



**ROYAL NAVAL  
ASSOCIATION**

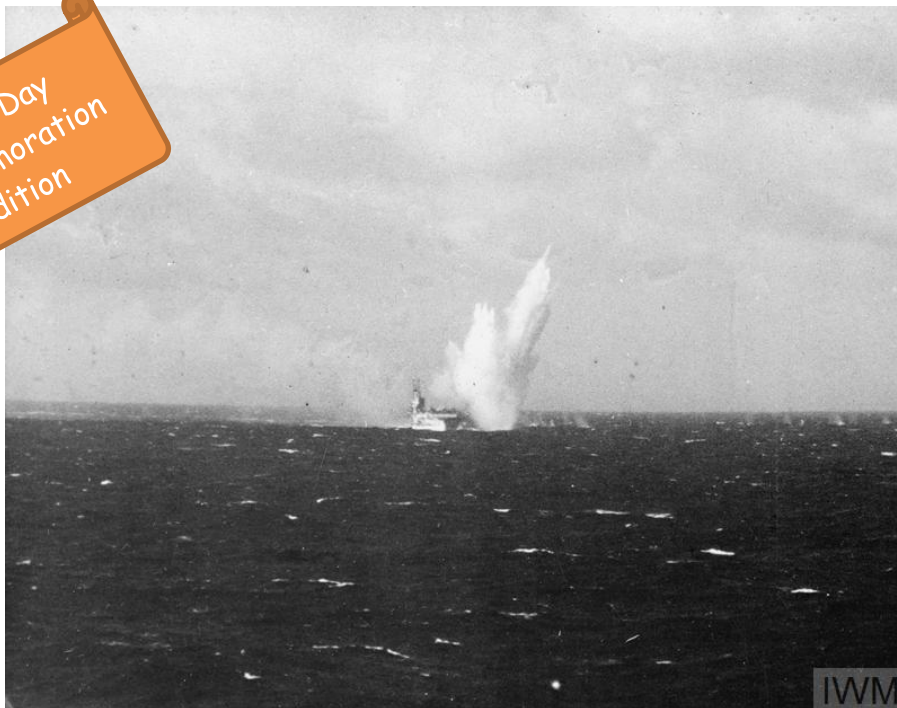
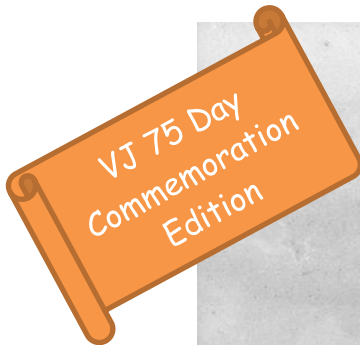


# The Semaphore Circular

**No 702**

*The Beating Heart of the RNA*

**AUGUST 2020**



*In commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day and final operations by the Royal Navy in the Pacific, the photo above shows a Japanese 'Kamikaze' crashing into the sea after failing to hit HMS Illustrious.  
(Photo courtesy of IWM Photo A29195)*

## **Shipmates Please Stay Safe**

**If you need assistance call the RNA Helpline on 07542 680082**

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## Glossary of terms

<b>NCM</b>	National Council Member
<b>NC</b>	National Council
<b>AMC</b>	Association Management Committee
<b>FAC</b>	Finance Administration Committee
<b>NCh</b>	National Chairman
<b>NVCh</b>	National Vice Chairman
<b>NP</b>	National President
<b>DNP</b>	Deputy National President
<b>GS</b>	General Secretary
<b>CONA</b>	Conference of Naval Associations
<b>NCBA</b>	National Charter, Rules and Byelaws Advisor



**indicates a new or substantially changed entry**

## Contacts

Financial Manager	023 9272 3823	<a href="mailto:michelle@royalnavalassoc.com">michelle@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Finance Assistant	023 9272 3823	<a href="mailto:kathryn@royalnavalassoc.com">kathryn@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Communications Manager	07860 705712	<a href="mailto:comms@royalnavalassoc.com">comms@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Digital Communications		<a href="mailto:mike@royalnavalassoc.com">mike@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Operations Manager	023 9272 0782	<a href="mailto:andy@royalnavalassoc.com">andy@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Membership Support Manager	023 92723747	<a href="mailto:nigel@royalnavalassoc.com">nigel@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
General Secretary / CEO	023 9272 2983	<a href="mailto:bill@royalnavalassoc.com">bill@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Admin	023 92 72 3747	<a href="mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com">admin@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Project Semaphore		<a href="mailto:Julie@royalnavalassoc.com">Julie@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
National Branch Retention and Recruiting Advisor	07713 876846	<a href="mailto:rna.brna@outlook.com">rna.brna@outlook.com</a>
National Welfare Advisor	07934 775087	<a href="mailto:ritalock@sky.com">ritalock@sky.com</a>
National Rules and Bye-Laws Advisor	0860 214766	<a href="mailto:njpurkis@hotmail.com">njpurkis@hotmail.com</a>
National Ceremonial Advisor	07810 300383	<a href="mailto:robertcoburn001@btinternet.com">robertcoburn001@btinternet.com</a>

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PLEASE USE EMAIL OR, IF THE MATTER IS URGENT, THE HELPLINE ON 07542 680082.**



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Hants PO1 3LT

## *From the General Secretary*

*Dear Shipmates,*

Welcome to the August edition of the Semaphore Circular. According to Admiral W H Smyth's book 'The Sailors Word Book' the word tot comes from 'a small drinking cup somewhat smaller than the regulation half pint to distribute the regular allowance of grog.' Using this slightly smaller measure meant there was a bit left over which was given to the cook of the mess for his troubles. I throw this little factoid in courtesy of Nigel as we publish this edition of the Circular on the eve of the 50th anniversary of Black Tot Day on Friday 31 July. With Covid still interrupting proceedings this has been scaled back but nevertheless the National President and National Chairman along with Adrian Bell, Chief Exec of the RNRMC, will be raising a glass at HMS VICTORY – this will be broadcast and details of how you can join in from the safety of your own place are covered in the BTD article. I ought to mention that the whole event will be supported by Pussers Rum who still make their Gunpowder strength rum to an Admiralty recipe.



A fortnight later, 15 August marks VJ Day but it also marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWII – I don't want to give the game away but look out for a major announcement that day when the RNA will recognise those survivors of that incredible generation who served in that conflict. Please also take some time to read the most informative and interesting article published by our National President in this edition about the Far East Fleet – the scale was simply amazing! Poignant too with the story of young **Sub Lieutenant Hockley RNVR** piloting a Seafire of INDEFATIGABLE's 887 Squadron shot down on 14<sup>th</sup> August, the day before Japan surrendered. He baled out and landed east of Tokyo. Taken prisoner he was executed that same day. His three murderers were later tried as war criminals and two of them were hanged. He gave his life for a cause which was already won.

Good to hear that some Branches and Clubs have been able to start to meet albeit with reduced numbers and with suitable precautions but as I said last month, please ensure you keep within the letter of the law in your location and, remember, this is an absolute minimum standard. Please remain sensible and remember your responsibilities if you are a Branch Committee member.

Looking a bit further ahead, we know that the RBL is still in discussion with Westminster Council in respect of attendance at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. We've heard numbers may be limited – watch this space. The Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall has already been cancelled however the BBC intend to put on a suitable alternative on the Saturday evening.

I did eventually manage to get up to Nottingham last week to recce our Conference venue for next year and, I must say, it looks like a great venue. Well done to Tom Rotherham and his team for finding such a good alternative location after the original venue let us down. More details to follow in due course and, fingers crossed, we will be over this Covid business by then. Mark your diaries; 12 June 2021.

Before then of course we have this year's Conference which will take place on-line at 1000, 21 August. Branch delegates should have the relevant papers by now and, most importantly, the raffle tickets which I would be grateful if you could make a push on selling please as they raise money for the welfare fund. It will be drawn during the Conference so please get your stubs back



to Central Office where the draw will be televised from during the Conference. Nigel has kindly offered a “stub writing service” for those who want to phone in to buy tickets (02392 723747) and thanks to those who have already done so.

I’m hoping for a good attendance at Conference this year especially as you can achieve it from the comfort of your own living room and have a mug, or indeed glass, of anything you want by your side. Zoom codes for the Conference are:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2888305105?pwd=TmtwempUWGwwUEtOcjY4ZU15RU5FZz09>

Meeting ID: 288 830 5105 Passcode: Shipmate

Moving on, please can I encourage Branch Membership Secretaries to continue to populate the new Database which is absolutely central to our three-pronged strategy for the RNA for the delivery of Comradeship through Events, Communication and Welfare Support. And please know that it is all GDPR compliant. Someone quite rightly explained it to me using an analogy which we are all familiar with. We join the Association, but our loyalty is to our Branch and shipmates in our Branch; much like we join the RN and then our loyalty is to our ship and her ship’s company. (Have I got that right or did I read somewhere that in our modern PC world, ships are now gender neutral?!)

Which leads me nicely on to Social Media. Just a reminder, if I may. We are a politically neutral organisation and if we want to continue to be supported by the RN we must keep any personal views we may have out of any correspondence we post on line. My mother always taught me that religion, politics and sex weren’t topics for the dining room table....and I seem to recall as a Midshipman in EDINBURGH the Jimmy telling us junior officers something similar for the Defence Engagement Receptions. Turns out they were both probably right!



*Artist's impression of the proposed RNBT Centenary Care Home to be built in Portsmouth*

Before I close, I ought to send a BZ to the RNBT for getting through a very tricky stage in the planning process with their Centenary Care Home which they are planning to build in Portsmouth – more later. Well done Rob Bosshardt and your team. Can I book in please?!

Finally, please remember that there is no October edition of the Semaphore Circ as I plan to send my fine team away on some very well earned leave but there is still a full programme of Fireside Chats on Mondays at 1800 (same code as above) and Virtual Tots on the

Community Site on a Wednesday and Saturday at 1900 – all are welcome.

*Up Spirits!*

*Bill Oliphant*

## 1. ★ 75 VJ Day Commemoration

To commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day our National President has written and forwarded the fascinating article below.

### VJ 75 - REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN ARMY AND THE FORGOTTEN FLEETS

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VJ Day approaches. What we are most aware of in contemporary Britain is the then Empire's major contribution to the defeat of Japan's Armies. This was the defence of India and the re-conquest of Burma. In commemorating the self-styled Forgotten Army, one aspect is worthy of note – the 14<sup>th</sup> Army's extraordinary ethnic diversity. It was brilliantly described in the second volume of his autobiography<sup>1</sup> by soldier turned novelist John Masters.

*This campaign gathered to itself, like a whirlpool, men from the ends of the earth, There were English, Irish, Welsh and Scots, and, in the RAF, Newfoundlanders, Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders, and South Africans. The Army, Masters continued, also counted Chinese, Esat Africans, West Africans, men from Burma, representatives of every state in the USA, and “Lastly and in by far the greatest numbers there were the men of the Indian Army..... from every caste and race amongst it's members.....No one , said Masters, who saw the 14<sup>th</sup> Army in action, or above all its dead on the field of battle, can ever doubt there is a brotherhood of man.....*

Field Marshal the Viscount Slim, one of Britain's greatest Generals earned the love of this polyglot force, mostly volunteers. As Russell Miller, his official biographer noted <sup>2</sup> *“in nine months of continuous fighting he coaxed ....them across nearly 1,000 miles of the most difficult and forbidding terrain in the world, annihilated five enemy divisions (305,000 Japanese soldiers fought in Burma; 60 per cent died of wounds, starvation or malnutrition) and inflicted the worst defeat on the Imperial Japanese Army in its history. With the most meagre of resources he had met every challenge and risen above it and proved himself to be both an administrative genius and master of warfare.”* According to his biographer Slim himself described the Burma campaign as being fought in *“the world's worst country, breeding the world's worst diseases and the world's worst climate”*.



