



SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



NEW SKILLS AND NEW FRIENDS

July saw the return of the Royal Naval Association's Sailing Camp, where the Association takes a number of young international sailors to the Royal Hospital School in Holbrook, Suffolk, to gain a sailing qualification, practise their language skills, and have a lot of fun.

This year the RNA hosted young people from the UK, France, Belgium, Italy and Germany, each gaining a recognised RYA qualification. Two of the youngsters even achieved instructor level.

The UK delegates were sponsored by the Naval Children's Charity, while the individual Naval Associations from the different countries sponsored the overseas students.

The RNA organised and delivered the event on behalf of the International Maritime Confederation, for the second consecutive year.

Bill Oliphant, RNA CEO, said: "We are delighted to run this event for these young people.

"Not only is it a great opportunity for them to learn to sail,

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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 5 September, and the deadline for material is 1000 on Wednesday 3 September. Branch Notes will next be published on Friday 8 August, and Semaphore Shorts on Friday 15, 22 and 29 August.



they also make friends for life from all over Europe.
 "Looking to the future, to the next generation of potential naval recruits, this week gives a taste of what it is like to be disciplined, resilient, and part of a team.

"All these things are invaluable skills. Plus, we all had a great time!"

The RNA supports the whole of the Royal Naval community, be they serving, retired, and families – no matter what rank or service.

Supporting Naval children and their whole family is one of the activities to which it is committed.

Jon Everett, RNA Welfare & Wellbeing Coordinator, said: "The RNA understands that our military community often needs specialist support.

"Our families cope with unique stressors so the RNA works upstream of the major welfare charities, ensuring peer support, welfare access and mental health and wellbeing activities to help when life gets tough.

"This sailing camp has supported young people struggling with bereavement, serious health conditions and other challenging situations.

"We are proud to deliver for these families, and in such a fun way too!"



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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Dear Shipmates,

Hope you are all well and enjoying life.

Another busy couple of months for the RNA and your National Chairman in this our 75th Anniversary year. After the splendid winning 'day out' at 'Twickers' and a superb Conference in Portsmouth in early June, we are now 'revving up' for the 'Whitehall Bimble' or (its official title) the Naval Associations Biennial Parade on Sunday 14 September.

Remember, if you aren't able to march, for whatever reason, please come and support those who can. Areas have been

provided with financial support to assist with travel expenses. (Specific details are available from your Area Committee or Central Office). The final event for RNA75 is the 'Fisherman's Friends', RNA Choirs and RM Band concert in Portsmouth Guildhall, which is sadly sold out for those looking for tickets.

I am sure you will be joining me in saying BZ to Bill Oliphant and the team for organising these fabulous events and bringing us all together and meeting up with Shipmates.

I made a private visit recently to track down my Great Uncles' graves in France and Belgium. They both served in the East Lancashire Regiment, both paying the ultimate sacrifice in 1915 and 1918.

I also visited the Menin Gate in Ypres and the Shot at Dawn Museum in Poperinge. I am always humbled at the horrendous loss of lives of these young men, but so proud that they carried out their duty. Look out for an RNA Battlefield Tour next year to France to follow the exploits of the Royal Naval Division in World War 1.

I had the pleasure of attending another 75th Anniversary, that of our very own Isle of Wight Branch, in the Marine Hotel, Ryde. The Branch is one of, if not the, according to the IOW Shipmates, oldest RNA Branch. Huge congratulations, Shipmates – wishing you many more years.

As part of the celebrations the 'Minutes' from the Branch's first meeting were copied and forwarded to Branch Shipmates – they were extremely interesting, containing so many similarities that relate to the 7Cs of today's RNA.

As a quick reminder, they are; Companionship, Community, Connection, Compassion, Care, Commemoration and Celebration.



These values were also in abundance at the Area 2 Sea Sunday Service recently held in Maidstone. It was an excellent RNA and Naval occasion with Area 2 Shipmates, RN (from Medway RNR) and Sea Cadets from Maidstone putting on a superb event. I was very honoured along with the Mayor of Maidstone to take the 'Salute'.

These events, along with all the other activities, be they commemorative or social, confirm what a vibrant and diverse RNA we have, and why we all should be so proud.

'Church Notices'...

Conference - What a good debate at Conference concerning the motion proposing a change in the routine for the AGM/Conference and Social weekend – delegates voted against the motion. Consequently the 2026 Conference will be held in the City of Salford, which will recognise the late S/M Steve Caulfield's involvement with the Branch. Delegates voted in favour of the motion to hold the 2027 Conference in Durham. One of the main issues in the proposed motion for change at Conference was to improve democracy by enabling all branches to vote by IT using a 'hybrid' voting mechanism. With this in mind, the AMC voted to approve a trial for the next two Conferences to establish whether this would be successful.

Staff Review: I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Chris Trevethan and Dave MacAskill, who have recently left RNA Staff, for all their hard work on behalf of our Association and wish them well for the future.

Governance: A quick update on the Governance juggernaut – it continues to roll forward at a pace, with the deadline to produce the first amended version of the Charter for the September National Council meeting. Keep tuned to this frequency! Can you believe it, your Chairman, out of loyalty to our Association, will miss the derby match between my beloved Saints and Poopay in favour of parading at the Biennial! As Victor Meldrew said: "I don't believe it!"

Enjoy the rest of the summer and see you in September.

Best wishes,

Andy

FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Ahoy Shipmates!

We're only just into August and already it's been a great summer of sport.

The British and Irish Lions have won their Test series in Australia with one match to play, and England's Lionesses had us on the edge of our seats before retaining their European title in Basel.

And the RNA is playing its part in this summer of sport and activity.

As you will see from our front page, we hosted this year's International Maritime Confederation (IMC) Sailing Camp at the Royal Hospital School, and it was a resounding success.

Not only did the participants leave with sailing qualifications but, more importantly, they left with a friendship base all over Western Europe which I hope will positively shape their internationalist views throughout their lives. It was fascinating to watch their bonds and friendship grow during their week together, and there was genuine sadness as they went their separate ways.

Talking of sailing, have you signed up for the RNA's Yachting SCG yet? It's easy – all you need to do is either capture this QR code above with your phone:



or enter <https://ask2gocloud.fillout.com/t/mrxBJtxwyJus> into your web browser, fill out the form and you could be setting sail on some superb experiences on either sailboats or motor yachts from a variety of locations around our shores!

In addition to day voyages or long weekend trips across the Channel, whether you are an experienced hand or a complete novice, other events planned include events you could be taking part in include a Summer Cruise along the South Coast to Dunkirk/Ostend and back, a South

West Rally and Dinner based from Dartmouth and the Royal Dart Yacht Club, a Mediterranean Charter Rally to Sicily (planned for late September 2026) and many more opportunities to get out on the water with like-minded friends.

You might also qualify for some subsidised training to bring your skills up to date! Don't delay, get involved today! Any questions, drop David Monks a line at david.c.monks@gmail.com.



Back on shore, the RNA's own football team will be dusting off their boots again for a fixture – Hartley-Whitney v RNA FC in Fleet on Wednesday 20 August, kick-off 1845. Manager Hugh Doyle is keen for those interested to contact him on 07801 712944 or hugh.doyle@hotmail.com. There's talk of a tour next year to Portugal!

The RN Cricket Club, which now comes under the auspices of the RNA as the RNA Cricket Sports and Comradeship Group, are playing a fixture at John Paul Getty's private cricket ground this Sunday (3 August) at Wormsley just off the M40 – link here: <https://wormsley.com/cricket/> The event isn't listed within the official fixtures for security reasons as it's a tri-Service event. Basically, it's the older serving and vets version of the inter-services T20. The cricket starts from about 1000 and goes through until late afternoon. Bring a picnic and come and cheer them on. Bring your RNA Membership Card for access.

It's not just traditional sport that is uppermost in our minds – for me, in particular, there is a little matter of a Race Across the UK which I am undertaking at the beginning of next month with my colleague Jon Everett, the RNA's Welfare and Wellbeing Co-ordinator.

The challenge is to get from Edinburgh to Dartmouth on little more than wits, imagination and willpower – and, believe me, we're not just there to make up the numbers. We're in it to win it – and we need your support to make sure we raise a healthy sum for RNRMC as well.

You can donate via the Race Across the UK link [here](#) or for larger donations and sponsorship, please contact cml@rnassoc.org.

It's only six weeks now until the Naval Associations Biennial Parade in Whitehall – the last significant anniversary event in which our World War 2 veterans will participate.

We want to see as many Naval Associations and Naval veterans as possible join us on the day – see [page 21](#) for more details, and watch our social media channels and Semaphore publications for further information.

And finally, I would like to echo the words of Andy in his Chairman's Chat in expressing my thanks to Chief of Staff Chris Trevethan and Engagement Co-ordinator Dave MacAskill for their valued contributions to the Association, and to wish them well in their future endeavours.

Safe winds and following seas,

Bill

READY AND ABLE TO RACE ACROSS THE UK

The RNA is launching its CEO and Welfare Co-ordinator off on a mad-cap Race Across The UK (RATUK) next month. The Race, inspired by TV's Race Across the World, will see competing teams of two set off from Edinburgh and arrive in Dartmouth a few days later, after traversing the UK – without phones, credit cards, or outside assistance.

They will set off with just a few pounds and a good sense of humour, both of which may be used up by the end of the challenge.

The RATUK is a fundraising event for Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC), the major fundraising charity for the Royal Navy community. RNRMC provides grant funding for the RNA to provide welfare assistance to its

members, which is only one of the reasons why the RNA wants to join in with fundraising for them.

RNA CEO Bill Oliphant said: "We are ever-grateful to RNRMC for their generous funding. The Race Across the UK is a great opportunity for our members to find out more about RNRMC and put the full might of their support behind fundraising for them. "It is also a great way for me personally to show just how much I appreciate the support of the RNRMC. Plus, Jon and I aim to triumph.

"Some may say I am a little disorganised and do things on the hoof. I say these qualities make me perfectly adapted to win this race. 'Mon then!"

Team RNA, also known as Ready 'N' Able, consists of Bill and Jon Everett, the Association's Welfare & Wellbeing Co-ordinator.

Jon said: "I'm here to make sure that we don't just get there but get there in one piece.

"It is a little bit daunting to be running this race with my boss..."

The pair are hoping to be supported by RNA branches throughout the UK and have already



been sponsored a whopping £3,000 by Aldershot branch.

Other branches are pitching in too, with Bridlington being the first to pledge £200.

If you, or your branch would like to support Team RNA, please either make a donation via the **Team RNA link**, or, for larger donations and sponsorship, please contact cml@rnassoc.org.

The Race takes place from 2-5 September – check our social media channels and Semaphores for the latest news.



SHIPMATES HONOUR VICTIMS OF TORPOINT AIR RAID

On 28 April 1941, an air-raid shelter within HMS Raleigh sustained a direct hit during a bombing raid, with the loss of 44 sailors and 21 Royal Engineers. The engineers are believed to have been members of two troops stationed in the Plymouth area, assisting in the preparation of assault boats for the North Africa campaign. They are all interred in war graves at Horson Cemetery in Torpoint.

On 4 July, following the receipt of a £380 grant from RNA Central Office to assist with minibus and fuel expenses, six members of the **Torfaen** branch travelled to the Plymouth area. They were accompanied by shipmates from the **Caerphilly**, **Swansea**, **Cardiff**, and **Carmarthen** branches, as well as two comrades from the Royal Engineers

Association.

The group grew again in numbers as they were joined by members of the local RNA branches from **Torpoint**, **Plymouth**, and **Bodmin** at the cemetery in Torpoint for a moving memorial service led by Dr Louise Pitman, Padre of HMS Raleigh, which featured a parade of Association Standards.

Following the service, the party returned to HMS Raleigh for lunch in the Wardroom and were subsequently invited to join the families and guests at the Passing Out Parade for the latest crop of young sailors. The entire event left a strong impression on all and prompted the



'spinning of dits' from some of the more experienced members.

Before heading home, there was a visit to The Hoe in Plymouth to pay our respects at the memorials and lay a wreath at the Royal Naval Memorial.



OPEN AND CLOSED

On Friday 11 July Central Office hosted the final Open Day of 2025 to welcome members of the **RNPT** branch as part of their reunion weekend in Portsmouth.

They were joined by shipmates from the RNA branches of **Marlborough** and **Lee-on-the-Solent**.

Guests enjoyed tea and sandwiches in the garden, followed by a scenic harbour tour

The programme this year has been briefer than normal because of the demands on Central Office staff, who are also overseeing events for the 75th anniversary year as well as organising the Annual Conference in Portsmouth.

We are planning a more extensive series of Open Days for 2026.





BIRTHDAY SPECIAL FOR RAY

Royal Navy veteran, former PO Ray Brewster, was feted at his 103rd birthday party at the Leicester Senior Service Club and Leicester County Hall for Armed Forces Day Flag Raising. VIP guests at his birthday and AFD Flag Raising included Leicestershire Lord Lieutenant Mike Kapur and Lord Mayor Teresa Aldred. Also at AFD Flag Raising were the High Sheriff of Leicestershire, Stephen Bryan, Lt Cdr Rod Grant from HMS Sherwood and Ian Robinson as Standard Bearer and Parade Marshal.



UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH SUPPORTS TRAINING FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL

The University of Portsmouth is offering a wide range of flexible learning options tailored to serving and former military personnel.

From work-based degrees and degree apprenticeships to Master's programmes and short courses, many options allow Service members to convert their military training and experience into academic credit, helping them progress more quickly toward a qualification.

Eligible courses can be funded through the MOD's Enhanced Learning Credits Administration Service (ELCAS), and many are available via distance learning for those stationed overseas.

Whether you're building your career in the Forces or preparing for civilian life, Portsmouth provides practical, career-focused education to support your next step.

Work-based degrees

Work-based 'Learning at Work' degrees give you the freedom to gain a Bachelor's (undergraduate) or Master's (postgraduate) degree without leaving your job.

You build your learning around work projects, set your own objectives and shape your degree to your own needs and your employer's goals.

You can study online units from home or work and choose to attend some lectures on campus – but that's not essential.

Degree apprenticeships

Would you like to earn a salary while you get a Bachelor's (undergraduate) or Master's (postgraduate) degree? How about not having to pay tuition fees?

Degree apprenticeships allow you to work as an employee while you study part-time, with your employer or the Government covering your fees.

You combine academic study with practical experience, gaining the knowledge and skills you need for a successful career in the Forces or beyond.

Master's degrees and postgraduate taught courses

Studying a Master's degree or other postgraduate qualification can advance your career prospects within the military or take you in a new direction elsewhere.

Courses are designed in collaboration with industry to make sure you learn the skills employers need.

You'll gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of your

discipline, get practical experience in a setting similar to what you'll experience in your career and carry out independent study and research.

Many of the Master's courses give you the option to study full-time, part-time or online, plus some courses have a January start. With more than 140 programmes to choose from, the University can help you get to where you want to be.

Professional doctorates

Sometimes known as a 'while-you-work PhD', Professional Doctorates are internationally-recognised qualifications.

They are ideal for working professionals in the private and public sectors who are interested in work-based research.

Unlike a PhD, a professional doctorate is not training for a career in academia, but an opportunity to combine your professional practice with a research degree.

This means you'll complete your doctorate while you continue in your current role.

