

# SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



## ➤ RNA SPORTS SUPREMO PUTS HIS CLUBSWINGER EXPERTISE TO USE

You don't have to be an iron-pumping action hero to join in the ever-expanding programme of sports, experience days, challenges and pastimes under the Thriving Together banner.

But it certainly helps if you are the one running the busy programme...

Pictured left (in shorts, naturally!) is the RNA's Sports and Comradeship Coordinator 'Scouse' Reeves, who on this occasion was co-commentating on the Royal Navy rugby league team's Betfred Challenge Cup tie against Thatto Heath Crusaders, from St Helens on Merseyside.

The Burnaby Road tie came as a result of the Navy beating the RAF 28-22 in Round 1, a match which Scouse also attended.

The Thatto match was broadcast live by BFBS, so Scouse provided the kind of expert view that only a former clubswinger could muster.

Sadly, the Brothers lost to the Merseysiders by 32-24, but the outing proved valuable for Scouse as he also ran a stall explaining the important role comradeship plays in the RNA and how, through the various strands of the Thriving Together programme, the Association is helping bring people together through shared interests, the thrill of a challenging experience or through playing and spectating at number or sports that link in to your serving days – these include golf, cricket and now the newly-formed RNA Football Club, who play their first match this month.

See also page 3 →

# ➤ CONTENTS

Call for Coastal Forces veterans	3
Contacts	4
From the General Secretary	5
Chairman's Chat	6
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	7
Word Search Competition	8
Submariners win ocean rowing race	9
Nuclear test veterans parade with their new medals	10
The Armed Forces Veteran Card	11
Fireside Chats	12
Health survey for veterans	14
Welfare and Wellbeing at the heart of RNA ethos	16
Focus on... longevity	17
Branch News	20
Obituaries	24
February Swinging the Lamp	26
RNA Calendar Competition	40
Longcast	41
Offers	41

**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.

# ➤ ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL

As part of 'Scouse' Reeves' Thriving Together programme the Royal Naval Association is excited to announce the beginning of the RNA Football Club (RNAFC).



"The club is designed to accommodate veterans, spouses and associate members of the RNA to reconnect, reminisce and remember through the avenues of football, regardless of standard." said Scouse, the RNA Sports and Comradeship Coordinator.

"Our first fixture is in Portsmouth on Tuesday 20 February, at HMS Temeraire, 1900 kick off – all support welcome!

"Loneliness and disconnecting from others is a huge factor affecting people's mental health, so whether it be as a player, staff or a spectator... We want to connect and reconnect shipmates and keep checking in with each other at games and events!"

## Could you support our mission aim?

With various games planned around the UK and Gibraltar in the coming months, we are looking for Sponsors to support what we want to achieve. If you want to get involved or your business would like to help in any way, please feel free to contact via DM or email Scouse on [scc@rnassoc.org](mailto:scc@rnassoc.org)

Players warm up at Burnaby Road before the Betfred Challenge Cup second round match between the Royal Navy and Thatto Heath Crusaders



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 <b>POSTPONED</b>	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

The latest details of the RNA Thriving Together programme

## ➤ HEADING FOR ST NEOTS...

The Royal Naval Association's Motorhome, Caravan and Camping (MCC) Special Interest Group have had their booking confirmed at St Neots Campsite on 20-25 June, which will coincide with the Armed Forces Day in the town.

The Meet is somewhat bigger than last time as they have 45 pitches, of which 27 have already been booked. Organisers are pleased to see the WRNS getting involved as well, and will also be liaising with St Neots RNA branch regards possible social events.

## ➤ CALL FOR COASTAL FORCES VETERANS

There used to be a national Coastal Forces Veterans Association, which decommissioned in 2007, when a number of local branches kept going, mainly in the larger towns and/or ports.

With the increasing age of World War 2 members, only London Branch still operates, meeting regularly on HMS Belfast. These days, the number of family members greatly outweighs the wartime veterans.

Branch secretary David Carter wondered if there are members of the RNA who were in Coastal Forces in World War 2 and may not have realised that the group is still around.

"If there are, we would very much like to hear from them

and learn their stories.," said David, who is himself a 'family member' in that his father was a Lieutenant RNVR and commanded ML 1301, which later became HMS Meda.

"We do have a website, [www.cfv.org.uk](http://www.cfv.org.uk) on which there is a forum for people to seek information or post stories and photos etc.