The picture above also taken from Russell Miller's biography shows *“Uncle Bill as the troops knew him”*

<sup>1</sup> The Road Past Mandalay

<sup>2</sup> Uncle Bill The Authorised Biography of Field Marshal Viscount Slim

The 14<sup>th</sup> Army was not without Royal Navy Assistance. In his marvellously written and enthralling memoir<sup>3</sup> Slim tells of his *especial pride....the warships we built for the Royal Navy in our Kalewa shipyards. They were two wooden, punt-like vessels, with lightly armoured bridges, which steamed about twelve knots and were armed with one Bofors gun, two Oerlikons, and a couple of double Browning light automatics mounted for anti-aircraft fire. I claim to be the only general who had designed, built, christened, launched, and commissioned warships for the Royal Navy. One I called PAMELA, after Admiral Mountbatten's younger daughter, and the other UNA, after our own daughter. The sequel to the double christening ..... came in the form of a dignified rebuke from their Lordships of the Admiralty who pointed out, .....that only Their Lordships were authorised to suggest names for His Majesty's Ships of war. ....HMS UNA and HMS PAMELA brought the White Ensign, and all it meant to us soldiers..... The little ships and their navy crews maintained the real Nelsonian tradition of steering closer to the enemy. They were often in action and both suffered damage from enemy shot.*

Slim also paid tribute to the "*greatest daring and skill*" of the Combined Operations and Pilotage Parties. They, UNA and PAMELA were not the only Royal Navy support given to the 14<sup>th</sup> Army especially in its primarily amphibious campaign in the Arakan region of Burma. This support included the battleship QUEEN ELIZABETH and in Operation MATADOR no less than 94 warships. 3 Commando Brigade, then as now a mixed Army and (predominantly) Royal Marine Force, carried out three amphibious landings in a month.

But even this was very far from the sum total of Royal Naval contribution to the defeat of Japan. It began very badly.

The worst nightmare of 1930s Admiralty planners was a simultaneous war against Germany, Italy and Japan. In December 1941 it became reality as Japan attacked the United States Fleet at Pearl Harbour and simultaneously assaulted Thailand, Malaya, Hong Kong, Wake Island and the Philippines. The Royal Navy was now at war in the Arctic, North and South Atlantic, the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, South China Sea and the Pacific. An emerging earlier strategy of a combined forward defence in the South China Sea with the United States, Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand based on the Philippines and Singapore was now completely overtaken by events. The recently deployed deterrent Force Z of the battleship PRINCE OF WALES and battlecruiser REPULSE attempted to disrupt landings in Malaya but were sunk by Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft operating from what was then French Indo-China. Gallant allied naval actions in the Java Sea led to the loss of the cruiser EXETER and three RN destroyers plus 2 Netherlands cruisers and a destroyer, and the cruisers USS HOUSTON and HMAS PERTH.

The Royal Navy was now forced to retreat to the Indian Ocean and to adopt a Fleet in being strategy around what was for the British Empire and the Allied cause in general a core area whose importance has been underestimated in most writings on the Second World War.

In his compellingly original study <sup>45</sup> published in 2017 Andrew Boyd asserts:

*The contribution of the British Empire and that of the Royal Navy in safeguarding the Middle East and Indian Ocean from the Axis between spring 1941 and winter 1942 has been understated. It has been overshadowed by later American strength, once it was properly mobilised from 1943*

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<sup>3</sup> Defeat Into Victory

<sup>4</sup> The Forgotten Fleet by John Winton

<sup>5</sup> The Royal Navy in Eastern Waters



onward, and the dominant contribution of the Russian army to breaking German land power. Yet British control of the area from Egypt in the west, through the Indian Ocean, Ceylon, and thence to Australia, was critical in containing Germany's military potential during this period. Britain needed the resources and strategic leverage of this eastern empire to ensure her own survival as an effective fighting power, to wear down Germany and Italy by denying them oil and expending their air power, and later to ensure the survival of her vital Russian ally through the Persian supply route. This empire contribution made while Russia's fate was still in the balance, and before American potential could take effect, was fundamental to future Allied victory..... The Royal Navy held prime responsibility for securing the war potential of this space from the existential threats facing at both ends.....by ensuring command of the eastern Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

The 1942 Eastern Fleet looked formidable on paper but four of its five battleships were obsolescent "R" class, one of its three Carriers was the old, slow and small HERMES and the air groups of FORMIDABLE and INDOMITABLE lacked training and experience. On taking command the outspoken and witty Admiral Sir James Somerville signalled: .....*there's many a good tune played on an old fiddle*". In March 1942 his fleet was fortunate not to join battle, as it intended to do, with a powerful Japanese raiding force which included five Carriers and four Battleships. Admiral Nagumo did however find and sink HERMES and the cruisers CORNWALL and DORSETSHIRE. The Eastern Fleet then retreated to Mombasa and Bombay.

After operations in Madagascar in May 1942 and into 1943 three Carriers and two Battleships left the Eastern Fleet for refit and to take part in the Pedestal convoy to Malta and the Torch landings in North Africa. The Eastern Fleet became an "Orphan Annie"<sup>6</sup>. In September 1943 the Italian Fleet surrendered and the battleship TIRPITZ was immobilised by X craft midget submarines. This released a number of ships for service elsewhere. Reinforcements began to arrive by the beginning of 1944. In April Admiral Somerville was able to attack the harbour and oil storage tanks at Sabang near Sumatra with aircraft from ILLUSTRIOUS and the USS SARATOGA. This was followed in July by a further attack in which Somerville's force included two Carriers, two Battleships and a BattleCruiser. It was Somerville's "farewell party" since he then went to become Head of the British Admiralty delegation in Washington.



Admiral Sir James Somerville speaks with WRNS officers serving in Colombo during his Birthday Inspection on 17 July 1944, marking his 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Imperial War Museum collection © IWM A 24957

Allied strategy for the Far East had taken some time to formulate but by July 1944 it was agreed that the main Fleet operations would be conducted in the Central Pacific. Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff were resolved that a British Fleet must take part. In November 1944 the Eastern

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<sup>6</sup> John Winton op. cit.



Fleet was split into two. Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser hoisted his flag as CinC of the British Pacific Fleet while Admiral Sir Arthur Power commanded the also newly named East Indies Fleet. Fraser had been Controller of the Navy for the first three years of WW2. As CinC Home Fleet he had led in the destruction of the SCHARNHORST at the Battle of North Cape. He was a man of great charm who established a firm friendship with Admiral Nimitz, the US CinC Pacific Ocean Area. Fraser also had that (continuing) rare quality in the RN – a flair for Public Relations.

Fraser's ability to get on with the Americans was equalled by his Deputy and at sea commander Vice Admiral Sir Bernard Rawlings. John Winton <sup>7</sup> tells a delightful tale. *After the Japanese surrender Admiral Halsey, signalled his Fleet "Splice the Main Brace".... and a few minutes later ....cancelled the order for the American Task Groups. British units .... gratefully complied....Next day Rawlings visited Halsey in his flagship.....and told the Fleet Commander that having studied his signal carefully he had noticed that the order had been cancelled for all American groups except his own. Whereupon Rawlings produced a jar of rum and all hands present in Halsey's cabin spliced the Main Brace.*

The BPF was nowhere nearly as varied in its ethnic composition as the 14<sup>th</sup> Army but it was truly representative of the Dominions. Two cruisers were New Zealand manned, another Canadian and Australia contributed a Destroyer Flotilla and part of another and most of the minesweeper escorts for the Fleet Train which itself was mostly manned by multinational merchant seaman including many people of colour. There were many Canadians, South Africans and New Zealanders who provided sometimes as much as one in four, in the Squadrons' aircrews. John Winton tells<sup>8</sup> us how *the aircrews contained men who had been sheep-farmers, opticians, solicitors, sewage inspectors and the pianist of Guy Lombardo's band. Amongst the ships' companies were farm labourers, chauffeurs, actors, cartoonists and a former lightweight champion of Great Britain.*

Many were in their first ship. But the majority, particularly the Chief and Petty Officers were veterans who had had a hard war. Admiral Rawlings since the day WW2 began including being wounded at Crete when his Flag Captain was killed. IMPLACABLE's Commander Air had led the flight which shot down the first German aircraft in WW2, the Fleet Fighter Direction Officer flew a spotting aircraft at the Battle of the River Plate and the Master of the Fleet had navigated *Cossack* when she released prisoners from the Altmark. Vian his then Captain had spent the entire war at sea in command apart from two short periods of ill health. He had already been awarded two DSOs and became the Flag Officer of the BPF's First Aircraft Carrier Squadron.

Reserve Officers and Men outnumbered the regular RN in every ship. Nine of thirteen Air Squadron Commanders were RNVR officers. IMPLACABLE had only two RN aircrew out of 150 officers. While the BPF's privations did not equal those of 14<sup>th</sup> Army they were severe enough. Men had to contend with heat, fresh water shortage, overcrowding, prickly heat, rashes, boils and occasional bouts of gastro-enteritis. Food in the ships was almost all dehydrated or tinned. When INDEFATIGABLE's Chief Cook was awarded the DSM the ship's company were convinced it meant "Distinguished Spud Maker". An input to one of INDOMITABLE's suggestion boxes wondered whether it was their Lordships' intention that the ship should return to UK with "a skeleton crew".<sup>9</sup>

The first of four main operational periods were two strikes in January 1945 against the Palembang oil refineries in Sumatra. They were the two most important refineries in the Far East

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<sup>7</sup> The Forgotten Fleet op cit

<sup>8</sup> The Forgotten Fleet op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> John Winton op. cit.

and were capable of producing about three-quarters of Japan's total requirement of aviation spirit making them significant strategic targets. They were strongly defended by a ring of fighter airfields and anti-aircraft batteries. The attacking force consisted of four Fleet Carriers, a Battleship, four Cruisers and eleven Destroyers. The Carriers had a total of 238 aircraft: Hellfires, Corsairs, Avengers, Fireflies, Seafires and Walrus. Production was brought to a standstill until the end of March when it reached about one third of its capacity. 68 enemy aircraft were destroyed for the loss of 41 aircraft from combat, damage and accidents in 378 sorties. Thirty aircrew were lost- nearly one aircraft in every 9 sorties a rate that might have made Bomber Command wince.

The Fleet then retired to Sydney where it received the most tumultuous welcome. John Winton gives some astonishing statistics: 63,000 young Australian women volunteered to act as hostesses at the nightly dances, 12,500 homes in New South Wales offered hospitality, £A200,000 was raised by public subscription to build a British Centre in Sydney which had 4,000 volunteer staff, 1200 beds and served 6,000 meals every day.

From Sydney the Fleet sailed 2,000 nautical miles (3560 km) to its forward base at Manus in the Admiralty Islands of New Guinea. The tasks for its second and third operational periods (March-May) both took time to agree but settled on supporting the capture of Okinawa. Task Force 57, as the BPF's strike component had now become, was charged with subduing the airfields and aircraft operations on and from the neighbouring Sakishima Gunto islands which were another 2070 nautical miles (3830 km) from Manus. The sheer geographical scale of the BPF's operations can be seen in this comparison superimposed on a map of the Western Hemisphere. Okinawa is about by the C of AFRICA.



