



SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



A TIME TO WORK – AND PLAY

One of the high points of the RNA's 75th anniversary year saw hundreds of shipmates flock to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard for a packed programme of social events, ceremonies – and the pivotal element, the Annual General Meeting.

And that's how Conference Weekend will look for at least the next two years as delegates turned down the option to split the business element from the reunion, deciding that the present system should remain in place.

The AGM, held in Boathouse 5 on Saturday 21 June, attracted 81 delegates and dozens more observers, and they were served up a wide range of informative talks, updates on the Association, and a couple of talking points to debate.

The meeting was opened at 0930 by RNA National President Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, who invited the Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet, Rev Stephen Ashley-Emery, to say the opening prayers.

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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 1 August, and the deadline for material is 1000 on Wednesday 30 July. Branch Notes will next be published on Friday 11 July, and Semaphore Shorts on Friday 18 and 25 July.



Lord Mayor of Portsmouth Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, welcomed delegates, observers and officials to the city which he described as the home of the Royal Navy. He added that a new tradition had been started in recent years whereby a Naval sword is marched in to the annual Mayor Making ceremony, and that the incoming mayor must swear on it that he or she will support the Royal Navy – previously it was only the Army that had an official role in the ceremonies.

Cllr Vernon Jackson also pointed out that he had arranged for 500 seats to be bought for the city's pantomime in December which went to Royal Navy families where their Service person was deployed.

The Lord Mayor then had to make a rapid departure as he had to be in position at the city's Armed Forces Day event at 1000, leaving the microphone to the National President for his opening remarks.

Vice Admiral Potts thanked those at RNA Central Office who had taken on the planning and organisation for delivering this year's Conference.

He also welcomed S/M Peter Nicholls to the fold – Peter is taking over the role of National Treasurer from S/M Ian Irvin, and has already been assisting Central Office staff with particular financial matters.

Vice Admiral Potts also thanked MW Shipping Management for sponsoring lunch at the Conference.

After messages of support from our patron, King Charles III, and from members of the Motorhome Camping and Caravanning Sports and Comradeship Group, who had a gathering on Exmoor over Conference weekend, the National President invited Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Andrew Burns

to address Conference.

The senior Naval officer said it is a busy time for the Royal Navy, and that the quality and quantity of the Navy's output was a testament to the important role of the people within the organisation – and that he was confident that it would be able to tackle any challenges that lie ahead.

Vice Admiral Burns said that despite the tensions and conflicts around the world he did not feel that we are in a pre-war situation. The Royal Navy response was to remain ready and to continue to work alongside our allies, particularly the United States.

The admiral noted that our Continuous At Sea Deterrent – the Trident submarine force – was now in its 56th year, and while the character of maritime warfare has changed, the Royal Navy continues to play a significant role.

Vice Admiral Burns continued by declaring that the RNA was part of the maritime fabric of the nation, and offered congratulations on exceeding 24,000 members. He said the Association represents a vital connection for Naval families, and said he was delighted with the BRNC and HMS Raleigh mentorship programmes.

With no changes to the Standing Orders it was straight

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on to the National President's address, which he said allowed him to reflect on the Association's many achievements.

Vice Admiral Potts pointed out that the Strategic Defence Review was very much about people, and the ethos and values of the Royal Navy are interlinked with those of the RNA.

The President spoke of the practical elements of wellbeing, and the fact that shipmates, branches and areas are guided by the '7 Cs', and he also referred to the events marking the Association's 75th anniversary – not forgetting anniversaries such as VE80 and VJ80, honouring our past while looking to the future.

Admiral Potts noted that while our values are timeless, our delivery must evolve with the times, and that partnerships will be crucial in the future.

The President concluded by observing that leadership is about lifting others, and listening more than speaking, and he thanked the leaders out in the areas and branches.

Admiral Potts then presented the Annual Awards, which were as follows:

Briggs Dirk for the Branch with 31 or more full members recruiting the most new members in the year as a percentage of their membership – Sunderland Branch

Briggs Rose Bowl for the Branch with 30 or fewer full

members recruiting the most new members in the year as a percentage of their membership – Yeovil Branch
Tasker Bowl for the Area returning the most Gift Aid forms as a percentage of their membership – No 9 Area
Sherwood Sword for the Branch whose members have collectively donated the most amount to the Central Charities Fund as a percentage of their membership – St Neots and District Branch

Sword of Honour for the Area whose members have collectively donated the most amount to the Central Charities Fund as a percentage of their membership – No 7 Area

Overseas Certificate for the Overseas Branch which has recruited the most new members in the year as a percentage of their membership – Japan Branch.

The National President then received a giant cheque for £2,000 from Monmouth Branch – a fundraising effort which Admiral Potts said was greatly appreciated – and presented the National President's Commendation to Kevin Hackett of Wrexham Branch, one of three shipmates who set up the weekly online Tot Time facility just before the first Covid pandemic lockdown in March 2020 and which is still going strong today. The other two Tot Time pioneers were S/Ms Eric Holmwood and Jeffrey Hughes.

S/M Nick Purkiss, Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, reported that there were 81 delegates present

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and no byelaw changes to report. He thanked Kate Aldous, Kathryn Brindley and Sara Field at Central Office for their support, and asked that Kate should not be given a hard time over annual returns – he said he would be happy to talk about any issues.

S/M Nick pointed out that laws and legislation over charities had been strengthened, and reported that three branches had been reported to the police and Charity Commission for alleged misuse of funds.

He added that if anyone had any queries they should reach out to Central Office or to himself for advice.

The minutes of the 2024 AGM in Cardiff were accepted without debate.

Next to the microphone was outgoing National Treasurer S/M Ian Irvin, who stepped down in March but felt it was his duty to deliver this final report to Conference.

S/M Ian said that nothing of concern about the finances had been raised by the Accountant, and that the RNA is in good financial health. He will be organising a full handover

to his successor, S/M Peter Nicholls, in the coming months, and said he remains committed to the RNA – he has taken up a Trustee role with Maryport Branch to help them out.

S/M Ian finished by

saying it had been a privilege to serve the RNA in the role of National Treasurer.

The Financial Report and Accounts were accepted by a majority vote.

National Chairman S/M Andy Christie then presented his annual report, saying it has been an honour and a privilege to serve in the role, and that it had been a steep learning curve.

S/M Andy reminded delegates of some of the shipmates who had crossed the bar in the past year, and who had worked so hard on the Association's behalf, including former National Chairman Chris Dovey, Keith Crawford, Maurice Foley and Steve Caulfield.

He told delegates: "For our Association to remain in existence and be attractive to our predecessors and the

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new generation of RN sailors, it must be relevant, accountable, inclusive, and sustainable, and the National Council recognise this ongoing vision as a priority." Andy also thanked Central Office staff for their efforts across numerous areas including welfare and wellbeing, governance and communication, and he made special mention of one person who he believes never gets the credit he deserves – General Secretary Bill Oliphant, who is "totally committed to the RNA cause, leaving no stone unturned to improve our Association."

National Vice-President S/M Mark Slawson then provided an update on the ongoing review of RNA governance, including an overhaul of the Charter, Rules and Byelaws, as agreed at the 2024 Conference.

Delegates were then treated to a presentation on the RNVY Yacht Club – now effectively the RNA Yachting Sports and Comradeship Group – by S/M David Monks, former Commodore of the Club, who outlined the group's status and some of the activities coming up. S/M David rounded off by stating that new members are always welcome.

The first Motion of Urgency at this year's Conference was a proposal by Salford Branch that the 2026 Conference be held in that city on the weekend of 12-14 June. The Conference, which would be named in honour of the late S/M Steve Caulfield, would be based around the impressive

Lowry Centre and Imperial War Museum (North) at Salford Quays, which has historic wartime links with the Royal Navy; a comprehensive outline of the proposed programme was well-received by delegates.

The proposal, seconded by S/M George Hathaway of Gosport Branch, was carried with just one abstention.

A National Council Motion of Urgency proposed that the Conference Weekend should be separated into two events – a one-day meeting for the AGM and a social weekend which could incorporate other events such as the National Standard Bearers competition.

The proposal was driven by feedback from the Cardiff conference, and if it succeeded it could be put into effect from 2027, with the social gathering in June and the AGM in

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September in years with a Biennial Parade, and the other way round in the intervening years.

Speakers for and against the motion raised the possibility of using technology to meet online, allowing delegates to participate without physically travelling.

Delegates were split on the motion, but the required two-thirds majority was not achieved, so the motion was defeated.

Following that decision, Durham Branch proposed that the 2027 Conference be held in their city, which has excellent transport links and shopping, plenty of hotels, a fine cathedral to host the Sunday service – and is a big draw for Harry Potter fans as some filming was carried out there...

The motion was carried by a large majority, with just one hand raised against and one abstention.

Conference ended in traditional fashion with the drawing of the raffle, the National Anthem and marching off the National Standard.

Conference ended at 1305.

Turning to the social side of the gathering, the weekend programme began on Friday evening with a drinks and canapes reception on board HMS Warrior, where guests enjoyed a relaxed atmosphere and fine weather.

The evening ended with a Ceremonial Sunset.

The Gala Dinner which followed the AGM on Saturday gave shipmates a chance to break out their gladrags and enjoy a splendid meal and musical entertainment in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard's Boathouse 7.

The weekend was rounded off by two events on Sunday.

The first saw a service at St Ann's Church in the Naval Base, during which a new National Standard was dedicated and blessed to help mark the Association's 75th anniversary.

Then it was a short stroll over to Admiralty House for a garden party to celebrate the anniversary of the amalgamation of disparate predecessors of the association into the RNA as it is today. The Association was formed by Royal Charter, and His Majesty the King is our Patron today. Congratulations to all our members, but particularly those who have been with us from the start! National President Duncan Potts wielded the sword and made us all proud with his cut and thrust technique.

A clutch of semi-formal photographs to mark the occasion marked the end of proceedings for the weekend, and a big thank you is due to all the wonderful staff who looked after us on the day and over the weekend.

Images provided by S/M Nigel Huxtable



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FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Ahoy Shipmates!

BEER, BEER, BEER!!!

I thought that might catch your attention. The RNA 75th Anniversary Ale has been launched. As your servant, I had to offer myself up, take one for the team and do the initial tasting. I tell you, the sacrifices I have to make in this job! Anyway, It's a fine drop and it's available to order now. Get your order in now for Christmas – the perfect stocking filler for that special Shipmate in your life. See details later in the Circular [here](#). This is where I ought to have a photo of me scuppering a swift one but I find myself in a train knocking this out and dislocated from my wet. Poor drills!

Congrats to the RNA Golfers who were out in force at Southwick Park Golf Club last month competing for the McAnally Salver, which was won by John Vaines of Waterloooville. BZ John! I should say I was very pleased with myself as I actually won something – maybe the first time ever playing the game that often spoils a good walk.

I hope everyone who attended the 75th anniversary AGM/Conference weekend in Portsmouth a fortnight back had a good time. We were certainly blessed with exceptional weather throughout the weekend, which made it feel like we were on a run ashore in the West Indies! Thank you to all my team in Central Office who dug out to make it a success.

Huge thanks to our furthest flung Branch, the Port Philips Bay Branch in Australia, for sending us a 75th anniversary cake which you can see National Chairman Andy Christie and myself looking at greedily before we stuck the knife in and carved it up in Central Office. It was a belter! Thank you!



ROYAL NAVAL
ASSOCIATION



ROMANTIC
NOVELISTS'
ASSOCIATION

You would think that after Conference weekend it would be a bit more relaxing in Central Office, but sadly not.

We are into the tactical planning for the IMC Sailing Camp, to be held at the Royal Hospital School near Ipswich later this month. It's great to be able to work with the Naval Children's Charity on this to find us kids from Naval families who are in real need of some fun and support – this is a really positive charitable output of our Association and we should be proud of this small contribution to the wider Naval family.

On a less serious note, I did get a good laugh this week. I had an email from the Intellectual Property Office telling me that someone had filed an emblem which might conflict with ours. It turns out that there is another RNA – the Romantic Novelists' Association! As you can imagine, that quite tickled me and I emailed them to say I didn't see the Romantic Novelists' Association as a threat to the Royal Naval Association. Indeed, I wonder if we might make something of our coincidence?! After all, sailors are the biggest ever romantics – or at least I know several who certainly think they are!

Safe winds and following seas,

Bill





SPECIAL VISITOR FOR KEN'S CENTENARY

Battle of the Atlantic veteran – and RNA Life Member – S/M Ken Benbow, has celebrated his 100th birthday.

Ken, from Lancashire, was visited by Winston Churchill himself – or a pretty good lookalike – at his party in Weeton.

He was also joined by family and friends from all over the UK.

RNA Central Office sent Ken a bottle of Navy Rum to help him celebrate this momentous occasion.

TRAVEL ON YOUR WITS AND RAISE FUNDS

The RNA is raring to go as the clock ticks down to the start of RNRMC's Race Across the UK.

And we are asking Branches, individuals and Areas to help our four RNA teams raise enough money to be able to participate.

The teams are raising funds for RNRMC, which provides funding to the RNA – meaning that there is no compulsory membership fee.

The RNA teams will race against each other, pitting Branch against Branch and Area against Area.

You can choose which team to back (will it be the serving RN Mother and Son duo or the CEO who will be chivvied along and terrorised for quotes by his Comms Lead?).

You can send them messages, trace their progress and support them online in a totally interactive way for the duration of the race.

Email cml@rnassoc.org for more details, and watch out for the next Semaphore Short for the announcement of the teams.

*There are still team places – please email for more details. Teams will have four days (2-5 September) to cover the 500 miles from Edinburgh to Dartmouth, relying on ingenuity, stamina and teamwork to get there before any of their rivals. You'll need to partner with someone you trust – someone who will motivate you and help power through when the journey gets tough. Together, you will tackle the UK's stunning and diverse landscapes, without the help of navigation apps, and without resorting to the use of cars, or aeroplanes.

You will rely solely on your wits, a traditional map, and whatever you can carry on your back as you make your way



from one checkpoint to the next.

This challenge offers a unique opportunity to test your limits, all while raising vital funds for an exceptional cause.

There is a strict limit of 50 participating pairs – 100 people in all, and a fundraising target of £1,500 per person.

The RNRMC will support you to reach and smash that target, and the RNA will be weighing in to help the teams racing in their colours.

Participants must be 16+. By signing up for Race Across the UK, you will play a significant part in improving the lives of those who serve our nation.

With spaces limited to just 50 pairs, apply now to secure your place and help the RNRMC make a difference.

If you would like to be one of the RNA teams, please contact Sara on cml@rnassoc.org.

For more details of what the event entails, see <https://lupine.co.uk/race/2025-rnrmc-race-across-the-uk.html>

GROWING SENSE OF SUPPORT FOR RN/RM

Greenwich Hospital has awarded HighGround £159,346 over three years to deliver horticultural therapy and support to serving and former Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel. HighGround was given the funding by Greenwich Hospital to further its work delivering specialist Horticultural Occupational Therapy and land-based programmes to members of the Royal Navy community.

The funding will play a crucial role in supporting individuals undergoing rehabilitation and those transitioning into civilian employment.

The grants enable HighGround to continue delivering its specialist horticultural therapy sessions for serving Royal Navy personnel at Stanford Hall, the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) and part of the clinical recovery pathway.

The structured outdoor sessions involve a variety of adaptive horticultural tasks and projects designed to support recovery by promoting teamwork,

physical endurance, stamina, and concentration.

The programme is led by HighGround's registered Occupational Therapists to ensure that clinical oversight and tailored support are delivered as part of the broader rehabilitation pathway for personnel.

HighGround's wider mission includes helping individuals identify and pursue land-based career opportunities as they transition out of military service. Through their established and tested Rural Week programmes, participants gain meaningful experience and confidence as they prepare for new roles outside of the military.

Deirdre Mills, Director, Greenwich Hospital, said: "Greenwich Hospital's funding ensures that serving and former Royal Navy and Royal Marines



LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –
OUTDOORS

personnel can access expert, outdoor-based therapeutic care and meaningful experiences – crucial to their recovery and successful transition from military service."

Jamie Crisp, Chief Executive Officer, of HighGround, said, "This grant allows us to continue delivering vital Horticultural Occupational Therapy and land-based recovery

programmes that not only support the rehabilitation of serving and former Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel but also equip them with the skills and confidence needed for a successful transition to civilian life.

"This funding will make a meaningful difference to the lives of many, helping them find new purpose and opportunities following military service."

RNRMC HOSTS LUNCH FOR VETERANS LEN AND ROBIN

Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) was proud to welcome Royal Navy veterans Len Chivers and Robin Boodle to HMS Excellent for a special luncheon in the Wardroom, celebrating their 101st birthdays.

RNRMC supports the entire Naval family, and this celebration offered a heartwarming opportunity for serving personnel and veterans to come together, connect, and share their stories.

Len Chivers, from Portsmouth, joined the Royal Navy at 15 years old and went on to serve for 35 years, including the evacuation of Allied troops from Crete and surviving the devastating bombing of HMS Kipling in 1942, where he sustained severe burns and a fractured spine. Len underwent pioneering treatment at before returning to active duty. He retired as an officer in 1974.

Robin Boodle joined at 16 and served in the Battle of the Atlantic, seeing the sinking of the Bismarck. He went on to serve for 22 years and now lives at Jellicoe House, a Portsmouth care home run by the RNBT, supported by RNRMC.

They were joined by other wartime Royal Navy veterans, including Ken Arkell, 98, who served in HMS Boxer, while Dorothy Walsh, 98, served in the WRNS at Bletchley Park, where Alan Turing and his colleagues were regularly breaking the notorious German Enigma code.

Peter Chivers, Len's son, said: "Today's event run by RNRMC was really special for my Dad, and for me, to experience this – they have recognised his 101st birthday, made a huge fuss, wonderful cake, and it has been a really nice day out."

Gay Kilshaw, Robin's daughter said: "Taking Dad to these events opens Dad up and reminds me of Dad 20 years ago; laughing and enjoying being centre of attention... it swells my heart and makes me feel so proud to still have our dad alive and able to share these moments that are just incredibly special. I am grateful to all of you for the time and attention and love that you show Dad and me!"