Continued professional development (CPD) and short courses

Whether you want to learn more about a specific area relevant to your career or work towards a university qualification, they have more than 100 short training and development courses to choose from.

The University develops their courses and training programmes with researchers and industry experts to make sure they are relevant to your needs and ambitions. Many of their short courses and CPD training programmes carry academic credits and have professional accreditation.

This means you can choose courses that interest you and build up credit over time to work towards a University certificate or award.

You can study their short courses on campus with access to their facilities, equipment and resources. Alternatively, some of the courses are available through distance learning online, allowing you to study from home or work.

For more information follow this link: <https://www.port.ac.uk/study/studying-while-working/military-personnel>

OUTSTANDING SERVICE IS RECOGNISED

In a special ceremony held at Admiralty House on 14 July, Sarah Ayton and Roger Collings were formally presented with Royal Navy 2* Commendations for their exceptional service to the WRNS Benevolent Trust and their dedication to the wider veterans community.

The commendations were awarded by Rear Admiral Jude Terry, Royal Navy Director of People and Training, who personally thanked both recipients for their unwavering commitment to supporting former members of the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) and for raising the profile of women in the Royal Navy, both past and present.

Sarah and Roger were recognised not only for their work delivering benevolence and guidance to former WRNS members, but

also for their continued advocacy on behalf of veterans and their families.

Their efforts have had a meaningful and lasting impact on the support structures available to the Naval community.

Kath Hutton, Vice Chair of WRNS BT, said:

"Sarah and Roger exemplify the values of service, dedication and compassion that are at the heart of the Royal Navy community.

"Their work ensures that no veteran is forgotten, and that the contributions of

women in Naval service – historic and ongoing – are rightly celebrated."

Both Sarah and Roger (pictured right on the steps of Admiralty House) expressed their gratitude at being recognised, noting how proud they were to receive such an honour from the Royal Navy.



NATION HONOURS THOSE WHO FOUGHT ON

Members of the public are encouraged to participate in a national two-minute silence on Friday 15 August to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War 2.

A Service of Remembrance will honour and remember those who fought and died during the war in the Far East at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, which will be broadcast live on BBC1 from midday.

It will host a spectacular tribute to veterans involving 400 members of the Armed Forces, the Red Arrows and historic aircraft from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

This follows four days of events in May to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day, which marked the end of the World War 2 in Europe.

However, at that time 80 years ago, thousands of British and Commonwealth military personnel continued to fight Japanese forces in Asia and the Pacific for a further three months until Victory over Japan (VJ Day) was declared on 15 August 1945, following Imperial Japan's surrender to Allied Forces.

The Service of Remembrance will be run in partnership with the Royal British Legion and will be attended by World War 2 veterans, VJ association members, senior politicians, and military personnel.

The event will include a guard of honour of Royal Navy, British Army and RAF



personnel and music provided by military bands.

Veterans attending will include prisoners of war held across the region and veterans stationed in the UK or Commonwealth countries who contributed to the war effort.

The service is a ticketed event, but members of the public visiting the Arboretum on the day are invited to observe the two-minute silence and watch the service on large screens at a nearby public viewing area.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said:

"Those who continued to fight bravely in Asia and the Pacific in those last few months of the Second World War must

never be forgotten.

"It is so important for us as a nation to come together on this important anniversary to remember our VJ Day veterans and hear their stories first-hand so we can ensure that their legacy is passed on to future generations and their sacrifice is never forgotten."

War veteran and RBL ambassador Tom Berry, aged 101, from Cheshire, who was serving in HMS Tartar in the Pacific when Japan surrendered, said: "For veterans like me and all those who carried on fighting until VJ Day was announced, this will be a very emotional day – a moment in history.

"I'll be watching the service at home, and I'd ask the country to do the same – to stop and remember all those who gave so much for our freedoms, and those who never made it back."

The national commemorations will commence with a Government reception to celebrate VJ Day with veterans, and Government buildings and High Commissions across the globe will also be lit up on 15 August to mark the day.

In addition, Imperial War Museums will be screening *I Saw The World End*, a digital public artwork by artist and designer Es Devlin, at Piccadilly Circus on 6 August to commemorate the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

■ **Portsmouth picnic to mark VJ 80 – see page 22**

EVENTS RECALL THE SINKING OF LISBON MARU

Amongst the events marking VJ Day this month are activities specific to the story of the atrocity of the sinking of the Lisbon Maru, a Japanese ship secretly carrying around 1,800 British POWs which was sunk by an American submarine in October 1942 resulting in the death of more than 800 men. Hundreds of British servicemen were saved by nearby Chinese fishermen, who plucked them from the sea under the noses of the Japanese. A memorial to the bravery of the fishermen was unveiled in China earlier in the summer.

On 13 August at 7pm Brian Finch will be giving an online talk, arranged by the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (SACU), describing how the friendship between the Chinese fishermen of Zhoushan and the British POWs from the Lisbon Maru that they rescued has developed over the years. To watch this online please click on [this link](#) to get free tickets.

On 15 August – VJ Day the main event, organised by the Royal British

Legion, takes place at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, and members of the Lisbon Maru Memorial Association (LiMMA) will attend.

The Royal Scots Museum Outreach Team will hold a VJ Day 80 event at the Central Library in Edinburgh which will include details of the Lisbon Maru story.

Chris Weedon, son of the late Martin Weedon, Middlesex Regiment and Lisbon Maru survivor, will give a talk about his father's diaries at the **Memorial Hall, Stoke sub Hamdon at 7pm.**

Fang Li's documentary film 'The Sinking of The Lisbon Maru' will be shown in the following cinemas:

■ Regent Street Cinema, Regent Street, London, at 7.30pm

■ Village Hall of East Brent, Weston-super-Mare at 7pm

■ Phoenix Cinema and Arts Centre, Leicester at 6pm

■ The Submarine Centre, Helensburgh, Scotland at 7pm.

The première of a new film, 'Dongji

Island', will be held at the Odeon Leicester Square at 7pm – this is a fictional drama based on the story of the Lisbon Maru. Members of LiMMA will attend.

On 24 August the documentary film will be shown at the **Kino, Hawkhurst at 3pm**

On 26 August China Global Media Network and China Media Group will host an event in Liverpool, co-hosted by LiMMA, to mark VJ 80. This will include several high-level speakers, including the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Brian Finch will be on the panel to discuss and answer questions on the Lisbon Maru.

On 30 August the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (Volunteers) Association are marking the 80th Anniversary of Liberation Day at the National Memorial Arboretum, and they are keen for the Lisbon Maru family to be represented.

Further screenings of the documentary film are expected to be shown in August.



TRAFALGAR CLASS BOWS OUT IN TRIUMPH

The Royal Navy's Trafalgar class of submarines have passed into history. For more than four decades, the seven submarines were at the forefront of underwater warfare, first as Cold War warriors, later adapting to a new world order when the Soviet Union collapsed. Submariners of all ages who served in the boats converged on Devonport Naval Base to celebrate the accomplishment of the T-boats and recall old times. The formal act of decommissioning the last operational boat in the class, HMS Triumph, provided the occasion for the reunion in the base which the hunter-killers called home for most of their

careers. Crews of the last two boats in service, Talent and Triumph, held Divisions at HMS Drake in Devonport, with former Trafalgar crews invited to join them. A Colour Party and Guard comprising submariners from Talent, which paid off three years ago but still has crew as part of the complex decommissioning process, and Triumph, as well as RNA shipmates and members of the Royal British Legion paraded in front of friends and families who had gathered for the occasion. Taking the salute was Capt Dave Burrell, who was Executive Officer of both Talent and Triumph and, as



skipper of HMS Trenchant, took her to the North Pole. He was joined by Guest of Honour and Triumph's Sponsor, Lady Hamilton, whose husband was Armed Forces Minister when the boat was launched in 1991. Also enjoying proceedings was one of the UK's oldest submariners, war veteran John Harlow, who carried out patrols in the wartime version of the T-boats, including HMS Truculent and Teredo. Captain Burrell told all present he was mesmerised by the T-boats from the moment he first stepped aboard HMS Tireless in 2003. "The boat was a marvel, the people inspiring, and the

mission was challenging." Since then he said the submarines "had become a second home" to him and cemented their reputation as workhorses of the submarine flotilla. "I asked the Royal Navy's most senior submariners how I should describe the Trafalgar class. They said simply: utterly brilliant submarines," he said. Mr Harlow, who from Devon, was delighted to be among honorary guests. "This is absolutely great – I cannot believe it. We are different ages and we talk different languages but I understand what they have gone through being under the water."



HONOURING SERVICE, RESTORING PRIDE

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) is proud to support Fighting With Pride through a Remembrance and Comradeship Grant, made possible by funding from Greenwich Hospital.

This support helped deliver a landmark event marking the 25th anniversary of the lifting of the military LGBT+ ban.

The event took place on board HMS Victory, and is the first of its kind – a formal ‘Dining Out’ evening held in honour of Royal Navy and Royal Marines LGBTQ+ veterans who served during a period when their identity risked not only their livelihoods, but also their dignity and place in military history.

This special gathering commemorated the sacrifices made by LGBT+ personnel during the ban (1967–2000), while also creating a space to reconnect, celebrate service, and rebuild a sense of belonging and recognition within the wider Armed Forces community.

The significance of the evening reaches beyond the ceremonial. For many veterans, this would have been one of their first opportunities to be publicly acknowledged for their service in a traditional military setting on one of most iconic Royal Naval ships - a powerful act of validation and respect. It also forms part of a broader mission to address historic injustices highlighted in the recent Lord Etherton Review and to champion the mental health, wellbeing, and social

inclusion of LGBT+ veterans across the UK.

“It was quite an emotional evening, marking a moment unlike anything the LGBT+ community has experienced before,” said Anthony Knight, Veterans Community Worker South-East England and Fighting With Pride Grants Manager.

“A traditional dining-out event was something we’d never had the ability to do before.

“With Lt Cdr Oli Brown serving as Master of Ceremonies, the night was one of celebration and friendship.

“None of it would have been possible without the invaluable support of organisations like the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity.”

By supporting this event, RNRMC continues its commitment to fostering a sense of belonging and recognition for all who have served in the Naval Service. The celebration also marked an important milestone in the journey towards a truly inclusive Armed Forces, one where all veterans are remembered, respected, and honoured.



CHARITY ABSEIL NETS CASH

Saturday 5 July 2025 was a day to remember, as courageous individuals geared up, clipped on, and stepped off the edge of Portsmouth's iconic Spinnaker Tower – all in support of Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC). Standing at 170 metres, the Spinnaker is not just a breathtaking landmark – it's also a serious challenge for even the most adventurous fundraisers. With views sweeping across the Solent, the abseilers – who included Rear Admiral Jude Terry – faced more than just their fear of heights. With nerves of steel (and a few shaky knees), they took on the challenge with determination, grit, and a whole lot of heart. Rear Admiral Terry said: "Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity is an amazing charity that supports all of our families,

serving personnel and veterans. "Abseiling down the Spinnaker Tower is a really quick way to take on a challenge that will absolutely support the Navy's number one charity." Speaking about her decision to take on the Spinnaker, RNA Vice President WO1 Claire Robson said: "I've worked closely with our principal charity for several years and wanted to take on this challenge to support them because RNRMC does some great things for our families - but also to face my fear of heights!" For some, the abseil was a personal tribute to loved ones in the Royal Navy. For others, it was a way to



give back to the community that's supported them. Each participant had their own reason for taking on the drop, but they all shared one goal: to make a difference and raise vital funds for RNRMC, the Royal Navy's principal charity. Every pound raised will help improve the lives of sailors, marines, and their families – whether they're serving today or are part of the wider naval family. As of yesterday, Admiral Terry and WO Robson have raised almost £4,500, and you can contribute at <https://tinyurl.com/9mpfcjeb>.



MUSIC AND PAGEANTRY ON DISPLAY

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



TRINITY

QUICK QUOTE FOR TRAVEL INSURANCE

As a member of the Association, 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.

https://51bwhwzvnuu.typeform.com/to/UU6CIVe3#association_members_area=xxxxx



PLEA FOR OLD CAP TALLIES

Michael Little is asking for old cap tallies to be used on Poppy Day appeals in Middlesbrough Cleveland Centre each year. Anyone in the RNA, Sea cadet Corps or RN associations that have spare tallies to add, please contact Michael for a forwarding address – his email address is littlemichael71@yahoo.co.uk

WELFARE AND WELLBEING

THE RNA – PROACTIVE WELFARE, AND MEANINGFUL WELLBEING

Strengthening Support, Building Connection, Upholding Legacy

The August update reflects the Royal Naval Association's ongoing dedication to proactive Welfare, meaningful Wellbeing, and visible presence across the community. From strategic networking to direct support of transitioning personnel, RNA shipmates continue to uphold the ethos of lifelong camaraderie and care.

A Warm Welcome at Central Office

Central Office continues to thrive as a welcoming and inclusive space where Welfare & Wellbeing operations are delivered with professionalism and genuine care. This month, Shipmate Brian visited in person to complete his DBS verification and collect his Welfare Photo ID card (pictured below). The occasion served as a reminder of Central Office's open-door ethos: all volunteers are invited to drop in, whether for welfare matters or simply a friendly chat. The environment is one where every visitor is treated with respect, and every interaction is handled with care. While everyone is welcome, those planning to visit should contact Jon in advance, as Naval Base passes may need to be arranged to ensure smooth access. If you're a Branch or Area Welfare Officer (BWVO or AWWO) and would like a Photo ID card, just send in your photo. Most cards are posted directly, but as Brian showed, there's always the option to collect one in person when visiting for DBS or other meetings. His DBS clearance was completed within 48 hours, thanks to the streamlined and thoughtful process managed by the Welfare team.

Each situation is approached on a case-by-case basis to ensure ease for the volunteer and cost-effectiveness for the Association. It's all part of a wider commitment to making welfare support accessible, practical, and personal.



BRNC Open Day: A Welcoming Spirit from Brixham Branch

The Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) Open Day, held on 26 July, was a fantastic opportunity to connect with people from across the Naval community, from seasoned officers and international cadets to families and holidaymakers. With more than 3,000 visitors attending to celebrate BRNC's 120th anniversary, the day was filled with pride, tradition, and real conversation.

Brixham Branch played a leading role, offering a warm and approachable presence throughout the day. Supported by myself in my role as Welfare & Wellbeing Support Co-Ordinator, we aimed to create a space that was both inviting and insightful—making sure the values of camaraderie, support, and lifelong belonging were genuinely felt (see separate story [here](#)).

I had the chance to speak with Capt Andy Bray, BRNC's Commanding Officer, and later met with members of the BRNC Chaplaincy to discuss the experiences of young officers adjusting to Naval life.

We explored how spiritual and emotional wellbeing is supported during those formative years – a vital piece of the puzzle when it comes to long-term resilience and leadership. One of the real highlights was talking with international officer cadets, especially those from the Bahamas, who brought unique perspectives and energy to the conversations. And, of course, meeting Naval families – some currently navigating life while loved ones are deployed – was a reminder of the strength and hope that anchors our community.

Mental Health Matters: Self-Care That Works

The Royal Naval Association is stepping up its wellbeing message by sharing trusted resources from Grassroots Suicide Prevention, giving members practical tools that go beyond crisis response.

