



SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



CAPITAL TURNOUT FOR PARADE

Representatives from across the Naval Family, including serving personnel and veterans, marched past the Cenotaph on Whitehall at the Royal Naval Association's Biennial Parade, held during the Association's 75th anniversary year.

Serving personnel from HMS Collingwood and HMS Sultan marched, as well as representatives from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and 12 Naval Associations including the **Association of Wrens**, **Association of Royal Yachtsmen**, **Submariners Association** and the **Merchant Navy Association**.

We were also joined by members of the **Belgian Naval Association** and the **Irish Naval Association**.

Captain Bill Oliphant, General Secretary of the Royal Naval Association, said: "This 75th anniversary year is a powerful reminder of the enduring spirit of the Royal Naval Association and the community it represents.

"For seven and a half decades, the RNA has brought together serving personnel, veterans and families, ensuring that the bonds forged in the Royal Navy last a lifetime.

"With nearly 25,000 members worldwide, our Association

Continued on page 3

CONTENTS

Naval associations gather for Biennial Parade in Whitehall	1
Contacts	7
Chairman's Chat	8
From the General Secretary	9
Dougie celebrates 100th birthday with 16,500 cards	10
Portsmouth stages RNA Uckers World Championships	11
RNA Christmas cards now on sale	11
Motorhome Camping and Caravan group visits Edinburgh	12
Team RNA tops Race Across the UK fundraising leaderboard	13
Carmarthen Branch celebrates George's 99th birthday	14
RNA Veteran Mentors win recognition in prestigious awards	15
Upcoming Area AGM and meeting dates	15
Book your seats for Army v Navy rugby 2026	18
Tickets on sale soon for Army v Navy rugby clash	16
Sports and Comradeship Groups	20
Fireside Chats	20
Branch News	21
Obituaries	27
Welfare and Wellbeing	28
October Swinging the Lamp	32
Longcast	46
Offers	46

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 7 November, and the deadline for material is 1000 on Wednesday 5 November. Branch Notes will next be published on Friday 10 October, and Semaphore Shorts on Friday 17, 24 and 31 October.



remains a living testament to the motto 'Once Navy, Always Navy.'

"Today's parade gives us the chance to unite as one Naval family – to celebrate our shared identity and to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice."

Katrine Sallows from **Stowmarket Branch** said: "I think it's important to be here to unite us and to remember everyone who has gone before us."

Andy Sears from **City of Edinburgh Branch** said: "I've come down with the Branch Standard which has never been here before."

"This is very important to me because, before now I was homeless, and because of the RNA and other charities I'm not homeless anymore and I'm having a wonderful time being back in the RNA."

The RNA organises the Biennial Naval Parade in Whitehall every other year to enable all Naval associations to come together and march in comradeship and commemoration.

The RNA would like to thank Oracle's MAVEN-UK Group for their support and also that of **RNRMC**, who helped veterans from further afield attend this event.

Feedback after the event indicated that the parade hit the mark.

Andy Fletcher, of the **Association of Royal**



Continued on page 4

Yachtsmen, said: "It is always a particularly special event which epitomises the utterly unique bond between every member of the various ship associations, the RNA Branches across the UK (including our friends from Belgium and the Irish Associations) and the Naval organisations who do sterling work looking after the welfare of members who may be feeling lonely or in need of help.

"The opportunity to catch up with old oppos and swing the lamps with like-minded people is a tonic to all."

Andy felt that the parade was "well-organised and relatively informal but very respectful," and noted that it is "always great to see the reactions of the general public when they accidentally stumble upon the ceremony."

He added: "To have today's 'new' Navy represented by recruits in training from Sultan and Collingwood is appreciated by us older members," and noted that "the presence of the world's BEST military band makes the day special for all of us – you always march better under

their control!"

John Mussell, Chairman of **Salisbury Branch**, said: ""A brilliant couple of days in London for the bi annual parade at the Cenotaph, along with a couple of oppos from the Salisbury Branch, one of whom I joined up with in 1970 (and no they were not wooden ships then).

"It was amazing how the memories came flooding back once our platoon instructor told us to 'fall in three deep' – it was donkey's years ago we received those orders but it seemed like yesterday.

"You probably won't believe it but we actually scuppered a few beers not to mention the Pusser's!

"A great turnout, and if we're still above ground hopefully we'll be back in two years time.

"BZ to all who made the day possible – great effort. Fall out and take a make and mend..."

Jeff Hughes, of **Wrexham Branch**, said: "The Parade was really good, organisation was excellent and the turn out from all aspects was superb – it was also great to see so many ordinary people watching."

Jeff continued: "The service by all the staff in the Civil Service Club was excellent considering so many descended on there in one fell swoop.

"Please convey the thanks of myself and the other Shipmates of the Wrexham Branch who attended a cracking weekend, and absolutely great to meet up with so many Shipmates old and new."

There were similar views from the **Portsea and Portsmouth Branch**, which sent the following critique: "A great event, with just the right amount of ceremony and formality that I would expected when on parade

Continued on page 5



at the Cenotaph, preceded and followed by the great camaraderie and friendship that is present when RN veterans get together.

"Renewed friendships with old shipmates and made some new shipmates, along with a surprise call round. Looking forward to the next one."

Ian McVitie, of the Type 22 Association (pictured right), said: "The parade was fantastic, and I met some wonderful people.

"Told and heard some amazing stories. My first RNA parade, and the first appearance of a Type 22 Association blazer badge at a Biennial Parade.

"An amazing experience – thank you."

The final word goes to Shaun Brosnan, who came all the way from North Yorkshire and made use of the RNRMC Travel Grant:

"It was lovely to see you, as always, at the Biennial parade last weekend.," Shaun emailed the staff at Central Office.

"It was a truly memorable occasion. I was a Parade virgin, but thoroughly enjoyed the day and indeed the whole weekend. "Why had I not been before?"

Images by S/M Nigel Huxtable and Central Office staff. See more on page 6





➤ CONTACTS



Central Office Contacts	
For all contacts and general enquiries 023 9272 3747	admin@rnassoc.org
CEO/General Secretary	ceo@rnassoc.org
Executive Assistant to the CEO	ceo-ea@rnassoc.org
Governance Support Officer	gso@rnassoc.org
Secretary to Boards	dcos@rnassoc.org
Welfare and Wellbeing Support	wws@rnassoc.org
Semaphore Circular and Short	comms@rnassoc.org
Membership Manager	ams@rnassoc.org
Finance	dams@rnassoc.org
Head of Communications	hoc@rnassoc.org
RNA Communications Lead	cml@rnassoc.org
National Advisors	
National Branch Retention and Recruiting Advisor	rna.brre@outlook.com
National Welfare Advisor	geoff@royalnavalassoc.com
National Rules and Bye-Laws Advisor	governancechair@royalnavalassoc.com
National Ceremonial Advisor	nca@royalnavalassoc.com

Find Semaphore Circular online at

www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/news

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Snail Mail – Postal Address

RNA Central Office,
Lanyard House,
Scott Road,
HM Naval Base,
Portsmouth
Hants PO1 3LU

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Dear Shipmates,

I hope you are all well and enjoying life before Autumn sets in – Storm Amy due this weekend!

My Branch, Lee-on-the-Solent and Stubbington (I know it's a mouthful, but its claim to fame is that it's the longest named branch in the RNA, it's like that station in Welsh Wales...) held its annual 'President's Day', which really brings the Shipmates together. This year 50 shipmates did some 'sea-time' on the Waverley, a former Clyde steam paddle ship. We sailed from Pompey to Swanage, leaving at '07 dubs' and returning at 2100 – what a great sea-dit spinning day out! In previous years the Branch has deployed to Windsor Castle, which included a River Thames cruise, Bletchley Park (highly recommended), the Cabinet War Rooms in London and Beat Retreat on Horse Guards with the massed RM Bands, along with the RMB and Kew Gardens followed by a RM Band concert at the Royal Albert Hall. All these events were co-ordinated by Branch President S/M John Lavery and have been amazing events which enable the branch to mix socially and chat to folk you don't know so well. Can I thoroughly recommend this activity to your Branch? It really works wonders with socialisation and allows all members to be included, in our case even WAFUs! Remember you can also apply to the Branch and Club Support Fund for assistance towards the costs. On 14 September shipmates mustered in King Charles Street, Whitehall, to participate in the Naval Associations Biennial Parade. What a brilliant and successful Naval family occasion! Nearly 40 Standards and two large RNA platoons of shipmates joined an RM Band, RN platoons and personnel from Eire and Belgium to parade in Whitehall and hold a service around the Cenotaph.

Luckily for us the weather played its part in that the storm that was due to hit veered away, and the protesters from Saturday had gone home, along with their rubbish (BZ Westminster Council)!

This year even the National Council managed to parade despite barracking from shipmates and an array of bad backs, knees and old hips! Area 7 NCM young Lance Higgon Young suggested an app for marching! However, after several practise marches led by your National Chairman, the rest was history...

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on the RNA's sincere thanks to S/M Mike Smyth and his team of Parade staff, who performed at the highest level and without whom the Parade wouldn't have been so successful, so a huge BZ to them. Also, once again, a BZ is deserved by Sara Field and the Central Office team for their considerable contribution as well.

So, to business...

Membership: RNA membership continues to grow at a fast pace – now standing at 25,000 with 6,000 Lanyard Roll members. Interestingly, national Branch membership has increased by 50 per cent since Covid. If you recall, when we scrapped subscriptions the membership figure was down at 8,000, so there is no question that a mammoth effort by Central Office is



working. The programme to recruit at Raleigh and Dartmouth plus the different offerings on social media are very popular.

Governance Update: The revision of the proposed new Charter, Rules and Byelaws V.1.0 is close to completion. NCMs received a copy for review/ comment, which they completed successfully! The byelaws are less of an issue as they can be amended

downstream, but the Royal Charter & Rules need to be exactly correct as they cannot go back to the Privy Council. The plan is to present the revised Charter and Rules to Conference 2026 and then onto the Privy Council.

Five-Year Plan: A new five-year strategic plan is currently under consideration which includes a way ahead with our relationship with RNRMC. This is of vital importance because the RNA needs to establish a long-term funding proposal from RNRMC and investigate ways of raising funds for the RNA and RNRMC possibly. The NC, along with other Naval charities, is also considering the future 40 years ahead – what will the RNA look like?

Conference 2026/2027: For those of you unaware, the next Conferences will be held in Salford (2026) and Durham (2027). Preparations are already under way for Salford with the initially proposed Gala Dinner being held in the Lowry and the AGM in the Imperial War Museum (North). The plan is also to trial the 'hybrid' attendance system, which will enable shipmates to link up using IT to attend from their own Area/Branches and hopefully increase RNA democracy!

Naval Service Memorial: Sad to report that there has been damage to our lovely memorial at the National Arboretum. Water has ingressed into some panels and repairs are needed to ensure there is no further damage. Unfortunately, the ten-year guarantee ended in 2024. The company who installed the memorial have quoted £14k to repair and waterproof the panels. For info 8k is still available in the Memorial Fund. NC/ Central Office are investigating, more updates to follow.

Financial Awareness Gentle Reminder: Sadly we still have a couple of 'Commission of Inquiry's running which involve financial issues and these take a huge amount of time and effort to follow through to a conclusion. So, please may I ask that your Treasurers take that extra couple of minutes to double check their returns – you know it makes sense...

Before I close, could I 'mention in dispatches' our Deputy National President S/M Mark Slawson and S/M Nick Purkis, our Governance Advisor, and the work, time and effort they have committed to the RNA in amending the Charter, Rules and Byelaws – it is highly commendable and worthy of a First Class BZ. Thank you so much Mark and Nick.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Fishermans Friend Concert.

Best wishes,

Andy

FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Ahoy Shipmates!

National Chairman Andy has covered the bases in his piece so I won't reiterate, but will take a moment to welcome the new Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Paul Beattie, to his new post.

We look forward to doing business with you Sir, and best wishes for your appointment.

Now I want to say thank you.

Last month, Jon Everett and I represented the RNA as we set off on the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity's (RNRMC) Race Across The UK.

It was a bit of fun and, of course, competitive.

We didn't win the race as far as first across the line goes, but I do want to tell you that because of the generosity of our Branches and individual members in sponsoring us, our team came out of it as the team which raised the most amount of money for RNRMC.

There were 24 teams of two participating so, as a fundraising effort, I would say that we were in fact the winners! Told you I was competitive!

As I write, the totaliser reveals that Branches and individual members within the Association collectively raised £12,403 plus another £546.61 through Gift Aid.

That is an immense effort, and I am so proud that our Association has achieved this.

I want to take this opportunity therefore to give all of you who contributed, either as an individual or as a Branch, a heartfelt thank you for this outstanding support.

I would also like to thank those who supported us morally and physically, as well as those who contributed financially.

The Edinburgh Branch saw us off early on a Tuesday morning at the Walter Scott Monument in Edinburgh (pictured) and the Brixham Branch saw us in at Dartmouth at the race conclusion.

Also to those favours requested and provided from our great network of members along the way – thank you all,



it was very much appreciated by both of us.

Finally, please can I thank my partner Jon, who had to put up with doing this with his boss – always a tricky proposition!

Being a 'young person' Jon was much better at the social media piece than me – and to Central Office Comms Lead Sarah Bewley, too, who had the unenviable task of trying to keep up with us to do the comms as we darted around the country. Thank you both.

Enjoy your Trafalgar Dinners around the country this month!

Bill

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AND 16,500 BIRTHDAY CARDS...

In a moving celebration of courage, community, and century-long resilience, Royal Navy veteran Doug 'Dougie' Shelley marked his 100th birthday last month with an extraordinary outpouring of love – more than 16,000 birthday cards arrived at the RNA Club in Southend from around the world, to honour his service.

Dougie, a D-Day and Arctic Convoy veteran, joined the Royal Navy at just 17 and served as a seaman gunner aboard River-class frigate HMS Meon and M-class destroyer HMS Milne during World War 2.

To mark his centenary, **Southend Branch** of the RNA launched a public appeal, hoping to gather 100 cards – one for each year of Dougie's life.

The response was overwhelming.

Cards came from schools, care homes, Sea Cadets, and individuals across the world, from as far afield as Australia New Zealand and Canada.

Among them were personal messages from King Charles III and Queen Camilla, and from No 10 Downing Street.

Moonpig and Card Factory donated cards for the public to show their love for the sprightly centenarian.

Southend Branch member Carol Pendrigh and Dougie's shipmates were determined to see Dougie receive at least one card for every day of his life, so put out an appeal to the Southend community.

Among those responding were staff from the town's Card Factory store, who not only organised a card, but a bespoke one in Royal Navy colours, personalised with Dougie's name and signed by the whole team, produced by the firm's in-house design team.

And for good measure they decorated their High Street store window with a large 'Happy 100th Dougie' message, and gifted balloons and decorations for his birthday party.

"His service means so much, and we wanted to ensure his 100th birthday was one he would never forget," said Carol.