"These veterans represent the very best of our nation's history," said Alice Farrow, Director of Marketing and Communications at RNRMC. "It is an honour to host them at HMS Excellent and to celebrate not only their birthdays, but also the enduring impact they've had on generations of sailors and Royal Marines."



HAPPY 101st EDDIE!

At their June meeting members of **Skipton & District Branch** celebrated their World War 2 veteran S/M Eddie Shipley's 101st birthday with a finger buffet, a beautiful cake and – of course – Splicers. Eddie served in HMS Starling under the command of the legendary Capt Johnnie Walker, and they believe Eddie may be the last surviving member of that heroic crew. In recent years he has also been honoured by the awarding of both the Russian Ushakov and the French Legion d'Honneur medals. He is a well-loved and respected member, and has many memories and dits to share with them.



NATION SHOWS ITS APPRECIATION AT ARMED FORCES DAY CELEBRATIONS

The nation showed its appreciation for our Servicemen and women, veterans and cadets once again at a host of Armed Forces Day events around the country.

The national focus was on Cleethorpes in Lincolnshire, which was chosen to host the National Event.

That brought with it the pageantry and trappings of a British military spectacular, including a display by the Red Arrows (who are based at RAF Waddington, little over 30 miles from the seaside town).

There was a parade along the seafront to start the day, with attention turning to a military village featuring exhibitions and displays, entertainment stages and a fireworks display. Other aircraft that swooped over the town included a Spitfire and a Hurricane from the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, and Chinook helicopters from RAF Odiham in Hampshire.

It is thought about 200,000 people gathered for the celebration of Britain's military past, present and future.

Defence Secretary John Healey, who watched the parade

in Cleethorpes, said: "I want to thank the people of Cleethorpes for hosting such a spectacular Armed Forces Day national event.

"On Armed Forces Day the nation unites to thank our

Armed Forces: our Service personnel, our reservists, our veterans and our cadets. This is the day we celebrate all they do – in ordinary and extraordinary ways – to make Britain secure at home, and strong abroad."

Other events both large and small were held around the country on the day itself or close by, including the Portsmouth AFD (which coincided with the RNA National Conference) and Plymouth, where the celebrations take over the Hoe.

There was also a Welsh national event which was hosted by Monmouthshire at Caldicot Castle and Country Park (see next pages). The bidding process to host the next Armed Forces Day national event opened for local authorities on 1 July.

For more on Armed Forces Day see www.armedforcesday.org.uk



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The annual **St Neots Armed Forces Day** saw good attendance at the Branch stand. The tombola was, as usual, very popular with adults and children. The branch prides itself on always being on the lookout for new members, and two new shipmates were signed up including one serving member due to leave the Service in the near future. The St Neots public were, as usual generous, and a very reasonable addition to the Branch's funds for good causes in the area was collected.



Veterans from **City of Newport** Branch joined with **Area 7** shipmates to take part in the Armed Forces Day Wales event at Caldicot Castle and Country Park in Monmouthshire. Reservists from HMS Cambria manned their stand all day and worked hard to enlist the next generation of matelots. The Naval Regional Commander Wales & Western England, Cdre Tristram Kirkwood, based at HMS Flying Fox, also attended. Large crowds turned out for a successful day and all 10,000 (free) tickets were issued. It was too warm for tots but "several rounds of cool wets were gratefully quaffed!"



DOWN THE SPINNAKER TO RAISE FUNDS

The Royal Navy's Director People and Training, Rear Admiral Jude Terry, and her Executive Warrant Officer Claire Robson are taking part in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) Annual Spinnaker Tower Abseil event tomorrow (5 July) in Portsmouth.

This event is a thrilling and meaningful way to raise funds for the RNRMC and support the Royal Navy community.

The abseil down the iconic Spinnaker Tower, on the water's edge in Gunwharf Quays, is not only a physical challenge but also a symbol of courage, community, and commitment to helping those who have served or continue to serve in the Royal Navy.

The funds raised from such events play a crucial role in providing support for Service

members, including injured personnel, mental health services, and financial aid for families.

Jude and Claire's first-hand experience with the RNRMC highlights the significant impact the charity has on serving personnel, Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans, and their families.

The collaborative support provided by RNRMC, and other Service charities, can be life-changing for those in need.

Every donation, regardless of size, contributes to improving the lives of those who have made sacrifices for their country.

It's heartening to see the generosity of participants and donors making a tangible difference within the Royal Navy community.

If you are interested in



supporting this cause, you can donate via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/9mpfcjeb>.

Your contribution will help ensure that the Royal Navy family receives the necessary support to thrive.

COME HEAR THE BANDIES

Audiences will be in for an unforgettable evening of music, precision, and pageantry as the world-renowned Massed Bands of His Majesty's Royal Marines take to the stage for their spectacular UK tour.

Featuring a mix of military classics, rousing film scores and breathtaking solo performances, this concert will leave you full of pride.

Witness the impeccable discipline of the world-famous Corps of Drums and the unmistakable sound of one of the finest military ensembles in the world.

An unforgettable experience of music, tradition and excellence – secure your tickets now and be part of this event.

The 2025 UK Tour Dates are as follows:

- **11 September** – Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham
- **12 September** – The Glasshouse, Gateshead
- **13 September** – Usher Hall, Edinburgh
- **17 September** – Bristol Beacon, Bristol
- **18 September** – Symphony Hall, Birmingham
- **19 September** – Bridgewater Hall, Manchester
- **20 September** – Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool

Tickets are on sale now – don't miss your chance to witness one of the finest military ensembles in the world live in concert.

For ticket information and more details, visit: www.royalmarinesbands.co.uk



QUICK QUOTE FOR TRAVEL INSURANCE

As a member of the RNA you have access to an exclusive annual travel insurance scheme from our insurance partner Trinity.

You can access this via the quick quote tool below to find out the annual price.

Select your age band, European or Worldwide cover and who is to be covered to get your premium.

Once completed, you'll be directed to the website to sign up. It's that easy! Any questions call: 02392 419 856.

The link is <https://tinyurl.com/yxvwvsy5>

SEA SUNDAY TIMES TWO

Two Sea Sunday services are being staged in North Pembrokeshire in Wales, both on the same day – Sunday 13 July.

The first is being held at St David's Cathedral, starting at 1100, while the second, at St Mary's Church in Fishguard, will be staged at 1830.

Veterans organisations are welcome at both services, which are open to all so there is no need to RSVP.

Uniform or corporate clothing is the rig of the day, and orders and decorations may be worn.

COFFEE TIME

The next monthly Armed Forces/Veterans LGBTQ Stand Easy is on Monday (7 July) at the ELM Centre, Leypark Drive, Plymouth PL6 8UE, starting at 1000 until midday.



DAEDALUS MEMORIAL STONE UNVEILED

A permanent commemorative stone has been unveiled at Solent Airport to honour the historic contribution of HMS Daedalus, the former Royal Naval Air Station that played a pivotal role in national defence between 1939 and 1996.

The unveiling ceremony, held at the airfield's Public Viewing Area, brought together Naval dignitaries, local officials, veterans, and community members in celebration of Daedalus's illustrious past. The commemorative stone was officially unveiled by Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, National President of the RNA, and the Mayor of Fareham, Cllr Mrs Louise Clubley. Adding a powerful tribute to the occasion, onlookers were treated to a dramatic fly-by from a World War 2-era Fairey Swordfish aircraft – W5856, the world's oldest airworthy example – courtesy of the Navy Wings Charity.

The historic aircraft served as a striking symbol of the air station's wartime role and aviation heritage. Capt Mark Hamilton, Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan, and Cdr Megan Ashton, of the Royal Naval Air Engineering and Survival Equipment School (RNAESS), represented HMS Sultan, which now continues the legacy of naval aviation engineering once central to Daedalus. During World War 2, Daedalus served as a crucial hub for Naval air operations. Aircraft such as Spitfires, Swordfish,

Typhoons and Mustangs were launched from the site, playing key roles in major military campaigns.

Swordfish squadrons were instrumental in the attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto and the pursuit of the Bismarck. In 1944 alone, Daedalus launched 435 sorties during the D-Day landings, supporting naval spotting, air patrols, and ground attack missions. By VJ Day, the station was home to 157 units, including aircraft from the RAF, Canada, and the United States.

The commemorative stone is the result of a collaboration between the Lee and Stubbington branch of the RNA, the Fleet Air Arm Association, and Fareham Borough Council, with support from several Naval heritage organisations. The ceremony featured a blessing by Rev Liz Quinn, the singing of the Naval Hymn and National Anthem, and concluded with refreshments at Café Zero Five.

Capt Hamilton said: "It's a privilege to represent HMS Sultan at this important commemoration. "The legacy of HMS Daedalus lives on through the engineering training we deliver today.



"The dedication and innovative spirit shown by those who served here continue to inspire our current generation of engineers and technicians.

"This commemorative stone stands as a proud symbol of our Naval aviation heritage and enduring connection with the local community."

If you have a look on our Facebook or Instagram account @ **rnassociation** you will find a video of the flight of the Swordfish at this event.

WELFARE AND WELLBEING

A HEARTFELT THANKS TO YOU ALL

A huge thank you to everyone who attended this year's Conference – it was truly a pleasure to meet so many Welfare and Wellbeing Officers and Branch Secretaries in person.

Your kind words of encouragement and support were deeply appreciated.

Throughout the event, I had the opportunity to speak with many of you about how we can continue to grow and strengthen Welfare and Wellbeing support across our branches and areas. It was wonderful to see so many of you collecting the new WW Volunteers Guide—your dedication to improving support services was genuinely inspiring. I also gathered information from several shipmates requiring DBS checks, which has already helped to speed up the process. If you, or another BWWO in your branch, require a DBS, please reach out to your Area WWO or contact me directly. If there's enough demand, I may be able to attend Area meetings to collect the required details and assist with the process in person.

A Small Plea

Could I kindly ask that all BWWOs reach out to their Area WWOs? It's vital that Area-level contacts know who to approach in each branch. This helps ensure we can effectively support all who serve, have served, and their families. If Area can't make contact, we can help. If you need contact details for your AWWO, please email me at wws@rnassoc.org.

Photo ID Cards – Coming Soon!

We're almost ready to roll out the first batch of Welfare &



Wellbeing Officer photo ID cards.

If you would like to receive one, please send me:

- A digital passport-style photo (in a dark-coloured top)
- Confirmation of your DBS status
- Proof of completed Safeguarding and any other welfare-related training.

Once I have received and reviewed these materials, I will arrange for your ID card to be issued.

Monthly Delivery Reports – Your efforts matter

A heartfelt thank you to all the branches who continue to send in their monthly reports. We all understand why these reports matter: they not only help shape the future of the RNA – ensuring we

build the right framework to support our Shipmates and their families – but they also contribute vital feedback to the RNRMC, who help fund and support the running of our organisation.

But beyond the admin, these reports tell powerful stories. They allow us to shine a spotlight on the incredible work our volunteers are doing every day. Please – don't keep your efforts hidden. Share them. Celebrate them. Every bit of support you offer makes a real difference, and your time and dedication deserve to be recognised.

We often support individuals who are not currently RNA members. So, let's use these reports not just to record what we do, but to reach out. Let's bring these 'unknown' shipmates into the fold, connect them with local branches, and help tackle social isolation together. With your stories, we don't just document impact – we amplify it.

Organisation	Telephone	Website
Op Courage	-	www.nhs.uk
Samaritans	116 123	www.samaritans.org
SSAFA	0800 260 6780	www.ssafa.org.uk
Naval Children's Charity	02392 639 534	www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk
Royal Marines Charity	-	www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk
Association of WRENS	02392 725 141	https://wrens.org.uk
RNBT	02392 690 112	www.rnbt.org.uk
RNRMC	02393 871 520	www.rnrmc.org.uk
RBL	0808 802 8080	www.britishlegion.org.uk
Naval Families Federation	02392 654 374	https://nff.org.uk
COBSEO	-	www.cobseo.org.uk
Seafarers UK	020 7932 0000	www.theseafarerscharity.org
CRISIS	0300 636 1967	www.crisis.org.uk
REFUGE	0808 2000 247	https://refuge.org.uk/
Veteran Outreach Support	02392 731 767	https://vosuk.org/
PTSD Resolution	0300 302 0551	https://ptsdresolution.org/
White Ensign Association	-	www.whiteensign.co.uk
GOV.UK for all OPs	0808 802 1212	www.gov.uk/support-for-veterans
Officer Association	020 7808 4175	www.officersassociation.org.uk
Fighting with Pride	-	www.fightingwithpride.org.uk
Help for Heroes	0300 303 9888	www.helpforheroes.org.uk
The Poppy Factory	-	www.poppyfactory.org
SAIL	0800 160 1842	https://sailine.org.uk/
Combat Stress	0800 138 1619	helpline@combatstress.org.uk

DON'T MISS OUT...

The Semaphore Circular and Semaphore Short publications are an important part of the RNA's '7Cs' provision to its members, so it is important that Branches have an accurate record of members' email addresses – please make sure members keep you abreast of any changes, or would like to be added to the dist list.

Lanyard Branch members should email Sarah Bewley on cml@rnassoc.org if they are having issues with receiving the newsletters.

FUNERAL GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE

"The RNA has launched our Funeral Guide, and reminds shipmates that we offer ceremonial and administrative support for our members and all those who have served in Our Naval Forces." – Jon Everett, Welfare and Wellbeing Support Co-ordinator wws@rnassoc.org, telephone 07591 829416
Find the guide on our website: <https://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/rna-funeral-guide>

MORE THAN JUST A DRAPE...

Funeral support is more than the supply of a drape, or a call for Standard Bearers – it's about remembrance, pride, and connection, writes RNA Welfare and Wellbeing Support Officer Jon Everett.

Over the past month, I've received numerous calls from people seeking help to honour their loved ones who served in the Royal Navy. Each call comes with its own story, woven with the deep pride of a granddaughter, a son, or a lifelong friend.

But not everyone is so fortunate as to know their loved one's Naval history. In those cases, I offer more than just practical support – I offer time, heart, and help in uncovering their stories.

Here is one that stayed with me. A couple of weeks ago, I was at my desk when the phone rang. On the line was the son of a Royal Navy veteran who had sadly crossed the bar.

He spoke of his father with reverence, describing how he supported the local RNA branch in Enfield until it closed (though he remained on HQ Roll).

He shared warm memories of his father helping to organise funerals through the RBL.

"I remember driving Dad everywhere," he said. "We attended so many Army and RAF veterans' funerals."

But now that his father had passed, the son found himself at a loss.

"I have no idea how to hold a proper Naval funeral," he admitted. "I hardly know anything about Dad's time in the RN – just that he served on a ship called Superb."



I knew I had to help. I turned to "Shipmate Google" and began digging. Before long, I uncovered details about the cruiser HMS Superb. As I delved deeper, I discovered that an HMS Superb Association still exists – run by a sprightly 90-year-old RN veteran. I reached out and, to my astonishment, they had records of the son's father – including his nickname. Armed with this discovery, I rang the son back. "Does the name Blondie mean anything to you?" I asked. There was a brief silence.

"Oh my," he finally said. "I haven't heard that name in years!"

I went on to tell him that his father had served as an AB on board Superb between 1952 and 1953. He had once been a member of the Superb Association, though his membership had eventually lapsed. There's even a book – 'A Superb Cruiser' – (available from a well-known online store) that chronicles the ship's journeys and includes a crew index.

Some of the crew's names are etched in its pages, preserving the memory for future generations.

The son was deeply grateful. Since that call, he's stayed in touch, sending over photos of his dad and old RNA membership cards from the 1960 & 70s.

Rest in peace, Blondie. Duty done.



FEMALE VETERANS PHOTOSHOOT IS ON TOUR

The Female Veterans Transformation Programme (FVTP) is creating a toolkit to aid services who support female veterans. Additional funding has been sought from the Office for Veterans Affairs and Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to raise the profile of female veterans. Part of this will be a photoshoot which is touring the UK. The FVTP wants female veterans from the breadth of the UK to be involved in this photoshoot, regardless of age, rank, time served, ethnicity, religion, disability, socioeconomic background, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other characteristic. The more

diverse the better!

To get involved click this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/SmuxuxW6EQ>

The dates and locations are:

- Monday 7 July – Plymouth
- Thursday 10 July – Edinburgh
- Monday 14 July – Cardiff
- Monday 28 July – Cannock
- Tuesday 29 July – Cannock
- Wednesday 30 July – Winchester

The images captured will be of you – authentically you. There won't be make-up artists and there is no dress code – wear what you're most comfortable in and how you want people to see you.

This will be codesigned – you can choose what to wear and how to describe yourself. It could be berets, medals and blazers, a ball gown, sports kit, work uniform, Scouts uniform, leggings and a strappy top – whatever you want (keeping it non-provocative and tasteful of course). The concept will be poster campaigns showing a single female veteran, with words surrounding it describing them and then the tag line: 'I served (add in how long if you want) in the (Service). I am many things. I am a Veteran.' Why get involved? Simple... You Served. You Belong. Let's Make It Visible.

THE RULES AND RIGHTS OF HOME OWNERSHIP – A QUICK GUIDE

Family Law and Property

Considerations – What are my rights and how are these affected by my relationship status? What happens to a house on divorce?

In the UK, approximately 65 per cent of people own their homes, which equates to about 28.36 million individuals. In 2022, approximately 24 million people in the UK were married. There are different ways to own property, and ownership is affected by marriage. It's important to be aware of the rules and the rights of home ownership – this is a quick guide to those property considerations.

Property ownership

There are two ways a couple can own a property:

1. Joint Tenants – equal rights and shares in a property. A key feature is the right of survivorship, which means if one owner passes away, their share automatically goes to the remaining owner.

2. Tenants in Common – either equal or unequal shares in a property. These shares, however, remain separate and upon the death of a party, their share can be passed on to beneficiaries as stated in their will or according to intestacy laws – the surviving owner does not automatically acquire the shares of the other co-owner. If the couple owns the property in unequal shares, perhaps because someone has contributed a greater deposit etc. it is always best to formally record the ownership in a Declaration of Trust (DOT). A DOT outlines the financial contributions of each party and their respective shares in the property. It will also set out how the proceeds of sale will be divided if the property is sold. A DOT is often used by cohabiting couples to protect their initial investments or contributions, especially if one party contributes a larger deposit.