Continued on page 16



Their self-care framework breaks it down into three smart tiers:

■ **Protecting Life** – Knowing when to ask for help and having the right support in place during tough moments.

■ **Preserving Wellbeing** – Building a plan before you need it, because preparation makes all the difference.

■ **Promoting Joy** – Finding daily habits that lift your mood and help you feel connected, fulfilled, and grounded. This approach makes mental health feel manageable and proactive—not just something we talk about when times get hard.

It's all part of RNA's wider push to cut through stigma and put support front and centre, wherever it's needed.

"Mental health isn't a trend—it's part of everyday life. The RNA is helping make that mindset real."

Honouring Service: Supporting Naval Veteran Funerals

Throughout July, I provided compassionate support to the families of six Royal Navy veterans who sadly crossed the bar. For each, I offered funeral guidance and coordinated the presence of Standard Bearers and buglers, ensuring that ceremonies were carried out with dignity and respect. Recognising the importance of visible tribute, the Royal Naval Association has recently invested in six coffin drapes – a symbolic gesture offering comfort and pride to bereaved families.

Already, four of these drapes have been used, dispatched directly to funeral directors for seamless inclusion in the service.

The feedback from families has been deeply moving, with many expressing sincere appreciation for this act of solidarity and remembrance.

"It's always an honour to support the close families of those who served with distinction. These small acts carry deep meaning—and they matter," said Jon Everett, Welfare & Wellbeing Support Co-Ordinator

RIP to all Naval veterans who crossed the bar in July.

Click here for the **Funeral Guide - Royal Naval Association**

Helping Royal Navy Leavers Take Their Next Step

The Royal Naval Association recently joined the RN Service Leavers' Event in Redruth, playing a hands-on role in supporting personnel moving on from Royal Navy service. Representing the RNA, Jon Everett (Welfare & Wellbeing Support Co-Ordinator) and Brett Crabtree (Area 4 Welfare and Wellbeing Officer) offered tailored guidance, emotional reassurance, and continuity during a significant life transition.



Their presence reflected RNA's ongoing commitment to standing beside those stepping into civilian life – not just with resources and signposting, but with lived empathy and practical know-how.

From career planning to connecting with community networks, Jon and Brett ensured that Service leavers felt heard, supported, and empowered.

"Leaving the Service isn't the end – it's a new beginning.

The RNA makes sure that next chapter feels connected and confident."

With several Service Leavers' Events still to come this year, Jon will be reaching out to local Areas and Branches to coordinate support and participation. Upcoming events include:

- 24 September 2025 **Faslane**
- 8 October 2025 **China Fleet Club, Saltash**
- 12 November 2025 **Portsmouth**

These gatherings are a valuable opportunity for RNA branches to connect directly with those beginning their next chapter, offering insight, community, and a sense of belonging that continues well beyond service.

A Busy Time in Central Office

Requests for Welfare and Wellbeing support continue to rise, reflecting the vital role we all play in supporting our veteran community.

To ensure we provide timely and effective assistance, I kindly ask that all Area and Branch Welfare Officers (AWWOs/ BWWOs) keep me updated with their most recent contact details.

This enables me to redirect enquiries swiftly to those with the local knowledge and insight needed to best help each Veteran.

Monthly Reports – Your Voice Matters

A gentle but heartfelt reminder to please complete and send in your Monthly Report Forms.

This simple one-page update allows the wider RNA family and our partner Naval charities to hear about the incredible work you're doing, providing support, guidance, and signposting to those who need it most.

If you don't tell us, we don't know.

So please, feel encouraged to share. Every story helps us say "THANK YOU" – and celebrate the compassion and commitment that defines our community.

SPIRIT OF THE ASSOCIATION

Brixham Branch exemplified the spirit of the RNA at the Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) Open Day, when more than 3,000 visitors flocked to its historic Dartmouth grounds in celebration of 120 years of Naval officer training and tradition. Brixham Branch was one of the most impactful contributors, adding a highly visible and engaging presence. The branch delivered outstanding community outreach, engaging guests through personal conversation, informative materials, and meaningful representation of the RNA's core values: camaraderie, support, and lifelong belonging. The event attracted local residents, holidaymakers, Royal Navy veterans, and Naval families, each greeted with warm hospitality and a sense of shared purpose. Brixham Branch's proactive approach provided a welcoming gateway for new connections, helping visitors understand the value of RNA membership and the ongoing support available to the wider Naval community. "Events like this remind us that our community spirit isn't just tradition – it's lived experience," said an RNA branch member.



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>

Royal Naval Association Lottery



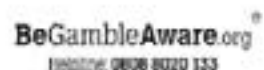
Win up to £25,000

**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**



NEW SHIP SWAPS FROM RFA TO HMS

A specialist minehunting ship formally becomes a Royal Navy warship today as she prepares for front-line operations protecting UK waters from underwater threats.

Acquired in 2023 for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and since carrying the moniker RFA Stirling Castle, the ship has, in a rare move, being redesignated as a fully-commissioned warship of the Royal Navy fleet – therefore becoming 'HMS Stirling Castle'.

Stirling Castle has been designated a warship as she will be committed 100 per cent of her time to front-line operations, allowing RFA personnel to focus on their primary task of crewing the array of tankers and support ships across their fleet.

The White Ensign was hoisted at Stirling Castle's masthead for the first time in a ceremony in Birkenhead.

Her 45-strong ship's company of sailors and officers officially moving onboard the ship currently berthed at the Cammell Laird facility on the banks of the Mersey. Stirling Castle – with her unique blue and white livery – will now take her place on front-line duties, carrying high-tech equipment, including autonomous surface and underwater vehicles, for specialist minehunting operations, primarily in UK waters.

Commanding Officer Cdr Phil Harper said: "This is the first time in living memory that Royal Navy personnel have taken over a ship from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

"I want to recognise the amazing work that the RFA have done in bringing this ship into service and preparing her for handover, and to thank them for the great head start we have been given in delivering Stirling Castle into service as a warship.

"We will soon be launching and recovering autonomous minehunting vehicles from this ship, keeping the seas safe for UK and allied warships and merchant sailors alike in an



increasingly dangerous world."

HMS Stirling Castle, which will be based at Portsmouth, marks a move away from traditional minehunting, embracing cutting-edge technology as she acts as a 'mother ship' for an array of remotely-operated and autonomous systems which will scour home waters looking for mines.

The ship began life as the offshore support vessel MV Island Crown but was snapped up by the MOD in 2023 and converted at Devonport.

There are plans in the future to have the ship repainted in grey.

REMEMBERING THE SOMME

The RBL Annual Somme Remembrance event at the Irish National War Memorial at Islandbridge in Dublin on 12 July took place with Royal Navy and RNA representation.

The Senior Naval Officer Northern Ireland was not available to attend, but arranged for Lt Col Gary Giles RM from Scotland step in represent the RN.

S/M Maurice Keane, of Dublin Branch, represented the RNA and laid a wreath on behalf of Central Office. S/M Robert Buchanan laid a wreath on behalf of 12 Area, while S/M George Ball laid a wreath on behalf of Dublin Branch. The RNA Standard was also present. This ceremony is a shared-island event arranged and led by the RBL in Ireland with the cooperation and assistance of the Irish

State.

The event, held annually around the time of the Somme, commemorates all those who lost their lives during the Battle of the Somme and in the two World Wars, particularly the estimated 60,000 Irish men and women from all parts of the island who served and died in those conflicts



CRUISES DEPARTING IN 2026...

S/M Mike Critchley, of Maritime Heritage Tours, has details of the ship lined up for his group's February 2026 cruise in the Caribbean.

The vessel chosen by the Ambassador Cruise Line is the new French liner Renaissance.

More details on the ship can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y2kyzde9> VERY few balcony cabins remain available (if any), but please quote Group 1384 when phoning Ambassador (0808 256 5952) to discuss your cabin options.

There are still a few cabins the company are holding for the party – see the details of this and our other holidays on the horizon at www.maritimeheritagetours.co.uk

Another group will be heading to Malta on 7 January, and at present there are no single supplements to pay. Email Maritime Heritage Tours via their website if you are interested in further details.

DEVONPORT OPENS TO THE PUBLIC

More than 10,000 people sampled life 'behind the wall' when Devonport opened its gates for the first time in more than a decade.

Not since Navy Days ended have people been allowed to look around the largest Naval base in Western Europe.

In cooperation with the base's industrial partner, Babcock International, over two days – one dedicated to the families of personnel and civilian

staff, the second for members of the public – seven sites, each showcasing a different aspect of the work and activities taking place, were opened to visitors.

Among the sights of 'Devonport Days': frigate HMS Portland and patrol boat HMS Smiter, both of which welcomed visitors to look around with crews on hand to talk about their duties and jobs.

"It's really important to let our families and the public see where we work and what we do – open days like this are a great opportunity for us all," said Lt Sam Charlesworth, Smiter's CO.

"It is tremendously important for the public to get a glimpse into the Naval Base and see what goes on behind the walls and barbed wire," said Naval Base Commander Brig Mike Tanner RM.

DATE FOR SEAFARERS SERVICE

The Annual National Service for Seafarers (ANSS), organised by The Seafarers' Charity and Trinity House, will be held at St Paul's Cathedral on Wednesday 8 October 2025.

The ANSS was first held in 1905 and has been observed annually ever since.

Its purpose is to recognise and give thanks for the vital work of seafarers, whose contributions are often overlooked. The service is a reminder of their enduring importance.

Many attendees have served at sea, often in dangerous conditions. Others come to honour loved ones who died in service. Their personal tributes are shared by others who recognise this island nation's duty to remember those "that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters."

The Service holds deep meaning for many, especially older members of the congregation who travel long distances to attend. They find comfort and connection in the familiar words, music, and shared remembrance.

The ANSS honours seafarers from all

maritime sectors: the Merchant and Royal Navies, fishing fleets, workboats, cruise liners, commercial ships, ferries, yachts, and others working at sea. It also welcomes maritime welfare charities, nautical schools, youth groups, veterans' associations, and people of all faiths and backgrounds.

The ANSS is open to all, and it's free to attend. Seafarers from all countries, faiths, and backgrounds, as well as those who support them from ashore, are encouraged to join us in this solemn celebration

Book tickets here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-annual-national-service-for-seafarers-2025-tickets-1057903701449>

WILDFIRE DETAILS

This year's Wildfire III service of remembrance will be held on 7 September at Queenborough, Kent, honouring those who served on the minesweeping base at Queenborough

during World War 2. The details of timings are as follows:

13.30 Parade musters outside Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Queenborough.

13.45 Parade marches to the park.

14.00 Service and wreath-laying ceremony in the park. After the service the parade reforms for the salute to be taken outside the Guildhall.

There will be light refreshments and entertainment at the Rose Inn, High Street, Queenborough.

The Guildhall will be open for standard bearers to prepare, and tots and standard bearers' bars will be presented at the Rose Inn.

WIDOWS GROUP SEEKS NEW CHAIRPERSON

The Royal Navy Royal Marines Widows Association (RNRMWA) is seeking someone with dedication and compassion to join them as their new Chair.

This is a voluntary role, with reasonable expenses covered.

Formed in 2008 by a group of volunteers, most of whom are widowed, RNRMWA offers befriending, a listening ear, regional lunches and events and online support through closed groups.

Responsibilities and Commitment:

■ **Representation:** Ensure the voices and experiences of their members are heard and considered to improve policy and bereavement-related processes. Advocate for a consistent, person-centred approach to loss, mindful that all bereavement experiences are unique.

■ **Meetings:** Attend meetings led by the Ministry of Defence, Royal British Legion, and other organisations, representing RN and RM Widows alongside the Army, RAF,

and the War Widows Association.

Contribute to academic research to shape change.

■ **Leadership:** Lead a small committee, plan and deliver quarterly meetings (online and/or in person).

Personal Attributes:

■ **Ability to present information at both strategic-level meetings and relate to RN and RM Widows in all their diversity, regardless of whether death occurred in service or as an RN or RM veteran.**

■ **An appreciation of funding, experience in hosting meetings, record-keeping, organisational communication, pastoral support, and advocacy are desirable.**

If you have the time to lead and develop the RNRM Widows Association, working alongside the Founder and a small committee, they would love to hear from you. **Please note: Applications close on Monday 4 August.**

For more information see [this link](#)



RUGBY MATCH IN MEMORY OF RHOD LEYSHON

Friends and colleagues of a Royal Navy pilot who died when he was forced to ditch his aircraft in the sea off the Dorset coast in September 2024 are holding a charity rugby match in his memory. Lt Rhodri Leyshon, aged 31, was a keen rugby player, a talented aviator and a proud Welshman. Rhod previously played rugby for Cowbridge RFC as well as Wales URNU, Cardiff Met University and was even able to participate in a BRNC alumni rugby tour of America. He subsequently specialised as a Commando Helicopter Force pilot, qualifying in 2018. A team formed of serving military personnel and veterans with personal links to Rhod will play Cowbridge at Cardiff RFC's home stadium, Cardiff Arms Park, on 30 August. The match will be a double header, with Cardiff RFC playing Esher in their final pre-season fixture (kick-off 3pm) before the Rhod Leyshon Select take on a Cowbridge Select XV at 5.30pm. Entrance to the charity match will be free, however there will be representatives of HMS Cambria collecting for Wales Air Ambulance on the gate and throughout the ground during both matches. You can follow the event Instagram account for all the latest updates via the following link - <https://tinyurl.com/4shxhzxp> or Facebook at And a access the public Facebook event via this link - <https://tinyurl.com/37se76wu>

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

MARCH WITH US IN LONDON

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

The event, organised by the RNA, is organised for the benefit of all Naval Associations, and is an opportunity to remember old comrades, put your Association in the spotlight, 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.

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

HISTORIAN SEEKS SAILORS WHO SERVED IN MALTA

An historian is seeking interviews with former sailors serving in Malta when Dom Mintoff was prime minister.

Andrew Southam would welcome any assistance completing his next work of history, Britain's escape from Malta 1971 to 1979, describing London's dealings with prime minister Dom Mintoff, ending a 180-year-old military and defence relationship with the islands. Andrew is interested in the stories of Service personnel or their families living in Malta through this period, especially during the

pre-emptive pull out and return of forces between December and March 1971 and the final departure preparations in 1978-79. Any interesting stories across the period would be warmly welcomed.

Andrew is an historian and history journalist who has written for the regional, nation and international media, including The Times, the Daily Express, History Today and Parliament's The House magazine, and books published by Pen and Sword.

Andrew can be contacted at andrew2southam@yahoo.co.uk

HEALTH CAMPUS TO HOST VJ 80 PICNIC

A VJ 80 Picnic is to be held at the St Mary's Community Health Campus in Milton Road, Portsmouth.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Healthcare are inviting you to bring your lunch and join them for a community picnic to commemorate the end of World War 2. Everyone is welcome to the event, which will be staged between 12.00 and 2.00 on Friday 15 August.

Collections will be held for charities that support Forces children and families, past and present.

What to Bring:

- Lunch, snacks, and nibbles – bring your

own!

- Light refreshments will be provided.

- Seating: Some picnic tables and benches are available, but you may wish to bring a blanket to sit on the grass.

Ceremony:

A short ceremony will begin at 12:30pm, where they will reflect on the significance of VJ Day and the end of World War 2.