Dougie is not just a veteran, he's an Arctic Convoy sailor and D-Day veteran, a true local hero.

"The support from Card Factory and the public has been incredible – it really shows



how much people still care about honouring our veterans."

Andy Thornburrow, Card Factory's regional manager, added: "Dougie's story has touched all of us here in Southend. It's been a joy for the team to be a part of Dougie's birthday and see the community come together to celebrate a truly inspiring man."

Dougie celebrated with a traditional tot of rum at a tea party hosted at the RNA headquarters in Southend, surrounded by Naval memorabilia, balloons, and decorations.

Visitors included the Mayor of Southend, Cllr Nigel Folkard, and the city's two MPs, Bayo Alaba (Southend East & Rochford) and David Burton-Sampson (Southend West & Leigh).

"I don't know what all the fuss is about – I'm only 100, not 200," Dougie joked, visibly moved by the tribute.



PLAYERS GATHER FOR UCKERS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The boards are set, the pieces laid out and the dice ready to roll.

The annual Uckers World Championships are back in Portsmouth tomorrow (4 October), with the Royal Maritime Hotel hosting the event in Queen Street.

For so long a close-hold Royal Navy game, Uckers is flourishing on the wider stage.

Gradually picked up by Commonwealth navies and other allied military forces – often with variations on the original, basic rules (does that ring a bell, WAFUs?) – the game enjoys an exalted status in Royal Navy units and establishments, and could while away many a long evening on far-flung deployment (keeping both players and observers engrossed).

Bespoke boards were much prized – in recent times at least one frigate is known to have turned a beautiful ornate Indian coffee table into a grand Uckers board.



There is still time to join in the competition – registration is between 0900 and 1000, after which the dice start to fly.

The Championships is run with sterling support from Uckers Ya Uckers, who produce top-quality standard and personalised Uckers boards – see <https://uckers.uk> for more details.

BRIDGE TO BRIDGE SUCCESS

The Sailors' Children's Society Bridge to Bridge cycling challenge raised more than £30,000 to support children and families from seafaring backgrounds facing financial and emotional crisis.

Now in its third year, the event sees riders tackle a gruelling 212-mile route over two days, starting at the Severn Bridge in Bristol and finishing at the Humber Bridge in Hull.

The Sailors' Children's Society team drove two support cars, with the team ensuring the riders had food, encouragement, and mechanical help throughout.

The event concluded with drinks and a medal presentation to mark the riders' achievement. Bridge to Bridge 20-26 is on 11-13 September, with registration now open on the Sailors' Children's website at <https://sailorschildren.org.uk/events/bridge2bridge2026/>



MARK OUR CARDS...

The RNA's Christmas cards are now on sale from our online shop.

There are two different packs of ten cards, each with two designs, so a total of four designs in all. One pack has five cards of robins wearing an RNA beret and five of donkeys with ban RNA Beret. The other pack has five cards with ships in harbour, and five cards with a robin on red boots wearing an RNA beret.

In all cases the words inside read 'Merry Christmas and Happy New Year'

Each pack costs £4.50, which includes postage of the pack. You can buy them at the [RNA website](https://www.rna.org.uk) through the SHOP button (top right of home page), or use [this link](https://www.rna.org.uk).

CHELMSFORD TO HOLD REMEMBRANCE RACE DAY

After the success of their last two Remembrance Racedays, Chelmsford City Racecourse is holding this year's event on the evening of Thursday 6 November.

Organisers will once again be offering current and past serving members of the Armed Forces two complimentary adult tickets to come to the raceday. Children under 18 are free and welcome to attend as well.

The evening is expected to feature a wreath-laying ceremony, choir, and a private marquee for those with the complimentary Armed Forces tickets.

Applications can be accepted by the following methods:

1. Completing the application form at the [back of this Circular](https://www.chelmsfordcityracecourse.com) and sending it back to info@chelmsfordcityracecourse.com

2. Completing the form online at [this link](https://www.chelmsfordcityracecourse.com)

Gates are expected to open at 3.30pm.

Applications should be returned by Monday 3 November.

Please note that photographic ID of military or veterans status will need to be included with your application. Organisers understand that not all veterans are in possession of an ID card, in which case please call them on 01245 360300.

Once your application has been approved, we will remove your ID from their system.

You are encouraged to allow the public to pay tribute to your service by attending in uniform. All uniformed military or veterans suited and proudly displaying their medals, will be invited into the Parade Ring for the wreath laying ceremony.

EDINBURGH GATHERING WAS SPECIAL FOR FORMER YOTTIES

The RNA Motorhome Camping and Caravan (RNAMCC) Sports and Comradeship Group visited Edinburgh for five nights early in September, with a total of 20 units and 39 members attending. Among the highlights of the meet was a visit to the Royal Yacht, now permanently berthed at Leith. For two members of the group it was a trip down memory lane – they were former Royal Yachtsmen, one of whom had not been back on board Britannia for 30 years.

A presentation was made to the CEO of the Royal Yacht, Franck Bruyère, Admiral Neil Rankin (a former Commanding Officer of the Yacht) and Kate Doig, the Events manager.

Using the Yacht's Rum Barrel, a toast was made to the late Queen Elizabeth II on board her 'Happy Place'.

The group were then taken on a tour of the areas that are normally off limits for tourists.

The group then went on to take a tour of the nearby Port of Leith Distillery, a unique site as it is the first vertical distillery to be built in the UK.

Sports and Comradeship Groups bring together shipmates from across the country under the umbrella of a shared interest. See [page 20](#) for more details of the current list of SCGs.



INSPIRATIONAL EVENING AT AWARDS CEREMONY

On 22 October the doors of the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel will open to one of the most inspiring evenings of the year – the Soldiering On Awards. This year's ceremony carries a very special tribute. With the support of Brig Karl Harris and his team, including Maj Chantelle Miller, they will bring to life a unique celebration of nations through dance.

This performance will honour the legacy of VE80 – 80 years since Victory in Europe – and the extraordinary spirit of unity that defined that moment in history.

VE80 is about more than looking back. It is about remembering the lessons of the past and carrying them forward.

Awards night itself promises to be unforgettable. Guests

will be treated to a dazzling programme of world-class entertainment.

Government leaders, charity partners, corporate supporters, and distinguished guests will come together under one roof, united in admiration for the remarkable finalists whose achievements will take centre stage.

From acts of selflessness and service to groundbreaking entrepreneurship, from tireless commitment to innovative partnerships, this year's finalists remind us that extraordinary things are possible when we stand together.

It will be a night that honours the past, reflects the present, and looks to the future with hope and determination.

Learn more about the Awards at www.soldieringon.org

TEAM READY N ABLE TOP THE FUNDRAISING LEADERBOARD

Their race is run, and they didn't cross the line in first place.

But RNRMC's Race Across the UK was not primarily concerned with the fastest times (well, we would say that, wouldn't we?)

No, for RNA Central Office the Race was the chance to show our appreciation for the support we receive from RNRMC, and give a little bit back.

And in that context we couldn't be happier as Team RNA – Ready N Able – are currently top of the fundraising leaderboard with £12.403 banked as of yesterday – that's £900 ahead of their nearest rivals.

But let's not get too competitive, as the Race was also something of a personal challenge for our intrepid team – RNA General Secretary Bill Oliphant and Welfare and Wellbeing Co-Ordinator Jon Everett.

Starting in Edinburgh and heading – in a roundabout sort of way – to Dartmouth, the 24 competing teams of two had to travel on the tightest budget, work out their best routes and overcome riddles and challenges along the way. There was plenty of enthusiasm at the starting line, despite the early hour, but that spirit was sorely tested over the following four days, and (if Team RNA was anything to go by) the finishing line at Britannia Royal Naval College was a most welcome sight.



All throughout the Race we were kept up to speed with Team RNA's progress on social media (see below).

Bill and Jon said they were so very grateful to all who contributed, whether that was Branches or individuals.

"Each pound donated goes towards helping shipmates in need and we are so very proud of our RNA membership for making such a huge impact on Our Naval Family," they said. You can see details of

contributions – and still make your own addition to the total – at <https://fundraising.rnrmc.org.uk/.../race-across-the-uk>



RAFFLE DRAW SOON

Bill and Jon had a little competition on the side during the Race Across the UK, in the form of a raffle. Jon's prize was a bottle of rum, Bill's was a crate of 12 cans of RNA Anniversary Ale, with each donation to their individual fundraising pages counting as a separate entry. The draw is taking place shortly, so keep an eye on our social media channels for the winners.

GEORGE CELEBRATES 99

A birthday party was organised by members of **Carmarthen Branch** to celebrate their shipmate George Smith's 99th birthday along with his physiotherapist Catherine McGrath. It was held in the tea rooms of the Carmarthen Museum, Abergwili, on 24 August, where World War 2 veteran George had a hearty breakfast with his family and members of the RNA. Although overwhelmed by all the attention, George thoroughly enjoyed himself.

During the event George was presented with his honorary life membership ID card by Branch chairman S/M John Jones (pictured right), and he also received a picture of his wartime minesweepers HMS Gazelle and HMS Waterwitch from Branch Secretary S/M Don Griffiths.



BFBS MARKS 50 YEARS OF FORCES TELEVISION

BFBS (British Forces Broadcasting Service) has proudly marked BFBS TV's 50th anniversary.

First launched on 18 September 1975 in Celle, West Germany, this golden milestone coincided with the Royal Television Society's (RTS) Cambridge Convention at King's College, a fitting stage to celebrate five decades of trusted partnerships, delivering top-quality television to the UK Armed Forces and their families overseas. On its inaugural broadcast, Hilary Osborn declared: "It is a historic moment for us in BFBS as we open up our first television service."

From a 30ft mobile control room at Trenchard Barracks, with content support and engineering expertise from the BBC and ITV contractor London Weekend Television, BFBS TV began transmitting UK programmes abroad.

From tape distribution in 1975 in Celle, to live news and sports via a bespoke microwave link in the 1980s – stretching from Wembley across northern, eastern and western Europe, eventually reaching West Berlin – to



satellite coverage in the 1990s and the introduction of multi-channel and initial live services for the Royal Navy, BFBS TV has consistently adapted to meet the needs of its audience.

The launch of secure streaming in 2014, followed by on-demand services in 2018 brought BFBS TV into the digital era, offering over 2,000 hours of content to browse, and up to 40 live channels wherever personnel are posted.

This includes bespoke edge solutions enabling streaming, catch-up TV, audio and digital print offerings, whether at sea or in locations where connectivity is limited.

As of 2025, BFBS TV works with more than 20 trusted partners including British public service broadcasters,

subscription TV and streaming platforms, international studios and sports rights holders, all supporting the service in reaching Armed Forces communities overseas.

Ben Chapman, CEO of BFBS, said: "Celebrating 50 years of BFBS TV at the RTS Convention was a powerful moment to honour our history and thank the studios, stakeholders, and teams whose outstanding content and collaborative partnerships have kept the UK Armed Forces connected for half a century."

"We also raised a glass to every colleague who has made this possible."

Adam Hardwick, Deputy Director of BFBS TV & Cinemas, added:

"Reaching this milestone is about recognising the breadth of services BFBS TV delivers today."

"From live sports, movies and series to trusted news, children's content and so much more, we're proud to offer a service that continues to innovate and evolve to meet the changing needs of the armed forces community wherever they are deployed or posted."

<https://www.bfbs.com/gettv>

MENTORS MAKE SHORTLIST FOR PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

The RNA Veteran Mentors at HMS Raleigh have been recognised by the English Veterans Awards for their outstanding contribution to the military community. S/M Terry Whitty and veteran colleagues were shortlisted in the Team of the Year category, and although they didn't win the award at the ceremony last night, they considered it a great honour to be amongst the contenders.

Turning a civilian into a Royal Navy sailor in ten weeks is an intensive, challenging and emotionally-charged process for trainees – and just as challenging for their families. And while there is an excellent pastoral-care system in place at Raleigh to protect and support trainees, the Veteran Mentors play a vital role. Operating outside the official chain of command and supplementing the well-established pastoral care system – with the full support of Raleigh staff – the Mentors add an extra dimension to the support offered to recruits as they transition from civilian life to the point at which they are ready to take their place in the high-pressure, high-tech world of the modern Royal Navy.



Whether it's offering a word of advice on issues over uniform, or a friendly chat about a tricky element of training, the Mentors are ready to step up

and help the recruits. And they also provide an additional line of communication with families and friends as the recruits

proceed through the ten-week Initial Training course – families also need to know the ropes, and to see the progress that their loved ones are making. There are currently a dozen Mentors, though the composition and size of the team varies. They are each allocated to specific Divisions as they pass through training, ensuring continuity for recruits and families. They all give much of their spare time to the cause, and some have been involved for many years. Lead liaison mentor Terry Whitty, for example, has been an RNA Veteran Mentor at Raleigh for 13 years, has been involved with 106 classes and has attended more than 150 Passing out Parades.



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

Trinity's benefits don't just cover travel insurance – there are also offers and discounts on Personal Accident cover, Buildings and Contents Insurance and Life Insurance.

Speak to the Trinity team on 0345 241 1001 during office hours for insurance help.

TRAFALGAR NIGHT AT THE SQUARE TOWER

Shep Woolley's popular Trafalgar Night at the Square Tower in Portsmouth returns on 21 October. Promising 'Sailors Pastie and Rum' as well as shanties and hornpipes, the event runs from 1930 until 2200 and costs £25. For more details and tickets call 02392 754559 or email shantynights@gmail.com.

AREA MEETINGS AND AGMS

	Next Meeting in 2025	AGM in 2026
Area 1	14 December Venue tbc	22 March Venue tbc
Area 2		
Area 3		Date tbc
Area 4		
Area 5	15 November Stowmarket	14 February Wymondham
Area 6	11 October (by Zoom)	21 February Royston
Area 7	25 October Port Talbot	Date tbc
Area 8	tbc	17 January West Bromwich
Area 9		
Area 10	18 October 2025 Llandudno	31 January Venue tbc
Area 11	6 December (by Teams)	14 March Hartlepool
Area 12	13 December East Antrim	7 February Venue tbc
Scottish Area	6 December Grangemouth	tbc

Royal Naval Association Lottery



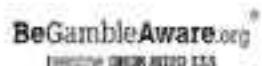
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deliver outstanding
support throughout
every stage of our
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CHINA FLEET CLUB CELEBRATES LINK WITH PATROL SHIP TAMAR

China Fleet Country Club is proudly celebrating four years since it formally affiliated with Royal Navy patrol ship HMS Tamar, marking a milestone that strengthens the Club's historic ties to the Royal Navy and reinforces its enduring support for serving personnel and their families.

HMS Tamar is affiliated with China Fleet Country Club and the China Fleet Trust, the military charity that owns the Country Club, representing the deep connection between the ship, the region, and its communities.

Since leaving the UK in September 2021, Tamar has been on a five-year mission patrolling the Indo-Pacific region, often working alongside international partners.

