

SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR

➤ ASSOCIATION UNITES TO BID FAREWELL TO RNA STALWART ERIC

Shipmates from across the country joined family and friends as they travelled to North Wales to bid farewell to a much-loved and highly-respected colleague.

They gathered in Wrexham for the funeral of S/M Eric Holmwood, who died on 27 January at the age of 69.

More than 20 standards were on parade at the funeral service at Pentrebychan Crematorium, which was held on 19 February, and according to Wrexham branch chairman S/M Kevin Hackett was an indication of the high esteem in which Eric was held.

The service was also streamed online for those who could not attend in person.

Eric, a Ganges boy, served almost 25 years in the Royal Navy, attaining the rank of Chief Petty Officer Radio Supervisor, and when he retired in late 1994 he continued to work tirelessly to help others.

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

Please note – there will be no Semaphore Short on Good Friday, March 29

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Printed below, in full and with his permission, is the eulogy delivered by S/M Kevin at Eric's funeral. The images on these pages were taken by S/M Ray Jones.

Ahoy Shippers !!!

... was usually the first indication Eric was in the building, on screen, the phone or text, and that shenanigans of some sort were about to begin.

Wrexham branch shipmates, make sure you have your £1 coins ready, Mick will collect them later, You didn't think Eric would let you away with it? Did you?

Where did it all start though?

As you have already heard, Eric was born in Pembrokeshire and left home at the age of 15 to join the Royal Navy.

Always one to arrive early, he arrived in Swansea six months early and was returned home that day, only to return six months later to join.

He passed through the gates of HMS Ganges on 18 May 1970 and would be forever known as a 'Ganges boy', a title he was very proud of.

He was selected for training as a 'radio operator' and served

in many shore bases, ships and COMCENs throughout his career.

Including:

The shore bases HMS Ganges, HMS Mercury, HMS Wildfire, HMS Collingwood;

HM Ships Lincoln, Egeria, Arethusa, Herald, Hecla, Protector, Bristol;

COMCENs at Northwood, CTF345, (but we won't talk about that or he'll have to kill me), Fort Southwick, Whitehall, and married accompanied drafts to COMCENs in Norway and Gibraltar (we won't mention them either, Bungy gets upset). It was whilst serving on Egeria that he met and married "the old girl", or as we call her "the lovely Angela" on 2 April 1975 and as he often told us, "He spoilt that woman". Truth be told I think they spoilt each other.

It was also on the EG that his CW papers were raised (he kept that secret) but he declined promotion to the Wardroom, wanting to stay with the troops.

Eric was discharged after 24.5 years' service from the Royal Navy on 27 December 1994, from HMS Collingwood, having attained the rate of Chief Petty Officer Radio Supervisor.

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And so it was on to pastures new, firstly with the Dartford Tunnel Police and then Connex before they became South Eastern Rail, where he became the train drivers' union representative.

Eric was meticulous in his support and preparation for meetings with the bosses on behalf of the train drivers, something which he carried on outside of his work, always fighting for those who needed him.

He gave his time freely to the Royal British Legion as a case worker, Poppy Appeal Organiser and as the chairman to the local Gillingham branch, who are represented here today.

Despite leaving the Navy in 1994, Eric continued his love for the Royal Navy and veterans of other Services, even when he decided to retire and move home to Wales, the land of his fathers in 2015.

Apparently Pembroke wasn't an option and so he decided to join his little girl Tabetha in Wrexham, according to Hollywood, it's always sunny here.

Just after moving "the lovely Angela" spotted a small advert for the Royal Naval Association in the Wrexham Leader, and suggested Eric might want to go, which he did. After his first meeting he said he wasn't sure if it was for him, but was persuaded by Angela to give it another go, which again, he did.

On that Wednesday night a perfect storm of banter, shenanigans and friendship began, between Eric, Jeff and I. The Wrexham Chuckle Brothers were born.

We were having fun enjoying ourselves, we even got kicked out of Wetherspoon's and missed far too many last buses, resulting in frequent calls to Angela.

And yet all the time we were discussing how we could



improve membership of the RNA. With the support of other shipmates we took ourselves out into the town to let people know we were there. Of course, Eric had a secret weapon, the 1200 TOT, funny how that always attracted new members of all ages, our membership began to grow, again hardly surprising with Eric's enthusiasm and passion. I often wonder what the people going about their shopping in Tesco thought of the shouts "you six-throwing so-and-so" and Jeff upboarding the Eric manufactured Uckers Board.

Eric made contact with other branches – Oswestry, Shrewsbury, Market Drayton, Wallasey, Crosby – and re-introduced them to Wrexham as a branch. We organised trips and combined them with visits to branches, always fun and always featuring rum and involving the families of the branch. Who remembers the sight of young Evie in her Welsh ladies costume alongside her grandad marching in Llandudno for Armed Forces Day? Many of those branches are represented here today.

He also involved himself with local veterans organisations such as SSAFA, Woody's Lodge and the Wrexham-based

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Army veterans associations, often ensuring they were involved in RNA and social events. And then Covid struck... and the whole world stopped. Or did it?

With the first lockdown announced for 23 March 2020, the Chuckle Brothers got together and FaceTimed the Royal Naval Association Facebook group at 1900 on Saturday 21 March, and what has become known as Tot Time started.

Broadcast live from my front room, the three of us armed to the teeth with a selfie stick, a dollop of Blutack, a good sized tot and some banter began, talking to anyone who logged in to see us.

Within a week Eric had come up with the idea to move it on to Zoom, so we could see each other from our respective homes and also see others who wanted to join us.

We spiced it up a bit by inviting shipmates to tell their story of service and welcomed shipmates from around the world – we even accepted Yotties.

We held sessions on Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and special events, to ensure shipmates had some form of contact, albeit virtually, and weren't alone.

Eric then set up Eric's Travel Agency and invited Tot Timers and Wrexham shipmates to join us in Malta. He was

awarded the Maltese Tour guide of the year 2023, 2024, for his efforts, mainly due to his haggling skills.

So many friends have been made on the Tot Time screen, many of us had never met before in person, but thanks to Eric we soon did. Many are here today, to pay tribute to Eric as we hold him in such high esteem. I would be here all day if I tried to name all who have sent messages or have expressed their condolences.

47 months later Tot Time is still going and will continue to do so – it is part of Eric's legacy.

Even after Tot Time, branch quizzes, breakfasts and the odd DTS, Eric – never one to rest on his laurels – instigated home visits accompanied by Jeff to other shipmates, just for a chat, or at least that's what he told me, I think it was to check out their rum supplies.

Eric was a kind man, an honourable man, a generous man, always with a smile on his face and a camera in his hand, he was the life and soul of many a party, dinner time session, BBQ and breakfast.

Eric was the embodiment of the RNA core values – Loyalty, Patriotism, Unity and Comradeship. He was a driving force and guiding light not only in Wrexham branch but in the Royal Naval Association as a whole, and he will be sorely missed by all who loved and knew him.

Over the years we have said farewell to many shipmates, and I'm sure they were waiting at the Pearly Gates for Eric, with his Tot card in hand.

About now I can hear him say "get on with it Hackett!"

So to paraphrase Eric "I'M GOING TO GO NOW, I'M BORING YOU"

Before I do, I have one more thing to do..... CHIEF PETTY OFFICER RADIO SUPERVISOR, ERIC GARFIELD HOLMWOOD, CLOSING DOWN CIRCUITS.....

QRU..... AR.

UPSPIRITS CHIEF, OUR FRIEND, OUR SHIPMATE, OUR CHUCKLE BROTHER.....



➤ CONTACTS



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<http://bit.ly/RNADownloads>

or

RNA Website / Members Area / Downloads /
Circulars / Code (shipmate)

Snail Mail – Postal Address

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➤ NO SCORE, BUT GOALS ACHIEVED...

Defences came out on top in the RNA Football Club's first outing – but the match at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth certainly achieved its goals.

A 0-0 draw with the RNFA Eastern Region Masters was a result which delighted the RNA's coach and supporters (there **were** supporters there on the night!), particularly as the players in dark blue shirts didn't know each other as they walked onto the pitch at Portsmouth, let alone having trained together – RNA FC President and honorary coach Hugh Doyle said he had a completely different team to the one on paper just seven hours before.



After a slightly uncertain start by both sides the players got into their stride, and although the RNA keeper was slightly the busier there were few real chances throughout, though the RNA did hit the woodwork.

Part of the the association's Thriving Together programme being driven by RNA sports and Comradeship Coordinator 'Scouse' Reeves (who showed the same kind of commitment on the pitch in the No 7 shirt), the value of this particular initiative was exemplified by former RN player Leon Cashman, who had driven all the way from Bedfordshire to play, and was heading back the

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Images by S/M Nigel Huxtable



same evening.
 "I've missed the lads, so it was nice to catch up with everyone – well worth the drive down," said Leon.
 Scouse Reeves said: "I didn't expect anything from the game – look at the calibre of the players on the other side. It was brilliant!"
 And the spirit of comradeship was an essential party of the evening as the team started to gel – as one player noted: "We didn't know all the names of our teammates, so at first it was like 'To me No 29!' But it got better after half time."
 As the game wore on there were more and more rolling substitutions as some players discovered that the spirit was willing but the flesh was – well, aching – but the intensity remained until referee Ciaran Nash (another volunteer – he's a senior rate but heading for BRNC) blew the final whistle. Old friendships were renewed, and new ones made, in the Sportsmans bar after the match, and there is the promise of more to come – Scouse and his colleagues are aiming to build up a fixture list for the club, and the second match has been pencilled in for 14 June in Cardiff against the Liverpool FC Military Veterans.



DATE	EVENT	VENUE
16 Mar	Chainsaw Experience – A look at life day with guided chainsaw awareness and maintenance	Somerset
12-14 Apr	Walking and waterfall weekend	Brecon - Wales
27-28 Apr	Deer meal preparation, bush craft, axe throwing, archery, camp out and coasteering	Dorset
18 May	Snowdon Walk	Snowdon - Wales
3-6 Jun	Normandy Cycle Event POSTPONED	France
28-30 Jun	Woman only walking and waterfall weekend	Brecon - Wales
20-21 Jul	Introduction to Surfing Weekend	North Devon
13 Jul	Introduction to dry stone walling	Dartmoor

THRIVING TOGETHER

The Thriving Together programme gives shipmates the opportunity to attend experience days, sports and challenging activities across the UK and Europe to reunite, step outside their comfort zones or connect with new / old shipmates. We have a varied range of activities planned and confirmed so far this year, with more dates, venues and activities to be confirmed later. If there is something you would like to experience, then contact our Sports and Comradeship Coordinator (Chris 'Scouse' Reeves) on scc@rnassoc.org Please see left the list of events for this year so far. If you would like any further information on any of these, please don't hesitate to contact us.

The latest details of the RNA Thriving Together programme

➤ FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Ahoy Shipmates,

What a busy month it's been. The sadness of Eric Holmwood's funeral and the immense support from across the Royal Naval Association community was humbling. It was fitting tribute to a man who was so humble himself but such a force of positivity. I noted at his funeral that there was representation from across the Association from Portsmouth to Edinburgh and many, many places in between. It was a measure of the man that his influence and popularity reached so many. He wasn't just a Wrexham branch shipmate, he was a highly-respected Association man. RIP Eric.

Back in Portsmouth, what a joy to watch the first RNA Football Club match at Burnaby Rd the week before last. This allows me to explain a little more what our newest staff member Chris 'Scouse' Reeves has been up to, and I'm very happy to do this because I was questioned about it at a recent Area AGM where, I sensed, they thought I had lost the plot!

Chris has been employed with the aid of a grant from the Covenant Trust Fund, or more specifically, the Afghan Fund, which we applied for and have been granted in order to recruit more working-age veterans to our Association. You will understand, it is my responsibility as the General Secretary to think more strategically about the longevity of our Association. We have been doing well recruiting new blood into the Association at HMS Raleigh and BRNC, so our demographics now reveal a blip at the beginning between 18 and 25 but then a slow incline towards the 60s, 70s and 80s age group where it then falls off very rapidly. With bringing Chris on board, it allows us to target the age group of the 40s, 50s and 60s to give life blood to our Association. All the activities he has planned are inclusive (apart from maybe the women-only events) so, even if you are a little bit older or even a little bit younger, everyone is welcome on the activities which Scouse is organising this year and publicised within this Circular. Please



give it a go, it's all about like-minded people coming together to do what we do best – Comradeship!

A thank you to Areas 3 and 7 for hearing me at your AGMs last month, and I look forward to attending both Area 9 and Area 11 AGMs this month so don't be afraid to poke me in the chest about some, any or all of the stuff we are working on in Central Office. I'm also planning to be on Tot Time tomorrow (Saturday 2 March) so more than happy to take any questions there too.

One thing which I have been questioned about on my recent travels to Area AGMs

has been our welfare and wellbeing policy which will eventually be released to Branches and Areas shortly. In my view, we are all responsible for welfare and wellbeing; we all have a part to play in looking after our oppos and that, of course, is nothing new to those of us who have served in the Royal Navy. In the same way that we use the skill sets of, for example, an accountant to become our National Treasurer and a lawyer to fulfil the role of our National Head of Governance, we must make use of the healthcare professionals within our membership who fully understand that acquirements of safeguarding and professional standards to make our welfare system more resilient and reactive to the needs of our shipmates. And, don't worry, we also recognise those individuals within our organisation who have a ton of experience in the welfare and wellbeing space to help us and this important task. Please embrace what we are doing as it's all about doing more for our shipmates who might need it most.