The flak defences around Sakashima Gunto were very extensive and the gunners increasingly ferocious and practised as the raids mounted despite daily bombing and even 15" bombardment from battleships. During these operations, codenamed ICEBERG 1 and 2, the BPF's Task Force 57 came under the command of Vice Admiral Raymond Spruance. He was the victor of Midway, one of the decisive battles of WW2. He had a rare combination of talents being a gifted staff officer and a brilliant sea commander. After the war Spruance wrote in the Journal of the Royal United Services Institution: *Task Force 57 did its work to my complete satisfaction and fully lived up to the great traditions of the Royal Navy.....if Admiral Rawlings and I had known each other for twenty years things could not have gone more smoothly.*

The USN and RN were both assailed by multiple Kamikaze suicide attacks. This was a pretty frightening experience. The onlooker felt that the Kamikaze was coming straight for him "like a giant bluebottle". The picture below shows HMS FORMDABLE having been struck on 4 May 1945 during ICEBERG 2. Four officers and ten ratings were killed and sixteen wounded. A 3"

The USN and RN were both assailed by multiple Kamikaze suicide attacks. This was a pretty frightening experience. The onlooker felt that the Kamikaze was coming straight for him "like a giant bluebottle". The picture below shows HMS FORMDABLE having been struck on 4 May 1945 during ICEBERG 2. Four officers and ten ratings were killed and sixteen wounded. A 3"



dent was put in the flight deck and fires started.



But while the British Carriers armoured flight decks made them hotter to live in and restricted the number of aircraft they could carry as compared with the wooden decks of US Carriers they were much better able to survive a Kamikaze attack. FORMIDABLE was back operating aircraft less than an hour after the aircraft had struck and its 500 lb bomb exploded. As her USN liaison officer remarked *“When a Kamikaze hits a US Carrier it’s six months in Pearl. In a Limey Carrier.... it’s sweepers man your brooms”*<sup>10</sup>

ICEBERG 1 and 2 ended on 25 May when the majority of the BPF set course for Sydney. TF 57 had been at sea for sixty-two days completing twenty-three strike days. All five Carriers had been hit at least once by Kamikaze. It had lost a total of ninety-eight aircraft of which twenty-six were due to enemy action. They had achieved their object of inhibiting use of the Sakashima airfields and earned Admiral Spruance’s assessment that the British Carrier Task Force was now ready to join with the USN Fast Carrier Task Force.

In the period 17<sup>th</sup> July to – 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945 during the final 10 days of operations against Japan 34 Royal Navy aviators were killed. Among the last was the universally liked Lieutenant Commander “Hammy” Grey, the Canadian Senior Pilot of FORMIDABLE’s 1841 Squadron. He had been part of the attack on Tirpitz in 1944 and had been awarded the DSC for his service in ICEBERG. He lost his life on 9 August, the day the second atom bomb was dropped, sinking a destroyer despite intense flak from shore batteries and some five warships. He was posthumously awarded the only Victoria Cross in the BPF.

On 14<sup>th</sup> August, the day before Japan surrendered Sub Lieutenant Hockley RNVR piloting a Seafire of INDEFATIGABLE’s 887 Squadron was shot down. He baled out and landed east of Tokyo. Taken prisoner he was executed that same day. His three murderers were later tried as war criminals and two of them were hanged. Both Grey and Hockley gave their lives for a cause which was already won.

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<sup>10</sup> John Winton op. cit.



The final surrender ceremony took place on board USS MISSOURI. Shortage of fuel had necessitated departure of most of the BPF. But the battleships DUKE OF YORK, flying Admiral Fraser's flag, and KING GEORGE V, Admiral Rawling's flagship, were accompanied by two Cruisers and four Destroyers. Among the latter was HMS WHELP whose First Lieutenant was

The Queen's future consort then Lieutenant Prince Philip of Greece. This picture shows

Admiral Fraser signing the surrender document. Behind him from left to right are General Douglas MacArthur and Admirals Rawlings and Brind.

On VJ Day the East Indies Fleet had 129 warships including 2 Battleships and 16 Aircraft Carriers. It had 9 bases and depot ships throughout India, what became Pakistan and Bangla Desh and the then Ceylon. The British Pacific Fleet had 173 warships. They included 17 Aircraft Carriers and 4 Battleships. It had 5 shore bases in Australia and Manus and its Fleet Train of Logistic Support vessels had 100 ships- a grand total for both Fleets of 402 ships.

Despite all I have recorded above the Royal Navy played only a supporting part in the colossal, mainly American, war in the Pacific. But its actions were significant. They deservedly won the admiration of the USN and as Admiral

Rawlings hoped in his valedictory message to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet, laid solid foundations for the immensely close relationship the two Navies have enjoyed ever since. The British Pacific and East Indies Fleets and the 14<sup>th</sup> Army together with its valiant RAF comrades deserve to be commemorated on the forthcoming 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## 2. ★ Monday Evening Fireside Chats

For Shipmates who are unaware a series of 'Fireside Chats' featuring some fascinating subjects including; Battle of Jutland, Operation Paraquet (Re-capture of South Georgia 1982), Naval Recruiting in 2020 to name but a few. The presentations are held on Monday evenings commencing at 1800 using 'Zoom'.

Meeting ID - 288 830 5105 Password – Shipmate (case sensitive)

Date	Presenter	Subject
Monday 03 Aug	Cdr David Pickles	A first-hand view on the deployment of HMS Queen Elizabeth
Monday 10 Aug	S/m Mike Milne (St Neots)	Op Pedestal – Malta Convoys
Monday 17 Aug	National President	The RN's war against Japan
Monday 23 Aug	S/m Ralph Dodds	1942 Convoys- Highs and Lows, Pedestal v PQ17
Monday 30 Aug	S/m Dave Cutler (West Lothian)	100 Years of Naval Photographic Branch

### 3. ★ RNA 100% Lambswool Scarves (Made in Scotland)

The RNA Lambswool Tartan Scarves are now available for sale at a cost of £15.00 plus post and package of £3.20 for orders of 1 to 10 scarves.

The scarves are tremendous value and, like the General Secretary, lovingly made in Scotland (Freedom!)

Please contact S/M Bob Coburn for further details, 01464 782162, or email [robertcoburn001@btinternet.com](mailto:robertcoburn001@btinternet.com)



### 4. ★ Covid 19 Humour .....Respectfully



There has also been sensational news from north of the border, of how to ensure Shipmate Bob Coburn, National Ceremonial Advisor is kept quiet, usually a futile task, however when he puts on the new RNA Tartan Facemask!! (Mrs Coburn is overjoyed and was last seen removing her ear defenders!)



### 5. ★ 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Black Tot Day

Shipmates may wish to know that the RNA along with RNRMC and Pusser's Rum are coming together to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Black Tot Day with a traditional 'Up Spirits' tot ceremony in front of HMS Victory. Full details can be found at <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/black-tot-50>

The event will be shown on Facebook live at 1150. Then at 1800 a RNRMC premier showing 'Coming Together' – A documentary on what 'Up Spirits' meant to Sailors and will be available via RNRMC Facebook or YouTube then at 1830 host your own 'Up-Spirits' Party.

Rum has long been closely associated with the Senior Service, and is an integral part of Naval heritage – but it is not the only liquor that has fuelled the Fleet.

With an unrivalled history of global reach, the Royal Navy has always made use of whatever resources were available around English overseas territories and later the British Empire, depending on location and political climate.

There is no single reason why spirits were issued to British sailors in the past, rather a number of factors that led to the tradition – and those are for very practical reasons. First, fresh food and drink did not last long on board slow wooden warships, especially in warm climates.



The English and British tar of the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century tended to have a better diet than many of his contemporaries ashore, but that didn't stop food and drink tasting foul more than he would have liked. Drinking water, stored in barrels or casks, would turn stale – and may not have been particularly fresh to begin with. One answer was to carry beer – often 'small beer' of low alcohol content, which would provide hydration for hard-working men but would not lead to drunkenness, and which tasted a little better than the water.

The original official daily allowance was a gallon of beer per day per sailor (where available), but such beer would not have had a long shelf life, so lesser quantities of wine or spirits might be substituted. Gin was always been popular with the Fleet – the drink first appeared in English records during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and got its 'Mother's ruin' connotation from the fact that it was cheap enough for (almost) anyone ashore to consume more than enough to get blind drunk. Gin rapidly gained popularity in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, leading to the 'gin craze' of 1690-1750, at the height of which some half of the 15,000 alcohol drinking houses in London were gin shops and law-makers were aghast at the level of drunkenness amongst the poor.

The Royal Navy helped spread the popularity of British-style gin across the globe as it protected and expanded the empire. Needless to say, Navy strength gin (as later with Navy rum) tended to have quite a kick (57% ABV (100° English proof)), with Plymouth gin – less dry than the more common London gin, and therefore easier to drink neat – tending to be the version found aboard warships. Brandy was also on the manifest periodically, usually when relationships with France were relatively cordial. But with a swathe of territory in the Caribbean producing sugar cane, the British readily turned to rum as an alternative – the spirit was fermented and distilled from sugarcane molasses or juice, widely grown on British possessions in the region. British privateers would have been introduced to rum far earlier, but formal links between the Royal Navy and rum can probably be traced back to 1655 with the capture of Jamaica from the Spanish and the start of industrial-scale sugar trading – sugar was a valuable commodity in those days, and formed a vital element of the so-called 'triangular trade' of (in the simplest terms) slaves from Africa to the Americas, sugar (and cotton and tobacco) from the Americas to Europe and manufactured items, clothing and rum from Europe to Africa.





A handy consequence (handy for the command teams of wooden warships, at any rate) of the consumption of strong spirits was that it could calm the nerves of those facing the commotion of battle – Dutch courage, or bravado gained from alcohol, is supposedly named thus because of the effects of jenever, or Dutch gin, on soldiers in Europe. Equally, it could rouse the spirits of those who were spoiling for a fight with the French, the Spanish or whoever else challenged the authority of the Royal Navy on the high seas.

Rum was officially issued in the Royal Navy from 1731 – half a pint per man per day, which inevitably led to cases of drunken behaviour. So, the next major development was the decision in 1740 to dilute the fiery liquor, a decision which still reverberates in the English language to this day.

That call was made by Admiral Edward Vernon, a sometimes-controversial figure whose long Naval career saw both success and failure in battle. Vernon made his mark in striving for a more effective and efficient Navy, codifying instructions that helped commanders to fight a fleet in the heat and confusion of battle and improving gun drill, setting the Royal Navy on a course that would see them outgun any rival on the seas.

In 1740, concerned at the risk of drunken behaviour affecting sailors' efficiency in battle, Vernon decided that the daily ration should be diluted with four parts water or beer to one part rum, and distributed in two servings rather than one. Vernon was known to his men as 'Old Grog' from his habit of wearing a heavy woollen grogram boat cloak in foul weather; the name quickly became associated with the weakened spirit, which became known as grog. Today that link can be found in the term 'groggy', a befuddled state which can easily result from drinking too much grog or booze.

The Royal Navy's daily rum ration continued throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, though the amount of spirit was halved in 1824 and again in 1850. There were variations on the theme of the tot issue, with senior rates being issued 'neaters' or undiluted rum, and a bartering system involving sippers, gulpers and so on.

Then came Black Tot Day.....

In later December 1969 the Admiralty indicated to Parliament that it was minded to end the issue of rum as sailors were handling increasingly sophisticated and delicate equipment aboard warships. The matter was aired in Parliament the following month (the 'Great Rum Debate'), with former sailor James Wellbeloved MP arguing strongly against it, noting that "the decision of the Admiralty Board to abolish the rum issue has aroused deep anger and resentment in the Royal Navy."



He also noted that if it were simply a question of preventing impaired performance, then "there would be a clear case for following the practice of other navies and banning all alcoholic drink from ships of the Royal Navy at sea. "If the Admiralty's case is right, the Navy should be dry of all spirits, but I do not believe that the Admiralty's case is right. "What is the truth of the Admiralty Board's claim? What evidence is there to support their contention?" Fellow MP Roy Roebuck suggested "they were drunk at the time..." The debate continued with much nautical terminology

and humour (see <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1970/jan/28/royal-navy-rum-ration>) but to no avail.

