonstrate their commitment to eight core standards ranging from specialised staff training ensuring the unique needs of veterans are met, to having established links with community services.

➤ SATURDAY NIGHT IS TOT TIME!

Is there a safe space where you can connect with other Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans, enjoy a tot*, spin a dit or two – and not have to leave the comfort of your own home?

Why yes – yes, there is, thanks to an initiative by shipmates at Wrexham branch.

You could join the fellowship of our online RNA Tot Time – and you don't even have to be a member to join in.

It would also give your family a rest from

having to listen to you banging on about ships, boats, or how uniforms were smarter in your day...

RNA Tot Time takes place every Saturday evening at 1830, where you can catch up with old shipmates and maybe make some new friends to the bargain.

To log on, visit the RNA website and go to the 'Online Events' page in the Members section, then click on the link.

*Sorry, you will have to supply your own tot!

► RALEIGH OFFERS NOSTALGIC VISITS

Did you serve at HMS Raleigh and fancy a trip down memory lane – while encouraging a new generation of RN sailors? After a winter break, from spring 2025 the gates to the Torpoint establishment are open again, allowing veterans back on site on some Fridays for a mix of nostalgia and a glimpse of tomorrow's Navy.

First introduced a year ago, the initiative allows old shipmates to reminisce, see how training has (or in some instances, hasn't) changed, and watch recruits pass out filled with the same sense of pride as they did themselves.

Raleigh's senior staff are keen to reinvigorate the initiative, giving access to the site to veterans, but also to show them how training has evolved to meet the expectations of young men and women and meet the demands of the Fleet.

You will watch successful recruits receive their epaulettes, tour a messdeck which serves as their home for the ten weeks of basic training, and watch a film showing how the RN of 2025 turns civilians into sailors.

After eating you'll witness the passing-out-parade. Throughout you will be hosted by members of staff, meet families of trainees passing out, as well as the recruits themselves. before attending the parade.

Anyone – whether you served on the staff or Raleigh or attended basic training and never returned – is welcome, and you can bring a partner/friend/carer, with allocation on a first-come, first served basis.

Contact **claire**.

axford624@mod.gov.uk to find out more.



► NEW RULES OPEN COTTAGE DOORS TO WIDER NAVAL FAMILY

A change of rules has opened the doors to a dozen almshouse cottages in Hampshire to the wider Naval family.

The King William IV Naval Foundation (KWIV) has been providing almshouses for the widows and daughters of Royal Navy and Royal Marines officers, and chaplains, in financial difficulties since its formation by the Dowager Queen Adelaide and Earl Howe in 1847.

For the last 50 years, it has provided subsidised accommodation in a dozen cottages in Southwick, north of Portsmouth, near the former HMS Dryad. Each cottage has its own sitting room, kitchen, and bathroom, with either one or two bedrooms, and a small garden. As the cottages are technically almshouses, no rent is charged, but residents do pay a monthly sum towards heating and maintenance. The village has an excellent village shop with a post office, a church, and two good pubs.

With a considerably smaller Royal Navy and huge changes in rank structures, the gender make-up of the Service, and in pension entitlements and home ownership since Victorian times, the Foundation's Governors (Trustees) have persuaded the Charity Commission to expand the criteria for benevolence.

In Victorian times, the Master, Boatswain, and Purser held Warrants, rather than a commission, but were granted Wardroom status and, in today's world, they would be officers. Similarly, in 1847, there were no female officers.

There are, however, female dependents, in financial need, of deceased RN/RM WOs, former officers and WOs of the WRNS, and retired female RN/RM officers and WOs who would benefit from support by the Foundation.

In recent decades, the RFA, though technically part of the Merchant Marine, has become such an integral part of the Fleet that it is logical that needy female dependents of RFA officers should be entitled to the same levels of benevolence as the widows of equivalent RN/RM officers.

To reflect today's conditions, the Charity Commission has approved the expansion of those eligible for accommodation by the Foundation to include broadly:

- Widows and daughters of deceased RN/RM and RNR/RMR WOs;
- Retired Officers and WOs of the former WRNS and WRNR;
- Retired female RN/RM and RNR/RMR officers and WOs;
- Widows and daughters of deceased RFA officers.

This is a very considerable broadening of eligibility to reflect today's circumstances which, they hope, will enable them to support a much wider group of the 'Naval family'.

There are certain restrictions on rank, age, the need for Reserves to have been employed on mobilised service, and length of service in the RFA.

Comprehensive information about the cottages and the actual requirements for eligibility, including rank, age, and Service restrictions, can be found on the Foundation's website at **www.royalnavalcottages.co.uk**

The Foundation will welcome applications for residence at the cottages from any of those who qualify. Electronic applications can be made by writing to: **contact@royalnavalcottages.co.uk** or in writing to: The Registrar Governor, c/o The Resident Secretary, Royal Naval Cottages, The Drove, Southwick, Hampshire, PO17 6HE.

GUIDE TO PENSIONS

Rules and regulations around pensions can be complicated, and this is certainly the case with deferred and preserved pensions for those who have served in the Armed Forces. A guide has been produced to provide information helping you understand whether you are eligible for an Armed Forces pension, when and how you go about claiming it.

That guide is now available to view and download from the RNA website at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/document-categories/central-office-documents

SLOPS STILL UP FOR GRABS

Shipmates are reminded that items such as blazer badges, pin badges, ties, beret badges etc are still available for purchase from Central Office.

If you would like to obtain such items, please contact Central Office on the main office number (023 9272 3747).



➤ CATCH THESE BUSES

The RNA has three minibuses, located in Plymouth, Manchester and Portsmouth, for use by shipmates.

The minibuses are a great asset to us all, and we are proud to offer this membership benefit. As you can appreciate, it costs a significant amount of money to keep all three minibuses on the road, and this year we have received a generous grant from the Seafarers' Charity, for which we are extremely grateful.

We are also extremely grateful to our RNA volunteers who manage the minibuses regionally,

including the bookings.

To book a minibus, the contact details are:

Plymouth – Les Yeoman - lesyeo3@gmail.com – 07795 231397

Manchester – David Barlow - dbarlow@hotmail.co.uk - 07747 006100

Portsmouth – Sara Field - ams@rnassoc.org – 023 92 723747

For insurance purposes, there are certain criteria for driving the minibuses and these, along with additional details, can be found on our website at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/mini-bus-hire



POPPY PIN BADGES NOW AVAILABLE

Just in time for Remembrance, our new mascot Gingerbread Sailor RNA poppy pin badge and our RNA Gingerbread sailor pin badge are here! They cost £7.50 and £6.50 respectively including p&p. You can also buy a more traditional RNA poppy pin (£6.50) from the same site.

Purchase on the Royal Naval Association's online shop www.rnagizet.co.uk



RNA Engagement Lead Dave MacAskill visited Victory Squadron at HMS Collingwood on Wednesday. These young people are in between courses and, because that can be a bit boring, they have a Quiz night. The RNA was delighted to buy them their pizza & join in the fun.

➤ STAFF JOIN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID COURSE



At the heart of everything we do at the RNA is the welfare of our Shipmates – which is why our Central Office organised a Mental Health First Aid Course. Central Office staff and association Welfare Officers attended the two-day training course in Portsmouth.

All agreed that they were more confident in dealing with anything from day-to-day mental health support to serious mental health crises by the end. Our thanks go to Havant and East Hants Mind - Andy Foster delivered the course with kindness and humour. Also thanks to the Keppel's Head Hotel who hosted us brilliantly in their secret downstairs bar.

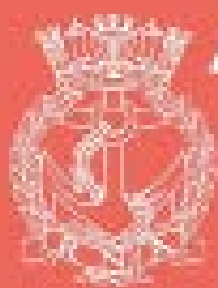


Our smart RNA-branded diary is still available to buy for just £6.50, including postage.

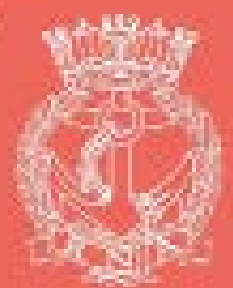
The diary, stamped on the front to mark the RNA's 75th anniversary, also contains a wealth of useful information, including contact details for Central Office staff and Area officials.

If you would like a copy then place your order on admin@rnassoc.org or call Central Office on 023 9272 3747.

3rd May Twickenham Stadium



Army v Navy Rugby



**Reserve your RNA
subsidised tickets now**

Only £43 per person

**including access to our exclusive
RNA Bar**



**Our seats are in the Cat1 section M33/34 - an excellent
position on the centre line.**

The bar is next-door - no long trek or queues for drinks.

**The RNA is delighted to announce it is the
Army v Navy Chosen Charity in 2025!**

**The RNA's Branch Support Fund can help out with transport
costs (tickets must be purchased via the RNA)**

engagement@rnassoc.org for more details



HMS Swiftsure

➤ SUBMARINERS MAKE EMOTIONAL RETURN TO SWIFTSURE BEFORE BREAKERS MOVE IN

Cold War warriors were invited to look around veteran submarine HMS Swiftsure before breakers start to dismantle her.

More than 40 veterans were invited to the Babcock facility at Rosyth in Scotland for one last look at the retired hunter-killer – the first of the Navy’s old nuclear-powered submarines to be disposed of in a complex operation.

Despite the passage of time – Swiftsure was withdrawn from service in 1992 – there were still reminders of her active service and life aboard.

Former crew were astonished to find bunk plans, detailing who slept where, still posted in the messes, and other mementos of Swiftsure’s active days.

Some described her as ‘a time capsule’. All veterans found the return was a bittersweet occasion: good times came flooding back, as did memories of shipmates no longer with us.

All told Chris Carpenter, Head of Submarine Disposal and Devonport Infrastructure, that the final chance to see the boat had been “very emotional”.

Mr Carpenter thanked the veterans not only for making the pilgrimage to the Babcock facility at Rosyth, but also for their service.

“Let me say how grateful I and my colleagues are for your service in keeping us safe - to the Silent Service.

“I wonder how many memories have been recalled: operations under the ice, crossings of the Equator, activities in each of the globe’s oceans, whether rolling uncomfortably at 400m, or drifting tensely in the adversaries’ baffles.

“Whether you served on the longest continuous surveillance operation, or on the well-publicised Kiev

recordings, I see your pride today. Your nerve, skill and determination set examples for us as valid today as they were then.”

The ‘Kiev recordings’ – capturing the sound signature of the flagship of the Red Fleet with the submarine’s periscope just 10ft below the aircraft carrier’s keel – is one of the few publicised highlights of Swiftsure’s 19-year career, almost all of it played out at the height of the Cold War.

Her career came to an end in 1992 (the last boat in her class, HMS Sceptre, came out of service in 2010).

She is one of more than 20 decommissioned nuclear submarines – mostly hunter-killers, but also all four first-generation deterrent submarines which paid off in the 1990s – awaiting recycling either in Rosyth or Devonport under the MOD’s complex, multi-phase Submarine Dismantling Project.

Swiftsure has been docked down in Rosyth since July last year in preparation for her dismantling.

Her breaking up will serve as a blueprint for dismantling the rest of the decommissioned boats.

With the reactor and fuel long since removed, as well as any sections of the boat and fittings containing low-level radioactive waste dealt with, Rear Admiral JJ Bailey, Director Submarine Support, said the main task could begin. “More than 90 per cent will be recycled and the project paves the way for the recycling of other laid-up submarines,” he said.

“The lessons learned from Swiftsure will be applied to the remaining laid-up fleet, ensuring all future boats are safely and efficiently recycled with cost savings where possible applied.”

Dismantling Swiftsure is due to be completed by the end of 2026.

➤ RAND ANALYSING RN AND RAF COMMUNITIES

Alongside the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) and RAF Benevolent Fund, Greenwich Hospital has commissioned research organisation RAND Europe to undertake a systematic survey into the RN and RAF communities.

This 13-15 month study will yield vital information on these communities, and will then project out to 2040. It will cover both the serving and former serving RN and RAF communities, thus enabling comparison between the two in order to establish commonalities and differences.

The research will enable effective and future financial and service delivery planning for RAFBF/RAFA and the Naval charities, and will also deliver valuable information that will assist MOD personnel and families policy.

An Advisory Board with representation from across the Naval sector – including the RNA – has been set up, and RAND has completed desk research and most stakeholder interviews. Proposed research into serving personnel and partners is intended to be conducted through surveys and research interviews this autumn:

Researchers are keen to hear from the Royal Navy community, and particularly keen to hear from Royal Navy veterans – and partners are a vital element in the study.

The link to the survey page is: <https://tinyurl.com/yxxunbk4> where you will find details of the project and its objectives, and the chance to contribute to it, using the relevant button depending on whether you are serving, a veteran or a partner of either.

Ex-Military

Tired of your health affecting the **cost** of your travels?



Sign up to our 40+ travel insurance scheme to enjoy worldwide cover with no medical declaration required.

*TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. ALL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHEME AVAILABLE AT: WWW.COMBINEDSERVICESTRAVELCOVER.ORG.UK

➤ TAKE A CHANCE ON THE RNA LOTTERY

Just a reminder that you could win up to £25,000 in the RNA Weekly Lottery, which gives supporters the chance to win cash prizes as well as backing our rank-blind network of serving, veterans and family members of the Royal Navy.

Once players have registered online they will be entered into the draw every Friday they are in credit (£1 per line, per week).

RNA General Secretary Capt Bill Oliphant said: "Our lottery is an exciting way of fundraising for and with at least 50 per cent from each £1 donated supporting the work we do, we will be able to help those in our community who need it most.

"The RNA is free to join but relies on donations to help continue the good work. Since Covid, we've done so much more in the welfare/wellbeing space with our veterans, and having an RNA Lottery allows us to do even more.

"Please do sign up and play our lottery, and if you're not a member – join us!"

Visit www.RNALottery.co.uk to sign up.

➤ SPONSORED WALK

Martin McDonough, Sodexo Head Chef at the Junior Ranks Mess at Portsmouth Naval Base, is undertaking a sponsored walk on 6 December in aid of Walking with the Wounded.

"Having served in the Royal Navy for 16 years and being involved in the Falklands Conflict aboard HMS Fearless, I just feel it's about time I did a little something to help those that need a little help and raise awareness along the way," said Martin.

At least 50 people are expected to do the walk, from Milton Common to the Naval Base. If you would like to support Martin see <https://walking-home.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk/users/martin-mcdonough>

➤ SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Shipmates might be interested to become involved with the popular and successful RNA Specialist Interest Groups. Whether you are already a part of a group or are yet to join one we highly recommend you get involved and see what it's all about. For more information on each group please contact the designated leaders, listed in no particular order:

Camping and Caravanning – Ron Shilton: rnamcc@outlook.com

Classic Cars – Mike Burnham: hon.secretary@rnarayleigh.org

Cricket – Mark Smith : Markmiff1962@gmail.com

Cycling – Craig Fulton: craig@govguide.co.uk

Decorative Ropework – Bob Jones: oldsalt69@hotmail.co.uk

Divers – Bill Lawless: billylawless40@yahoo.com

Fishing – Gus Honeywood/Selwyn Davies/John Stephenson: rna.fishing.sig@gmail.com

Golf – Colin Dinsdale: rna.golfers@gmail.com

Model Makers – Gary Daisley: RNA.Modelmakers@gmail.com

If you are interested in forming a Special Interest Group please contact cml@rnassoc.org

➤ MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

The subject of next Monday's Fireside Chat (4 November) will be HMS Pickle, the schooner that brought news of victory at Trafalgar and the death of Nelson back to England. The Chat will be given by Peter Hore.

■ For shipmates who are unaware, there is an ongoing series of 'Fireside Chats' on subjects of Naval and wider maritime interest. The presentations are held on Monday evenings commencing at 1830 using 'Zoom'. All are welcome.

Meeting ID – 288 830 5105 Password – Shipmate (case sensitive) Or, click on the link [here](#)

* Lecture subjects may change at short notice.

** Shipmates please note that the 'Fireside Chat' commences at 1830

Date	Presenter	Subject
Mon 4 Nov	Peter Hore	HMS Pickle
Mon 11 Nov	Nick Dutt	The Royal Society of St George
Mon 18 Nov	Brenda Shackleton	The Rescue Ships, Part 2
Mon 25 Nov	Ron Shilton	RNA Caravanning and Camping Special Interest Group
Mon 2 Dec	Tbc	Royal Naval Benevolent Trust
Mon 9 Dec	Anthony Moth	The Noble 8 December, Battle of the Falkland Islands 1914

➤ HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

We are now over 21,000 strong!

Through our Thriving Together Programme, our HMS Raleigh Veteran Mentors Programme, our 1,000 Good Deeds Programme, our Accessibility Programme (online events, RNA minibus and the like) and more we are helping more shipmates than ever before.

Now that membership is free (thank you to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, RNRMC, whose funding made this possible!) how can you help us to carry on supporting our shipmates when they need it?

Here are just a few ideas for starters:

Play the RNA Lottery – if you spend just £5 per month on our lottery you might win anything from £5 to £25,000! But not only do you get the opportunity to bag a tidy little sum – the RNA raises money too. It really is win-win!

Send in your photos – we love that many of you are

members of the RNA Community Facebook site, but did you know that no one outside the organisation can see the good work you are doing because this is a private page? After posting on this community, please do send your stories also to comms@rnassoc.org so that we can tell the rest of the world what wonderful work you are doing – or what great fun we have together.