Please sign up to our Cardiff Conference over the 14-16 June w/e. Area 7 are doing a great job pulling it together and it promises to be a lot of fun. Thank you also to the Branches who have forwarded several motions for discussion at Conference which will be distributed for consideration to Branches shortly. This will be an important one as there are fundamental issues to discuss at Conference so make sure your Branch is represented... but you don't have

to be a Branch Delegate to attend and enjoy yourself at Conference, it's actually a great social occasion too.

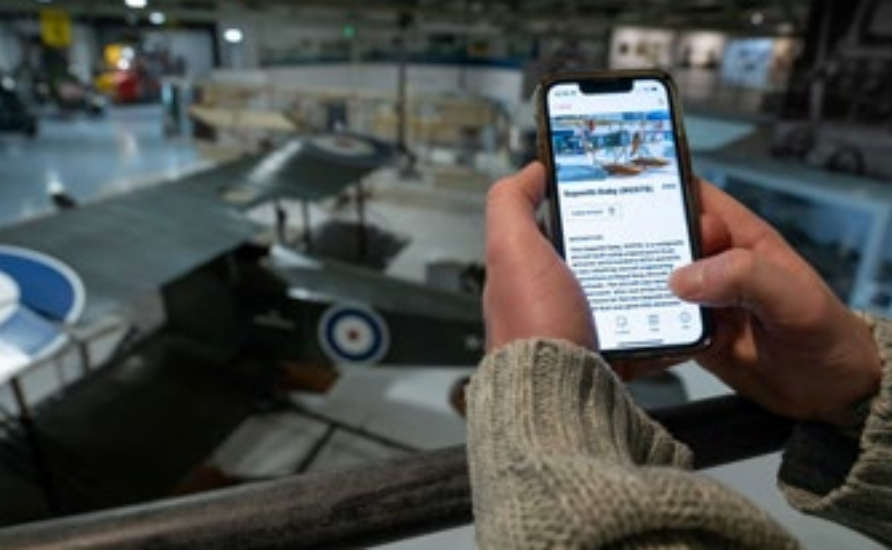
Look out for your Yearbook; it ought to be hitting your doormat very soon if it hasn't landed already and please think about a donation or, if you prefer the chance of a £25k win, sign up to the RNA lottery as a way of helping us to do more for our shipmates.

Finally, thanks also to Rich Harris, who has contributed the first in what I am hoping might be series of dits regarding pipes we've all known. The dit published this month certainly made me smile

Bill

Bill Oliphant with RNA FC President and honorary coach Hugh Doyle





➤ APP ADDS TO VISITORS' EXPERIENCE AT MUSEUM

In a first for The National Museum of the Royal Navy, the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton has launched a new digital guide on Bloomberg Connects, the free arts and cultural app created by Bloomberg Philanthropies, joining a global community of over 250 cultural institutions. The Bloomberg Connects app, available for download from Google Play or the App Store, makes the museum accessible for either onsite or offsite visits through photographs, audio and video features offering insights into more than 100 years of pioneering Royal Navy flying history.

Elliott Bailey, Public Programming Manager at the museum, said: "The Bloomberg Connects app will allow our visitors to access more content from our collection than ever before, with expertly curated audio, video and text content being available for visitors to enhance their museum experience, be that on site or from home on their personal device. As a supplement to our guide book, it enables visitors to get the very most from their visit. "Practically this will help our visitors to scope out our exhibitions before their visit, better explore and navigate our collections during their visit, and further engage with our museum from home after their visit. "Future plans include expanding the content to show aircraft and other collection items which are not currently on display."

Set amongst four vast aircraft hangars, the Fleet Air Arm Museum is home to Europe's largest naval aviation collection. With veteran aircraft like the Sopwith Pup and Supermarine Seafire, which helped secure victory in two world wars, helicopters that saw action in the Falklands, to the up-to-date and award-winning Aircraft Carrier Experience, visitors also get a fascinating view across to the busy RN Air Station Yeovilton. New to the museum is the chance to see conservation in action as an extinct aircraft is bought back to life. Not a single complete Barracuda aircraft exists in the world today, but its legend will live on with Barracuda Live: The Big Rebuild as the Barracuda DP872 is reconstructed in the new Arthur Kimberley Viewing Gallery.

Legendary Naval aviator and war hero Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown, who was renowned for flying 487 different types of aircraft - a world record that is unlikely to be matched - is just one of the Fleet Air Arm pilots featured at the museum, which also includes his Vampire aircraft, the first jet to land on the deck of an aircraft carrier in 1945.

The Bloomberg Connects app is available for download from Google Play or the App Store. To find out more about the museum, visit www.nmrn.org.uk/fleet-air-arm-museum. For more information on Bloomberg Philanthropies see bloomberg.org.

➤ DEMENTIA SUPPORT FOR VETERANS IN COUNTY DURHAM

Working alongside the Durham Dementia Advice and Support service, the Veteran Dementia Adviser service provides a Dementia Adviser to specifically work with people diagnosed with dementia and their carers who have served in the Armed Forces.

Their services are commissioned by Durham County Council and cover the whole of County Durham. Dementia Advisers support people worried about their memories, with a diagnosis of dementia and carers, families, and friends who are over the age of 18.

The Veteran Dementia Adviser will work with people through the diagnosis process, following a diagnosis and throughout their journey, listening to people's needs and offering tailored information and advice so they can consider future options. They will work alongside people to develop an individually personalised information plan and support plan. They offer information and practical guidance to help people understand the condition, cope with day-to-day challenges and prepare for the future. They link people up with local professionals and services, including everything from social groups to help managing money. They empower people to maintain independence and stay active for as long as possible, working in partnership with people living with young onset dementia and other agencies to ensure people with dementia have their voices heard and their wants and needs met in County Durham.

They don't replace statutory services, tell people what to do or provide specific medical or legal advice, but are always keen to link in with other services and teams in the area to develop referral pathways and give awareness raising talks.

Contact them at durhamandchester@alzheimers.org.uk or 0191 3890400

➤ PENSION UPDATE DELIVERED ONLINE

The Forces Pension Society are delivering an update on the Armed Forces Pension Scheme, and all veterans invited to join in.

The update will be held online on Tuesday 19 March, 1230 and 1315 via Microsoft Teams. It will cover, inter alia, the latest on the 2015 McCloud implementation, how to claim a deferred pension, and the benefits of membership of the Forces Pension Society. For more details of the presentation and how to join it see the Society's website at <https://tinyurl.com/yck9z54h>

➤ POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER – PART 2

by Dr Richard Cullen OSt.J; MA; Chartered FCIPD; CmgrFCMI; FRGS

“You can’t beat PTSD but you can learn to manage it”

Chris Middleton, Rifles, bilateral leg amputee due to an IED

If we step back into history, what we now know as PTSD was known to the medical profession as far back as World War 1. It was known in Germany, France and the UK, among many other countries. In the UK it was known as ‘shell shock’.

Thousands suffered from the condition, and it was particularly prevalent among officers. A specialist hospital, staffed by psychiatrists, was established in Scotland and the symptoms that we now ascribe to PTSD were identified.

Sadly, at the same time soldiers were being executed by firing squad for deserting the frontline when suffering ‘shell shock’.

The condition was not defined, and the world went through many major conflicts; World War 2, Korea etc without defining the condition. The Vietnam War, was the catalyst to psychologists/psychiatrists, understanding and defining the condition.

It was not until 1980 that PTSD appeared as an operational diagnosis in the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual. It is fair to say that many psychologists/psychiatrists refused to accept the condition well into the 1990s and beyond.

In 1988, 75 per cent of psychiatrists did not acknowledge the condition.

We have moved a long way forward, but not far enough. Awareness of the symptoms of PTSD and how to support someone with the condition is woefully inadequate.

Many experience symptoms soon after trauma; however, some, who served in the Falklands War, are now reporting symptoms for the first time.

Some people with PTSD experience long periods when their symptoms are less noticeable, followed by periods where they get worse. Other people have constant severe symptoms.

It is very important to note that the specific symptoms of PTSD can vary widely between individuals, but generally fall into the categories described below.

The NHS reports the symptoms as:

Re-experiencing

Re-experiencing is the most typical symptom of PTSD.

This is when a person involuntarily and vividly relives the traumatic event in the form of:

- flashbacks
- nightmares
- night terrors
- repetitive and distressing images or sensations
- physical sensations, such as pain, sweating,

feeling sick or trembling

Some people have constant negative thoughts about their experience, repeatedly asking themselves questions that prevent them coming to terms with the event.

For example, they may wonder why the event happened to them and if they could have done anything to stop it, which can lead to feelings of guilt or shame.

Avoidance and emotional numbing

Trying to avoid being reminded of the traumatic event is another key symptom of PTSD.

This usually means avoiding certain people or places that remind you of the trauma or avoiding talking to anyone about your experience.

Many people with PTSD try to push memories of the event out of their mind, often distracting themselves with work or hobbies.

Some people attempt to deal with their feelings by trying not to feel anything at all. This is known as emotional numbing.

This can lead to the person becoming isolated and withdrawn, and they may also give up pursuing activities they used to enjoy.

Hyperarousal (feeling “on edge”)

Someone with PTSD may be very anxious and find it difficult to relax. They may be constantly aware of threats and easily startled.

This state of mind is known as hyperarousal.

Hyperarousal often leads to:

- irritability
- angry outbursts
- sleeping problems (insomnia)
- difficulty concentrating
- Other problems

Many people with PTSD also have a number of other problems, including:

- other mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety or phobias
- self-harming or destructive behaviour, such as drug misuse or alcohol misuse
- other physical symptoms, such as headaches, dizziness, chest pains and stomach aches

PTSD sometimes leads to work-related problems and the breakdown of relationships.

Learning to understand the symptoms and how to support a person who appears to be suffering from PTSD is so important and the MHFA mnemonic referred to in Part One (the February edition of the Semaphore Circular) should trigger referring the individual to seek medical support through their GP.

➤ FALKLANDS MEMORIAL TO BE DEDICATED IN JUNE

All RNA members are invited to a dedication of the new permanent Falkland Islanders Resistance Memorial on 12 June starting at midday.

The ceremony will be held at the site of the new memorial in the Allied Special Forces Grove of the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire.

The postcode of the Arboretum

is DE13 7AR.

This is an open event, not run by the RNA, and there is no formal dress requirement.

RSVP to Mike Colton, 2 Manor Road, Kings Bromley, Staffs DE13 7HZ, tel 07929 118598, or email mikecolton@hotmail.com

For more information on the site of the memorial see www.alliedspecialforcesmemorialgrove.org/

➤ AGGIE'S SEEKS NEW CEO

Dame Agnes Weston's Royal Charity for the Naval Service – known to all as Aggie's – is looking for a new Chief Executive Office.

The Charity's stated object, which is for the Public Benefit, is the promotion of the efficiency of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines and the advancement of the Christian faith.

The overarching vision of Aggie's is that all beneficiaries should be able to 'live life to its fullest measure' which means that they should have physical, emotional and spiritual health, and be living in strong relationships. Aggie's works in partnership with the Naval Chaplaincy Service and other Naval charities to enhance the operational capability of the Royal Navy through the provision of pastoral support to serving members of the Royal Navy (including the Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary), and their families.

For further information and a full Job Description please contact the Chair of Trustees by email: Chairman@aggies.org.uk



➤ RNRMC IS RECRUITING

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) is looking to recruit for three posts – Senior Individual Giving Fundraiser (closing date 8 March), Individual Giving Fundraiser (closing date 31 March) and Volunteer Coordinator (closing date 18 March).

For full details of job descriptions, including the location, salary, duties and responsibilities see the COBSEO (Confederation of Service Charities) job vacancies section at <https://www.cobseo.org.uk/news/topics/job-vacancy/>

➤ RNA OFFICE OPEN DAYS

Ever wondered how the Royal Naval Association is supported by the Central Office team? You could take a look for yourselves – shipmates are advised that the dates of Central Office Open Days this year are:

24 May

28 June

9 August

6 September

If you would like more details, or to register your interest, contact Sara on ams@rnassoc.org

➤ VETERANS LOOKING FORWARD TO D-DAY 80

Col David Waters (Retd), President, Central Lancashire Armed Forces Veterans Association (CLanAFVA), went to see their 100-year-old sapper Jack Gledhill recently, taking with him Jack's new sapper tie. Col Waters then surprised him with the sapper sweatshirt - he was absolutely thrilled and delighted. Col Waters said that Ken Benbow, their 99-year-old Royal Navy veteran, came with him, taking the opportunity to show off his new teeth, new glasses and new hearing aides! The two veteran are pictured (right) with Col Waters.

They had only met once before, at an ITV filming shortly before, but they greeted each other on the day like they were two long lost shipmates.

The conversation soon turned to 6 June and they were buzzing with the thought they only had to wait another 100 days before they would be flown out to the Normandy Memorial with the other Lancashire World War 2 veterans. Col Waters said it was a great pleasure to be involved.