And so the final issue of rum was made 50 years ago, at 1100 on 31 July 1970 – Black Tot Day – when some wore black armbands and tongue-in-cheek mock funerals were held at home and abroad for the much-cherished tradition. The demise of the tot also led to another nickname – the First Sea Lord at the time of the decision, the outstanding (and red-haired) Admiral Sir Michael Le Fanu, became known to ratings as ‘Dry Ginger’...



Even after Black Tot Day, rum still had a place in the modern Royal Navy – the order to ‘Splice the Mainbrace’ means the issue of a tot to a body of sailors, usually in celebration of an event or a job well done. Such an order in the Royal Navy, only given by the Queen, a member of the Royal Family or of the Admiralty Board, is derived from the reward given to sailors on sailing warships who carried out emergency repairs to the Mainbrace, the most significant piece of

rigging which controlled the main yardarm – a difficult operation on which the safety of the ship depended.

*(The picture above was taken from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 35199) shows Defence Secretary Denis Healey enjoying a tot with senior rates on board destroyer HMS Hampshire in January 1969, the year before the rum ration ended. Also the picture of the Royal Navy ratings drew their rum ration wherever they served – here, on the top of the RN Signal Station at Valletta Palace, Malta, in February 1942. From the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM A 9245)*

## 6. ★ China Fleet Club - Saltash

The China Fleet Club has begun its tentative social distanced lockdown ‘Opening -Up’ process.



The facility has recently completed a multi-million pound upgrade, the excellent family accommodation includes a kitchen and the whole complex boasts ultra-modern facilities, swimming pool, aqua spa, health club & racquet sports and now the new 'Woodland Adventure Golf' as well as the Golf Course a family friendly Country Club. Your Royal Naval Country Club, (the British Army and the RAF do not own or enjoy such luxury). Be sure to claim your RNA Veteran's DISCOUNT when booking.

Visit the Website @ [www.china-fleet.co.uk](http://www.china-fleet.co.uk) or please call 01752 848668 for further details.

## 7. ★ Dauntless Divisional Photos Project - Association of Wrens

*Please see below an email from Mandy Whitham who has asked for assistance with her project.*

Over the years on social media (Wrens pages) it became very apparent that many of the ladies had lost their photos and memories along the way as a result of a whole variety of reasons, some not very pleasant. Until the creation of social media, it was particularly difficult to find others of your own division in the hope that you could cadge a copy of your Divisional Photograph.



With lockdown, and people finding things to do to keep them occupied, I approached the Association of Wrens and asked if I could undertake a project to collect as many of the Dauntless Divisional Photographs during the time that HMS Dauntless was open for training, 1947-81. Initially it was just to create a resource where ladies could find their own Divisional photo and take a copy. But the project has grown and has developed into a community project.

I am hoping eventually to find a location to store the project so that it is available online to any who wish to be involved but for now, we are a private Facebook Group called Dauntless Div Phots 47-81. And whilst I realise that many do not like or use social media, having it located as a FB group means that ladies find each other on the pages that belong to their Division. They share tales, photos, find old friends and rekindle that sense of belonging that they had back in the Dauntless days.

It has been running just short of a month and already we have nearly 600 photos and 800 data entries pertaining to which division joined when. The Group, in the short space of time, has over 900 members and over 10,000 social interactions within the group (FB Statistics).

I am hoping that this will be shared to RNA members who may know of Dauntless Wrens and who may wish to be part of the project.

If someone just wishes to make contact there is an email address: [dauntlessdivphotos@gmail.com](mailto:dauntlessdivphotos@gmail.com)

Or they would be warmly welcomed at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/562267424472895/>

(If anyone wishes to join the group there are three naval questions to be answered for security purposes – standard practice on any military closed page/group.)

We look forward to hearing from any Dauntless Wrens.

Mandy Whitham

Project Coordinator <https://www.facebook.com/groups/562267424472895/>

## 8. ★ Ralph And Edna Joke

Ralph an Ex sailor and Edna an ex Wren were both patients in a mental hospital.

One day while they were walking past the hospital swimming pool, Ralph suddenly jumped into the deep end. He sank to the bottom of the pool and stayed there. Edna promptly jumped in to save him.

She swam to the bottom and pulled him out. When the Head Nurse became aware of Edna's heroic act she immediately ordered her to be discharged from the hospital, as she now considered her to be mentally stable.

When she went to tell Edna the news she said, "Edna, I have good news and bad news. The good news is you're being discharged, since you were able to rationally respond to a crisis by jumping in and saving the life of the person you love.... I have concluded that your act displays sound mindedness."

"The bad news is, Ralph hung himself in the bathroom with his bathrobe belt right after you saved him. I am so sorry, but he's dead."

Edna replied, "He didn't hang himself, I put him there to dry. How soon can I go home?" 😂😂😂



## 9. ★ This Month's Unusual Photo



This month's unusual photograph was taken in the jungles of Borneo during the 1964 Indonesia-Malaya confrontation and features two Wessex Helicopters.

Please could I have your assistance (Stand Too! FAA) in trying to work out what mark aircraft they are and which squadron?

I found this in my Fathers collection from when he was in Borneo 1964/65  
Thank you S/m Andy Christie

Please send your photos / old 'dits' etc to [andy@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:andy@royalnavalassoc.com)

## 10. ★ VC Series - Leading Seaman James Joseph Magennis VC

This Month is the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day so it is appropriate we acknowledge that even in 1945 the fighting was still as intense.

Leading Seaman Magennis was born on 27 October 1919 in West Belfast. He was awarded the Victoria Cross, along with Lieutenant Ian Fraser Royal Navy, whilst serving in HMS XE3 during Operation Struggle in the Straits of Johore. His Citation was published in a supplement to the London Gazette on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 1945;

*ADMIRALTY Whitehall, 13th November 1945.  
The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the VICTORIA CROSS for valour to: Temporary Acting Leading Seaman James Joseph MAGENNIS, D/JX. 144907.*



*Leading Seaman Magennis served as Diver in His Majesty's Midget Submarine XE-3 for her attack on 31 July 1945, on a Japanese cruiser of the Atago class. The diver's hatch could not be fully opened because XE-3 was tightly jammed under the target, and Magennis had to squeeze himself through the narrow space available.*

*He experienced great difficulty in placing his limpets on the bottom of the cruiser owing both to the foul state of the bottom and to the pronounced slope upon which the limpets would not hold. Before a limpet could be placed therefore Magennis had thoroughly to scrape the area clear of barnacles, and in order to secure the limpets he had to tie them in pairs by a line passing under the cruiser keel.*

*This was very tiring work for a diver, and he was moreover handicapped by a steady leakage of oxygen which was ascending in bubbles to the surface. A lesser man would have been content to*

*place a few limpets and then to return to the craft. Magennis, however, persisted until he had placed his full outfit before returning to the craft in an exhausted condition. Shortly after withdrawing Lieutenant Fraser endeavored to jettison his limpet carriers, but one of these would not release itself and fall clear of the craft.*

*Despite his exhaustion, his oxygen leak and the fact that there was every probability of -his being sighted, Magennis at once volunteered to leave the craft and free the carrier rather than allow a less experienced diver to undertake the job. After seven minutes of nerve-racking work he succeeded in releasing the carrier. Magennis displayed very great courage and*

*devotion to duty and complete disregard for his own safety.*



In addition to L/S Magennis VC other members of HMS XE7 Ships Company won awards for the action. Lieutenant Fraser was also awarded the VC ; whilst Sub-Lieutenant William James Lanyon Smith, RNZNVR, who was at the controls of XE3 during the attack, received the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC); Engine Room Artificer Third Class Charles Alfred Reed, who was at the wheel, received the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (CGM).

In 1949 L/S Magennis left the Navy and returned to Belfast, where, at some point, he sold his Victoria Cross. In 1955 he moved to Yorkshire, where he worked as an electrician. For the last years of his life, he suffered from chronic ill health, before dying on 11 February 1986 of lung cancer hours before his heroism was honoured by the Royal Navy Philatelic Office with a first-day cover.

## 11. ★ Can You 'Black Cat' This Dit .....

Shipmates will remember that in last month's Semaphore Circular we asked if anyone could 'Black Cat' the dit about HMS Chiddingfold and her 'foc'sle sail' well Shipmate Michael Hilder has one, please see below .....

In July's Semaphore circular the RNA news sheet, there is a dit about HMS Chiddingfold raising the ships foc'sle awning to make a sail to get to Gib 1.5 Kts faster on their way to the Gulf to relieve HMS Dulverton. They have asked for black cats (standfast HMS Reclaim).

Well I sent you two photos of **HMS Kirkliston** returning to Portsmouth from Northern Ireland in 1978, on one main engine. The other had to be changed. L/S MW Yorkie



Elton raised two grey canvas sails up the mainmast & two large flags one black, one red & white stripey hung from pieces of 4X4 lashed to the bridge deck rails & the flag ends secured to the acoustic deck railings. We achieved similar results to the Chiddingfold. Could you find & scan them to Andy Christie at the RNA Central Office ?

Yours Aye,

Mick H.

PS - Unfortunately Bob Dean's PC has gone tits (is U/S) & I am awaiting results of if his repairer has recovered all the photos onto a memory stick.

PPS - We had to take down the sails once we turned the corner to go up channel as we had a lovely force 10 SW gale for two/three days our speed at 3/4kts. We couldn't turn off as we risked broaching to until we were in the lee of the Isle of Wight. Crew slept in their lifejackets along the alleyways, ops room etc. I thought if I'm going to die, I might as well be comfortable so I slept in my bunk! On watch we only got really concerned when we could stand on the wheelhouse door! Great times!

***(Editors Comment - Regrettably HMS Chiddingfold has produced the evidence in the form of a photograph! So, Black Cat currently denied as we await the Kirkliston photo's once Shipmate Bob Deans PC is operational.....)***

## **12. ★ HMS Raleigh - RNA Mentors**

National Raleigh Mentors Advisor S/m Les Yeoman wished departing HMS Raleigh Commanding Officer, Captain Rich Harris Royal Navy, best wishes in his forthcoming appointment at RCDS in London. Please see below his reply thanking the RNA mentors.

*Dear Les*

*Thank you very much for your very kind letter. Alas, my time at RALEIGH is indeed coming to an end, not on promotion but to go to the Royal College of Defence Studies in London....as a student. Whilst I think I will enjoy learning about the world, conflict, economics and the odd London pub, I would be lying if I did not say that I would prefer to be engaging with the very people who I have enjoyed serving with throughout my career ie. decent officers and sailors, just like we have at RALEIGH, either serving or veterans.*

*It has been a very great privilege to work alongside all of the mentors at RALEIGH, and I am hugely grateful for everything you all do to support the young recruits and the staff, and their families. We are gradually opening up RALEIGH as lockdown eases, and whilst I do not know whether I will see you and your fantastic colleagues before I leave, if I ever do return, I hope we get to meet again.*

*Thank you again for kind wishes, and I also wish you fair winds and following seas.*

*Yours, very respectfully,*

*Rich*

***Captain Richard Harris Royal Navy | Commanding Officer HMS RALEIGH***



### 13. ★ RNRMC CEO Adrian Bell Letter

RNA Stowmarket Shipmate Pete Chivers invited the RNRMC CEO Adrian Bell to submit an article to the Stowmarket Branches newsletter 'Gen Dit', which we thought you'd all enjoy.