Use the RNA shop to buy Christmas presents – we have stocking fillers, Christmas cards and more. While we do not make a lot of money from our shop (we try to pass on the savings we get to our members), we do make a little – which is used to fund the previously mentioned programmes.

You can access the shop [here](#)

If you can do any of the above, you can be assured that you are helping your Association to continue to grow, to thrive – and you will be supporting your shipmates too.

➤ STRIKE GROUP TRAINS FOR DEPLOYMENT

Waves crashing against tanker RFA Tidespring as she replenishes aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales with fuel during Exercise Strike Warrior

The exercise saw the UK Carrier Strike Group embarked in Prince of Wales and also featured 809 Naval Air Squadron and RAF 617 Squadron with eight of their F35B Lightning stealth fighters – the first time 809 have embarked a Queen Elizabeth-class carrier. The squadron undertook intensive training over a couple of weeks as pilots earned their carrier qualification and personnel integrated with the ship's company and experienced the routine at sea.

Thereafter training moved up through the gears as Prince of Wales was joined by escorts and support ships from allied NATO nations to form a Carrier Strike group for a fortnight-long exercise.

The British-led group, which included warships from Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Germany and Portugal, then joined forces with an equivalent US force – US Carrier Strike Group 8 (CSG8), based around USS Harry S Truman – in the North Sea to demonstrate allied resolve, unity and cooperation.



Britain's biggest warship hosted the US Strike Group Commander Rear Admiral Sean Bailey, who watched British Lightnings launch from her flight deck, then join Truman's F/A-18 Super Hornets and an E/A-18G Growler in a flypast over the two naval groups. The UK Carrier Strike Group

encompassed almost 2,000 personnel, and Strike Warrior, was one of the final milestones in the preparations before the Group can undertake a global deployment to the Indo-Pacific region next year.

The Lightning training package featured preparations for strike missions, including the dropping of live ordnance onto the Cape Wrath range in Scotland.

The exercise scenario was choreographed by the UK's Joint Training and Exercise Planning Staff based in the Royal Navy Warfighting Centre in Portsmouth Naval Base, with the activity of the Strike Group in response to the training scenario being directed by the staff of Headquarters UK Carrier Strike Group, embarked in Prince of Wales.

The RAF supported the anti-submarine defence of the Carrier Strike Group through provision of Poseidon P8 maritime patrol aircraft while other NATO aircraft supported F35s in defending the strike group.

➤ RNA AT SEAFARERS SERVICE

Members of the RNA attended the Annual National Service for Seafarers at St Paul's Cathedral in London.

RNA National President Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, National Chairman Andy Christie and General Secretary Bill Oliphant honoured those who have served at sea, in conflict, or perilous conditions. The service, an emotional and celebratory event, was also attended by the Princess Royal. During the service, members of the congregation were called to action to be "good neighbours" – to lend a helping hand to all seafarers in times of need.

Following the service, the RNA party met with those who have collaborated with them to be a force for good for seafarers of every profession, and Maritime Minister Mike Kane MP, from the Department for Transport (DfT), promised to be the seafarers' champion, advocating for better working lives at sea for all during his tenure.

For those who would like to attend the next such service, save the date – 8 October 2025.



LIMITED NUMBER

After producing a larger poppy pin in 2023 it was requested to make a RNA featured pin **£6.50**

including postage

Approximate size 28mm

The Gingerbread Sailor wearing a RNA cap tally is a simple way to show the world you are part of the largest ships company - SAILORS first before introducing others to the Royal Naval Association

Male or female, young or old, the Gingerbread sailor presents a fun way to engage people to talk about the Royal Navy, your journey and the membership.

Limited numbers of everything as we try something 'different'.

This IS first come first served.

Items available via www.rnagizze.co.uk or by emailing engagement@rnassoc.org



LIMITED NUMBER

The first pin featuring the RNA ships company Gingerbread pin

£6.50 including postage

Approximate size 28mm



LIMITED NUMBER

Gingerbread poppy related pin holding an anchor.

including postage. **£7.50**

Approximate size 35mm



LIMITED NUMBER

Giant Gingerbread Sailor hanging decoration, presented in its own velvet presentation box. Features gold foil gingerbread outline on front and RNA text Once Navy Always Navy inside.

including postage. **£14.00**



A6 cards x 5 without text. 148mm x 105mm

5 cards including postage. **£4.60**



A6 cards x 5 WITH text. 148mm x 105mm

5 cards including postage. **£4.60**



A5 cards x 5 without text. 210mm x 148.5mm

5 cards including postage. **£6.40**



A6 cards x 5 WITH text. 148mm x 105mm

5 cards including postage. **£6.40**

*NB A proportion has been allocated to postage whether used or not - ONE price applies to all.



➤ RNA OFFICIALS HAVE LEADING ROLE AT HELM OF INTERNATIONAL MARITIME CONFEDERATION

Royal Naval Association President Duncan Potts and General Secretary Bill Oliphant were key participants at the 49th Conference of the International Maritime Confederation in Split last month.

Duncan (**pictured above, facing camera**) said: "I chaired the annual meeting of the International Maritime Confederation (IMC) in Split, Croatia, on 16-18 October. "The IMC draws together naval veterans' charities from across Europe to share best practice, promote common bonds and support youth initiatives.

"The UK has chaired for the last three years, and has led

the IMC into the post-Covid era.

"A particular highlight this year was the running of a sailing camp in the UK for 15 to 22-year-olds from across Europe.

"This was deemed a huge success, and the IMC agreed to continue this as an annual event."

That the RNA's President is also the President of the IMC is a great honour for the Association, and solicits respect from our international counterparts.

Building bonds across the world is one of the things the RNA takes great pride in.

➤ LAST CHANCE TO JOIN WALKING WEEKEND

The final Thriving Together event of the year is under way at the end of the month - and the last handful of places are up for grabs.

But if you can't take part, don't worry - the 2025 programme will be unveiled soon.

This season's finale is a walking weekend in the Lake District, based at Ambleside, and as this Semaphore Circular went to press there were no more than four places still open.

For a cost of £25 per person, financially subsidised by a generous grant from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC), participants will enjoy dinner, bed and breakfast plus a guided walk or wet-weather activity.

It is open to RNA members, including new members, who need a break.

Priority will be given to those recently back from deployment, spouses with a deployed partner, people feeling lonely or isolated, or anyone looking for support for any reason.

You don't have to be broken - just in need of a break.

To qualify for this break, you need to be a serving or veteran member of the Royal Navy or Royal Marines, a Reservist, or a spouse or child over the age of 18, and an RNA member (and don't forget, membership of the Association is now free!)

Participants can arrive Friday evening (29 November) or Saturday morning (30 November), with the main activity starting at 0900 on the Saturday.

Those taking part should bring waterproofs, hiking gear "and prepare yourself for fun-filled, laughter-oriented days of connection."

People can leave after 1000 on Sunday, and accommodation is in private rooms.

Station collection will be possible by arrangement.

As part of the Thriving Together programme this event aims to build resilience through peer support and signposting.

For enquiries or to book one of the last few remaining places get in touch through cml@rnassoc.org



REASONS TO ATTEND YOUR AGM

YOUR BEST CHANCE TO BE HEARD

If you have any concerns of branch/area life or want to propose changes to the association, then the AGM is the perfect opportunity for you to raise this with and in front of your fellow shipmates.



TAKE CONTROL OF IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Remember, the Royal Naval Association is YOU, the members who have joined collectively. Your AGM is the perfect opportunity to take part in the decision making process



REPRESENT YOUR BRANCH

Your voice and attendance matters; and the conference is the chance to take any issues from a local level to a National platform. Shipmates from all around the UK gather - ideally this is the ONE time your branch can stand up and be counted



MORE THAN A MEETING

What happens in branches under the name of the Royal Naval Association is remarkable

A number of prizes are awarded at Conference for shipmates' contribution to the Association - These are presented during Conference - the only time of the year the RNA is ALL together

COMRADESHIP

CONNECTION

COMMEMORATION

Comradeship is the lifeblood of our Association - friendships are secured by getting to know each other sharing experiences and making new memories

Tradition, respect and honour

We are all rightly proud of our Naval history and service; commemoration and ceremony is a huge part of the RNA's identity

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LEE-ON-THE-SOLENT and STUBBINGTON Branch

Lee on the Solent and Stubbington branch have established an annual event known as the President's Day trip. This is an excellent way of bonding with fellow branch members away from their regular haunts and, as you will see from the comments below, this is a much-valued event eagerly awaited each year.

Branch President Capt John Lavery, RN Rtd., kindly organises this event for members each summer. In previous years they have visited Buckingham Palace, the Cabinet War Rooms, the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Windsor Castle, the New Forest, and Bletchley Park.

This year more than 40 members enjoyed a day out in London. Their itinerary included a day trip to Kew Gardens and an evening display of Beating Retreat by the Massed Bands of the Royal Marines.

Shipmates were blessed with fine and warm weather, and they spent a very pleasant four hours exploring the delights of Kew Gardens.

The highlight of the day was witnessing the Beating Retreat ceremony performed by the Massed Bands of His Majesty's Royal Marines Bands on Horse Guards Parade.

The evening was, thankfully, dry and sunny, and several members took the opportunity to have a picnic in St James's Park prior to the event.

Security was tight and they all had to go through airport-style checks before taking their seats for the two-hour show. For those unfamiliar with this ceremony, the Retreat has origins in the early days of chivalry when beating or sounding retreat put a halt to the day's fighting, a return to camp and the mounting of the guard for the night. The event, which featured more than 200 of the world's finest military musicians, included a precision drill of the 40-strong Corps of Drums and a 100-strong Royal Marines Guard of Honour.

As the evening sun faded, they were treated to a rendition of the Naval Sunset Ceremony in front of the beautiful backdrop of Old Admiralty Building and St James's Park (guaranteed to bring a lump to the throat).

This was a truly spectacular evening which will live long in the memory, as indeed have previous President's Day trips:

"The organization was excellent. We have attended many President's Day events, and all were most enjoyable"
Shipmates John and Jan W.

"We have been members for three years and have been on three President's Day trips. They are very well organised, and a good chance for more interaction with our fellow members of the branch. They are well attended, and we are already looking forward to next year's trip."





Shipmates Dave & Kathryn B

"I've been lucky enough to attend 4 President's Days so far and have thoroughly enjoyed all of them. We've had such variety, and they are always well attended. One of our early boat trips was from Gosport to Lymington and we were joined by a couple of dolphins! We're very lucky to have a President who organises such great days (he does a mean quiz too!)"

Branch member

"We had very good seats to watch Beat Retreat, it was absolutely amazing. Then back to the coach and home. It

was a great day out. Been on a lot of President's Days and they have all been great."

Shipmate Jan S.

[With reference to the 2023 President's Trip to Buckingham Palace]: "Just before we entered, the news came through that, following a deterioration in the Queen's health, the Royal Family were gathering up at Balmoral. The visit then became more poignant, and we became absorbed in the majesty of it all, especially the wonderful Platinum Jubilee exhibition. We were on the outskirts of London when the news came through that Her Majesty had passed away. What a privilege, however, for us to spend the last few hours of her life visiting her working home. We'll never forget where we were that day. It was an honour serving you, Boss!"

Shipmate Julia H



NORWICH Branch

On 12 October Norwich branch shipmates attended the Edith Cavell Commemoration Service at Norwich Cathedral along with nurses from NHS hospitals in Norfolk. Two shipmates are former Naval Nurses - S/M Rhian Coates laid a wreath on behalf of the RNA and QARNNS and S/M Tracey Slater laid a wreath on behalf of Op Courage, the veterans mental health service. Also present were The Lord General Richard Dannatt, a representative of the Belgian Ambassador to the UK, the Lord Mayor

of Norwich and the County Chair of the RBL. This event is held every year in Norwich to commemorate Nurse Edith Cavell who was born near Norwich in 1865. She is celebrated for saving the lives of soldiers from both sides without discrimination in World War 1. She also helped around 200

Allied soldiers escape from occupied Belgium, and for this was arrested and executed by a German firing squad on 12 October 1915. The night before her execution she said "Patriotism is not enough, I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone". Following a funeral in Westminster Abbey, Nurse



WEST Lothian and FORTH VALLEY Branches

On 8 October shipmates from West Lothian and Forth Valley branches were invited to visit HMS Venturer in build at Rosyth. The Type 31 frigate is the first of its class to be totally built at the Babcock facility. The nine visitors were hosted by CPO John Donovan and the Senior Rates in the build crew, with the SNO joining in at the many questions put to them. The most senior shipmate, John Wain - who served on HMS Belfast's last commission - like them all was astounded by the capability Venturer has at its disposal. The group was invited to join in a lunch at Caledonia's Senior Rates Mess. They thanked all who made the visit possible BZ

EASTBOURNE Branch

Eastbourne Branch President S/M John Kingwell (left of picture), Chairman S/M Mal Chumbley and Secretary S/M Stuart Ramsden (taking the photo) were proud and honoured to visit their shipmate, World War 2 Royal Navy veteran Harry Waddingham, on his 108th birthday. John presented Harry with a bottle of his favourite tippie (rum, naturally) and a card picturing one of his wartime drafts and a vessel close to his heart, the Hunt-class destroyer HMS Mendip. Harry joined the Navy as a boy in 1932, and his shipmates say it is always a privilege to hear his wartime memories, and always amazing how clearly he remembers dates, places and his shipmates' names. Harry is pictured (top left) some time between 1939 and 1942.

Harry started his career as a gunner but later 'recat' to PTI so, as Mal was also a PTI, there was lots of reminiscing and dits about rope



climbing, star jumps and burpees. Harry's wife Colette turned 92 on 18 October, and as Harry likes to point

out they now have 200 years between them... Happy birthday Harry and Colette!



RIDERS Branch

Riders Branch members, along with a record 12,000 other riders from all the Services and civilians alike, attended the annual RTTW (Ride to the Wall), now in its 17th year.

Most of the RNA Riders branch assembled at Whittington Barracks for the (fairly) short ride into the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire, where they made for the Royal Naval Memorial for the annual photo and general banter.

Three potential new members signed up with another two getting in touch a few days later.

They assemble to remember "those who can no longer ride by our side" and those whose names are on the

Armed Forces Wall (hence ride to the wall)

This raises on average over £120-130,000 per year to keep the NMA free to enter.

Pictured above are members of the WRNS group, from left, Jenny Brownhill, Kimberley Edmunds-Jones, Fiona Laing and Natalie-Jane Burt. Fiona Laing rode her Honda Rebel CMX1100 bike down from Arbroath - and returned the



same way, in some grotty weather. The Ride takes place on the first Saturday in October, the date the late Queen dedicated and opened the NMA. Contact Mark Gayton on secrnariders@gmail.com if you would like more information on the branch.





ST NEOTS Branch

On 27 September eight members of the St Neots Branch, including one of their 100-year-old Normandy veterans, S/M Richard (Dick) Woods along with his son Alan and his daughter Linda, made the trip to Normandy. Dick was in HMS Jervis providing cover for the Canadian troops landing on Juno Beach on D-Day. They travelled using a minibus provided by the RNA, kitted out with a wheelchair lift and easy access.

They set off from Portsmouth on the ferry to Ouistreham/Caen, arriving at 2200, and checked into the Ibis Hotel at Hérouville-Saint-Clair.

On the 28th, they travelled to Bayeux to see the famous Tapestry and Cathedral, and the following day went to the British Normandy Memorial, where S/M Dick laid a wreath in remembrance of those who fell. Dick was not able to make the main commemorations this year and it meant a lot to him to lay a wreath. Then it was on to Arranches to see the remains of the Mulberry Harbour and to visit the museum there.

On 30 September they visited Juno Beach and the adjacent town of Courseulles-sur-Mer; the town mayor met with them to thank Dick for his part in the landings. Dick presented the mayor with an RNA plaque, and she was also presented with an RNA scarf as a personal memento.

Then it was on to the Juno Beach Centre, where they were given a tour of the facility, and Dick presented the Director with an RNA plaque. The Pegasus Bridge memorial was next on their schedule.

Their last day was spent visiting the British Normandy Cemetery at Bayeux. From there they made a visit to the American cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, overlooking Omaha Beach.

They returned to Portsmouth by ferry on 2 October after a very memorable trip. They would like to thank all those that helped to make this trip such a success; a special thank you to Sara and the Central Office staff. The group were very impressed with the help and kindness throughout the trip, from the ferry staff to the staff at the Ibis Hotel at Hérouville.



LLANDUDNO Branch

Members of Llandudno branch were delighted to acknowledge a milestone in the life of a shipmate when former Wren Joyce Crosby celebrated her 100th birthday.

Joyce received many cards, including a special birthday card from King Charles.

Branch shipmates George Davies and Anne Gibson joined Joyce and her family for a small party (pictured below).

Joyce served from Christmas 1943 until mid-July 1946 as a steward, serving at HMS Seahawk at Ardrishaig, RN Air Station Machrihanish, both in the West of Scotland, and RN Air Station Worthy Down, near Winchester.

Joyce is a Life Member of the Association.