➤ THE RNA: WHO WE ARE, OUR VISION – AND WHAT WE DO

Imagine having a couple of minutes to pitch the RNA to someone who has shown some interest in joining. What would you say? To help us all articulate what the RNA is about and what our aspirations are Central Office have developed, and the AMC have approved, the Who are we, Vision, Mission & Values.

Who are we?

The Royal Naval Association is a inclusive, diverse, multi-generational, rank-blind and free to join membership organisation. It is primarily for serving and former serving personnel of our Naval forces and their families. Membership is also open to those who may not have served but have an interest in the Naval Service.

Vision:

To be the most relevant Naval Association offering support to our members and smaller Naval Associations, whilst ensuring they maintain the independence and unique identity. Working with other charities, organisations and Governmental agencies to create an environment that improves the wellbeing of all former Naval Forces personnel and their families. As well as offering comradeship to our members.

Mission:

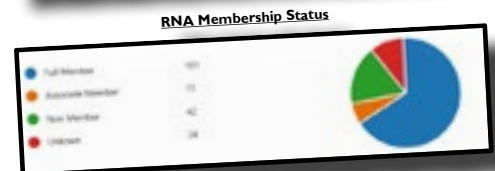
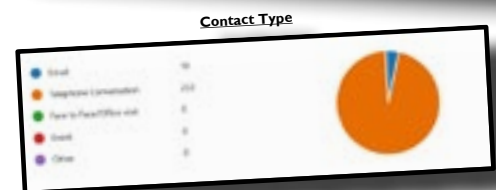
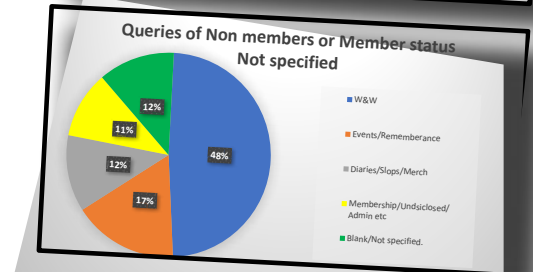
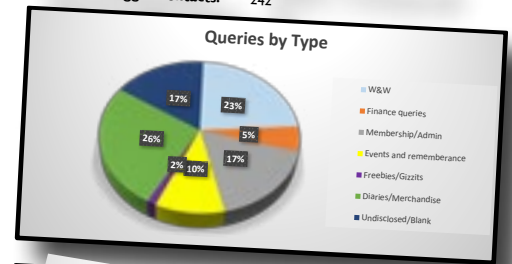
To successfully foster comradeship within our membership.

Values:

Our core values are centred on the seven components (Seven Cs) of Comradeship which are, Companionship, Community, Connection, Compassion, Care, Commemoration and Celebration, we seek to maintain the naval ethos and enjoy sharing experiences with like-minded people while supporting each other in times of need.

Central Office Contact Record Form Data Insight

Data Collection Period: July 2023 – 14th November 2023
Number of Logged contacts: 242



➤ MONTROSE CELEBRATES LINKS WITH FRIGATE

Residents of the Scottish coastal town of Montrose now have a permanent reminder of their Naval links. The arrival of the bell from HMS Montrose, the veteran Type 23 frigate, completes the memorial display to the ship in her namesake community. Throughout her 30-year operational career, the Devonport-based warship maintained regular contact with her namesake town (though the Duke-class ship takes her name from the Duke of Montrose, rather than directly from the town) and the wider Angus community, calling in on the small North Sea port whenever her programme allowed. Some 5,000 local residents filed aboard the ship on the frigate's farewell visit in March last year. Since then the ship has been decommissioned, stripped of

whatever kit can be used elsewhere in the Fleet, while objects of no military but of sentimental value were offered to the ship's company and those connected with HMS Montrose over the years. No object is more iconic on any ship than her bell – it's the item divers seek to recover from wrecks to prevent them falling into the hands of unscrupulous souvenir hunters. There was no danger of that happening in this case: it just took a request from RN veteran David Moxey via Angus MP David Doogan, and the Royal Navy agreed to loan the bell as centrepiece of an exhibition which also features the frigate's nameplate, White Ensign and a scale model of the ship. The display was unveiled by Mr Doogan and the Navy's Regional Commander

for Scotland and Northern Ireland, Brig Andy Muddiman, his Chief of Staff at Navy HQ Cdr Morgan McDonald, local VIPs, Provost Brian Boyd, Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans and Gary Wilson, who served in Montrose while she was deployed to Bahrain. The frigate steamed around 400,000 miles under the White Ensign on her patrols around the globe, spending the final years of her extensive career on an extended deployment in the Gulf and Middle East, proving particularly successful at intercepting drug runners as part of a wider maritime security mission. The display can be seen in the Montrose Museum – one of the oldest purpose-built museums in Scotland – in Panmure Place, Fridays through to Mondays, 1030 to 1600. Entry is free.

➤ 2024 RNA ANNUAL CONFERENCE CARDIFF

All branches – please see the AGM delegates' form at the end of the circular for the National Conference weekend, which will be held in Cardiff from 14-16 June.



It is important that as many branches as possible are represented so that members' voices are heard when shaping policies and making decisions.

There is also further information on booking arrangements for accommodation as well as events over the weekend, such as the Gala Dinner, which will be held at the Voco St David's Hotel in Cardiff Bay.

Keep an eye out for further details about updated plans for Conference weekend as we get closer to June.

We will also let you know what motions have been forwarded by branches for discussion at the AGM.

➤ SLOPS STILL AVAILABLE

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

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

➤ MERSEYSIDE PARK FOR RETIRED MARINERS

The Nautilus Mariners' Park Estate in Wallasey is a unique place to live, where former seafarers can share memories and camaraderie in their retirement years with others who have experienced life at sea.

Founded around 160 years ago, Mariners' Park Estate now forms part of the care and support services provided by the Nautilus Welfare Fund, a registered charity administered by Nautilus International. The Fund offers a range of specialist services to support retired seafarers and their dependants in need.

That includes a variety of independent living accommodation, a care home and home care services. The specialist accommodation means retired mariners and dependants can be surrounded by like-minded neighbours, and have access to a range of support services to enable a happy retirement.

Located on the banks of the Mersey, the Mariners' Park Estate comprises 122 homes, including apartments, bungalows and houses, and a 36-bedroom care home. The charity specialises in supporting seafarers in their retirement and providing a range of housing options for rent. One and two-bedroom

➤ SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

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

Camping and Caravanning – Ron Shilton: rna.camping.caravan.motorhome.club@gmail.com

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

Cricket – Mark Smith : Markmiff1962@gmail.com

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

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

Divers – Bill Lawless: billylawless40@yahoo.com

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

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

*Riders Branch – Mark Gayton: secrnariders@gmail.com

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

If you are interested in forming a Special Interest Group please contact admin@royalnavalassoc.com

**Please note – the Riders are a Branch, not a Special Interest Group.*

properties are available now.

Located on the banks of the Mersey, Mariners' Park To arrange a visit email welfare@nautilusint.org or call 0151 346 8840. See www.nautiluswelfarefund.org

➤ TAKE A CHANCE ON THE LOTTERY

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

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

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

"The RNA is free to join but relies on donations to help continue the good work. Since COVID, we've done so much more in the welfare/wellbeing space with our veterans, and having an RNA Lottery allows us to do even more. Please do sign up and play our lottery, and if you're not a member – join us!"

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



Uckers

English 'Open' Championships (Singles) 2024



Saturday 18 May 2024
1030 first dice

Our hosts for 2024

WALLESEY RNA

Riverview Road WALLASEY

Merseyside CH44 6PX



To join the RNA:
<https://linktr.ee/rnassociation>

To book: engagement@rnassoc.org



➤ MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

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

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

Our image shows Type 23 frigate HMS Lancaster (© Ministry of Defence). See 4 March.

** Lecture subjects may change at short notice.*

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

Date	Presenter	Subject
Mon 4 March	Anthony Moth	HMS Lancaster, Old to New
Mon 11 March	Iain Greenlees (tbc)	HMNB Portsmouth Infrastructure
Mon 18 March	WO1 Jim Wright	WORN – Naval Update
Mon 25 March	Chris Taylor (tbc)	Nine Lives, Four Collisions and a Ditching – Part II
Mon 1 April	Easter Break	
Mon 8 April	Easter Break	
Mon 15 April	Easter Break	
Mon 22 April	Anthony Moth	RN v the World 1974 – Now
Mon 29 April	Cdr Lee Paddock	Improving the 'Leave Well' Package

➤ RNBT IS SEEKING A NEW TRUSTEE

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust efficiently and effectively helps Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel and their families in times of need, whether through the provision of wide-ranging financial assistance or the care offered to older members of the Royal Naval family at Pembroke House in Gillingham, Kent, and the Trust's Centenary Year Project – Admiral Jellicoe House in Southsea, Hampshire, which opened in June 2022.

The Ordinary Member Trustee position will commence from early April 2024 and election will take place during the last week of March. The Trust is looking for a wide range of competences and the current Trustees wish to continue to encourage diversity, with applications from Junior Rates / Ranks as well as representation from minority groups very welcome. In particular, those with service in the Royal Marines or Submarine Service would be very welcome.

The closing date for applications is 15 March 2024.

See <https://www.cobseo.org.uk/royal-naval-benevolent-trust-trustee/> for more details

Notification of Election of Members and Deputy Members of the National Council 2024

AREA	Nominee for National Council Member
2	Dennis Potter (Chatham)
3	Andy Christie (Lee-on-the-Solent)
4*	Warwick Belfitt (Liskeard) Les Yeoman (Plymouth)
5	Pete Chivers (Stowmarket)
9	Paul Harries (Spalding)
10	Sterling Simmons (Crosby)
12	Paul Stephenson (Dublin)

*Number 4 Area are holding an election. For information, the deadline for withdrawal of a nomination for election is 8 March 2024

AREA	Nominee for Deputy National Council Member
5	Diana Sadler (Norwich)
10	Timothy Pike (Wrexham)
12	Robert Buchanan (Londonderry)

➤ SAILING OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Naval Children's Charity has been helping Naval Children for nearly 200 years. If you serve or have served in the Naval Service (Royal Navy, Royal Marines, QARNNS, WRNS, Reserves or Royal Fleet Auxiliary) and you have a child/children up to and including the age of 25 they may be able to help you. The charity's Head Office is in Portsmouth, and they support children throughout the UK and Commonwealth. They work closely with other Naval charities to ensure they can deliver support to children quickly and effectively both in times of crisis and throughout their lives to help them navigate the challenges they can experience as a result of their parents' service in the Royal Navy. They have a team of caseworkers who deal directly with families at Head Office and outreach caseworkers in the South-West and Scotland to work more closely with the Naval communities in those areas. Families are referred to them in times of crisis by the RNA, SSAFA, RN FPS and can also go to them directly. They believe that to be the child of someone who is, or has been, in the Naval Service should be a positive and enhancing experience – something to be borne with pride. For those children where life is more



difficult, they are there to help. To help Naval children navigate through life as well as offer individual support in times of crisis, the charity a range of free resources and has a Life Chances Programme which offers opportunities to all their Naval children and young people. This programme aims to increase their resilience, enabling them to strive to reach their full potential and improving their outcomes in life. The opportunities in the Life Chances programme offer a range of projects, to suit the differing interests and needs of the children. Outdoor horizons, offering voyages with the Tall Ships Youth Trust and activity adventure breaks, or Creative horizons with debating and artistic

opportunities, and they are also ensuring that they offer meaningful educational and employment courses that can have a positive impact on their personal development and long-term career opportunities. The Naval Children's Charity is delighted to be working with the RNA to offer four places on the International Maritime Confederation (IMC) Youth Sailing Camp at the Royal Hospital School, Suffolk. The RNA is currently President of the IMC and is organising this summer's IMC sailing camp at the school during the week of 20-27 July. Each member nation of the IMC has been asked to provide four young people. This exciting opportunity includes food and accommodation at RHS and a four-day sailing course which takes beginners to RYA Stage 2 standard. The sailing is to be held on Alton Water, a ten-minute walk from RHS. If you are aged between 15-20 and would like to take part, please complete the application form which can be found here <https://tinyurl.com/juy3jmt4> or use the QR code. For more information about the Life Chances Programme please see <https://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk/life-chances/>

➤ THE BEST INSURANCE OFFERS FOR OUR SHIPMATES ARE WHOLLY TRINITY...

The Royal Naval Association has teamed up with veteran-run military insurance specialists Trinity Insurance Services Ltd (www.talktotrinity.com) who now offer the following benefits to our members:

Combined Services Travel Cover – Over 50s Annual Travel Insurance

A travel insurance scheme for Over 50s exclusive to members of Service associations that are affiliated with Trinity. This is an annual travel insurance scheme that runs from 1 February to 31 January, covering multiple trips over the 12-month period. There is no need to declare your medical conditions as long as the traveller passes Trinity's fit to travel check. Members can join at any time in the year, but the policy will be automatically renewed on 1 February. The policy is available up to age 74 on joining but once a member of the scheme you can remain on it indefinitely (regardless of age), as long as you continue to pay the annual premium and remain a member of the RNA. The costs are: Individual £380, Couple £530, Single Parent £495 and Family £522.