*My huge thanks to Pete for inviting me to submit an article to 'Gen Dit'. We go back a long way (NEWCASTLE 1983) and if I ever get to visit you – which I hope I do – I might be persuaded to tell a dit or two! As members are hopefully aware, the Royal Naval Association and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity work very closely together for the benefit of all. Last summer RNA General Secretary, Captain Bill Oliphant, and I decided to use the occasion of Black Tot Day to trial something to help tackle loneliness and isolation and build on the resounding success of the RNA's award-winning Project Semaphore. On the 49th anniversary of the cessation of the tot in the Royal Navy, we gathered together 100 RNA members from across the country for lunch in the dining room of HMS Belfast on London's South Bank.*

*The abolition of the tot had been discussed in Parliament as far back as 1850 but no one was prepared to bite the bullet until, as he became, Admiral of the Fleet Hill Norton, did just that in 1970. His main concern was that the tot put sailors over the legal drink drive limit whilst working on increasingly complex 20th century warships. Whilst that had considerable merit, it didn't take into account some of the other important aspects of the tot, particularly the social aspects of this tradition. When 'up spirits' was piped messes would congregate - frequently inviting oppos, - for a swift aperitif and a good yarn. A great many bonds of friendship and comradeship were forged in this way, some of which endure to this day. Bill and I used this special commemorative lunch to throw down the gauntlet to the RNA members in the room to consider how the wonderful social aspects of the tradition might be revived and provide an important lifeline to comrades who have somehow become hidden or lost in the complexities of today's society.*

*We asked those at the event to consider the huge numbers of beneficiaries that the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity exists to support - every sailor, marine and their families for life - probably about three quarters of a million individuals – and to reflect on the likely significant number in their own parts of the country who need the support of the Charity but are unaware of the help that exists for them or are reluctant to seek help themselves.*

*As the country's resolve is now being tested in ways that we couldn't have imagined on that balmy July afternoon last year following the advent of the global coronavirus pandemic, physical distancing and lockdown only serve to amplify the solitude and loneliness of those within our community who were already craving social interaction before the pandemic struck.*

*Loneliness has for some time been recognised as a significant threat to physical and mental health and has been found to be predictive of mortality. The crisis has also hit us at a point when more people are living alone than at other point in our history. One of the consequences of social isolation is that people vanish. It has never been more important that we all pull together to tackle loneliness by building on the sense of community and connectedness that has been so inspiring to see in the face of the coronavirus outbreak across the nation. Offering regular conversation to members in your local area living alone, especially at this time, will reap enormous health benefits for them and help alleviate feelings of loneliness, anxiety and depression. One of the*



*founding tenets of the Royal Naval Association back in 1952 was comradeship, which plays into the natural willingness to help others stemming from the tradition and camaraderie that only Naval Service life can instil. Now with 20,000 members spread*

*across 370 branches in the UK and overseas, you have an unparalleled network to identify and help combat loneliness within the naval veteran community.*

*For our part, we have been persevering in our mission during these extraordinary times, transforming our response to ensure that we are directly reaching those within our community hit hardest by the coronavirus outbreak, and as a charity of last resort for individuals who cannot be catered for elsewhere.*

*As the national charity of the Naval Service our primary objective is to ensure that there is no disruption of our grants programmes, so that we continue to provide the support on which so many sailors, marines, veterans and their immediate families count on us to provide.*

*We have been working with other funders to support efforts to bolster the Naval Service charity sector as it responds to the outbreak, recognising it is an exceptional event that is already having an impact on many of the 60 or so delivery partners, charities and organisations we support – many of whom are working in the veteran space - with grants to assist our beneficiaries. We have contacted them all to offer them our help to achieve the planned outcomes of our funding in the current climate. They have also been asked to consider what additional needs they have identified among the beneficiaries they serve on our behalf.*

*The Support Line which we launched at the beginning of the year as a source of friendly advice and support for all our beneficiaries, is experiencing greater usage during Covid-19 and is open Monday to Friday from 08.30 – 16.30. It has been a real lifeline to callers seeking physical and mental health support, practical advice and social contact, especially pertinent given the scarcity of SSAFA case workers. Rather than merely signposting those in need, call handlers make warm referrals to naval and other charities, statutory bodies and local authorities as appropriate, and, critically, follow cases through to a satisfactory resolution. Our long-standing partnership with Relate, the relationship experts, has been extended to offer free specialist bereavement and loss counselling in addition to the existing package of fully funded relationship and family counselling.*

*We have been very concerned that some of those in the naval veteran community and among naval families most in need, have had to face new risks during social isolation of physically being unable to access food. Through the expertise and generosity of our corporate supporter ESS, and several of the partner charities we work with, we have distributed 500 boxes of essential foodstuffs to those falling into this category.*

*Trustees have already approved a £1 million Hardship Fund to support people and organisations facing situations unimaginable for them and their loved ones not so very long ago. Nearly 50 grants have been expedited to assist individuals stranded abroad, those awaiting the outcomes of protracted claims for Universal Credit, and to naval veterans forced to self-isolate in their rooms within care homes. We have assisted those Coronavirus positive personnel in both ships and shore establishments in poorly equipped isolation cabins and provided additional mess deck recreational equipment for those on extended deployments who are unable to benefit from runs ashore. Thanks to the funding we provided to enable HMS RALEIGH to livestream passing out parades, hundreds of families have still been able to witness a milestone moment in their loved one's naval career. We have also partnered with Sailors' Children's Society to provide computer equipment to enable low income beneficiary families to stay connected and for their children to participate in virtual home learning, thereby minimising the disruption to their education.*

*We have recently partnered with Navy Sport to promulgate its daily programme of physical and mental wellbeing workouts and activities, nutrition advice and fitness guides during lockdown, so that naval veterans and their families are able to benefit from content which would otherwise remain inaccessible behind the MOD digital gateway. You can find them on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/RNRMC>*

*Of course, no-one knows when we'll emerge from this crisis, but when we do, we must ensure that we are in a position to effectively support all naval veterans, and the chronically lonely in particular. This has prompted us to start work on a nationwide befriending scheme, which takes full advantage of our corporate supporters' strong desire to deploy their employees in offering practical assistance to our beneficiaries during the crisis and beyond. On July 31st this year, it will be 50 years since the cessation of the tot in the Royal Navy. With no let-up in sight for a return to normal life, it is incumbent on us all to use this milestone anniversary to each play our part in making sure that all those with a past connection to the Senior Service feel valued and socially engaged. There's something very reassuring about that sense of belonging and being a part of something, and real power in knowing that you have people around you that you can trust. And knowing that in difficult times, that you can rely on them.*

*Adrian*

#### 14 ★ Royal Naval Benevolence Trust (RNBT)

Fantastic news from RNBT who have now got the go ahead for RNBT's brand spanking new centenary care home in Portsmouth which will be named Admiral Jellicoe House.



Portsmouth City Council today gave the go ahead for the building of a state-of-the-art care home for naval veterans in Milton, Portsmouth. The application was supported by the Planning Committee and authority delegated to grant planning permission subject to completion of a suitable Section 106 Agreement and suitably worded conditions. The impressive 66-bed home, to be named Admiral Jellicoe House after the founder of RNBT, will be built on Locksway Road on a site close to St James' Hospital, with its strong historic links to care for the naval community, owned by NHS England

RNBT Chairman of Trustees Nick Fletcher said 'We are delighted that the City Council has given the go ahead for this most important project which will deliver residential, nursing and dementia care for naval veterans in Portsmouth, the Home of the Royal Navy. It will be the centrepiece of our centenary – what better way to mark our hundred years of care than by building such an impressive and important care home for naval veterans.'

#### 15. ★ Extract from Midshipman Terry Lewin , HMS Valiant 1940

Our grateful thanks go too Tim Lewin, son of the late Admiral of the Fleet Terrence Lewin KG, GCB, LVO, DSC, who has very kindly agreed to share his father's 2WW Journal and we commence with June 1940. The Journal is available on Amazon at the following link

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/He-Who-Would-Valiant-Midshipman-ebook/dp/B018K6K6UE/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=he+who+would+valiant+be+lewin&qid=1592598238&s=books&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/He-Who-Would-Valiant-Midshipman-ebook/dp/B018K6K6UE/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=he+who+would+valiant+be+lewin&qid=1592598238&s=books&sr=1-1)



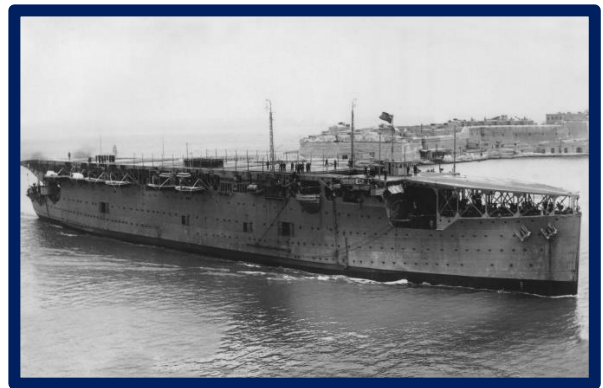
Valliant's war now becomes much more active, sailing into the Mediterranean she joins with Force "H" and is immediately despatched to North Africa to try to persuade the powerful French Fleet in harbour there to join British Forces following the surrender of France. TTL's position in Valiant was, with Midshipman (Later Admiral) Roddy MacDonald, high up in the bridge spotting for enemy bombers, all that he reports was seen at first hand.

The destruction of this massive force that might have joined the enemy following the French surrender greatly impressed the Americans who up until then had been very unimpressed by the outward state of British resolve, that said, it was the subject of a deep resentment in France that persisted long after the War was over.

### **Wednesday 31 July 1940**

It was disclosed early that we were proceeding to sea. Both watches secured for sea at 0315 and we followed Argus out, about eight o'clock. The whole of Force H came out escorted by ten destroyers. We are to be engaged in probably the riskiest operation we have yet undertaken.

We are to escort the Argus to a position near enough to Malta to enable her Hurricanes to fly off and reach there. They will be led and navigated by two Skuas, and other R.A.F. personnel are taking passage in two Sunderlands. We expect to reach a position south of Sardinia, about four hundred miles West of Malta on Friday morning. At this time Hood and Ark Royal will be creating a diversion to the Northward of us. The position we are aiming for is well within range of M.T.B's based at Cagliari, so we may expect surface as well as air attack.



### **Thursday 1 August 1940**

At the end of the morning watch we sighted a shadowing aircraft. It was an Italian CANT three engined low wing seaplane. He was only in sight for about five minutes, and then he turned away towards Sardinia. This could hardly be called a shadowing aircraft, rather was it reconnaissance? Shadowing for any length of time is not a very healthy occupation when the fleet has a combination of Skuas and R. D/F. We expect a raid after this early visitor, so at noon we went to A.A. action stations. We were kept on tenterhooks, however, until about six o'clock. The afternoon was peaceful, with nothing but our own A/S and fighter patrols showing on the R. D/F screen. Just before six we got reports of two groups approaching the port beam. Ark Royal saw them first – five Savoia bombers - and opened fire. She was to port of us, and we were the second to open fire. This time they seemed to carry more bombs, but of a smaller calibre. They scored no near misses or hits with the first salvos, most of the bombs falling in the triangle

enclosed by Ark Royal, Argus and ourselves. The formation of five broke up after they had



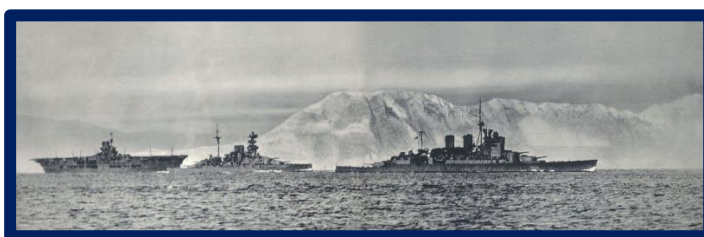
dropped their bombs and flew away ahead of us, only one coming in the arc of fire of our starboard guns. Soon after the first lot, came another group, this time of seven. Our barrage broke this formation into one of three, one of two and two singles. Their bombing was just as inaccurate as the first lot, although a destroyer was straddled by at least four large bombs. Shortly afterwards we saw three aircraft coming in very fast on our starboard beam, and we immediately thought dive bombers had come at last. Our pom-poms put up a fierce barrage before we

recognised these as Skuas, Luckily, none was hit. We saw no more enemy aircraft, apparently only one squadron was used to attack us. After dark Hood, Ark Royal and Enterprise went on ahead at twenty two knots. It was announced today that Delight has been sunk by bombs in the Channel.