In recent months, she made headlines for her mercy dash across the Pacific to Samoa, where her crew assisted with the recovery of personnel and equipment from the stricken New Zealand ship HMNZS Manawanui, which sank after hitting a reef.

This Christmas will mark Tamar's fifth festive season away from home waters, but links to Cornwall remain strong.

Over the past four years, China Fleet Country Club has provided a 'home port' for Tamar's families and loved ones.

The Club regularly exchanges newsletters, photos, and updates with the ship, which are proudly displayed in a dedicated area for members and visitors.

Social media posts, Christmas cards,



and other gestures of support help keep the connection strong while the crew serves thousands of miles away. Dean Bennett, Managing Director at China Fleet Country Club, said: "HMS Tamar represents the Royal Navy's future, and we are incredibly proud to be part of her journey.

"This milestone celebrates not only the crew's dedication, but also the bond we share with their families here in Cornwall.

"Through regular updates, displays, and events, we aim to ensure they always feel connected to home."

The Club's ongoing investment – including recent gym and Aqua Spa

refurbishments – ensures it remains one of the region's most modern health and fitness destinations, serving both the military and civilian communities. This milestone reaffirms China Fleet's role as a hub of support and pride for Cornwall and Plymouth, while Tamar proudly flies the flag for Cornwall across the globe.

Dean added: "China Fleet Country Club was founded to serve those who serve, and our partnership with HMS Tamar ensures that tradition continues today.

"We are proud to support the ship, her crew, and their families while they are away from home."

CARRIER PAYS TRIBUTE TO NAMESAKE

Sailors from aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales have paid tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice more than 80 years ago.

Wreaths were placed over the wrecks of battleship HMS Prince of Wales and the cruiser HMS Repulse, which were both sunk in the South China Sea on December 10 1941.

It was the first time the Fleet Flagship – which is spearheading the Royal Navy's key deployment of 2025, Highmast – has honoured those who went before.

Committal wreaths were placed in the sea by UK Commander Carrier Strike Group, Cdre James Blackmore, Commanding Officer of the aircraft carrier Capt Will Blackett, and Sub Lieutenant Takumi Kitamura from the accompanying Japanese destroyer Akebono.

In the autumn of 1941, then brand-new battleship HMS Prince of Wales and World War 1-era battlecruiser Repulse, the core of Force Z, were sent to the Far East by Prime Minister Winston Churchill to deter Japanese aggression.

When Japanese forces invaded the Malay peninsula, the

capital ships were dispatched from Singapore to stop them.

On December 10 1941 – just three days after the surprise Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii – Force Z was intercepted by the Japanese in the South China Sea. Lacking air cover, the two Royal Navy ships were first sighted then subjected to a ferocious and sustained attack by Japanese bombers.

In a valiant, but unequal, fight the two ships evaded more than 40 torpedoes but were still hit by four apiece – enough to send them to the sea bed.

HMS Repulse sank first, taking 512 men with her, and Prince of Wales followed shortly after, taking 330 men with her, including the task force commander Admiral Tom Phillips and her captain John Leach, the father of future First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Henry Leach.

Royal Navy divers recovered the bells from both wrecks 20 years ago amid growing fears of plunder by unscrupulous souvenir hunters and scrap metal merchants, and returned them to the museum in Portsmouth for safekeeping.

WATCH ARMY V NAVY WITH YOUR SHIPMATES



The Inter-Services men's rugby champions will be back defending their title against the Army at Twickenham on Saturday 2 May 2026 – and you could be watching from a section of the stadium exclusively set aside for members of the RNA. Tickets for the 2026 Army v Navy rugby match are now on sale at early bird prices, but there is a special rate of £44.20 with access to a bar next to the RNA allocated seating area when you book through the Association. These clashes are always worth attending, but the past two years have been particularly thrilling – high-scoring games with the result in the balance until the clock goes red, with the Royal Navy holding off the Army challenge by 37-33 in this year's match. Use the link [here](#) to book your tickets - we will contact you to confirm your order and organise payment.

HARD CHOICES

While we love to send you a hard copy of the RNA Yearbook in January, we are also aware that some of you prefer to read it online and save a tree. So if you would prefer us not to send you a copy in the post, please click on [this link](#) to de-select yourself. The Yearbook will be available to read online on our website all year.

GET YOUR GIZZETS AT ONLINE SHOP

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

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:

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

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. 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





TRINITY

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Enjoy the following member benefits:

- Special Premium Rate for Veterans' Personal Accident cover
- 15% discount on Travel Plus holiday insurance
- 15% discount on Free Spirit travel insurance
- Buildings & Contents Insurance - on purchase, choose a military charity for your donation
- Life insurance - on purchase our partner, LifeSearch will donate £50 to a military charity of choice
- Eligibility for Trinity's 40+ travel insurance scheme

* These member charitable claims from includes the Royal Naval Association (RNA)



ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION



Associations Line
Speak to the Trinity team on 0940 241 9001 during office hours for insurance help.



Go to post members area
To access all of the products and discounts

Trinity Insurance is a member of www.trinityinsurancesolutions.com | trinity@trinityinsurancesolutions.com

DIARIES FOR YOUR DATES

The 2026 RNA Diary is now available at a price of £7 including postage. The slim dark-blue diary with integrated cover can be bought from the RNA website shop through [this link](#).

ROYAL VISITOR FOR NAVAL CHILDREN'S CHARITY

The Naval Children's Charity (NCC) received a visit from their Royal Patron, the Princess Royal, to their offices in Portsmouth. The Princess Royal became Royal Patron of the NCC in March 2025, following many years of patronage by Queen Elizabeth II. The Royal visitor was welcomed by Chairman Christopher Tite, and CEO Clare Scherer, and met with staff, Trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries of the charity. Her Royal Highness unveiled a plaque commemorating her visit in the

charity's Bicentenary year and met members of the Youth Council. Clare Scherer said: "On behalf of all at the Naval Children's Charity we offer our warmest thanks to Her Royal Highness for agreeing to be our Royal Patron and for her visit to learn more about our work". The NCC helps around 2,000 children directly each year and many thousands more through their resources and work with communities and

other organisations. To donate or find out more about the charity please visit their website: www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk

TOP AWARD FOR SARA

Congratulations to Sara Smith, NCC Head of Operations, who has won the Charity Leader of the Year category at the ACO (Association of Charitable Organisations) Awards. The NCC was also shortlisted for Charity of the Year and the Outstanding Achievement Award – Frankie Stride).

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



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
Mon 6 Oct	Alison Baverstock	Reading Force
Mon 13 Oct	VAdm Duncan Potts	2025 Defence Review debrief
Mon 20 Oct	Cdr Dicky Barton	Battle of Trafalgar – the other bits!
Mon 27 Oct	Capt Mark Hamilton	CO HMS Sultan
Mon 3 Nov	Stew Kilby	RND Battlefield Tour brief
Mon 10 Nov	Cdr Simon McCowan RAN	Australian Naval Attache
Mon 17 Nov	David Monks	The Trafalgar Trail
Mon 24 Nov	Anthony Moth	The Flying Wrens

BRANCH NEWS

BRIXHAM Branch

HMS Mersey took time out from a busy operational program to visit Dartmouth as the guardship for the Dartmouth Royal Regatta 2025. Brixham Branch members, along with other local organisations, were invited to attend a Reception and Capability Demonstration onboard. Nine shipmates enjoyed the hospitality of Mersey's ship's company, where they were given an insight into life on board HMS Mersey, and the vital role she plays in today's Navy. The visitors were made to feel very welcome onboard, where the ship's company of about 30 personnel all pulled together to ensure they had a good time. They had a tour of the ship, and a 'meet and greet' on the quarterdeck. The evening ended with Ceremonial Sunset, which brought back many memories. Brixham shipmates had a most enjoyable evening. BZs all round!



TYNE Branch

At the Tyne Branch September meeting Chairman S/M Knocker (Tony) White presented a Certificate of Appreciation to S/M Roslyn Hastie-Murray on behalf the Branch, to recognise the service and dedication she has given to shipmates in RNA Tyne, in Area 11 and nationally during the past 31 years. S/M Roslyn has now stepped up as Area 11 Secretary in addition to her role as National Council Member for Area 11, and will be standing down as Tyne Branch Secretary at the 2026 AGM. S/M Roslyn expressed her thanks to all shipmates for this special award.

FERNDOWN Branch

Ferndown and District Branch is pleased to announce that it has changed its venue. It now meets at Ferndown Village Hall, Church Road, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 9ET. The Branch will meet normally in the Committee Room at the rear of the hall; Mess Members are requested to use the rear car park. New members (and visitors/guests) always welcome. The Branch will continue to meet on the Second Tuesday of each month at 1930 for 2000. The first Mess Night at the new venue will take place on Tuesday 14 October, where Mess Members will be joined by Chris Brown from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The contact details remain unchanged: [rna.ferndownanddistrict@gmail.com](mailto:ferndownanddistrict@gmail.com), Tel: 07787182162

HELSTON Branch

Helston Branch supported the Warspite Association weekend in Marazion. They joined the WA on Saturday night at the Marazion Hotel Cutty Sark bar for a meet-up over good food and, of course, the odd drink to catch as they missed it last year. Ivor Davis, from the WA, welcomed all present with warm handshakes and told the gathering was great to see shipmates from Helston who took the place of the Penzance decommissioned branch. On Sunday the service was indoors as the weather forecast wasn't promising, and was held in the Cutty Sark bar. The Mayor, along with Ivor Davies and Mr. Valentine from the WA, laid the wreath at the Warspite Stone. Helston Shipmates attending were Chairman George Scott, Vice Chairwoman Josie Locke, Secretary Joe Locke and committee member Tony King, along with wives Linda Scott and Sue King.

PORT PHILLIP Branch

The Port Phillip Branch in Australia is holding an event to commemorate the heroes of Trafalgar at lunchtime on 12 October at the Frankston Naval Memorial Club. If you want to take part, you will have to be quick – booking is essential, and closes on Monday (6 October). See the flyer at the back of this Circular [here](#).



NORWICH Branch

At the beginning of September shipmates enjoyed breakfast together (right), then at a busy branch meeting we welcomed two new members (one attending on his birthday!), a talk from Area 5 Welfare and Wellbeing Adviser S/M Kath Hutton, and a quiz.

The next day Chairman Neil Hall and shipmates joined colleagues from RMA Norfolk to wish our shipmate Edna Fitch a happy 100th birthday. Neil, and S/Ms Stuart Fidler, John Kett and Deryck Self presented her with flowers, chocolates and a card from the Branch, at a party to celebrate her 100th birthday. Edna has been a member of the Branch since 2010, and was married to S/M Freddie Fitch, who passed away in 2023, for more than 70 years (top right, on their wedding day). S/M Edna opened a birthday card from the King and Queen and blew out the candles on her cake at the gathering in her care home (above).

She was also presented with a 100th birthday blanket from her family. Happy Birthday, Edna, from all at Norwich Branch!

Two Norwich shipmates attended the Naval Associations

Biennial Parade – they are pictured (bottom right) with shipmates from RNA Stowmarket. It was a great event, and attendees can thoroughly recommend joining in the next one in 2027!

Norwich rounded off the month with a run ashore to a local hostelry, where the landlord is very supportive of veterans and provided shipmates with a free tot and food (pictured below).

Amongst the events coming up at Norwich are two that are relevant to a local Norfolk lad – Horatio Nelson. On 18 October is the Trafalgar Night Dinner, at the Wensum Valley Hotel, Taverham, and on 26 October is the Trafalgar Day Service at Burnham Thorpe, birthplace of Admiral Lord Nelson.





BRACKNELL Branch

Bracknell Branch members continue to be active, attending several memorial and other events.

On 15 August shipmates (and the Branch Standard) attended two events commemorating VJ 80 – the first in Binfield, arranged by the Parish Council, and the second in Bracknell Town Centre, arranged by the local RBL and including a Parade and Service with local dignitaries. Two Naval wreaths were laid – one by President S/M Mike Daley on behalf of the Branch and the other by one of the Branch's two serving Shipmates, Ryan Parker, on behalf of the Officers and Ratings of HMS Collingwood. Two days later the Branch was invited by Maidenhead RBL to parade their Standard at All Saints' Church in Maidenhead for their VJ 80 Service of Commemoration. It was a pleasure to be there with the local Maidenhead Sea and Royal Marines Cadets Unit, TS Iron Duke, who all looked so smart. Members celebrated Merchant Navy Day with Bracknell Town Council, where the Mayor and councillors were very keen to assist in offering RNA hats to passing children.

S/M Anthony Boddrell led the tribute (with the Branch Standard) while the Red Ensign was being raised on the Council office's roof. Three shipmates (with the Branch Standard) paraded at the Cenotaph in London on Sunday 14 September for the Naval Associations Biennial Parade – always an honour, and a great opportunity to meet up with shipmates from all around the country. Thanks, as ever, to the Central Office staff for all their careful planning and organisation. Members welcomed a variety of interesting speakers at the Branch's monthly meetings, covering a wide variety of topics including from a wildlife photographer, another on 'the Gibraltar Story', and then one on HMS Hood. As usual, Branch shipmates have attended local Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Clubs in the



area as well as other Area events, including another local Armed Forces Veterans' Hub, run by Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service at Whitley Wood (Reading) Fire Station. Members are now looking forward to their annual Trafalgar Dinner, and Remembrance ceremonies in November.



DORCHESTER Branch

Dorchester Branch members collected £500 for the Dorset County Hospital Charity (pictured right). The money is earmarked to help veterans and their families when they enter the hospital. After discussion with the Armed Forces Lead, Mrs Hannah Robinson, it was agreed that the donation will be used to set up a new facility to help veterans who have dementia by helping to create some military-themed reminiscence boxes and purchase military-based activities for ex-Service patients. It will also create an Armed Forces display within the hospital which can be kept updated and there for patients to see. This donation is to help lots of our ex-Service patients and it will be acknowledged on the boxes and equipment that these were funded by the RNA Dorchester branch. Members are looking forward to seeing the roll-out of the new scheme. Shipmates at the Branch have chosen the MV Freedom as one of the charities to support this year, and after a skittles evening – with the help of other branches in Area 4 and a street collection – they managed to raise £1000 for them (pictured below). MV Freedom is a 10-metre motor catamaran that has



been specifically designed and built to cater for wheelchair users and those living with disability, providing access to the sea for all. The charity has been in existence for 37 years. Their passengers include those with sensory impairments, military veterans, young adults, children and the elderly. Many are confined to wheelchairs, and often would have no other way of accessing life-enhancing seagoing experiences and their proven therapeutic benefits. MV Freedom was first formally recognised for her work with people living with disability, by being entrusted with the privilege of carrying the Olympic Flame for the 2012 Paralympic sailing events held in Portland Harbour. In June 2021, on the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation, the charity was thrilled and honoured by the award of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, and in September received the celebratory Crystal and Scroll from Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant – both extremely proud moments for all their volunteers, passengers and supporters. The charity is completely reliant on fundraising to survive. Every penny donated is spent on the safety, encouragement, enjoyment and empowerment of their passengers, plus the inevitable maintenance costs of running MV Freedom. They have no paid staff. Dorchester Branch are proud to have supported this amazing charity, and wish them well for the future.