Location:

St Mary's Community Health Campus
Milton Rd, Portsmouth, PO3 6AD
The Picnic will be in the Capt Sir Tom Moore Garden, located behind Block D in the south-west corner of the campus.

- The garden is to your right as you reach Block D.

- Look out for bunting!

- What3Words location: vest.smashes.invest

Parking Information:

- Parking is limited – please consider alternative travel if possible.

- No reserved parking is available.

- Motorcycle bays and disabled parking spaces are available near Block D.

- A drop-off area is also located close to Block D.

- All motorists must pay for parking upon exit using the on-site machines.

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DIARY DATES

Assoc Management Committees:

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 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

GET YOUR GIZZETS!

Our 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/>



CATCH IT WHILE YOU CAN...

We might have mentioned in the last Circular that we were on the beer... and here is our National President enjoying some of that rather special ale.

The RNA 75th Anniversary special edition pale ale has been produced by the Powder Monkey Brewery, based at historic Priddy's Hard in Gosport, and was officially launched at the RNA National Conference in June.

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 – and remember, the RNA gets a percentage of every sale.

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

STANDARD BEARER TRAINING

A further date has now been arranged for Standard Bearer Training and refresher in Scotland for Sunday 24 August at HMS Scotia.

Tea/coffee will be available for stand-easy and they will look to have lunch in the SR Mess again.

Names (for access to the base) and numbers (for lunch) need to be confirmed by no later than 15 August.

Please confirm by no later than 14 August should anyone from your Branch wish to participate, and if so, provide:

- full name
 - car make, model, colour and registration
 - if you currently have a pass for HMS Scotia/HMS Caledonia (and may therefore be able to act as an escort).
- Equally, any existing Standard Bearers would be very welcome to attend to assist with the training.
- Contact Karen Elliot, RNA Scottish Area Secretary, at kelliott250666@gmail.com

FINALISTS HONoured

The Finalists of the Soldiering On Awards 2025 were honoured at a prestigious ceremony in the Cholmondeley Room and Terrace of the Palace of Westminster last month.

The awards recognise those who have gone above and beyond in their dedication to support the military, veterans, and their families.

Shipmates might like to think about potential candidates for the 2026 awards...



WELFARE TEAM AT REDRUTH

Smart as paint! The RNA's Welfare Co-ordinator, Jon Everett, and Brett Crabtree, Area Welfare and Wellbeing Officer for Redruth and Camborne Branch, attended the Service Leavers' Event at Redruth to offer support to those transitioning out of the RN and into civvy street. BZ – and good luck to all who were there. See **page 15** for our Welfare and Wellbeing report.

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

Yachting – David Monks: david.c.monks@gmail.com

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
August	Summer break	Fireside Chats will resume on 1 September
Mon 1 Sept	Lt Cdr Johnny Mason	Force Generation of a Carrier Strike Group
Mon 15 Sept	David Fields	The Royal and Russian Navies
Mon 22 Sept	Terry Barnes	My Falklands Campaign – 40 Cdo RM
Mon 6 Oct	Alison Baverstock	Reading Force

BRANCH NEWS

BODMIN Branch

Bodmin Branch switched its annual summertime event this year.

Instead of the regular BBQ and boules, a more refined afternoon cream tea was held and hosted by S/Ms Mike and Isobel Frost, longstanding members of the Branch.

Several shipmates attended and, with no boules to play, lazing on a sunny afternoon (didn't the Kinks do that?) seemed to be the order of the day.

After games and Cornish pasties the scones, jam and cream were served but unfortunately, the age old question of jam first or cream first raised its head and was not settled once and for all...

Bodmin Branch is open to all serving and former serving members of the Royal Navy and any others who feel affiliated and align to the RNA ethos.

Please feel free to get in touch – the shipmates would make you feel more than welcome. They meet on the first Friday of every month at Bodmin Bowls Club at 7.30pm.



4 AREA/FROME Branch

No 4 Area (South West Flotilla) was proud to present Walking with the Wounded, a charity which assists veterans, with a cheque for £1,000 from their Annual Reunion Charity Chest.

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 4 Area was invited to submit a proposal to receive a portion of these funds to support a cause of their choosing.

Frome Branch nominated Walking with the Wounded. Heather Saunders, Area Manager South, was invited to Frome's monthly meeting to accept the cheque from Branch Chair Sandra Elmer, and to give a talk to shipmates about the charity

and what it does.

Heather was extremely grateful to receive such a sizeable donation and said: "I had a really lovely time – it was fabulous to meet you all, and hear about the activity within your area, and you all made me feel so very welcome.

"Thank you also for your generosity – thank you so very much. I can assure you the monies raised will be put to very good use."

Also present for the presentation were S/M Mike Lawton, Chair of the Reunion Committee.

4 Area comprises 27 branches across Bristol, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, proudly hosted its Annual Reunion Weekend from 7–9 March 2025 at the Durrant House Hotel in Bideford, North Devon.



PORTLAND Branch

Shipmates of Portland Branch honoured the memory of those who fell during the attack on HMS Foylebank on the morning of 4 July 1940, with a poignant ceremony held at the Yeates Road memorial site.

Since the dedication of the memorial on 4 July 2021, Portland RNA has proudly taken on the duty of remembrance, ensuring the sacrifice of those lost is

never forgotten. This year, 14 members of the branch were in attendance.

A moving reading was delivered by Branch Chairman S/M Dusty Miller, while the Branch Standard was paraded by Branch President S/M Ben Cartwright.

S/M Micky Fox also paraded the Ajax Association Standard, adding to the solemn dignity of the occasion.

The ceremony was further marked by

the presence of Mr Johnson, whose father, Edwin Johnson, served aboard HMS Foylebank.

His attendance served as a powerful reminder of the personal legacies carried forward by families and communities alike.

Portland Branch remains committed to preserving Naval heritage and supporting veterans and their families through unity, loyalty, and comradeship.



CARDIFF Branch

Cardiff Branch chairman S/M Andy Clark reported a great afternoon supporting the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust's five-year strategy launch event, meeting up with S/M Graham Warner (RNA Area 7 Chair) and Debbie Dollner (RNBT CEO). Pictured left is S/M Andy Clark with Graham and Debbie, who made the most of the opportunity to network with like-minded charities and individuals.

The RNBT was established as the Grand Fleet Fund before becoming a Royal Charter Benevolence Charity in 1922. It operates two care homes, Pembroke House in Gillingham, opened in 1952, and Admiral Jellicoe House in Portsmouth in 2022, marking the charity's centenary.

Looking over the next five years, the Trust's four key strategic objectives are strengthening community engagement and benevolence, enhancing the Trust's culture through their people and governance, improving operational efficiency and capacity, and ensuring financial sustainability and stability.

For full details of the strategy see [here](#).



HUNTINGDON and DISTRICT Branch

Members of the congregation of Hartford Church, plus representatives from the Huntingdon and **St Neots** branches, gathered by the riverside on 13 July to remember seafarers who had crossed the bar. Carnations were cast into the Great Ouse as an act of remembrance as part of the annual Sea Sunday service which is usually held on the second Sunday of July each year. The traditional Service has been held for many years now, promoted by the Mission to Seafarers, whose main mission is to provide support and pastoral care for seafarers around the globe. Although arranged by Huntingdon Branch, the service also had representation from the Merchant Navy Association. The service in church included the Naval Prayer and the hymn 'Eternal Father strong to save', as well as the National Anthem. It is hoped that this annual memorial for the shipping industry will continue into future years.



BRACKNELL Branch

Bracknell shipmates had a very busy month in June 2025. It started with their very enjoyable Annual Race Night on 7 June, showing just how competitive oppos can be... An excellent supper was provided by one shipmate, and the Chairman kept the horses (and the punters) very much 'in order'. More than £150 was raised for Branch funds. Still on the fundraising front, Bracknell held a charity collection day on 12 June at the local Tesco store and managed to raise nearly £500. It is always a pleasure to talk to members of the public and to hear their stories of family who have served. The Branch is grateful for the kindness and support of all the staff at Tesco. On 15 June ten Branch shipmates attended the Annual Service of Remembrance at the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne College. It is both a solemn and an enjoyable occasion, made more so this year by meeting up with four shipmates from **Newbury Branch** as well as (Thatcham Veterans' Breakfast Club) friends from HMS Antrim. As usual the college staff and cadets looked after everyone extremely well and it was lovely to meet up with old friends who regularly attend. Conference was a very busy but great weekend, and



at the same time, the Branch was also represented at the annual awards evening at Maidenhead Sea and Royal Marines Cadets Unit (TS Iron Duke), where the youngsters and staff never fail to impress. One of the highlights of the month was a visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Seventeen shipmates packed themselves into a minibus – the most they have had on one outing. As usual, the weather was fabulous and they had an amazing tour, guided by Pensioner John Byrne, a resident of seven years, who answered questions with great patience and kindness. It may well become an annual event as it was so much enjoyed by all. The Branch had more exposure on Armed Forces Day, 28 June, when the Chairman had organised a gazebo and table in Bracknell Town Centre. Quite a few shoppers stopped to talk, and shipmates raised awareness of the Branch as well as nearly £100. The Branch wishes all shipmates and oppos everywhere an enjoyable summer.

CITY of EDINBURGH and CITY of GLASGOW Branches

Shipmates of the City of Edinburgh and City of Glasgow Branches, along with a few Members from the AOW Edinburgh & District Branch, enjoyed a private tour of the Scottish National War Memorial on 21 July.

They were invited into Edinburgh Castle, after hours, for a private tour led by expert and enthusiastic volunteer tour guides Trish Keppie and Jim Leggatt.

The SNWM commemorates 150,000 names from World War 1 and 50,000 from World War 2, all hailing from Scotland.

The Duke of Athol started the ball rolling to look for a suitable site and location for a fitting memorial, and the then General Officer Commanding Scotland offered the space within Crown Square, Edinburgh Castle, which previously held a barrack block.

£125,000 was raised, mainly from donations, in 1925 and work began. The SNWM is still funded today largely by public donations. It was officially opened in July 1927, with the King and Queen being

the first to officially enter using a golden key.

There are a number of beautiful stained-glass windows, and various detailed murals, as well as laid-up military standards, military insignia of the Armed Forces and regiments of Scotland, and books containing the names of the fallen.

One of the books contains the names of Scottish female military personnel, which includes four WRNS Officers, 26 WRNS Ratings and 4 QARNNS.

The large White Ensign on display is one that has been retrieved from the wreck of HMS Royal Oak, this particular one from 2016.

Within the Shrine, not normally accessible by visitors, lays the casket which was donated by King George and Queen Mary and contains still the original scroll. They ended their tour with private reflection.

On exiting the Castle, a few of them enjoyed a lovely bite to eat and a refreshment (or two) at the local Filling Station on the High Street. A wonderful evening, informative, enlightening, commemorative and, as always, in comradeship.



BODMIN and PORT PHILIP Branches

The Chair (Ian Laurie) and Secretary (Annette Laurie) of Bodmin Branch, currently travelling the world, met up with shipmates in Victoria, Australia, last month. Having seen in the RNA Semaphore publication a picture of the CEO cutting a 75th Anniversary cake that made its way all the way from near Melbourne, they realised that they were staying nearby on the Mornington Peninsula, as part of their nine-month world trip.

Initially they couldn't make contact due to email issues, but a swift email to RNA HQ saw messages start to fly backwards and forwards, with a very prompt invitation to join the Port Philip Branch for their monthly get-together and lunch.

Branch Chairman Mike Bennett and Branch Secretary Mike Murphy warmly welcomed them and introduced them to the many shipmates present.

"The time went very quickly," said Ian. "We got chatting inside their amazing meeting club, full of Aussie Naval artefacts down one side and Royal Navy artefacts and photos down the other side. There was a great roast beef lunch and apple crumble dessert which was extremely tasty, and well washed down by the obligatory tot or two!"

Annette and Ian both gave a brief introduction about themselves, having served for 60 years in the RN/RNR between them.

"I really enjoyed the movie presentation as there were various issues put together for it, including a piece on 100 years of the WRNS," said Annette.

After lunch there was a raffle and a photo opportunity for all – including a picture of Janner Pasty Peeps, a Cornish Pasty who travels the world with them, alongside his partner in crime, Help for Heroes Baby Bear.

"Being away for so long really makes you realise how much you miss the camaraderie and connections," said Ian, "and we are really thankful to Kathryn at RNA HQ for passing our email on to the Port Philip Branch to make this happen."

And just to go full circle, there was another 75th Anniversary cake made by Lauren Dugan, who made three in total – one for the Branch birthday in June, one for the RNA 75th Anniversary and another for shipmates who missed the June celebrations such as Dennis Fryer, an RNA Life Member, who was the Branch Secretary for over 15 years and his lady Joy Fryer, who when she was



physically able, was a stalwart of the branch, organising functions and the like.

Also missing in June were Jeanette and Graham Caldwell, and so the smaller cake was presented to them "so as they would not dip out," according to Chair Mike Bennett, who said "plus we had a couple of overseas visitors at the July meeting."

Dennis did a great job cutting the cake into 12 portions and sharing amongst those lucky few.





2 AREA

Congratulations to S/M Martyn Evans on becoming the Area 2 Standard Bearer. The competition at which Martyn triumphed took place at Ashford Sea Cadets Unit (TS

Churchill) under the instructions of Area 2 Ceremonial Commander Steven Susans. The Parade Marshal was

Malcolm Friend

Adjudicators were:

S/M Sue Rickard

S/M Alan Oliver

The result:

1st: **S/M Martyn Evans**, Paddock Wood

2nd: **S/M Bryan Goldsmith**, Ashford

3rd: **S/M Barry Toogood**, Whitstable

With thanks to Glenys Goldsmith for her help.

Judges were: S/M Dave Corrigan

S/M Tony Avery

VIP for the Day:

S/M Hazel Evans, receiving a medallion for her contribution to the day's proceedings.



6 AREA

An Area 6 meeting was held at the Welwyn Garden City RNA Club, with eight branch delegates present (out of 12), and a number of observers.

After marching on the Area Standard, the names of five shipmates who had crossed the bar since the last meeting were read out after the Last Post was played. The agenda was kept as simple as possible, so that the essential business could be covered in a reasonable time, to avoid causing shipmates too much discomfort on a blistering hot day.

All officials' reports had been pre-circulated, which avoided having to go through each one, but to merely ask for questions, which were mercifully few.



There was also a full house of branch reports, along with two newsletters. Future events included March Armed Forces Fair on 31 August and Rushden Branch's Trafalgar Dinner on 25 October.

Branches were requested to

provide details of any events such as Armed Forces Days, Branch Dinners, Trafalgar Nights, Standard Dedications etc which shipmates from other branches were welcome to attend.

An 'Open Forum', led by the Area Secretary, provided opportunities for all shipmates to ask questions or raise issues for discussion.

A number of items were raised, including the order of items in the service for shipmates who had crossed the bar at the beginning of area meetings and the recent Informal Groups (IGs) Guidance document and how IGs are to be supported.

After the meeting, there was a chance to socialise with other shipmates and enjoy 'Up Spirits', along with an excellent buffet, provided by S/Ms Penny Jarvis and Val Godfrey and a raffle. Many thanks to Welwyn Garden City Branch & Club for hosting a very successful area meeting.