Buildings and Contents Insurance

A comprehensive, reliable and consistently priced home insurance



product that is especially designed to meet the needs of the Armed Forces community. It offers: savings when taking out a combined policy; built-in home emergency cover and family legal expenses; no claims discount: option for Buildings and Contents, Buildings Only and Contents Only.

Purchasers of this product can choose to nominate the RNA for a £5 donation from Trinity and the underwriter.

15 per cent discount on 'Travel Plus' Travel Insurance Bought via Trinity

Travel Plus provides wide-ranging cover for individuals, couples, and families, giving you peace of mind and protection both before and during your holiday/trip.

15 per cent discount on 'Free Spirit' Travel Insurance Products Bought via Trinity

Travel Insurance for all ages (no age

limit and wide cover for medical conditions). This is a policy designed for travellers of any age who don't qualify for the Combined Services Travel Cover scheme. Annual and single trip insurance is available.

Special Premium Rate for Veterans' Personal Accident Cover

Free Life Advice from Trinity's Authorised and Experienced Advisors plus £25 Voucher for any Military Life Policies Purchased by Serving Personnel

Get peace of mind by checking on your protection needs for you and your loved ones.

10 per cent discount on Veterans Life Insurance

On online purchases only.

Free Dental and Optical Cover on Switching Existing Personal Health Insurance Cover to Trinity's Offering with Aviva Plus a £25 Voucher of Their Choice

All of these products are available via the RNA website or call the dedicated Trinity Associations line: 0345 241 1001 during office hours (Monday-Friday, 9am – 5.30pm) to speak to a member of the Trinity team.

For the Combined Services Travel Cover call 02392 419009.

➤ CALLING THESEUS 144 AT HMS DAUNTLESS

Kate Hanna, Liz Dalton, Di Williams and Penny Viney – all maiden names – are planning a 60th reunion for the girls who joined up on 15 September 1964 and were assigned, with them, to Theseus 144 at HMS Dauntless.

Sadly, some have crossed the bar, and they have lost contact with others.

If there is anyone out there who would be interested in a reunion, sometime in September this year (dates and venue to be confirmed), please contact Kate at katewoodfin@hotmail.com They really hope there are some of you out there who would like to meet up, catch up and reminisce.



► DEBBIE TAKES UP RNBT CHIEF EXECUTIVE ROLE

Following the news that Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT) Chief Executive Rob Bosshardt is retiring after seven years, the RNBT has announced the appointment of Debbie Dollner (right) as their new Chief Executive. Debbie brings broad experience across the wider charities sector, having most recently served as Director of Health and Wellbeing at Morden College, a prestigious City-backed almshouse charity specialising in residential, domiciliary care and support for older people; prior to that Debbie was Chief Operating Officer at Guild Care, a Worthing-based social care charity. Debbie said: "It is an honour to have been asked to join the RNBT family. With such a proud and important history I am delighted to be working alongside the remarkable people that touch the lives of those supported by the RNBT. Knowing the difference the Trust makes to those most in need, I am looking forward to continuing the charity's incredible work. I would like to



thank the trustees and staff for this very special opportunity." Russell Best, Chair of Trustees said: "We are pleased to announce we will welcome our new Chief Executive this April. We look forward to her arrival and welcome her onboard as we embark on the exciting next phase of the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust's journey. As we expand our care and benevolence offerings to Royal Navy and Royal Marines, serving and former serving and their families and dependants, I am sure that Debbie has the right

combination of talent, experience and innovative thinking to lead us forward." On the announcement of his departure. Rob Bosshardt said: "It has been my great privilege to have led RNBT as Chief Executive over the last seven years. I have been brilliantly supported by staff at Castaway House, Pembroke House and Admiral Jellicoe House, as well as working with superb trustees and volunteers. "RNBT is a really special organisation in which helping our people is always at the heart of all that we do. We have made so many advances including delivering Admiral Jellicoe House as our centenary care home project and developing our benevolence processes, which withstood the sternest of tests during the pandemic. "I am retiring with a sense of pride in our achievements and very fond memories. I wish Debbie all the success in the world as she leads the RNBT to the next phase of its development as the major naval benevolence delivery charity."



► D'YOU HEAR THERE...

Commodore Rich Harris RN (Retd), former Captain of HMS Raleigh, has been collecting pipes... not the smoking type – rather the pipes that you would hear on a warship on specific occasions. Cdre Harris has kindly offered to share some of his thoughts on these pipes with RNA shipmates.

We start with:

D'you hear there, the Ship is about to alter course across the sea, and may roll heavily.

This pipe is a helpful warning from the Officer of the Watch (OOW) that the ship is about to alter course during the course of which, it may move beam-on (ie sideways) to the sea. This is an uncomfortable moment.

The OOW's use of the word 'may' should be replaced

by the word 'will'.

Violent movements caused by the sea can cause injury. Indeed if, for example, one has not secured a towel for action, the towel could cause serious injury or clog up a water extraction pump.

The alteration of course usually takes place while the Chefs are preparing lunch, and if one is fortunate enough to be stood outside the galley at the time of this pipe, or shortly after, it is likely that they will hear colourful language alongside the clatter of pans hitting the deck. The expletives are likely to be greater if the warning pipe is made after the alteration of course.

Pictured is HMS Duke of York in an Arctic gale, from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 8143).

Uckers Ya Uckers!

We are proud to announce and re-confirm 'Uckers Ya Uckers as our official partner and supplier



**The Royal Naval Association's
World Uckers Championships**
Saturday 12 October 2024

Royal Maritime Hotel Portsmouth

More details

Sat 12 Oct 2024

Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth.

More details coming soon: engagements@royalnavalassoc.com

► BRANCH NEWS



Bracknell Branch

The branch keeps very busy and, since their last report, they have enjoyed amongst their entertaining monthly meetings talks by an 'outside' speaker and a shipmate on HMS Victory and the Battle of Miawand.

Sadly, the dreaded Covid reared its ugly head again, so the December meeting went online as a Zoom meeting and the branch had to cancel their annual skittles competition.

They held their AGM in January and have been planning events for the year ahead which will include a range of new speakers, their usual two dinners (for St George's Day and, of course, Trafalgar Day), outings to the Milestones Museum, the Weald and Downland Museum, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and Beaulieu as well as the return of their 'repeat' skittles competition towards the end of the year.

Branch shipmates have attended Armed Forces Veterans' Breakfast Clubs in the area as well as other Area events. This included a local Armed Forces Veterans' Hub, run by Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service, at Newbury Fire Station and the laying up of the old Branch Standard and dedication of new one at Rushden RNA.

The Branch Standard was paraded at two Remembrance Services in Binfield with a Branch shipmate laying a wreath at each service. A poppy wreath was also laid at the



service in Bracknell, arranged by Bracknell Town Council, and was attended by eight shipmates. A fourth wreath was laid at their local Commonwealth War Graves Commission grave for a World War 2 sailor in Binfield.

Three days of charity collecting in December at a local Tesco resulted in £1,402.74 being received in donations, £1,050 of which has so far been donated to other Naval charities, including Maidenhead Sea & Marines Cadet unit. Dates have already been arranged for more collecting in December 2024 as well as a day in June.

In the past four months the branch has gained three new full and two new associate shipmates – but there is always room for more...

Portsea and Portsmouth Branch

The Portsea and Portsmouth Branch held its AGM on Friday 16 February at the Royal Maritime Hotel in Queen Street, Portsmouth. 61 branch members were in attendance for the meeting, which was followed by a branch lunch.

Outgoing branch Chairman Shipmate Mike Noonan was presented with Life Membership by Branch President Vice Admiral John McAnally (Pictured right). Meanwhile, outgoing branch Secretary S/M Ted Hawkins was voted in as Vice President of the Branch.

Shipmates Di Hawkins, Pat Grimshaw and Pam Nicholls were presented with Certificates of Appreciation for their continued support and hard work for the branch.

Shipmate Tom Franks has stepped up from Vice President to branch Chairman, with S/M Derek Brown taking over as Hon Secretary.





Warwick Branch

On 20 February Warwick branch held a service to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the sinking of destroyer HMS Warwick. The service took place around the HMS Warwick commemorative tree in the grounds of Warwick Castle and around 40 people attended, including the Mayor of Warwick, Cllr Oliver Jacques, councillors and officers of Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council, RNA National Chairman S/M Peter Godwin, RNA Area 8 Chairman S/M Chris Lincoln, RNA members and standards and members of the Family and Friends of HMS Warwick Association. The ceremony was followed by tea/coffee and Danish pastries at the Courthouse where there was a display focusing on HMS Warwick and crew. W-class destroyer HMS Warwick was commissioned shortly before the end of World War 1 and was flagship for the Zeebrugge Raid of St George's Day 1918. She was torpedoed on 20 February 1944 off Cornwall while hunting a German submarine and sank rapidly taking 66 of her crew with her; 93 men were rescued.

Helston Branch

Helston branch members also marked the anniversary of the sinking of HMS Warwick 80 year ago. Shipmates mustered in Penzance cemetery at 1100 on Tuesday 20 of February to play their part in events around the country to mark the day. The service was led by S/M Joe Locke with Chairman S/M George Scott and Vice Chairwoman S/M Josie Locke, standard bearer Alec Willett and S/M Ron Strong. S/M Willett dipped the standard as the still was being piped and the service closed with the National Anthem. Pictured right are members of Helston branch at the grave of OS Ronald Neale, who died at the age of 20 in the sinking of HMS Warwick. Branch chairman S/M Scott can be seen sharing a tot with Ronald.



Area 6/Rushden Branch

On Saturday 17 February, delegates and observers from across seven counties of 6 Area attended the Annual General Meeting, Area Meeting and Social held in Northamptonshire and hosted by Rushden and District branch at the town's cherished Windmill Club in Rushden.

The event was well attended. Chairman S/M Paul Godfrey gave thanks to shipmates who had travelled far distances to attend the event, made more enjoyable by the camaraderie and banter that followed later in the day with entertainment by a live folk band playing sea shanties.

This year's focus was very much on messaging and how the Association can better communicate, and exchange best practices to work their way through the challenges that face the Association, particularly support to the less-able branches which struggle to find new members, and active member participation.

Area Awards and an RNA Central Office Note of Recognition were presented for achievements in the year. Receiving a Note of Recognition were Penny Jarvis (First Garden City Letchworth branch) and Gill Clements (Area Treasurer and Peterborough branch) for their support to branches outside their own and breathing new life into a branch beset with administrative problems.

The amazing June Boddrell (Bracknell branch) received Area Shipmate of the Year and Paul McKay (Area MCO and Rushden branch) received the President's Award for his work in delivering a communication change strategy.

The Best Fundraising achievement went to St Neots branch, the most improved branch was Hemel Hempstead and, for the third year in succession, the award for best branch went to Rushden and District.

The day concluded with travellers making their weary way home to faraway places but fuelled with a feeling of great achievement for a remarkably successful year.

While the area might be landlocked with no coastal sea air to enjoy, there are plenty of branches within easy reach where one can go to enjoy a warm Naval environment.



Caerphilly Branch

Shipmate Dave Richards is pictured receiving his Life Membership Certificate from Caerphilly branch S/M Chairman Paul Pritchard. Caerphilly is one of the newest branches in the Association, having been launched just last year thanks to the efforts of S/M Paul, who served 25 years in the Royal Navy, including the Falklands Conflict.

Eastbourne Branch

During their first meeting of 2024 Eastbourne branch was pleased to be able to present Eastbourne Sea Cadet Unit with a lifebuoy from Leander-class frigate HMS Juno – Juno was affiliated to the town and this lifebuoy will stand on the main deck of the unit headquarters alongside that of HMS Eastbourne.

Branch President Rear Admiral John Kingwell, himself a former Sea Cadet and currently also President of the Hastings and Newhaven and Seaford Sea Cadet units, is pictured (below) presenting the lifebuoy to PO (SCC) Abbie Wheeler, Commanding Officer of the unit, accompanied by Royal Marines Cadet L/Cpl Hoare and Sea Cadet First Class Thompson.

Both young people say they want to join their respective Services, L/Cpl Hoare wants to be a RM Commando and Cadet Thompson wants to be a Weapon Engineer – Eastbourne branch wish them all the best. Shipmates are also grateful to S/M Bill

Whaley who, having served in HMS Juno, kindly donated the lifebuoy, a ship's crest and a ship's picture with cap tally to the branch for the presentation.

At the February meeting the branch was able to present their Vice Chairman S/M Brian Witham with Life Membership to the RNA. Brian has been a member of the RNA for over 48 years, helping veterans and organisations in Eastbourne through the RNOCC and the RNA.

Brian was presented with his Life Membership, member's card and lapel pin by branch President Rear Admiral Kingwell (above right), and was accompanied by his wife Jessie, herself a longstanding branch member and supporter.

Chairman S/M John Wicking said that throughout his tenure Brian has been a valuable and strong help and constant support, always there when he was needed. Brian himself said he was a bit surprised but extremely pleased to receive the award – he modestly said he does what he can, turns up to help keep things functioning, buys raffle tickets and talks to people. He thanked everyone for the honour.