SALISBURY Branch

Three Shipmates (Reg Ricketts, John Mussel and Dave Kerley) from Salisbury Branch decided last year to attend the Biennial Parade in London and to make it a weekend break, so rooms were booked at the Union Jack Club. The subject was discussed at the monthly meeting, and at first, about six members were interested in going, three of them going up on the day by train. Unfortunately, life gets in the way and instead of what was originally planned – taking wives with them – it turned out to be just the three of them. The train departed on time and they were at the UJC ten minutes after arriving at Waterloo. Having booked in, they went to their rooms and then made their way to the bar. The good thing about the UJC is that they were talking to fellow RNA members, Pongos and Crabs like they were long-lost oppos within ten minutes of sitting down. A quick shout out to Wally who joined the Andrew in 1965! The night soon ended, with the trio making plans to meet in the restaurant

at 0745, the following morning. The day soon came around and it being a nice day, they made the decision to walk to King Charles Street, the start of the parade. The receptionist at the UJC gave them directions walking away from the Thames, which was a bit worrying at first, but following her directions they crossed Westminster Bridge and had a word with some police who gave us the last direction to King Charles Street. The parade was led by Plymouth Command Royal Marines Band who were first class. Members were formed up into a gaggle, informed of the direction of the parade, basically told to follow the shipmate in front! It took them past the Cenotaph and the 'Women of WW2' memorial and finally to the service, remembering oppos who have crossed the bar, and shipmates who are always on patrol. The parade marched off again to the sounds of Heart of Oak and onlookers giving a good send off. Today's RN also joined in – ratings from HMS Collingwood and Sultan, and speaking to them after the –

parade, they said they also enjoyed the experience. Afterwards they were briefed by the Admiral in charge of recruiting who said that the Royal Navy will have a busy future – has anything changed in that sense? Afterwards they made our way to the Civil Service Club, where big eats were put on. They felt sorry for the lady who ordered her Sunday lunch, and by the time it arrived, had 150 matelots as company! They then made their way to the Old Shades Inn followed by the Admiralty Pub on Trafalgar Square. This is the place they would recommend to all Shipmates, (it was recommended to them by S/M Richie Farman). It has paintings on the wall, or should that be bulkheads, of the ships involved in the Battle of Trafalgar. Plus, they sell Pussers! After that they made our way back to the UJC. Overall, they had a cracking weekend and would recommend it all to all shipmates throughout the land. So start saving now for the Parade in 2027!

CHATHAM Branch

Chatham Branch, with the help of the wonderful Standard Bearers and shipmates from Area 2, hosted the 108th annual Drill Shed Commemoration service at the Drill Shed Library (Universities of Medway), formerly HMS Pembroke, on 3 September. This annual

commemoration recalls the horrific event that happened on September 3 1917, when 131 sailors were killed by two bombs that fell into the Drill Shed whilst most were sleeping. This was one of the first night-time air raids the world had ever witnessed. Chatham members follow this ceremony by visiting St George's Centre to celebrate the Merchant Navy service, under the direction of Chatham Branch Chairman Ralph Collins. There is a short documentary that will give a better understanding of what happened on that tragic evening, and another created by Canterbury Christ Church University Campus Director and staff explaining how the injured were treated then and how they would be treated with many lives saved now – see [here](#) for the

former and [here](#) for the latter. Thanks are also due to Hayley Smith and staff of the University of Greenwich for facilitating the event to be held in the former swimming pool area, now called the Deep End, as a wet weather routine. The Universities of Medway are so incredibly supportive of this historical moment in time, and the Branch is very grateful to one and all for their ongoing contributions. The permanent cabinet display is a very poignant reminder of what happened on that tragic evening. With thanks to the Mayor of Medway, Cllr Trevor Clarke, Kent Police, Prof Peter Griffith, and everyone else involved. This event is held annually, and should any shipmates wish to attend next September please contact Chatham Branch Hon Secretary Gary Hammell.





TORBAY Branch

Torbay shipmates have been commemorating 80 years of their Branch, including five years between 1945 and 1950 of the former Torbay Royal Navy Old Comrades Association (RNOCA). An informal celebratory lunch was held on 18 September, which was followed on Sunday 28 September by the Laying-Up Ceremony of the RNOC Standard in Paignton Parish Church. Shipmates Terry Membery (Branch Chairman) and Shaun Runham (Standard Bearer) presented the Standard to Father Neil Knox for safekeeping. They were supported by other members of the Branch, as well as members of Paignton Branch of the Royal British Legion, with whom the RNA Branch has strong ties. A further commemoration of the 80th Anniversary is planned towards the end of the year when an English oak tree will be planted in one of the major parks on the English Riviera.



OBITUARIES

S/M RON BRAIN Falmouth Branch members are today mourning the loss of Shipmate Ron Brain.

Ron, a stalwart of the Branch for many years, passed away in his sleep after a long illness on 16 September at the age of 77.

Ron had been ill for some time and had been missed by the Branch members at meetings over the past year.

A member of not only the RNA but the Tribal Class Association and the HMS Tartar Association, Ron



will be remembered for his contribution to all Associations, the Branch, for his sense of humour and his friendship. The thoughts and prayers are with Ron's wife Brenda and their family at this sad time.

S/M ALAN BAYLISS

The funeral of S/M Alan Bayliss, former President of the Rosyth and West Fife Branch, was held at Dunfermline Crematorium on 18 September.

Alan died on 25 August at the age of 87.

The service was conducted by the Rev Andrea Fraser, Parish Minister in Fife, Forthview Parish Church and Chaplain to the RNA.

Alan was Branch President for many years and an icon for many.

His Naval career started as a young seaman and he joined the RN Clearance Divers Team after passing the gruelling qualifying courses, rising to the Rank of Lieutenant Commander.

Alan was the diver who retrieved the ship's bell from the battleship HMS Royal Oak, sunk by a German U-boat in Scapa Flow with heavy loss of life in October 1939.

His passion for the Service and the branch was an inspiration to his shipmates, and all who came into

contact with him. He will be sadly missed.

The turnout for the funeral was impressive. Not only did branch members attend, but so too did the Commanding Officer of HMS Caledonia, Capt Stuart Cantellow, and the First Lieutenant, Lt Cdr Morgan McDonald.

Members lined the sides of the road leading up to the crematorium and when the hearse arrived it was led up the road by the Branch Piper and the standards of the branch and regions. The proceedings started when Branch Chairman Dickie Wardrope brought all to attention and the piper started playing Dark Isle whilst carrying out a slow march to reception.

Among those attending were members of the Royal Navy and Mine Clearance Divers, demonstrating the affection and respect members of the Branch and Royal Navy held for him.

Rest in Peace, Shipmate. Five Bells, your work is completed.

ALLIES TRAIN IN THE NORTH

Royal Marines from CLR Armoured Support Group (ASG) have been conducting Beach Landing Drills with RFA Lyme Bay (pictured) in Norway.

Exercise Tarassiss marks a step-change in Northern European Defence cooperation. From the Arctic Circle to the shores of the Baltic, a series of large-scale military activities have been demonstrating the unity, power and reach of partner nations defending peace and security in northern Europe.

Tarassiss is the most ambitious live activity of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) since it was established at the NATO 2014 Summit in Wales, as a regional security cooperation structure for participating nations. Activities began in early September and run until the end of this month, involving thousands of troops, sailors and aircrew, and dozens



of ships and aircraft in the North Atlantic, Scandinavia and the Baltic region. Tarassiss brings together a series of military activities to demonstrate the ability of the JEF to act collectively and project power in response to a threat to regional security. Tarassiss will also demonstrate how

the JEF complements NATO deterrence and reassurance activities in peacetime and crisis.

Truly multi-national and multi-domain, Tarassiss incorporates activities in the Land, Sea, Air, Space and Cyber domains. As well as JEF nations, Canadian forces will participate.

Interaction with NATO exercises will also showcase the JEF's ability both to act independently and to complement the Alliance. As the Framework Nation to the JEF, the UK is coordinating Tarassiss from the UK's Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ) near London.

WELFARE AND WELLBEING



DOGGED PARTNERSHIPS

I was recently invited to visit Hounds for Heroes, and I have to say, it was an incredibly uplifting experience, writes *Jon Everett, the RNA's Welfare and Wellbeing Co-ordinator*. The charity does amazing work supporting injured and disabled members of the Armed Forces and emergency services by providing them with specially-trained assistance dogs.

These dogs aren't just helpful companions – they're life-changing partners.

From the moment I arrived, I was warmly welcomed by the team and trainers. Their passion for what they do was clear, and it was inspiring to see how much care and dedication goes into every part of the process, from training the dogs to matching them with the right individuals.

But of course, the real stars of the show were the dogs themselves. Meeting them was a joy. They were calm, focused, and clearly loved what they were doing.

It's amazing to think how much independence and confidence they help restore to the people they're paired with.

The visit also reminded me of the importance of wellbeing and community – something we value deeply in the Royal Naval Association.

Just like our Welfare and Wellbeing initiatives, Hounds for Heroes is all about making sure those who've served are supported in every way possible, not just physically but emotionally too.

I left feeling incredibly grateful for the opportunity to see their work up close. If you ever get the chance to visit or support them, I highly recommend it. You can learn more about what they do at www.houndsforheroes.com

Breaking the silence: How the RNA Biannual Parade tackled social isolation head-on

A few weeks ago, the streets of London echoed with laughter, camaraderie, and the unmistakable pride of Naval heritage as shipmates from across the country gathered for the Naval Associations Biannual Parade. But this wasn't just a ceremonial march – it was a lifeline.

In a world where social isolation quietly creeps into the lives of many veterans, especially those living alone or far from their old messmates, the Parade offered more than pageantry. It was a powerful reminder that no one who has served should ever feel alone.

From the first salute to the final pint, the Parade was a celebration of shared experiences. Shipmates who hadn't seen each other in years found themselves swapping stories, cracking jokes, and rediscovering the joy of being among those who truly understand. For many, it was the first time in months – or even years – that they felt part of something bigger than themselves.

Whether reconnecting with long-lost comrades or meeting new faces who instantly felt like old friends, the day was filled with the kind of banter only sailors can deliver. And while the bands played and standards flew high, something deeper was happening – isolation was being dismantled, one handshake at a time.

With welfare and wellbeing support, there's always a helping hand

Wearing my welfare and wellbeing support hat, I was there for a few shipmates who still needed that arm around the shoulder – a quiet reminder that sometimes what's needed most is

Continued on page 29

WELFARE AND WELLBEING

Continued from page 28

simply to be there. This support is crucial, and it's vital that it carries on well beyond the Parade.

Keeping the connection alive

But the Parade was just the beginning. The real challenge – and opportunity – is what comes next. We must commit to keeping in touch with those we met for the first time and those we've known for decades. A quick call, a shared photo, a message to say "How's it going?" – these small gestures can make a world of difference.

Let's not wait for the next Parade to reconnect. Let's build a network of support that thrives year-round. Whether through local branches, WhatsApp groups, or good old-fashioned letters, we have the tools to ensure no shipmate is left adrift. The RNA Biannual Parade reminded us that the ties forged at sea don't fade with time – they just need a little wind in their sails. So, let's hoist the flag of friendship high and keep sailing together, through calm waters and stormy seas alike.

Important reminder for visiting shipmates and families

■ **DBS Certificates:** All Branch Welfare and Wellbeing Officers must hold a current DBS certificate. If you think you may need one, please don't hesitate to contact me for guidance and support.

■ **Safeguarding Awareness:** It's essential that all Branch



NEW CHAIRMAN OF WIDOWS ASSOCIATION VISITS CENTRAL OFFICE

John Scivier, the new Chairman of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Widows' Association, popped into the RNA office recently to talk about working more closely together and how the RNA can help raise awareness of the important work the RNRM Widows' Association does in supporting bereaved families across the Naval community. John (centre) – a former Commanding Officer of HMS Victory – is pictured with (former colleagues!) RNA General Secretary Bill Oliphant and Jon Everett, the RNA Welfare and Wellbeing Co-ordinator.

Welfare and Wellbeing Officers and support volunteers have a good understanding and awareness of safeguarding practices. This ensures we provide a safe and supportive environment for all shipmates and their families.

Branch Welfare and Wellbeing Officer (BWVO) Information Sessions — Saturday 11 October

I'm excited to invite all Branch Welfare and Wellbeing Officers to join one of two drop-in, drop-out Zoom sessions planned for Saturday 11 October:

First session: 10am – midday

Second session: 4pm – 6pm

These sessions are designed to provide a relaxed opportunity to connect, ask questions, and share experiences, whether you want to pop in briefly or stay for a chat.

The Zoom login details will be posted on the RNA Welfare and Wellbeing Facebook page and emailed directly to all BWVOs. Please feel free to drop in, say hello, and bring any questions or topics you'd like to discuss. It's a great chance to support each other and strengthen our community.

Looking forward to seeing many of you there!

Wellbeing Wednesdays update

Apologies for the lack of direction last week – I was off sick and wasn't able to get the information out to you all as planned. However, I'm hopeful that we can rearrange our guest speaker from the Poppy Factory for a date later this month. Thank you all for your patience and understanding – looking forward to bringing you a meaningful session soon.

TRUSTED GUIDANCE

The White Ensign Association offers "trusted, independent guidance for the Naval community – serving, veteran, reserve and family members". But what does that mean? The Association was founded almost 70 years ago as a joint effort between the Royal Navy and the City of London, aiming to provide impartial guidance and support for serving and former members of the RN, RM, and RFA, along with their families. So the organisation has stuck pretty much to its guns since it was first unveiled in 1958.

But as the landscape has changed over the decades, so too has the offering of the Association, which is headed by former Royal Navy officer Cdre Stuart Wright.

The services are grouped under six main headings:

Armed Forces Pensions: specialist consultants provide guidance on all aspects of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme.

Armed Forces Compensation: free, unbiased guidance is provided on claims, appeals and reviews of existing awards.

Financial Wellbeing: tailored advice to bolster financial confidence and management in key areas.

Employment Services: providing comprehensive employment services to help service leavers achieve their vocational goals.

Professional Services advice: expert advice across a range of financial and legal services.

Career Compass: using cutting-edge technology to help people find the right job through their online portal.

<https://www.whiteensign.co.uk>



RECAP: WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR PENSION IF YOU DIVORCE?

There are several Armed Forces Pension Schemes – AFPS1975, AFPS2005, AFPS2015 and the Reserves Forces Pension Scheme (RFPS). A lot of information has been shared in the last few weeks, which follows Armed Forces Pension Awareness Week 2025 in early September. Here is a re-cap and important information to know on divorce.