TRAFALGAR NIGHT CELEBRATIONS

Wansbeck branch enjoyed a really good meal during their Trafalgar Night Dinner at the Half Moon, Stakeford, in Northumberland on 21 October - the date of Nelson's victory over the Franco-Spanish fleet and also the day the nation lost a hero.

The event was attended by 22 shipmates and guests, and the three-course meal was followed by a raffle. Thanks to Robbie and Kelly and the staff for their usual excellent service.

The branch is now looking forward to a Christmas function on 14 December at the Cherry Tree, Choppington.

Cdr David Hilton RN (Rtd), President of the **Isle of Wight** branch, welcomed RNA National President Vice Admiral Duncan Potts and his wife Pamela to their Trafalgar Night Dinner, reporting that "without exception, the shipmates thoroughly enjoyed the evening at the Lakeside Hotel and Spa in Wootton and were very complimentary to have the National President as Guest of Honour."

Admiral Potts met S/M Alec Penstone, a very fit and healthy 99-year-old, with a very strong handshake! Alec served in the Arctic Convoys.

Cdr Hilton said it was also good to see the younger shipmates networking about the Royal Navy as it is not often they had the opportunity of socially talking to an Admiral on the Isle of Wight!

Chard Branch's Trafalgar Night Dinner was combined with celebrations for the branch's 37th anniversary of its commissioning. The venue was the Lord Leaze Hotel, where those attending were treated to a lovely meal and the wonderful company of their Patron Cdre David Pond RN (Rtd) accompanied by his wife Lesley.



Chard

David provided an excellent after dinner speech, incorporating both Trafalgar and the devastation he has seen in Ukraine when undertaking his humanitarian trips, supporting Ukrainian citizens with much-needed emergency aid.

On completion two members, much to their surprise, were presented with RNA Life Membership for their services to the Branch of 12 years. Both Shipmates, Paula and Dick Moon, were quite overcome by the gesture.

Following the Trafalgar Night meal, the next day eight shipmates attended

St Thomas Church, Cricket St Thomas for the annual Trafalgar church service, with the Lesson being read by Branch President S/M Malcolm Day, who also paraded the Branch Standard. Gala Trafalgar Night **Torrevieja** branch enjoyed another exceptional and successful annual event, filled with pomp, ceremony and fun, at La Laguna Hotel on the anniversary day itself. Shipmates were once again proud and privileged to have Capt Stephen McGlory RN, Defence Attaché at

Continued on page XX



Dublin



Isle of Wight



Wansbeck



Warwick

the British Embassy, as guest of honour. They were also proud to have two branch members, S/Ms Frank Goodman and Helen Goodman, who had both been members for 20 years and received their Certificates in October.

Among the merry band of 'swashbucklers' were families, friends and civilians, Royal Marines, representatives from the RAF, the Merchant Navy, and even the Army. Shipmates from **Tyne** branch held a Trafalgar Dinner at Jesmond Masonic Hall in Newcastle, with guests from the NE Submariners, Calliope Association and the Tyneside Scottish Royal Artillery Association.

Despite their guest speaker having to cancel at the last moment due to illness, their Branch Chairman, S/M Knocker (Tony) White, stepped in with an impromptu excellent and entertaining presentation.

The Trafalgar weekend itself saw branch shipmates support two local events.

Firstly, the Trotter Memorial at St Mary's Heritage Centre in Gateshead, where the family grave of John Trotter is located. Master Mariner Trotter saw action in Leviathan at Trafalgar and was lucky enough to return home afterwards and build a worthy career.



TS Leviathan, the Gateshead Sea Cadets, hold an annual Memorial Service which shipmates from Tyne branch support.

On Trafalgar Day itself each year, Toast the Admiral is an event supported by North Tyneside Council where they usually gather at the foot of the Collingwood Monument at Tynemouth to raise a toast to Lord Cuthbert Collingwood at midday to mark the time at which the first shot was fired at Trafalgar.

For the second year in a row, due to poor weather, this event was instead held at the Tynemouth Volunteer

Life Brigade Watch House, near the Monument.

The Oration was given by Cdre Thomas Knowles RN, Naval Regional Commander for Northern England and the Isle of Man.

Bude branch celebrated the Immortal Memory of Horatio Nelson with an excellent dinner at the Falcon Hotel, Bude, when members and their guests enjoyed a friendly event together.

With an excellent reflection by Branch President Chris as to Nelson's activities and actions both prior to Trafalgar and the events on that day, it was also time to celebrate, via Hon Sec Bob, the Branch's 35-year history since commissioning in August 1989.

From an initial two shipmates' 'light-bulb moment', the branch has grown from an initial 'worthy dozen' to its current strength of 111, including one recruit on the night. The evening also included presentations of the branch's annual trophies awards.

St Neots branch celebrated Trafalgar Day with a two-course luncheon at the Three Horseshoes at Graveley, Cambridgeshire, with 29 members and



Tyne



Torrevejia



Torrevejia



guests present.

Chaplain Fr Paul Bennett said the Grace before and after the meal, while their Serving Member in Uniform Derek Francis provided details of Nelson's strategy which led to the English defeat of the French, before proposing the silent toast to the victorious English and the brilliant Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson. Dublin branch held its annual Trafalgar Night Dinner at the Royal Irish Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire, County Dublin.

This year they were delighted to welcome Cdr Tom Wardley RN, Senior Naval Officer Northern Ireland, as their Guest Speaker. Cdr Wardley gave an excellent toast to the Immortal Memory.

The branch was also delighted to welcome Paul Johnstone, the British Ambassador to Ireland, with his wife Nicola. The Ambassador gave an enjoyable response to the toast to the visitors.

Along with 70 branch members and their guests, Dublin was also delighted to welcome Col Sean Grant, British Defence Attaché to Ireland, and his wife Caroline, along with Brig Gen Stephen Ryan, General Officer Commanding 2 Brigade, Irish Army. An excellent night was had by all. If any Shipmates from other branches are visiting Dublin, they would be happy to welcome them.

Norwich branch always sees Trafalgar Day as a very special occasion, as Nelson was something of a local boy. Shipmates are proud to say they belong to an inclusive and diverse branch, and feel it is worth saying that they have more than 20 female veterans (WRNS, QARNNS and RN) in their branch.

They are also proud of the Nelson

connection. Many know (or should know) that Nelson was born in Norfolk, and is quoted as saying "I am myself a Norfolk man and glory in being so". Shipmates joined **Cromer** branch and Wells Sea Cadets for a Trafalgar Day Service at Burnham Thorpe - the actual birthplace of Lord Nelson - where standards of Cromer and Norwich branches, RMA Norfolk, TS Eliza Adams Sea Cadets plus local Scout units were paraded. The service was held in the church where Nelson's father was the rector, and his parents and sister are buried there - it is the only church with permission to fly a White Ensign. Members always find it fascinating to walk in the footsteps of Nelson and drink with shipmates in the pub that Nelson frequented.

Bridport branch hosted its annual Trafalgar Night dinner at the Bridport and West Dorset Golf Club, a fitting venue for the occasion.

Shipmates extended a heartfelt thank you to the club's staff for their outstanding hospitality, noting the delicious food and warm, welcoming service that helped make the evening a memorable celebration.

The evening's guest speaker was Richard Balson, a well-known local figure and owner of RJ Balson & Son Butchers in Bridport, a business with a history stretching back more than 500 years.

The Trafalgar Night dinner served as more than just a commemoration of Naval history - it was an opportunity for Bridport branch members and their families to come together in a spirit of camaraderie.

The gathering allowed them to reconnect, share stories, and celebrate their collective military heritage while enjoying a sumptuous meal in a

festive atmosphere. The evening truly captured the essence of community, with the shared pride in both local and national history.

The Bridport RNA extends an open invitation to anyone who is currently serving or has served in the military.

Warwick branch celebrated their 70th anniversary and commemorated Trafalgar on 18 October.

The theme for the evening was to celebrate the great victory which meant that we were still British and would celebrate, not with frog's legs and snails, but with steak pie, chicken casserole, 'Victoria sandwich, scones with jam and cream!

There were just under 40 guests present, including the Mayor, Town Clerk, Leamington & Warwick Sea Cadet officers and members of the HMS Warwick Friends & Families Association.

Entertainment was provided by Romany Pie singing traditional British folk music before dinner, and the Hawkesbury Trawlermen singing sea shanties, with song sheets provided so that members could all join in, after dinner.

A commemorative shot glass was given to all present for the celebratory toasts.

Meanwhile, **Bognor Regis** branch also conducted some business during their Trafalgar Day lunch - and a useful piece of business it was too for local Sea Cadets

Attending the lunch was S/M Ray Rowe, Chairman of the Bognor Regis Sea Cadets TS Sir Alec Rose, and S/M Rowe accepted a cheque from S/M John Haste, President of Bognor Regis branch, for £300, which will go towards the Sea Cadets building roof appeal, time having taken its toll of the building over the years.

During the meal a further £155 was collected from the guests.

■ **Don't forget to send your news and photos to RNA Central Comms on comms@rnassoc.org to be included in the Semaphore and on all our social media platforms.**



Bognor Regis

OBITUARIES

S/M MICHAEL TIBBS

Lt Michael Tibbs OBE RN Rtd, one of our last surviving World War 2 submarine officers, crossed the bar on 2 October, at the grand age of 102.

Michael served in submarines during the war and was First Lieutenant of HMS Tantalus for the two longest submarine patrols of World War 2, both in the Far East.

Tantalus was a Royal Navy submarine of the third group of the T Class. She was built as P318 by Vickers Armstrong, Barrow-in-Furness, and launched on 24 February 1943. So far she has been the only ship of the Royal Navy to bear the name Tantalus, after the mythological Tantalus, son of Zeus.

Tantalus served in the Far East for much of her wartime career. She sank the Malaysian tug Kampung Besar, and the Malaysian Pulo Salanama in April 1944; she went on to sink the Japanese army cargo ships Amagi Maru and Hiyoshi Maru, the Japanese cargo ship Hachijin Maru, the Japanese coaster Palang Maru, the Japanese fishing vessel Taisei Maru No 12, a Japanese tug and three barges, an unknown Japanese vessel, and a Siamese sailing vessel, whilst claiming to have damaged a second.

Tantalus survived the war and continued in service with the Royal Navy, finally being scrapped at Milford Haven in November 1950.

Later, in post-Royal Naval life, Michael was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by Queen Elizabeth in recognition and gratitude for his services as Secretary to the Royal College of Physicians. A long-time supporter of Friends of the RN Submarine Museum, he read the prayer for Veterans at the dedication of the Submariner Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in 2023.

Lt Michael Tibbs, we your brother and sister submariners thank you for your dedicated service.

May your final and eternal patrol be in smooth waters.



Shipmate MAURICE FOLEY

S/M Maurice crossed the bar on 9 October.

Maurice joined the Navy in 1962, and whilst in basic training in at HMS Raleigh he joined the Fleet Air Arm branch. He served at various shore establishments and in ships, including HM Ships Ariel, Fulmar, Goldcrest, Heron (899 NAS), Daedalus, Portland, Osprey, Eagle (899 NAS), Kent (829 NAS) and Hampshire (829 NAS).

Maurice left the Navy in December 1971, having met his wife Ann at HMS Heron where she was a Naval Nurse. They were married in April 1972 and settled down to married life together.

There was a period of time before Maurice became a member the RNA, starting at the Greenford branch in 1988. During his membership he held the positions of branch delegate, branch and area committee member, social secretary, area secretary and National Council Member for No1 Area for more than 20 years.

He will be greatly missed by his beloved wife Ann, his family and the many shipmates across the Association who knew him.

Maurice is pictured above enjoying an encounter with then Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel (image by S/M Nigel Huxtable).

Shipmate NORMAN LOWRY

S/M Ron Hargest, Chairman of Bognor Regis branch, is saddened to announce the crossing the bar on 27 October of a deeply respected and popular life member, S/M Norman Lowry.

Norman had also been a shipmate at Thurrock branch before moving to Bognor Regis. He retired from the Royal Navy as Petty Officer Aircraft Radio/Radar having served from January 1954 until September 1967.



Ships included HMS Bulwark, Eagle and Ark Royal, while shore establishments included HMS Ariel, RNAS Ford, Brawdy, Lossiemouth and Lee-on-the-Solent. Campaigns included Suez and Cyprus. Norman was awarded the GSM (Near East).

He will be sorely missed at meetings of the branch.

May he find safe anchorage.



HMS Opossum pictured in June 1964, shortly before she was commissioned. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection:© Crown copyright reproduced under delegated authority from The Keeper of Public Records. Image: IWM (HU 129924)



Shipmate WILLIAM 'BILL' OWEN

It is with great sadness that the SAA reports the death of Capt Bill Owen, a man who was a key figure in the establishment of the modern day Royal Australian Navy Submarine Arm.

Bill Owen was born in Pembrokeshire, Wales, on 16 December 1927. After spending most of his early years and school holidays in Khartoum, Sudan, where his father was the Chief Justice, he entered the Royal Navy as a Cadet Midshipman on 1 December 1941 to train at Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. After graduating as a Midshipman on 1 May 1945, Bill underwent further training in the training cruiser HMS Frobisher and later HMS Glasgow. Bill was promoted Acting Sub Lieutenant in May 1947 with four-and-a-half months' time gained.

In late August 1948 he obtained his Royal Aero Club Aviation certificate on a Tiger Moth biplane at the Royal Naval Air Service station at Gosport before commencing his submarine training in 1949.

This was followed by a posting to the T-class submarine HMS Tantalus, a veteran of World War 2 which would be scrapped the following year.

Subsequent postings included Springer, Totem (3rd Hand), Scorcher, Sanguine, Trump and Tiptoe (as First Lieutenant). In October 1953 Bill was engaged to Ann Nicholson, elder daughter of the late Maj Gen F L Nicholson CB, DSO, MC, and they were married on 31 July 1954.

In the same year he completed Staff Course and qualified as a German Interpreter. He retained his German linguistic skills throughout his life, conversing with other German speakers wherever possible.

Bill successfully undertook Commanding Officers' Qualifying Course COQC (Perisher) No 29 in 1955 with three other students, Lts Burrage, Fieldhouse and Henry, under the tutelage of "Teacher" Cdr D Hay.

Promoted to Lt Cdr in August 1957, Bill was appointed in command of HMS Subtle, followed by two years in Sydney, Australia, in command of HMS Anchorite, part of the 4th Submarine Squadron based at HMAS Penguin, between 1959 and 1961.

While in command of Anchorite, the submarine visited Auckland to provide anti-submarine warfare training services for the Royal New Zealand Navy and during a sonar tracking exercise in the Hauraki Gulf, collided with an uncharted rock on 3 October 1960. No one was injured, although the submarine spent several weeks in Calliope Dock for repairs. Bill was cleared of any blame at the subsequent court martial, but his Hydrographic Note which suggested the rock be named 'Owen's Knob' was firmly rejected and Anchorite Rock remains

the name on charts to this day!

On return to the UK, Bill joined the Tactical School at Woolwich, near London, and in 1964 became CO of the new submarine HMS Opossum, being built at Cammel Laird in Birkenhead, and during his command (1964-65), it ventured the furthest north under the Arctic ice cap by a conventionally-powered submarine.

In 1967 Bill Owen transferred to the RAN as an Acting Commander, initially serving at HMAS Penguin in command of the RN 4th Submarine Squadron. On 18 August 1967 he became the commissioning CO of HMAS Platypus and inaugural Commander of the First Australian Submarine Squadron. Bill was confirmed in the rank of Commander in June 1969 and would remain in command of the Submarine Squadron until 1971, guiding it through its formative years.

Following a posting to HMAS Cerberus as the Training Commander in 1970, Bill joined the Naval Staff in Canberra as Director of Submarine Policy, where he served until 1975. During his tenure, he initiated a number of projects to enhance the warfighting capability of the Oberon-class submarines; a combination that was later dubbed the Submarine Weapons Update Program (SWUP). SWUP had far-reaching implications since the submarines now had the ability to reach their potential as strategic assets for Australia and it provided the confidence, many years later, for Australia to embark on the New Construction Submarines project that delivered the Collins class submarines. During this period, Government approved an expansion of the Submarine Force to six.

In January 1976, he would return to Sydney to command Platypus and the Submarine Squadron for a second time. He was promoted to Captain on the 30th of June 1976. In December 1978, one of his final duties as the Squadron Commander was to welcome the newly commissioned HMAS Otama to the Squadron, in which his son Frank Owen was serving.

Bill's final posting was as Naval Officer Commanding Queensland. He retired from the RAN in 1983 and initially settled in Brisbane, where he remained active in the defence sector as a consultant to industry.

Bill and Ann moved back to the Canberra region in 1989, settling in the rural area of Wamboin. After Ann's passing in 2013, Bill sold the Wamboin property and, after several years in Deakin, moved to Bundanoon, NSW for the final year of his life. Bill was gifted in the arts with great skill on the piano and also with pen and brush.