So why does ownership matter? If a couple who owns their property as joint tenants separate, they may wish to sever the tenancy so that they become tenants in common. They might not want their share to automatically pass to the surviving

Emma Jones has significant experience in dealing with legal issues arising from the breakdown of relationships involving serving or former Armed Forces personnel, their families and current or former MOD individuals.

Emma – herself a member of the RNA – has represented several personnel in the Royal Navy, from ABs to Vice Admirals. She understands the difference between civvy and military life and the impact this may well have on a relationship and/or a family.

Knights is a business and leading law firm offering premium professional services everywhere in the UK.

The team is made up of 1,100+ professionals across 26 (and growing) locations in the UK from Carlisle all the way down to Exeter.

The national family team at Knights are familiar with all aspects of family law, including contact arrangements for children, divorce and finances and pre/post-nuptial agreements.

They have a handful of individuals who specialise in the treatment of Armed Forces pensions on divorce and appreciate the complexities of these schemes.

It's important to seek specialist legal advice when considering the financial arrangements on divorce, and they are there to help.



Knights

co-owner as they would with equal rights and shares in the property, and instead would prefer it to be based onto beneficiaries of the Will (note, always best to update a Will – or create one(!) on the breakdown of a relationship).

A property can, of course, also be held by one individual.

It might be that a house is already owned prior to a relationship, and the other party moves in. If this remains the case and the parties marry, and the house is lived in as a matrimonial home, both parties have home rights.

This means the non-owner party can stay in the property, even if they don't own it.

The non-owner party can have this right registered on the property as a home rights notice at the Land Registry.

A home rights notice can prevent the sale of the property until matters are resolved and the notice is lifted – without one in place, the owner could sell the house and leave the non-owner homeless.

If the parties continue to live in the property together but do not marry, they are cohabitants. There is no such thing as common law marriage in England and Wales – this is a huge myth!

Cohabitants/unmarried individuals and married couples do not have the same rights, and it is important to consider how joint finances, assets etc in a cohabitating relationship are treated.

Cohabitation agreements

Unlike on divorce or dissolution, there is no particular set of rules that automatically applies if you split up. We have established there is no such thing as common-law marriage. There are limited remedies available to unmarried cohabiting couples, so we would always recommend parties entering into a cohabitation agreement. This will set out arrangements for finances, property and children while the parties are living together and if they split up, become ill or die.

As a cohabitation agreement is executed as a deed, it is binding and creates legal obligation that determine rights in relation to the family home and other financial issues.

It is important that parties do not sign the agreement unless they understand it and intend to be bound by its terms. A cohabitation agreement is not limited to romantic couples but can also be entered into by friends or siblings for example.

Continued on page 20

Some areas to cover in a cohabitation agreement include:

The property

It is important to record how this is owned, and whether there has been any separate agreement or promise that isn't currently reflected in the legal documents.

Who is paying the mortgage? If there are any endowment policies or other savings arrangements linked to a mortgage, what contributions are being made to those and how will they be dealt with if they split up?

Are they going to insure each other's lives?

Money and paying bills

Many people find it convenient to have a joint bank account when they live together, but need to decide what contributions they are going to make to that account.

Will the contributions be equal, and if not, will they consider the money in the joint account to be equally owned?

What will the joint account be used for and when should their personal accounts be used instead?

If they are not using a joint account, who will pay which of the household bills and will this be considered an equivalent contribution to something else?

What about credit cards and debts?

There are lots of aspects to home ownership to consider when entering into a relationship, a marriage or on divorce.

It is important to seek legal advice at all and every stage – so if you are



considering purchasing a property or popping the question, it is worth exploring what options are open to you. I'm here to help navigate these issues, and for all other family law questions!

As a side note, it was so lovely to meet so many RNA members at the evening reception and Ceremonial Sunset on board HMS Warrior last month (above). My partner Alex, who is a submariner, and I spoke to quite a few of you about past-times, life in the Royal Navy

now and my encounters with serving members as a family lawyer. Quite a mix of conversations!

Please do reach out if you have any legal questions, and I look forward to the next RNA event!

<https://www.knightsplc.com/company/our-professionals/emma-jones/>

www.linkedin.com/in/emmxjones

emma.jones@knightsplc.com

CRUISE OUT, STROLL BACK ROUND LOCH

How does the idea of a little summer cruise and a stroll back around a beautiful Scottish loch sound?

If that's your thing, mark Saturday 19 July on your calendar.

On that day a group of RNA and Association of Wrens members, plus others from the RN community, will sail across the stunning Loch Katrine, with a walk back along the banks of the loch in the picturesque Trossachs.

The walk, which should be achieved between 1000 and 1700, is flat, with several resting points along the way. It is recommended you wear comfortable walking shoes for the 13-mile distance, and clothes suitable for the weather of the day (a brief will be provided to participants in advance). You will need to bring your lunch and snacks including a good amount of drink. The walk itself is estimated at 5 hours 30 minutes.

There are limited ferry tickets available each day, and therefore it is strongly recommended that you purchase your one-way ticket as soon as possible. The cost of a one-way ferry ticket is £20, and you are booking the 1030 from Trossachs Pier to Stronachlachar – see <https://steamshipsirwalterscott.rezgo.com> for details.

If you require assistance with transport to and from Loch Katrine, please do let Coral McGowan know and she will do her best to support with a car-share.



If you are a driver and are willing to offer lifts, please let her know in your registration of interest.

Please contact Coral via email: coralbrady@yahoo.co.uk to register your interest.

Please note – the closing date is this Sunday – 6 July.

Photo by Marc Pell on **Unsplash**

Royal Naval Association Lottery



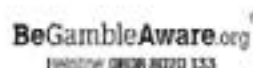
Win up to £25,000

**We rely on your help to
deliver outstanding
support throughout
every stage of our
members' lives.**



**Help us continue our work
by playing the RNA lottery**

**Enter by using the QR Code
or visit RNAlottery.co.uk**



NAVAL CRUISE

S/M Mike Critchley, of Maritime Heritage Tours, has a four-night minicruise sailing from Portsmouth next year that may be of interest to shipmates.

The cruise, with a Naval flavour, is to Liverpool via Dublin and Belfast. Ambassador Cruise Line's M/V Ambition offers a choice of 680 cabins on ten decks.

The trip sails from Portsmouth on 22 April arriving in Liverpool four nights later. A coach back to Portsmouth is £26.50 per person, or stay in Liverpool (or the Lake District?) before heading home.

For more information see www.maritimeheritagetours.co.uk/ireland

for booking instructions and details of this and other upcoming tours. Cabins are available from just £259 per person. When you book directly make sure you quote the **group reference of 1322**.

It is hoped the Rn Presentation Team and members of the RM Band will be on board, along with a Sea Shanty group!

CHOIR TUNES UP FOR BIG CONCERT



The RNA Community Choir for Scotland and North East England held their first formal rehearsal recently – great fun, with lots of enthusiasm as they ran through all their songs.

Everyone is very much looking forward to the RNA 75 Concert in Portsmouth on 22 October. The RM Band's MD and AMD, Christian and Matthew, were so patient and planned a fantastic day for the rehearsal.

LOOK – WE'RE ON THE BEER!

An RNA 75th Anniversary special edition Pale Ale was officially launched at the Association's National Conference in Portsmouth.

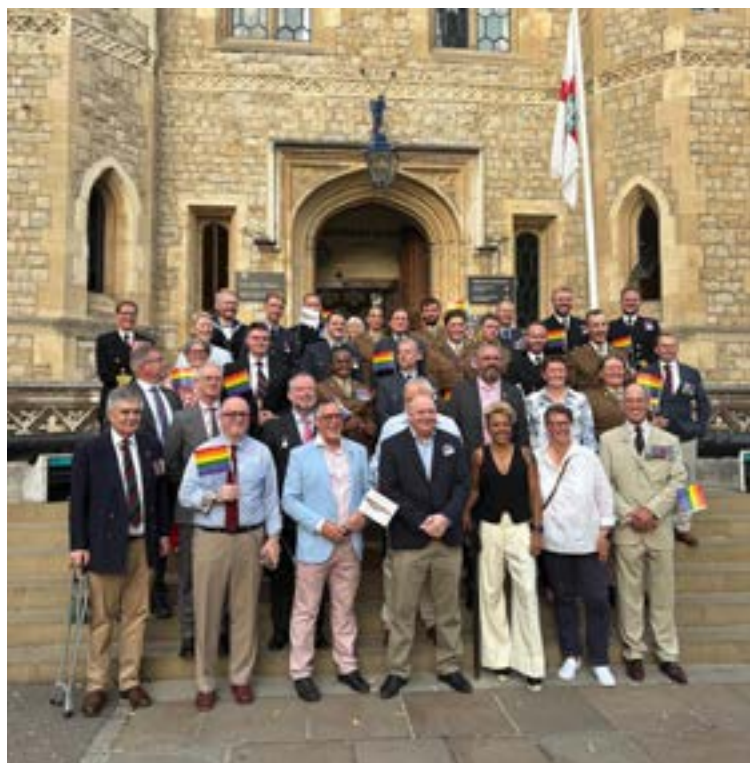
Brewed just for us by Powder Monkey using a special recipe, and packed in commemorative RNA 75 cans, everyone who has tasted it thinks it is an excellent beverage!

As a launch promotion, a case of 12 will cost you £36, plus you get an extra 15 per cent off your first purchase – so it would seem sensible to make it a big one...

Fill in **this form** to let us know how many cans you would like and we will be in touch to give you your link to buy through the brewery.

The RNA gets a percentage of every sale, so you can feel doubly great about your charitable beer

The form can also be accessed at: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/DaW7t7VMVV>



A wonderful night at the Tower of London with Fighting with Pride and Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

CARRIER HOSTS LECTURES

Osprey Publishing has run a series of lectures on board HMS Queen Elizabeth to support the professional development of the ship's company, as well as those of other ships in port and shore-based personnel in Portsmouth.

Four lectures featured respected historians from across the Osprey and Bloomsbury lists:

- Scholar of Russian security affairs Dr Mark Galeotti looked at Russian aims and motivation and the current strategic picture in Europe
- Former Royal Navy officer and Naval historian Angus Konstam told the story of a key turning point in the war at sea in the Second World War
- Maritime history author and historical consultant Dr Paul Brown detailed the critical Naval actions in the Falklands conflict of 1982
- Award-winning aviation historian Dr Victoria Taylor took a fresh look at the Battle of Britain.

Capt Claire Thompson, Commanding Officer of the carrier, said: "HMS Queen Elizabeth is very fortunate to be hosting this initiative."

Osprey Publishing is one of the leading publishers of military and naval history with more than 3,000 books and 30 series covering a range of military subjects ranging from the ancient world to the present day.



LANYARDS AND PIN BADGES ON WEBSITE

Our gorgeous lanyards and pin badges are now available from our online shop! Visit the website and click on the SHOP link, or go to: <https://www.rnagizzet.co.uk/>

BLACK TOT DAY AT SHIP ANSON

Black Tot Day will be marked at the Ship Anson pub in Portsmouth on the notorious day itself – 31 July.

The event starts at the pub, on The Hard, at 1600 and, according to Shep Woolley and Tim Walker, there will be “lots of tots and music – shanties, jigs and reels.” Black Tot Day refers to 31 July 1970, which was the date of the final daily rum ration issue in the Royal Navy, ending a tradition that stretched back more than three centuries.

The practice was ended because it was felt that the performance of sailors dealing with high-tech modern equipment in modern warfare could be compromised by a daily ration of strong alcohol.

MINIBUSES ARE AN ASSET FOR ALL

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

COME JOIN THE PARADE!

One of the five major celebrations in the RNA's 75th anniversary year is the Naval Associations Biennial Parade in Whitehall, London, in September – and we want you to be a part of it.

The event, organised by the RNA, is specifically for all Naval Associations, and is an opportunity to remember old comrades, put your Association centre stage, and enjoy a day of comradeship in the capital.

We are still in the planning stage, so we need to gauge what the demand will be for security, toilet facilities and the like.

Please fill in [this form](#) to let us know if you intend to come to march with us at the parade on 14 September.

You do not need to be a Royal Naval Association member to march – you can march with any Association – but that Association should contact the Royal Naval Association in advance to let us know they will be represented, and we still need your details

so we can keep a tally of approximate numbers.

The relevant form is also available through this link: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/92g2vDkmCK>

If you have any questions about the Parade please contact us on ams@rnassoc.org

DROP IN ON UXBRIDGE BRANCH

Calling all shipmates attending the Naval Associations Biennial Parade in London on 14 September 14.

If you are looking for a comfort break on your way home why not stop by and anchor up at the RNA Uxbridge clubhouse?

They are situated on the main A40 westbound coming out of London – as you pass RAF Northolt on the right come off at the next exit (signposted Hillingdon) and they are located at the back of the car park entrance 50 yards from the end of the exit slip off before the lights. Free parking available!

Waterlooville Branch are already booked in and they have the space for many more. On arrival rum will be issued and a nice buffet awaits you. They have seven lines of popular beer brands at subsidised prices plus free tea and coffee facilities on request.

Don't hang around in London and get ripped off with £8-£10 pints of beer – head for Uxbridge, relax and enjoy a proper Naval club at decent subsidised prices.

All they ask is can you let them know that you are coming in advance for catering purposes – please contact them at rna.uxbridge@hotmail.co.uk or call Slinger Wood on 07961124459

CENTRAL OFFICE OPEN DAYS FAA MUSEUM OFFERS QUIET SESSION

Central Office Open Days have proved popular with shipmates, giving them the chance to see how the office works and meet some of the people they normally deal with by phone or email.

Due to a busy 75th anniversary year, we were limited as to the number of days we could squeeze in, and the final one – 11 July – is now full.

If you are interested or would like more information on our Open Days, please email Sara on ams@rnassoc.org – and contact her early to avoid disappointment. Usual service will resume in 2026, as we plan to hold many more Open Days next year.

The next Quiet Afternoon at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton will be Thursday 17 July, 2pm – 4.30pm

During quiet afternoon sessions, sounds, lights and interactive elements are lowered or turned off to create a low-sensory environment.

These sessions are intended to support a range of visitors of all ages, including neurodiverse individuals, people with social, emotional, or mental health needs, those living with dementia, and anyone who may benefit from or simply enjoy a quieter, more relaxed environment.

Access during this event will require a valid museum ticket.

See the museum website at <https://tinyurl.com/5cdxj9wd> for tickets.

CLASSIC CARS AND OUR CRICKET CLUB

The Royal Navy Cricket Club now come under the auspices of the RNA as the RNA Cricket Sports and Comradeship Group. Members are playing a fixture at John Paul Getty's private cricket ground on Saturday 2 August at Wormsley, just off the M40 – see the link here: <https://wormsley.com/cricket/>

The event is basically a version of the Inter-Services T20 cricket tournament, but for older serving personnel and veterans. The cricketers have also invited both the RNA Riders Branch and the RNA Classic Car Sports and Comradeship Group to the event.

The cricket starts from about 1000 and goes through until late afternoon, but the advice is to bring a picnic from about 1100.

There is no cost other than your own victuals and it would be a great opportunity for the various groups to meet up and exchange ideas.

The RNA's General Secretary, Capt Bill Oliphant, is certainly keen on the idea, and is planning to bring his own little classic car, Bianca (pictured right) with him. If you are interested please contact cml@rnassoc.org to register your interest and obtain further instructions.



Are you:

Ex-forces?

Eager to travel more this year? ✓

Tired of rising insurance costs? ✓

You could make a saving by

Joining our 40+ travel insurance scheme to benefit from cover that can continue into your later years, with no upper age limit*

Get A 30 Second Quote

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



DIARY DATES

Assoc Management Committees:

Fri 18 July 2025 (Zoom 0900)

Fri 17 Oct 2025 (Zoom 0900)

Fri 27 Feb 2026 (F2F RMH)

Fri 8 May 2026 (Zoom 0900)

Fri 17 July 2026 (Zoom 0900)

Fri 16 Oct 2026 (F2F RMH)

FACs (finance):

Fri 1 Aug 2025 (Zoom 0930)

Fri 14 Nov 2025 (Zoom 0930)

Fri 13 Mar 2026 (Zoom 0930) Accounts ready

Fri 15 May 2026 (Zoom 0930)

Fri 24 July 2026 (Zoom 0930)

Fri 23 Oct 2026 (Zoom 0930)

National Councils:

Sat 13 Sep 2025 (1400) UJC London

Fri 12 Dec 2025 (0900 Zoom)

Fri 20 Mar 2026 (F2F RMH)

Fri 29 May 2026 (Zoom 0900) Pre-Conference

Fri 7 Aug 2026 (Zoom 0900)

Fri 6 Nov 2026 (F2F RMH) Annual Report

NEWEST MEMBER TAKES THE TITLE

Look at these two handsome chaps! One is the former RNA National President and one is our newest member. But which is which?

John McAnally presented John Vaines with the McAnally Salver as the winner of the annual RNA Golf Tournament, played at Southwick Park Golf Club the day before the RNA AGM. The tournament was supported by Oracle, led by Colin Dinsdale.

If you are interested in joining the RNA Golfing Sports and Comradeship Group please email cml@rnassoc.org for details or visit our website.



MEMORIAL HONOURS OP CHARIOT

Work will begin this summer to create a new monument to an heroic World War 2 commando raid.

Often referred to as 'the Greatest Raid of All', the attack on the docks at St Nazaire in western France in March 1942 rendered the port unusable by German battleships. The raid – Operation Chariot – is marked by memorials in St Nazaire and in Falmouth, the port of departure of the raiding force. But now the Operation Chariot Memorial Project will ensure the attack is also remembered at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

The impressive design mirrors one of the iconic sights of the attack – a steel replica of HMS Campbeltown riding high rammed into the dock caisson with five commandos emerging to destroy port installations. The obsolete destroyer was sent in to destroy Normandie Dock to deny the Germans a sanctuary on the Atlantic coast. Campbeltown was loaded with time-delayed explosives to complete the mission after

ramming the dock. Army commandos would then wreak havoc on other dock facilities upon disembarking their smaller ships.