First step: It's important to be familiar with each of the above schemes, as they all have their own rules and entitlements, and understanding those benefits is crucial on divorce.

These schemes can be subject to a Pension Sharing Order (PSO) and subject to an agreement or court order, there could be provision for a percentage to be shared with your spouse.

If you are going through a divorce and you have not already done so, request a Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) for your pension.

This information is necessary to consider the financial arrangements – an annual benefit statement is not enough.

The value of the pension scheme, especially for the purpose of the divorce, involves far more complex calculations than members often think.

The values are subject to periods of service, rank, promotions and organic growth.

There are also potential tax implications, and with the noise of the 2015 Remedy (McCloud), up-to-date valuation information is vital. Request a CETV sooner rather than later!

How much should I share on divorce?

The duration of a marriage is usually a key factor when considering what percentage of the pension should be shared, but it is not the only consideration.

It is often argued that the relevant duration period usually starts from the date of cohabitation (if this flows seamlessly to marriage) and ends at separation.

It is also commonly claimed that pre-marital pension accrual should be protected from possible sharing arrangements, but it is not always the correct approach.

The needs of the parties will take priority

Emma Jones has significant experience in dealing with legal issues arising from the breakdown of relationships involving serving or former Armed Forces personnel, their families and current or former MOD individuals. Emma – herself a member of the RNA – has represented several personnel in the Royal Navy, from ABs to Vice Admirals. She understands the difference between civvy and military life and the impact this may well have on a relationship and/or a family.

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

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

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

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

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



Knights

over ringfencing assets, ie what income do the parties need in retirement, and what resources are available between them to make that happen?

Ringfencing is more likely to be successful if the marriage is short, the parties are young and they both have the opportunity to continue working and building their own pension pots. This is where input from a Pension on Divorce Expert (PODE) is almost certainly required.

The experts can provide calculations for several scenarios as to how pensions could be shared on divorce, including: total accrual, pre-marital accrual, offsetting (cash in exchange for pension) and at various ages – because different schemes have different benefits at different pension ages.

It really is a complex area of the financial arrangements, and it's important to seek expert legal advice and actuarial input to make sure the issues are resolved correctly.

Pensions can only be shared on divorce, not informal separation or on the breakdown of a cohabiting relationship.

The arrangements must be court ordered and usually via a PSO. The PSO is then served on the pension provider with the final order in the divorce (previously the decree absolute) – this would be Veterans UK for AFPS, and then implemented within a limited time period.

The recipient of the PSO will receive a pension credit and becomes a member of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme.

It takes some time to get to this stage, and resolving the financial arrangements (especially with an Armed Forces pension scheme) on divorce very rarely has a simple answer. If you are going through a divorce and are unsure about the pension arrangements, or how to divide your finances generally, I'm here to help navigate these issues, and for all other family law questions!

I am an Associate in the family team at Knights, but I am also the fiancée of a submariner, come from a military family and have a little girl who is one.

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

www.linkedin.com/in/emmxjones

emma.jones@knightsplc.com

WELFARE AND WELLBEING

SILVER SUNDAY OFFERS TOP VALUE

This Sunday (5 October) is Age UK's Silver Sunday, a national day where communities come together by hosting fun and free activities for older people. In 2024 there were more than 1,300 Silver Sunday events across the UK, organised by local groups, businesses and volunteers. From fitness classes to tea parties and everything in between, there are events across the country – and by no means all of them fall exactly on Sunday. The object of Silver Sunday



is to create uplifting events and activities for older people, particularly those who might be lonely or isolated. Age UK state that coming

along to a Silver Sunday event is "a great way to meet people, have fun and try some new activities. "We know attending a group event can sometimes feel daunting, but rest assured that all Silver Sunday events are friendly and informal, with helpers on hand to make sure you feel welcome and included." Some events may be age-specific, perhaps 50+ or 65+ in order to limit numbers, but ideally all events are open to the widest range possible.

The vast majority are also free, making them open and inclusive to all older people, but organisers sometimes ask for a small contribution to cover running costs. Age UK has created a dedicated website for the event, which is <https://silversunday.org.uk> giving details of all the events which have been notified to them, searchable by keywords, date or location, and viewable in map form. Examples include a **Silver Sunday indoor market** at Beaulieu Court – Sanders Senior Living at Leigh-on-Sea near Southend, at 3pm on 5 October; **senior swimming sessions** at Holly Hill Leisure Centre, Salisbury Green, on 6, 8 and 10 October, and a **Daytime Disco** with Age UK North Tyneside at 2pm on 6 October at King Street Social Club, North Shields, cost £3 per person, promising a 'groovy afternoon'!

LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY WITH YOUR WILL

If you need to update or create a new will you can take advantage of a free service, where you can also leave a lasting legacy by helping the Royal Naval Association to continue to support Shipmates in need. We've partnered with expert estate planners Octopus Legacy, so you can write or update your will for free – over the phone, or in person, and home visits

can be arranged as well. Call 020 4525 3605 and quote 'The Royal Naval Association' to make your appointment. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 0900-1730. All they ask is that you consider leaving the Royal Naval Association a gift in your will. For more information see the web page at <https://buff.ly/44BjG39>

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 wsw@rnassoc.org, telephone 07591 829416 Find the guide on our website: <https://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/rna-funeral-guide>



OCTOBER 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 October 1920

HM Gunboat Greenfly was captured by insurgents in Mesopotamia on or around 1 October 1920, though the exact circumstances of the incident are unclear. The vessel began life as one of 16 Fly-class gunboats, built in 1915-6 in sections by Yarrow at Scotstoun as "small China gunboats" but transported to Abadan in Iran, where they were assembled to form the Tigris gunboat flotilla during the Mesopotamian Campaign. The 100-ton ships had a very small draught of just two feet, though that did not help Greenfly when she ran aground on the Euphrates River on 10 August 1920. While steaming downriver to help shore up the defence of the town of Khedr, which was the site of a strategically-important railway station. By that time she had been handed over to the Army and was part of the Inland Water Transport division, patrolling the river to counter the Arab insurgents operating in Iraq and Mesopotamia (now mainly Iraq) after the Great War. She was manned by two officers and 20 infantrymen attached to the Royal Engineers, and became stuck on a sandbank some six miles from Khedr. With insurgents firing at her from close range, the British poured resources into floating Greenfly off the sandbank, but

she was still stranded a week later and casualties were mounting. Sister ship HM Gunboat Greyfly, with two launches and a strong force of Indian troops, made a final effort on 20 August, but to no avail, with river levels falling. She could have been scuttled and abandoned, but the decision was made to reinforce the crew with Indian troops and abundant supplies of food and ammunition, then leave them to defend the boat while plans were drawn up and ships gathered to attempt another rescue when conditions allowed. Weeks went by with no sign of relief for the beleaguered gunboatmen, and on 30 September the sole officer on the boat, 2nd Lt Hedger, sent a message saying food was running low but morale was still sound, and there were only a handful of casualties – one dead, two suffering bullet wounds, and four or five sick through lack of rations. He added that he felt they could stick it out until they were rescued so long as they could be resupplied. That was the last that was heard of Greenfly's crew, and their fate remains a mystery. One theory is that the Indian troops rebelled, killed the British troops and handed the boat over to the insurgents shortly after that final, optimistic message. The insurgents then stripped the boat of guns and ammunition, and set her alight. That, at any rate, was the conclusion of the Board of Inquiry that convened several months later, though there was no evidence to support that theory – only one body was ever recovered, that of a British trooper.

2 October 1866

Wooden screw gun vessel HMS Griffon was stranded and lost after colliding with sister ship Pandora off Little Popo in the Bight of Benin in West Africa on 2 October 1866. The 430-ton steamship, built by Northfleet near Gravesend in Kent and launched in February 1860, had

Continued on page 33

a short but relatively successful career on anti-slavery patrols in the Senior Service, apprehending eight salvers off the coast of Africa between 1861 and 1865. On 2 October 1866 she was in the Bight of Benin off the town of Little Popo in Togo, now known as Aneho. While on manoeuvres at night with sister ship HMS Pandora, the captain of the latter signalled Griffon to tack, but confusion over the signal (a new system of signalling at night was in the process of being introduced) led to the two ships colliding. Griffon was badly damaged and run ashore where her crew of 60 were taken off safely – there were no casualties in either ship. Pandora and a third gun vessel, HMS Mullet, attempted to pull Griffon free of the beach but failed, and the ship could not be saved.

3 October 1808

Brig-sloop HMS Carnation was taken by the French ship Palinure in the Atlantic on 3 October 1808. Carnation had a brief and ignoble career under two ensigns. Launched at the Taylor yard in Bideford on 3 October 1807, the 18-gun warship sailed on commissioning to the Caribbean. On 3 October 1808 – a year to the day after her launch – Carnation was engaged by the 16-gun French brig Palinure some 200 miles north-east of Martinique, and things quickly went very wrong. The opening exchanges resulted in the death of Carnation's captain and entire officer cadre, and when the remaining British sailors were mustered to resist an attempted boarding a Royal Marines sergeant refused to obey and led more than 30 Britons below deck to await capture. The loss of around a third of the available crew gave the French the upper hand, and the Cruiser-class ship was quickly taken. Carnation was sailed back to Martinique where, on 31 January 1809, she was commissioned into the French Navy. However, that was as far as she got – the British had invaded Martinique the previous day, and Carnation was set alight by the French at her berth, destroying the ship. Sgt Chapman, the Royal Marine who had refused to oppose the boarding, was tried by court martial and hanged from the yardarm for cowardice, while all but one of the 31 who followed him were sentenced to flogging or transportation to Botany Bay; the other sailor was acquitted. Palinure was herself taken by the British frigate Circe just days after she defeated Carnation, and later returned to service for the British as HMS Snap.

4 October 1912

Submarine HMS B2 was sunk on 4 October 1912 when she collided with a German ocean liner off Dover, resulting in the death of most of her crew. B2 was one of 11 320-ton B-class boats built by Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness between 1904 and 1906 – B2 was launched on 30 October 1905 and commissioned around six weeks later. In October 1912 she was taking part in submarine exercises in the Strait of Dover as part of preparations for any possible future war, and was running on the surface four miles off Dover in the small hours of 4 October when she was struck by the 22,600-ton transatlantic Hamburg-Amerika Line ship SS Amerika. She rapidly sank, taking all but one of her crew of 16 with her. The sole survivor was bridge officer Lt Richard Pulleyne, who was rescued by HMS C16, but who died when in command of HMS E34, sunk when she struck a mine in the Heligoland Bight on 20 July 1918. B2 was left in where she sank, allowing the bodies to remain undisturbed.

5 October 1909

Destroyer HMS Lee was wrecked off the west coast of Ireland on 5 October 1909. Lee – a Doxford three-funnel ship, also known as a 30-Knotter – was launched at the Doxford and Sons yard in Sunderland on 27 January 1899, and commissioned little over two years later, a delay partly down to her struggling to reach her specified speed of 30 knots. She spent most of her career in the Channel Fleet, based on the Medway and at Sheerness, with some time in reserve. On 14 July 1907 the 350-ton warship collided with the Dutch protected cruiser Friedland, holing the destroyer near her bows. On 5 October 1909 she was wrecked off Doolough Bay in Blacksod Bay, County Mayo, on the west coast of Ireland. She ran onto rocks only yards offshore, and although at first her crew remained on board in the hope she could be pulled off the rocks, eventually the destroyer's hull was breached and she began to flood. All machinery and equipment that could be salvaged was taken off her, and she was abandoned.

6 October 1914

Submarine HMS E9 sank German torpedo boat SMS S-116 off the Western Ems on 6 October 1914. The

HMS Pandora, which collided with sister ship HMS Griffon. See 2 October. Image from the Imperial War Museum: © IWM (Q 41144)

Continued on page 34



British E-class boat, displacing 820 tons, was launched on 29 November 1913 at the Barrow yard of Vickers Engineering, and joined the front line on 18 June the following year. She enjoyed notable success early on, sinking a light cruiser on 13 September 1914 and following it up with the destruction of S-116 on 6 October. S-116 was a 1902 product of the Schichau yard at Elbing, displacing just over 400 tons, and on 6 October was on patrol in the mouth of the River Ems with sister ship S-117 when she was spotted by E9, which was under the command of Lt Cdr Max Horton. E9, part of the Harwich Force, fired two torpedoes, one of which hit S-116 which caused her to break in two and sink rapidly, killing nine of her crew of 50; the remainder were rescued by S-117 and another torpedo boat, S-118, which was in the area. E9 escaped, and Lt Cdr Horton was awarded the DSO for sinking the two German warships. The two successes were also instrumental in starting the tradition of British submarines flying the Jolly Roger when returning from a successful patrol; Lt Cdr Horton took his cue from the comment by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson, who described submarines as “underhanded, unfair, and damned un-English” and stated that submariners should be hanged as pirates. E9 did not quite survive the Great War, being scuttled in the Gulf of Finland on 3 April 1918 to prevent her falling into German hands. Horton, however, went on to become one of the giants of Royal Navy history, being a key figure behind the tactical developments that swung the Battle of the Atlantic in favour of the Allies in the latter part of World War 2.

7 October 1853

The North Yard at Devonport Dockyard – originally built as the Keyham Steam Yard – was officially opened when HMS Queen sailed into the basin on 7 October 1853. The development was essential as the Royal Navy embraced the new technology – by 1840 around a quarter of warships were steam-powered and required dedicated support facilities. Work started on the Keyham Steam Yard in 1844, requiring the displacement of the Powder Works, while almost 40 acres of land, and more than 40 acres of foreshore, were bought. A huge coffer dam, more than a quarter of a mile in length, was built to allow the construction of basins and locks, and vast quantities of material were shifted – around 150,000 cubic yards of mud was dug out, while thousands of tons of granite and limestone were used to create the walls

and infrastructure. The foundation stone of the South Lock was laid on 12 September 1846, and the lock was flooded for the first time on 4 May 1850, though the entire complex was not tested until three years later. The new Steam Yard, which was lit by gas, covered more than 74 acres and was linked to the older part of the Dockyard by a tunnel which was built between 1855 and 1857. The Steam Yard operated independently from the original part of the Dockyard until 1876 when it was incorporated into the Royal Dockyard, and in late 1903 – by now boasting a considerable extension – it was formally renamed the North Yard, while the older parts of the Dockyard, around the First Dock, became the South Yard. There is a certain irony in the fact that the 110-gun first rate HMS Queen was the first ship to use the Keyham Steam Yard, as she was the last purely-sail battleship ordered for the Royal Navy, and thus the last sort of ship in mind when the Yard was conceived. However, Queen – built in Portsmouth in the late 1830s – was retrofitted with an auxiliary steam engine in 1858-9 and served with the Mediterranean Fleet for several years before being broken up in London in 1871.