He passed away on 4 October aged 96. He is survived by his son Cdr Frank Owen, daughters Louise and Sarah, son Charlie, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



► NOVEMBER SWINGING THE LAMP

'Swinging the Lamp' events are drawn, by permission, from the definitive Naval history reference book *The Royal Navy Day by Day*, written by Honorary Shipmate Lawrie Phillips and published by The History Press (www.thehistorypress.co.uk). The book is issued to all HM Ships and Establishments and is 'probably one of the most well-thumbed and valued books that Captains of HM Ships possess'. It is currently available online for around £45 (search ISBN number 978-0750982665)

1 November 1918

HMS G7 was declared lost on 1 November 1918 in the North Sea – the last Royal Navy submarine to be sunk during World War 1. G7 was built by Whitworth Armstrong on Tyneside, and was one of a class which demonstrated just how fast the submarine had evolved in the Royal Navy – launched in March 1916, G7 appeared just 15 years after Holland 1, but while the Navy's first submarine displaced 107 tons and had a crew of nine, the G-class displaced 850 tons submerged and had a complement of 30. Holland 1 had a range of 23 miles, while G7 could manage 2,800 miles. The G class were tasked with patrolling the North Sea, hunting German U-boats, and G7 almost chalked up a victory on 15 April 1917 when she spotted U-30, part of the German IV Flotilla, between Lerwick and Bergen in Norway. G7 loosed a torpedo, which missed, at which point the submarines exchanged gunfire before the German boat dived and fled the area. The U-boat had been attacking two Norwegian freighters at the time; one (Svanfos) still had a German boarding party aboard, and managed to get back to Bergen on her own, while the second (Borgila) had been abandoned by her crew and was minded by a salvage party from G7 until a Norwegian destroyer arrived to take control. G7, part of the 11th Submarine Flotilla, left Blyth in Northumberland on 21 October 1918 for what was to be her third and final patrol from the port, intending to replace G10 off the Danish coast at a time of great uncertainty – the Admiralty feared that the German High Seas Fleet was preparing for a final mass attack, and a barrier of mines was

being laid by German vessels in the North Sea. Communication with G7 was lost on 23 October. She was declared lost on 1 November, with the assumption that she had struck a mine off the Little Fisher Bank in the North Sea and had gone down with all 31 souls on board, as there was no claim by the Germans of having had a hand in her sinking. However, the discovery of a wreck much closer to her Blyth base earlier this century has led researchers to believe it to be that of G7, which suggests she was on her way home from her patrol and therefore was lost around 30 October 1918. The wreck lies in almost 100m of water in the Farnes Deep, and her stern appears to have been taken clean off – possibly the result of a ramming (deliberate or accidental) by a surface ship, or through striking a sea mine, possibly a British device that had broken free of its moorings in the closest minefield to the wreck because of the rough sea conditions at that time.

2 November 1961

Veteran frigate HMS Troubridge arrived at Belize with soldiers and emergency stores two days after Hurricane Hattie struck British Honduras. The warship started life as an emergency programme T-class destroyer, launched at the John Brown shipyard on the Clyde on 23 September 1942, being commissioned just under six months later. She had a busy war, picking up a slew of Battle Honours including the invasions of Italy at Sicily and Salerno (both 1943), the Aegean, South France and Adriatic (all 1944). In March 1945 after a refit in Chatham she sailed for Australia to join Task Force 57 on operations against Japan in the Far East. She gained her final Battle Honour of Okinawa (1945) in a period when she was generally screening capital ships in the British Pacific Fleet and bombarding shore targets, and Troubridge took part in the final Naval engagements of World War 2. After hostilities were over she remained in commission and served in the Mediterranean until 1949. In 1955 she was taken up for conversion to a Type 15 fast frigate at Portsmouth and White's at Cowes, a short-term solution to the lack of effective, fast frigates to counter the growing threat of the Soviet submarine fleet – Troubridge and similar

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'utility' warships were deemed obsolete by the end of the 1940s. She served in the Caribbean and home waters for a period, and was back in the Caribbean when Hurricane Hattie struck at the end of October 1961. Hattie turned out to be the fiercest and deadliest hurricane of the 1961 Atlantic season, killing almost 520 people in total, mainly in British Honduras (now Belize), Honduras and Guatemala. The hurricane went ashore near Belize City on 31 October as a Category 4 storm, with wind speeds in excess of 150mph and a storm surge of more than 4m, destroying or damaging more than 70 per cent of the buildings in the capital and killing more than 300 people. The storm then blew itself out over the high ground of Guatemala the following day. Troubridge arrived at Belize on 2 November, around the same time as two American destroyers, being the first ships to enter the devastated harbour after the storm. As far as Troubridge was concerned it was a classic relief operations, for which the ship was well-prepared – guards were landed to prevent any looting, while technical specialists from the ship went ashore to restore essential services, principally by getting generators up and running to restore power. Efforts were also made to get through to isolated villages to provide immediate relief. The warship was later joined by frigate HMS Londonderry and survey ship HMS Vidal, which had picked up essential medical supplies and more troops. The following year Troubridge was called on to act as the command centre for the British response to civil disturbances in Georgetown, British Guiana – parties of sailors from the ship carried out shore patrols and were involved in firefighting. Troubridge continued to serve throughout the 1960s, including a refit when she was towed from Portsmouth to Malta in 1964, and she finally paid off at the end of March 1969 after several years in the Far East. She arrived at Newport in South Wales to be broken up on 5 May 1970.

3 November 1942

German U-boat U-132 began her attack on Liverpool-bound Allied Convoy SC-107 in the North Atlantic on the evening of 3 November 1942 – but the action would end in the unusual circumstance of a submarine being sunk by a freighter... U-132 picked off her victims one by one, starting at just after 2300 with the 5,500-ton Dutch general cargo steam ship Hobbema, which was struck by a single torpedo which damaged her engines and generators, leaving the ship in darkness and sinking. Three British gunners and the ship's master were amongst the 28 men who died, although 16 (including four more gunners) were rescued by American tugs. Next to be hit was the British (Glover Brothers) general cargo steamer Empire Lynx (6,400 tons), which sank with no loss of life – the 43 crew were all picked up by the Dutch freighter Titus, another ship in the convoy of 39 merchantmen. Finally, U-132 lined up a shot at 6,700-ton steamer Hatimura, bringing her to a halt and setting her on fire. Four of the Hatimura's crew of 90 died, the rest being picked up by the American tugs and landed ashore at Reykjavik by rescue ship Stockport. But there was a sting in the tail of this freighter; amongst her mixed cargo of almost 9,000 tons was 300 tons of incendiary bombs, 250 tons of gunpowder and 200 tons of TNT. Spotting the stricken ship, one of the wolfpack attacking the convoy – U-442 – sent more torpedoes into her at around 0320 on 4 November, setting off one of the largest

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Armed boarding steamer HMS Tara IWM (Imperial War Museum collection © The rights holder (Q 73829)) and (inset right) one of Major the Duke of Westminster's Armoured Cars at Es Sollum – the very vehicles used to rescue the crew of Tara, April 1916 Image: IWM (Q 15725. See 5 November.



non-nuclear explosions ever detonated. Several other ships in the convoy believed they had been torpedoed, such as the violence of the shockwave created. The freighter was blown apart and debris scattered over a wide area, but the commander of U-442 had not spotted U-132 lurking near the freighter, also preparing to deliver a fatal blow. Whether the submarine was struck by flying debris or seriously damaged by the shockwave is not clear; the result was that the U-boat sank with all 47 men going down with their boat. U-442 did not last much longer – just over three months later she was sunk in the North Atlantic by depth charges from a British Hudson aircraft, going down with all 48 hands. The convoy was very much a German success, despite the loss of two U-boats in the attacks; of the 39 merchantmen that left the Canadian coast on 29 October a total of 15 were sunk, killing 150 Merchant Marine and Royal Navy personnel.

4 November 1834

Schooner HMS Nimble was wrecked on passage to Havana, partly because of swift currents, and partly because of the noise made by 272 slaves that had been rescued from a slave ship. The 170-ton ship was originally built in 1822 as the Greater Colombian schooner Bolivar, and may even have been used in the slave trade until she was bought by the Royal Navy in August 1826 and put to work in the West Indies Squadron, armed with five guns. Nimble was active in anti-slave trade patrols between 1827 and 1834, sometimes getting into tight scrapes. One such example on 19 December 1827 saw the schooner go around in the Florida Keys while duelling with Spanish slaver Guerrero. The Spaniard sank, taking 41 African slaves with her as they were trapped in the hold; 520 slaves and the crew were rescued by wreckers (early unregulated salvagers from coastal communities), although the Spaniards managed to wrest control of two wrecking boats and sail them to Cuba with almost 400 slaves. The remaining freed slaves were taken to Key West, while wreckers helped the crew of Nimble refloat her and replace her damaged rudder with that of the Guerrero. Over the following years Nimble hunted down several slave ships, mainly Spanish, freeing well in excess of 1,000 African slaves – it was reported that Nimble's activities were so disruptive that slave traders considered obtaining and deploying a 20-gun ship of their own against her. That never happened, and Nimble continued to pick off slavers

until early November 1834 when she encountered the Spanish ship Carlotta, which fled the Royal Navy vessel but in doing so ran aground on the Cuban coast. More than 270 African slaves were rescued from the Spaniard, with Nimble setting course for Havana, but the schooner ran into foul weather on 4 November and was driven onto a reef in the Old Bahamas Channel near Cay Verde. It was stated that the sound of breaking waves, which could have alerted the British sailors to the dangerous reef, was drowned out by the noise made by the slaves in her hold. Nimble went down with 70 Africans, though her crew and some 200 slaves were rescued.

5 November 1915

Armed boarding steamer HMS Tara was sunk by U-35 off Sollum – the start of a grim period in captivity for her crew. Tara started life as a passenger steamer, TSS Hibernia, built by William Denny and brothers at Dumbarton in 1899 for the London and North Western Railway. The 1,860-ton express passenger ferry was put into service in January 1900 on the Holyhead to Dublin route across the Irish Sea, which she plied until 1914, when she was requisitioned by the Admiralty and converted to an armed boarding steamer, tasked with enforcing blockades by intercepting and boarding foreign-flagged merchantmen to ensure they were not assisting the Axis powers. The first years of World War 1 saw her in the seas around the British Isles, mainly Scotland and Ireland, after which she was switched to the Mediterranean, chiefly along the coast of Egypt. On the morning of 5 November 1915 she was heading for the port of Sollum, now Sallum, in the north-west of Egypt close to the border with modern-day Libya, when she was torpedoed by submarine U-35. The steamer sank in around ten minutes, allowing 93 of her crew of 104 to scramble into lifeboats. U-35 then surfaced and towed the lifeboats some eight miles to the coast near Port Suliman, where the British mariners were handed over to Turkish officials and hostile Senussi tribesmen. The captives were then forced to undertake a gruelling three-week 250-mile journey through harsh desert and along rocky coastlines, being joined along the way by survivors from the horse transport HMT Moorina, which had also been sunk by U-35 two days after Tara. Rations consisted. In the main of small quantities of boiled rice, occasional goat meat, weeds and on one or two occasions handfuls of snails which the men picked from inside wells or buildings and

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HMS Zubian. See 8 November. Image from the IWM collection Image: IWM (Q 61101))



Battleship HMS Britannia sinking. See 9 November. Image from the IWM collection © The rights holder (Q 75587)



roasted or boiled. They slept little as nights were cold and their clothing constantly damp from dew through sleeping in the open. Their 'prison camp' for another four months or so was the remote desert oasis of Bir Hakeim, swept by cold winds and with little to eat, drink or occupy themselves. A handful of men dies of disease – shallow graves were dug with difficulty using the lids of cooking pots - but the remainder were rescued on 17 March 1916 by an armoured car unit led by Maj Hugh Grosvenor, the second Duke of Westminster, a Boer War veteran who had returned to the fray in the Great War. The rescue has a Naval aspect in that the Duke originally led No 2 Squadron of the Royal Naval Air Service Armoured Car Division, originally deployed to the Western Front before transferring to North Africa when Northern Europe became bogged down by trench warfare. Several models were used in early experiments with armoured cars, but the Rolls-Royces proved to be outstanding, equipped with plating, a turret and a powerful and reliable engine. The Duke originally bought his squadron's cars out of his own (admittedly considerable) funds. Recast as an Army unit (the Light Armoured Motor Battery or LAMB of the Machine Gun Corps), the Duke's snarling Rollers were soon unleashed on the troublesome Senussi tribesmen, striking quickly and with precision at targets who didn't really know what had hit them. The LAMB played an important role in retaking the town of Sollum on 16 February 1916, at which point the Duke came to hear of the Tara sinking and the crew's desperate situation through a letter from the ship's Commanding Officer, Capt Gwatkin-Williams. Using a Senussi prisoner as a guide, a special mission was planned and a convoy of 31 ambulances and support vehicles set out with nine LAMB Rolls-Royces just after midnight on 17 March. The going was tough – narrow

tracks, a steep rocky escarpment – and the Duke was almost ready to call a halt after more than 100 miles when the two wells of Bir Hakeim were spotted on the horizon. The Rolls-Royces barrelled in to attack the unprepared guards, who were killed as they fled, and the emaciated, disease-riddled men of HMS Tara and HMT Moorina were helped into the ambulances and taken back to Sollum. They had been in captivity, in the most distressing circumstances, for almost five months. As for U-35, the German submarine finished the war as the most destructive of Germany's U-boat fleet, sinking 220 merchantmen totalling more than half a million tons, and also sank three warships, two of them British. She was surrendered to Britain after the Armistice and broken up in the early 1920s.

6 November 1998

Helicopter carrier HMS Ocean, Type 22 frigate HMS Sheffield, small Fleet tanker RFA Black Rover and amphibious assault ship RFA Sir Tristram, along with elements of 45 Commando Royal Marines and Dutch Marines, joined major disaster relief operations in Honduras and Nicaragua on 6 November 1998 in wake of Hurricane Mitch, the second most deadly such storm on record to hit the region. Mitch formed in the Caribbean Sea on 22 October and quickly increased in power to a Category 5, with wind speeds in excess of 180mph as it smashed through Central America; by the time it had weakened to a tropical storm and drifted off into the North Atlantic it had killed almost 11,400 people and caused billions of pounds worth of damage. In response the British government assembled a small flotilla under the banner of Operation Tellar. Ocean, the new 21,200-ton helicopter carrier, was on warm-weather trials in the region when she was reassigned to humanitarian efforts, while Sheffield had been on West

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Indies Guard Ship duty in the Caribbean; one Honduran who was grateful for the frigate's presence was a woman swept 50 miles out to sea by the storm surge and who was, against the odds after six days, spotted by an eagle-eyed US Coast Guard sailor and picked up by Sheffield's Lynx helicopter. Sheffield also picked up debris from the luxury yacht *Fantome*, lost with all 31 hands when it inadvertently ran into the centre of the hurricane which changed course unexpectedly and proved too fast to outrun. The two RFA ships shared the *Wilkinson Sword of Peace* for 1998 because of their outstanding efforts in Honduras and Nicaragua. The Marines were involved in rescuing people trapped by floodwaters, often plucking them from the roof of their home after their villages were inundated, while the RN group was able to offer vital helicopter support for rescue missions and reconnaissance purposes.

7 November 1915

HMS E19 sank German light cruiser *Undine* in the Baltic, 22 miles off Trelleborg, Sweden, on 7 November 1915 in an action that helped stifle German activity in the Baltic for the remainder of the year. E19 was the last of five Royal Navy submarines that slipped into through the Oresund in September 1915 to join the Baltic Flotilla in order to disrupt German shipping. Built by Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness the previous year as an improved E-class vessel, E19 displaced 820 tons submerged and had a range of more than 3,200 miles. Her most destructive day was 11 October 1915 when she sank four German merchantmen off the Swedish island of Oland in just a few hours on what became known as the 'submarine massacre'. All four ships were sunk without a single torpedo being fired or a life lost – they were boarded by Royal Navy parties who set scuttling charges. A month later her Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Francis Cromie spotted German light cruiser SMS *Undine* steaming with the ferry *Preussen* and two torpedo boats between Trelleborg and Sassnitz, and the British submarine fired two torpedoes. Both struck the warship, with the second causing an explosion in her magazines which blew the ship in two. Reports vary over the number of casualties, generally between 14 and 25, with the majority of her ship's company of 270 being rescued by the accompanying vessels. This was the second warship lost in the Baltic in a fortnight, the other being armoured cruiser SMS *Prinz Adelbert*, sunk by HMS E8 with huge loss of life – only three of her crew of 875 were rescued. The two attacks prompted the German navy to curtail its activities in the Baltic for several weeks. E19 continued to patrol the Baltic until early April 1918 when she was one of seven British submarines scuttled at Helsinki to avoid them falling into the hands of the advancing German army's Baltic Sea Division. The other submarines scuttled were C26, C27, C35, E1, E8 and E9. Their crews returned to the UK via northern Russia, except (by now) Acting Capt Cromie, who took up the post of Naval Attaché at the British Embassy in Petrograd, where he was highly-regarded by all sides in what was a volatile city at the heart of the Russian Revolution. He was murdered on 31 August 1918 while defending the building against an illegal incursion by armed Bolshevik secret police, who went on to heavily-handedly arrest all Embassy staff, sparking outrage in the UK.