Torrevieja Branch

February's meeting of Torrevieja branch was memorable for several reasons, and a very proud time for members to show their ethos and core values of Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism, Comradeship by awarding special branch certificates to dedicated and longstanding shipmates. Chairman S/M Tony Jenkins presented a Gold Certificate to S/M Margaret Forshaw for her 20 years membership and support to the branch.

This award was doubly worthy, because not only was she and her late husband, John Forshaw, early founding members of the branch, but she also served on the Committee for several years as Honorary Secretary. S/M Jenkins also awarded a Bronze Certificate to S/M Bryan Dalton who, even though a 'sprog' compared to Margaret's tenure, has nevertheless amassed a significant ten-year membership of the branch.

Importantly, most of his time as a member of the branch has been in the capacity of Standard Bearer, which he has carried out masterfully and stoically.

These special recognitions were in addition to the normal events of a monthly meeting, which including such things as:

Ex RN Ditty, where a short resumé from someone about their time in Service is presented, and this month it was the turn of Jo Rich, who was a Jenny Wren;

Tot Time, where all shipmates receive a tot of rum, and in some cases some less potent alcohol, to make toasts to different events that take place before their next meeting;

Shipmates' birthdays, always the last item to receive a toast; this time there was an added special recognition as S/M Michael White is due to celebrate his 22nd birthday on 29 February – the youngest oldie in the group!

Schoolie Session, continuing with the education of non-RN shipmates in the branch on the vagaries, usage and history of Jack and Jennyspeak; Schoolie S/M Graham Shelton gave his usual entertaining and enlightening rendition, this time on the word 'dhobey' and all the connotations thereof, such as 'dhobey crusher', a fiendish laundry machine on

board HM Ships apparently designed to rip off the buttons of Jack's shirts and then fire them through his socks! Which all leaves the question of "what will next month's meeting bring"?

Branch members and guests continued this year's social calendar by treating their loved ones to a Valentine's Dinner at Little Italy Restaurant near Cabo Roja.

The venue was romantically decked out with loved ones in mind by branch Assistant Social Secretary Lenny Manning and his Bosun's Mate, Angie Manning.

Each of the 'loved ones' was lavished with gifts including a personally addressed and individually hand-crafted Valentine's card from a secret admirer, a bottle of fizz, a large red rose and a favour of, a handmade chocolate heart with a Cupid's arrow through it and, last but not least, a beautiful heart-shaped brooch, all of which was prepared and presented by S/M Angie Manning on behalf of the 'secret admirers'.

Little Italy's chef and waiters did themselves proud, with the food and service befitting the adoration of the 'loved ones', and all the 'secret admirers' keenly anticipate being festooned with many 'brownie points'.

The amassing of prizes and drawing of the raffle was enthusiastically undertaken by branch Raffle Coordinator Nicola Loudon, aided by Kim Hemingfield.

As the evening was drawing to a close with everyone in high spirits, all the 'loved ones' and 'secret admirers' (who were no longer secret by this time) made their ways home, giving

a massive BZ to those who aided in staging the event and looking forward to the next date in the social calendar.



RNA Book Club



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Shipmate Ken Williams

South Bristol branch report with great sadness that S/M Kenneth (Ken) Williams crossed the bar on 13 December 2023, aged 99 years. His funeral service was held on 31 January at St Nicholas Church, Whitchurch, Bristol, followed by a committal at South Bristol Crematorium. Besides family members, there were three standards in attendance from RBL Whitchurch & Pensford, MNA Bristol and RNA South Bristol Branches. Representatives from the respective Associations and many of Ken's former work colleagues from Cadbury Schweppes also attended to pay their respects.

Ken was born in Bedminster, Bristol, on 20 April 1924 and joined the Royal Navy at Portsmouth as a Seaman Gunner in 1942 at the age of 17.

After completing his basic seamanship and gunnery training, he was 'volunteered' for bomb disposal while awaiting his first sea draft. One such incident Ken often recalled was of his team being detailed off to remove a large unexploded bomb lodged in a deep, water-filled crater between the sea wall and the large dry docks in Devonport Dockyard, and being kitted out in a diver's suit (minus helmet) for the task. The bomb was eventually removed safely.

He was eventually drafted to



HMS Vimy (a World War 1 vintage destroyer, launched in December 1917 as HMS Vancouver but renamed in April 1928).

Battle honours include the damaging / sinking of three German U-boats.

Ken spent all of his war years in HMS Vimy, serving on the Atlantic and Arctic Convoys, D-Day and then in the Pacific until the surrender of Japan in 1945.

Ken left the Royal Navy in 1946 to get married and soon had a family of three sons and a daughter.

He initially took up post-war employment on the tugboats working between the Ports of Bristol and Avonmouth, and then later as a long-term delivery driver for Schweppes (later known as Cadbury Schweppes) until retirement.

Ken leaves behind one remaining son, grandchildren and great grandchildren, his wife, two sons and daughter having sadly all predeceased him.

Ken was awarded Life Membership of the RNA in 2020, along with many other RNA World War 2 veteran members.

He will be sadly missed by his former work colleagues and shipmates.

Shipmate Thomas Haddon

West Ham branch are mourning the loss of S/M Thomas George Haddon, who died on 9 January at the age of 100.

S/M Thomas was born and lived his life in London's East End, apart from the war years. He joined the Royal Navy in 1942, serving in Coastal Forces, patrolling home waters and was also involved in Atlantic operations in Motor Torpedo Boats. He was involved in the early stages of the Normandy Landings – prior to D-Day his boat protected Motor Launches that were landing secret agents in France, and also laid mines. On late evening 5 June 1944 they left Plymouth Harbour with two American officers and a sergeant on board, who fixed port and starboard lights to the masthead facing skywards. In the early hours of 6 June, somewhere off Cherbourg near Utah Beach, two squadrons of planes carrying paratroopers flew over then turned sharply, guided by the mast lights. A little while after there were explosions visible from the coast. S/M Thomas went back to Civvy Street in 1946. He leaves a son and daughter-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Shipmate Barry Reynolds

Basildon branch are sad to announce that S/M Barry Reynolds, aged 65, crossed the bar on 17 January in Bronglais Hospital in Wales after a short illness.

Barry was very involved with Basildon branch as Social Secretary for a number of years, organising dances, and outings to other branches, as well as the dedication of the branch's new standard.

Whilst living in Wales S/M Barry got very involved with the local RNLI and worked as a volunteer in their shop in Aberystwyth. On the day of his funeral they lowered their flag to half-mast.

His daughter and son have made a donation to the charity and his name will be one of those shown on their new boat when launched.

Even though he lived in Wales, he was still a member of the branch and will be sadly missed.

Shipmate Ray Wiltshire

Wansbeck branch is sad to report the passing of former branch member S/M Ray Wiltshire, who crossed the bar on 18 February at the age of 93 after a long illness. S/M Ray had resigned as a member in 2017 on health grounds after being a regular attendee at meetings for many years. His funeral is on Tuesday 5 March at Blyth Crematorium at 1345; all shipmates are requested to attend if possible, especially Wansbeck and District branch members, and anyone else who knew him. Tyne branch is also invited, and the branch standard will be in attendance.

Following the funeral the family would like to invite those at the funeral to the South Beach pub for refreshment.

Shipmate Russell Hamilton Wigley

Portland branch are mourning the passing of S/M Russell Hamilton Wigley, born in 1949, who joined the Navy in 1971 and served in HMS Invincible during the Falklands Conflict.



Army Navy Rugby Match



Can your area get together to take a minibus or coach to the Army Navy Rugby Match at Twickenham on the 4th May?

The RNA's Branch Support Fund can help out with up to £250 towards transport (tickets must be purchased via the RNA)



contact
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information

ONCE
NAVY
ALWAYS
NAVY

HMS Affleck coming alongside at Belfast after she and other members of the 1st Escort Group (HMS Gore, HMS Gould and HMS Garlies) destroyed two German U-boats in the Atlantic. See 1 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 22696)



➤ MARCH SWINGING THE LAMP

1 March 1944

Two vessels – one British, one German – were lost as a result of the longest U-boat hunt of the war. The 1st Escort Group of Captain-class frigates was patrolling the far Western Approaches when, on 26 February 1944, three ships of the group – HM Ships Affleck, Gore and Gould – located and sank U-91, which went down with 36 matrosen; 16 men survived. Three days later, on 29 February, HMS Garlies detected U-358 on its ASDIC set, which was attacked by the group. Contact was maintained through the night and into the next day, with more than 100 depth charges being launched, as well as Hedgehog mortars. HMS Gore and Garlies had to return to Gibraltar to refuel, but HMS Affleck and Gould maintained contact with the submarine. At 1920 Gould was fatally struck by an acoustic homing torpedo fired by the U-boat, at which point

the submarine surfaced – only to be met with a hail of gunfire from Affleck, sinking the German vessel with just one survivor being picked up. U-358 had taken part in 11 wolfpack attacks during the Battle of the Atlantic, and was credited with the sinking of four merchantmen in addition to HMS Gould, which sank with the loss of more than 120 sailors – only 14 men survived the attack. The American-built ship had been in service with the Royal Navy for less than six months.

March 2 1960

HMS Tyne was dispatched from Gibraltar to Agadir in Morocco as part of the international response to the devastating earthquake that struck the Moroccan Atlantic coast just after 2330 on 29 February 1960. The quake itself was moderate in intensity, but being so shallow it caused widespread destruction, killing up to

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15,000 people in the port city – up to a third of the population. American and French forces were quickly on the scene, as they had military bases in relatively close proximity, joining Moroccan troops in the area. British Ton-class minesweeper HMS Darlaston, which had been ready to deploy to the Far East at the end of February, was diverted the 500 miles or so to Agadir with a doctor and emergency supplies to provide an on-the-spot assessment as part of Operation Samaritan, and it was subsequently decided to send depot ship HMS Tyne to Gibraltar to pick up further stores, including dozens of prefabricated wooden huts which were part-assembled en route to Agadir by the ship's company. The international rescue operation was hampered by the damage to so many buildings (including the loss of fire stations) and the unusually high temperatures, which rose to 40C (104F) and meant bodies trapped in the rubble putrefied rapidly, causing the risk of disease as well as attracting swarms of flies. Tyne herself could not go into the inner harbour as the shifting seabed presented unknown hazards, and no personnel went ashore.

March 3 1971

HMS Dreadnought became the first Royal Navy submarine to surface at the North Pole. The boat, the Royal Navy's first nuclear-powered submarine which was first commissioned in April 1963, was taking part in Arctic exercises, apparently codenamed 'Sniff', when she detached to navigate under the ice and find a convenient point through which to surface close to the North Pole. When she returned to her home port of Faslane it was discovered that she had suffered minor damage to her propeller and parts of the fore casing. Apart from the challenge of finding the Pole and a suitable spot to break through the ice with equipment which was far from optimised for the task, the command team also had an interesting problem to overcome when they withdrew – every direction was south, so they had to make sure they found the 'correct' south – ie the lines of meridian that would take them back towards their compatriots, rather than, say, Siberia or Greenland. Fortunately, they succeeded. Under-ice operations such as this Polar visit are only possible in nuclear-powered submarines, which can remain submerged for extended periods as they make their way under thick ice sheets.

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HMS Dreadnought is pictured at the North Pole. See March 3. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM CT 100)





A Royal Navy doctor from HMS Gambia inoculating a child against typhoid in an emergency medical station set up in the waiting room of the railway station in Port Louis, the capital of Mauritius. See 4 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 34279)

4 March 1960

Light cruiser HMS Gambia arrived at Port Louis, Mauritius, with emergency supplies following an Indian Ocean tropical storm. Cyclone Carol hit the Mascarene Islands on 27 February 1960 with wind gusts of almost 160mph, the strongest ever recorded at that time and only surpassed once since. The storm killed 42 people on Mauritius and injured a further 95 and destroyed or seriously damaged some 100,000 homes, leaving 15 per cent of the population homeless. The storm, which also ruined more than half of the island's sugar crop, was the second such event in little over a month, as Cyclone Alix had brushed past Mauritius in mid-January, killing eight, injuring more than 100 and destroying 20,000 homes and other buildings. Landing parties from HMS Gambia repaired power supplies and telephone links, gave typhoid injections and built emergency accommodation. It was one of the final major acts of the cruiser, which was first commissioned in February 1942 and served for 18 months or so in the Indian Ocean and East Indies before transferring to the Royal New Zealand Navy as HMNZS Gambia, operating against the Japanese in the Pacific in the final months of the war and firing some of the final shots of World War 2, as she was

attacked by Japanese kamikaze aircraft as a ceasefire was announced. She was also present in Tokyo Bay for the signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender on 2 September 1945. After the war Gambia continued to make her presence felt, providing assistance to the Greek island of Zakynthos in 1953 when the area was struck by an earthquake, and serving as a flagship on the East Indies Station. She returned to Portsmouth for the final time at the end of 1960, making her final journey to the breakers yard in December 1968.