8 October 1884

HMS Rodney was launched on 8 October 1884 – the last Royal Navy battleship built with a figurehead. One of six Admiral-class ironclad battleships, the 10,300-ton Rodney was built at Chatham Dockyard and commissioned on 20 June 1888 when she took up her place in the Home Fleet. The battleship had four 13.5in guns, six 6in guns, 12 six pounders and four above-water torpedo tubes – her main armament was capable of firing a 570kg shell which could penetrate almost 70cm of iron plate at just under 1,000 metres. She went on to serve in the Channel and Mediterranean Fleets, serving with the International Squadron in 1897 to protect Ottoman troops and Turkish civilians during the Greek uprising against Ottoman rule in Crete. She finished her service as a coastguard ship in the Firth of Forth, when she sailed to Chatham for a refit then a final spell in reserve before being sold in 1909. Her figurehead is now on display at the Historic Dockyard in Chatham.

9 October 1943

HMS Panther was sunk by German dive bombers in the Scarpento Channel on 9 October 1943 – the last British warship to fall victim to the much-feared Stuka in World

HMS Panther seen from aircraft carrier HMS Formidable during the invasion of Sicily in July 1943. See 9 October. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: Image: © IWM (A 18312)

Continued on page 35





Four British submarines alongside depot ship HMS Forth at Norfolk Naval Base, Virginia, USA, at the completion of NATO exercise Fishplay Six in October 1961. See 11 October. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © Crown copyright reproduced under delegated authority from The Keeper of Public Records. Image: IWM (A 34526)

War 2. Light cruiser HMS Carlisle was also damaged beyond repair during the attack. Panther was a 2,290-ton P-class destroyer, launched at the Fairfield's yard on the Clyde on 28 May 1941 and commissioned two weeks before Christmas the same year. She roamed far and wide during the early part of her career, first sailing to Iceland with battleship HMS King George V then escorting a British convoy to India. In April 1942 she rescued the survivors of two cruisers sunk in the Indian Ocean, then took part in the invasion of Vichy French Madagascar, sinking a French submarine on 8 May in company with destroyer HMS Active. After a refit at the end of the year she escorted ships involved in the Allied landings in North Africa, but sustained serious damage in the process; three of her sailors were killed and ten wounded in air attacks, and while her ship's company managed to douse the fires she was forced to limp back to Gibraltar for repairs. In late 1942 and early 1943 Panther was again escorting capital ships and convoys in the Mediterranean and the eastern Atlantic, and then helped screen warships from attack during the Allied invasions at Sicily, Salerno and Taranto. After the surrender of Italy she was switched to the Aegean, and on 9 October was sailing in the Scarpento Channel with light cruiser HMS Carlisle and Hunt-class destroyer HMS Rockwood, aiming to intercept German convoys

in the vicinity of the Greek Dodecanese islands. Shortly before midday the three ships were attacked by Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers. Two bombs struck Panther, breaking her in two and causing her to sink in under ten minutes; 33 sailors died in the attack. Carlisle was seriously damaged, losing 24 sailors, and although she was towed back to Alexandria by Rockwood she was beyond repair and was instead converted for use as a base ship in harbour. She was listed as a hulk in 1948 and broken up the following year.

10 October 1957

Minesweeper HMS Gavinton was towed for two miles at 5kts off the Isle of Wight by a Whirlwind helicopter on 10 October 1957. Gavinton, built by Doig at Grimsby and completed on 14 July 1954, spent her first six years as Senior Officer with the HMS Vernon Squadron at Portsmouth, and it was during this period that she took part in the somewhat unusual towing exercise. On 10 October 1957 the 360-ton ship was hooked up to a Westland Whirlwind helicopter during trials to see how effective such aircraft could be in salvage operations. The Whirlwind, part of the Special Trials Flight of 705 Naval Air Squadron, towed Gavinton around two miles in ideal conditions, reaching around 5kts, but the practice was considered somewhat risky (particularly to the

Continued on page 36

helicopter and to those sailors dealing with the tow rope) and was never introduced into the Royal Navy.

11 October 1960

Submarine depot ship HMS Forth returned to Devonport from Malta on 11 October 1960 after 13 years of service in the Mediterranean. The Maidstone-class vessel was built by John Brown and Co on Clydebank and launched on 11 August 1938, commissioning shortly before the outbreak of World War 2. She began the war supporting submarines in home waters, including Holy Loch on the Firth of Clyde, and later crossed the Atlantic to Canada to carry out her duties at Halifax, Nova Scotia. Shortly after the war she moved to the Mediterranean and spent much of that time in Malta, where she was a familiar sight moored in Msida Creek. She left Malta on 11 October 1960 and supported NATO exercises on the eastern seaboard of North America the following year. From 1962-6 she was upgraded at Chatham to support the Royal Navy's fleet of nuclear-powered submarines, and in 1966 she was sent to Singapore to relieve HMS Medway, spending almost five years as depot ship for the 7th Submarine Squadron. In 1972 she was renamed HMS Defiance and spent six years as depot ship for the Fleet Maintenance Base of the same name at Devonport Naval Base. The 9,050-ton ship was sold for scrapping in July 1985.

12 October 1944

L-class destroyer HMS Loyal was badly damaged by an acoustic mine in the Mediterranean on 12 October 1944, and subsequently written off as a total loss. The 2,700-ton destroyer was built at Scotts in Greenock and launched on 8 October 1940, though she wasn't completed for another two years because of design changes and the need to prioritise other work. She sailed from Greenock for the Mediterranean on Boxing Day 1942, joining her flotilla on Algerian convoy escort duties based out of Algiers and Bone, as well as interception patrols. She also provided protection for fast minelayer HMS Abdiel on several occasions. She was damaged by an air raid while in Bone on 1 March 1943, with two of her sailors later dying of their injuries. Later that year she took part in Operation Corkscrew, the Allied invasion of the Italian island of Pantelleria in

June, when she bombarded shore defences, and then moved on to Operation Husky, the landings in Sicily in July, and Operation Avalanche, the landings at Salerno in September. She was hit by 88mm shellfire during the latter, damaging a boiler room but she remained operational until steaming to Malta briefly for repairs on 10 September. In early 1944 she took part in the Anzio landings, providing naval gunfire support, and later rescuing survivors of HMS Spartan, sunk by a radio-controlled bomb at the end of January. She was again hit by shore-based artillery on 9 February 1944, and this time repairs at Taranto took around six weeks to complete. No sooner had she returned to the heat of battle at Anzio than she was damaged in air attacks, and was back at Taranto for further six weeks of repairs. By September that year she was on operations in the Adriatic, carrying out shore bombardments, but on 12 October she detonated a mine which damaged her hull, causing flooding, with the shock knocking machinery off-line. She was towed to Ancona by sister ship HMS Lookout, then towed on to Taranto for docking and inspection. This determined that extensive repairs would be needed to her hull to bring her back into action, and she was paid off into care and maintenance in December 1944. She remained in the Italian port for the rest of the war pending a tow to Malta, which did not materialise until 1946, after which she was repaired sufficiently to act as an accommodation ship. She was declared a Constructive Total Loss in 1947, and the following year was towed to Milford Haven where she was broken up during the summer.

13 October 1996

HMS Scott, the largest survey ship ever built for the Royal Navy, was launched at Bideford in Devon on 13 October 1996. She was built by Appledore under contract from BAeSEMA to replace the ocean-going survey ship HMS Hecla, which was something of a minnow by comparison – Hecla displaced 2,800 tons while Scott, a one-off design, weighed in at almost 15,000 tons, making her the fifth-largest vessel in the Royal Navy fleet at the time she was built. Named after the polar explorer Robert Falcon Scott, the ship was a huge leap forward in terms of technology and capability. While she is the only ocean survey vessel on the Navy's books she can remain at sea

Continued on page 37

**HMS Loyal on the Clyde. See 12 October.
Image from the Imperial War Museum
collection: © IWM (FL 1375)**



for up to 300 days a year, with two-thirds of her ship's company of almost 80 on board at any time through a rotation system. Capable of exploring deep into the great oceans, Scott's capability was demonstrated when she surveyed the sea bed around the site of the 2004 Indian Ocean Boxing Day earthquake off the coast of Sumatra, which killed a quarter of a million people. The earthquake, which triggered the deadly tsunami, radically altered the shape of the sea bed up to 5,000 metres deep. Scott was originally earmarked to leave service in the early 2020s, but has now been retained and is likely to continue in service until at least 2033.

14 October 1941

Flower-class corvette HMS Fleur de Lys was sunk in the Strait of Gibraltar by U-206 on 14 October 1941. The escort ship was launched at the Smith's Dock Co on the Tees near Middlesbrough on 21 June 1940, originally for the French Navy as La Dieppoise but renamed before she was commissioned on 26 August 1940. One of a large class of cheap, rugged and dependable escorts, Fleur de Lys and her sisters were originally designed for work in the North Sea, but their capabilities and range saw them also play a significant role in protecting Atlantic convoys, meeting the merchant ships far out at sea and bringing them in to British ports or escorting them out to the limit of their range. On 14 October 1941 Fleur de Lys, which had already escorted more than 30 convoys, was escorting Convoy OG-75 (Outbound to Gibraltar) some 50 miles west of Gibraltar when she was hit by three torpedoes fired by U-206. The torpedoes detonated the 925-ton corvette's magazine, breaking the ship in two; she sank with 70 of her ship's company, while the remaining three were picked up by a Spanish freighter.

15 October 1942

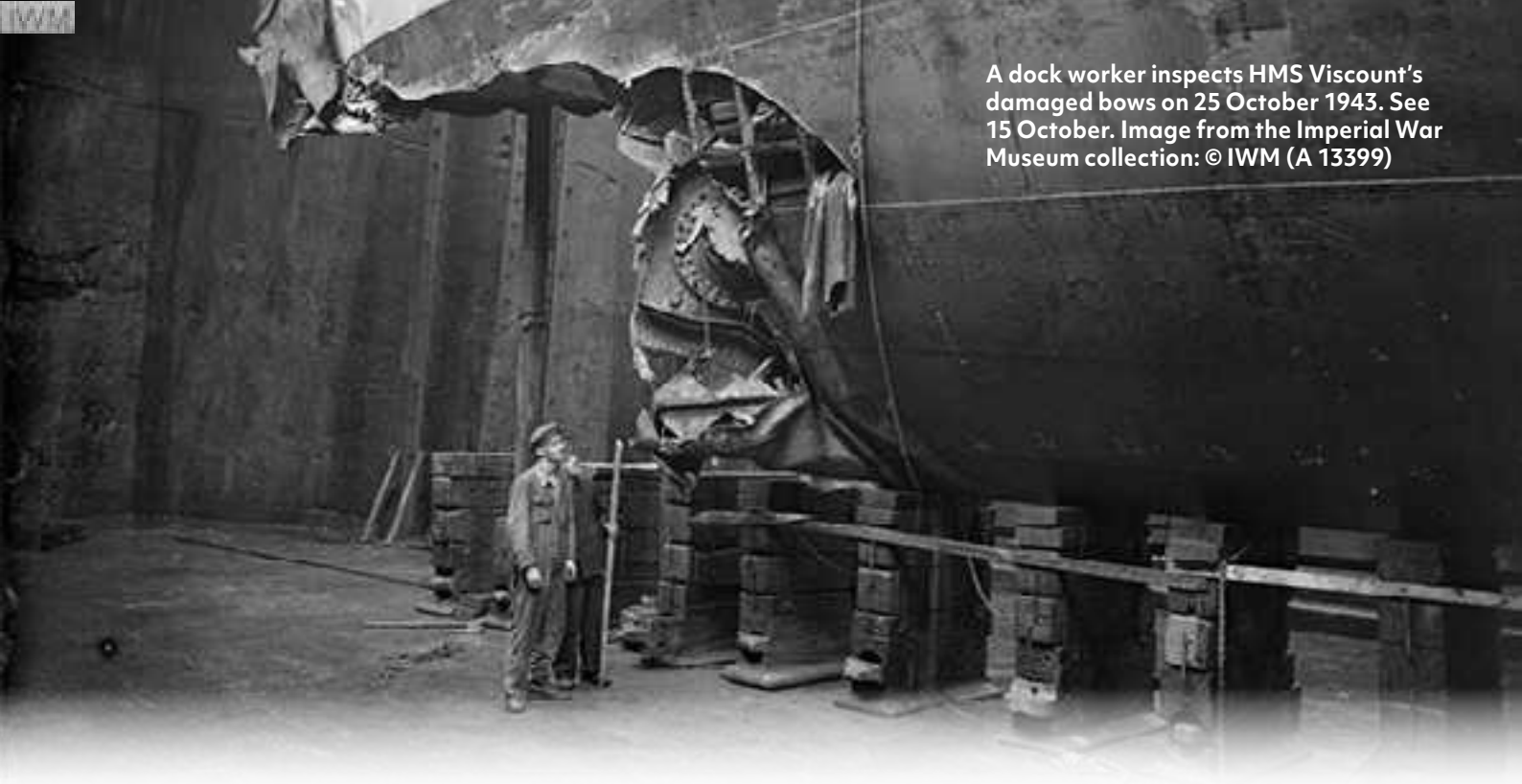
Destroyer HMS Viscount sank submarine U-661 on the boat's first patrol – and a very thorough attack it was too. The encounter, south-east of Cape Farewell, was a prime example of a seasoned war machine against inexperience. Viscount was a veteran of World War 1, having been launched at Woolston by John Thornycroft on 29 December 1917 and commissioned on 4 March the following year. Despite her late entry into the Great War the 1,120-ton V-class destroyer made her mark – she was regarded as an extremely fast ship, and while serving

with the Grand Fleet claimed at least one U-boat kill, steaming in to depth-charge a boat that crash-dived after she caught it on the surface. Between the wars Viscount served with the Atlantic and Mediterranean Fleets, including a major cruise in the Baltic in 1921. On the outbreak of World War 2 the destroyer was based at Plymouth on convoy escort and patrol duties in the Channel and South West Approaches, moving to Liverpool when Western Approaches Command moved north in April 1940. After joining the Norwegian Campaign later that year she resumed her convoy escort duties, undergoing conversion to Long-Range Escort status in June 1941. In October 1942 Viscount was part of the escort for Convoy SC 1 CW, from Nova Scotia to Liverpool, when the formation came under attack from the ten-strong Wotan submarine wolf-pack. On 15 October Viscount picked up the submarine U-607 and attacked, but the U-boat escaped. U-661 was not so lucky. The German submarine had only been commissioned eight months earlier and was on her first war patrol – she claimed her first and only victim the previous day when she sank the 3,700-ton Yugoslav cargo ship Nikolina Matkovic with the loss of 14 of her crew of 35 sailors. On 15 October she was spotted by Viscount as the wolf-pack carried out its attack hundreds of miles south of Greenland, and the destroyer did not hesitate. The destroyer charged in and rammed U-661, following up with gunfire and, when the submarine slipped below the waves, a fierce depth-charge attack, sinking the boat with her entire crew of 44. Viscount was sufficiently damaged in the ramming to require immediate repairs, so left the convoy and headed straight to the UK. She was back on duty by February 1943 and joined Convoy ONS 165 (Outbound Slow to Nova Scotia) but repeated her actions of October by ramming and depth-charging U-201 in roughly the same area that she sank U-661. Once again the submarine sank with all hands, and Viscount was sufficiently damaged to take her out of the front line, this time for a couple of months. Later that year she took part in anti-submarine operations in the Bay of Biscay and in Operation Alacrity, the creation of Allied air bases in the Azores. Her war service ended in early 1945 with coastal convoy escort work, but she was withdrawn in February that year to free up manpower for more modern warships, and decommissioned in March. She was sold

Continued on page 38

HMS Scott at Devonport. See 13 October. ©UK Ministry of Defence Crown Copyright, 2023.