8 November 1916

Destroyer HMS *Zulu* struck a mine off Dunkirk on 8 November 1918 which killed three men and blew her stern off – but the ship (or part of her) went on to play an active role in the rest of the Great War. *Zulu*, a 1,150-ton Tribal-class destroyer, was launched at Hawthorn Leslie on Tyneside on 16 September 1909, and at the start of the war she was part of the 6th Destroyer Flotilla, which was at the heart of the Dover Patrol. On 8 November 1916 she was steaming from Dover to Dunkirk when she hit a mine that had been laid by prolific German submarine minelayer UC-1 – mines sown by UC-1 in 80 patrols sank 41 merchant and warships. The mine exploded beneath the destroyer's engine room, killing three men and causing the stern to break away and sink. The remainder of the ship stayed afloat and was towed to safety in Calais Harbour by French destroyer *Capitaine Mehl*. What can one do with the front end of a warship? Well... as chance would have it a sister ship, HMS *Nubian*, had been badly damaged in the Battle of Dover Strait on 26-27 October, when a large force of German torpedo boats launched a successful raid on the Dover Barrage before withdrawing with barely a scratch. During the encounter *Nubian* was hit by a torpedo and her bows were blown off; the hulk was taken in tow and beached at South Foreland to prevent it from sinking. Although *Zulu* and *Nubian* were of the same class they were not identical, as shipyards had a certain amount of freedom within the design parameters – but they were close enough to do a cut-and-shut job. The two half-ships were towed to Chatham Dockyard where the workforce managed to join them together despite a difference in beam of more than three inches. The new ship was commissioned on 7 June 1917 as HMS *Zubian*, taking part of each name, and the appearance of the ship caused much head-scratching at the upper echelons of the German Navy, who had no information at all on the construction of the ship. *Zubian* returned to the Dover Patrol where she played an active part in the war. On 4 February 1918 she found minelayer submarine UC-50 surfaced in the Dover Strait' an attempt to ram her failed but the destroyer dropped depth charges and observed oil and wreckage in the area immediately after. Patrol boat HMS P12 followed up with more depth charges, and divers later confirmed *Zubian* had indeed sunk UC-50. She was also part of the bombardment force during the First Ostend Raid of 23-24 April 1918, a secondary (and unsuccessful) element of the Zeebrugge Raid of the same date. Having taken more punishment than most ships, *Zubian* was sold shortly after the end of the war and scrapped at the end of 1919.

9 November 1918

50 men died when battleship HMS *Britannia* was torpedoed off Cape Trafalgar on 9 November 1918 – the last of 13 battleships and the last British major warship lost to enemy action in World War 1. *Britannia* was launched at Portsmouth Dockyard on 10 December 1904, shortly before the building of HMS *Dreadnought*, the ship that relegated her and those of her ilk to rapid obsolescence. Displacing 17,300 tons in deep load, the King Edward VII-class ship was nonetheless a powerful battleship with four 12in and four 9.2in guns, and on the outbreak of war in 1914 she was part of the 3rd Battle Squadron of the Grand

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The casket of the Unknown Warrior is carried aboard HMS Verdun at Boulogne. See 10 November. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: IWM (Q 47638).



Fleet. She regularly went on Fleet sorties seeking German ships – the older pre-dreadnoughts like Britannia were often at the head of divisions as they were more expendable in a mine strike than the more modern ships astern – but in the latter part of 1914 and throughout 1915 she saw no action, though she was damaged when she ran aground in the Firth of Forth on 26 January. By the start of 1916 her star was fading fast and she was relegated to the 2nd Detached Squadron operating in the Mediterranean in support of the Italian Navy, which mainly involved enforcing a blockade at the southern end of the Adriatic. She was refitted in Gibraltar in the spring of 1917 enabling her to take up an escort and patrol role in the North Atlantic with the 9th Cruiser Squadron, and it was on this deployment that she met her fate. On 9 November 1918 she was steaming towards the Strait of Gibraltar when she was hit by two torpedoes from German submarine UB-50. The first strike caused the ship to heel ten degrees to port, and the second, a few minutes later, started a fire in one of her magazines, which exploded shortly after. Britannia took more than two hours to sink, taking 50 of her ship's company with her, many killed by the thick smoke from burning cordite; more than 700 men were taken off before she went down. Her killer, UB-50, came late to the war, having been commissioned in July 1917, but she racked up an impressive tally in her short service, sinking 38 merchant ships and two warships, of which Britannia was the last and largest of her victims.
10 November 1920

Destroyer HMS Verdun sailed from Boulogne on 10 November 1920 with the body of Britain's Unknown Warrior, from the Ypres Front, on board. Launched onto the Tyne at the Hawthorn Leslie yard on 21 August 1917, Verdun served in both the Grand Fleet and in the Harwich Force before the Armistice. Named after the bloody Battle of Verdun of 1916, in which more than 300,000 French and German combatants died, Verdun was the obvious choice to ferry the body of the Unknown Warrior across the Channel in 1920 as a tribute to Britain's allies. The concept of the Unknown Warrior came from British Army chaplain Revd David Railton, who was prompted to suggest the idea by the sight of rough wooden crosses he saw on the Western Front in 1916 marking the last resting place of unnamed soldiers. In 1920 he suggested to the Dean of Westminster, Herbert Ryle, that an unidentified body from the Western Front be buried in a full state funeral at Westminster Abbey to represent the hundreds of thousands who died from across the Empire. The idea quickly won widespread support, including that of Prime Minister David Lloyd George, and the process began. Four bodies were exhumed from battlefields across the Western Front and brought to a chapel at Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise in France on the evening of 8 November 1920. A senior Army officer, Brig Wyatt, closed his eyes and walked between the bodies, in plain coffins draped in Union Jacks, placing his hand on one of them. The three other bodies were taken away to be reburied, while the

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coffin of the Unknown Warrior remained in the chapel overnight and through the following morning. In the afternoon of 9 November it was taken to the citadel of Boulogne, its route lined by troops, and there it laid in state overnight while a company from the elite French 8th Infantry Regiment stood vigil. On the morning of 10 November two undertakers placed the simple coffin into a casket constructed of oak from trees in Hampton Court Palace, topped by a 16th Century sword from the Royal collection chosen personally by King George V and surmounted by an iron shield inscribed with the words 'A British Warrior who fell in the Great War 1914-1918 for King and Country'. The casket was placed on a French military wagon drawn by six black horses, and as church bells rang out Aux Champs (the French version of the Last Post) was sounded by trumpets and bugles of infantry and cavalry units. A procession estimated at a mile long, headed by a thousand schoolchildren and watched by huge numbers of local people, wound its way down to the harbour where HMS Verdun was waiting at the Quai Carnot. Saluted by the distinguished French Marshal Ferdinand Foch, the casket was carried across the brow, piped aboard with an admiral's call, and placed on the quarterdeck, covered with wreaths of white flowers. The 1,340-ton destroyer slipped her moorings just before noon and steamed north, escorted by a flotilla of six destroyers (HM Ships Veteran, Wanderer, Whitshed, Witherington, Wivern and Wolverine), to be met by a 19-gun Field Marshal's salute at Dover Castle. The casket was landed on the Admiralty Pier at the town's Western Docks and transferred to the adjacent Dover Marine railway station – carried by six senior officers from the three Armed Forces – from where it was taken by train to Victoria station in London, remaining at platform 8 overnight. On 11 November a funeral cortege set off

for Whitehall, with the Unknown Warrior's casket on a Royal Horse Artillery gun carriage drawn by six black horses. At Whitehall the procession halted while King George V unveiled the new Cenotaph, then the casket was carried on to Westminster Abbey where it was interred at the western end of the Nave using soil from each of the main battlefields. A similar process was carried out simultaneously by the French, with one of eight candidates being selected by a young soldier at Verdun on 8 November. The French Soldat inconnu was brought to a tomb beneath the Arc de Triomphe in Paris on 11 November, though the actual interment did not take place until 28 January 1921. HMS Verdun went on to serve throughout World War 2, having been converted to an anti-aircraft escort at Chatham Dockyard in the autumn of 1939. She spent much of the war escorting North Sea convoys and screening major warships involved in Arctic Convoys. On 1 November 1940 she was damaged by a bomb which killed 11 of her sailors including her Commanding Officer. At the end of the war she was placed in reserve, and in April 1946 she was sold for scrapping on the Forth. Her ship's bell hangs in Westminster Abbey, close to the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior.

11 November 1875

HMS Shannon, the Royal Navy's first armoured cruiser, was launched at Pembroke Dockyard on 11 November 1875, but turned out to be less of a success than was hoped. She was designed to counter the threat of second-class ironclads of foreign navies and was something of a compromise, straddling different philosophies. As such, she was the last Royal Navy warship to have a lifting propeller that could be hauled out of the water to reduce drag while under sail, and the first to have an armoured deck. She also had a detachable bow ram, intended to be used only in times

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of war, thereby preventing accidental rammings. Displacing almost 5,700 tons, she was armed with two 10in and seven 9in guns, all muzzle-loaded, and was intended for use as a long-distance cruiser, providing protection for British trade worldwide, hence the need for sails to extend her range. However, she turned out to be less than effective in the role, being too slow, overweight and beset by engine problems, and her time on foreign stations (China and the Pacific) was brief. An additional issue was the fact that she was at the time the only ship in the Pacific with 10in guns and the cost of moving and storing suitable ammunition was prohibitive, so she was banned from gunnery practice with her main armament. In May 1883 she served as a tender to HMS Warrior, but then took up a role as a coastguard vessel until being placed in reserve in May 1895. She was sold for scrap in December 1899.

12 November 1925

Submarine HMS M1 sank with all hands on 12 November 1925 following a collision with a Swedish steamer off Start Point in the Channel. At 90m long with a submerged displacement of almost 1,980 tons, M-class boats were originally designed as monitors, carrying one big (12in) gun for coastal bombardment, but that primary function changed during the design process to make them capable of taking out merchant ships at range – torpedoes at the time were not reliable enough over distances in excess of 1,000 yards. Only three of the class were built – a fourth was broken up before completion – and because of limitations hammered out in the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-2 only M1 was fitted with a gun, which was a spare from the Formidable-class of battleship. M2 was converted to a seaplane carrier while M3 became a minelayer. M1 was launched by Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness on 9 July 1917 but was not involved in action in World War 1. Operating out of Portsmouth, the boat was pushing the technology of the time, and suffered because of it – for example, in 1923 the cap on the barrel of her gun suffered a leak and when it was fired the barrel suffered considerable damage. On 12 November M1 was submerged while on exercise in the Channel and was run over by Swedish collier SS Vidal. The collision tore the gun from its mounting and the sea flooded through the loading hole, sending her to the bottom more than 70 metres down with all 69 men on board. Sister boat HMS M2 fared little better, sinking off Dorset on 26 January 1932 when water flooded through an open hangar door, and her crew of 60 died in the submarine.

13 November 1978

The first landing by a Sea Harrier took place on aircraft carrier HMS Hermes on 13 November 1978. The Harrier had originally begun life as a speculative VTOL (vertical take-off and landing) project in the late 1950s based around the marriage of the Bristol Engine Company's Pegasus vectored thrust engine and a Hawker Aircraft light support fighter airframe. Hawker's successor, Hawker Siddeley, privately developed the P1127 and thereby attracting the attention of the RAF, which ordered six prototypes in 1965. By this time the P1127, designated the Kestrel in a series of evaluation aircraft, had been tested by British, American and German pilots, with promising results, despite a lesser powered engine than would ultimately be used – the first flight of this aircraft took place on 7 March 1964. Plans for a supersonic Kestrel, the P1154, got no further than the drawing board when the NATO requirement was cancelled and the Royal Navy and RAF could not agree on a common model that met both their needs. Instead the RAF sought an upgraded Kestrel that would fulfil its need for a V/STOL (Vertical/Short Take Off and Landing) ground attack jet, and the Harrier GR1 first took to the skies on 28 December 1967, entering service with the RAF less than 18 months later. The US Marine Corps took delivery of more than 100 of the AV-8A variant between 1971 and 1976. Meanwhile the Royal Navy were looking at an extensively modified variant for fleet air defence and combat air patrol purposes, and the aircraft would have to be able to thrive in a hostile maritime environment. Deck trials were taking place on Hermes in the autumn of 1978 to aid development of the aircraft, now being developed by British Aerospace. Sea Harrier XZ 450 was the first of the type to fly, on 21 August 1978 at Dunsfold aerodrome near Godalming in Surrey, and the same aircraft was the first to land on an aircraft carrier on 13 November. The following day it also took the honour of being the first to take off from a carrier. The trials also involved three 'standard' GR1 Harriers and a Hawker Hunter. The Fleet Air Arm aircraft was later used in the development of BAE's Sea Eagle anti-ship missile before being packed off to the Falklands during the 1982 Conflict as part of 800 Naval Air Squadron, where it was shot down on 4 May by 35mm anti-aircraft fire during a bombing mission against Argentine positions at Goose Green airfield, killing pilot Lt Nick Taylor.

14 November 1968

HMS Sheffield, the first of the Type 42 class of destroyers, was ordered from Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering at Barrow on 14 November 1968. Laid down in 15 January 1970, the ship was damaged by an

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HMS M1. See 12 November. Image from the IWM collection © IWM (Q 74873)



explosion during build in which two shipyard workers died. In order to complete the ship the damaged section was replaced by an identical section from sister ship Hercules, which was being built for the Argentine Navy. Sheffield was launched on 10 June 1971 by the Queen. As the first of class, Sheffield had an extensive trials programme, which included the introduction of the Sea Dart surface-to-air missile system. In late March 1982 the destroyer joined Exercise Spring Train, a Royal Navy-led NATO exercise held in the eastern Atlantic, during which Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands. On 2 April Sheffield was ordered to join the rapidly-assembled task group that was to sail south and attempt to retake the islands. She sailed with sister ships HMS Coventry and Glasgow and frigates HMS Arrow and Brilliant, reaching Ascension Island on 14 April. Along with other ships of Task Force 317 she pressed on south, and began operations in the Total Exclusion Zone around the islands on 1 May. Early on 4 May 1982 Sheffield was spotted by a Lockheed Neptune patrol aircraft of the Argentine Navy, which relayed her position back to the mainland at regular intervals. Two Argentine Navy Super Etendard aircraft took off from the Rio Grande naval air base around 0945 and refuelled from a Hercules as they flew eastwards towards the Falklands. The two pilots had been practising attacks on ships in the previous weeks, including against the two Argentine Type 42 destroyers, through which they knew the best way of striking at Sheffield. Flying in at very low altitude, down to 30m, popping up to fix their targets, the pilots released their Exocet missiles at just after 1100 more than 20 miles away from the ships, then turned for home. Sheffield was part of a picket line of three Type 42s, screening the carriers and amphibious forces of the main task group which were up to 30 miles behind them. Confusion over the threat from the air, and an unauthorised satellite transmission which interfered with other sensors on board Sheffield, were factors

in the response to the Exocet attack by the destroyer, and the reality of the situation only became clear when lookouts spotted smoke from the incoming missiles. One of the missiles fell harmlessly into the sea, the other struck Sheffield, damaging the electrical system and the seawater fire main and starting fires. 20 men died in the attack. When the strike was reported, frigates HMS Arrow and Yarmouth were detached from the task group to investigate, playing their part in helping the destroyer's crew fight the fires, though with the main firefighting system disabled it was a losing battle of small portable pumps and buckets of water. After around four hours, with the risk of fire reaching the Sea Dart magazines and causing a huge explosion, as well as leaving the frigates in harm's way, the destroyer's Commanding Officer Capt Sam Salt ordered the ship be abandoned. Most of the sailors scrambled aboard Arrow while a handful took to Yarmouth by Gemini or were picked up by helicopter and landed on flagship HMS Hermes. Over the course of six days the smouldering hulk was inspected on several occasions to see if anything could be salvaged, and it was decided to patch up the ship as best they could and HMS Yarmouth would tow her to South Georgia. But on the high seas, a steady swell caused water to gradually fill Sheffield's hull through the gaping hole caused by the missile, and the doomed ship rolled over and sank on 10 May – the first Royal Navy warship sunk in action since World War 2.