### Friday 2 August 1940

Just before dawn, Argus began flying off her Hurricanes. They, and two Skuas, all got off safely and disappeared towards Malta. We didn't see the Sunderlands, but we think we got them on the R. D/F screen. Hood and Ark Royal rejoined soon after the Hurricanes had gone. Swordfish from the Ark had attacked the aerodrome and harbour at Cagliari just after dawn. They sunk two flying boats and scored direct hits on hangars, aircraft on the ground and petrol dumps. They also dropped magnetic mines across the entrance to the harbour. The B.B.C. glossed over the dropping of those mines by saying that some bombs dropped in the harbour. The Italians may not realise that those were mines. Two aircraft were lost. One crashed on taking off in the dark, another made a forced landing in Sardinia and the crew were taken prisoners. Enterprise created a diversion by sending out false enemy reports to the Northward of us. We turned when our job was finished and shaped a course for Gibraltar at eighteen knots, Argus at top speed. We expected more enemy air attacks during the day, and were at action stations most of the time.

Several times formations of enemy bombers tried to reach us, but each time they were picked up by the R. D/F, Skuas despatched to chase them away. Skuas shot down two reconnaissance planes during the day and one bomber during yesterday's raid. In the afternoon Hood opened fire on an aircraft that flew across the fleet at seventeen thousand feet. It was thought to be a French Martin bomber, but it might have been under Italian control.



### Saturday 3 August 1940

We were shadowed during the forenoon, probably by Spanish or French aircraft. We didn't sight them, but the R. D/F had them very distinctly. Hood and ourselves carried out a concentration shoot. As we have no 15" practice shell, we used 4.5" in main armament control. It was a throw-off shoot with Arethusa as target. Apparently, we were the only ship to obtain a straddle, a very good effort if the inaccuracies entailed by using the T.S. table with 4.5" guns are remembered. It was not a very satisfactory shoot. Arethusa was acting as a spotting aircraft and was so slow in sending out her reports that we missed our firing sectors on several occasions. As we couldn't

get into Harbour in daylight, we spent the night steaming about outside. We catapulted both our aircraft in the afternoon. They carried out an A/S sweep and then flew on to Gibraltar. Ark Royal went on ahead and got in before dark. Enterprise had already returned; she didn't rejoin us after her operations off Sardinia.

### Sunday 4 August 1940

We entered harbour and secured in our old billet at the detached mole soon after six. Almost immediately a lighter came alongside and we carried on de-ammunitioning 4.5" shells from our after replenishment magazines. We got out about two hundred and fifty rounds. Leave to Force H was granted until only 1700, so we thought it possible that we might be leaving that evening. During the afternoon several ratings came aboard for passage to England, and at 1900 all Force H, except Resolution, and including Argus, sailed. To begin with we steamed East but after dark we turned West. The Captain broadcast that we were going to Liverpool for a rush docking and it would be possible to grant about two and a half days leave, at least, to each watch, and possibly more.

*Photos - HMS Argus arriving in Malta: Force H escorting Argus with Hurricanes bound for Malta: Force H sailing past Gibraltar.*

## 16. ★ Tribal Warfare – HMS Tartar 1942-46

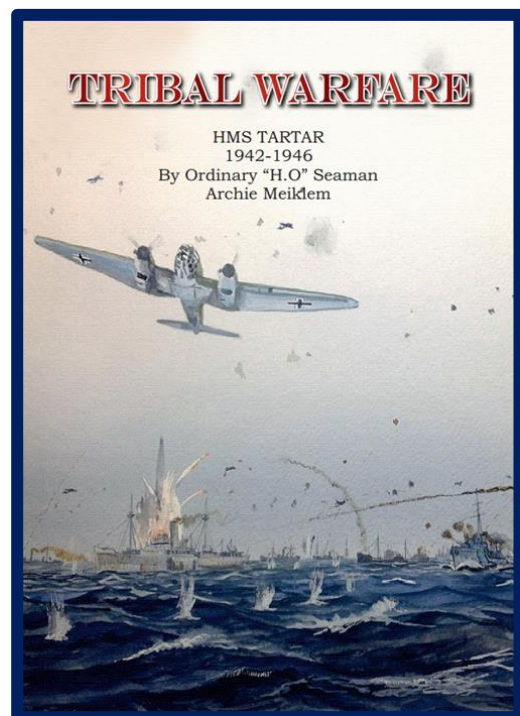
Tim Lewin, son of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Lewin, forwarded details of a book he published in early July please see the details below;

*Dear Shipmates,*

*50 years ago the writer of this book, which I published today, was murdered in a vicious street attack by two thugs. A year before this happened he gave his original typescript, memoir, of his wartime service to my father.*

*The writer, Archie Meiklem, from Glasgow, served his entire War in HMS Tartar, one of the four out of the original sixteen Tribal Class destroyers to survive to see Victory in 1945. My father also served most of the War in a Tribal, HMS Ashanti, it was at a reunion that Archie gave him this memoir. Since my father died in 1999 Archie's typescript, in its neat red folder, has sat in my desk silently nagging me to be let out. Now its done, here it is.*

*Copiously illustrated with my collected photos. When Archie wrote this, it was the present, only now is it history. Tartar served in the Arctic, Mediterranean, Italian landings, and the Western Approaches for D-day before sailing to join the war in the Far East. I hope some of you will read it, and some of you will send a review to Amazon with your thoughts.*



<https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B08CCKYSFB>

Tim



## 17. ★ Assistance please – Hugh Seabag-Montefiore

Hugh Seabag-Montefiore is a historian writing a book about the Arctic convoys of WW2. He has been commissioned by the British publisher Harper Collins and would like to ask if our members know of any:

- Living veterans who took part in the Arctic Convoys or their relatives?
- Vivid written or recorded personal accounts of what was witnessed by the participants on these convoys?
- Relevant photos, or little-known books?
- Associations, groups, clubs, local museums/archives/oral history collections that I might have missed?

He only wants to only use accounts written or recorded directly by a witness and will only be using accounts of what happened on those convoys where there were battles or where ships were sunk, or accounts of what happened in Murmansk and Archangel when the convoy crews landed there.

If you can help with the above he would be very grateful if you would ask them to contact him at [sebags@hsmontefiore.com](mailto:sebags@hsmontefiore.com) ; they should only ring him on 0207-435-1035 If I have not replied to an email within 48 hours, or if the person with the information does not use email. If anyone thinking of contacting him wants to see what kind of books he writes, they can click on the following link to see his website: [www.hughsebagmontefiore.com/the\\_author.php](http://www.hughsebagmontefiore.com/the_author.php)

## 18. ★ Royal Maritime Club and Hotel (Old speak Home Club) Portsmouth



Dear Members, Guests and Friends,

We are pleased to announce that we will be reopening the Royal Maritime Club on **Monday 13th July 2020**. Our **reservations team will be available from Wednesday 1st July 9am - 5pm**, to take your booking,

so please call 023 9282 4231 or email [info@royalmaritimeclub.co.uk](mailto:info@royalmaritimeclub.co.uk)

We closed our doors in line with the Government directive back in March along with the rest of the hospitality industry to keep our staff and guests safe, and we are now very excited to reopen.

Whilst we have been closed we have finished some of our bedroom refurbishments, our Horatio's restaurant extension is complete and our new lift is in place; albeit at a slower pace than we would have wished for!

We are very much looking forward to welcoming you back and hope to create the same warm welcome that we always hope to deliver, whilst adhering to our stringent new health and safety measures.

Thank you so much for all the countless messages of support and the patience that you have shown to us during this challenging time.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Kind regards,

John P Alderson  
General Manager  
Royal Maritime Club & Hotel

## 19. ★ And Finally, A Factoid .....

The National Chairman Shipmate Stoker Ridley forwarded this 'factoid' .....

On July 9 1864, the Admiralty ruled that the flag – flown by all serving Royal Navy warships, ship's boats, Royal Marines craft, naval bases and establishments at home and overseas – would become the Service's only standard, marking it apart from the merchant fleet.

Happy 156th Birthday from all us who sailed under the White Ensign'

## RNA Longcast

2020	
01 Aug	Area 5 Quarterly – Norwich
07 Aug	Central Office – Open Day
14 Aug	FAC (1000) - <b>Online</b>
14 Aug	AMC (1400) - <b>Online</b>
15 Aug	Area 2 Delegate Meeting - Chatham
21 Aug	Conf/AGM – <b>Online</b>
31 Aug	August Bank Holiday
<b>05 Sep (was 12 Sep)</b>	National Council Meeting – Zoom On-Line Meeting
19 Sep	4 Area Quarterly – Portland
02 Oct	Central Office – Open Day
10 Oct	Area 2 Committee Mtg - Bromley
31 Oct	Area 5 Quarterly - Harwich
12 Nov	FAC
13 Nov	AMC
21 Nov	Area 2 Delegate Meeting – Ramsgate
04 Dec	National Council Meeting - Portsmouth
25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	Boxing Day
2021	
12 June	National Conference - Nottingham

***D'ye hear there'.....***

***News from around the Areas and Branches.....***

***This Month Featuring.....***

[RNA Reigate](#)

[RNA Huntingdon](#)

[4 Area](#)

[RNA Rosyth and West Fife Branch](#)

[Ton Class Association](#)

**RNA Reigate Branch**

In July 2019 Reigate Branch commemorated the daring escape by HMS Amethyst down the Yangtze river, and gave an undertaking to the Amethyst Association to remember the anniversary each year.



Despite the extraordinary circumstances, eleven members of the Branch, together with guests and members of St Peter's congregation gathered at the grave of Cdr John Kerans DSO RN, to remember what has become popularly known as the 'Yangtze Incident'.



This year was particularly poignant as we remembered also Lt Cdr Stewart Hett MBE RN, long time and enthusiastic President of the Amethyst Association, and two ex-Amethysts, Eric Mustoe and John Ashford, who have all crossed the bar since last year's anniversary. The Amethyst Association was wound up in 2019 and the Branch renewed its commitment to maintain the commemoration as part of its annual calendar.

Cdr Kerans' family and members of the Association were unable to attend this year but they received a programme and were with the event in spirit. Prayers for the fallen and for reconciliation were followed by a minute's silence and the exhortation. The Chairman then placed a cross at the grave.



Following the commemoration Branch members retired to the Barley Mow where the archivist presented to the Chairman a framed print depicting HMS Amethyst. The print was donated by Cdr Bill Evershed RN, of the Amethyst Association in recognition of the Branch's local association with Cdr Kerans and HMS Amethyst.

The day's events closed with a tot, generously provided by the landlord, and a toast to the memory of HMS Amethyst and her crew.



## RNA Huntingdon Branch

In July 2019, members of Huntingdon & District Branch of the Royal Naval Association (RNA) held their first Sea Sunday Service in the Market Square. The service is an annual event organised by Christian churches to remember all seafarers and their families and to give thanks for their lives and work.

Our first event was a great success and we had been hoping to hold the service again this year, sadly that was not to be.