A dock worker inspects HMS Viscount's damaged bows on 25 October 1943. See 15 October. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 13399)

for scrap the same month, and broken up on the Tyne in May 1947.

16 October 1940

Monitor HMS Erebus and three destroyers bombarded Dunkirk on 16 October 1940. Erebus was a one-trick pony – she and her sister HMS Terror were designed and built around a single twin-15in gun turret mounted on a tall barbette just forward of the bridge, giving her a range of around 22 miles. Displacing 7,300 tons, the ships, built by Harland and Wolff at Govan on the Clyde, were well-protected by thick deck armour and effective torpedo bulges and easily capable of 12 knots. Launched on 19 June 1916 and commissioned on 2 September the same year, Erebus saw action in World War 1 when she bombarded German naval forces at Ostend and Zeebrugge, though she suffered damage when struck by a remote-controlled motorboat packed with explosives on 28 October 1917. Post-war she was in action at the British invasion of Russia in 1919, then spent much of her time as a gunnery training ship. On the outbreak of World War 2 she served with the Eastern and Mediterranean Fleets, carrying vital supplies into the besieged city of Tobruk as well as bombarding enemy forces ashore. However, on 16 October 1940 she was engaged close to home, firing shells into Dunkirk as part of Naval operations against a build-up of German shipping, with fears growing that the Germans were preparing an invasion fleet. Erebus was escorted by three destroyers, one of which was the new Hunt-class ship HMS Garth. She went on to serve as an anti-aircraft gun platform in Trincomalee, being damaged by Japanese air attacks in April 1942, then pounded German defences during the Italian invasions in 1943 and at Utah Beach during the Normandy Landings on 6 June 1944, targeting batteries at Barfleur and La Pernelle, though one of her 15in gun barrels was wrecked when a shell exploded prematurely. She was paid off after the Japanese surrender and placed on the Disposal List in 1946; bought for scrap by Ward's, she was broken up at Inverkeithing

on the Forth in January 1947.

17 October 1939

Elderly battleship HMS Iron Duke was bombed in Scapa Flow on 17 October 1939, and though she never moved again during the conflict she played an important role in World War 2. The 30,000-ton name ship of the Iron Duke class was built at Portsmouth Dockyard and launched on 12 October 1912, going on to serve as the flagship of the Grand Fleet at the Battle of Jutland in May-June 1916, where she mauled the German battleship SMS König. After the war she served with the Mediterranean Fleet, seeing action in the Russian Civil War and the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-22. She was effectively demilitarised under the terms of the 1930 London Naval Treaty, with armour and part of her armament being removed as she was converted to a gunnery training vessel. At the start of World War 2 she was moved to Scapa Flow as an base ship and floating anti-aircraft platform, with her secondary guns being removed and placed around the main harbour as additional defensive points. On 17 October 1939 Iron Duke was damaged by several near misses when four German Junkers Ju88 bombers attacked the harbour, and her crew drover the old battleship ashore to prevent her sinking. She was further damaged in another bombing raid on 16 March 1940, and did not move from the shoal on which she was beached, but still managed to affect matters around her. It is thought her presence influenced German naval commanders when they planned Bismarck's raiding sortie into the North Atlantic, a reconnaissance appeared to show a strong active Home Fleet unit in Scapa Flow, though in reality it was the stranded Iron Duke and two decoys, merchant ships made to look like Revenge-class battleships. Iron Duke was repaired and returned to service as a harbour ship for the rest of the war, though she never moved – indeed, she was still beached when she was sold for scrapping in 1946. She was finally refloated in April that year, moving to Faslane in August. Her final voyage was in late 1948 when she was

Continued on page 39

HMS Erebus in 1944. See 16 October.
Image from the Imperial War Museum
collection: © IWM (FL 693)



moved on to Glasgow and scrapped on the Clyde.

18 October 1812

The brig-sloop HMS Frolic was captured by American sloop Wasp on 18 October 1812, but was recaptured within hours. Frolic was a Cruiser-class warship carrying 18 guns, built in Bridport in 1805-6, and saw her first significant action in the Caribbean after she crossed the Atlantic in February-March 1808. She took part in the invasion of Martinique (February 1809) and the invasion of Guadaloupe a year later. On 12 September 1812 Frolic set out from the Gulf of Honduras as escort for a convoy of 14 British merchant ships bound for England. On 16 October they were around 300 miles north of Bermuda when they ran into a gale which scattered the convoy and damaged Frolic, which lost part of her rigging and her main yard. By evening the following day her crew had carried out some repairs and six of the 14 ships of the convoy had rejoined Frolic. Shortly before midnight the American sloop-of-war USS Wasp, which had also taken some damage in the storm, spotted some of the merchant ships and shadowed them until daybreak, when they sighted Frolic. In heavy seas and with a strong wind still blowing the two warships prepared for

battle, closing to 60 yards or so before opening fire and gradually moving closer. Frolic's gunners aimed high, causing severe damage to the American's rigging and masts, while Wasp's crews aimed for Frolic's hull, taking a bloody toll. After around 20 minutes both ships were out of control, and Frolic collided with Wasp, which fired a final raking broadside. Shortly before midday the Americans, whose gunnery had proved superior to that of their foe, boarded Frolic to find that every officer and more than half the crew – 90 men in total – were either dead or wounded; 30 British sailors died in the encounter, while the Americans suffered three dead and eight wounded. With battle over, both of Frolic's masts collapsed, so a prize crew from Wasp attempted to effect enough repairs to sail the battered ship back to port. However, just four hours later the 74-gun third rate HMS Poictiers appeared on the scene, capturing both Frolic and Wasp with very little fuss and taking them to Bermuda along with a number of merchant ships from the convoy. Frolic was too badly damaged to be of any further use and was broken up in November 1813, while Wasp was repaired and returned to service in the Royal Navy as HMS Loup Cervier, later taking on the name HMS Peacock, though she did not last long – she

Continued on page 40

Gunnery training vessel Iron Duke in floating dock between the wars. See 17 October. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (Q 65645)



disappeared off the coast of Virginia in 1814 and was presumed to have been wrecked.

19 October 1818

Experiments to defeat weevils by adding caraway seeds to ship's biscuits proved unsuccessful as the insects simply ate their way round them and ignored the seeds. These biscuits, also known as hard tack and containing just wheat flour, water and salt, were a crucial part of the sailor's daily diet – so long as the sailors could actually eat them, as they were notoriously solid items. They could be broken up and eaten as small pieces, or soaked in liquid such as small beer or stew, providing plenty of calories for men working in physically-demanding circumstances. The idea that these biscuits were teeming with maggots or weevils is probably somewhat far-fetched; they could be turned to dust in storage by insects if left alone for long periods, and could also decay from damp sea air, but if stored in airtight conditions they would last for months or even years and still be quite edible. By the mid-Victorian period 'proper' bread (initially known as 'soft bread' to distinguish it from hard tack, which was officially described as bread) was being introduced, along with tinned food, and the idea of the weevil-infested ship's biscuit began to fade from public view

20 October 1915

Hired drifter HMD Star of Buchan struck a mine to the east of the Isle of Wight and sank on 20 October 1915. The 80-ton Fraserburgh-registered drifter, built in 1913 and also known as the Star o' Buchan, had been hired by the Admiralty as a patrol boat at the start of 1915 but never saw out the year; she struck a mine off the Nab Buoy on 20 October and was lost, along with seven members of the RNR. The mine is believed to have been laid by submarine UC-5.

21 October 1976

Fleet submarine HMS Sovereign held what was believed to be the most northerly Trafalgar Night dinner on 21 October 1976. The S-class nuclear-powered boat was en route to the North Pole for under-ice manoeuvres when the dinner was held. Sovereign, launched at Barrow by Vickers on 17 February 1973, had set out from Devonport for a five-week patrol on 1 October 1976, completing a number of tasks by 19 October, by which time the boat was 850 miles inside the Arctic Circle and some 70 miles off the north-eastern point of Greenland. At this point she started Exercise Brisk, ten days of exercises under the ice cap – a task for which nuclear submarines are ideally suited, as they can remain submerged for weeks on end (the only limitation is the crew's need for food). Sovereign

Continued on page 41

Crew from HMS Sovereign at the North Pole. See 21 October. Image © Ministry of Defence Crown Copyright 1976



made its final turn towards the North Pole on the evening of 21 October, arriving at around 1900 the following day, at which point the search began for a suitable polynya – a patch of thin ice through which the submarine can break through to the surface. Using upward-facing sensors, a suitable polynya was found early in the morning of 23 October, but the surrounding ice was found to be unstable, so the boat dived again after breakfast and a further polynya was found at 0915. Conditions on the ice were relatively benign – minus 35 Celsius, dry, light winds and visibility of around 1,000 yards. By the time she dived again, six hours later, 105 of the 114 men on board had been out on the ice, medals and certificates had been presented, a football match played (the Seamen beat the Technical Department 2-0) and a round-the-world race held, though bad light prevented a cricket match from being played and the ship's diver were unable to access clear water around the 4,500-ton boat to carry out their expedition. Sovereign gathered reams of data as she travelled beneath the ice cap, for both military and civilian analysis, and the submarine was back in Devonport on 5 November. Sovereign was the second Royal Navy submarine to visit the Pole – HMS Dreadnought, the first British nuclear-powered Fleet submarine, had broken through the ice there on 3 March 1971.

22 October 1683

The first officials were appointed to open Jamaica Dockyard on 2 October 1683. The facility, in Port Royal, had long been a haven for pirates, privateers and buccaneers, earning it the title of the 'wickedest place on Earth', but the presence of these high seas thugs, who preyed mainly on Spanish trade (having been displaced by the Spanish over the years) gave the island of Jamaica a certain security. Port Royal grew to become one of the largest cities in the British colonies after they took the island in 1655; initially known as Cagway, it had hundreds of houses, shops, taverns and warehouses around a series of forts, and was regarded as the unofficial capital of the island until a devastating earthquake struck in 1692. The first resident Royal Navy officer was in place by 1675 to oversee a careening wharf and rented storehouse on the waterfront, and on 22 October 1683 officials were appointed to oversee the development of a proposed dockyard. The earthquake of 1692 put a spanner in the works. By now the population had reached almost 7,000 people and the settlement boasted substantial brick buildings – but when the powerful quake

struck on 7 June it liquefied the deep sand deposits below the city, causing many buildings to slide into the harbour or simply sink into the sand. A subsequent tsunami completed the initial damage, and up to 3,000 people died in the disaster, though a further 2,000 or so were killed by disease in the following weeks. While Port Royal never recovered from its reputation as a city of pirates, wild taverns and brothels, and Kingston assumed a pre-eminent role as a commercial centre, the Royal Navy continued to persevere, rebuilding and expanding its facilities there, even when hampered by disastrous fires and hurricanes. By the mid-18th Century the port had new docks, wharves and storehouses, cooperages, accommodation and workshops, and within another 50 years or so there was a small victualling yard, with a Naval hospital opening in 1817. It was the headquarters of the Royal Navy in the Caribbean (the Jamaica Station) until 1830, then a vital part of the North America and West Indies Station until its closure in 1905.

23 October 1958

A Westland Whirlwind helicopter ditched in the Mediterranean after losing power on 23 October 1958, and the aircrew were successfully rescued. The Whirlwind HAS 7 anti-submarine aircraft of 820 Naval Air Squadron (XL871) was operating from aircraft carrier HMS Albion around 80 miles west of Malta when in a low hover over the sea when water was drawn into the air intake from the crest of a swell which caused the engine to cut out. The three-man crew was rescued by another Whirlwind helicopter. Albion had left Portsmouth on 16 October and arrived in Malta three days after the accident, continuing on to Port Said at the end of the month. The ship, which was already undertaking the duties of a commando carrier and was converted to the role three years later, had already lost a Whirlwind HAS 7 in the Mediterranean two months earlier when the aircraft went out of control during a resupply mission north-west of Cyprus, and once again the crew – this time four-strong – were lifted to safety.

24 October 1942

Submarine HMS Unique was presumed lost on 24 October 1942 west of Gibraltar while on passage from the UK. Despite her name, the boat was not unique – she was the third vessel of that name in the Royal Navy, and one of 49 smaller (730-ton) U-class submarines built by the Royal Navy in the first two years of World War 2. Unique was launched by Vickers at Barrow on 6 June

Continued on page 42

HMS Unique. See 24 October. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 20432)



1940 and commissioned just over three months later. She spent most of her active career in the Mediterranean, enjoying some success – she sank two large Italian ships in 1941 and permanently disabled a third. She underwent a refit in the summer of 1942 and sailed from Holy Loch for a patrol in the Bay of Biscay on 7 October, parting company with her escort two days later off the Scilly Isles. That was the last that was heard of her. Sister boat HMS Ursula was in the same area, to the west of Germany, on 10 October and reported hearing underwater explosions, which were thought to be German depth charges being dropped on the British boat, though the Germans made no claims over sinking her. At around that time it is thought Unique carried out an attack on the German tanker Spichern, and from eyewitness accounts it seems possible the British submarine could have been sunk by the premature explosion of one of her own torpedoes. Whatever her fate, she was reported overdue at Gibraltar, having failed to arrive on schedule and not having responded to signals for several days. She had a crew of 34 on board when she was lost.

25 October 1941

Fast minelayer HMS Latona was sunk in an air attack off the coast of North Africa on 25 October 1941. The 3,400-ton Abdiel-class ship, launched onto the Itchen at the Thornycroft yard on 20 August 1940, had a brief but busy active service career. She commissioned on 4 May 1941, survived for less than six months and never actually laid a single mine – instead she ran vital resupply missions in the Mediterranean. She reached Alexandria via the Cape of Good Hope and the Suez Canal on 21 June 1941, joining sister ship HMS Abdiel, and the very next day she sailed for Cyprus carrying RAF personnel to reinforce the island's garrison. She was back in Alexandria on 25 July, and the following month, with an Australian escort, she and Abdiel ferried troops and supplies to Tobruk.