LICHFIELD Branch

Armed Forces Weekend at the National Memorial Arboretum – great meeting you all! HMS Sherwood URNU, Dave Robertson MP for Lichfield, Burntwood and the Villages, Glen Bown from Alrewas & Fradley Alcoholics Anonymous, University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust, TS Vigo (Brownhills Navy Cadet Force), Tamworth and Salford Branches and Chris Upton.

An absolute pleasure to have World War 2 RN veteran 99-year-old Arnold Salter come to visit and share a tot with Lichfield shipmates (thanks to JLR AFCN). Lots of interest in the branch and the RNA as a whole. They have new members, new joiners and transfers. It's epic, and they haven't stopped yet. Lots of things on the horizon for Lichfield!



TENBURY WELLS Branch

A Re-commissioning Ceremony was held by Tenbury Wells at the town's Masonic Lodge Rooms on 12 July.

Branch Chairman (Elect) S/M Tony Kirkham and Vice Chairman S/M Nigel Trigg welcomed guests to the ceremony, including Guest of Honour Cllr Robert Perrin, the Mayor of Tenbury Wells.

Commissioning Officer S/M Peter Godwin, the National Council Member for 8 Area, was asked to re-commission the branch by S/M Kirkham, following which the Founding Members together confirmed to the Commissioning Officer that they "do promise to conduct the affairs of this branch in accordance with the Supplemental Royal Charter, its Rules and By-laws as decided by an annual Conference or the National Council of the RNA and approved by His Majesty's Privy Council."

S/M Peter then confirmed that the National Council had approved the re-commissioning.

After the Act of Dedication and prayers, led by Chaplain the Revd (Capt) Justin Trevelyan Parker, S/M Peter was invited



to cut the commissioning cake, and there was a celebratory toast during Up Spirits.

Attendees – 29 in all – were then invited to join Tenbury Wells members for a buffet and refreshments.



WANSBECK and DISTRICT Branch

Since the last report from Wansbeck Branch shipmates have managed to keep themselves busy.

At the end of April the Branch held their St George's Day service and social at Ashington with a Service at St George's Church, followed by a social gathering at the Masonic Hall with over 100 in attendance, including the Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland Dr. Caroline Pryer among the guests, as well as four RNA branch members.

There was a home visit to 101-year-old George Benning, a World War 2 Naval veteran from Newbiggin-by-Sea, and to Maureen Dyer at the Care Home where she now permanently lives – Maureen is a former Wren, now in her 80s, and the Branch keep in touch with its veterans regularly.

In May they had the VE Day event on the 8th at Blyth Battery, with the Lord Lieutenant (and her mother) once again in attendance. Also in May, one of the branch's older Naval members, Dave Eaborne (who is 87), was finally accepted as a blind veteran.

Between April and July Branch Secretary S/M Derek Wilkinson personally attended six funerals, two of them military.

In June two Wansbeck Branch members attended a Falklands 43rd Anniversary parade and service at Jigsaw Memorial in Killingworth, with 30+ veterans on parade, three buglers, seven standards and 12 wreaths laid.

Also in June, a number of Wansbeck shipmates attended an Aden Veterans parade of Remembrance at Newcastle,



along with some of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (formerly the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers), followed by refreshments at the Three Bulls Heads. There were around 20 or more on parade, four wreaths were laid, and around 50 people attended in total.

At the end of June a number of members attended Armed Forces Day parades at various venues, some of which were visited by bikers.

Last month the branch lost one of its former members, Margo Kirsopp, a former Wren who crossed the bar on the 8th – she was 86.

Also in July we had our a branch '43rd and RNA 75th Anniversary and 80th since the end of World War 2' celebration meal at the Old Ash Dene pub in Ashington, where 22 members and guests had a lovely 3three-course meal subsidised from branch funds, attended by Branch members, and Submariners and Fusilier veteran members as our guests.



MARKET HARBOROUGH Branch

Market Harborough Branch had a very good attendance for the Church Service with three Standards being paraded. Afterwards we had tea and sticky buns in the Church Hall with Presentations of Certificates to the Sea Cadets.



FALMOUTH Branch

At its packed July branch meeting a total of 44 shipmates gathered to wish former Vice Chairman and Secretary S/M Ian Stobie and his wife Sharon 'Bon Voyage' as they prepare to head off for a new life Down Under.

A stalwart branch member, supported by Sharon, Ian held a number of posts within the branch and organised Falmouth's Sea Sunday Parade on behalf of the town for a decade.

Ian and Sharon head off to start a new life with their family in Australia with the heartfelt best wishes of the Branch.

It's never "goodbye" – just "until we meet again".

The photograph shows Falmouth Branch President Cdre Tony Hogg (on the right) presenting Ian Stobie with his leaving gift on behalf of his shipmates at the branch meeting.

OBITUARIES



S/M CYRIL OLIVER
Rhondda Branch Shipmate Cyril Oliver crossed the bar on 21 July at the age of 98. Rhondda branch. Rest in Peace.

S/M GEORGE BOOTHBY

George Boothby was born in Preston on 3 October 1924 and attended St Luke's School. He became an apprentice turner at Leyland Motors, but his apprenticeship was interrupted when, on reaching the age of 18 in 1942, he volunteered to join up and went off to do his basic training with the Royal Navy at HMS Drake, Devonport. Probably because of his engineering training, he was posted into the Fleet Air Arm at Lee-on-the-Solent and became an aircraft ordnance fitter, ie an armourer loading up bombs, torpedoes and machine gun

ammunition onto aircraft.

He then moved back up to Lancashire for training outside the village of Kirkham for armaments before moving back down to Hampshire. George was then posted to Arbroath to an FAA base before sailing by troopship from Liverpool to Sydney and onward by land to Brisbane.

George joined HMS Chaser, a small Attacker-class escort carrier which could carry up to 24 Grumman Avenger aircraft.

The carrier's role was to provide cover for the main fleet against



the Japanese.

George then moved to HMS Vengeance, a light fleet carrier assigned to the British Pacific Fleet.

Early in 1946 trips were arranged to go ashore and visit Hiroshima which had been almost completely flattened by the first atomic bomb.

George married Margaret (known as Peggy) and they had one son, Stewart, who died last year. George remarried Jean and had four step-children, Carol, John, Louise and June who died last year.

S/M MARGO KIRSOPP

It is with much regret and sadness that Wansbeck and District Branch report the death of S/M Margo Kirsopp, one of their former branch members. Margo had resigned her membership in 2017. Margo died on 8 July aged 86, one month before her 87th birthday. She was a former Wren, and widow of George Kirsopp, their former Branch Secretary/

Vice President.

There is to be no funeral as Margo had made arrangements for a pure cremation after her husband died two years ago. Sincere condolences have been passed on to her remaining family on behalf of the Wansbeck & District RNA.

Margo had been very ill for some time with cancer. RIP Margo – no more suffering.



Field gun teams train at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth in 1953 for the Royal Tournament. See 2 August. Image from the Imperial War Museum: © IWM (A 32560)

AUGUST 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 August 1998

Type 23 frigate HMS Somerset sailed into Abukir Bay at the mouth of the Nile in Egypt to mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of the Nile, in which a British fleet destroyed their French opponents. An ecumenical service honoured the casualties from both fleets. The battle, in 1798, on 1-3 August, was the defining point of a campaign that began when Napoleon landed a French army in Egypt intent on attacking British India. A British fleet under Nelson had been searching for this expeditionary force, and discovered the escorting French fleet at Abukir Bay, 20 miles from Alexandria, with the French army having already landed. The French believed their anchorage was almost impossible to attack as the ships were lined up, ready for battle, with one flank protected by dangerous shoals. However, when Nelson reached the scene in the early evening he went straight onto the offensive, with one part of his fleet managing to steer between the French and the shore while the other attacked from seaward. The first phase of the battle lasted for three hours and saw the leading French ships caught in a withering crossfire. When reinforcements joined the British attack they

concentrated on the central section of the French fleet, a move which saw the French flagship *Orient* blow up when a magazine caught fire, killing and injuring up to 1,000 people. This prompted the ships to the rear of the French line to attempt to escape the anchorage, scrapping with their British foe as they went. In the end, only two French ships of the line and two frigates escaped the carnage – 11 ships of the line and two more frigates were destroyed or captured. No British ships were lost (though HMS *Culloden* went aground and was badly damaged) though 218 men died and almost 700 were wounded – the French were estimated to have suffered up to 5,000 killed or wounded and up to 3,900 captured. Nelson, in his flagship HMS *Vanguard*, suffered a serious head wound in the thick of the battle that ripped the skin from part of his forehead and caused him severe concussion, but he was patched up and continued. The Battle was also a strategic victory – the French army was trapped in Egypt and Napoleon eventually abandoned it when he returned to Europe; the Royal Navy had wrested the upper hand in the Middle Sea; and it also encouraged other nations (including Russia and the Ottoman Empire) to turn against Napoleon.

2 August 1999

The final performance of the Royal Tournament at Earl's Court in London was staged on 2 August 1999.. The event began as an Army-only affair, with the first 'Military Tournament and Assault-at-Arms' being held at the Agricultural Hall in Islington, London, in June 1880, and although it was not initially a success the crowds gradually came along to support the show in subsequent years. The Royal Navy joined the show in 188, and the first all-Naval element of the Tournament

Continued on page 36

was the cutlass drill and field gun drill, performed by 40 ratings from HMS Excellent in Portsmouth, in 1896. In 1906 the event moved to larger premises, at Olympia, and a crucial element was added to the mix the following year with the introduction of the spectacular Naval Field Gun competition, representing the transport of makeshift artillery pieces by a Naval brigade from the coast to help raise the Boer siege of Ladysmith in 1899 during the Second Boer War. The competition, dubbed the toughest sport in the world, became a huge favourite over the years, and the Devonport Command team saved their best till last, setting the record for the fastest run during the final year of competition in 1999. The Royal Tournament made its final move, to Earl's Court, in 1950, but by the end of the 20th Century ticket sales were not covering costs and the Strategic Defence Review of 1998 provided sharp focus on military spending; the Tournament was deemed unsustainable and did not make it into the 21st Century.

3 August 1945

HMS Tiptoe and Trump attacked a Japanese convoy in the Java Sea on 3 August 1945 – the last effective torpedo attack by British submarines in the war. Tiptoe was very late to the scene – the 1,600-ton boat was completed in June 1944 and first deployed – in home waters – in the autumn of that year. She sailed for Australia early in 1945, though she undertook her first war patrol from Subic Bay, in the Philippines, in May. At the start of August 1945 Tiptoe and Trump carried out attacks on a small Japanese convoy, escorted by patrol boat PB-109, from Batavia to Singapore, north of the Sunda Strait, sinking the 2,700-ton troop transport Tencho Maru with 121 souls on board. Tiptoe claimed the kill – Trump had attacked the same ship with eight torpedoes earlier the same day but failed to hit her. Tiptoe then came under depth-charge attack but managed to remain undetected until a charge exploded rather to close for comfort, at which point she ran for safety. With the end of the war in the Far East just a few days later the pair returned to Fremantle in Australia along with sister boats HMS

Thorough and Taciturn. Tiptoe not only survived the war, but after modification to a streamlined 'Super T-boat' served through until 1970, and was scrapped in Portsmouth in 1975 – the last of the T-boats to be retired. Trump spent a good deal of her post-war career based in Australia, but was finally scrapped in the summer of 1971.

4 August 1943

Destroyer HMS Arrow was damaged beyond repair in an explosion in Algiers Harbour on 4 August 1943. The A-class warship was built by Vickers-Armstrong at Barrow-in-Furness and commissioned in April 1930, serving in the Mediterranean until 1937. Part of that service included the Spanish Civil War, during which she evacuated British subjects from Spanish ports, carried out patrols and monitored shipping. The first part of World War 2 saw Arrow on convoy protection duties, though she also had work carried out on unreliable turbines. She was switched to the Norway Campaign in April 1940, and was holed when rammed on 26 April by a German trawler flying a false flag in the Romsdalfjord. Her last contribution, in Operation Alphabet, was to help escort a slow convoy of transport and store ships as Allied forces evacuated Norway – she picked up some 80 survivors from two Norwegian passenger ships sunk by German aircraft nearby. Further convoy escort work in the Western Approaches, North Atlantic and Mediterranean followed in 1941-2 before she joined the Eastern Fleet in April 1942. Machinery defects required attention from November 1942 until March 1943, though a subsequent collision with a defensive boom delayed her return to action until May that year. She was in harbour in Algiers in early August, and on the 4th of that month she went alongside ammunition transport ship Fort La Montee, which was heavily loaded and had caught fire. Arrow's firefighting efforts were in vain, and when the merchant ship blew up the destroyer was badly damaged in the blast and also caught fire. Arrow sustained numerous casualties – 36 of her crew eventually died from the blast or injuries sustained – requiring the Admiralty to arrange a tow

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HMS Arrow. See 4 August. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 1031)



back to Gibraltar for the destroyer. After temporary repairs, in late November 1943 she was towed to Taranto for permanent repairs, which were scheduled to take place in November 1943 after an in-depth survey. This marked the beginning of the end for Arrow; although a programme of repairs was agreed and took place from January to September, it became increasingly clear that she was not a worthwhile asset in her current role. In October all further work was suspended, all usable kit was removed and she remained a hulk at Taranto until she was broken up in May 1949. As for Fort La Montee, six died of their wounds when that ship blew up. Her for'ard section burned for several days before being sunk, the remainder of the was sunk by gunfire to prevent further explosions. The freighter had been built in North Vancouver in 1942 and quickly pressed into service for Allied military activities in the Mediterranean.

5 August 1917

Special Service Ship (Q-ship) HMS Chagford was struck by a torpedo in the North Atlantic on 5 August 1917 and sank two days later. Chagford started life as the 2,100-ton Admiralty collier HMS Bracondale in 1903, but during World War 1 was converted to a decoy vessel – Q-ships were designed to appear to be innocent merchant ships which would lure U-boats into an attack, upon which screens were dropped to reveal their guns, the White Ensign was flown and the British ship would turn the tables on the submarine. It didn't always turn out that way, of course, as was the case on 5 August 1917, when the Q-ship was around 120 miles north-west of Donegal in Ireland. U-44 spotted the ship, but by now solitary merchantmen aroused some suspicion, so the submarine fired a single torpedo as it slowly approached. Chagford launched her 'panic party' (a group of sailors who take to a boat or boats to appear as if they are rapidly abandoning ship), but the impact of the torpedo caused her screens to fall, revealing her guns and forcing the ship to go on the offensive before the U-boat was close enough on the surface. U-44 dived and fired two more torpedoes which badly damaged Chagford, and the ship sank two days later while under tow, though all but one of

her crew survived. Chagford turned out to be U-44's final victim. The 930-ton boat, commissioned in May 1915, had made her name by sinking 20 merchant ships (70,226 tons) and two auxiliaries, as well as damaging several other vessels. But on 12 August 1917 she was spotted by destroyer HMS Oracle in the North Sea, which attacked with gunfire then rammed the submarine, which had tried to disguise herself with a sail. The U-boat sank with all 44 of her crew.