As curious Germans inspected Campbeltown the morning after the raid the hidden explosives detonated, smashing the caisson and inundating the dock, which was put out of action until after the end of the war. The explosion killed almost 350 people, including a party of 40 high-ranking German officials. A total of 140 gallantry awards were bestowed, with three of the five Victoria Crosses awarded to Royal Navy personnel. Work is due to begin on the memorial towards the end of August, with a formal dedication of the completed monument planned on the 85th anniversary of the raid in May 2027.

Around £150,000 of the £170,000 total cost of the monument, designed by noted sculptor Joanne Risley has been raised to date. However, donations are still welcome – you can contribute to the project through www.stnazaireraid.org.

HELP GET LISBON MARU FILM SEEN

The UK distributor for Fang Li's documentary film 'The Sinking of The Lisbon Maru' is planning a further push for distribution in August to coincide with the 80th anniversary of VJ Day. Chan Hiu-man is targeting community cinemas around the country and is seeking help from those interested. If you would like the film to be shown in your area, please contact your local community cinema and encourage them to show it during August.

The film tells of the sinking of a Japanese ship carrying British prisoners of war. More than 800 men died, most drowning or being shot. A further 640 were rescued by Japanese naval vessels and returned to captivity, while almost 400 were saved by Chinese fishermen, an act remembered in a memorial unveiled just weeks ago near the scene of the sinking.

If you would like to help make sure the film is seen as widely as possible visit the website: <https://mycommunitycinema.org.uk/find-a-cinema/>.

Enter your postcode and find your nearest community cinema. Propose the film and if they are interested, you can share with them this link to the booking form ahead of the newsletter: <https://tinyurl.com/3su23cs6>

The film is also being shown on 6 and 7 July in Hong Kong at Jade Pearl Cinema and MCL Theatre – screening times vary. Details from the cinema websites.

AREA 6 NCM

At last month's AGM former RNA National Chairman S/M Keith Ridley, of St Neots and District Branch, retired after serving for 13 years as National Council Member for Area 6. Keith's place has been taken by S/M Anthony Boddrell, of Bracknell Branch. Anthony will be able to be contacted in due course on the ncm6@rnassoc.org email account.

ON COURSE FOR YACHTING GROUP

Delegates at the Annual Conference in Portsmouth last month enjoyed a presentation on the RNVY Yacht Club, which will also cover the RNA's Yachting Sports and Comradeship Group (SCG).

Now shipmates can enjoy the benefits of membership of the club, with the aim being to eventually create an RNA group under the wider umbrella and expertise of the RNVRYC. The plan is that members will pay an annual fee to cover both the RNA SCG and the RNVRYC, and the details are being worked out.

The RNVRYC is 77 years old and an all-ranks organisation, with more than 400 members in various categories, the vast majority of them Royal Navy.

Members' boats are spread around the UK and abroad – there are 144 boats based in South East England, 26 in the South West, seven in Scottish harbours and 18 on British inland waterways, for example.

There are also boats in Australia, Bermuda, Croatia, Greece, St Kitts and Nevis, Thailand and the United States (Florida), amongst others.

According to S/M David Monks, a former Commodore of the Club, among the benefits are the opportunity to have fun, make new friends and gain experience; if you're crew you can seek berths on voyages, if you're an owner you can seek crew! RNVRYC members also benefit from subsidised RYA training. There are regular opportunities to sail in home waters, and the Club also ventures further afield for a change – Caribbean cruising, anyone?

There are also regular social events for non-sailors, including three formal events each year – a Northern Dinner (Liverpool), a Southwest Dinner (Dartmouth) and an Annual Dinner in a prestigious location such as the Painted Hall at Greenwich or



the Royal Yacht Squadron, Cowes. Among the less formal events are dinners in locations such as Hornet SCC and Henley Rowing Club, and various barbecues and pontoon parties.

For further information scan the QR code or go to <https://ask2gocloud.fillout.com/t/mrxBJtxwyJus> and fill out the RNA SCG form.



Members of the RNA Motorhome, Caravanning and Camping Sports and Comradeship Group could not make it to the Annual Conference this year as they had their own gathering on Exmoor – but they sent a message of support which was read out to delegates by RNA Bill Oliphant. Here is a flavour of what the group members were up to over that weekend...



BE A WINNER WITH THE RNA LOTTERY

You could win up to £25,000 in our very own 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 Naval community.

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 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."

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

PLEASE TAKE NOTE(BOOK)

The Royal Naval Association 75th anniversary notebook with pen is now available – looking gorgeous, and a great little gift!

Black ink, £6.

See the Gizzet store on the RNA website at <https://tinyurl.com/3ufm4fbd> where you will also find the RNA 75 jute-style bag for £7.50.



GET YOUR SLOPS HERE

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) or via the 'Shop' button at the top of the RNA website home page at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

SPORTS AND COMRADESHIP GROUPS

Different name but same objectives... Shipmates might be interested to become involved with the popular and successful RNA Sports and Comradeship Groups (SCGs), formerly known as Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Whether you are already a part of a group or are yet to join one we recommend you get involved and see what it's all about. For more information on each group please contact the designated leaders, listed below:

American Football – Steve Phillips: rna.american.football.sig@gmail.com

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

Cricket – Mark Smith : Markmiff1962@gmail.com

Collectors: Insignia and Badges – Paul Banyard: rna.insignia@gmail.com

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

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

Genealogy – Mike Wilkinson: mike.j.wilco@gmail.com

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

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

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

RNA Football Club – scc@rnassoc.com

Rugby Union – Steve Phillips: rna.rugby.union.sig@gmail.com

Woodcraft – Graham Warner: vicechair@rna-7area.org

If you are interested in forming a Sports and Comradeship Group please contact cml@rnassoc.org

MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

■ For shipmates who are unaware, there is an ongoing a 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 7 July	Emma Jones	Knight's Solicitors – expert in RN pensions and family law
Mon 14 July	Gordon Meadows	The role of AI (artificial intelligence) in Defence
Mon 21 July	Cdr Simon Cowan RAN Naval Attache in London	The Royal Australian Navy
Mon 28 July	TBC	Defence Debriefing Team
August	Summer break	Fireside Chats will resume on 1 September

BRANCH NEWS

BUILTH WELLS Branch

Builth Wells Branch was pleased to host the fourth Welsh Open Uckers Tournament on 8 June at the Rugby Club, Builth Wells (aka HMS Swan). Contestants came from as far afield as Monmouth, Torfaen, Malvern, Woking, Hay-on-Wye, and from not-so-far as Builth Wells shipmates and local residents also competed for the spoils of battle, medals and trophies. The day started with the first throw of the dice at 1100 and the presentations took place at 1730 after many a hard-fought game between teams and singles players, many being completed needing just a last throw of the dice for a one or two between them for victory – phew!

Chairman Dave presented the trophy for the Uckers Singles Champion to Emma Buckingham (below), and Vice Chairman Shaun presented S/Ms Colin

Lever and Dave Buckingham with the Team trophy (right). After the presentations to the silver medallists – S/Ms Shaun and Patrick, who were team runners up, and S/M Colin, singles runner up – there was a short break for all to refuel, then back to be entertained by the sea shanty group 'The Lower Deckers' (below right). After an hour of some of the best performance of shanties any of us could remember, they received a resounding and well-deserved ovation from us all, there then was a chance to replenish glasses and grab some food before the grand draw for the raffle. A good number won prizes and the final one, a model of HMS Tiger, was swapped around till the only RN veteran of the Lower Deckers ended up with it!

The day was a complete success, thanks to the branch's own Gail and Ellie, who provided much-needed sustenance throughout the day, sponsors Patricks ERD engineering, Black Mountains Botanicals/Black Mountain Roast (coffees) and the Royal Naval Association.



A big thanks to all who entered and played in the tournament and, last but not least, our own working party, Sue and Bettie, aided (when not playing) by Colin, Emma, Shaun, Mark and Nino. All look forward to next year's Welsh Open Uckers Tournament. Finally, if you would like to find out more about Uckers or the Branch, they meet on the third Friday of the month in the Rugby Club Builth Wells at 1930.



LICHFIELD Branch

Lichfield Branch held a special social evening on 16 June during which three branch members received individual awards, presented by special guest Lt Cdr Bill McLundie, from HMS Forward.

The recipients were George Barbrook (Certificate of Appreciation), Rachel Dawson (Lifetime Membership) and James O'Hagen (Certificate of Appreciation).

The branch's previous chairman, Rachel Dawson, joined with current chairman Dino Lott and current secretary Phil Tootill to thank Lt Cdr McLundie for attending the branch's awards evening.





CHRISTCHURCH Branch

Members of Christchurch and District branch took the opportunity to celebrate yet another special birthday of one of their shipmates.

This time it was in honour of S/M Ron Checketts MBE, who was celebrating his 104th birthday. Amongst those helping Ron mark this special occasion was Christchurch Branch President, S/M Rick Squibb, Branch Chairman S/M Cliff Espin and members of the branch, along with Ron's family and friends (pictured above).

S/M Ron was a founder member of Christchurch Branch, which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

Ron will be invited to the Branch anniversary lunch in October, where he will take pride of place as Guest of Honour.

The event is scheduled to be held at Christchurch Sailing Club.



PLYMOUTH Branch

The Plymouth Branch Standard was paraded by Cat at the D-Day memorial in Saltash Passage, from where American troops departed to join the invasion of Normandy in June 1944. This is an annual event, on this occasion with the King being represented by the Lord Lieutenant of Devon. See also [page 36](#).



RAYLEIGH Branch

The annual Rayleigh Trinity Fayre, organised by Rayleigh Town Council and Haddon Events, was held on 8 June, reports branch Welfare and Wellbeing Officer S/M Brian Dobinson.

Rayleigh Branch had a gazebo at the event, and it was manned all day by various branch members. Members were given the option to attend wearing No 2 Rig or Pickle Night Rig – they attracted quite a

lot of interest, and hopefully some new members too!

A number of local dignitaries visited the stand, including Mark Francois, MP for Rayleigh and Wickford. They were also visited by Rayleigh Town Council Chairman, Marianne Vernon, (who is also an RNA Member at Rayleigh), and Cllr Natasha Gallop.

It was a long day, and thank goodness the weather was good too!

SOUTHEND Branch

As 'flaming' June turns into heatwave July, we look back at some activities that Southend Branch has been involved with over the past few weeks, and some of their plans for the future.

First – Trafalgar Dinner. Yes, we might be talking end of October, but tickets are on sale now. This year's Dinner will be held at the RNA Social Club in East Street on 25 October: 6.30pm arrival. 7pm sit down, carriages at 11.45pm.

Dress code is Gentlemen: Mess Undress, Dinner Suit or RNA Rig with Black or RNA Bow Tie; Ladies: Evening Dress, Cocktail Dress or Smart Day Dress. The price per person is £35, which includes three courses, table wine and port (for the toasts).

Menu and booking forms are available on request from Diana Mailley at royalnavalass05@gmail.com. Early booking is recommended as space is limited, and tickets are selling out fast. The RNA Social Club continues to put on many social events and evenings of entertainment, as advertised on their Facebook page. They are also taking bookings for private events, so if you are looking for a venue to host your birthday, anniversary, wedding, christening or bar/bat mitzvah, give them a call on 01702 612255, email them on royalnavalass05@gmail.com or pop along to www.facebook.com/groups/1157850279469862/

Meanwhile, the Branch has taken a Boarding Party to the sun-kissed Historic Dockyard at Chatham to experience the 'Call the Midwife' (filming location) tour. The day continued with some of them taking advantage of free entry to HMS Gannet, HMS Cavalier and HMS Ocelot. There was also time to visit some of the many other static displays and museums, but to be honest, you'll need more than one day to cover them all...! S/M Brian Cox headed up the

Collections Team at David Lloyd again this year, but this will be the last time they are able to do so, due to the advancing age of some of the branch's more 'active' members. Can you help? They are looking for volunteers to step up and help with their public collections.

The Uckers Training Day brought many new and established players to the RNA Social Club, with new players learning the basic rules, and experienced players having their skills honed by their very own Branch and Area Championship winning coaches.

There will be plenty more opportunities for you to pick up the game ahead of this year's competition season, which begins in earnest in October – the



RNA Uckers World Championships in Portsmouth is on 4 October, an Open Competition at Southend on 11 October, the Area 5 competition at Southend on 22 November and Southend take on Rayleigh at Southend on 6 December. Let them know if you'd like to join in. Lastly, the branch took part in Armed Forces Day celebrations at the Castle Point Offices in Kiln Road and in Southend High Street.





DORCHESTER Branch

In a much-anticipated community celebration of service, friendship, and support for local causes, Dorchester Branch hosted its annual Skittle Tournament and Charity Raffle Evening on 6 June at the Trinity Club in Dorchester. Generously sponsored once again by Drumgrange Ltd, a leading Portland-based defence and technology firm, the evening welcomed local veterans groups, charities, and supporters to compete and connect over a traditional game of skittles.

Teams representing Dorchester, **Portland** and **Weymouth** Branches, the Fleet Air Arm Association Weymouth and Portland Branch, Drumgrange Ltd, and the Friends of MV Freedom brought energy, enthusiasm, and a bit of healthy rivalry to the lanes.

The night belonged to Drumgrange Ltd, who not only claimed the overall trophy but also earned the top men's score. The ladies' medal was awarded to Angie Cole, who played for the Friends of MV Freedom team.

More than just a sporting occasion, the event's core mission was community support. With both a Rum Raffle and a Prize and Bottle Draw, the event raised a commendable £625. These funds will directly support the Friends of MV Freedom, which provides accessible sailing experiences for people with disabilities, and Dorchester

County Hospital Charities, supporting essential local healthcare services.

As part of the proceedings, Drumgrange Ltd's Richard Fagan presented a £500 sponsorship cheque, which was received with thanks by the event organisers and representatives of Friends of MV Freedom.

Reflecting on the evening, Dorchester Branch officials praised the turnout, spirit, and shared purpose of all involved.

The verdict was: "It's events like this that remind us what community means, bringing people together, celebrating our Naval heritage, and supporting causes that matter deeply to us all."

Dorchester Branch and Weymouth & Portland Fleet Air Arm Association continue to engage their members and the broader community through inclusive, meaningful activities. Their joint efforts strengthen intergenerational bonds, foster mutual support, and honour the values of service, remembrance, and resilience.

The Skittle Tournament is not just about tradition; it's about impact. The funds raised will go a long way in helping local charities do what they do best – change lives.

The evening ended with smiles, medals, and a shared commitment to do it all again next year.



AREA 4 and CHARD Branch

Following the hugely successful Reunion of the RNA Area 4 South West Flotilla in Bideford this year, funds were raised from 15 branches in attendance from around the South West, comprising a total of 154 members.

S/M Malcolm Day, President of Chard Branch, was proud to present a cheque for £1,000 to Angela Harper, the Families Pastoral Worker for Aggie's, a charity based at RNAS Yeovilton (pictured left).

Angela accepted the cheque on Aggie's behalf and thanked the shipmates who attended this year's reunion at Bideford for their kind generosity.

Pictured right are (from left) CPO Harrower, WO1 Edwards, Angela Harper, S/M Malcolm Day and Naval Chaplain Nigel Beardsley in the church at Yeovilton.



WREXHAM Branch

On 13 June, in a very public display of unity between the Royal Navy and the RNA, shipmates from Wrexham Branch joined the ship's company of HMS Dragon as they exercised their right to march through the city, *writes S/M Kev Hackett*.

HMS Dragon was afforded the Freedom of the city and county borough of Wrexham in September 2024, but due to operational demands, they were unable to parade until last month when, at the request and personal invitation from their Commanding Officer, Cdr Iain Giffin, shipmates were asked to provide a squad from the branch to march alongside their shipmates from Dragon. In his acceptance speech, given in both English and Welsh, Cdr Giffin explained the significance and history of ships being affiliated with towns and cities, before giving the order to unfurl the standard and fix bayonets. It was in bright sunshine that the parade stepped off, drums beating, standards flying and bayonets fixed, carrying the Scroll of Freedom before them to march through Wrexham city.

Cheered and clapped along the route by members of the public, who also watched and waved from office windows, the ship's company celebrated their newly-awarded freedoms.

The parade ended at the War Memorial Hall, with the ship's company being hosted by Wrexham Council for a reception before joining their RNA shipmates in the War Memorial Club for a less-formal reception.

HMS Dragon's ship's company, which included shipmates from Australia, New Zealand, the USA and France, were immaculately turned out, and their drill impeccable.

However, given the parade marshal was one WO1 Darren Waring RN, RVO, MBE, the former ceremonial officer of the Royal Navy, responsible for the immaculately executed 12 - 6 manoeuvre seen at His Majesty's coronation, you would expect nothing less.

Able supported by his team of GIs, including CPO (AWW) ED Mooney and PO (AWW) Jack 'Tom' Hanks, Escort to the standard CPO (AWW) 'H' Nelson (I know that name from somewhere).

I could not write this without stating it was an emotional day. I can honestly say, this old matelot's eyes were affected, without any smoke or hayfever being involved, as I witnessed these events coming to fruition and thought about the shipmates we have lost along the way; as we



fought to reinvigorate the branch and raise the profile of the Royal Navy throughout Wrexham, they would have been so proud of the branch and the shipmates from Dragon.

My final thought on the day was the joy I experienced watching the 'Old and Bold' and the 'Present and the future' chatting with each other and exchanging dits.

The Royal Navy is in very safe hands, shipmates!

They may be a different generation and operate under different conditions and core values than we did, but they are shipmates and matelots through and through.

Up Spirits Dragon, BZ!





PORTSEA and PORTSMOUTH Branch

Another busy month for the Branch starting off on 6 June at the D-Day 80 service at the D-Day Memorial Stone close to South Parade Pier in Southsea.

Naval Base Commander Cdre Marcel Rosenberg and HMS Victory's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Steve Cass were among those laying wreaths.

S/M Richie Farman had the honour of meeting D-Day veteran Keith Whiting RM.

Next up on 14 June was the Falklands Liberation Service at Old Portsmouth. This was a well-attended event and wreaths were laid on behalf of the Branch by Branch Chairman S/M Tom Frank and on behalf of Central Office by S/M Richie Farman, who then represented the Branch at a very well-organised barbeque and Horse Racing Night hosted by **Salisbury Branch**.