However, a small socially distanced service was held at home with Huntingdon Branch shipmates, Karl Webb and Reverend Clifford Owen (providing the prayer). Our Branch President, shipmate Victor Lucas also remembered Sea Sunday and flew the White Ensign from his home.



A minute's silence was held to remember all those who have served, are serving, or will serve at sea.

## 4 Area

Portland Branch RNA were delighted to have had their nomination for the Weymouth & Portland Veterans Hub to be the main beneficiary from the 2020 Area Reunion Rally Charity Chest accepted by the Branches in No4 Area.

The nomination was instigated by S/M Charles H Thompson, No4 Area Life Vice President and member of Portland Branch who sadly crossed the bar recently and was not able to witness his efforts rewarded.

The Branch are eternally grateful to the 2020 reunion committee for their efforts in organising the weekend event and managing to raise the substantial sum of money that was distributed to various parties, mainly due to the generosity of Shipmates attending and supporting the fund raising raffles etc The £1800 cheque was presented to Lisa Rushby Co-Director of Weymouth & Portland Veterans Hub by S/M Alex Oswald, Chairman Portland Branch.

Also in attendance were No4 Area President S/M David White MBE MSM, No4 Area Deputy Chairman Peter Shoesmith and No4 Area Standard Bearer S/M Ben Cartwright parading the Area Standard, and Andy Price, Co-Director of the Hub. The photograph shows the presentation group



## RNA Rosyth and West Fife Branch

Rosyth and west Branch will be holding an event to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day (The Forgotten Army) on Saturday 15 August at the Hillend Children's Playpark commencing at 1900. Anyone wishing to join us should adhere to current Government guidelines regarding social distancing, at all times and if you wish to take part in the "Nations Toast" please supply your own Beverage of choice

The programme for the evening;

- 1830-1845 Branch s/m's arrive at Hillend children's playpark.  
1855 S/m's spaced out by parade commander s/m Dickie Wardrope.  
1900 Intro by s/m Dickie Wardrope.  
O/C Piper "Sound Battles Over" s/m Brooklyn Morris.  
O/C Light the "Beacon of Peace" Mrs Myrna Venters.  
O/C "Binyons lines" s/m Dickie Wardrope.  
O/C "Last Post" Mr Michael Hunter.  
2 Minute Silence.  
"Reveille" Mr Michael Hunter.  
O/C "Kohmina Epitaph" s/m Dickie Wardrope.  
O/C Piper Sound "VE75" During which, Wreaths will be laid by S/m Jim Stewart. And Emma Cockburn from the Village Hub.  
O/C Piper Plays "The Dark Isle" followed by "Amazing Grace" during which time, other flowers/tributes may be laid by others who have lost loved ones during Covid 19 and for any other loss.  
O/C The village Crier will ring out the "Cry For Peace" followed by the " Nations Toast" to all who never returned.  
  
O/C Parade will march off to the Lament "Black Bear" played By s/m Piper Brooklyn Morris to the Hillend Tavern  
The Parade Commander s/m Dickie Wardrope and the Branch President Lt Cdr Alan Bayliss will "Salute the Memorial" before walking to the Tavern,

## Ton Class Association

Ton Class Hon Sec, Peter Down forward the article below ackno wledging the efforts of Gipping Press for their efforts producing 'TON Talk' during lockdown.

We wanted to acknowledge the sterling efforts of Gipping Press, who have continued production of our magazine *TON Talk*, despite having to operate under demanding conditions of LockDown. With their production staff furloughed, the MD, a Graphic Designer, took over studio work from his home and the Production Director attended the works once a week to ensure that all was secure, then operated the digital press and finishing equipment for us single-handedly . The pair then cooperated to envelope the magazines and transfer them to Royal Mail for distribution.



We said "Thank You" nicely and even explained what Bravo Zulu meant. Then it occurred to us that we could perhaps present them with a BZ.

A couple of e-mails and phone calls to George and Louise at Forever Jack and the result was the Wall Shield [photo attached] printed on an acrylic fascia. I understand that they may be priced at about £12.99, so others may also like to say BZ in a material way. The shield can also be personalised with the name of the recipient or donor.

Best wishes,

Peter Down  
Hon Sec, TCA

## CROSSED THE BAR – Celebrating a life well lived

[Bernard Leith Nightingale](#)

[James Moore](#)

[Harry Anderson](#)

## Bernard Nightingale - Uttoxeter Branch

Uttoxeter and District are sad to report the "crossing the bar" of their ex President S/M Bernard Leith Nightingale. Bernard resigned his Membership and his position of President in July 2017 after a long and active service to the Branch. His medical condition deteriorated and after many hospital and doctor visits and a long and loving nursing by his wife Averil he "crossed the bar" on the 2nd February 2020. A private funeral was held at Stafford Crematorium and a Remembrance Service held at St. Cuthberts Church, Doveridge with RNA members and Standard attending.

S/M Bernard learned to fly while attending Hampton Grammar School (Greater London) and at 17 and a half was accepted by the Fleet Air Arm but failed the medical for operational flying due to colour blindness. He went on and was commissioned in the RNVR as Midshipman serving from 1943 to 1947. On demob. His rank was Acting Lieutenant.



Bernard's Active service included Operations he served both ashore and at sea in;

HMS Collingwood, HMS Jervis (on Atlantic convoys), HMS Plym during 'Operation Overlord', HMS Loch Ailort on Combined Ops, HMS Courier (Algerine class minesweeper). He also attended a Short Navigational Course at Royal Naval College, Greenwich, probably could have been a bit longer for as Navigational Officer on one ship he put the vessel about 200 miles from their destination.

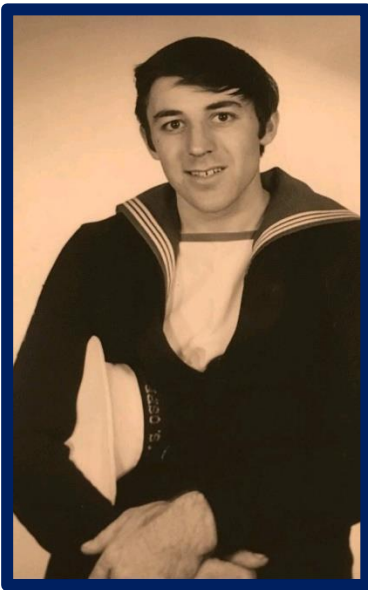


After demob. Bernard worked for and represented various Companies in Sales and Directorship including Picot Perfumes, English Grains, Granary Haulage, Bovril, Beecham plc and many more including Business Adviser and Consultant to the Polish Business Advisory based in Warsaw, Wroclaw and Krakow.

He, Bernard was an ardent sportsman and supporter being President of Buxton and District Cricket Assoc. and President of Burton and District Umpires Assoc.

He will be Greatly missed by Family and Friends.

### James Moore - Swaffham Branch



James (Pony) Moore joined the RN at HMS Ganges in May 1963. He was a member of the Fleet Air Arm and a very proud member of the Air Handlers Association.

He left the Navy in 1970 in the first swathe of redundancies and the reduction of the Carrier force. On his return to Kings Lynn, he started studying engineering at college and night school and started his own company LynnMoore Engineering in 1994.

In 1979, Jim lost his first wife to cancer. He met Valerie at a quiz night organised by a mutual friend (Valerie had lost her husband to cancer as well). That evening was the first time either of them had laughed in a very long time. They cautiously proceeded to meet for coffee and the odd evening out and slowly a romance developed that lasted for over 40 years.

Jim is sorely missed by Val and their children, Paul, Catherine, Sarah and Joanne. Rest in Peace Shipmate.

### Harry Anderson – Port Philip Bay (Australia) Branch

Port Phillip Bay Branch Hon Sec, Mike Bennett has just found out that Harry Anderson crossed the bar on the 18th June 2020, in Hornsby (an outer Sydney suburb).

Many of you will recall that Harry started life as a Baby Tiff in HMS Fisgard and then HMS Caledonia where he qualified as an Ordnance Artificer; he went on to receiving a commission as an SD officer. In 1970 Harry joined Reso while she was undergoing her first refit in Rosyth and went on to become the second APSO of the Starboard Crew (relieving Douglas Fry) - Harry was the APSO that took us through DASO in 1972 (and my DO). In later years Harry (on promotion to Lt Cmr.) was a PSO on Resolution.

Harry retired from the RN and transferred to the RAN reserve with the rank of Commander: He went on to be the lead Battle Systems Project Manager on the RAN Collins Class project at the ASC in Adelaide. It was while I was the Systems Engineering Manager for Apple Computer Australia Ltd that I renewed my acquaintance with him, firstly in the QANTAS Club Lounge in Sydney's domestic airport one memorial Friday afternoon (with resultant effect of drinking

copious amounts of Chivas Regal!) and later at the Adelaide ASC on a more official capacity and a much more sober note.

On retirement from ASC Harry and his family moved to Sydney – Always a keen snooker player and natural organiser, Harry became a very active members of the Hornsby RSL and went on to become Chairman of the Hornsby RSL.

Not generally known was the fact that Harry was a recognised Scotch whisky sommelier (a trained and knowledgeable scotch whisky expert), an interest (and his instruction) which has brought many a big smile over a Wee Dram to many of us over the years.

Vale Harry, always a gentleman but never a snob. Always keen to assist and a bloody good nose for a fine wee half.

## RNA Members Benefits

### UK Holiday Group /CONA Holiday Service

- Variety of special deals for both Groups and Individuals. 1% of turnover thorough CONA Holiday Service is returned to the RNA <https://royal-naval-association.co.uk/members/offers/members-cona-holidays-service/>

### Portsmouth Historic Dockyard



PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC DOCKYARD

- RNA member entry just £10 plus four guest at £10 each provides access to the all attractions including the Submarine Museum, RM Museum and Explosion!.

### Legal Services



Free 30 minute legal advice with Coffin Mew.  
[armedforces@coffinmew.co.uk](mailto:armedforces@coffinmew.co.uk) 0800 827168

### Breakdown Service



- RAC Breakdown and recovery service  
[asec@arno.org.uk](mailto:asec@arno.org.uk) or 0207 4025231



*Organisers of Reunions should be aware the CONA Travel will match or better any other 'like for like' Reunion/Group Trips bookings so why not give them an opportunity to impress you. 0844 264 2122*

[conatravelservices@justforgroups.co.uk](mailto:conatravelservices@justforgroups.co.uk)



- Discounts on a large range of new Cars [www.motorfinity.uk/rna](http://www.motorfinity.uk/rna)



### The 'Shortcast' Editors Note

**Due to the current Coronavirus situation Shipmates should contact the individual Association to ensure that the reunion is still going ahead.**

*Note from the CONA (Conference of Naval Associations) Secretary -*

*I would be very grateful if organisers of reunions would oblige me by obtaining a quote from the CONA Travel Service, who will not be beaten on like for like price. CONA Travel Service donate 1% of their CONA business back into the Conference totalling to date £2,700 which provides funds to assist members Associations. Oh, and by the way, their service is first class as well.*

	Please check go to link for RN Shipmates.co.uk for a comprehensive list of further reunions. <a href="http://www.rnshipmates.co.uk">www.rnshipmates.co.uk</a>		
Fri 7th Aug 2020	H.M.S. Rhyl 9th Reunion	Royal Maritime Club Portsmouth	
Sat 15th Aug 2020	H.M.S. Intrepid	Best Western Beach Hotel Southsea	
Sat 29th Aug 2020	RMBS 1/70 and 2/70	Deal	<a href="#">Contact</a>
Fri 4th Sep 2020	H.M.S. Diana Association	Hallmark Hotel Derby	
Fri 18th Sep 2020	HMS Ark Royal IV Communicators	Weymouth	<a href="#">Contact</a>
Fri 25th Sep 2020	H.M.S. Arethusa	Novotel Hotel Newcastle	<a href="#">Contact</a>
Fri 25th Sep 2020	Royal Navy Electrical Weapon Engineering Branch Association	Risboro Hotel Llandudno	
Fri 25th Sep 2020	H.M.S. Tiger Association	St Pierre Hotel, Wakefield WF2 6QG	