6 August 1940

A German mine exploded while being examined in the mining shed at HMS Vernon, Portsmouth, on 6 August 1940, killing five people. The mine, thought to have been a one-tonne parachute device, had apparently been dropped on Portland, where it was defused then transported to Portsmouth for further examination. The mine was taken to HMS Vernon, close to Portsmouth Dockyard, to be studied, but the Germans had begun to attach various booby-traps to some of these mines – and this appears to have been one of the doctored devices. While it was being worked on the booby trap was triggered and an explosion occurred – probably only the booby trap, as the mine itself would have caused much greater damage. The explosion killed one officer and four ratings and seriously injured a number of other personnel. As a result of the incident, a new investigation facility was set up in disused chalk pits at Buriton, near Petersfield, some 15 miles north of Portsmouth, where any further incidents could be more easily contained and explosives could be steamed out of these huge devices. The new facility was dubbed HMS Mirtle, from the acronym Mine Investigation Range.

7 August 1853

91-gun second-rate screw ship-of-the-line HMS Caesar was finally launched at Pembroke Dockyard after a 17-day effort to get her onto the sea. The 3,250-ton ship was actually christened on 21 July but ground to a halt on the slip after travelling around half of her length, and did not shift for more than two weeks. It would appear that the dockyard had used timber from fir trees rather than oaks for the slipway,

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A German air-dropped mine at HMS Vernon for investigation in 1939. See 6 August. Image: © IWM (A 30292)





and as fir was much softer the ship had embedded herself into the wood and gouged a hollow from which she could not simply slide – added to which poor-quality tallow was used to grease the slipway. Local legend has a more interesting reason for the mishap – witchcraft. Local woman Betty Foggy was known to be a witch and caster of spells, and she, along with much of the population of the town, had made their way to the dockyard for the grand launch, which was a popular form of free entertainment in the mid-Victorian era. Unfortunately, the scruffy-looking Betty and her daughter were refused entry (possibly because the local populace, in their finery, felt she would bring the tone down, or because of her reputation as a witch, citing the possibility of bad luck). That approach was something of a risk, as thwarting a ‘wise woman’ would be unlikely to end well, and so it proved – Betty went home muttering under her breath, and Caesar was not launched that day nor for many days afterwards. When the warship did finally move, locals suspected it was a combination of the efforts of dockyard workers who built ‘camels’, huge wooden structures, under her hull to lift her above the damaged wooden slipway – and Betty lifting her curse. When the warship finally began to move again, the commotion caused chapels and churches to empty as the people of Pembroke Dock again flocked to the yard to see the ceremony that started 17 days before come to fruition. In early October Caesar was towed to Portsmouth by the steam paddle frigate HMS *Magicienne*, where final fitting-out work was carried out. Caesar saw service in the Crimean War and also served with the Channel Squadron, which included spells in the Mediterranean and in the Americas. She paid off in Portsmouth in February 1862 and was sold for breaking up at Blackwall on the Thames on 19 April 1870.

8 August 1944

Battleship HMS Valiant was damaged when a floating dock collapsed in Trincomalee on 8 August 1944. The fully-laden 33,800-ton warship was about to undergo routine maintenance in Ceylon, but having entered the dock an incorrect ballast pumping sequence was carried out, which overstressed both ends of the dock and caused it to break its back. As it sank, one section reared up and struck the battleship’s stern, badly damaging her two inner propellers and shafts and her rudder. The ship, which was still in steam, was driven away from the dock to avoid further damage,

but it was found she could not steer a straight course and was restricted to eight knots. A plan was devised to take her through the Suez Canal to Alexandria, in Egypt, on her two remaining propellers so that temporary repairs could be completed, but as she wove her way north she grounded near the entrance to the canal. Her two damaged propellers and shafts, and the A-brackets supporting them, were cut away, and she was turned around to complete the tricky passage back to the UK by way of the Cape of Good Hope. Because of the age of the ship – she was launched in November 1914 by Fairfields of Govan, and took part in the Battle of Jutland as well as several major actions in World War 2 – and her general condition it was decided that a full repair would be inappropriate, so after she arrived back in the UK she was decommissioned in July 1945 and used for stoker mechanics training at Devonport until she was sold for scrap early in 1948 and towed to a breakers yard at Cairnryan in Scotland in August the same year.

9 August 1914

Light cruiser HMS Birmingham rammed and sank U-15 on 9 August 1914 – the first U-boat to be sunk in an act of war. Birmingham was a Town-class light cruiser of 5,500 tons, launched by Armstrong Whitworth onto the Tyne in May 1913, and only joined the Fleet in the months before World War 1. On 9 August 1914 submarine U-15, on her first war patrol, lay helpless on the surface of the North Sea off Fair Isle, her engines failed. The only thing in her favour was that she was shrouded in thick fog – but that was not enough to shield her from the view of lookouts on board Birmingham. Sailors in the British warship could hear hammering from inside the 640-ton submarine as frantic attempts to repair her were carried out; when their gunfire missed its target and the submarine began to submerge, Birmingham leapt forward and rammed the diving U-15, cutting her in two and sinking her with all 25 hands – the first U-boat loss to an enemy warship. Birmingham went on to see action at the Battles of Heligoland and Dogger Bank in 1915, and Jutland the following summer, and had an active life after Armistice, acting as flagship for the 6th Light Cruiser Squadron and serving on overseas stations until she was sold in 1931 and broken up at Thomas Ward in March of that year.

10 August 1942

Armed naval trawler HMT Islay sank Italian submarine

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Scire off Haifa, in Mandatory Palestine (now Israel), on 10 August 1942, putting an end to a series of human torpedo attacks on British harbours. Islay was a 554-ton Isles class ship, built by Smiths Dock Co of South Bank in Middlesbrough and launched on 10 April 1941. She rescued 19 survivors from the sinking of SS Zealand, torpedoed by U-97 off Haifa on 28 June 1942, though the steamer went down with 14 crew men and military gunners. On 10 August she spotted Scire, which was heading for Haifa with 11 commandos on board, intending to launch a human torpedo attack on shipping in the harbour – the submarine had already carried out such attacks at Gibraltar and Alexandria. The encounter was not purely by chance – Ultra signals had been read, providing intelligence, and RAF aircraft and coastal batteries were also involved. The submarine was initially seen by a Royal Navy Walrus seaplane, but it was Islay, with gunfire and depth charges, that engaged the submarine and sank it with 60 men on board; the remains of 42 of them were recovered in 1984. Islay was sold as a commercial vessel to a French company in October 1946, and the ship disappeared without trace off the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean on 15 March 1950.

11 August 1705

HMS Plymouth foundered in a gale in the English Channel on 11 August 1705, with more than 350 sailors drowning in the sinking. The ship was originally built by James Taylor at Wapping, and launched on Boxing Day in 1653 as a 52-gun ship, and saw plenty of action in home waters, the North Sea and in the Mediterranean, including the Four Days Battle of 1666, the Battle of Texel in 1673 and the Battle of Barfleur in 1692. She was partially broken up for rebuilding in 1703, and completed as a larger 60-gun vessel at Henry Johnson's yard at Blackwall in March 1705 – which may have had an impact on her stability, as she was lost with all 365 of her ship's company when she foundered in a storm in the Channel on 11 August that same year.

12 August 1844

Boats from the corvette HMS Dido destroyed Seriff Muller's settlement in the Sengei Undop in Borneo on

12 August 1844 – part of wider operations against pirates in South East Asia and the local chiefs who supported them. Dido was an 18-gun corvette/sloop, launched at Pembroke in 1836, which saw 20 years of service far and wide for the Royal Navy, from the Mediterranean to Australasia. In 1842, under the command of Capt the Hon. Henry Keppel, Dido sailed from England for China, based around Hong Kong and Singapore, often countering pirates. In the summer of 1843 Dido and her boats were involved in targeted raids on pirates in Borneo – operations which Keppel was instrumental in setting up and executing. One by one, pirate strongholds along rivers and in estuaries were attacked and destroyed, and promises of support given to local people if they would refuse to shelter pirates. After several months off Canton, and a passage from Singapore to Calcutta, Dido returned to the piracy issue in the summer of 1844. With Dido anchored at the mouth of the River Morotaba, on 29 July an 80-strong party of sailors from the warship, plus several boats, went upstream with the merchant steamer Phlegethon. As and when tides allowed, the party destroyed forts and strongholds, often with very little resistance as the pirates disappeared into the surrounding jungle. Although there were very few casualties on either side, the British raiders managed to weaken the power of the pirates – on 7 August, for example, accommodation for up to 5,000 pirates and their families was burned, four forts and several hundred boats destroyed, 15 iron cannon spiked and thrown into the river along with large quantities of guns and ammunition, and 60 brass cannon seized. On 14 August Seriff Muller's settlement was found after gruelling expeditions through thick jungle; the settlement was undefended so it was plundered and burned, while local intelligence suggested Seriff Muller and his supporters had decamped to a spot around 25 miles further up the Undop River – this position was attacked on 14 August, and further operations continued until the last week of August. HMS Dido returned to Spithead on 27 January 1845, when Keppel learned that his wife, whom he had not seen for four years, was at Droxford, a dozen miles to the north of Portsmouth. With Dido ordered to make for Sheerness to pay off, Capt Keppel changed clothes

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HMS Birmingham. See 9 August. Pictured from the Imperial War Museum collection: © The rights holder (Q 75365)





with his Master, Robert Allen, who impersonated Keppel as he took the ship around the coast of Sussex and Kent. Keppel met with his wife, and together they drove (in a yellow post-chaise, no less) to Sheerness, where Keppel confessed his subterfuge to the local Captain Superintendent, who turned a blind eye to the three-day charade. Dido continued to serve until 1860, seeing service in New Zealand, the Middle East, China and South America, where she ran aground in April 1852. She also went aground in Tahiti three months later, requiring repairs back in England. From 1860 she was used as a coal hulk at Sheerness, and was sold in 1903.

13 August 1915

Former ocean liner HMT Royal Edward was sunk by submarine UB-14 in the Aegean Sea on 13 August 1915, resulting in large loss of life. The ship began life in 1907 in Govan as the 11,120-ton Royal Mail Steamer Cairo, designed for mail services between Marseille and Alexandria, but the venture was not a success and in 1910 Cairo and her sister, Heliopolis, were sold to the Canadian Northern Steamship Co, with Cairo being renamed Royal Edward. The liner carried out a year-round service across the North Atlantic from Avonmouth to Halifax or Montreal until the outbreak of World War 1, when she and her sister (no named Royal George) were taken up as troopships. After a spell of bringing Canadian troops to Europe, Royal Edward embarked almost 1,400 men, mainly 29th Infantry Division, for Gallipoli on 28 July 1915. She arrived at Alexandria on 10 August, a day after her sister had arrived from Devonport. She then continued unescorted towards the island of Lemnos, but on the morning of 13 August she was spotted by UB-14 off the island of Nisiros in the Dodecanese group. The German submarine fired two torpedoes from a mile distant, striking Royal Edward on the stern and causing the troopship to sink within six minutes. The British hospital ship Soudan, which had passed Royal Edward shortly before, turned and rescued more than 400 men, while two French destroyers and some trawlers picked up a further 221. The number of casualties in the sinking is open to much debate – figures range from 132 to more than 1,860, but an Admiralty

casualty list published in The Times in September that year puts the figure at 864.

14 August 1943

River gunboats Aphis, Cockchafer and Flores bombarded the coastal road at Taormina in Sicily, while HM Ships Dido, Panther and Sirius bombarded Scaletta in Italy. Taking Aphis an example, the 635-ton Insect-class gunboat was built during World War 1 and saw action on the Danube, operating out of Bucharest, and in the immediate post-war period she joined the Yangtse Flotilla in China to support British trade and wider interests. In World War 2 she served almost exclusively in the Mediterranean, where her shallow draught (just over one metre) and impressive armament – two 6in guns and two 12pdrs as well as six .303 machine guns – made her and her sisters (including Cockchafer) very useful for coastal bombardment work in support of Army operations, as seen in the Italian campaigns. When Malta became available, Aphis switched to the island from Alexandria, putting her much closer to the assaults on Italian islands and ultimately the mainland. She took part in the landings in Pantelleria in June 1943, and also bombarded important infrastructure in Sicily in July and August, including coastal roads as on 14 August when she, Cockchafer and the much larger (1,820-ton) Dutch gunboat HNLMS Flores pounded the road near Taormina – although the Insect-class ships were spared from the action during the actual landings of Operation Husky (9 July to 17 August 1943) as they were vulnerable to air attack. On the same day that the Taormina road was under attack, another force was bombarding the ancient fortified town of Scalea, to the south-east of Naples on the mainland of Italy. Anti-aircraft cruisers HMS Sirius and Dido and P-class destroyers HMS Panther and HMS Penn took part in various naval gunfire serials during August under the collective name Operation Annoyance, softening up targets in Calabria and Campania as far north as Naples and intercepting Axis convoys. The bombardment of shore facilities prepared the way for the Allied landings in mainland Italy in September 1943, with the main landings taking place around Salerno and Taranto.

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15 August 1915

Armed fishing smack HMS Inverlyon sank submarine UB-4 off the coast of East Anglia on 15 August 1915. In February of that year the Germans had determined to sink any vessels within the so-called war zone, which was essentially all waters around the UK, and commercial fishing vessels were seen as legitimate targets. Thus, in mid-June, German submarine UB-2 had sunk six fishing smacks in two days in the North Sea – smacks are a traditional type of British fishing vessel, powered by the wind and often displaying distinctive red sails. With such vessels being targeted, some smacks were taken up by the Admiralty as Q-ships – decoy vessels that would appear innocuous and would lure unsuspecting submarines to close in, at which point they displayed the White Ensign and opened fire with concealed guns. Inverlyon was put into military service on 2 August 1915, and within two weeks had scored a notable success. Under the command of Royal Naval Gunner Ernest Jehan, supported by three other Naval gunners and the smack's civilian crew (who were temporarily inducted into the Royal Naval reserve), Inverlyon was operating in amongst a group of similar vessels at Smith's Knoll Buoy to the east of Great Yarmouth on 15 August 1915. UB-4, a 140-ton coastal submarine which had sunk four vessels in 14 patrols, was hunting more victims, having sunk the 60-ton smack Bona Fide the evening before. It was gone 8pm when UB-4 approached the smacks and began to shout orders in German. The boat closed to within 30 metres of Inverlyon before Jehan revealed their true colours and ordered his colleagues to open fire with the modest 3pdr gun, hitting the fin and bridge and sending her

commanding officer into the water. Drifting out of control, the submarine floated astern of Inverlyon and back into the gunner's arc of fire, upon which six more shots were fired, two into the fin, two into the hull at point-blank range, and two that missed. A hail of small-arms fire was also aimed at the stricken boat. The submarine tipped slowly up until almost vertical, and slipped beneath the surface, but in doing so she fouled Inverlyon's nets (which had been deployed to help with the subterfuge) and anchored the fishing smack in place. With no radio, an account of the incident was passed to another smack, and then Inverlyon released carrier pigeons the following morning asking what they should do. Any attempt to salvage the submarine was rejected, so the nets were cut and UB-4, along with her crew of 15, finally sank to the sea bed. The encounter earned Gunner Jehan a Distinguished Service Cross, and the smack's civilian skipper, a man named Philips, was praised by the Admiralty for risking his own safety in attempting to save the life of a drowning German sailor, though he failed to reach the doomed man before he was dragged down with his submarine. Inverlyon came close to sinking a second submarine in early September, but could not add to her tally, and the following year she returned to commercial fishing. Ironically, having returned to civilian life, Inverlyon was sunk by a submarine on 1 February 1917 when U-55 shelled her off the north coast of Cornwall, although there were no reported casualties.