The weekend of 21 June saw members attending the RNA 75 National Conference and events as well as manning a stall at Portsmouth Armed Forces Day, where Vice Chairman S/M Paul Henty enjoyed a Tot with both local MPs Stephen Morgan and Amanda Martin

Monday 23 June saw the Flag Raising in Guildhall Square for Armed Forces Day, with yet another good turn-out from the Branch.



TORREVIEJA Branch

Once again, Torrevieja Branch rose to the challenge by this year – for the first time – hosting locally the Armed Forces Day (AFD) Parade and Service, under the leadership of chairman Tony Jenkins. Armed Forces personnel, veterans, families and supporters demonstrated their fortitude with the challenge of the temperature on 28 June 2025 at the Capilla de las Mil Palmeras, where British veterans in Spain gathered with pride and reverence to commemorate AFD through heartfelt ceremonies, music, and moments of remembrance, blending time-honoured British tradition with warm Spanish hospitality. These events not only honoured military service but also strengthened the bonds of community, solidarity, and shared values.

The event was made possible with the support of local businesswoman Francisca Samper and the Pilar de la Horadada Ayuntamiento.

Among the guests was the Mayor of Pilar de la Horadada, José María Pérez Sánchez, a familiar and welcome presence at these veterans' events. He was joined by Maria Del Mar Sáez Martínez, Councillor for Citizen Security, María Nieves Moreno, Councillor for Foreign Residents; Mariano Alvarez, of the Local Police; and Anthonio Lopez Bailon, Sub Lieutenant of the Guardia Civil in Torre de la Horadada.

The service was led by Pastor Phil Molloy of Asambleas de Dios, who warmly welcomed the congregation in both English and Spanish. Her address acknowledged ongoing global conflicts

as she honoured the sacrifices made by Armed Forces, police, and auxiliaries past, present, and future.

A parade of Standard Bearers from veterans associations, including the RNA, Submariners and RBL, was led by the Torrevieja Pipes and Drums in the march to the church in true military style.

Pastor Phil delivered a dual-language sermon that combined spiritual reflection, gratitude, and remembrance. The offering, designated for Armed Forces charities, was followed by Our Military, a poem written especially for the day by Pastor Phil and read by RAF veteran Walter Shatford. Then came a solemn moment as Ian Gibson of the Just Brass Band performed The Last Post, followed by Reveille.

He was followed by former policemen, Piper Colin Gordon of the Torrevieja Pipes and Drums who performed Hector the Hero.

Following the Nationals Anthems of Spain and UK, and led by the Standard Bearers, the congregation moved to the Garden of Remembrance.

Piper Gordon provided a musical backdrop as the Mayor, the Sub Lieutenant Commander of the Guardia Civil and the local police laid wreaths. Councillors from Pilar de la Horadada then placed three bouquets of red and yellow roses.

The wreaths and garlands formed a poignant circle of tribute, a silent promise that the sacrifices of those who served will never be forgotten. In true Jack style, following the service, almost 50 guests went to Pueblo Latino for a celebratory lunch. During the meal, Branch Chairman Tony Jenkins expressed his heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the day's success. He spoke about the RNA, which



this year celebrates its 75th anniversary, having been formally founded in 1950 from the merger of several Naval organisations.

Unlike its predecessor, which served primarily ex-ratings, the RNA was created as an inclusive association, embracing officers, ratings, WRNS, QARNNS, Reserves, Royal Marines their families and supporters who embrace the mission: to unite the Naval family under the ethos of "all of one company" and adopt the motto of "Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship".

In closing, Tony proposed a toast: to 75 years of the RNA, to all who wear or have worn the Royal Navy uniform, and to the continuing legacy of service, solidarity, and remembrance for generations to come.



FOLKESTONE Branch

Branch members had a busy day on 14 June. At 11am two members, both Falklands veterans, laid a SAMA wreath and a Type 21 Association wreath at the town's War Memorial to mark the 43rd anniversary of Falklands Liberation Day 1982. They were supported by the Branch



Standard Bearer.

Following the observance of the Silence and Exhortation they joined other Branch members, as well as members from other Service Associations, at Folkestone Indoor Bowls Club for a three-course lunch to mark the 75th anniversary of the RNA at which the Guest of Honour was Folkestone Deputy Mayor, Cllr Jacqui Meade.

The restaurant area had been prepared for the occasion by the catering team.

Each guest was given a memento of the occasion – a glass coaster each containing the 75th logo supplied by Central Office.

On completion of the meal the guests returned to the lounge for coffee/more drinks and the obligatory raffle, which raised a total of £120 for Branch funds.



ST NEOTS and DISTRICT Branch

100-year-old S/M David Berry recently met with members of the Huntingdon Sea Cadets at the unit's annual parade and inspection.

Dave, who was a Telegraphist Air Gunner in Fairey Swordfish torpedo-bombers during World War 2 was a guest at the cadets' parade, a highlight of the year for any cadet unit.

Shipmates will no doubt remember that it was a Swordfish that crucially crippled the steering gear of Bismark, leading to her destruction at the hands of a Royal Navy task group.

The veteran biplane, known as the Stringbag, also sowed mines and sank a considerable number of submarines.

Also invited were members of St Neots Branch – Shipmates Geoff Patterson, Tony Webley, Keith Ridley, Maureen Ridley, Helen Patterson, and Terry Brown, who were surprised and delighted at how much interest the cadets took in Dave and his experiences.

Afterwards shipmates, including David, joined in timed, assigned group tasks – in which David's group came top!

A great example of the future meeting the past and learning from it!





RHONDDA Branch

Gordon 'Pop' White was the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement award at the recent Welsh Veterans Awards.

S/M Pop, a Life Member of Rhondda Branch, is a veteran of the Anzio Landings in Italy where he was wounded – he suffered a broken left arm and right leg. Pop, who is 102 years old, is pictured with the new Naval Regional Commander for Wales and West, Cdre Tristram Kirkwood.

AREA 4 and PORTLAND Branch

No 4 Area (the South West Flotilla), which covers 27 branches across Bristol, Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, staged its Annual Reunion Weekend from 7–9 March at the Durrant House Hotel in Bideford, North Devon.

As part of the reunion tradition, members organised raffles and fundraising events throughout the weekend, raising an impressive £3,500 for the Reunion Charity Chest. Each branch within No 4 Area was invited to submit a proposal to receive a portion of these funds to support a cause of their choosing. Portland Branch nominated the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, recognising the invaluable assistance the service has provided to its members in the past. The Reunion Committee accepted this proposal and awarded £1,000 to the charity. At the most recent branch meeting, a cheque was formally presented to Harry Hendry, representative of the Air Ambulance, by S/M Peter Shoesmith, Deputy National Council



Member for 4 Area (pictured).

Also present for the presentation were S/M Dusty Miller, Chairman of Portland Branch, and S/M Ben Cartwright, Deputy Chairman of 4 Area and Portland Branch President. The RNA continues to honour its commitment to community and camaraderie, with heartfelt contributions that make a meaningful impact across the South West.



PLYMOUTH Branch

At the June meeting of Plymouth Branch three new Standard Bearers, having completed their training, were presented with their Badge of Office, as shown in the picture – from left, Chairman Kevin Adamson, Martin Sims, Lee Perry and Katheryne Jones, Ceremonial Officer Derek Atkinson and Branch Standard Bearer Colin Heart.

CHART YOUR STORY IN ARTWORK

Every sailor has a story – what's yours? Honour your story with an art piece as unique as your career.

These beautiful pieces are created from original hand drawings of your ships' crests and placed onto a chart of your choice.

The prints come as 80x60cm and are completely unique to you, a limited edition one-off, all complete with mount and plaque.

These are a new product and will be priced at £1,697.

But for the month of July only, artist Emily Witcher is offering just ten members of the RNA an incredible opportunity to have your very own bespoke piece of



art for just £997.

For this you will receive this unique piece, free delivery, VAT included and a small surprise gift.

If you would be interested to knowing more about this limited offer please email Emily on [info@](mailto:info@emilyroseframing.co.uk)

emilyroseframing.co.uk and start telling your story. Emily Witcher runs Emily Rose Fine Art and Framing; for more details see her Instagram (<https://tinyurl.com/3hxadhkb>) or Facebook (<https://tinyurl.com/4wf28m5n>) pages.

NOT FORGOTTEN IN THE REGIONS

Regional Connect Weeks are a bold new idea for the 105th anniversary year of The Not Forgotten.

Their events programme this summer (and into spring 2026) is focused on one region of the UK at a time, delivering a full week of activities, events, and engagement for veterans and their guests.

The first Regional Connect Week in South West England was a great success, with hundreds of veterans coming together to enjoy a Garden Party, Fun Fest, Afternoon Tea Concert and a Hiking and Abseil Challenge across Devon, Cornwall and Somerset.

They hit Wales 14-18 July, then South East England 28 July – 1 August. See <https://thenotforgotten.org/events/> for full details.

OBITUARIES



S/M JEFF FOX

Plymouth Branch is sad to announce that S/M Jeff Fox crossed the bar on Thursday 26 June. He died peacefully at home with his wife Moira by his side. Not only was Jeff our Branch Standard Bearer but also carried out that responsibility for SAMA. In recognition of this their Standards led the parade of a further 12 Standards, all dressed with Mourning Drapes, in the Veterans Parade on Armed Forces Day.

S/M PETER KENT

All at the RNA were deeply saddened to hear that S/M Peter Kent has crossed the bar at the age of 100. Peter took part in the D-Day Landings, and he later sailed to Singapore to assist with the repatriation of POWs. He served in HMS Adventurer and HMS Hartland Point, and will be much missed by all who knew him.

S/M JOHN WILBOR

S/M John Wilbor passed away on Sunday 29 June at the age of 93 years.

John's son said that his father joined the Royal Navy at 17 years old in 1950 and served on board HMS Vanguard (pictured right), HMS Glasgow, HMS Plover, HMS Mercury and HMS Hermes. He was a Ship's Cook, so although not a particularly glamorous position, he was nevertheless extremely proud to have served his country.

He was an active member of the Northallerton Branch and served as Chairman for the branch until it was disbanded a few years ago. It was while he served in HMS

Mercury that he was a member of the football team that won the Navy Cup.

For the past five years or so John's son subscribed to Navy News for him, and he loved reading the magazine on a monthly basis.

John will be cremated at Maple Park, Thirsk, at a service on Wednesday 23 July at 1.00pm, if any shipmates are interested in attending. There will be a wake following the service at the Golden Lion Hotel, 114 High Street, Northallerton DL78PP from 2.30pm.

Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: IWM (A 31507)



S/M MICHAEL SCARBOROUGH

Michael Scarborough passed away on 30 May 2025.

A member of Newark Branch, Michael joined the Royal Navy at 15 and served with honour on board HMS Birmingham, Barrington, Belfast, Rame Head, Zulu, Sirius, Jaguar, Dido (aka Hero), Excellent, Mermaid, Ark Royal (pictured above) and Hermes.

He transferred to the Reserve List in 1985.

He crossed the bar aged 85 – a sailor through and through, he will be much missed by family and friends.

A short service of remembrance will be held in Coddington on 30 July. Details with the local RNA."





HMS A1 in 1906. See 9 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (Q 22015)

JULY 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 July 1922

HMS Insolent was one of those small, perhaps insignificant footnotes in the annals of the Royal Navy, but she was still a part of the vast panoply of vessels both large and small that made the Senior Service the most powerful fighting force in the world during the reign of Queen Victoria. Insolent could easily be overlooked in the grand scheme of things. She was one of two Bouncer-class gun boats launched at Pembroke Royal Dockyard in 1881, a 265-ton 'flatiron' vessel, so-called because of her supposed likeness to the clothes irons of the day. She and her sister, Bouncer, were small, without masts and having a low freeboard. Built of steel, she mounted a 10in muzzle-loading fixed gun, which was aimed by pointing the whole vessel at the target. The class, as with many of the flatiron and similar gun boats, was nominally for coastal defence, but also with an eye to coastal bombardment – acting as small monitors that could either steam into position – slowly – or be towed to a certain location, from where she could hit shore defences. Her career was distinctly patchy; one of her Commanding Officers, Boatswain Ernest Griffin, was removed from command after a court martial in 1909, though he was temporarily back in command for two months in 1914. In 1917 she appeared to be operating in the western English Channel, as she was reported to have picked up survivors from the American destroyer USS Jacob Jones, sunk by U-53 on 6 December 1917 near the Isles of Scilly. Before the war ended she was reduced to harbour service at Portsmouth as a gate vessel, and by 1919 she was one of 33 Royal Navy vessels deemed obsolete and awaiting disposal. Many of her type of ship were particularly sturdy and saw continued service in civilian life, but Insolent was not so lucky, as she foundered in

Portsmouth Harbour on 1 July 1922.

2 July 1803

HMS Minerve has a rather unusual history, having been built by the French, captured by the British, recaptured by the French and finally taken again by the Royal Navy, meaning she had four distinct identities during her 20-year career. She was built as a 40-gun frigate at Toulon and launched in September 1794 as Minerve. She saw some action in the Mediterranean, capturing the British collier Hannibal off Ibiza in December that year, and the following year she took part in the Action of 24 June, when she and the 36-gun frigate Artemise tangled with frigates HMS Lowestoffe (32 gun) and Dido (28 guns). Despite their apparent advantage in firepower, the French did not play their hand well – Artemise fled the scene and Minerve was forced to surrender. She was commissioned as HMS Minerve and enjoyed several successes, including the capture of the Spanish frigate Santa Sabina 1 December 1796 in a bloody action (the Spanish had 164 men killed or wounded, while Minerve had eight men killed, four missing and 38 wounded). In early September 1802 she ran the 46-gun French frigate Bravoure ashore off Elba. On 2 July 1803 Minerve ran aground in fog off Cherbourg while chasing French merchant vessels. Attempts to refloat her failed, and under fire from a shore battery as well as gunboats, she surrendered early the following morning. The ship was put straight back into service by the French as the *Canonnière*, and in 1806 sailed to Mauritius (at that time known as Isle de France), patrolling the Indian Ocean and tangling with two powerful Royal Navy ships on 21 April that year. She continued to range far in her duties, sailing from the Philippines to Mexico in early 1807 before returning to Mauritius, where she challenged the blockading 30-gun frigate HMS Laurel, defeating her in a single-ship action on 11 September 1808. In late 1809 she began a transit back to France for major repairs under the name *Confiance* with a small crew and reduced armament, having been sold before she set off. While on passage she managed to evade British warships more than a dozen times, but her luck ran out off the coast of Brittany when she encountered 74-gun third rate HMS Valiant and captured after a six-hour chase. She was once more placed on the Royal Navy's books, but she never saw active service and was

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deleted from the records in 1814.

3 July 1942

Armed trawler HMS Le Tiger was loaned to the Americans in March 1942 for a period of just seven months, but that gave the 516-ton ship plenty of time to prove her worth. She was built in 1937 by Cochrane and Sons at Selby on the River Ouse and commissioned into the Royal Navy in the first weeks of the war as an anti-submarine vessel. Having gained experience in anti-submarine warfare tactics at Tobermory in Scotland and Lough Foyle in Northern Ireland over several months, in March 1942 she and her crew were sent to the East Coast of the United States to patrol under US Navy control. On 3 July that year she was tasked with picking up survivors of the 7,000-ton American merchantman SS Alexander Macomb, which had been attacked by submarine U-215. The cargo ship, carrying 9,000 tons of military kit including aircraft, tanks and explosives, was on her maiden voyage and in thick fog had fallen astern of Convoy BX 27, which was heading to Halifax in Nova Scotia in preparation to cross the North Atlantic. At just after midday around 170 miles off Cape Cod a torpedo from the U-boat caught the merchant ship amidships and detonated explosives in her hold, causing her to sink in under 30 minutes. Ten of her crew of 66 died, and 35 of the survivors were picked up by HMT Le Tiger within 15 minutes of the ship going down. The British trawler dropped her passengers ashore at Woods Hole the following day, by which time U-215 had met a similar fate to her only victim. Having picked up the American survivors, HMT Le Tiger began to hunt for the attacker, a 1,280-ton Type VIID submarine which was also on her maiden war patrol, and she quickly detected her prey. A brief and accurate attack with depth charges destroyed the submarine, which went down with all 48 hands. Le Tiger returned to British service in the autumn of 1942 and served out the war without mishap. She was sold to the Hull Ice Co in October 1945, renamed Regal in the summer of 1947 and Othello a year later. She was finally scrapped at Ghent in Belgium in 1963.

4 July 1915

Frederick Parslow won the Victoria Cross for his actions in the face of an attack by a U-boat off the coast of Ireland on in the summer of 1915, though it could not be awarded until four years after later, after some administrative loose ends were tied up. On the morning of 4 July 1915 Frederick Parslow was the Master of His Majesty's Horse Transport Anglo-Californian, a 7,330-ton requisitioned steamer carrying almost 1,000 military horses, when she came under attack from U-39. Parslow, a civilian mariner aged 59, ordered the ship keep changing course to avoid the U-boat, but by 1030 he was preparing to follow the Kptlt Walter Forstmann's order to "abandon your vessel as quickly as possible" when the British wireless operator received a message from a Royal Navy destroyer telling them to hold out as long as possible. Parslow got his ship under way again, at which the submarine – a prolific ship-killer, with more than 150 victims – redoubled its attack, firing at the transport's bridge. Parslow remained on the bridge throughout, despite the damage caused by the gunfire, and he died where he stood. Parslow's son, also Frederick, was the Chief Officer on board and took over from his father, managing to steer clear of major damage until two Royal Navy destroyers arrived and drove off the U-boat. The steamer suffered 20 casualties, but most of the

horses were saved. Frederick Parslow the younger was subsequently commissioned into the RNR as a Sub-Lieutenant and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions. His father was not eligible for the VC as a Merchant Navy officer at the time of his death; however, the Royal Navy posthumously commissioned him as a Lieutenant in the RNR, and in May 1919 he was posthumously awarded the highest gallantry medal, making him the first member of the Merchant Navy to receive the VC, as well as the oldest recipient in World War 1.