"It also has a comprehensive list of people who were killed in service together with a list of CF boats - where built and what happened to them. One of our members - Pete Scott - operates a Facebook page "Spitfires of the Sea" and people post photos etc on that as well.

Contact David on [cdcarter263@hotmail.com](mailto:cdcarter263@hotmail.com)

## ➤ CONTACTS



Central Office Contacts	
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### Find Semaphore Circular online

<http://bit.ly/RNADownloads>

or

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

### Snail Mail – Postal Address

RNA Central Office,  
Building 1/087,  
Scott Road,  
HM Naval Base,  
Portsmouth  
Hants PO1 3LT

# ► FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Ahoy me hearties,

Lots of news this month, mostly good but let's get the bad out of the way first. I regret to report the Crossing of the Bar of Eric Holmwood from Wrexham Branch who collapsed last Friday and, having not regained consciousness, passed the following day in hospital. A shock to all. I know we have loyal RNA members crossing the bar on a regular basis and I don't always mention them in this column but Eric was part of that group in the Wrexham Branch who, during the first Covid lockdown, started the Saturday evening virtual tot – a tradition which endures to this day – see the Facebook RNA Community Site for joining details. This Saturday's Tot time will honour his memory with toasts at 1900, that's 7pm for Associate Members... My sincere condolences to his family and to all at Wrexham Branch, especially his close chums Kev Hackett and Jeff Hughes.

More bad news if you were intending to come on the Normandy D-Day 80 cycle in early June. Having been over there for a recce last week (see image below), I've come to realise that it simply won't work during the week of D-Day itself as all the little lanes leading to the five beaches will undoubtedly be clogged up with minibuses full of folk visiting memorials and paying their respects. I've therefore pushed it right and we will seek to reorganise the cycling event in September or so. Apologies to the cyclists, however, what it does mean is that it opens up the possibility of more of us attending to support the commemorative events going on in Normandy for this big anniversary. The accommodation – originally booked for the cyclists – is still available but I regret is not suitable for those with mobility problems. The ferry is also already booked with Brittany Ferries giving us a deal on the fares so the package will be reasonably priced. The concept of ops would be to muster in Portsmouth for a briefing in Eisenhower's



D-Day map room at Southwick House in the afternoon of Monday, 3 June, deploy to France am 4 June, take in a couple of the more significant battle sites like Pegasus Bridge, Pont du Hoc and Omaha Beach as well as attending the RBL sponsored commemorative events at the British Normandy Memorial before returning to Portsmouth in the evening of 6 June. All you need to do is get yourself to Pompey as the RNA minibuses will come with us and be our transport. If you are interested, please notify Sara at [admin@rnassoc.org](mailto:admin@rnassoc.org) and, if we have more takers than we have

room for, we'll prioritise those who have a Normandy connection – a father or grandfather for example – so let us know if that's the case. This is open to all members noting the mobility issue.

Now onto the really good news. I'm delighted to say that I am in the final stages of negotiation with a company called Trinity who I am looking to seal a deal with regarding discounted insurance for RNA members. This will include travel insurance for all ages, personal accident insurance and buildings and contents insurance. Full details to follow next month.

Good news too from the Office of Veterans Affairs who have eventually released the details for former serving to get the Armed Forces Veteran Card – please see the article on page 11.

Great news also from the magnificent team in Area 7 (S Wales) who are stitching together this year's RNA AGM/Annual Conference and reunion weekend in Cardiff over the w/e of 14-16 June. After the shock last month of the original venue becoming unavailable, the team are now proud to announce that the new location for the Conference and the Gala Dinner on 15 June will be held the very smart Voco St David's Hotel in Cardiff and, thanks to some deft negotiations they've managed to keep the same price for the Gala Dinner in the evening as it would have cost originally except, now it's in a 5-star location – BZ team! See the accommodation details

on page 45. Accom is more expensive at the St David's though, but there's a full range of accom to suit all budgets in the Cardiff area so it promises to be a great w/e.

Please also note the date for this year's World Uckers Championships has been announced – 12 Oct at the Royal Maritime Club so better get your lucky dice warmed up! Details on pg 15.

Finally, a warm thank you to both No4 and No10 Areas for their kind invitation to their AGM in January. It was great to meet more Shipmates from around the Branches – thank you. I'm hoping to get out to as many as I can over the next few months so feel free to pin me to the bulkhead and tell me what needs improving with our Association.