15 November 1918

Royal Naval Volunteer Reservist Cdr Daniel Beak's Victoria Cross was gazetted on 15 November 1918. Beak, who was born in Southampton on 27 January 1891, joined the RNVF as a rating on 2 February 1915, and shortly afterwards was commissioned as a temporary sub lieutenant in the Royal Naval Division. The RND was an infantry division with a distinct Naval slant that was created on the outbreak of war

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A Harrier prepares to land on HMS Hermes during trials in the Channel. See 13 November. Image from the IWM collection © Crown copyright reproduced under delegated authority from The Keeper of Public Records. Image: IWM (HU 109896)



using volunteers and reservists from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines who had not at that point been taken up for sea service. It saw service at Antwerp in 1914 and Gallipoli in 1915, but by the middle of 1916 many of the original Navy personnel had been lost or transferred to sea service, often being replaced by soldiers from oversubscribed Army regiments, such that the division was shifted across to the Army as the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division and fought the remainder of the war on the Western Front. Beak was a member of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, but records do not reveal whether he saw action at Gallipoli. He appears again in France in May 1916, and the following year was appointed adjutant of Drake Battalion before commanding the unit for a fortnight from 19 March 1917. On his move to HQ he was appointed lieutenant commander. 1917 saw Beak awarded the Military Cross in January, and Bar to the MC on 18 July. In the first case Temp Sub Lt Beak "led his men in the attack with great courage and initiative and materially assisted in the capture of the enemy line. He set a fine example throughout." He won the Bar as an Acting Lt Cdr for "conspicuous gallantry during operations, when he continually dashed forward, under heavy fire, to reorganize the men, and led them on with great bravery through the enemy barrage and machine-gun fire." Later in 1917 Beak attended a Senior Officers Course at Aldershot, and on 31 December was promoted temporary commander and took command of Howe Battalion. In 1918 Beak

swapped units, commanding Howe, Anson and Drake Battalions at various times, being Mentioned in Despatches (MiD) on 20 May then winning the Distinguished Service Order on 26 July for organising and commanding a rearguard action in a "difficult situation" that allowed two brigades to withdraw to safety after a flanking night attack by the Germans. After a bout of flu and a short period of home leave, Beak returned to the Western Front on 10 August to lead his men on dangerous missions to capture enemy positions under heavy fire on one occasion having been struck a glancing blow by shrapnel. His exploits earned him the highest military honour, the Victoria Cross. Beak's citation states the award was for "most conspicuous bravery, courageous leadership and devotion to duty during a prolonged period of operations. He led his men in attack, and, despite heavy machine-gun fire, four enemy positions were captured. His skilful and fearless leadership resulted in the complete success of this operation and enabled other battalions to reach their objectives. Four days later, though dazed by a shell fragment, in the absence of the brigade commander, he reorganised the whole brigade under extremely heavy gunfire and led his men with splendid courage to their objective. An attack having been held up, he rushed forward, accompanied by only one runner, and succeeded in breaking up a nest of machine guns, personally bringing back nine or ten prisoners. His fearless example instilled courage and confidence in his men, who then quickly resumed

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King George V presents the Victoria Cross to Temporary Cdr Daniel Beak at Valenciennes. See 15 November. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: IWM (Q 9759)

the advance under his leadership. On a subsequent occasion he displayed great courage and powers of leadership in attack, and his initiative, coupled with the confidence with which he inspired all ranks, not only enabled his own and a neighbouring unit to advance, but contributed very materially to the success of the Naval Division in these operations." Beak still had time to add a further MiD before the end of the war, and he returned home in May 1919, being demobbed the following month. Beak transferred to the Army in 1921 when he gained a regular commission with the Royal Scots Fusiliers as a captain. He served in France and North Africa during World War 2, gaining a further MiD which was gazetted on 20 December 1940. He retired on 19 February 1945 with the honorary rank of major general, and died on 3 May 1967 at the age of 76; he is buried in an unmarked grave at the London Necropolis, also known as Brookwood Cemetery, near Woking in Surrey.

16 November 1967

HMS Norfolk, the eighth and last County-class guided missile destroyer, was launched at Swan Hunter on the Tyne on 16 November 1967. The 6,200-ton ship was built at a time of political flux and rapidly evolving technology, with a shrinking Navy, and for a cruiser-sized ship her armament was initially underwhelming – two twin 4.5in gun turrets, two 20mm Oerlikons, two quad Sea Cat missile launchers and a twin Sea Slug launcher. However, in 1972 she was refitted and lost one of her turrets, which was replaced by four Exocet missile launchers, making her the first Royal Navy ship with three separate missile systems, though the

supposedly improved Sea Slug system fitted to her proved somewhat worse than the original iteration. The ship deployed far and wide, including the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, as well as NATO standing deployments in the Atlantic, but with money tight in the 1970s her command system was never upgraded to the level of her three Batch 2 sisters, and she was tasked as the Dartmouth Training Ship in 1981. The following year she was sold to Chile and renamed *Capitan Prat* after a prominent Chilean naval officer of the 19th Century. She was finally laid up on 24 February 2006 and decommissioned that summer. She sailed to Mexico to be scrapped in September 2008.

17 November 1917

HMS K1 was sunk by a British light cruiser on 17 November 1917 after the submarine collided with sister boat HMS K4 off the Danish coast. K1 was one of the so-called Kalamity Ks, ambitious steam-turbine powered Fleet submarines designed to be fast and seaworthy enough to work with the Grand Fleet but ultimately the technology was simply not good enough to sustain such vessels. Displacing a colossal 2,600 tons submerged, K1 was launched at Portsmouth on 14 November 1916 – a massive advance in just 15 years on the 107-ton Holland 1. K1 was on patrol on the afternoon of 18 November in a line of K-boats (K3, K4 and K7) led by the scout cruiser HMS Blonde when the flotilla was forced to make a sharp turn and, in the confusion, K1 and K4 collided. Her crew of 59 were taken off by boats from HMS Blonde and after a discussion about the viability of saving the submarine, it was decided. To sink it to prevent it

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County-class destroyer HMS Norfolk at Bremen in November 1970. See 16 November. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (HU 129911)



falling into German hands. Several 4in rounds from the cruiser sent K1 to the bottom at shortly after 1900. K1 certainly maintained the reputation of the class as unlucky, to put it mildly; of the 18 built, none was lost to enemy action but six were lost in accidents with heavy loss of life. K13 sank in January 1917 when a vent failed to close and her engine room flooded, while K4 and K17 both sank in the chaos known as the Battle of May Island on 31 January 1918, when a Fleet exercise resulted in the loss of the two boats with all hands and considerable damage to three more. A year earlier K4 had run aground at Walney Island in the Irish Sea. K5 was lost in unknown circumstances during exercises in the Bay of Biscay on 20 January 1921; K15 sank at her berth in Portsmouth through hydraulic pressure loss which opened sea valves, and K16 and K12 both sank in Gareloch, though both were recovered in a matter of hours. Part of the problem was the sheer size of the boats – at 103m long they were longer than many contemporary destroyers, they were difficult to handle and trim, and they had a nominal maximum diving depth of just over 60m, considerably less than their overall length. In addition, when operating on the surface they were powered by conventional steam engines, and in order to dive there were hundreds of valves, hatches and holes that needed to be closed and sealed in order to make a K-boat watertight, to say nothing of damping down the fires and lowering the two funnels. The submarines were operated on a volunteer-only basis as their reputation tended to have a negative effect on the morale of their crews.

18 November 1861

Clown-class wooden screw gunboat HMS Kestrel defeated a superior force of Chinese pirates and dismantled their guns in their shore battery at Ching Keang, Chu san, on 18 November 1861. The 12-strong Clown class were 'Crimean gunboats'. A development of the Cheerful class, though they never made it to that conflict as the Crimean War was over by the time the first of the class were being commissioned. The wooden-hulled ships had both sail and steam propulsion, and were of particularly shallow draught – 1.2m or around 4ft – to allow them close inshore to carry out bombardment of targets ashore using their two cannon, one a 68pdr, the other a 32pdr. Kestrel was launched on 26 May 1856 at the William Cowley Miller yard in Liverpool, and on commissioning was sent to the Far East. On 25 June 1859 she took part in the Second Battle of Taku Forts, an Anglo-French venture during the Second Opium War, taking heavy damage and almost sinking in the Hai River, though she was recovered and put back into service. Her tangle

with Chinese pirates at Chu san (now Zhousan) on 18 November 1861 when she was stationed at nearby Ningbo, was not the first – in the early autumn of 1860 Kestrel, assisted by a French gunboat, took on dozens of junks and killed around 200 pirates, with two of the ringleaders (both European) being captured and sent to Hong Kong for trial. Kestrel's Commanding Officer, Lt Henry Huxham, was wounded in the incident. In December 1861 rebel (Taiping) troops attacked Ningbo, forcing Kestrel to leave the station, but the gunboat was back the following year when the eastern Chinese city was retaken in May 1862; her sailors were in the thick of the action, at one point swinging a pontoon bridge open while under fire, and Kestrel was reportedly hit almost 70 times. In 1863 Kestrel was switched to Japan, where she was tasked with guarding the port of Yokohama, and it was in that city that the gunboat was sold in March 1866 to the Japanese-based Anglo-Scottish merchants Glover and Co, although they later sold her on to Japanese owners, possibly the Japanese navy.

19 November 1693

Bomb vessel HMS Vesuvius exploded during an assault on St Malo harbour, France, causing considerable damage, on 19 November 1693. Vesuvius was part of a flotilla assembled under John Benbow and Royal Navy ordnance engineer Capt Thomas Phillips for an attack on St Malo during the Nine Years War between France and the Grand Alliance of the English, Scots, Dutch, the Spanish, the Holy Roman Empire and the State of Savoy. Benbow had by that time established himself as an exceptional sailor, an expert at pilotage and navigation who regularly took the role of master of a war fleet. Benbow had also spent seven years in the merchant navy, where he took the opportunity to display his skill and bravery; as Master of the Malaga Merchant he and his crew fought off an attack by Barbary pirates, allegedly preserving the heads of 13 of them to produce to magistrates at Cadiz for a reward. Having spent some years on the administration side of naval matters, including the role of Master Attendant at Deptford and (briefly) at Portsmouth to manage repairs to the Fleet, Benbow was back at sea in September 1693 at the head of the Naval squadron that included 12 warships, a flotilla of four bomb vessels and ten brigantines which he skilfully guided through the rocks and sandbanks that littered the coast off St Malo. Several weeks beforehand Capt Phillips had carried out reconnaissance missions in the Channel Islands and at St Malo which was a centre of French privateer activity. Benbow, at that time a Commodore aboard the 50-gun 4th rate HMS Norwich, began his

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attack on 16 November with a bombardment that lasted three days, with the ships lobbing up to 70 bombs each day onto the town, directed by Phillips. On 19 November Phillips took the 300-ton galliot (small galley) *Vesuvius*, which was packed with explosives, towards the harbour, intending to detonate it close to the town. However, *Vesuvius* ran aground on rocks some 50 metres or so short of her target and exploded; contemporary reports talk of the town being shaken as if by an earthquake, blowing the roofs off some 300 houses, breaking all the windows for many miles around and setting off numerous fires. A large section of the sea wall was also destroyed and an outer fort captured, yielding 80 prisoners and 60 guns, while 30 privateers and numerous merchant ships were burned in and around the harbour. It would seem that Capt Phillips was seriously injured in the venture – although he returned to Benbow's fleet he died three days later on board HMS *Norwich* as the ship lay at Guernsey Road in the Channel Islands. Benbow went on to prepare a similar attack on Dunkirk the following year, which was unsuccessful, and on Granville on 8 July 1695, which set the town on fire. Benbow's bold inshore actions with his bomb vessels had helped get him promoted to Rear Admiral by this time, and he spent the next couple of years commanding squadrons which protected English maritime trade. 1698 saw him appointed to tackle piracy in the Caribbean and up the east coast of North America, which morphed into a campaign against the French in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14). In July 1702 Benbow led a squadron seeking a French fleet under Admiral Jean-Baptiste du Casse, which Benbow feared would attack English and Dutch shipping. The two fleets finally came together on 9 August 1702 and a protracted six-day chase ensued, during which Benbow (whose leg was broken by chain shot) was less than pleased with the effort put in by several of his captains. Six of the captains petitioned Benbow to cease the chase, citing fatigue amongst the men, lack of ammunition and battle damage, and on returning to Jamaica Benbow had the captains arrested for cowardice (perhaps spurred on by a letter from du Casse that spoke of his expectation to be defeated by Benbow and condemning the "cowardly captains who deserted you." One man died before the courts-martial could be held, but two were sentenced to be shot and three others cashiered. Two of the three quickly had their sentences remitted for their bravery, the third man (who was also accused of drunkenness)

was imprisoned until he was pardoned by Queen Anne in 1704, while the two men sentenced to death were shot on the frigate HMS *Bristol* in Plymouth on 16 April 1703. Benbow did not live to see the sentence carried out – he died at Port Royal in Jamaica on 4 November 1702 as a result of complications from his broken leg. His legacy lives on both within the Royal Navy and outside – three warships have been named after 'brave Benbow' as well as numerous buildings and units (including one of the battalions of the Royal Naval Brigade during World War 1) while there are several Admiral Benbow pubs around the country and overseas that are believed to have been named in his honour (though they could equally have taken their cue from the imaginary Admiral Benbow Inn featured in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island*).

20 November 1939

Armed Merchant Cruiser (AMC) HMS *Chitral* intercepted German merchant ship *Bertha Fisser* on 20 November 1939 off Iceland. *Chitral* was originally launched on 27 January 1925 as the 15,250-ton P&O passenger liner *SS Chitral* for Australian services, though from the early 1930s onwards she was increasingly used on Far East routes (on one occasion, in 1933, she carried the dismantled gunboat HMS *Sandpiper* from Southampton to Shanghai for use on the Yangtze River). At the end of August 1939 *Chitral* was requisitioned by the Admiralty and converted in Glasgow by her original builders, Alexander Stephen and Sons, for service as an armed merchant cruiser; her aft funnel was removed and she was fitted with seven 6in guns and two 3in guns. *Chitral* was working up out of Scapa Flow when battleship HMS *Royal Oak* was torpedoed in October 1939. On 20 November the same year she was on the Northern Patrol when she intercepted German freighter *Bertha Fisser* to the south-east of Iceland. Before the British ship could capture the merchantmen her German crew scuttled her – though the capture yielded vital information about two German commerce raiders, *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*, that were approaching. Three days later *Chitral* rescued ten men from the P&O AMC *Rawalpindi*, which had been sunk by the enemy battle cruisers. *Chitral* made three trooping runs to Iceland in 1940, and rescued more sailors from another lost AMC, HMS *Jervis Bay*, before being switched to the East Indies Fleet, where she spent two years escorting trooping convoys on the east coast of Africa. In early 1944 she

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sailed to Baltimore in the United States, where she was converted to a troopship, and on 14 September that year made her first voyage from New York to Liverpool carrying American troops. Chitral was returned to P&O on 17 September 1947 and the following year she was back on the Australia route, this time carrying up to 740 emigrants in very basic accommodation – her pre-war configuration had seen her carry just over 200 in First Class and just over 100 in Second Class. Her last voyage to Australia, in early 1953, was plagued by mechanical problems; she arrived back in London on 22 March 1953 and was sold within a fortnight to the British Iron and Steel Corporation for scrap.

21 November 1914

Three Royal Naval Air Service Avro 504 biplanes flew from Belfort on the Franco-Swiss border to attack the German Zeppelin factory at Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance on 21 November 1914. At the start of the war the Zeppelin was seen as a huge problem – the rudimentary aircraft of the day could barely touch it, its range and endurance made it an effective reconnaissance platform and it was seen as a massive threat when used in bombing raids. With little chance of success against the monsters in the air, the only hope was to destroy them on the ground, and one of the first campaigns of the war was against the Zeppelin bases and factories. Early strikes at airship bases in Cologne and Dusseldorf were inconclusive, so a raid on the main factory at Friedrichshafen in southern Germany, on the shore of Lake Constance, was planned. It fell to Royal Navy aviators to carry out the task, as they flew the more suitable aircraft than their Army colleagues, who were more concerned with aerial reconnaissance in the early part of the conflict. Reconnaissance for the raid was carried out partly through visits to neutral Switzerland, from where the Zeppelin works could be seen across the lake, and Belfort – a French airship station – was chosen as it was the closest suitable location to the works, being 125 miles away. Aircraft were procured specifically for the mission – the Royal Naval Air Service bought half-a-dozen Avro 504 light bombers from A V Roe, of which four were boxed and transported to eastern France by train as Belfort had

no conventional runway. The 5045 turned out to be a good choice – the sturdy and capable little machine became the most commonly-used military aircraft of the Great War, with more than 11,000 variants being built worldwide between 1913 and 1932, though they were hardly formidable machines, ambling along at just 80mph and taking a leisurely 15 minutes to climb to 10,000ft; they spent most of their later years as trainers having been superseded by better-performing machines. For the Friedrichshafen raid the two-seater biplanes were flown by just the pilot, allowing for a greater fuel load as well as four 20lb bombs carried on tailor-made bomb racks. Using one of the airship sheds at Belfort, the small team included assemblers, engineers and – reportedly – Roy Chadwick, a leading young designer and draughtsman at Avro who went on to design the Lancaster bomber, amongst others. They travelled by sea from Southampton to Le Havre shrouded in secrecy, continuing by train to Belfort, where they arrived on 13 November 1914. The aircraft were assembled over the following couple of days, with the team confined to the shed where the work was carried out – not the most enticing of billets in a central European winter. With no runway to use, the team had to clear the most promising strip of rough ground, removing rocks and even fencing, though damage to one of the aircraft (number 179) while taxiing prevented further trials. The pilots also received training in releasing bombs and flying the aircraft – none of them had even handled the machines before, nor carried out a bombing mission. The raid took place on 21 November simply because the weather had cleared sufficiently to allow the aircraft to take off. All four Avros were readied, and because of the shortness of the runway and the load of fuel and bombs, each was held back by the ground crew until the engine was at full power, creating a makeshift catapult effect. First up at just after 1000 was Flt Cdr Edward Featherstone Briggs in number 873, followed three minutes later by Flt Cdr John Babington in number 875, Flt Lt Sidney Sippe in number 874, and finally Flt Cdr Roland Cannon in the repaired number 179, though this aircraft failed to get airborne and suffered further damage, reducing the mission to three aircraft. There was little chance of

Three Avro 504s on the ground at Belfort, France, shortly before setting out for the raid on the Zeppelin sheds at Friedrichshafen. From left, No 873, flown by Flt Cdr Edward Briggs; No 875, flown by Flt Cdr John Babington and No 874, flown by Flt Lt Sidney Sippe. See 21 November. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (Q 73780)

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the three flying a co-ordinated attack as the Gnome engines could not be throttled back – they just ran at full power, so formation flying was beyond the planes' capabilities. The mission remained something of a mystery – none of the three had seen their target or knew what it looked like, but they had been assured that if they spotted large sheds beside a large lake they would be pretty safe to assume that was the target. In bright sunny weather, and strong winds, the aircraft headed north-east for around an hour then turned south-east for the final 40 minutes or so. Briggs was the first to attack the sheds, but having dropped his bombs his 504 was struck by ground fire, damaging the fuel tank and causing him a head injury. He managed to glide in to land close to the Zeppelin sheds, where he was captured and taken to hospital. Sippe was next, dropping one bomb from 700ft onto anti-aircraft guns before putting the next two onto the cluster of sheds. The final bomb could not be released; he attempted to drop it on a nearby floatplane facility but gave up and headed back to Belfort, arriving in the early afternoon. The final assault was by Babington, who arrived some time after his colleagues as his aircraft engine was struggling and he could not climb higher than 4,000ft, which made his crossing of the Black Forest mountains somewhat risky. Having delivered his bombs, he attempted to retrace his route back to base (the French had demanded the aviators carried no maps) but lost his way and, running low on fuel, landed to ascertain his whereabouts. By good fortune he was back in France, and a friendly farmer allowed him to use his telephone to arrange to be picked up by the Belfort team, some 20 miles to the north-east. The Naval party rapidly packed up and the following day left for England where they were greeted as heroes. All three pilots were awarded the Distinguished Service Order and the French Legion of Honour. Briggs, who was a prisoner of war, managed to escape later in the war. The success of the raid is open to debate. British reports claim one airship destroyed, damage to the sheds and the demolition of a vital hydrogen-production plant. The Germans, who had been warned in a phone call of the approaching planes, speak of a damaged house (killing one), a broken window and damaged door, and a few craters in nearby fields. One bomb fell very close to an inflated Zeppelin, but it escaped damage. But the raid boosted morale back home, laid some ground rules for

the very new art of strategic bombing, and forced the Germans to divert some of their airship production to a new site in the east of the country.