5 July 1873

Two of the most dispensable ships of the Victorian Navy went head-to-head on 5 July 1873, and after the smoke had cleared no one was any the wiser as to how they could effectively deploy these two white elephants. HMS Hotspur was launched in March 1870 at the Robert Napier and Sons yard in Govan. The 4,330-ton ship was designated an ironclad steam ram, a design which grew from the idea that a steamship could itself be a weapon by the addition of a ram to its bows, in this case a 3-metre armoured projection. In reality there were hardly any examples of a ram working properly in combat – the chances were that the attacking ship would do at least as much damage to itself as to its foe. In the case of Hotspur, there was even less chance of her doing damage, as she was considerably slower than her prospective targets, and the prominence of the ram in her design meant that the effectiveness of her main 12in gun was compromised. She was rebuilt in 1871, when she received a revolving turret mounting two 12in guns, as well as new boilers and improved armour, and in July 1873 her effectiveness was tested against the breastwork monitor HMS Glatton. This 5,000-ton ship, completed at Chatham Dockyard in 1872, is something of a mystery – her design was determined by the Board of Admiralty but her purpose was never made entirely clear, and even her designer was not let into the reasoning behind her existence. There was vague talk of her being used to defend British harbours and anchorages, while attacking those of the enemy, but her very limited freeboard (less than a metre amidships) meant she would have been less than comfortable in open waters in anything more than a gentle breeze. She went straight into reserve on commissioning, acting as tender to the gunnery school at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth, and on 5 July 1873 she was the target of live firing trials by HMS Hotspur, which sent 600lb shots into Glatton's turret to see how it coped with the shock. She clearly survived this ordeal, as she was fitted to fire torpedoes in 1881 and additional guns were added to her armoury. Her only 'sea time' came in 1887 when she was made responsible for the defence of the Thames Estuary, after which she drifted into reserve and was sold in 1903. Hotspur saw service in the Sea of Marmara during the Russo-Turkish War of 1878 but was also limited in terms of active service at sea, and she ended up as guardship at Holyhead, until 1893, then at the Royal Dockyard in Bermuda, where she was sold for scrap at the start of the 20th Century.

6 July 1916

With a slight shift in timing it could well have been the case that the submarine HMS E26 lined up against Royal Navy warships instead of with them. The 820-ton vessel was one of a pair ordered by the Ottoman Navy in April 1914, but that order was taken over by the Admiralty

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instead and the submarine was laid down at the William Beardmore yard in Dalmuir in November that same year. She was launched almost exactly a year later, but her career was relatively brief. She sailed from Harwich on 29 June to take up a patrol off Terschelling on the coast of the northern Netherlands, but on 2 July the Germans reported seeing evidence of an oil leak apparently coming from a submarine. The following day, HMS E55, which was in the same vicinity, heard the muffled sounds of distant explosions, which with hindsight could well have been the death throes of her sister boat. No more was heard from E26m, and she was listed as having been lost with all 31 hands on 6 July 1916 in the North Sea, somewhere off the mouth of the Ems River, where German forces had indeed attacked an unknown submarine with gunfire and bombs on 3 July. Her wreck was found by Dutch divers some 20 years ago.

7 July 1917

Submarine HMS J2 is thought to have sunk U-boat U-99 in the North Sea on 7 July 1917, though there are doubts over the exact fate of the 1,100-ton German submarine. J2 was something of a monster – built just 14 years after the Holland class, the J-class boats displaced 18 times that of Holland 1 and they could motor along at almost 20 knots on the surface, making them the fastest submarines in the world at that time. Reports at the time record that the British boat encountered U-99, which was on her maiden war patrol, between the Orkneys and the Norwegian coast on 7 July 1917, putting an 18in torpedo into the German vessel, which sank with all 40 hands. Subsequent research suggests that J2's attack as carried out at extreme range, and there are doubts whether such an attack could have resulted in the loss of U-99. After the war J2 was one of the six surviving J-boats offered to the Royal Australian Navy as gifts to help police the Pacific region, and she sailed for the Antipodes on 9 April 1919, along with cruisers HMAS Sydney and HMAS Brisbane and submarine depot ship HMAS Platypus. The flotilla reached Sydney three months later in somewhat weary condition, requiring immediate refits, but despite being brought back to readiness they had little to do, and by the middle of 1922 they were being withdrawn from service as their maintenance was proving too costly. J2 was scuttled off Port Phillip Heads in 1924 and she is now a popular destination for experienced divers, amongst whom she is known as the '39-metre Sub' or 'Deep Sub' (because of the depth of water in which she lies).

8 July 1854

In late June 1854 boats from paddle frigate HMS Firebrand and paddle sloop HMS Vesuvius destroyed part of the Russian defences at the mouth of the Sulina branch of the Danube near the town of Sulina, on the Black Sea in what is now Romania. This small action, part of the wider Crimean War, itself sparked a series of consequences, including the death of a popular young Naval officer. The two wooden warships, each mounting six guns, had bombarded coastal defences and attacked Sulina with virtually no opposition, and it was assumed that the Russians – including mounted Cossack troops – had abandoned the area, despite the fact it was strategically important in controlling military and trade movements on the Danube. On 8 July Capt Hyde Parker, of HMS Firebrand, was rowed upstream in his gig to inspect the damage and investigate rumours that some Russian had returned to man an earthwork battery. Parker's gig was followed by a second boat from his frigate and a third from Vesuvius, carrying the paddle sloop's Commanding Officer Cdr Richard Powell. Although they believed no enemy was present, the boats were fired on from the remains of the damaged stockade. Parker, the 30-year-old son of Vice Admiral Hyde Parker, ordered the boats to withdraw, but then landed a shore party to attack the stockade. Parker led the charge, but in doing so was shot through the heart and died at the scene. Cdr Powell took command of the assault party and swiftly drove off the Russian defenders. Nine days later, on 17 July, boats from Vesuvius and the five-gun paddle gunship HMS Spitfire returned to the spot where Capt Parker died, and completely destroyed what remained of the Russian stockades. The boats then continued upstream to Sulina, which they burned, leaving only the church and a lighthouse standing. Sulina was a key location, as it was a major trans-shipment point for the vast quantity of grain that came down the Danube and was then transported out to larger ships in deeper water. HMS Firebrand, which had been ordered in 1842 as HMS Belzebub but was renamed before being launched in that year, served in the Royal Navy until she was sold in 1864; HMS Vesuvius was sold for scrapping the year after, and HMS Spitfire, which by the time of Crimea had been converted to a survey vessel, was used as a tug from 1862 and broken up in 1888.

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HMS Defender and cruisers in action south of Sardinia in September 1940. See 11 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (A 2320)





MTB 80 – sister to MTB 81 – under way. See 12 July.. See 5 June.
Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (FL 25733)

9 July 1902

HMS A1 was launched on 9 July 1902 – the first British-designed submarine, the first Royal Navy submarine to suffer fatalities, and the first submarine to be sunk twice. The lead ship of the A class, A1 displaced 210 tons when submerged – twice that of the Holland class that preceded her by a year – but her later sisters were even larger and more sophisticated. She was not a particularly lucky vessel. Before she even left the Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness there was a hydrogen explosion on board, and while she was being towed to Portsmouth to start her service career seawater entered her batteries, flooding the boat with chlorine and forcing the crew to evacuate. On 18 March 1904 she was carrying out dummy attacks on cruiser HMS Juno in the Solent when she was struck by mail steamer SS Berwick Castle. Although the sea was only 12 metres deep the crew of 11 could not escape as she flooded and all were lost. She was raised a month later, repaired and put back into service, but following an explosion in her petrol engine six years later she was converted for use in anti-submarine warfare research. A1 was lost in 1911 when she was running unmanned underwater on automatic pilot; an extensive search failed to find her, but fishermen in Bracklesham Bay discovered her almost 80 years later – it would appear that she had sunk slowly, and with that reserve of buoyancy she had been pushed several miles away from the search area by strong currents.

10 July 1866

Wooden screw sloop HMS Amazon sank off Start Point in Devon on 10 July 1866 after colliding with a civilian steam packet in flat calm, clear weather. The 1,080-ton vessel had both a simple 300hp steam engine and barque-rigged sail plan, and was launched at Pembroke Dockyard in May 1865. She was equipped with a ram bow and four muzzle-loading guns – two 7in and two 64pdrs. There is not much to say of her Naval career which was as brief as could be. According to a contemporary report in *The Times*, she was on her maiden voyage and bound for the Nova Scotia when the collision occurred. Around 0100 on 10 July 1866 on

a clear, calm night in the Channel 20 miles off the Devon coast it is thought the officer in charge at the time, Sub Lieutenant Alfred Loveridge, ordered the helm to be put to starboard instead of port, with the result that Amazon ploughed into the 420-ton Irish steamer SS Osprey, bound for Antwerp out of Liverpool, which had a crew of 20, and carried seven passengers, as well as the Master's wife and three children, plus a little boy who was a family friend. Amazon's ram proved effective – the merchant ship was sliced in two and rapidly sank, taking ten people with her, those being several passengers, the Master's children and a female steward. The warship stopped and lowered her boats to pick up survivors (most of Osprey's crew had clambered from the stricken steamer directly onto the warship while the two remained locked together), but the collision had seriously damaged her ram and she started to flood through her bows; little over two hours later she too sank in thickening fog, though her ship's company and the survivors of the Osprey were able to clamber into her boats and with the help of three fishing boats all made it safely ashore near Torquay that afternoon. The collision raised questions in Parliament, with MPs asking how most of the crew of Osprey escaped with their lives while passengers went down with the steamer – and also how a modern warship designed to ram armoured vessels should sink herself when ramming a civilian steamer. Sub Lt Loveridge was dismissed the service following a court martial on board HMS Victory which found him guilty of "grave error of judgment", but "on account of the high character given him for zeal in the service, they recommend him to the favourable consideration of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty."

11 July 1941

Destroyer HMS Defender was fatally damaged by a bomb as she returned to Alexandria on 11 July 1941, sinking several hours later. Defender was a 1,920-ton D-class destroyer, built by Vickers Armstrong at Barrow in the early 1930s, and spend much of her pre-war service on the China Station and in the Red Sea. The first part of her war saw Defender serving in the Mediterranean and on West Africa convoy escort duties,

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and she picked up a clutch of Battle Honours – Calabria and Spartivento (1940), and Matapan, Malta Convoys, Greece, Crete and Libya (1941). In June 1941 she began shuttling from Alexandria to Tobruk, in Libya, carrying essential supplies, and it was on one of these missions that she met her end. Returning from Tobruk just before dawn on 11 July 1941 in company with the Australian destroyer HMAS Vendetta, Defender was spotted by a lone Junker Ju88 bomber on a reconnaissance mission. The aircraft attacked the ships, and one bomb fell very close to Defender, exploding under her hull just in front of her engine room. The shockwave broke the destroyer's back and flooded her engine room, so most of her ship's company transferred to Vendetta, which took Defender and a skeleton crew in tow. However, the stricken warship began to break up under the strain, so the final members of her crew were recovered and Defender was scuttled by Vendetta using torpedoes and gunfire. There were no casualties in the sinking

12 July 1943

Motor Torpedo Boat MTB 81 sank a German submarine in the Messina Strait on 12 July 1943. The boat was built at the Vosper yard in Portchester, at the top of Portsmouth Harbour, in 1943, one of the Vosper 70ft type of MTB displacing just under 50 tons that created legends in home waters and beyond as they dashed into combat at speeds over 40 knots. MTB 81 was for much of her war part of the 24th MTB Flotilla which operated in the eastern Mediterranean, with an emphasis on special operations in the latter part of the conflict. However, on 12 July MTB 81 was operating in Italian waters, and fired torpedoes at U-561 in the Strait of Messina. The submarine sank, with 42 of her crew of 47 going down with her. Her loss occurred almost exactly a year after she narrowly escaped destruction by an Allies aircraft – on the evening of 15 July 1942, off Port Said in Egypt, a British Liberator bomber was fired on by the submarine, and hits were noted on the aircraft, which flew over the boat without dropping any bombs. The U-boat dived, resurfacing around an hour later at 2315, at which point she came under attack by what they assumed was the same bomber. This time the U-boat's flak was more accurate, bringing down the aircraft and killing all seven of its crew.

13 July 1943

German submarine U-607 sunk by an RAF Short Sunderland in the Bay of Biscay on 13 July 1943 – and the handful of survivors were eventually picked up by Black Swan-class sloop HMS Wren. The U-boat was built by Blohm & Voss at Hamburg and launched on 11 December 1941. Displacing 860 tons submerged, and with a crew of up to 60, the Type VIIC boat had a long range – almost 10,000 miles at 10 knots – and could operate as deep as 230 metres, making her a dangerous opponent. U-607 completed three patrols under her first commanding officer, the first from Kristiansand in Norway then two from St Nazaire in France. During her second patrol the submarine took part in an attack on Convoy SC 104 from Canada to Liverpool, and took a beating when HMS Viscount dropped 14 depth charges on her – the boat plummeted to 180 metres before the crew regained control, and the incident resulted in an open slanging match between her commanding officer and engineering officer, which resulted in the court martial and removal of the latter, who was sentenced to a year in confinement. The submarine took six weeks to repair. Her fourth patrol – the first under her new captain – was also a tense affair for her crew, with two air attacks and a depth-charge run by a Royal Navy corvette, all of which she evaded. On 10 July 1943 she sailed from St Nazaire with a crew of 51 to lay mines off Kingston, Jamaica, in company with three other U-boats, though one was forced to return to base with mechanical issues. In the morning of 13 July U-607 surfaced at the western edge of the Bay of Biscay, and was spotted by a Short Sunderland flying boat of 228 Sqn RAF and a Handley Page Halifax bomber of 58 Sqn RAF. The Sunderland pressed home a low-level attack, dropping seven depth charges from a height of 50ft, narrowly missing the U-boat's fin. The depth charges cut the submarine in two, with the bow rising vertically before sinking and the stern capsizing before slipping below the surface. Around two dozen sailors were seen to escape, seven of whom managed to clamber into a dinghy dropped by the Sunderland – these were the only men to survive the sinking. The Royal Navy's Second Support Group swept past some time later but could not divert from their task to pick up the men, so it was left

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HMS C11. See 14 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © The rights holder (Q 74809)



to sloop HMS Wren to approach in the early hours of 14 July. At first the Germans refused to state the identity of their submarine, but when Wren threatened to leave them adrift they changed their mind and revealed they were from U-607.

14 July 1909

Submarine HMS C11 sunk following a collision with merchantman SS Eddystone off the Norfolk coast on 14 July 1909. One of a class of 38 short-range coastal submarines built in the first decade of the 20th Century, C11 was launched at Vickers of Barrow on 27 March 1907 and commissioned in September the same year. On in the evening of 14 July 1909 the 320-ton boat was on a southbound passage in the North Sea with eight of her sister boats, 11 torpedo boats and the depot ship HMS Bonaventure. It was a calm but foggy night, with all the warships correctly lit. Approaching from the south was the 3,900-ton freighter SS Eddystone, carrying a cargo of wheat and unaware of the formation coming in the opposite direction. The merchantman attempted to steer through the flotilla, causing them to swerve out of line, and in doing so she ran down C11, the first submarine in the column, slicing her fin clean away from the hull and causing her to rapidly sink in around 22 metres of water off the town of Cromer. Three of her crew of 16 survived – commanding officer Lt Charles Brodie, First Lieutenant Lt Geoffrey Watkins and a junior rating, AB W Stripes, who were on watch and therefore on or in the vicinity of the bridge; all were thrown into the sea or scrambled off the hull before she sank. An immediate attempt to raise the boat resulted in her being lifted more than 50ft from the sea bed slung between two lighters, but on moving the wreck struck an underwater obstruction and became stuck. Cruiser HMS Vindictive was then placed on station above the wreck in the hope of salvaging C11 or some of her equipment, but over the course of six weeks virtually nothing could be done, and the warship left after a full formal funeral service. Diving on the wreck proved difficult in strong currents, and after C11's periscope and some other deck fittings were retrieved she was left to the shifting sands, and it is thought the wreck was fully buried on the sea bed by early September. Lt Brodie went on to have a successful career, achieving the rank of rear admiral.

15 July 1916

Submarine HMS H3 was sunk by a mine in the Gulf of Cattaro in the Adriatic on 15 July 1916, barely a year after she was commissioned. H3 was one of an unusual group of submarines, as H1 to H10 were built by Canadian Vickers in Montreal during the war, with the first four vessels making the transatlantic crossing in June 1915 from St John's Newfoundland to Gibraltar accompanied by armed merchant cruiser HMS Calgarian, arriving on 3 July. The boats were built overseas as there was not sufficient capacity in British shipyards at the time. A second group of ten H-class submarines was built in the United States at the same time as Group 1, but with the Americans being neutral at that time the finished boats were impounded and only released when America entered the war in 1917. The 440-ton H-class submarines, based on the American Electric Boat Co's Holland 602 Type design, were generally popular with their crews, and were designed to be small enough to operate in coastal waters, either laying mines or attacking coastal shipping. H3 is thought to have struck a mine in the Adriatic on 15 July 1916 and went down with all 22 hands. One of those lost in the sinking was South African Sub Lt William Tatham, who was appointed First Lieutenant of H3 at the age of just 19, making him the youngest Jimmy the One in the Royal Navy at the time. His brother was killed while serving with South African infantry just three days later.

16 July 1940

Destroyer HMS Imogen sank after colliding with HMS Glasgow in thick fog off Duncansby Head on 16 July 1940 – but despite her loss so early in the war, she still managed to make a name for herself. The 1,920-ton I-class destroyer was launched at the Hawthorn Leslie yard at Hebburn on Tyneside on 30 December 1936, and was involved in the Spanish Civil War, joining the blockade out of Gibraltar to deny arms to both sides. On the outbreak of World War 2 she moved from the Mediterranean Fleet to the Home Fleet and took part in the Norwegian campaign, with no little success – the destroyer played her part in sinking two submarines (U-42 on 13 October 1939 and U-63 on 25 February 1940) as well as rescuing shipwrecked mariners from two

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merchantmen and the battleship HMS Barham. On the night of 16 July 1940 Imogen, en route to Scapa Flow, was five miles off Duncansby Head, the most north-easterly point of Scotland, when she ran into a powerful cruiser-led Royal Navy task group which had been sent out to find German shipping in the North Sea. With intelligence reports suggesting there was nothing to hunt down, the group reversed course and headed back to Scapa Flow. During the course of their passage back home, Imogen collided with light cruiser HMS Glasgow in thick fog. Badly damaged, the destroyer caught fire and sank unseen some time afterwards; 18 men died in the incident or shortly afterwards, while Glasgow rescued 135 sailors.