5 March 1954

HMS Explorer, the first of two experimental submarines based on a German U-boat design, was launched by Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness. The boats were designed along the lines of HMS Meteorite, formerly U-1407, one of three German coastal submarines which used an High Test Peroxide (HTP) air-independent propulsion system and which was taken by the Allies after Germany surrendered. Meteorite, an unpredictable and unloved vessel described as "75 per cent safe" by her crews, was scrapped in 1949, but had proved promising enough for the Admiralty to order the building of two larger boats. Also powered by HTP, their use of

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a hydrogen peroxide oxidiser inevitably led to Explorer and her younger sister HMS Excalibur being known as the blonde boats. Steam was raised by the interaction of HTP and diesel oil, a dangerously volatile process which led to unexpected flames, occasional explosions and fumes filling compartments – so much so that Explorer was given the nickname ‘Exploder’. Explorer was beset by early teething problems, but when she finally got to sea and performed as planned she was impressively fast, achieving 25 knots while submerged, making her useful as a target for anti-submarine warfare training. The development by the Americans of nuclear reactors small enough to install in a submarine led to the end of the HTP experiment in the Royal Navy. HTP was the cause of the loss of at least two other submarines – HMS Sidon, which sank in Portland Harbour in June 1955 when an experimental HTP-powered torpedo motor exploded, killing 12 sailors (and later a Naval doctor who was helping survivors on board) and seriously injuring 12 more, and the Russian nuclear submarine Kursk, which was lost in August 2000 with all 118 men on board following a similar HTP torpedo malfunction.

6 March 1945

Midget submarine XE 11 drifted out of a designated exercise area and collided with boom defence vessel Norina which was laying

buoys in Loch Striven, off the Firth of Clyde in Scotland, causing the 33-ton submarine to sink with the loss of her commanding officer and two members of the crew, although the remaining two crew were rescued. The submarine had been carrying out depth gauge calibration, normally a two-man operation but on this day with three additional crew to gain experience. Rising from 100ft deep 10ft at a time, the boat struck the keel of the stationary Norina just as her screws started up, and the damaged submarine sank to the floor of the loch at more than 200ft. The two men who escaped made the Guinness Book of World Records for achieving the deepest unaided ascent from a sunken submarine. XE-11, unofficially known as Lucifer, was later salvaged, but the sinking meant she was the last Royal Navy submarine lost for any reason during World War 2.

7 March 1916

HMS E24, the first British minelaying submarine, began operational duties in the mouth of the River Elbe off Cuxhaven in Germany. She had been launched on 9 December 1915 at Vickers and commissioned on 9 January 1916, and although she had five torpedo tubes and a 2pdr deck gun her main task was to lay mines – the second of the E-class boats to take on the task. Her first patrol passed without incident, but her second was to prove her last. Part of the 9th

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HMS Explorer on speed trials in January 1957. See 5 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 33764)

Submarine Flotilla, she left Harwich early on 21 March 1916 bound for the Heligoland Bight with the object of laying a zigzag pattern of mines during the hours of darkness but it is thought she struck a German mine in the area; she was reported as missing on 24 March. Her wreck was found in 1973 by divers searching for the wreck of a U-boat in the vicinity and was towed to Cuxhaven where it was identified as E24; the human remains found inside were buried in Ohlsdorf Cemetery, Hamburg.

8 March 1872

Wooden screw frigate HMS Ariadne, on passage to Gibraltar, hove to when a sailor fell overboard from the main topmast crossrees while the ship was 130 miles out into the Atlantic off the Portuguese coast. The ship was running under reduced sail in a strong breeze with a long, heavy swell, causing it to roll violently, and the lost sailor had been helping replace a split sail. A rescue was attempted and a cutter made good progress towards the fallen sailor's last position, but with the weather deteriorating, Ariadne raised steam and lowered her screw starting to steam towards the cutter. As it reached the lee of the ship the cutter was swamped and capsized. A second cutter was launched but one of the winches failed, causing it to plunge bows first into the sea and capsize almost immediately, though all but one of its crew were pulled to safety with

some difficulty. Ariadne was then allowed to drift towards the wreck of the first cutter and lines were thrown, allowing four of the first cutter's crew to be saved. In total Ariadne lost 11 members of her ship's company. The four rescued from the first cutter reported that their boat had performed admirably for the two hours or more that it was away from the mother ship, despite difficult sea conditions, and it was only when attempting to change course in confused seas that it was caught broadside on and overturned. The 26-gun frigate, displacing 4,600 tons, had served with the Channel Squadron for five years, during which time she was part of the squadron that carried the Prince of Wales – later King Edward VII – on a royal tour of the United States and Canada in 1860. On two later occasions she acted as a royal yacht for the Prince and Princess of Wales in the Mediterranean. Ariadne was converted to a naval cadet training vessel as part of HMS Vernon in 1884, and was renamed HMS Actaeon in 1905 when she became a hulk at the Naval torpedo school at Sheerness. She was scrapped in 1922.

9 March 1959

Revolutionary frigate HMS Ashanti was launched at Yarrow, Scotstoun, the first of seven Type 81 Tribal-class frigates. She was the first frigate designed and built with combined steam and gas turbine main propulsion (COSAG),

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HMS Ashanti. See 9 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM HU 129738)

the first two-funnel frigate (one funnel was required for gas turbine venting), the first warship built equipped with a guided missile system (Seacat close-range air defence), the first warship to incorporate a helicopter into her systems (a Westland Wasp), the first frigate with cafeteria messing, bunk sleeping accommodation and full air conditioning, and the last DD/FF class with scuttles in the hull. She had an eventful career; her gas turbine failed in 1962 when a blade fractured, in May 1965 she was damaged in collision with a Russian merchant ship in Mombasa and in 1967 while undergoing refit in Aden some of her ship's company worked alongside the Army in the British withdrawal from Aden. The frigate undertook Beira patrols in 1970 and was at the Royal Navy's withdrawal from Malta in 1971. Three years later, while on passage from the Caribbean to the UK she lost two sailors when she was struck by a freak wave 80 miles off Bermuda – one man (the youngest on board) went overboard while the other (reportedly the oldest in the ship's company) died of injuries received on board the ship. Ashanti returned to Bermuda for repairs, but in the meantime hasty unconfirmed reports had been relayed to the UK that the ship had been lost at sea. In 1977 three of her sailors died in a boiler room fire in the Bristol Channel. Ashanti spent her final years as a harbour training ship, and was sunk as a target by nuclear submarines using missiles and torpedoes in 1988.

10 March 1956

A world air speed record of 1,132mph was set by Lt Cdr Peter Twiss in a Fairey Delta 2 on a measured distance between Chichester and RN Air Station Ford, in West Sussex. The Naval officer was the first person to fly at more than 1,000mph in level flight, and the new mark exceeded the existing record by more than 310mph. The Fairey Delta was a British supersonic research aircraft produced for investigations into transonic and supersonic flight. The aircraft, one of only two produced, featured a 'droop snoot' and delta wing, both prominent features of the Anglo-French Concorde project which was in the early stages of development at that time. The world record run was largely undertaken as a private venture by Fairey as the government of the day was indifferent, if not against, the attempt – indeed, Fairey had to pay associated costs and 'borrow' the aircraft back from the Ministry of Supply. A period of time was set aside for the record attempt, but every run fell foul of a technical issue, until on the final day two runs were

Survivors from the sinking of HMS Naiad on board HMS Jervis in the Eastern Mediterranean. See 11 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 8389)

scheduled. The first was another failure, but on the second – the last throw of the dice – the aircraft lived up to Fairey's expectations and smashed the existing record, set by a North American F-100 Super Sabre the previous year. The astonishing flight – breaking the record by more than 35 per cent, an unheard-of achievement – caused a major rethink in the military aircraft sector around the world, and the record stood until the end of 1957, when a McDonnell JF-101A Voodoo of the US Air Force nudged it up to just over 1,200mph. One of the two Deltas – WG774, the plane in which Twiss broke the speed record – was later converted to what was designated the BAC 221, plying a part of the Concorde development programme, and that aircraft is now preserved and on public display (alongside Concorde 002) at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton.

11 March 1942

Dido-class light cruiser HMS Naiad was sunk by U-565 south of Crete in the Mediterranean. Launched on 3 February 1939, and commissioned on 24 July the following year, Naiad initially joined the Home Fleet, then escorted convoys of West Africa. In May 1941 she was serving with Force H in the Mediterranean, mainly on Malta Convoy operations, but also on Crete operations, where she was badly damaged in German air attacks. On 10 March 1942 she left Alexandria as part of Force B (including HMS Dido and Euryalus) to intercept an Axis supply convoy off Tripoli and to act on reports that an Italian cruiser had been damaged, but the sortie was unsuccessful on both counts. On her return passage to Alexandria the following day Naiad was spotted by U-565, whose torpedo struck the British anti-aircraft cruiser amidships on her starboard side; the cruiser capsized and sank in little over half an hour with the loss of 77 men.

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HMS Bulwark passing HMS Albion in the Red Sea to the accompaniment of the salute of Verey pistol shot. See 15 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 35046)



12 March 1944

German U-boat tanker Brake was scuttled by her crew after being spotted by aircraft supporting a Royal Navy carrier group including escort carrier HMS Battler, cruisers HMS Suffolk and Newcastle and destroyers HMS Quadrant and HMS Roebuck – an attack delayed by several days so as to avoid causing suspicion amongst German military commanders. Brake was a replacement for the 7,700-ton tanker Charlotte Schliemann, which was scuttled by her crew off Mauritius on 12 February after being intercepted by destroyer HMS Relentless, an operation underpinned by intelligence gained through Ultra codebreaking. The movements of the 10,000-ton Brake were also known through Ultra intelligence, but her interception was held off so as to make it appear coincidental.

13 March 1859

River gunboats HMS Clown and HMS Janus, and boats from HMS Niger, attacked targets in the estuary of the Broadway River (now Xi River) during the Second Opium War. The Clown class was a group of a dozen gunboats originally designed for use in the Crimean War, though by the time they were built that conflict was over and some of the vessels were deployed to the Second Opium War in China instead. An improved version of the Cheerful class, the Clowns were 230-ton three-masted shallow-draught ships with both steam power

and sails, typically operated by a crew of 30, and bearing one 68pdr and one 32pdr gun. Niger was a wooden screw sloop (later designated a corvette) of 1,500 tons and a ship's company of 160, and was on the East Indies and China Station during her second commission. Starting on 13 March the little flotilla managed to cause quite a stir – between them they destroyed a village, 20 pirate junks, 11 fast boats and a 36-gun defensive stockade in an operation that lasted for three days. The Opium Wars were a series of clashes between 1856 and 1860 between Britain, France and the United States on one side and the Chinese Qing dynasty over the right to import opium to China.

14 March 1958

The final parade was held at HMS Ceres, the Royal Naval Supply and Secretariat School at Wetherby in West Yorkshire, before the establishment was paid off on 31 March and subsequently moved to Chatham.

15 March 1980

Fire broke out in a boiler room in commando carrier HMS Bulwark during a visit to Philadelphia in the United States. Although the damage was assessed as being too costly to repair, the ship continued to operate in her role as an anti-submarine warfare carrier until the delayed arrival of new carrier HMS Invincible. Bulwark was laid down at Harland and Wolff in

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Belfast at the end of World War 2 and launched in June 1948, but the 22,000-ton Centaur-class light aircraft carrier was not commissioned until late 1954. She had an eventful career, including a vital role in the Suez Crisis in 1956, but in 1958 she was converted to a commando carrier, followed shortly after by her sister ship HMS Albion. She took part in the Indonesian Confrontation and served in many parts of the world, regularly supporting the British withdrawal from overseas territories such as Aden and Malta. She also played an important role in the development of the Sea Harrier, acting as trial ship for the Harrier's forerunner, the Hawker Siddeley Kestrel, in 1966 as well as the Sea Harrier itself in 1979. Bulwark was placed in reserve in 1976 and was offered up for sale to the Peruvian Navy, but after two years of negotiations the Admiralty decided to keep her and she went into refit to prepare her for her role as an interim anti-submarine warfare carrier. It was during Exercise Safe Passage off the Atlantic coast of the United States that she paid a visit to Philadelphia and her boiler room was damaged by fire; despite this she participated in exercises off Sardinian and Norway later that year, though further damage was sustained through a fire in a messdeck and part of her hangar. She carried on in service with minimal repairs until Invincible arrived in early 1981, at which point Bulwark bowed out of active service. There was a plan to reactivate her for the Falklands Conflict, after which she would remain in the South Atlantic as an HQ ship at Port Stanley, but the cost and effort of preparing her after the fire damage and deterioration of her machinery was deemed too much and she was put up for disposal in April 1983, being scrapped in Scotland a year later.

16 March 1801

3rd Rate HMS Invincible was lost in a storm off the coast of Norfolk, with more than 400 sailors dying in the incident. Invincible (74 guns) was the second ship of that name, the first (a captured French 74-gun man o'war) having been wrecked on a sandbank at the eastern end of the Solent in 1758, and sadly she came to a similar end to her predecessor. The second Invincible was launched on 9 March 1765 at Deptford and took part in the battles of Cape St Vincent (1780), Chesapeake (1781), St Kitts (1782) and the Glorious First of June (1794), where she sustained serious damage. In mid-March 1801 Invincible was sailing from Great Yarmouth to the Oresund, between Denmark and Sweden, in preparation for an attack on the Danish fleet by Admiral Sir Hyde Parker. She had not got far when she was caught by a squall that forced her onto a rock on the Hammond's Knoll sandbank off Happisburgh. She remained stuck for some hours, and when she eventually worked free she immediately grounded on the sandbank itself, where she was dismantled and began to break up. She remained on the sand through the following day, but later in the evening the remains of the hull floated off the sandbank and sank in deep water. Almost 200 sailors survived the disaster by taking to boats – some were picked up by passing vessels – but 400 of their shipmates drowned. The subsequent court martial laid the blame at the feet of the harbour pilot and Invincible's Master, who should have been familiar with the many dangerous shoals and rocks off the Norfolk coast.