On 25 October 1941 Latona and her escorting force were attacked by German dive bombers to the north of Bardia, in Libya, and one Junkers Ju 87 Stuka put a bomb into the minelayer's engine room. Destroyers HMS Hero and HMS Encounter came alongside the minelayer and took off most of the 1,000 Polish troops on board, as well as part of her ship's company. A fire started by the bomb soon raged out of control, and Latona's aft magazine exploded around two hours after she was hit, sinking the ship and killing 27 men, seven of them Polish troops.

26 October 1944

Norwegian corvette HNoMS Rose sank in mid-Atlantic after a collision with HMS Manners while escorting convoy ON 260. The 1,040-ton Flower-class corvette was transferred to the Norwegian navy on completion by Simons and Co of Renfrew, and was commissioned on 31 October 1941. She joined the Liverpool Escort Force on 24 November 1941 and remained with it until her loss. She undertook some escort work, and also joined numerous anti-submarine exercises as tactics were honed and new equipment introduced in a bid to turn the tide in the Battle of the Atlantic. On 26 October 1944, during Convoy ON 260, outbound to Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1,160-ton Captain-class frigate HMS Manners accidentally rammed Rose, causing the smaller ship to sink with the loss of three of her crew of 85. Manners herself did not survive the war – exactly three months later, while involved in a group attack on submarine U-1051 in the Irish Sea, a torpedo from the German submarine broke the frigate's back, and although the forward section remained afloat and was towed to Barrow, her stern sank and almost 40 ratings died. She was declared a constructive total loss and struck from the books, being nominally returned to the Americans on 8 November 1945 and scrapped in 1947 in Greece.

Continued on page 43

HMS Latona. See 25 October. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 14541)



27 October 1927

Sailors from HMS Wild Swan stood down from defending the major Presbyterian Mission hospital in Swatow, China, on 27 October 1927, following threats from Chinese Communist forces. Wild Swan was one of seven Modified W-Class destroyers completed after World War 1, completed on 14 November 1919 by Swan Hunter at Wallsend on Tyne after which she joined the 3rd Destroyer Flotilla in the Baltic. The 3rd Flotilla assisted in the evacuation of Greeks from Turkish territory after the end of the Greco-Turkish war in 1923, then in 1926 Wild Swan and her Flotilla compatriots were sent to the China Station to protect British interests as the Chinese Civil War raged, and it was during this time that the destroyer intervened to defend the mission hospital in Swatow. In the turbulence of the Chinese civil war, a splinter group of the struggling Communists (the 'Front Committee') had set off on their so-called 'Southern Expedition' in the summer of 1927, occupying cities and towns as they went, and their approach to Swatow – now Shantou – caused panic, with rich merchants and foreigners fleeing on steamers bound for the safety of Hong Kong while local Communist sympathisers caused mayhem with bombs, forcing the imposition of martial law and the rapid collapse of the local currency. The van of the Communist force reached Swatow on 23 September 1927 and took control the following day, though foreign interests around the commercial harbour were defended by military forces – the British and Japanese had three warships in situ, the Americans two. On 8 October armed Communist troops forced entry to the Presbyterian mission hospital and threatened administrators, ordering them to obey the military authorities. A doctor managed to smuggle a message to Wild Swan, which sent a party of armed sailors to the site to defend the hospital, while the British consul told Chinese authorities that the guard would not be withdrawn until guarantees were made that there would be no more interference. After a spell in reserve Wild Swan was reactivated and returned to the China Station in 1931. The Abyssinian Crisis and Spanish Civil War saw the flotilla back in the Mediterranean, and the destroyer was attacked by Nationalist bombers on 23 July 1936. Another spell in reserve was followed by an extensive refit at Chatham,

and the upgraded warship joined the 19th Destroyer Flotilla at Dover in April 1940. She played an active role in Channel operations in 1940, including the rescue of Dutch troops from the bombed ferry SS Juliana, and in Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk. Later that year she took on escort duties with the 7th Escort Group, based in Liverpool. In June 1942, while escorting Convoy HG 84 in the Western Approaches, she detached to refuel and, while passing through a fleet of Spanish trawlers, was attacked by German aircraft who mistook the vessels for an Allied convoy. Wild Swan shot down six aircraft – a record for a single ship in one action – but was seriously damaged and collided with a trawler, which sank. The destroyer picked up the crew, but was then herself sunk; 31 sailors died of exposure, but the remaining crew and the Spanish fishermen were rescued by HMS Vansittart.

28 October 1915

Armoured cruiser HMS Argyll was wrecked on the Bell Rock, on the east coast of Scotland, on 28 October 1915. The 11,000-ton warship was launched at Scotts of Greenock on 3 March 1904 and served in the Channel and Atlantic Fleets in the first decade of the century before escorting the Royal Yacht for King George V's visit to India in 1911-12. Her squadron was attached to the Grand Fleet at the outbreak of World War 1, but she never saw combat. She patrolled between Shetland and the Norwegian coast, at one stage capturing a German merchant vessel, but on the night of 27/28 October 1915 she came to grief. As Argyll sailed off Dundee she signalled a request to turn on the lamp of the Bell Rock lighthouse – lighthouses had been darkened during the war to prevent U-boats making use of them for navigation purposes, and could only be lit with special permission. However, the Bell Rock lighthouse had no radio and could only be contacted by signal lamps or boat, so the request was never received. Argyll assumed the request had been acted on, but in the foul weather ran aground at 0430, badly damaging the hull and starting a fire. Two destroyers, HM Ships Hornet and Jackal, rushed to the scene and managed to pick up the entire ship's company of around 600 without any deaths or major injuries. Over the subsequent weeks

Continued on page 44

HMS Argyll in 1906. See 28 October.
Image from the Imperial War Museum
collection: © IWM (Q 20963)



much of the equipment on board Argyll was salvaged, including her guns, and the wreck was demolished by the salvage team. Bell Rock lighthouse is considered a wonder of the industrial age – it was completed in 1810, and was so well-built of interlocking granite stones that it has never required rebuilding, and remains the oldest surviving sea-washed lighthouse in the world. Its value is incalculable – before it was built, it is thought an average of six ships were lost each year on Bell Rock, which is submerged for much of each day. Since 1810, only two ships have perished on that rock – one being Argyll, the other a cargo ship called Rosecraig that ran onto the rock in September 1908, and again the entire crew (of seven) were saved.

29 October 1918

Destroyer HMS Ulysses was lost in a collision with the SS Ellerie in the Firth of Clyde on 29 October 1918. The 1,100-ton modified R-class destroyer was launched at the shipyard of William Doxford and Sons at Sunderland on 24 March 1917 and joined the 15th Destroyer Flotilla of the Grand Fleet, based at Scapa Flow, escorting convoys between Britain and Scandinavia. Despite joining anti-submarine sweeps in the North Sea, the destroyer did not score any successes against U-boats. On 29 October 1918 Ulysses was steaming in fog in the Firth of Clyde when she collided with merchant ship SS Ellerie. Although the destroyer sank, her entire crew of more than 80 sailors were rescued by the drifter Ivy III.

30 October 1844

Steam paddle frigate HMS Gorgon was refloated on 30 October 1844, having been aground since 10 May near Montevideo in the mouth of the River Plate. Modest ship though she was – displacing 1,640 tons, bearing six guns with a ship's company of 160 – Gorgon had a varied and interesting Naval career. She was the first ship with direct-acting engines, making her two power plants very compact and light for the time, as well as efficient and smooth-running. She also had a full schooner sailing rig as well, and with a capacity of 400 tons of coal she could steam for 16 days before the need to refuel. Her armament was not as specified in her design – she should have carried 18 guns, but when launched she rode

so low in the water that her gun deck ports had to be permanently closed, so the heavy guns from that deck were removed. Gorgon was built at Pembroke Dockyard and launched on 31 August 1837, commissioning one day short of a year later. In 1840, along with three other paddle sloops (Vesuvius, Stromboli and Phoenix) bombarded the city of Acre (now part of Israel) during the Second Egyptian-Ottoman War, and either she or third rate HMS Benbow fired the one single shot that changed the course of the action, detonating the city's powder magazine and causing an explosion that wrecked the city's defensive plans. In 1843 she joined the Royal Navy squadron operating on the River Plate protecting British interests during the Uruguayan Civil War, but ran aground on 10 May. She remained stranded until she was refloated on 30 October, almost six months later. In February 1855 she assisted with the refloating of HMS Hecla at Gibraltar, but was in more destructive mood when, seven months later, she collided with the Prussian barque Mentor in the Channel off Beachy Head, badly damaging Mentor which was on the verge of foundering when he was towed to safety at The Downs, off Deal in Kent. Between 1856 and 1857 Gorgon was employed in transporting ancient artefacts from the Mausoleum of Halikarnassos near Bodrum, in Turkey, to the British Museum during Sir Charles Thomas Newton's excavations. The following year brought another high-profile mission, this time surveying the route of the first transatlantic telegraph cable which was laid by converted warship HMS Agamemnon – once the link was completed in New York, the crew of the paddle sloop were feted as heroes by the citizens of the Big Apple. In 1863 she was deployed to Madagascar to help keep the peace on the death of the highly-influential King Radama II. She arrived back at Spithead in January the following year, at which point she was decommissioned, though she still had one more role to play – that of isolation ward, accommodating the crew of former Royal Yacht HMY Osborne, seven of whom had been diagnosed with smallpox. The hulk was eventually dismantled at Woolwich in 1864.

31 October 1914

Converted seaplane carrier HMS Hermes was sunk by

HMS Ulysses (F80) with battleship HMS Valiant and sister ships HMS Undine and HMS Sable. See 29 October. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © The rights holder (Q 74057)

Continued on page 45



U-27 off the Outer Ruytingen shoal in the Straits of Dover Strait on 31 October 1914. The ship was originally built as a Highflyer-class protected cruiser by Fairfields of Govan and launched on 7 April 1898, though she wasn't completed for another 18 months. Her first assignment was on the North America and West Indies Station, though engine and boiler problems meant she had to undertake extensive repairs in Jamaica. She went on to serve as flagship on the station until late 1901 when she had her unreliable boilers replaced in Belfast. She served with the Channel Fleet until 1905 when she sent into reserve, but the following year she was recommissioned as the flagship of the East Indies Station, then the Cape of Good Hope Station, where she spent six years before she returned to England and another spell in reserve. Soon after, work began on converting her to carry a modest force of three seaplanes in an experiment to assess the viability of aircraft supporting the fleet at sea. Her forward 6in gun was removed and a launch platform with tracks built in its place, while a flimsy canvas hangar was built at the start of the tracks to provide some protection for the aircraft. A derrick attached to the foremast was used to recover the plane from the water. More guns were removed aft to provide room for another aircraft, while a third was squeezed in amidships. Fuel (petrol) was carried in tins in storage lockers on deck. Hermes was recommissioned on 7 May

1913 and carried out trials using a variety of aircraft, including a Borel Bo11, a Short Folder and a Caudron G2 Amphibian. As part of the trials an aircraft was used to search for 'enemy' ships reporting details back to Hermes on a small, short-range transmitter, which would retransmit the information using her more powerful equipment. Overall, the trials were deemed a success, and pointed the way to crucial developments of using aircraft at sea. Hermes paid off again in the last days of 1913 but was recommissioned on 31 August 1914 and put straight to work ferrying aircraft and supplies to France. On 30 October she delivered a load of seaplanes to Dunkirk and set out the following morning on her return passage but was recalled because of the reported presence of a U-boat. Zig-zagging as she went, Hermes retraced her path but was torpedoed by U-27 and sank off the Ruytingen Shoal in the Straits of Dover with the loss of 21 of her ship's company. Her wreck lies upside down in around 30 metres of water. U-27 had gained notoriety earlier the same month when she torpedoed and sank HMS E3 in the North Sea, becoming the first submarine to sink another in battle. U-27 was sunk by gunfire from Q-ship HMS Baralong, killing all on board in controversial circumstances – a dozen surviving German sailors were reported to have been shot in the water in a 'take no prisoners' scenario.

A Short Folder seaplane being hoisted out from HMS Hermes during Naval manoeuvres in 1913. See 31 October. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (Q 90115)



2025

4 October 2025	World Uckers Championships, Portsmouth
8 October 2025	National Service for Seafarers, St Paul's Cathedral, London
22 Oct 2025	Fisherman's Friends Charity Fundraising Concert, Portsmouth
9 Nov 2025	Remembrance Ceremonies, Cenotaph, Whitehall
15 Nov 2025	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting hosted by RNA Stowmarket
17 Jan 2026	Area 4 AGM hosted by Bude Branch
17 Jan 2026	Area 8 AGM. Other meetings on 18 April, 18 July, 10 October
2 May 2026	Army v Navy rugby match, Twickenham

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



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China Fleet Country Club	Click on the link for offers for Serving and ex-Serving RN and RM
Trinity Insurance	For offers see https://tinyurl.com/ssy8vt5s

The Royal Naval Association, Port Phillip Branch invite all to draw near and give their attention at the celebrated Frankston Naval Memorial Club on Sunday the 12th day of OCTOBER 2025. That we may in good spirits (and with fine victuals) so commemorate and give thanks to those shipmates of all nations and creeds of 1805, and all those who contributed in the glorious event and so honour The Immortal One



WHERE: Frankston Naval Memorial Club, 36 Barretts Road Langwarrin South VIC 3911 on Sunday 12th October 2025 [Rig of the Day is per No.1/ MUFI attire]

MUSTER 1200 - Beat to Divisions (bar opens 1130)

1220 Ode to the fallen – Lest We Forget

1225 ‘Pipe’ Up Spirits, Splice the Main Brace

(Pussers neat Tot of Lambs Navy Rum or Choice of Sherry – No U.A. or T Limers)

1300 (approx.) ‘S/M Peter Russell will ‘Pipe’ “Hands to Dinner”

*A fully catered lunch comprising a choice of varied main courses, followed by a variety of desserts
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TABLE / SEATING RESERVATIONS CLOSE MONDAY 6th OCT 2025

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TABLES / SEATING WILL BE PRE ALLOCATED [PER YOUR CHOICE]

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Leave your Name / Group / Number of seats to be reserved.

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Sunday 12th October 2025

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**PLEASE REMEMBER TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND YOUR
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PLEASE NOTIFY US BY 03rd OCT IF YOU REQUIRE WHEELCHAIR
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TABLE / SEATING BOOKING CLOSE 1200 Monday 6th October 2025

FIRST NAME	FAMILY NAME	CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER	Seating / Table Preference	Club / Group

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To apply please complete the form below and return it to info@chelmsfordcityracecourse.com by **Monday 3rd November**. Alternatively, you can complete the form on-line at [Remembrance Raceday Application Form](#)

Please note that **photographic ID of military or veterans status** will need to be included with your application. If you opt to complete the form online you will need to send the requested supplementary information to info@chelmsfordcityracecourse.com to support your application. **We understand that not all veterans are in possession of an I.D card therefore please call us.** Once your application has been approved, we will remove your ID from our system.

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<https://chelmsfordcityracecourse.com/plan-your-visit/faqs/>

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