17 July 1943

Battleship HMS Warspite bombarded the city of Catania in Sicily. The veteran warship had been active in the Mediterranean with Force H in the preceding days, providing protection for convoys and hunting enemy units – the Italian submarine Nereide was sunk by screening destroyers on 13 July, though three days later the aircraft carrier HMS Indomitable was struck by an air-launched torpedo and forced to limp back to Malta, escorted by battleships Warspite (known as 'the Grand Old Lady') and Valiant and a clutch of destroyers. The following day, 17 July, Warspite and Valiant were due to bombard the Sicilian coast, but in moving from the overcrowded Grand Harbour to Marsaxlokk Bay Valiant fouled anti-submarine defences and became trapped, so Warspite continued alone. The 33,800-ton battleship, completed during World War 1 and which served at Jutland, sailed from Malta at 1300 and picked up a seven-destroyer escort off Grand Harbour before

heading north at a speed of over 23 knots – which was compromised when her steering suddenly jammed and she began steaming in a tight circle (a problem which had plagued her since Jutland in 1916). Having fixed the problem, Warspite made her firing position just 12 minutes late at 1842 and began raining heavy shells down on her military targets, while her escorts fired at coastal batteries. During the 20-minute bombardment the battleship was attacked by three Focke-Wulf Fw 190 fighters, though no damage was done. By the time the assault, in support of the 8th Army, was over, Warspite had fired almost 60 15in shells. During the passage back to Malta the ship again came under air attack on several occasions, but no damage was sustained, and she was safely back in Marsaxlokk Bay by 0700 on 18 July. On her return she received a signal from Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Fleet, which said: "Operation well carried out. There is no question when the old lady lifts her skirts she can run." Warspite, which won 14 Battle Honours in World War 2 to list alongside Jutland – the most honours won by any single ship – served across the globe during the war, including the Far East, and came through some heavy punishment, be that bombs, mines, missiles and shells. She also achieved one of the longest-range gunnery hits ever achieved by a moving ship on a moving target when she landed a damaging blow on Italian battleship Giulio Cesare from around 15 miles away during the Battle of Calabria on 9 July 1940. Worn out by war, the battleship was earmarked for scrapping in July 1946 and on 19 April 1947 she was towed from Portsmouth, bound for Faslane, but a severe storm drove her ashore near St Michael's Mount in Cornwall and several salvage attempts failed to shift her. She was scrapped in situ

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HMS Warspite bombarding Catania in Sicily. See 17 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (A 18494)



over the following eight years.

18 July 1944

German submarine U-672 was crippled by depth charges from frigate HMS Balfour off the Channel Islands on 18 July 1944, but her crew survived. U-672 was a relatively modern craft, having been commissioned on 6 April 1943, but was a failure as a weapon of war, registering no victims at all during her four patrols. The submarine went into active service on 1 October 1943 with 6 Flotille based at St Nazaire in France, although she left for her first war patrol on 13 November 1943 from Kiel, finishing in the French Atlantic port on 15 January 1944, 64 days later. Her second patrol, starting on 24 February, was even longer, at 79 days, during which she suffered two air attacks. U-672 also took part in eight wolfpack attacks between December 1943 and March 1944, all of which drew a blank. She set out from St Nazaire on her final patrol on 6 July 1944, and spent the next 13 days prowling around the Bay of Biscay and South West Approaches in a fruitless search for targets. On 13 July she escaped damage when an Allied aircraft dropped four depth charges on her in the Channel, but five days later her luck ran out. Spotted midway between Fowey and Cherbourg by Captain-class frigate HMS Balfour on the afternoon of 18 July, the submarine was subjected to a depth-charge attack caused serious damage. Although U-672 managed to slip away from Balfour, she was forced to surface in the early hours of the following day. Unable to save her, her crew successfully scuttled the 860-ton submarine and all 52 took to lifeboats, being picked up later that day and seeing out the war as prisoners.

19 July 1918

Seven British aircraft destroyed two German airships and an air balloon on 19 July 1918 in the first air attack in history to be launched from an aircraft carrier. The so-called Tondern Raid was a joint Royal Navy and RAF

operation, launched from aircraft carrier HMS Furious, a converted battlecruiser which had small flight decks fitted in front of and behind her superstructure. The operation was suggested by an RAF Staff Officer Lt Col Robert Clark-Hall and one of his pilots, Sqn Cdr Richard Bell-Davies VC, both of whom had been Naval aviators before the RN Air Service and Royal Flying Corps were merged. On 1 April 1918. Using markers to simulate the layout of airship sheds at Tondern in Denmark, seven pilots underwent intensive training at an airfield in Turnhouse, Scotland, in June, and the pilots and their Sopwith Camel aircraft sailed with Furious and an escorting force on 27 June. However, when the flotilla reached its flying off point the wind was deemed too strong at Force 6 and the operation – code named F6 – was called off. A second attempt (F7) was planned, and the ships sailed around midday on 17 July. Early on 18 July the aircraft were ready to launch, but a sudden and violent thunderstorm prevented them leaving. Instead, the flotilla loitered out of sight off the Danish coast for 24 hours, and around 1035, with the weather threatening to close in again, the seven Camels got airborne. Little over an hour later the first wave of three aircraft attacked the largest shed at Tondern, which housed two airships – L54, which had undertaken 16 missions, 14 of them scouting and two bombing raids, and L60, with 11 scouting flights and one bombing raid to its name. Both airships were destroyed by fire, though the planned explosion, which would have wrecked the shed, did not occur. The second wave of three (one Camel was forced to abandon the mission with mechanical trouble) hit the second shed and destroyed a balloon inside. Four men were injured on the ground, but the attacking force suffered one pilot dead (Lt Yeulett, whose Camel is thought to have run out of fuel over the North Sea, and whose body was later recovered from the sea) and several aircraft losses – two more ditched at sea while three landed in Denmark with no hope of making it back to the ships. The flotilla waited at their designated

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Destroyed German airships L54 and L60 in the sheds at Tondern following the raid. See 19 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (Q 47940)

rendezvous until it was certain that the aircraft would have run out of fuel, then made their way back to the UK. As a result, Tondern was abandoned as an operational airship station and only used for emergencies. Two of the pilots involved were awarded the Distinguished Service Order, while a third was awarded a Bar to his DSO.

20 July 1918

German submarine UB-124 was a novice in terms of warfare by the summer of 1918, so when faced by overwhelming odds there could only have been one result. The 630-ton Type UB III boat had only been commissioned on 22 April 1918, managed one (incomplete) war patrol and had one victim to her name – the 32,300-ton troopship SS *Justicia*, which was running out of Belfast unladen and had been badly damaged by UB-64 on 19 July 1918. UB-124 spotted *Justicia* under tow to the north of Londonderry on the following morning and hit her with two torpedoes, killing a number of engine room crew and causing the ship to finally roll over and sink. Unfortunately for UB-124, that was the last act in her brief naval career. The boat suffered a critical equipment failure in the engine room which caused her to sink to the sea bed 90 metres deep. After around seven hours her crew attempted to bring her up, but in doing so water in the bilge got into her electric motors and shorted them. Destroyers HMS *Marne*, *Milbrook* and *Pigeon*, accompanied by a host of patrol craft, had remained in the area and attacked the submarine with gunfire as it came to the surface. Unable to dive again, the boat was abandoned and scuttled, with two German sailors dying in the attack.

21 July 1941

The Hawker Sea Hurricane scored its first success when an aircraft launched from the flight deck of HMS *Furious* shot down a German flying boat on 21 July 1941. The Royal Navy had gone into World War 2 with a glaring lack of capable fighter aircraft – the Gloster Sea Gladiator biplane was already obsolete on its introduction to the Fleet Air Arm in 1938, with a top speed of little over 250mph, although many of the Navy's 98 machines, as well as the RAF variants, served in theatres around the globe in World War 2. Royal Navy attempts to procure Spitfires for use at sea proved fruitless, but in 1940 they were able to get their hands on some (somewhat tired) Hawker Hurricanes, which had a top speed of well over 300mph. The first Hurricanes in Naval service were the Mk IA 'Hurricats' launched from

CAM ships (Catapult Aircraft Merchantmen) – civilian ships with a rocket-propelled launch system but no landing facility; once launched, the aircraft either had to head ashore to land or ditch into the sea. Meanwhile, on 15 January 1941, 880 Naval Air Squadron was formed up to receive the new aircraft. The Mk IB Sea Hurricane appeared soon after, adapted for operation from an aircraft carrier, and the first formation joined HMS *Furious* in July that year. It was one of 880's Sea Hurricanes which notched up the first victory against an enemy aircraft when it shot down a Dornier Do 18 flying boat on 21 July 1941. The Dornier was itself in the Gloster Gladiator category – very much a pre-war aircraft that was being relegated to less critical roles at the time this particular aircraft was loft. More than 440 Hurricane variants served with almost 40 Fleet Air Arm squadrons during the war, and they were prominent in the Battle of the Atlantic, Mediterranean convoys (including Operation Pedestal, the convoy that relieved the pressure on Malta in August 1942) and Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa. By the autumn of 1944 the type was being superseded by Seafires (the maritime version of the Spitfire) and American carrier-launched fighters.

22 July 1836

Portsmouth-built brigantine HMS *Buzzard* intercepted a Portuguese slave ship off the Calabar River in what is now Nigeria, preventing more than 420 slaves from suffering the notorious 'Middle Passage' from West Africa to the Caribbean. *Buzzard* was built in 1834, initially ordered as a ten-gun Cherokee-class brig-sloop but completed as a 230-ton brigantine with reduced armament to serve as anti-slave patrol ships off the African coast. She left Spithead for The Gambia on 30 August 1834 with a crew of 50, and before the year was out she was involved in a brutal 45-minute action with the 300-ton eight-gun Spanish slave brig *Formidable*, carrying 712 slaves and a crew of 66. After a day-long chase, including much use of sweeps (oars) by the crew of *Buzzard*, the Spanish ship was forced into action, during which two British sailors are reported to have died, while *Formidable* lost at least four men, with 11 wounded, including her captain. Two months later, in February 1835, *Buzzard* caught the slave schooner *Iberia*, with more than 300 slaves on board. *Buzzard* continued to apprehend slavers throughout the rest of 1835 and into 1836, affecting more than 1,500 slaves. On 22 July 1836 her target was the slave brigantine *Joven Carolina*, bound for Havana, Cuba, and hundreds

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HMS *Pigeon*. See 20 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © The rights holder (Q 74292)



more slaves were freed in the following months, while two of the ships seized – Eagle and Clara – were escorted to New York by Buzzard for adjudication. Having been determined that they were Spanish, not American, Buzzard escorted them back to Bermuda, but both slavers were apparently lost in a severe storm. Slavers were harder to find in the 840s, and in May 1842 Buzzard returned to Britain, paying off at Plymouth on 19 May. She was advertised for sale in October, and apparently sold the following year. Buzzard's efforts were part of a wider antislavery initiative led by Britain, which outlawed the slave trade in 1807 and abolished slavery all together in 1833. The Royal Navy was at the forefront of the fight against slavery, intercepting slave ships off the African and American coasts, while British diplomats applied pressure to other slaving nations to end the trade. The Middle Passage was the transatlantic crossing by which slaves, tightly packed in the hold of slavers, were taken to the Americas and Caribbean. Many died of disease, starvation or abuse during the passage, which was part of a triangular trade system – the first passage saw ships bring goods from the UK (and other European nations who took part) which could be bartered for slaves. The final, third leg of the triangular system saw the slave ships, having delivered their human cargo, return to Europe with raw materials such as cotton, sugar and tobacco.

23 July 1940

Ocean-going submarine HMS Thames was lost on or around 23 July 1940 – her exact fate remains a mystery to this day. The giant boat – at 2,700 tons the River class dwarfed their predecessors, the legendary S-class (935 tons) and the equally lauded T-class that came later (1,590 tons) – was launched at Vickers Armstrong's Barrow yard on 26 February 1932 and allocated to the Mediterranean Fleet, stationed in Malta. On the outbreak of war she returned to home waters for anti-submarine and surface raider patrols. She supported the Norwegian campaign in the North Sea in the spring of 1940, and doubts arise over the exact date of her loss

as she is a leading candidate for the submarine that sank German torpedo boat Luchs on 26 July; Luchs was part of the escort for damaged battleship Gneisenau, which was being moved from Trondheim in Norway to Kiel. In any case, Thames was officially reported overdue at her home base of Dundee on 3 August, and she is suspected to have struck a mine off the Norwegian coast in the last week or so of July. She was lost with all 63 hands.

24 July 1945

Algerine-class minesweeper HMS Squirrel was lost to a mine in the Far East on 24 July 1945. The 1,150-ton turbine-powered vessel, completed at Harland and Wolff in Belfast on 16 August 1944, spent the first couple of months of her career clearing mines off the Belgian coast, but in November was nominated to transfer to the Far East. After a refit and some more mine clearance work in the Channel, Squirrel and sister ship HMS Fancy set course for India in March 1945, towing a floating dock with them. Unfortunately, the minesweepers were caught in a severe storm in the Bay of Biscay which damaged the ships and sank the floating dock, so Squirrel returned to the UK for repairs, which were carried out at Canning Town in London. The minesweeper left Falmouth for Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) on 13 May, passing through the Mediterranean, Suez Canal and Red Sea before arriving at Trincomalee in July. Squirrel sailed from Trincomalee as part of Force 63 for Operation Livery, with the minesweeping element planning to sweep the Strait of Malacca to persuade the Japanese that an Allied landing was coming. While at work of Phuket Island a mine was detonated by the sweeping gear of HMS Plucky, forcing Squirrel into untested water where she struck a mine, killing seven of her sailors and badly damaging the fore part of the ship. The minesweeper gradually took on a heavy list, and more than two hours after the blast the situation was deemed beyond repair and the ship's company was taken off. Squirrel was finally sunk by gunfire from other ships in Force 63.

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Hawker Sea Hurricanes. See 21 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 9534)

25 July 1941

Cruiser HMS Newcastle spotted famed German blockade runner Erlangen in South American waters on 25 July 1941, resulting in the freighter's destruction. The Erlangen, a 6,000-ton general cargo ship built in 1929, had plied her trade between Australia, New Zealand and South America before the war, and in late August 1939 was in Dunedin Harbour in the South Island of New Zealand. On 25 August a signal from German radio station Norddeich Radio warned more than 2,400 merchant ships across the globe that a declaration of war was imminent. They were subsequently instructed to keep out of normal shipping lanes, and to try to make it to a friendly or neutral port within four days. Erlangen sailed on 26 August, stating her destination as Port Kembla coaling station in Australia then New York. Low on fuel, the blockade runner began by heading north, but then doubled back after dark and took refuge in the Auckland Islands archipelago to the south of the country. Hidden in a narrow anchorage, the crew spent five weeks cutting wood from a nearby forest for fuel, and at one point she only remained undiscovered because cruiser HMS Leander, searching for the ship, could not enter the narrow channel because of poor weather. With her bunkers partly replenished, and with a set of makeshift sails knocked together by the crew, Erlangen sailed from her secret berth bound for Chile on 7 October, anchoring off the port of Ancud on 11 December, and as her story became known back home she took on the reputation of Germany's most famous blockade runner of the war. Her career ended seven months later when she was seen by HMS Newcastle in the mouth of the River Plate off Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay. The cruiser set off in pursuit and fired on the merchant ship, which was scuttled by her crew using explosive charges, sinking rapidly.

26 July 1953

Aircraft carrier HMS Unicorn came to the aid of a British freighter that was under attack by Taiwanese forces in an act of piracy on 26 July 1953. The incident was part of a wider campaign by the Republic of China (Taiwan) to enforce a trade embargo on the People's Republic of China during the Chinese Civil War. Ships of all nations were liable to attack by vessels of the Republic of China Anti-Communist National Salvation Army (ROC ACNSA), even in international waters or the seas around sovereign nations such as Japan. Former Flower-class corvette HMS Nigella, at the time operating as the

civilian freighter Nigelock, was attacked by ROC ACNSA gunboat on 17 February 1951 though the converted warship, transporting fruit and vegetables, escaped unscathed.

On 26 July 1953 the small British coastal freighter Inchkilda, formerly SS Fort Wilhelmus, was attacked by three ROC ACNSA gunboats in the Wuqiu region of Taiwan, and her distress call was picked up by HMS Unicorn, which came straight to her aid. Inchkilda escaped on this occasion, but was seized again, by the ROC Navy, in October the following year; this time it took British and American diplomatic efforts to secure her release. Unicorn was built by Harland and Wolff in Belfast as an aircraft maintenance and replenishment/light fleet aircraft carrier – she proved a very useful asset during World War 2 and the Korean War. Launched in November 1941 and commissioned in March 1943, the 20,600-ton Unicorn was straight into action, providing air cover for the Allied amphibious landings at Salerno, Italy, in September the same year. She was the moved to the Indian Ocean, supporting both the Eastern Fleet and its successor, the British Pacific Fleet until the end of the war, when she returned to the UK and went into reserve. She was recommissioned in 1949 and returned to the Far East, where she spent most of the Korean War ferrying aircraft, supplies, equipment and personnel in support of United Nations operations. Released in 1954, she returned to the UK and was refitted the following year, though she remained in reserve. She was put up for disposal in 1958 and broken up in Scotland to years later.