17 March 1917

The Admiralty Compass Observatory moved to Ditton Park, Slough. The Observatory was

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HMS Tiger at sea in February 1959. See 18 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 34145)

formed in 1842 to design, develop and maintain compasses and other precision instruments for the Royal Navy and subsequently as required by the other Services. At first known as the Compass Branch (1842 to 1917), it was established as part of the Hydrographic Department and featured a small wooden octagonal structure in the garden of a house in Hawkins Terrace, Charlton, South London, close to the dockyard at Woolwich. The Observatory had two stone pillars to hold instruments determining true north, while a third held the compass being tested. With the closure of the Woolwich Dockyard in 1869 the Observatory moved to the central open square at the Naval Victualling Yard at Deptford. Once tested in the Observatory, a compass would then be tested again back on its ship moored in the Thames Estuary as the ship was swung through the points of the compass; this process usually

happened every three or four years. In 1917 the Observatory, now known as the Compass Department, moved to Ditton Park, a private estate on the outskirts of Slough, and in 1968 it was renamed the Compass Directorate. Three years later the organisation was merged with the Admiralty Surface Weapons Establishment (ASWE)'s Navigational Division, continuing to operate in Slough until the early 1980s.

18 March 1959

Cruiser HMS Tiger was commissioned, more than 17 years after she was laid down at John Brown's on the Clyde. The name ship of the three-strong Tiger class of conventional cruisers, Tiger was laid down as HMS Bellerophon in 1941 at John Browns on the Clyde, but other higher-priority ships pushed her down the pecking

Leander-class frigate HMS Jupiter (F60) alongside Blackwood-class frigate HMS Keppel (F85) at Portsmouth, 1969. See 19 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM HU 129863)

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order and she was still on the stocks when she was renamed Tiger in 1945. She was launched, partially completed, in October that year but then lay at Dalmuir on the Clyde for another six years, during which time she was redesigned as an air defence ship with numerous alterations to her original wartime specification, which by the mid-1950s was considerable outdated. Work was further delayed until 1955, and she finally entered service in 1960. She took part in the Indonesian Confrontation, although manpower shortages meant some of her equipment could not be utilised. Tiger was visiting Cardiff in October 1966 when the Aberfan disaster happened, and members of her ship's company helped in the rescue operation; at the end of the year she hosted unsuccessful talks between Prime Minister Harold Wilson and Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith after the latter's unilateral declaration of independence. That same month Tiger went into reserve before an unexpectedly expensive and overly long five-year conversion to a helicopter and command cruiser, which included the addition of a flight deck, making her a valuable task group flagship. When fully-manned with helicopter squadrons the ship had a complement of almost 900, putting a strain on accommodation and making her expensive to operate – making her an obvious candidate for the axe during the economic downturn of the late 1970s. Tiger was placed in reserve in 1978 and decommissioned in May 1979; she and sister ship HMS Blake were reactivated at the start of the Falklands Conflict as their flight decks were seen as valuable assets, but the sobering losses of HMS Sheffield and the General Belgrano, coupled with the ships' lack of modern self-defence capability (and the large numbers required to crew them – the thought of losing more than 800 men if one of them sank was a considerable worry) meant that the refits were halted almost before they started. With no one interested in taking her on, Tiger quietly rusted away in the upper reaches of Portsmouth

harbour until she was sold for scrapping in Spain in mid-1986.

19 March 1974

Leander-class frigate HMS Jupiter received an unexpected guest on board on 19 March 1974 during a visit to San Diego. An elderly Californian resident went up the brow and reported to the Officer of the Watch, declaring himself a deserter from his ship some 55 years previously. Reportedly over a tot of whisky with the frigate's Commanding Officer, 73-year-old Walter Talbot described how he had been an Ordinary Seaman in light cruiser HMS Calcutta when it escorted the then Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII, to Montreal in 1919. Talbot, aged 19 at the time, had jumped ship and fled to New York, where he enlisted in the US Navy and served for six years, re-enlisting to fight in World War 2. By 1974, with his past preying on his mind, Talbot was prepared to face the consequences of his actions as a teenager because he wanted to see England again before he was too old to travel. A swift signal to CINCFLEET by the frigate's CO secured the promise of Talbot's honourable discharge from the Service, which was formalised later that year. The UK issued him with a British passport and Talbot, who was married with three children, flew back to London in June and met his sister for the first time in 54 years; she had been just one year old when Talbot left his ship.

20 March 1954

890 Naval Air Squadron became the first Royal Navy unit formed up to operate the de Havilland Sea Venom FAW (Fighter, All Weather) when it stood up at RN Air Station Yeovilton. The squadron had first appeared in Canada in June 1942 as a Grumman Wildcat/Martlet squadron and operated for two years, reappearing again in January 1952 at RN Air Station Ford in West Sussex for just ten months while operating the Supermarine Attacker. In its third iteration it took delivery of its first Sea Venoms a few days

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A Royal Navy Sea Venom in flight. See 20 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 33503)



after recommissioning, signalling the start of some nine months of working up, followed by a similar period working at sea. The two-seat Sea Venom, designed for defence of the Fleet as well as ground attack support, proved an effective aircraft and capably fulfilled the all-weather, night-flying requirements as well as demonstrating good endurance. All together 50 Sea Venom FAW.20 and 167 FAW.21 were built, and both types were operated by 890 NAS. The Sea Venom, powered by a single de Havilland Ghost 105 turbojet, reached speeds of up to 576mph at low altitude and had a range of 700 miles, but its replacement on the front line by the de Havilland Sea Vixen began in 1959 and the final aircraft left second-line service in 1970.

21 March 1901

HMS Duncan, the lead ship of a class of pre-dreadnought battleships, was launched at the Thames Ironworks yard at Leamouth, Blackwall. Designed to counter the Russian Peresvet class of fast battleships, the six 15,000-ton Duncans were indeed rapid (up to 19 knots, a knot or two faster than the Russian ships to which they were by some way quite superior) but sacrificed defensive armour to make the grade. As such they were not a great success, though they remained the fastest battleships in the world for a number of years. Duncan served in the Mediterranean, the Channel and the Atlantic, suffering a couple of prangs in 1905 (colliding with battleship HMS Albion at Lerwick, being holed below the waterline) and 1906 when she briefly went aground off Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel during failed attempts to rescue her stricken

sister ship HMS Montagu. On the outbreak of war Duncan was in refit, but quickly joined her four surviving sisters as part of the Grand Fleet's 3rd Battle Squadron at Scapa Flow. Shortly afterwards the group transferred to the Channel Fleet, operating out of Dover, Portland and Sheerness. Recommissioning in 1915, Duncan switched to the North Atlantic then the Adriatic and Aegean, becoming embroiled in the dispute with the self-declared neutral (but pro-German) Greeks in December 1916. Returning to the UK in February 1917, Duncan was either in reserve or refit for the remainder of the war; she was put up for disposal in March 1919 and scrapped in June 1920.

22 March 1942:

Lt Dennis Copperwheat won the George Cross for his heroic efforts in scuttling a burning ammunition ship in the harbour of Valletta in Malta. The Norwegian merchantman Talabot had arrived laden with ammunition as part of the heavily-defended Allied convoy MG1, but was set alight by German air attacks. The burning ship was a danger to ships and infrastructure in the busy harbour so Lt Copperwheat, a torpedo and explosives officer in light cruiser HMS Penelope, led a party from the ship tasked with scuttling the floating bomb. As the party laid charges, ammunition stored on deck was exploding all round them and prevented them from entering the hold, so the scuttling charges were slung over the side of the freighter, which lay less than 60 yards from the shore. The electric cables connected to the charges barely reached the shore, so Copperwheat sent his men to take

HMS Duncan. See 21 March. The image is from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Q 74922)

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Kingfisher-class corvette HMS Puffin in Harwich after she rammed a German Seehund midget submarine. See 26 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 27876)

shelter and set off the charges himself, fully exposed to the blast which lifted him bodily. The Talbot sank, preventing a massive explosion, and a good deal of the ammunition on board was later salvaged, with heavy bombs being used in operations to liberate Italy.

23 March 1922

Submarine HMS H42 was sunk by destroyer HMS Versatile during 3rd Submarine Flotilla exercises with the Atlantic Fleet off Europa Point, Gibraltar. The submarine, built by Whitworth Armstrong on the Tyne and commissioned in May 1919, had been carrying out practice torpedo attacks against Royal Navy destroyers around Gibraltar when she unexpectedly surfaced between 30 to 120 yards in front of Versatile, which was steaming at 20 knots. Although the destroyer immediately put her engines full astern and put the helm hard over to port she rammed the 500-ton submarine just astern of her conning tower, almost cutting her in half. The boat sank immediately, taking her crew of 24 with her.

24 March 1878

More than 300 men died when training frigate HMS Eurydice was lost in a storm off Ventnor on the Isle of Wight – one of Britain's worst peacetime Naval disasters. Eurydice, a fast 26-gun frigate with a shallow draught for operations in shallow waters, was built in Portsmouth and launched in May 1843. She spent her early years on the North American and West Indies, and South African, stations. She spent 20 years without seagoing service between 1857 and 1877, during which time she was converted at Whites yard in Cowes, Isle of Wight, as a training ship. In November 1877 she left on a training cruise to the North America and West Indies Station, based in Bermuda, and set off on her return passage eastwards on 6 March 1878. She made a rapid crossing of the Atlantic, but was caught in a sudden violent snowstorm in Sandown Bay, causing her to capsize. Only two of the ship's 319 crew and trainees survived – many went down with her, the remainder died in the freezing water. One of the witnesses to the

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tragedy was three-year-old Winston Churchill, whose family were living at Ventnor at the time, and there are several tales of a ghostly Eurydice appearing off the Dunnose headland, including an account by Prince Edward, now the Duke of Edinburgh, who said he saw the ship while filming in the area, and another by a Royal Navy submarine commander, whose boat took evasive action only for the ship to disappear. The disaster had an unhappy sequel; although the officers and crew were cleared of blame, it was felt that the ship's streamlined design, shallow draught and known lack of stability made her unsuitable as a training vessel, yet an almost identical ship, HMS Atlanta (previously HMS Juno) took on Eurydice's role and was lost at sea in a storm in 1880 with the loss of 281 lives. Eurydice was salvaged and refloated later in 1878 but was found to be so badly damaged that she was broken up.

25 March 1944

The world's first deck landing of a high-performance twin engine aircraft was carried out by legendary Royal Navy test pilot Lt Cdr Eric 'Winkle' Brown RNVR, flying a Mk6 de Havilland Mosquito fighter-bomber variant – the first Sea Mosquito, designated the TR Mk.33 – from the RAE Farnborough to HMS Indefatigable off Ailsa Craig in the outer Firth of Clyde. The 32,600-ton carrier was still undergoing builders trials at the time. This was not the first twin-engined plane to land on a carrier – a French Potez 56 transport

aircraft had landed on and taken off from the carrier Bearn in March 1936, but although the two aircraft were similar in size the Sea Mosquito was far more powerful and three times as heavy as the Potez.

26 March 1945

Kingfisher-class sloop HMS Puffin was damaged while ramming a midget submarine, accidentally detonating its warheads off Lowestoft. Puffin, launched on the Clyde in May 1936, was upgraded at the outbreak of war – she and her sisters were equipped with extra machine guns and 20mm Oerlikon guns as they became available, and also fitted with effective attack and air defence radar. Puffin quickly showed her mettle, combining with anti-submarine trawler HMT Cayton Wyke October 1939 to attack U-16 off Dover with depth charges – there is some dispute as to whether the U-boat was damaged in the incident, but in any case the submarine struck a mine and was scuttled the following day. On 26 March 1945 Puffin spotted a two-man German Seehund midget submarine in the North Sea and rammed it, detonating its torpedoes which badly damaged the British ship's bows. When she returned to Harwich a survey found the damage to be so extensive that she would have to be written off, and she was sold for scrapping in 1947. Seehunds were difficult to spot, even with radar, and sank around 100,000 tons of shipping in the final months of the war, mainly in the North Sea and Channel.