22 November 1916

Submarine HMS E30 was lost to a mine in the North Sea on 22 November 1916. The submarine, which displaced 820 tons when submerged, was launched at Armstrong Whitworth on Tyneside on 29 June 1915 and commissioned in November that year. She began service life with the 11th Submarine Flotilla, based at Blyth in Northumberland, patrolling the Danish and Norwegian North Sea coasts. She caught a blockade runner in March 1916, but was forced to cut short a patrol and head back to Blyth on 7 April when explosions in batteries number 1, 2 and 3 on board killed four sailors. In May she sank a German freighter which had been abandoned by its crew, and at the start of June, after a Norwegian patrol, she was fired on by two cruisers returning from the Battle of Jutland; although HMS Minotaur claimed a kill, E30 returned safely to Blyth. Her exact fate is unknown, but it is believed she struck a mine near Orfordness in Suffolk on 22 November in a new, previously unknown minefield, sinking with all 30 hands.

23 November 1780

Frigate HMS Hussar ran onto rocks at Hell Gate on the East River in New York on 23 November 1780 and sank within minutes. Hussar was a 28-gun 6th rate frigate which was launched at the Thomas Inwood yard on Rotherhithe on 26 August 1776 and completed at Deptford Dockyard later that year. Her early service included cruising off the west coast of Ireland before serving on the North American side of the Atlantic. She was refitted at Woolwich on the Thames in the mid-1770s then returned to North America, carrying dispatches and undertaking patrols on the eastern seaboard. On 20 November 1779 Hussar captured the Spanish ship-of-the-line Nuestra Señora del Buen Confeso, though the Spaniard was on cargo duties at the time and lightly armed. With French and American troops approaching New York from the north in mid-1780 the British fleet moved south and a depot was set up at an anchorage on the eastern tip of Long Island. On 23 November 1780 23-year-old Capt Charles Pole – later to achieve the rank of Admiral of the Fleet – opted to sail from his anchorage in the East River through the notorious shoals of Hell Gate tidal narrows between Manhattan and Long Island, despite the local pilot's misgivings. As they approached Long Island Sound the frigate was carried onto Pot Rock and holed. Pole could not run the frigate onto a nearby shoal and she sank in around 30 metres of water. Rumours of gold being carried on the ship prompted several salvage attempts over the subsequent decades, though no such sunken treasure was ever found. However, a 9pdr cannon from the ship had been kept in the Central Park Conservancy of New York, and when conservationists attempted to

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The exposed bridge on HMS Unshaken. See 25 November. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (FL 20454)

clean rust from it in January 2013 they discovered that the cannon was still loaded with gunpowder, wadding and cannonball. Bomb disposal experts removed almost 2lb of live gunpowder from the weapon. Hussar was just one of many ships that fell foul of Hell Gate, and in the 19th Century a series of controlled explosions were used to demolish the most dangerous shallows and rocks, beginning with Pot Rock in mid-century. Incidentally, Hell Gate took its name from 'hellegat', the Dutch name for the East River (which is a tidal channel and not a river at all). 'Hellegat' could be translated as either 'clear opening' or 'bright strait', so nothing to do with the Underworld. However, given the hidden rocks, shallows and dangerous tidal currents, the English corruption to 'Hell Gate' seemed quite appropriate and became the established name.

24 November 1807

Brig Ann fought ten Spanish gunboats off Tarifa on 24 November 1807, taking three of them. Ann was a hired armed brig carrying ten 12pdr carronades which was taken up by the Royal Navy on 21 May 1804 in a deal which proved to be a considerable success. Ann was in company with brig-sloop HMS Cruizer in June 1804 when the latter captured the new French privateer Contre Amiral Magon, which had already herself captured several ships on her first cruise, including three English merchantmen; although two of these ships had already docked in France their crews were set free. Several more privateers and French merchant ships were captured over the subsequent year or so, with Ann being solely responsible for the seizure of Spanish privateer lugger Vensejo on 20 November 1807. That ship was retained in company with Ann as she continued on her way, and it was while the ships

were sailing off Tarifa Island in the Straits of Gibraltar that they spotted ten gunboats approaching on the morning of 24 November. As it rowed closer to Ann the lead gunboat raised the Spanish flag and opened fire, quickly followed by two more. With light winds preventing an escape, the British ships joined battle at something of a disadvantage – the lugger Vensejo was only manned by a small prize crew of nine men while Ann herself had a reduced crew of 30, outnumbered by prisoners, and was carrying dispatches. With three of her crew dead, Vensejo surrendered after about 90 minutes, but Ann continued to fight the gunboats, causing two to surrender and dismasting a third. The brig then turned her fire on five gunboats that had captured Vensejo, using her sweeps (oars) to reposition herself in the light winds and bringing her guns to bear. Early in the afternoon, after a four-hour action, the gunboats made off with Vensejo; Ann suffered little damage and no casualties but was in no position to pursue them. McKenzie and his crew were recognised for their bravery and fortitude with the award in 1847 of a Naval General Service Medal, with a clasp bearing the ship's name and the date of the action, though not a single person stepped forward to claim it. The award recognised the fact that Ann's crew of 30 had for four hours managed to fight off an attack and attempted boarding by the gunboats, several of which would have carried up to 60 men and four guns – collectively vastly outnumbering and outgunning Ann. Ann's service for the Royal Navy ended on 28 July 1809.

25 November 1942

Submarine HMS Unshaken lost her Commanding Officer, her Yeoman of Signals and an AB off the bridge in heavy weather off Gibraltar on 25 November 1942.

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HMS Bulwark. See 26 November. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © Image: IWM (Q 74916)



The Barrow-built U-class submarine was launched by Vickers Armstrong on 17 February 1942 and initially patrolled the coast of Norway, spotting the German raising force (including the battleship Tirpitz) that put to sea to attack Convoy PQ 17. Her report, along with those of a Russian submarine and a patrol aircraft, alerted the Germans to the fact they had been spotted, and the surface raiders were recalled to port, and while PQ 17 lost more than half of its 40 ships, it could have been much worse had Tirpitz and the heavy cruisers attacked. In October 1942 Unshaken was switched to the Mediterranean where she sank several ships, including an Italian torpedo boat, and had a narrow miss when a Polish submarine mistook her for a German and fired four torpedoes, all of which missed. In the late afternoon of 25 November 1942, just weeks after taking part in the Torch landings in North Africa, the boat was in a stormy Gulf of Lyons when she surfaced to take a navigational fix. Three men climbed to the bridge atop the fin but the submarine slipped below the waves to a depth of around 30ft, washing the three overboard – the Commanding Officer, Lt Charles Oxborrow, Yeoman of Signals Sydney Bennett and AB Charles Thorn, who were lost in the rough seas and drowned. 26-year-old Lt Oxborrow, who only passed the Submarine Commanding Officers Qualifying Course in January 1942 and took command of Unshaken in June, had already distinguished himself while serving in other submarines, including HMS H33 and HMS Utmost (as First Lieutenant), winning the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC). The submarine continued to enjoy moderate success in the Mediterranean and survived the war. She was scrapped in Troon, Scotland, in March 1946.

26 November 1914

Pre-dreadnought battleship HMS Bulwark of the 5th Battle Squadron, Channel Fleet, blew up in an ammunition explosion off Sheerness with the loss of most of her ship's company of more than 750 men. Bulwark (16,220 tons) was launched at Devonport Dockyard on 18 October 1899 and completed in 1902. She began service life as the flagship of the Mediterranean Fleet, then served the same role with the Channel and Home Fleets. At one point, in 1908, Bulwark's Commanding Officer was Capt Robert Falcon Scott, the polar explorer. The battleship was mainly held in reserve or in refit between 1910 and 1914, but with the declaration of war she became part of the Channel Fleet, with one of her first (and, as it turned out, last) roles being the protection of the British Expeditionary Force as it crossed the Channel to fight the German army in Belgium and France. Shortly before 0800 on 26 November 1914 Bulwark was moored four miles west of Sheerness in Kethole Reach, part of the estuary of the River Medway, when she was blown apart by an explosion. Only 12 or so ratings of the 800 men on board survived, and only 30 bodies were ever recovered. Amongst the victims were members of the HMS Excellent band, which was playing on board at the time. A Board of Enquiry surmised that 30 cordite charges left temporarily in cross passages may have been placed against a boiler room bulkhead which had heated up when the boilers were fired up, which caused them to detonate. This explosion in turn set off dozens of nearby 6in and

12pdr shells, which finally caused the aft 12in magazine to explode. Boats from other nearby ships and from ashore hurried out to help, but few survivors were found amongst the mass of floating debris and mutilated bodies, and most of them were seriously injured, though there was the occasional tale of a miraculous escape, such as the sailor blown through a hatch high into the air who landed clear of debris and trod water until he was rescued. Witnesses on the nearby HMS Implacable spoke of the final explosion shaking their battleship from masthead to keel, while fragments of papers and personal items scattered across the town of Sheerness. Divers who went down to the wreck three days later found the ship's bows had been blown off, but the bulk of the ship had been obliterated, with no recognisable elements to be seen. One of her 12in guns was found a month later some considerable distance from the wreck.

27 November 1923

The Special Service Squadron sailed from Devonport on 27 November 1923 on the ten-month 'Empire Cruise'. Led by battlecruisers HMS Hood, flying the flag of Vice Admiral Sir Frederick Field and HMS Repulse, accompanied by the 1st Light Cruiser Squadron (HM Ships Danae, Dauntless, Delhi, Dragon and Dunedin), the flotilla steamed south to the first port of call, Freetown in Sierra Leone, making the most of the time at sea to exercise various departments of the ships and clean and paint them ready for the first of numerous open days. The ships refuelled and topped up stores in Freetown – in the case of Hood, it took more than 2,000 tons of fuel oil, around 4,000lbs of fresh meat and more than 8,200lbs of fresh vegetables. With an average speed of 15kts the squadron pressed on to Cape Town, holding Crossing the Line ceremonies on 14 December and reaching the South African port just before Christmas. Visitors were welcomed on board for six or seven days, and a Squadron Ball was held on Boxing Day. The squadron departed Cape Town on 3 January 1924 with East London and Durban being brief ports of call en route to Zanzibar, which the squadron reached on 12 January for a five-day visit with ships open to the public once again. After the by-now standard whirl of visits, civic events and Naval housekeeping the flotilla headed east on a nine-day passage to Trincomalee in what is now Sri Lanka, where the public events were slightly reined back during their six days alongside. The next five-day passage brought the warships to Port Swettenham in Malaysia, where the British sailors had to endure extremely high temperatures and the squadron suffered its first death – AB Walter Benger of HMS Hood died of malaria, and was buried in a nearby cemetery. The next leg of the cruise was relatively short, bringing the ships to Singapore the day after they left Port Swettenham, and here the men of the Squadron were again granted leave, allowing them to join excursions while their shipmates carried out a maintenance programme before the 11-day crossing to Australia. Sailing from Singapore on 17 February, the Special Squadron called in very briefly at Christmas Island, then continued on to Fremantle in Australia, encountering a period of exceptionally rough seas on the way. Australia and New Zealand merited a special cruise of their own, with the squadron spending almost three months Down Under, and it was arguably here

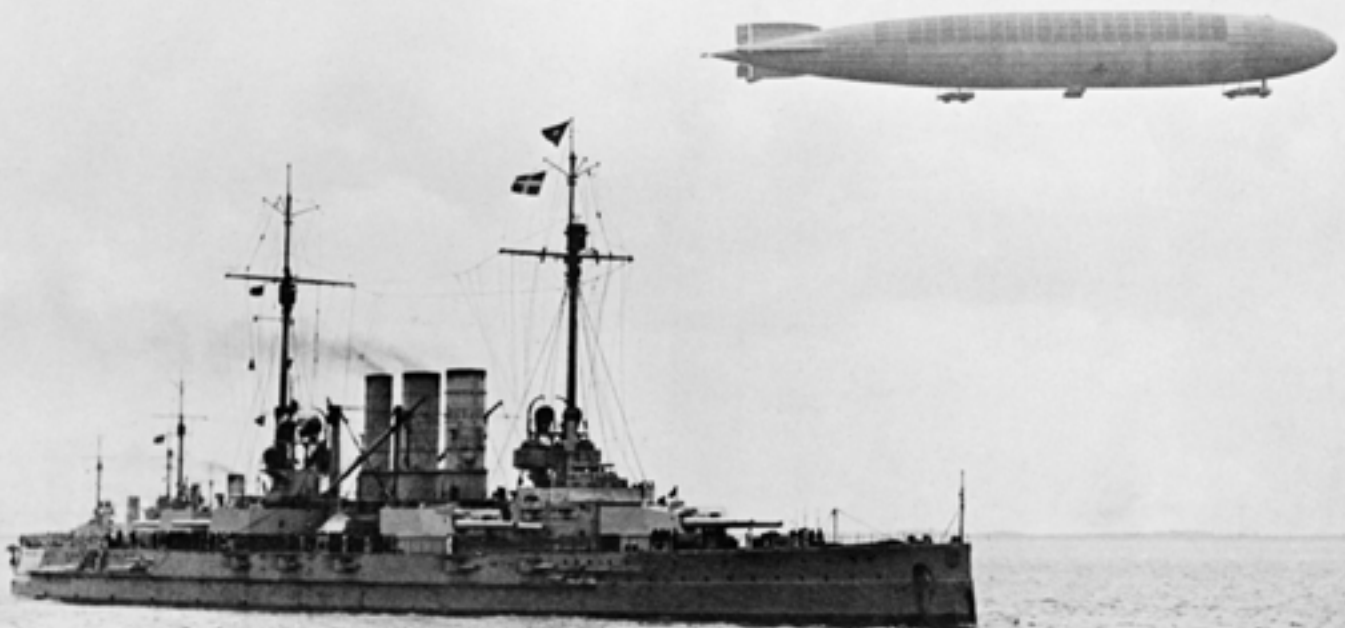
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that the greatest response from the public was seen – in Melbourne extra tram and train services were arranged to meet public demand to view the ships, and even late-night services had to be bolstered as the crowds gathered to watch the searchlight displays. It was also Down Under that the real sporting clashes were staged – top Naval boxers had been drafted onto Repulse's books to provide a decent challenge to Aussie fighters, while the squadron also had a fair sprinkling of Navy representative footballers. It began on arrival in Fremantle/Perth on 27 February, continuing with Albany and Adelaide, with around four days in each, then Melbourne and Hobart for eight days each. A brief stop at Jervis Bay allowed the ships to prepare for an 11-day visit to Sydney for an extensive programme of civic, cultural and sporting events as well as more open days for visitors and the chance for British sailors to explore that part of New South Wales. The squadron was joined by Australian cruiser HMAS Adelaide for the next part of the cruise, which began at Wellington, New Zealand on 24 April with the start of a fortnight's visit. The squadron's arrival in New Zealand also presented the opportunity for one of the cruisers, HMS Dunedin, to be formally transferred to the Kiwis. Hood briefly called in at Napier while the squadron was en route to Auckland for a nine-day sojourn when all the ships welcomed members of the public on board. The group bid farewell to the Land of the Long White Cloud on 18 May and struck

out into the South Pacific, spending a week at Suva in Fiji before continuing north on a ten-day passage to Hawaii, calling briefly at Apia in Western Samoa en route. The first taste of American life was a little soured by the strict adherence to Prohibition laws and a consequent lack of alcohol on runs ashore (and the fact that Hood's cricket team was beaten by a scratch team of baseball players) but after a week in Honolulu there was another ten days at sea before the squadron was back in the more familiar surroundings of the British Empire, specifically two weeks in Victoria and Vancouver in British Columbia. A three-day voyage back south brought the warships to San Francisco for five days and on 'at home' status for Britons in the region, before the set off on the longest passage of the cruise – almost two weeks at sea en route to Balboa in Panama, by which time the two battlecruisers had separated from the cruiser squadron, with the former heading for the Panama Canal while the smaller ships continued to travel south along the west coast of South America. The canal was quite a tight fit for the British warships, but they emerged unscathed and continued north to Kingston, Jamaica for a five-day visit before continuing to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where they arrived on 5 August at the start of an 11-day stay. Meanwhile the cruisers had made an even longer haul down to Magdalena Bay in Mexico before continuing to Callao in Peru, Valparaiso and Talcahuano in Chile and on through the Strait of Magellan to Punta Arenas, the

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German naval airship L31 flying over dreadnought SMS Ostfriesland. See 28 November. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (Q 58459)



Falkland Islands, Bahia Blanca and Buenos Aires in Argentina, Montevideo in Uruguay and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil before crossing the Atlantic to the Cape Verde Islands. The two battlecruisers rounded off their cruise with two weeks in Quebec in Canada and a fortnight in Topsail Bay, Newfoundland, before they set out for home on 21 September. The two forces then rendezvoused off the Lizard and arrived together at Devonport on 29 September. The distances steamed by different ships varied, but as an example HMS Hood alone logged more than 38,000 miles, and welcomed more than 750,000 visitors on board. The cruise was deemed a resounding success by both the Admiralty and the British government; it demonstrated that the Royal Navy was still the premier navy, capable of reaching around the globe, while it also served to emphasize the unity and value of the British Empire – the Commonwealth was still a couple of years away – and confirm the strong ties between nations which had fought side-by-side in the Great War.