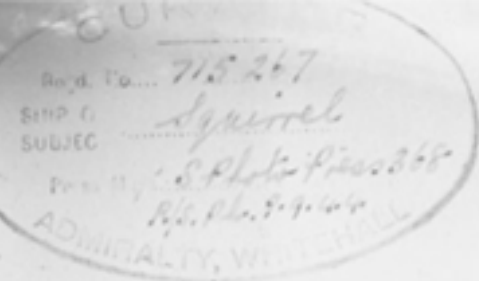
27 July 1803

3rd rate warship HMS Plantagenet captured privateer Atalante after a long chase on 27 July 1803. The 74-gun warship was built at Woolwich and launched on 23 October 1801, and although she was set to be laid up in ordinary at Plymouth she was instead fitted for service and ready for action by April 1803. The following month she sailed as part of a squadron on Channel patrol, and she claimed her first victim – the six-gun French privateer Courier de Terre Neuve – on 24 July. Three days later, in sight of HM Ships Endymion and Rosario, Plantagenet gave chase to the French privateer Atalante, mounting 20 guns with a crew of 160. The Bordeaux-based ship gave a good account of herself, but was finally taken by the warship, whose crew found four British sailors from the Ville de Paris amongst the French ranks. The privateer was taken by a prize crew into Falmouth, having survived an counterattack by French sailors who had remained concealed during the taking of their

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HMS Thames. See 23 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 19843)





HMS Squirrel. See 24 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 10368)



ship. Atalante was taken into Royal Navy service, under the name Hawk. Plantagenet went on to serve in the Channel, the Baltic, the Atlantic, the Caribbean and the east coast of the United States until she was disposed of in 1817.

28 July 1914

Royal Navy fleets were ordered to their war bases on 28 July 1914 as talk of war continued to grow in the fevered diplomatic activity of the July Crisis. While the government was still mulling over the idea that they might become involved in the fighting, Navy formations completing large-scale exercises and cruises were told not to disperse and take leave. As the situation developed large numbers of warships were on the move, with the First Fleet safely at Scapa Flow by 1 August. Full mobilisation came the following day, with orders being issued for two German warships en route to Turkey to be shadowed across the Mediterranean. Britain had also assured France that if a German fleet sailed into the Channel or North Sea, Britain would lend every assistance in what would have been regarded as a hostile act. War was officially declared by the British government at midnight on 4 August 1914 as a consequence of German forces invading Belgium and ignoring Britain's ultimatum that they should withdraw.

29 July 1856

Esquimalt in British Columbia replaced Valparaiso in Chile as the Royal Navy's main base in the Pacific in the summer of 1856. The Chilean base had been established in 1813 as the home of the British Pacific Squadron, from where Royal Navy ships could protect British interests in the region. In 1842 the survey ship HMS Pandora sailed north to study the coast of Vancouver Island, during the course of which it was discovered that Esquimalt Harbour would be well-suited to Royal Navy requirements, particularly with tensions rising between Britain and America not far to the south in Oregon. The first ship stationed there was the powerful 50-gun frigate HMS Constance, which arrived in 1848, and in 1855 three wooden 'Crimean huts' were built ashore to

take patients from the Crimean War. The location of this Naval base proved ideal in more ways than one – the site was surrounded by coniferous forests that provided abundant material for spars, and when steam took the ascendancy there was coal to be found on the island and in nearby Vancouver. By 1865, with Esquimalt by now well established as the headquarters of the Pacific Fleet, plans for development of the site were advanced, and a graving dock was duly commissioned in 1887 that could handle the largest ships in the Pacific Fleet, allowing Britain to continue countering Russian ambitions in the region, as well as defending British Columbia from threats of annexation by the United States in the Alaska Boundary Dispute, a grumble which the Americans had inherited from the Russians after the Alaska Purchase of 1867. Shifting geopolitical concerns at the end of the Victorian era meant Britain needed to change her focus to the rise of the German navy, and the Esquimalt Station closed down at sunset on 1 March 1905, transferring to Canadian control, though Royal Navy ships still used the facilities there. It is now the Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, one of two major naval facilities in the country, the other covering the Atlantic from CFB Halifax, Nova Scotia.

30 July 1941

Minelayer submarine HMS Cachalot was sunk on 30 July 1941 when she was unable to dive and an Italian destroyer rammed her. The 2,160-ton submarine was built by Scotts at Greenock and launched on 2 December 1937, one of six in the Grampus class. She began her career in home waters with some success, torpedoing U-boat U-51 in August 1940 in the Bay of Biscay and sinking a German auxiliary minesweeper with one of her mines in September. Switching to the Mediterranean the following year, Cachalot departed Malta on 26 July bound for Alexandria, and in the early hours of 30 July spotted Italian torpedo boat Generale Achille Papa. The submarine dived and waited, but on resurfacing she found the Italian vessel – an obsolete destroyer that had been reclassified as a torpedo boat – still in the area. Cachalot attempted to dive a second

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time but a hatch jammed, and the Italian rammed her. Her crew managed to escape before the boat was scuttled and sank, and all but one were picked up by the Italian warship.

31 July 1804

Boats from 74-gun 3rd rate HMS Centaur cut out the privateer Elizabeth in Guadeloupe on 31 July 1804. The Woolwich-built warship, launched on 14 March 1797, spent the first part of her career in the Mediterranean where, usually as part of a squadron, she successfully harried enemy shipping, capturing small vessels and in one instance driving a 40-gun Spanish frigate ashore and wrecking it. In the Action of 18 June 1799 she was part of a squadron that captured a five-strong French formation consisting of three frigates (40, 36 and 32 guns) and two brigantines of 18 and 14 guns. Centaur then had a spell in the Channel Squadron, colliding with HMS Mars on 10 March 1801 and causing damage to both ships; a lieutenant on board Centaur lost six months' seniority and was dismissed from the ship. In late 1802 Centaur sailed for the Caribbean, joining Vice Admiral Sir John Duckworth's squadron in Jamaica. She was involved in the taking of Saint Lucia, then Tobago, then Dutch territories, in the summer of 1803, also capturing American and Dutch cargo vessels. On 26 November, while sailing past Martinique, Centaur was fired on by a shore battery. The warship anchored, and a landing party of Marines and sailors destroyed the battery, throwing the guns into the sea, though one sailor was killed and several injured when the battery blew up

prematurely. Shortly afterwards Centaur spotted a second gun battery, and this time the French fled as the landing party approached; the end result was the same, with the cannon in the sea and the barracks and stores blown up. In early 1804 Centaur established her own gun batteries on the 'stone frigate' HMS Diamond Rock, a tiny steep-sided island just off Martinique. On 25 April Centaur sailed from Barbados to Surinam where, after a little persuasion from the British warship's effective landing parties, the Dutch surrendered. On 30 July 1804, Centaur's boats – under fire from the shore – cut out an unidentified schooner and the privateer Elizabeth (six guns) out of Basseterre Roads, Guadeloupe. Elizabeth had a crew of 65, most of whom were either killed or swam ashore. One British sailor died in the action, with five wounded. Elizabeth had been described as "the fastest sailing privateer out of Guadeloupe" and a lucky ship at that. Talking of luck, in July 1805 Centaur just survived a hurricane, which dismasted her and opened up a number of leaks, requiring extensive repairs at Halifax, Nova Scotia. These repairs cost Centaur her place at the Battle of Trafalgar later that year. In 1806 Centaur continued to burnish her reputation, this time in the Channel, the Eastern Atlantic and, in 1807, the Baltic, including the Second Battle of Copenhagen. There was no respite in 1808 as the veteran warship took part in the Anglo-Russian War, and returned to the Mediterranean the following year, helping at the Defence of Tarragona. She crossed the Atlantic at least three further times in her final years, paying off at Plymouth in November 1815 and being broken up in late 1819.

HMS Unicorn entering Kure Harbour in Japan in August 1950. See 26 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: Image: © IWM (A 31695)



2025

9 August 2025	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting online
15 August 2025	VJ80 ceremony, Lanyard Building Memorial Garden
30 August 2025	Scottish Area Quarterly Meeting hosted by Aberdeen Branch
13 Sept 2025	Area 4 meeting hosted by Saltash Branch
14 Sept 2025	Naval Associations Biennial Parade, Whitehall
4 October 2025	World Uckers Championships, Portsmouth
22 Oct 2025	Fisherman's Friends Charity Fundraising Concert, Portsmouth
9 Nov 2025	Remembrance Ceremonies, Cenotaph, Whitehall
15 Nov 2025	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting hosted by RNA Stowmarket

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The Surrender of the U-Boat Fleet 1945

Author: Derek Waller

Highlights

- The most complete account ever written of the surrender of the remaining U-boats to the Allies at the end of the War
- Contains exhaustive and original research from Royal Navy and US Navy deck logs and many other primary sources
- Highly significant work for understanding US and Soviet submarine developments in the postwar years

Description

In the weeks after the end of the War in May 1945, 156 U-boats surrendered to the Allies. Some of these either surrendered at sea or directly in a variety of ports, whilst the majority were taken over whilst moored in German bases in Norway, Denmark and France. Nine gave themselves up in the USA, Canada and Argentina. This book provides a comprehensive record of the surrender of all these vessels, and it also includes the story of the 200 or so U-boats which were scuttled, rather than surrendered, in the final days of the War. And it includes details of others which have been raised since and then either been used or scrapped.

The author begins by describing the development of Allied policy in 1943, 1944 and early 1945 for the surrender and disposal of the German Navy and its surviving U-boats. It then explains the surrender arrangements, as well as the discussions concerning U-boats at the Potsdam Conference in July 1945 and by the Tripartite Naval Commission (TNC) in Berlin between August and December 1945. The uses and fates of all the surrendered U-boats are then described, particularly those which were formally allocated to the UK, the USA and the USSR. It includes the story of the capture of U-505, before concluding with a schedule showing the final disposal details of each of the U-boats which surrendered.

The level of detail, and the exhaustive research incorporated in this work, makes it both an important new reference book and a fascinating analysis of one of the most significant events of the War's end; it also leads the reader into the world of postwar submarine development and the tussle between the US and Soviet navies to best exploit the technical advances that originated with the wartime U-boat.

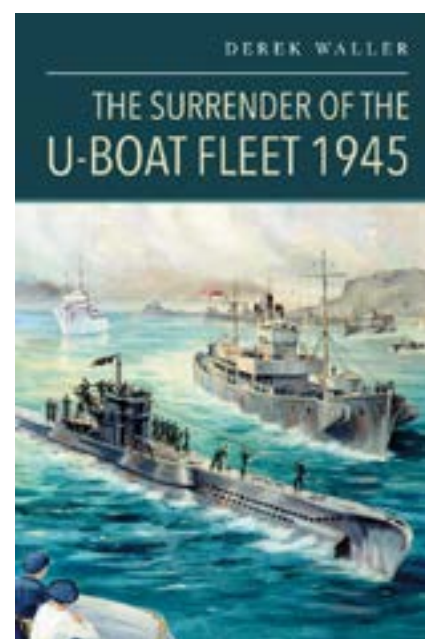
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Author Details

Derek Waller's interest in the fate of the remaining vessels of the German Navy began in the early 1950s as a schoolboy hobby, leading to the publication of a short article about the surviving U-boats in 1970. Then, after a full career in the Royal Air Force, he picked up the topic again as a retirement project in 2010, since when he has written many articles about the U-boats which survived the War.



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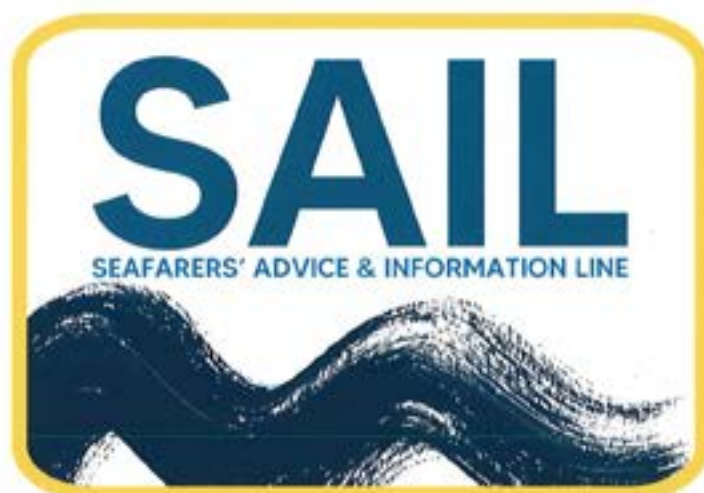


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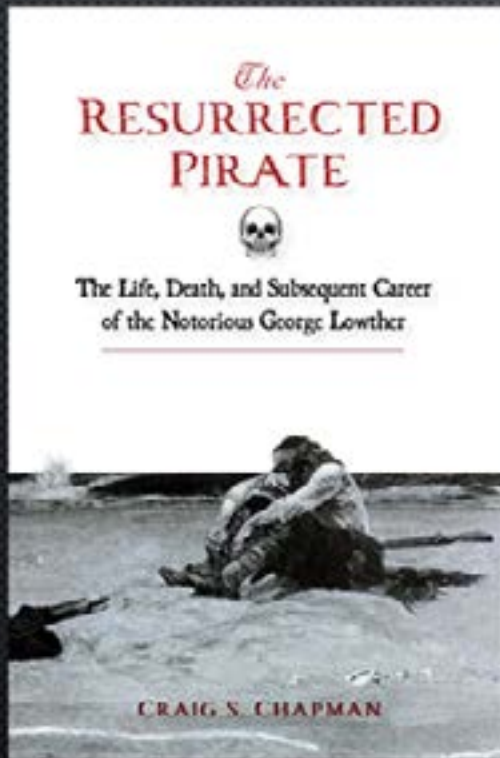
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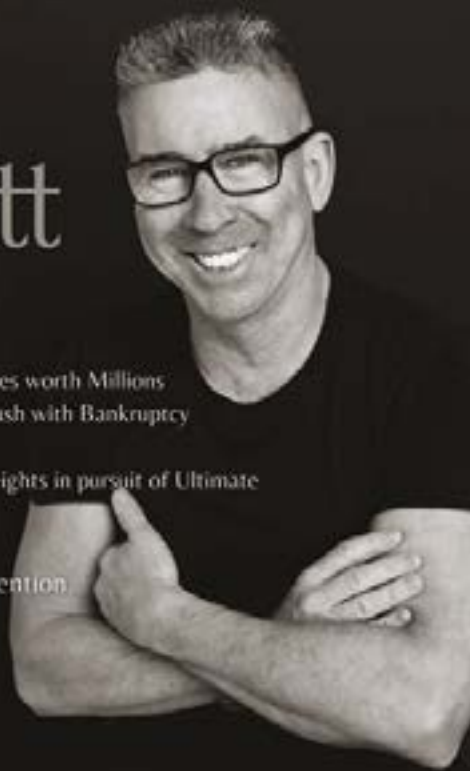
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Keith Scarratt



Flying high

Keith began his career as a **naval aviator**. The rigorous training, survival skills and hostile environments pushed him to his physical and mental limits and made him the person he is today. That's someone who, by his own admission, **'blagged his way into PR'**, worked his way up through **Saatchi and Saatchi**, and went on to run **multi-million-dollar businesses**.

Peaks and troughs

Keith has, quite literally, experienced life's ups and downs, **from a six-figure salary one day, to a brush with bankruptcy the next**. He's been at the helm of two failed businesses, ones that went under due to the financial crisis and an investor getting cold feet, oh and "a bucket load of bad luck." True to character, Keith picked himself up, dusted himself off and went again.

Taking the helm

With twenty years in the events industry, Keith knows a thing or two about running a tight ship. He was at the helm of the Navy's Field Gun Competition, a final point of the Royal Tournament, the world's first and biggest Military Tattoo. **Forget HYROX**, this was as close as you get to **professional athleticism**. Teams trained three times a day, six days a week and Keith did it all. Not only that, he was responsible for liaising with key sponsors who supported the event because, they said, "when it came to teamwork, there's nothing in the world quite like it."

Reaching new heights

Today Keith brings together elements of his military, corporate and entrepreneurial past to focus on teambuilding and resilience, two things he knows an awful lot about. As founder of **Imagine-thePossibilities.com**, the UK's leading team building and corporate events company, he's helping colleagues from all walks of life to connect, collaborate and thrive.

From Military Man to Businesses worth Millions
via Saatchi & Saatchi and a Brush with Bankruptcy

Keith takes Top Gun to new heights in pursuit of Ultimate
Teambuilding.

His is a story worthy of attention

Imagine-ThePossibilities.com

Imagine The Possibilities

Imagine-ThePossibilities.com is a culmination of Keith's past experience and his vast knowledge of, and experience in, the business world. As the UK's leading corporate events and teambuilding company, it provides experiences that inspire, motivate and push individuals to new heights. Events are, as expected, run with military precision, with every detail meticulously planned and accounted for.

"Things will go wrong and do go wrong. That's OK, but we know exactly what to do because we pay attention to the finest of details. If it always has a Plan B, don't let people down and do the better than anyone else out there."

In relative infancy, Keith's business is already flying high with bespoke events, such as 'Top Gun Maverick' taking centre stage. Unsurprisingly, 'suffragette' is also in demand, with Keith, rather than Claudia, leading the way. And as testament to his never say never approach, Keith and his team fly away from nothing, even choosing to work with animals, but thankfully not children.



GET IN TOUCH

Keith is available for podcasts, print and
broadcast interviews.

He can provide expert commentary on
a wide range of subjects from
teambuilding to resilience, to
entrepreneurship to exercising physical
and mental strength. He can talk about
his past successes and failures and the
lessons learnt along the way.

An eloquent speaker, Keith is as
comfortable behind a microphone as he
is in front of a camera or live audience.



CONTACT

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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07957578796

The Beliefs Behind The Brand

Like any strong brand, Keith's business is based on sound values and principles, but these three beliefs are at its core:

1. Mental Fitness comes from physical fitness.

Keith is well aware of the importance of staying physically strong and the impact this can have on mental health. Following the intensity of the Navy's Field Gun competition, he lost the discipline of being fit. After seeing the impact this had on his life, he vowed never to do that again and in true Keith style, went on to enter an annual CrossFit contest for elite competitors in Dubai. He won this three years running and took second place twice.

2. To succeed you need to take chances based on strong belief.

When setting up his property business in 2004, there were just five employees. Still, Keith leased the entire top floor of a building, the size of two football pitches, much to the amazement of the letting agents. The office was full within a year. The business turning over £200k million.

3. You've got to think global.

Keith has lived in, and been responsible for, setting up large business operations across the world, in Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai. Business is about cultural adaptability and making the most of your surroundings - lessons learnt from the military.