Fri 2nd Oct 2020	HMS Lowestoft Association	Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea	<u>Contact</u>
Fri 2nd Oct 2020	H.M.S. Troubridge Last Commission 1966 - 69	Royal Beach Hotel Southsea	<u>Contact</u>
Fri 23rd Oct 2020	Undaunted / Eagle / Yarmouth - Open to RN	Hallmark Hotel: Derby	<u>Contact</u>
5/9 Oct 2020	<p>The HMS LOCH FADA ASSOCIATION F390 will hold their 23rd Annual Reunion &amp; AGM @ the Royal Beach Hotel Southsea from 5th to 9th October 2020. This will be our 4th 4 Day Reunion after the great successes of our 1st Three.</p> <p>Friday venture into Pompey (Under own Steam) Saturday 1030 AGM &amp; 1830 Reunion Dinner (Black Tot day being Mourned by the Issue of Real Pussers Rum) in the Company of our Special Guests The Lord Mayor &amp; Escort of Eastleigh ( our Warship week Town).</p> <p>Sunday Mystery coach tour ( towards Southampton).</p> <p>All Bookings &amp; Arrangements are being made by Isle of Wight Tours email <a href="mailto:iowtours.com">iowtours.com</a> or telecom 01983 405116, or <a href="mailto:F390.sec@virginmedia.com">F390.sec@virginmedia.com</a> or Snailmail F390 Sec, 91 Ayling Lane, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 3ND. Telecom 01252 310767</p>	Royal Beach Hotel Southsea	
31 Oct 2020	BRNC Entry September 1980 40 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary reunion dinner, BRNC Dartmouth, Saturday 31 October 2020. Details available from Cdr N J 'Nobby' Hall <a href="mailto:neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk">neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk</a>	BRNC Dartmouth	
<b>2021</b>			
7/10 May	The HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association will hold their 42nd Annual Reunion & AGM at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea from 7th to 10th May 2021. Please contact Secretary Denis Askham for more details. <a href="mailto:askhamd3@gmail.com">askhamd3@gmail.com</a>	Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association	

## Swinging the Lamp – August 2020

*The RNA is grateful to the Author, Lt Cdr Lawrie Phillips TD, RD, RNR for allowing us to publish a selection from the RN Day by Day. If you would like to read more it can be purchased from - The History Press and is priced £60 ISBN 978 0 7509 8266 5*



Date	Year	Entry
1st	2005	<i>Invincible</i> entered Portsmouth for the last time to pay off.
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1999	Final performance of the Royal Tournament at Earl's Court, in which the Royal Navy had participated since 1887. The centrepiece since 1907 was the annual naval field gun competition, a relic of the Naval Brigades in the Boer War, between the Home Ports, later joined by the Fleet Air Arm. Devonport was the last winner.
3rd	1941	First operational success by a Fighter Catapult Ship. Hurricane fighter W/9277 launched by <i>Maplin</i> , formerly the Morant Steamship Company's <i>Erin</i> , shot down a Focke Wulf 200 Kondor attacking Convoy SL 81 from Freetown (50.33N, 19.40W). Pilot, Lt (A) R.W.H. Everett RNVR, bailed out, was rescued and DSO.
4 <sup>th</sup>	1960	<i>Vanguard</i> , Britain's last twentieth-century battleship, towed from Fareham Creek bound for shipbreakers at Faslane and briefly went aground off the Customs Watch House in Old Portsmouth near the Still and West tavern on Portsmouth Point. Similar reluctance displayed by battleship <i>Warspite</i> .
5 <sup>th</sup>	1915	One of the first naval courts martial held on shore. Skipper James Sadler RNR of HM Trawler <i>Vale of Leven</i> dismissed the Service at RNB Devonport for being drunk on board and, to the prejudice of good order and naval discipline, for bringing on board two women 'of loose character and behaviour' and keeping them in his cabin until the afternoon of the following day. Things had changed since Prince William Henry commanded <i>Andromeda</i> .
6 <sup>th</sup>	1944	Frigate <i>Loch Killin</i> and <i>Starling</i> , sloop, sank U-736 in the Bay of Biscay
7th	1980	<i>Scylla</i> began five days of hurricane relief work in Cayman Islands. Hurricane Allen.
8th	1914	U-13 made first submerged attack of First World War, firing a torpedo which missed battleship <i>Monarch</i> off Fair Isle.
9th	1968	Leander-class frigate <i>Scylla</i> launched at Plymouth, the last ship to be built in a Royal Yard.
10th	1678	Royal Observatory, Greenwich founded.
11 <sup>th</sup>	1942	The old carrier <i>Eagle</i> , covering the Operation Pedestal convoy to Malta, torpedoed 65 miles S. of Majorca and 584 miles W. of Malta (38.05N, 03.02E) by U-73, Kapitänleutnant Helmut Rosenbaum, operating from La Spezia. Capt L.D. Mackintosh and 927 of her 1,160 ship's company rescued by destroyers <i>Laforey</i> and <i>Lookout</i> , and tug <i>Jaunty</i> . Four Sea Hurricanes of 801 NAS airborne were recovered to <i>Indomitable</i> and <i>Victorious</i> . 'The faithful old carrier, which had made no less than nine aircraft ferry trips and had despatched 183 Spitfires to Malta in 1942, sank in eight minutes. If we had to lose her



		it was appropriate that her grave should be in the Mediterranean, whose waters she had known so well' – Capt S.W. Roskill RN, <i>The War at Sea</i> , vol.2 p.304.
12th	2000	Russian Oscar II-class cruise missile submarine <i>Kursk</i> destroyed in explosion in Barents Sea. Cdre David Russell, DFOSM, led RN assistance party.
13th	1934	Metropolitan Police, hitherto responsible for establishment security, withdrawn at midnight from Devonport Dockyard.
14th	1816	Party landed from the frigate <i>Falmouth</i> , Capt Robert Festing RN, to take possession of Tristan da Cunha to prevent its possible use by French republicans to rescue Napoleon from St Helena. The frigate's First Lieutenant, Lt David Rice RN, became the first Governor and, with Lt Archibald Dunlop RM, three midshipmen, the Assistant Surgeon and thirteen men, he held the island until relieved on 28 November by Capt (later General Sir) Abraham Josias Cloete, 21st Dragoons, with forty soldiers sent from the Cape to garrison the island.
15th	1945	VJ Day. Japanese surrender. End of the Second World War. From C-in-C Fifth Fleet to Fifth Fleet Pacific: 'The war with Japan will end at 12.00 on 15 August. It is likely that Kamikazes will attack the fleet after this time as a final fling. Any ex-enemy aircraft attacking the fleet is to be shot down in a friendly manner.'
16th	1956	Frigate <i>Loch Killisport</i> , Cdr G.C. Hathaway RN, left Portsmouth for the Gulf and the East Indies Station with a Royal Marines detachment of twenty men embarked as part of the ship's company. The Royals had hitherto served only in warships of cruiser size and above.
17th	1997	Destroyer <i>Liverpool</i> and RFA <i>Black Rover</i> assisted in evacuation of Montserrat following major volcanic eruptions. Operation Caxton.
18th	1923	Submarine L 9 foundered in hurricane at Hong Kong. Salvaged but scrapped.
19th	1941	Convoy OG 71, which left the Mersey on 13 August carrying military supplies for Gibraltar, attacked by a German U-boat pack W. of Ireland. The commodore's ship, the Yeoward liner SS <i>Aguila</i> , with ninety service personnel including twenty-two wrens (twelve cypher officers and ten chief wren W/T special operators), torpedoed and sunk by U-201 (49.23N, 17.56W); Cdre P.E. Parker (Vice-Admiral, retd) and 156 souls lost. Master and nine others rescued by corvette <i>Wallflower</i> , another six by tug <i>Empire Oak</i> which was herself torpedoed and sunk with all hands by U-564 on 22 August. The convoy escort included the corvette <i>Campanula</i> , whose First Lieutenant, Lt-Cdr Nicholas Monsarrat, remembered the loss of the Wrens in his fictional character Third Officer Julie Hallam in <i>The Cruel Sea</i> in 1951. Future WRNS drafts were permitted passage in HM ships.
20th	1896	First RN wireless transmission ( <i>Defiance</i> ). <i>Defiance</i> , a wooden ship of the line, at Devonport, was the first ship to receive a morse transmission. Her captain, Capt H.B. Jackson, later Admiral of the Fleet FRS, developed the device, and worked with Marconi in his trials. Marconi's first major trials of radio in Britain were not carried out until the autumn of that year. On 20 May 1897, the radio was

		demonstrated at ranges up to 2 miles by the <i>Defiance</i> at anchor, and <i>Scourge</i> under way.
21st	1915	Crew of sunken <i>Ruel</i> , while in their boats, fired on by U-38 (S.S.W. of Bishop Rock). First authenticated case of such behaviour.
22nd	1940	Three Swordfish of 824 Sqn ( <i>Eagle</i> ) sank the depot ship <i>Monte Gargano</i> , a destroyer and the S/M <i>Iride</i> in the Gulf of Bomba, bound for a 'chariot' raid on Alexandria.
23rd	1993	<i>Opossum</i> , Lt-Cdr J.R.G. Drummond RN, last of the Royal Navy's thirteen Oberon-class diesel-electric submarines, paid off at Gosport. Earlier that month the thirty-year-old boat was the first Western submarine since the Second World War to visit Severomorsk, the Russian Northern Fleet base.
24th	1867	The murder of child Fanny Adams at Alton, Hampshire (which led to Winchester's last public hanging). Macabre and grisly details of how her body had been dismembered were given in court and widely reported. The introduction of tinned meat in the Fleet that year led to lower deck concerns about its provenance. The tins, however, became useful containers, hence 'fannies' for mess traps.
25th	1944	Battleship <i>Warspite</i> bombarded Brest
26th	1914	Cruiser <i>Highflyer</i> sank the German armed merchant cruiser <i>Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse</i> off Rio de Oro, Spanish West Africa, only ten days out from Bremen.
27th	1979	Murder of Admiral of the Fleet the Earl Mountbatten of Burma.
28th	1595	Drake and Hawkins left Plymouth on what turned out to be their last voyage, since neither returned. Drake died of yellow fever and Hawkins of dysentery
29th	1985	HM Air Force Vessels <i>Sunderland (Crabfat 1)</i> and <i>Stirling (Crabfat 2)</i> transferred from RAF to RN, renamed <i>Cormorant</i> and <i>Hart</i> and, and commissioned at Gibraltar to form the Gibraltar Squadron.
30th	1954	The Royal Naval Association – 'Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship' – formed in 1950, received its Royal Charter from HM The Queen. Its purposes 'to further the efficiency of the Service in which members of the Association have served or are serving, by fostering esprit de corps and preserving the traditions of the Service and thus to achieve those ideals for which Our Naval Forces have fought and perpetuate the memory of those members who have died in the service of their country; to relieve members of the Association who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress'.
31st	1908	Final day of trials of Col Cody's man-lifting kite off Isle of Wight, with battleship <i>Revenge</i> (tender to <i>Excellent</i> ) and TBDs <i>Fervent</i> and <i>Recruit</i> . Strong winds, searches for submerged mines outside St Helens Bay and occasional immersions – 'the aeronauts have got up satisfactorily but were finding difficulty in getting down'.

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