28 November 1916

German naval airship LZ-61 (tactical number L-21) was shot down over the East Coast of England, eight miles off Lowestoft. L-21 took part in ten raids and 17 reconnaissance missions over England, killing dozens of people including more than 30 civilians in Wednesbury and Walsall in the Midlands and 31 soldiers billeted in a church hall in Cleethorpes. On 27 November 1916 L-21 was part of a force of ten Zeppelins that set out in two squadrons to bomb the North of England and the Midlands, with L-21 specifically targeting Leeds, but air defences proved too strong, and with Barnsley blacked out the airship turned left and bombed industrial sites in the Potteries, damaging buildings but causing no casualties. At 0130 on 28 November it turned for home on a course that would take it over Great Yarmouth; en route it managed to evade two Royal Naval Air Service aircraft near Peterborough and a third near East Dereham, which was forced to break off an attack when it suffered engine problems. However, reports of its progress and course were relayed to Great Yarmouth, and at first light two RNAS BE 2c single seat fighters took off from South Denes with Flt Lt Egbert 'Bertie' Cadbury and Flt Sub Lt Gerard Fane at the controls, they were later joined by Flt Sub Lt Edward Pulling from RNAS Bacton, an airfield built to intercept Zeppelins. Cadbury spotted the airship first and began pursuing it, causing it to ascend from 5,000ft to 8,000ft. He attacked from below and emptied four drums of explosive ammunition into the stern of L-21, immediately setting it on fire. One of the other pilots flew above the airship but did not attack as the Zeppelin was clearly doomed, and spiralled down into the North Sea around eight miles off Great Yarmouth. Pulling received the Distinguished Service Order for his part, while Cadbury and Fane received the Distinguished Service Cross. Cadbury later reported that he could feel no joy at his success, describing it as "a most horrible sight" when it went down. Cadbury, who shared the pacifist views of his confectioner family, had left his studies at Cambridge to volunteer for the Royal Navy, switching from sea service to aviation in 1915 after flying lessons at Hendon. While he was stationed at South Denes one of his ground crew was the celebrated World War 1 veteran Henry Allingham, who died in 2009 at the



Flt Sub Lt Bertie Cadbury. See 28 November. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (Q 60791)

age of 113 and was for a month the oldest living man in the world; he is also the second-oldest military veteran ever, and the 12th oldest man on record. Cadbury went on to shoot down another Zeppelin on 6 August 1918 (having beaten another pilot by just seconds in a foot race to the only aircraft available), earning himself a Distinguished Flying Cross, though he had been recommended for a Victoria Cross for attacking two airships so far out at sea in bad weather in a land-based aircraft. After the war he returned to the confectionery business, rising to Managing Director of J S Fry and Sons, which merged with Cadbury's in 1918, and taking on numerous civic and honorary duties which resulted in a knighthood. He died at the age of 73 in 1967.

29 November 1915

The Duchess of Hamilton paddle minesweeper struck a mine off Longsand in the Thames Estuary and sank on 29 November 1915. Duchess of Hamilton was a 550-ton steel paddle steamer built by Denny and Co of Dumbarton in 1890 for the Caledonian Steam Packet Co of Glasgow. A popular modern and spacious vessel, she began on the summer Isle of Arran services in the

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Firth of Clyde as the premier steamer on the Clyde, and after 1906 operated mainly from Gourrock as an excursion steamer as she was superseded by others in the CSP fleet. She was taken up by the Admiralty on 11 September 1915 as 'Auxiliary Patrol Paddler No 933' – one of more than 50 hired paddlers that served under the White Ensign during the war. She met her end on 29 November 1915 when she struck a mine off Longsand near Harwich, her base port at the time, killing nine of her crew. The mine was thought to have been recently laid by German minelayer submarine UC-3 which was responsible for sinking more than 20 ships and damaging two others. Ironically, UC-3 was sunk with all hands on 27 May 1916 in a minefield that had been laid by the Royal Navy off Zeebrugge in the North Sea while the boat was out on patrol and therefore unaware of the danger.

30 November 1916

Q-ship HMS Penshurst sank German submarine UB-19 in the Channel on 30 November 1916. Penshurst was built as a 1,200-ton cargo steamer built in 1906 by the Montrose Shipping Company, leading a very uneventful life until the outbreak of war. In 1915 she was claimed. By the Admiralty and sent to Orkney for conversion to a Special Service Vessel, otherwise known as a Q-ship. Such vessels are designed to look like an innocent merchant ship, enticing U-boats to approach close before revealing her true nature by dropping screens and false fittings to reveal five (later six) guns of up to 4in calibre and engaging with the submarine. Her duel with UB-19 on 30 November 1916 was the first of two such successful actions, and took place to the north of the Casquets rocks in the Channel Islands. Having served to the north of Scotland, in early 1916 she switched to Ireland and the Channel, without any success – the Germans had scaled back U-boat operations in British waters so there were few submarines to lure in. Then, as with the proverbial buses, two came along at once... On 29 November 1916 she spotted a U-boat attacking the freighter Wileyside. Penshurst got to within 3,000 yards before the U-boat commander ordered her to stop. The Q-ship went through a false abandon ship routine but the submarine would not approach any closer. Penshurst opened fire anyway, forcing the submarine to dive, and she dropped depth charges for good measure, but the submarine made good her escape. The following day, with her appearance altered by moving false screens and fittings, Penshurst came by the submarine UB-19 attacking another merchantman, the Ibex, north of the Channel Islands. While she was approaching a seaplane flew overhead and attacked the U-boat with bombs, forcing it to dive. When the pilot realised Penshurst's true nature he landed and offered to spot for the ship, but crashed on take-off. Penshurst stopped to pick up the crew,

which lured the submarine into a false sense of security. UB-19 surfaced and approached the Q-ship, to be met with deadly fire. The German sank, and the Commanding Officer of Penshurst, Cdr Francis Grenfell, was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. Less than two months later Penshurst repeated the trick, again in the Channel. On 14 January 1917 she encountered UB-37, which closed to 3,000 yards and opened fire. The Penshurst 'panic party' abandoned ship and Grenfell allowed the ship to slew broadside on to the submarine as it slowed, but the U-boat commander kept on her bow, firing at Penshurst and causing some damage and casualties. Eventually Penshurst returned fire, the accuracy of which quickly disabled the U-boat. As it sank Penshurst steamed over the spot and finished the doomed boat with depth-charges; there were no German survivors. The same routine almost worked on another unidentified submarine on 20 February, but on this occasion the German escaped. Two days later U-84 almost fell into Penshurst's trap, but again the U-boat was able to dive, although damaged, then surface some distance away and outrun Penshurst and the sloop HMS Alyssum, which had joined the hunt. An encounter with UB-32 on 30 March resulted in Penshurst taking considerable damage, and while the submarine made off the Q-ship had to be towed back to Portsmouth for repairs. On 2 July an unidentified U-boat took damage from Penshurst after attacking her with a torpedo and gunfire for 30 minutes, but despite the arrival of destroyers the German slipped away. Her next encounter, on 19 August, saw Penshurst hit by a torpedo, and although UC-72 approached the damaged ship the British gunners could not deliver a knock-out blow, and when destroyer HMS Leonidas turned up the U-boat dived and escaped. Penshurst once again limped into port for repairs and an upgrade to her armament, but it was to be in vain. On the morning of Christmas Eve 1917, while patrolling the southern Irish Sea, Penshurst encountered U-110, which struck the Q-ship with a torpedo, striking her engine room. The submarine remained underwater for two hours, studying her slowly sinking opponent, then surfaced and began firing her deck gun. Penshurst replied, but could only bring her guns to bear as she rolled. When further Royal Navy units approached in the afternoon U-110 retreated, having suffered little damage, but an attempt to tow Penshurst to safety failed when the Q-ship sank in mid-evening. Most of her crew were rescued, but two men died. Despite a relatively short life, Penshurst was one of the most successful Q-ships, sinking two U-boats and damaging several others in a total of 11 encounters; in general, Q-ships were a great concept but the reality was that far more Q-ships were sunk than German submarines destroyed.

➤ LONGCAST

2024 -25

10 Nov	Remembrance Ceremony at the Cenotaph, London
16 Nov	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting, hosted by Stowmarket branch
18 Jan 2025	4 Area AGM, Dorchester
8 Feb 2025	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting and AGM hosted by Cromer branch
28 Mar 2025	CONA meeting, Portsmouth
3 May 2025	Army v Navy rugby match, Twickenham
15-18 May 2025	Londonderry Battle of the Atlantic 80th Anniversary Commemoration
17 May 2025	4 Area meeting, St Austell
20-22 June 2025	RNA75 Annual Conference 2025, Portsmouth
14 Sept 2025	Biennial Parade, Whitehall
22 Oct 2025	Fisherman's Friends Concert, Portsmouth

Please check the **RNA website** and the RN **Shipmates.co.uk** website for a list of further events



www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

MORE OFFERS

Ship Anson pub, 10 The Hard, Portsea	10% off food and drink
Portsmouth Historic Dockyard	£20 for a day ticket 30% off annual Ultimate Explorer tickets
Royal Maritime Hotel 182 Queen Street	A 10% discount on food, selected drinks and hotel rooms
Sea Urchin's Gin Navy Strength Gin Arctic Convoy Vodka	10% to RNA from the sale of each bottle Don't forget to tick the box for RNA. P&P is free for orders over £40, otherwise it is £4.50.
China Fleet Country Club	Click on the link for offers for Serving and ex-Serving RN and RM
Trinity Insurance	For offers see https://tinyurl.com/ssy8vt5s



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Delegate to Annual Conference 2025 - PORTSMOUTH

Branch secretaries should note the following before submitting their application.

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 Branch Annual Report 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. 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.

Each Branch which 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.

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			
Delegate's e-mail			
Number of Observers if known			
Name of Branch Hon Secretary			

NB: A Delegate will not be confirmed as such unless or until the Branch Balance Sheet for 2024 and Branch Annual Report for 2024 have been received in RNA Central Office.

Should either not have been received in Central Office, the Delegate's Status will be deemed to be that of an Observer.

Branch Secretaries are to ensure that their nominated Delegate, receives the copies of the agenda and minutes of the previous years' AGM prior to representing their Branch at the AGM. Copies will be made available at the AGM, but sight of these prior to the day is considered essential. Branch Secretaries will be forwarded this paperwork from Central Office as soon as it is finalised.

Please forward the completed form to RNA Central Office, Lanyard House, Scott Road, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth, PO1 3LU or email to ams@rnassoc.org

To check ahead of Conference, please call Sara on 023 92 723747

PROPOSED MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

Proposals must reach The General Secretary by **1600 28 February 2025**

Name of Proposing Branch:

Motion / amendment

Explanation of the Motion / Amendment (To be included in the notes for Conference)

Hon Secretary(signed).....(dated)

Name of Seconding Branch:

Hon Secretary(signed).....(dated)

Notes

- a. A motion is submitted in the name of a Branch. Secretaries of proposing and seconding Branches are **certifying** that the motion or amendment reflects the view of the Branch meeting (not a committee); and that voting was conducted in accordance with Rule 20.
- b. A separate form is required for each Motion or Amendment
- c. A manuscript copy is acceptable for additional Motions or Amendments if the printed form is not available.
- d. The Motion or Amendment should be as short and precise as possible avoiding ambiguity. A Motion should normally start with the word 'THAT'
- e. The explanation is to assist the scrutiny of the Standing Orders Committee in understanding the intention behind the Motion so that they may be able to consider its presentation so it can be improved and implemented as soon as possible (Conference Bye Law C4)
- f. Motions may be submitted at any time but must reach the General Secretary by **28 February 2025**.
- g. Motions of Urgency should reach the General Secretary not less than 48 hours before Conference. (In accordance with Conference Bye Law C6.) and include an explanation about the urgency.
- h. Amendments to Motions should also normally reach the General Secretary not less than 7 days before Conference. The provision for the submission of amendments during Conference is in the Conference Bye-Laws.
- i. Bye-Laws. A Motion to Conference may propose that a Bye-Law be set aside or it may ask the Council to consider making or amending a Bye-Law.
- j. The Branch Proposing a Motion **must** have it Seconded by another Branch before forwarding it to the General Secretary. (Conference Bye Law C3a)

NOMINATION FORM
ELECTION OF MEMBERS AND DEPUTY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL 2025
(Revised RNA Bye-Law 7)

For the attention of All Branch Secretaries:

NCM in Areas 1, 6, 7, 8, 11, Scottish and DNCM in Areas 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, Scottish

Each Branch may nominate **one full or life member** from any Branch within its own Area, as a Candidate for election to the National Council, and **one full or life member** for election as the Deputy National Council Member **subject to the approval of the Branch to which both persons belong.**

Please note that our current governance construct means that National Council Members are automatically Trustees of the Royal Naval Association (Charity no: 266982). Nominees for NCM should therefore ensure that they are not in any way disbarred from holding a trusteeship. If unsure, please check the Charity Commission website.

Names of Nominees

NCM **DNCM**

Proposed by **Branch** **Area**

Address of Nominee

NCM.....

..... **e mail**

DNCM.....

..... **e mail**

Brief history of nominees in the Association. (Continue on separate sheet if necessary)

NCM-

DNCM -

Chairman (signed)(dated).....

Secretary..... (signed)(dated).....

If the Candidate is **not** a member the proposing Branch, this section is to be completed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Candidate's **own** Branch.

Candidate's Branch

We are aware of the above nomination.

Signature of Chairman (Candidate's Branch)

Signature of Secretary (Candidate's Branch)

Candidate

I accept the nomination and promise to attend as many National Council Meetings as is possible and to sit on any Committees to which I may be elected.

Signature of Candidate Dated

The envelope containing this completed form should be marked **NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL** and must reach RNA HQ no later than **1600 on 28 February 2025.**

Alternatively, you can scan the fully signed form and email it to ams@massoc.org

Nominations for Governance Standing Orders Committee 2025

For the attention of All Branch Secretaries

Applications are sought for the Governance Standing Orders Committee.

Each Branch may nominate **one member** as a candidate for election to the Standing Orders Committee, **subject to the approval of the Branch to which the candidate belongs.**

Applicants should be Full or Life members. A nil return is not required.

NAME OF NOMINEE

PROPOSED BY BRANCH

ADDRESS OF NOMINEE

.....

.....

E mail Post code

Brief history of nominee in the Association. Continue on separate sheet if necessary.

Chairman (signed).....(dated)

Secretary (signed).....(dated)

If the Candidate is **not** a member of the proposing Branch, this section must be completed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Candidate's **own** Branch.

Candidate's Branch

We support this Nomination.

Signature of Chairman (Candidate's Branch)

Signature of Secretary (Candidate's Branch)

Candidate - I accept this nomination and undertake to attend as many Standing Orders Committee Meetings as is possible.

Signature of Candidate

This form should be forwarded to Central Office to be received no later than **28 February 2025**
Nominations received after this date cannot be included in any Ballot required if more than two apply