16 August 1917

Q ship HMS Saros was sunk by a German submarine in the Strait of Messina on 16 August 1917. Saros,

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HMS Aphis off Pantelleria in June 1943. See 14 August. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 17372)



previously the 3,700-ton collier *Bradford City*, built in 1910, operated in the Mediterranean, though she did not appear to have much success. On one occasion, on 30 October 1916, *Saros* had attracted the attention of a submarine but despite attempts to appear to be a civilian ship in panic mode, the submarine lay off and shelled her, forcing *Saros* to return fire, which prompted the U-boat to escape. Three days later a particularly careless and lazy attack by a U-boat, which clearly accepted that *Saros* was just a bog-standard merchant steamer, resulted in *Saros* scoring at least one hit on the submarine, but that too escaped, and *Saros* spent a nervous night zig-zagging to avoid the risk of an attack by a submerged enemy. *Saros* was operating off the south-west coast of Italy when she was spotted and torpedoed by an unnamed U-boat on 16 August 1917. It would appear that there were no casualties from the *Saros* (also known as *Ballistan Saros*), which began service with the Admiralty as a Q-ship on 16 October 1915.

17 August 1973

Admiral Sir William 'Bubbles' James died on 17 August 1973 at the age of 91. James was the grandson of pre-Raphaelite painter John Everett Millais, and as a young boy he sat as the subject of several of his grandfather's portraits – one of which ('A Child's World') showed five-year-old James gazing at a soap bubble he had just blown. This image was taken up by the Pears Soap company for advertising and became widely recognised – saddling James forever with the nickname 'Bubbles' (or 'Sir Bubbles' after his knighthood in 1938). Breaking with family tradition – his father served with distinction in the Zulu Wars with the Army – James pursued a career in the Royal Navy, starting on board the training ship *HMS Britannia*, after which he was confirmed in the rank of sub lieutenant in April 1901, being promoted to lieutenant later that year. During World War 1 James was Executive Officer in battlecruiser *HMS Queen Mary*, leaving the ship shortly before the Battle of Jutland, when the warship suffered a catastrophic explosion which sank her with all but 20 of her ship's company of 1,286. Later in the war he was a key figure in the creation of the Naval Intelligence organisation, decrypting enemy signals and working on the Zimmerman Telegram, which was instrumental in bringing the United States into the war on the side of the Allies. After the war he undertook a number of important roles, including Director of the Royal Naval

College at Greenwich, Naval Assistant to the First Sea Lord and Chief of Staff to both Commander-in-Chief Atlantic Fleet and Mediterranean Fleet. In the 1930s he took command of the Battlecruiser Squadron, with his flag in *HMS Hood*, and was promoted full admiral in 1938. In World War 2 James was for a time Commander-in-Chief Portsmouth, and commanded Operation Aerial, the evacuation of 200,000 British forces and civilians from Brittany and Normandy which ran in tandem with the Dunkirk evacuation. From 1942 he was appointed Chief of Naval Information, overseeing naval publicity, and on top of all that he was elected Conservative MP for Portsmouth North from 1943-5, during which time he retired from active service. In his retirement James spent a great deal of time researching and writing on British naval history, and was president of the Union Jack Club in London between 1955 and 1964.

18 August 1915

Submarine *HMS E13* ended her active service career stranded on a Danish island on 18 August 1915. *E3* was a member of the effective E-class submarines that served throughout World War 1, though her own part in the conflict was very brief. The 820-ton submarine was built at Chatham and launched on 22 September 1914, commissioning just over two months later. With a crew of 30, *E13* had a range of over 3,200 miles and could operate underwater for more than five hours. *E13* and her sister *HMS E8* sailed from Harwich on 14 August 1915 to intercept German shipping in the Baltic, in order to disrupt the flow of iron ore from Sweden to Germany. However, because of a faulty gyrocompass, early in the morning of 18 August *E13* went aground on the island of Saltholm in the Oresund, between Malmo and Copenhagen, and as dawn broke she was lying fully visible in the shallows. Danish torpedo boat approached and informed *E13*'s captain that he had 24 hours to leave or else he and his crew would be interned for violating Danish neutrality. Attempts to refloat her failed, and with radio contact lost (the Germans were jamming signals) the British sought to negotiate terms for internment. At this point a German torpedo boat arrived, but withdrew in the presence of Danish vessels. But with the Germans keen to keep Allied submarines out of the Baltic, the torpedo boat and a second vessel were ordered to attack *E13*, which they did with torpedoes, gunfire and machine guns, killing 15 British sailors and setting the submarine on fire. The Germans only halted their attack when

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HMS E13 aground on Saltholm after a German attack. See 18 August. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 4296)



a Danish patrol vessel placed itself between them and the stricken submarine. The remaining 15 crew were interned in Copenhagen for the remainder of the war, though her captain, Lt Cdr Geoffrey Layton, and First Lieutenant escaped to return home and continue fighting for his country. Layton went on to serve with distinction in World War 2, commanding the Royal Navy's Eastern Fleet and attaining the rank of Admiral. The attack caused outrage in the UK and Denmark as it was a clear violation of neutrality, and the Germans eventually apologised to Denmark. The Danes arranged for the bodies of the 15 sailors who died to be repatriated with full military honours. E13 was towed into harbour from her resting place on Saltholm, but was too badly damaged to be of any use, and was sold for scrap in February 1919.

19 August 1915

CPO Michael 'Micky' Keogh of HMS Ark Royal won the Albert Medal for his actions in trying to save the life of a pilot in an aircraft crash on 19 August 1915. Keogh, from Co Cork, joined the Royal Naval Air Service on 23 April 1910, starting as a PO in the carpenter's crew, later rating as a Leading Mechanic and being promoted to Chief. He also qualified as a pilot in 1913. On 19 August 1915, a BE2c aircraft piloted by renowned Naval aviator Capt Charles Collet was ascending from an aerodrome on the island of Imbros, near Gallipoli, and had reached a height of around 150ft when the engine stopped. The aircraft was buffeted by air currents from nearby cliffs, and fell vertically to the ground, bursting into flames. Keogh and several colleagues saw the crash, and the Irishman, having clambered through a ravine to reach the spot, wrapped a tarpaulin around himself and dashed into the flames in a vain attempt to rescue the fatally-injured pilot, who was still alive when dragged from the flames but who died shortly after. His passenger, George Lacey, was thrown clear of the aircraft and avoided the fire, though he suffered two badly-broken legs. Keogh was gazetted for the award of the Albert Medal on 12 January 1916 – he later exchanged in for the George Cross in 1971. Keogh was commissioned into the Royal Air Force as a Second

Lieutenant, Technical Officer, on the formation of the junior service on 1 April 1918. He went on to achieve the rank of Sqn Ldr in the RAF, and then served eight years with the Royal New Zealand Air Force, ending as a Group Captain. He died, aged 94, on 22 July 1983.

20 August 1940

Submarine HMS Cachalot sank U-51 in a surface action in the Bay of Biscay on 20 August 1940. The Porpoise-class minelaying submarine had a brief front-line career. Built by Scotts at Greenock, she was launched on 2 December 1937 and commissioned on 15 August the following year. Displacing 2,160 tons when submerged, the boat carried 1 torpedoes and up to 50 mines, in addition to a 4in deck gun. On 20 August 1940 she was in the Bay of Biscay when she spotted German submarine U-51 on the surface to the west of St Nazaire – the U-boat was on her fourth war patrol, having sunk five merchantmen and an auxiliary warship, totalling more than 30,000 tons. Cachalot struck the fatal blow, and her torpedo sent U-51 to the bottom, taking her crew of 43 with her. Cachalot went on to serve in the Mediterranean but did not survive for long. She sailed from Malta on 26 July 1941 with passengers for Alexandria, and was also tasked with looking out for an Axis tanker bound for Benghazi. Cachalot found the tanker, but unfortunately the tanker's escorting torpedo boat Generale Achille Papa found the British submarine and attacked. Cachalot dived to escape, but on resurfacing later she was attacked once more and her upper hatch jammed, preventing her from submerging. The Italian rammed Cachalot, forcing the British crew to scuttle their boat; a Maltese steward died in the attack, but the remaining personnel – 67 crew and 20 passengers – were rescued and taken prisoner.

21 August 1853

Merchant ship Breadalbane, carrying supplies for an expedition searching for Franklin's exploratory voyage looking for the Northwest Passage, was crushed by ice and sank in Lancaster Sound in Canada on 21 August 1853. Breadalbane was a 430-ton three-masted barque built on the Clyde in 1843 for a Scottish

Winnie, one of two 14in cross-Channel guns at Dover. See 22 August. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (H 7918)

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merchant, taken up by the Admiralty in 1853 to carry coal and other supplies. Accompanied by paddle sloop HMS Phoenix, Breadalbane sailed for the Resolute Bay area of Canada, high in the Arctic Circle (now part of Nunavut) carrying supplies for a venture by Sir Edward Belcher, who was looking for the lost Franklin Expedition of 1845 in HM Ships Erebus and Terror. On 21 August 1853 Breadalbane was anchored in ice floes south of Beechey Island, some 500 miles north of the Arctic Circle, when ice formed around her hull. One slab pierced her hull, and in the following hours the pressure on her hull increased to the extent that her skipper ordered his 20-strong crew off the ship as quickly as possible, taking whatever they could carry with them. And clambering aboard HMS Phoenix. Within 15 minutes of them evacuating, Breadalbane sank in 100 metres of water in the Barrow Strait. The wreck was discovered in 1980, lying upright and intact, with two of her three masts still in place, on the sea bed in remarkably good condition, having been preserved by the icy water.

22 August 1940

The Royal Marines Siege Regiment stationed at Dover fired the first shell across the Channel on 22 August 1940. The Regiment was stationed at Dover from its formation on 7 September 1940 until September 1944, and amongst their responsibilities was the operation of A Battery (two 14in guns, named Winnie and Pooh), and B Battery (three 13.5 in railway guns, Sceneshifter, Piecemaker and Gladiator). The 14in guns, which arrived at the site near the village of St Margaret-at-Cliffe in July and December 1940, were spare Mk VII Naval guns with a range of 27 miles, meaning any activities near the coast of the Pas de Calais could be interrupted. As it happened, the first two shots, fired on 22 August 1940, were aimed at a German convoy passing through the Channel. German interest in neutralising these two guns led to extensive attempts at camouflage; at least one dummy gun was built of wood and papier mache, though the effect was somewhat spoiled by the exaggerated droop that developed in the barrel over time. The use of 'supercharged' firing, using cordite charges some 20 per cent larger than those for which the guns were designed, meant that Winnie and Pooh could only fire some 50 round before the rifling in the barrels became worn, so they were used sparingly. The two main guns were installed at the personal request of Winston Churchill (hence the name Winnie), and the Prime Minister was a regular visitor to the site. By mid-1942 the threat of invasion had receded; the railway guns were handed over to the Royal Artillery in late 1943 leaving just the pair of 14in guns, which had their last hurrah when they both fired their maximum 50 rounds at the retreating German army along the Channel coast in August 1944, scoring some direct hits (including an ammunition dump).

23 August 1914

HMS Kennet engaged the German torpedo boat S-90 at Tsingtau on 23 August 1914, and came off second best. The 625-ton River-class destroyer was built by John Thornycroft at Chiswick and commissioned on New Year's Day 1905. Her first service was on the east coast of England, based at Harwich, during which time she was damaged by the somewhat smaller destroyer HMS Leopard while she was visiting

Plymouth – Leopard manoeuvred to avoid a buoy and in doing so damaged Kennet's rudder, which holed the smaller ship's hull. By 1910 Kennet was assigned to the China Station, and shortly afterwards she and her River-class sisters were reclassified as E-class ships by the Admiralty. Kennet remained in China on the outbreak of war, and she was with the China Squadron blockading German treaty ports in China, including Tsingtao (now Qingdao) on the Yellow Sea, in the first weeks of the conflict. On 23 August 1914 Kennet took on the combined might of the 380-ton high-speed torpedo boat S-90, the rather more formidable 1,050-ton gunboat Jaguar and a 4in gun shore battery. Kennet was attempting to cut off the passage of S-90 into Tsingtao but she was thoroughly outpaced, and in the course of the action Kennet lost five men and a gun was put out of action. Shortly after the Allied forces, including Japan, besieged Tsingtao until the port city fell on 7 November. By that time Kennet was back in the European theatre, joining the war in the Mediterranean and supporting the Dardanelles campaign, including patrols and direct support of the ANZAC landings. She remained in the Mediterranean until the end of the war and was sold for scrap in December 1919.

24 August 1810

HMS Nereide was taken by the aggressive French ship Bellone in Grand Port, Mauritius, on 24 August 1810, suffering a great many casualties. The 42-gun frigate was something of a yoyo ship. She was built in St Malo in 1779 and saw some success with the French Navy throughout her first 17 years under the Tricolour, including the capture of a British privateer, the ten-gun Prince of Wales, off Madeira in 1780. However, she met her match on 20 December 1797 when she encountered the smaller but superior frigate HMS Phoebe off the Isles of Scilly. The two ships exchanged broadsides for 90 minutes before Nereide struck her colours, having suffered 20 dead and 55 wounded – Phoebe lost three men and ten were wounded. Nereide entered service under the White Ensign and re0enteerd the fray with a vengeance – literally, as the first ship she took in British colours was the French privateer Vengeance, on 2 March 1800, which she followed up the next day by taking American ship Perseverance, with its valuable cargo, then retook Lord Nelson on 17 March and Eagle on 5 June. Over the following decade she continued to enjoy success in the Caribbean and the North Atlantic, but her career came to an end at the disastrous week-long Battle of Grand Port on Isle de France (now Mauritius), when a squadron of British frigates took on a French equivalent. The British sought to blockade the port and draw out the French warships on 22 August 1810, but in subsequent manoeuvring in narrow channels between shoals most of the British ships grounded and were lost; all of the French ships also grounded and were badly damaged, but as they held a strong defensive position and used it well, the battle is viewed as a disaster for the Royal Navy, and is the only French naval victory recorded on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Nereide was the unfortunate victim of the worst punishment. She had anchored overnight on 22-23 August 1810 to protect the grounded British flagship HMS Sirius, but on the 23rd she came under intense fire from three French ships, including the 44-gun frigate Bellone, which managed to cut Nereide's stern cable,

Continued on page 45

which swung the British ship round and presented Bellone with an unprotected stern into which the French ship poured cannon fire. By 10pm Nereide was a wreck with more than 220 casualties in her ship's company of 281, more than 70 of whom died. Still she refused to surrender as her buccaneering captain, Nesbit Willoughby (whose poor reading of the French situation was largely to blame for the defeat) explored all options before deciding to end his crew's suffering with an offer to surrender which was finally passed to the French the following morning, 24 August. Nereide was subsequently attached to the French squadron, but was so battered that she never sailed again. Ironically, she was to be recaptured by the British later that year, when the island was invaded in early December. All Nereide's surviving Royal Navy officers and ratings were found in prison ships in Grand Port and were released, but the Royal Navy, like the French Navy, could find no use for the shattered frigate and she was sold in 1816 for breaking up.