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Fleet Air Arm Blackburn Buccaneers and bombs being prepared at RNAS Brawdy to support the Torrey Canyon emergency. See 28 March. The image is from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM HU 131765)





Supertanker Torrey Canyon breaking up on the Seven Stones reef off Cornwall. See 28 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 35082)

27 March 1680

HMS Adventure engaged and destroyed the Algerine ship Citron Tree off Arzila in Morocco. Adventure was a 34-gun 4th Rate built at Woolwich Dockyard and launched in 1646, though in her later career she mounted up to 44 guns. On the outbreak of the English Civil War she was deployed on the side of Parliamentary forces, becoming part of the Commonwealth Navy in 1650 when she took part in a number of battles in the Channel against the Dutch. On the restoration of the monarchy Adventure became part of the Royal Navy and continued to be in the thick of the action. Her action against Citron Tree came during a particularly effective period in her career; on 27 March 1680 she destroyed the 32-gun Algerine ship near Tangiers, and on 11 April she captured the 28-gun Calibash. A year later she took the 46-gun Golden Horse, and followed that up with the destruction of the 34-gun Flower Pot in December 1681. She was rebuilt as a 5th Rate at Chatham in 1691 and relaunched in February of that year with a maximum 44 guns in time of war (36 in peace time). She continued to play her part in battles, including Barfleur in 1692, and to take a number

of privateers in the Channel, North Sea and Mediterranean. She was tasked to help escort a convoy to the West Indies in 1709, but that was to prove her undoing – she was captured by a French squadron off Martinique in the West Indies in a brutal encounter on 1 March 1709, during which she suffered around 100 casualties.

28 March 1967

Fleet Air Arm Buccaneers from 736 and 800 NAS bombed the stranded supertanker Torrey Canyon, setting it alight as it lay on the Seven Stones reef between Land's End and the Isles of Scilly, ten days after it went aground. The Liberian-registered Torrey Canyon, an American ship on charter to BP, was en route from Kuwait to Milford Haven when she struck Pollard's Rock on the Seven Stones reef on 18 March, becoming grounded and days later starting to break up. Attempts to refloat the tanker failed, and with a potentially disastrous oil spill in prospect – huge amounts of detergent had already been deployed at sea and on beaches around the area in an attempt to break up the oil slick – the UK government decided to set the wrecked tanker on fire to burn off oil, using Fleet Air Arm

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and RAF aircraft. On 28 March 1967, Blackburn Buccaneers from RN Air Station Lossiemouth dropped more than 40 1,000lb bombs on the wreck, with RAF Hawker Hunters dropping cans of kerosene on the site to help speed combustion. Although the plan appeared to be working, very high tides doused the flames, and further bombing runs by Fleet Air Arm Sea Vixens, operating out of RN Air Station Brawdy, and RAF Hunters dropping napalm were required before the tanker finally sank the following day. The oil slick that resulted from the wreck was estimated to cover around 270 square miles of sea, and more than 100 miles of Cornish coastline was affected to a greater or lesser degree. Numerous Royal Navy ships were involved in the episode, some helping to distribute detergent while others, including destroyers HMS Barrosa and Delight, patrolled a seven-mile exclusion zone.

29 March 1996

HMS Daedalus at Lee-on-the-Solent in Hampshire closed for military flying, almost 80 years after it was first opened. The establishment, on the coast four miles west of Portsmouth, was one of the Fleet Air Arm's foremost airfields, having been established in 1917 as a temporary seaplane training school, working in tandem with the established training base at Calshot on the west side of Southampton Water. Construction on the airfield itself – by now under the wing of the RAF – started in earnest with the laying of a grass in 1931 and formally opened in 1934 as part of RAF Coastal Command. It was commissioned as HMS Daedalus on 24 May 1939, the day on which control of the Fleet Air Arm switched from the RAF to the Admiralty – Daedalus was one of four aerodromes that were transferred in the move, the others being Ford, near Arundel in West Sussex, Worthy Down, north of Winchester, and Donibristle near Rosyth. At this point it is estimated that the establishment had handled almost 850 different types of aircraft since 1917, both seaplane and land-based. The switch from RAF to RN also saw the start of construction

of two concrete runways at Daedalus, though there was still plenty of seaplane activity at the base. The amount of space at Lee-on-the-Solent allowed for the storage of aircraft as well as the support of numerous front-line units, and during World War 2 it was the main administrative depot for Naval air ratings as well as the HQ of the Admiral (Air). Being such a hub of Naval aviation brought with it risk – on 16 August 1940 a German air raid killed a number of personnel and damaged several buildings. By 1942 the station could handle five front-line squadrons, and three second-line units at any one time, and the airfield was a crucial factor in the Normandy Landings of June 1944. Ten squadrons were operating from Lee in the days before D-Day, and some of the first Allied aircraft involved in support of Operation Neptune took off from Daedalus shortly before 0500 on 6 June 1944 and in the course of the day more than 430 sorties were flown, more than any other airfield in the south; most of these were reconnaissance and aerial spotting missions by British, Canadian and American aircrew for naval gunfire support along the landing beaches. In the autumn of 1959 the site was recommissioned as the ground training establishment HMS Ariel, reflecting its additional role training electrical specialists, encompassing the Joint Service Hovercraft Unit in 1962, but the station reverted to its former name on 5 October 1965. A full programme of Service flying continued at Daedalus until 1993, including the familiar red and grey Sea Kings of 772 NAS Search and Rescue flight; an SAR unit first formed at Daedalus in late 1972, taking over from the RAF unit at Thorney Island in West Sussex. Other units based at Daedalus included the Mobile Aircraft Repair Transport and Salvage Unit, the Safety Equipment School and the Photographic School. Daedalus closed completely as a military establishment on 31 July 1996.

30 March 1944

Destroyer HMS Laforey was torpedoed and sunk by the doomed submarine U-223 off Palermo

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Destroyer HMS Laforey. See 30 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 15873)



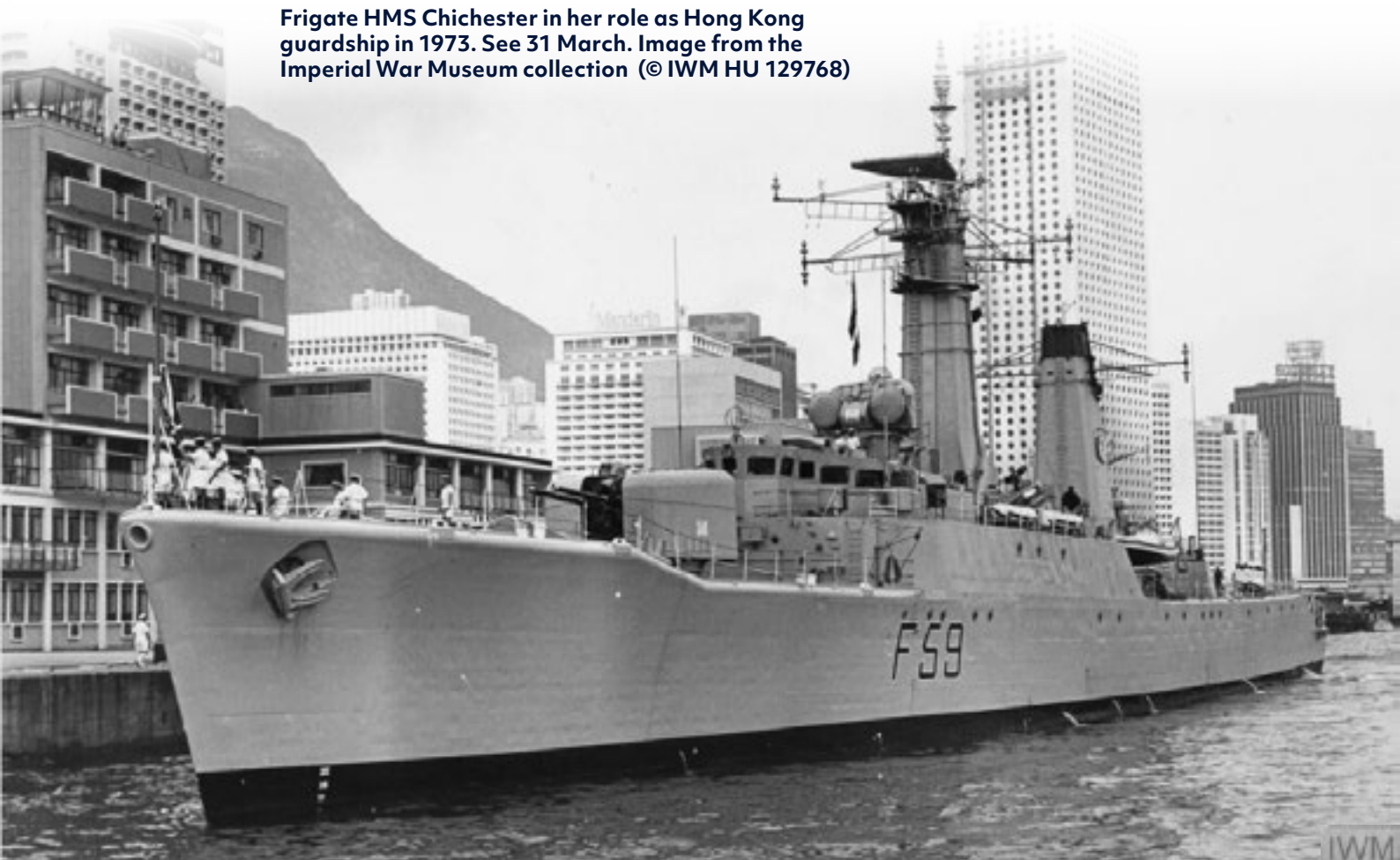
after a five-hour hunt. Laforey was an L-class destroyer launched in February 1941, by Yarrow's at Scotstoun in Glasgow, and as soon as she was commissioned she was sent to the Mediterranean where she carried out escort duties (including vital Malta convoys) and patrols as part of Force H. It was Laforey that stood by the stricken HMS Ark Royal when the aircraft carrier was torpedoed on 13 November 1941, running power cables across to help damage control efforts which came to nought when the carrier sank the following day. After more escort duties and anti-submarine patrols off Gibraltar Laforey took part in Operation Ironclad, the invasion of Madagascar, carrying out shore bombardments and marking the invasion route into Diego Suarez. After a brief refit in the UK Laforey continued to operate in the Med on escort, patrol and strike missions, as well as providing gunfire support for landings at Pantelleria and mainland Italy. On 23 July 1943 she sank Italian submarine Ascianghi, which itself had just torpedoed and sunk cruiser HMS Newfoundland, and the following January she helped rescue survivors from destroyer HMS Janus and cruiser HMS Spartan after the Anzio landings. It was during patrols off Italy that the destroyer met her fate. She deployed from Naples on 28 March 1944, and the following day joined the hunt for submarine U-223 north of Palermo. Laforey and destroyers HMS Blencathra, Hambledon, Tumult, Tuscan and Urchin stalked the submarine for several hours overnight, and constant depth-charging finally paid off when U-223 was forced to surface. The warships opened fire, but

U-223 was able to fire three torpedoes which hit Laforey. The destroyer sank quickly, killing 182 of her ship's company of 247, but revenge was swift, with U-223 quickly following Laforey to the bottom of the Mediterranean. 23 of the U-boat's crew of 50 died in the sinking; the boat had already had a lucky escape the previous year when it was rammed by destroyer HMS Hesperus, leaving her damaged and unable to dive, but she had managed to limp back to base

31 March 1976

The last Hong Kong guardship, frigate HMS Chichester, left the colony for the UK after three years on station. The Salisbury-class, or Type 61, frigate was launched by Fairfields at Govan, on the Clyde, on 21 April 1955 and entered service in 1958, joining the 4th Frigate Squadron with duties alternating between home waters and the Far East. She also undertook fishery protection duties, on one occasion raising complaints from the Soviet Union that she was spying on their naval exercises, and was also employed on the Beira Patrol in late 1969. Chichester was refitted in 1971 for the role of Hong Kong guardship, with reduced radar fit and greater light arms provision. She was joined by a flotilla of Ton-class minesweepers following the election of a Labour government in 1974, and as the Royal Navy presence around the world was rolled back Chichester left Hong Kong on 31 March 1976 to return to the UK via the Falklands, where she was required to provide a presence after an incident between a British research vessel and an Argentine destroyer. Chichester was scrapped in March 1981.

Frigate HMS Chichester in her role as Hong Kong guardship in 1973. See 31 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM HU 129768)





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3-7 Jun	RNA Battlefield Memorial Tour to Normandy
14-16 Jun	RNA National Conference, Cardiff
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Branch secretaries should note the following before submitting their application.

No Branch shall be permitted to send a delegate to the Conference unless it has observed the regulations of the Association in regard to the return of balance sheets, the Branch Annual Report and the formation of Branches. This provision has no application to the right of, and expectation for, ships and establishments to send a delegate to the Conference. Associate members are eligible to act as a Branch Delegate at Area meetings and Conferences, provided that they have completed three years continuous membership of the Association immediately prior to election as Delegate.

Each Branch which has been in commission for at least three months by the date of a Conference shall be entitled to nominate one eligible Association Member as its Delegate to attend a Conference.

Each Branch nominating a Delegate shall send details to the Council **to arrive not less than one week before the date of Conference**. A Branch may change its nominated Delegate provided the Council is notified not less than twenty four hours before the Conference.

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

NB: A Delegate will not be confirmed as such unless or until the Branch Balance Sheet for 2023 and Branch Annual Report for 2023 have been received in RNA Central Office.

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

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

Please forward the completed form to RNA Central Office, Building 1/087, Scott Road, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth, PO1 3LU or email to sara@royalnavalassoc.com

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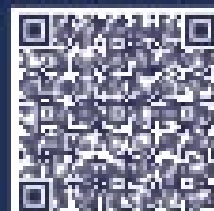
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