25 August 1707

24-gun sixth rate HMS Nightingale was captured by six French privateers off Harwich on 25 August 1707. The Chatham-built ship was commissioned shortly after Christmas 1702 and went on to serve in the North Sea. On 25 August 1707 she was escorting a convoy of more than 30 ships when she encountered a flotilla of French privateer galleys off the coast of East Anglia, and while the warship was captured, most of the merchant ships escaped. Nightingale was put into service with the French navy as *Le Rossignol* (French for 'nightingale'). Her service under the Tricolour was brief – she was recaptured by HMS Ludlow Castle on New Year's Eve the same year, and commissioned into the Royal Navy a month later, this time under the name HMS Fox, once again in the North Sea, though she later went on to undertake a voyage to Newfoundland and also served in the Mediterranean. She underwent a total rebuild at Deptford in 1727, going on to serve in the Americas, based first in South Carolina and then in Barbados. She was broken up for good in January 1738.

26 August 1799

HMS Tamar captured the French warship *Republicaine* some 80 miles north-west of Surinam on 26 August 1799 after a lengthy chase. The 38-gun frigate, launched at Chatham in 1796, was a successful

privateer-hunter, taking ten French ships between 4 April and 10 August 1797 alone, all of them in the Caribbean or east coast of the Americas. On the evening of 25 August 1799 Tamar spotted the 28-gun French corvette *Republicaine* off the island of Surinam, but could not follow the smaller ship into the shallow water of the island's coast in the hours of darkness. However, the following morning Tamar again spotted *Republicaine* and immediately resumed the chase. The French skilfully managed to evade their opponents for nearly 12 hours, but some time before 6pm on 26 August Tamar drew alongside and opened fire. The unequal battle lasted no more than ten minutes, by which time *Republicaine* was in a poor state and had lost nine men killed and 12 wounded – Tamar, which had sustained only minor damage to her masts and rigging, suffered just two men wounded. Tamar took the French warship under tow, but because of her age and the damage she sustained, *Republicaine* was not added to the Royal Navy's fleet. Tamar continued to serve until she was paid off in 1802, and she was broken up in 1810.

27 August 1834

Excise cruiser *Camelion* was run down and sunk by HMS Castor off Dover on 27 August 1834. The 85-ton vessel, whose name was also spelled *Cameleon*, operated in the Channel out of Portsmouth from around 1816. She met her unfortunate end in the Strait of Dover in the early morning of 27 August 1834 when she was struck by the 36-gun fifth rate frigate Castor. The cutter sank immediately with the loss of 13 men and boys; four sailors were rescued by Castor. The subsequent court martial, on 6 September, could not exonerate either crew as both vessels have been keeping a good lookout, but in the end the finger of blame was pointed at Castor's Officer of the Watch, who was dismissed the service. Castor went on to serve in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and the China Station, and she lost several of her sailors when she took part in the conflict with the Maori in New Zealand in early 1846. She was tasked as a training ship in 1860, and became the Royal Naval Reserve training ship at North Shields from April 1862. She was sold at Sheerness on 25 August 1902 for breaking up at Woolwich.

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HMS Ouse. See 28 August. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © The rights holder (Q 75033)





Blackburn Kangaroo. See 28 August.
Image from the Imperial War Museum
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28 August 1918

HMS Ouse and an RAF patrol aircraft combined to sink submarine UC-70 in the North Sea. Ouse was something of a veteran River-class destroyer by the time World War 1 began, having been launched onto the Mersey by Cammell Laird at Birkenhead on 7 January 1905 and commissioned in September the same year, though the 635-ton warship was actually a repeat of the destroyers built under the Lairds 1901-2 programme. After commissioning she was allocated to the East Coast Destroyer Flotilla, running out of Harwich, before moving to Chatham in late 1910. After a spell in reserve, and by now assigned to the E class of destroyers, Ouse began World War 1 based on the River Tyne, patrolling between the Scottish border and North Yorkshire. Her main task was preventing the sowing of mines outside East Coast ports and stopping raids on towns along the coast. She later switched base to the Humber, and in May 1917, along with destroyer HMS Bat, was involved in a blue-on-blue attack on HMS C10 off Blyth; although the submarine survived, one sailor died and a second was wounded. On the afternoon of 28 August 1918 the 500-ton German minelaying submarine, which was responsible for the sinking of more than 30 merchantmen, was spotted three miles off Whitby in North Yorkshire by a Blackburn Kangaroo, one of only eight such aircraft in the RAF at that time, all of which were stationed near Hartlepool. The aircraft type had carried out 11 attacks on submarines, but this was the first to draw blood. The pilot, Plt Lt Arthur Waring of 246 Squadron RAF, noticed a trail of oil on the surface of the sea, and following it he quickly spotted the German submarine on the sea bed in relatively shallow water. Waring dropped a 520lb bomb on top of the submarine, and the explosion caught the attention of HMS Ouse, which raced over and, guided by flares from the circling aircraft, dropped a series of ten depth charges which destroyed the boat, killing her crew of 31. Just over two

weeks later a Navy diver, PO 'Dusty' Miller, entered the wreck and retrieved documents, code books and other material that identified the boat as UC-70 of the Flanders Flotilla. It is thought she was lying on the sea bed to repair damage sustained in a recently-laid British minefield off the coast of Yorkshire, which caused the oil leak. UC-70 had already been sunk once before – she was truck by gunfire from British monitors off Ostend in June the previous year, but had been raised and repaired. She had sailed from Zeebrugge on 21 August on her final patrol. HMS Ouse managed one more kill before the end of the war – on 29 September 1918, long with destroyer HMS Star, she depth-charged UB-115 off Sunderland, sinking the submarine with her crew of 39. Ouse was broken up at Dover in late 1919 or early 1920.

29 August 1791

HMS Pandora, a 24-gun sixth rate post ship searching for the Bounty mutineers, was lost on the Great Barrier Reef of Australia on 29 August 1791. Pandora was built at Deptford and launched on 17 May 1779, seeing service in the Channel then as an escort for transatlantic convoys. She captured at least 11 ships, either alone or in company with other warships, before she was placed in ordinary at Chatham in 1783, and there she languished for seven years until reactivated in June 1790 as war loomed with Spain. However, on hearing news of the mutiny on HMS Bounty, the Admiralty decided to end a ship to round up the mutineers, and Pandora was chosen. HMS Bounty, commanded by Lt William Bligh, had been seized by disgruntled members of her ship's company in the southern Pacific on 28 April 1789. Bligh and loyal shipmates were set adrift in a ship's boat, while Bounty, under Fletcher Christian, returned to Tahiti, where some mutineers remained, while the other nine (with a group of Tahitians, mainly women) travelled on to the uncharted Pitcairn Island, and were not

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discovered until 1808, when all but one had died, often in violent circumstances. Their descendants still live on the island. Pandora sailed from Portsmouth on 7 November 1790 under Capt Edward Edwards with a ship's company of 134, reaching Tahiti via Cape Horn on 23 March 1791. Some of the Bounty mutineers handed themselves in, others fled for the hills and were hunted down, and by the time Pandora sailed on 8 May 1791 she had 14 suspected mutineers locked in a makeshift brig on her quarterdeck, nicknamed Pandora's Box. She then scoured the southern Pacific for three months, searching for the Bounty and her mutineer crew, though by that time Bounty had been stripped of all useful material and destroyed by fire on Pitcairn Island. She then headed for the Dutch East Indies, but on sailing for the Torres Strait north of Australia Pandora ran aground on the Great Barrier Reef on 29 August 1791, and sank the following morning, taking the lives of 31 crew and four of the mutineers. The survivors spent a couple of nights on a small sand cay then made an arduous journey in open boats to Kupang on the island of Timor, though 16 more men died en route. Only 78 of the original 134 ship's company of Pandora eventually returned to England, where Capt Edwards and his officers were exonerated at a court martial. Three of the ten mutineers were hanged for their part in the taking of the Bounty, four were acquitted, two received a Royal pardon and one avoided punishment on a legal technicality. The wreck of Pandora was found in 1977, 33 metres deep, and is one of the best-preserved wrecks in the Southern Hemisphere.

30 August 1943

Flower-class corvette HMS Stonecrop and Bittern-class sloop HMS Stork sank U-634 in the North Atlantic on 30 August 1943. Stonecrop, built on Teesside at Smith's Dock, was commissioned on 30 July 1940 and had already destroyed one U-boat, U-124, on 2 April 1943 off the Portuguese coast, alongside HMS Black

Swan. On 30 August she and HMS Stork were escorting Convoys SL 135 and MKS 22 in the Atlantic when they spotted U-634, a relatively-new 860-ton Type VIIC U-boat with one merchant ship to her name. After a protracted hunt, the two ships attacked U-634 with depth charges, and the German vessel sank with all 47 hands on board. Stonecrop survived the war and was sold on 17 May 1947, when she was converted to the merchant ship Silver King. HMS Stork, which was a pre-war Denny Brothers ship built at Dumbarton on the Clyde, saw action in the Norwegian Campaign of 1940, and in 1941 served as Cdr Johnnie Walker's lead ship in the 36th Escort Group, helping to sink two U-boats in December that year. She continued to play a leading role in the Battle of the Atlantic, and was damaged during the Operation Torch landings in North Africa in 1942. Stork was part of the protective screen for the D-Day Landings in the summer of 1944, and was then earmarked to serve in the Far East but the Japanese surrender came before she was ready and she went into reserve. She served two years as Senior Officer's ship in the Fishery Protection Squadron in the mid-1940s, then went back into reserve. She was broken up in 1958.

31 August 1940

The 20th Destroyer Flotilla, the Royal Navy's only offensive minelayer force, lost HM Ships Esk and Ivanhoe in one disastrous mission off the Dutch coast on the night of 31 August 1940, while a third (HMS Express) was put out of action for a year. Esk was an E-class destroyer, designed in the early 1930s to be easily converted to a fast minelayer, which is what happened on the outbreak of World War 2. Esk had by that time already seen action with the Mediterranean Fleet during the Abyssinia Crisis of 1935-6 and the Spanish Civil War, when she helped enforce the arms blockade on the warring factions. Converted in September 1939, Esk laid mines for the Norwegian Campaign in April and May 1940, then returned to

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HMS Stonecrop on convoy escort duty in September 1941. See 30 August. Image from Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 5518)





home waters. HMS Express was a sister to HMS Esk, and was also converted to minelaying duties early in the war. She helped evacuate troops from Dunkirk in May and June 1940, and after losing her bows off the Texel in August that year she was under repair for more than a year. Assigned to the Far East, Express escorted Force Z – battleship HMS Prince of Wales and battlecruiser HMS Repulse – to Singapore, and was one of the ships that rescued survivors from the two big warships when they were sunk by Japanese bombers in December 1941. She returned to the UK in 1943 and took up convoy escort duties with the Royal Canadian Navy under the name Gatineau. She was paid off in 1946 and is now part of a breakwater off the coast of British Columbia.

I-class destroyer HMS Ivanhoe was also quickly converted to a minelayer as war loomed and, like Express, also helped evacuate troops from Dunkirk, carrying more than 2,000 men to safety. She was badly damaged by a German bomb on 1 June 1940 and had only returned to operational duties on 31 August 1940. On that day HM Ships Esk, Express, Intrepid, Icarus and Ivanhoe set off from Immingham to lay a new minefield off the island of Texel, off the northern coast

of the Netherlands. While laying mines, the Admiralty received intelligence suggesting an invasion force may be gathering, and the flotilla was ordered to intercept it. As they closed on the supposed invasion fleet (which turned out to be a small German minelaying unit moving from Cuxhaven to Rotterdam) they ran into a newly-laid German minefield. Express lost her bows in an explosion, killing 90 of her ship's company of 175, while Ivanhoe, closing to assist her, struck another mine, killing a further nine sailors. Esk was next to detonate a mine, and around 15 minutes later she struck a second, which broke her back and caused her to sink rapidly, killing 127 of her ship's company of 145. The incident resulted in the death of more than 200 British sailors, while another 100 or so were either wounded or drifted ashore in the Netherlands in liferafts, where they were taken prisoner by the Germans. Ivanhoe was scuttled the following day by destroyer HMS Kelvin, while Express was towed back to England. There was one further casualty in the so-called 'Texel Disaster' – light cruiser HMS Galatea, one of two cruisers sent to cover the rescue operation, also struck a mine and was slightly damaged.

HMS Ivanhoe sinking after being torpedoed by HMS Kelvin. See 31 August. Image from Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 486)



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
2-5 Sept 2025	RNRMC Race Across the UK
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
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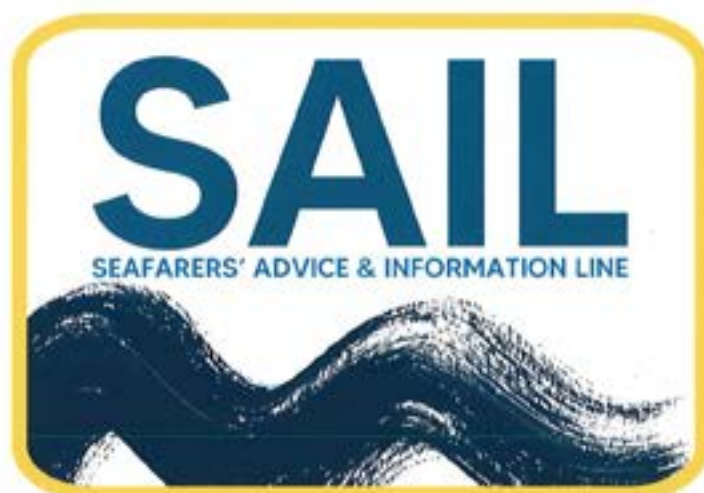


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Ex-service men needed to take part in research interviews

Are you a man who has previously served in the UK Armed Forces?
Have you experienced sexualised behaviour whilst serving in the UK Armed Forces?

Who do we want to speak to?

We would like to speak with male veterans who have experienced sexualised behaviour, who have previously served in His Majesty's Armed Forces as a full-time regular.

What do we mean by sexualised behaviour?

By sexualised behaviour, we are referring to behaviour of a sexual nature, including but not limited to:

- targeted sexual comments about yourself or others, including insults, derogatory comments, insults etc
- verbal and physical sexual harassment (i.e. intrusive sexual questions, non-consensual touching, making sexual remarks about another person's appearance, clothing, body or sexuality)
- sexual humiliation
- forced nudity
- exhibiting or forcing others to participate in sexual acts
- sexualised hazing, initiations or games
- sharing or display of sexual materials (i.e. videos, photographs)
- sexual assault (i.e. non-consensual sexual touching, kissing, assault by penetration)
- rape

What will this mean for those who want to get involved?

You will be asked to take part in an interview, virtually via Microsoft Teams or face-to-face, about your experience of sexualised behaviour whilst serving in the Armed Forces.

Why are we doing this research?

The purpose of this study is to better understand male experiences of sexualised behaviour whilst serving in the Armed Forces, to contribute to an under-researched area and make recommendations for improving support based on the perspectives of veterans.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact the researcher:

Emily Snow, ejs199@pgr.aru.ac.uk