Very best wishes,

*Bill*



## ► CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

### Ahoy Shipmates

I am delighted to present my first Chairman's Chat. I am immensely proud and honoured to have been elected as National Chair (NCh) by the National Council (NC) and look forward to leading the RNA through a challenging but exciting time ahead. Firstly, I want to pay tribute to my predecessor Keith Ridley. Keith, without doubt, has been an exceptional NCh and has been a tour de force within the association for many years. I was extremely pleased that he accepted Life Presidency and look forward to his continued support and leadership within the NC.

There are several challenges ahead as we grow the association; two major areas are Governance and Welfare / Wellbeing (W/W). Our current Governance structure puts us in conflict with the rules of the Charity Commission, therefore we must look at the organisation from top to bottom and update it to meet current legislation. Nobody likes change, but our association was set up a long time ago and some of our practices are simply out of date. Most importantly, nothing will change without the approval of our membership. There will be plenty of opportunity for all to express their view. I want to make my position clear; we are a membership organisation that has charitable status. Branch and Area are the cornerstone of who we are



and what we do.

Secondly W/W, again nobody likes change but the reality is that the law has changed, and we must protect ourselves from stepping into danger when dealing with various situations. The initial attempt at restructuring our W/W delivery came under criticism from many quarters. We listened and looked again at how we were presenting the change and corrected / modified it so that it was clearer. I know that it is not fully developed yet but the fact remains we must change our practices to deliver the W/W to our shipmates that both serves its purpose and protects those delivering the service.

In both areas we will continue to be transparent throughout the process, we will present to the membership at the appropriate time and take feedback as we develop these vital areas.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can during my tenure – and anticipate some healthy debates.

Very best wishes,

*Peter*

## ► DO YOU KNOW A D-DAY VETERAN?

Do you know someone who served during the D-Day Landings along the coast of Normandy in June 1944?

HMS Collingwood, the Royal Navy establishment in Fareham, Hampshire, is searching for individuals who can share their first-hand experiences and stories from this momentous event in our history.

If you or someone you know was part of the D-Day Landings, staff at Collingwood would be honoured to hear their story.

They are looking to bring those extraordinary days back to life through captivating images and personal narratives.

As part of the commemorative events, they are hosting a special

dinner at HMS Collingwood on Thursday, 6 June 2024.

They are seeking a keynote speaker who can provide a unique perspective on the D-Day Landings, which was the springboard to the Allies' gaining a foothold in France, liberating the country and driving on to eventual victory in the war in Europe.

They believe the initiative will help them to commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of those who served before them, many of whom paid the ultimate price for the freedoms

we enjoy today.

If you are interested in sharing your/their story or know someone who might be, please reach out to the Collingwood PR and Events Team at NAVYOPTRG-CWDCORPCOMMS@mod.gov.uk They would be delighted to hear from you.

As the Collingwood team says, let us come together to pay tribute to the heroes of D-Day and ensuring that their legacy lives on whilst remembering the 80th Anniversary of this pivotal moment in history.

## ► STANDARD BEARERS COMPETITION

Shipmates intending to compete in this year's RNA Standard Bearers competition, please let Central Office know ASAP by email to [projects@rnassoc.org](mailto:projects@rnassoc.org)

# ➤ POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER – PART 1

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

"I honestly believe you saved my son's life."

*Mother of a Depththerapy beneficiary*

"If it hadn't been for Depththerapy I would not have seen Christmas."

*Depththerapy beneficiary*

My name is Richard Cullen, and until the charity Depththerapy ([www.depththerapy.co.uk](http://www.depththerapy.co.uk)) closed on 31 August I was its Chair and Head of Ops.

As with many Armed Forces charities, giving massively declined during Covid and we saw our beneficiary pipeline pretty much dry up.

We sought to rehabilitate UK Armed Forces veterans and serving personnel who had experienced life-changing mental and/or physical challenges, through the medium of specially adapted scuba diving programmes.

In addition, we provided 24/7 support to those who needed it. We continue to provide that support through an innovative Peer Buddy Support Scheme.

When we were formed in 2014 the majority of our beneficiaries had physical injuries, mainly amputations, as a result of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. As we moved forward 95 per cent of our beneficiaries were experiencing PTSD and other mental health illnesses.

There is much ill-informed comment about PTSD, mainly by ultracrepidarian individuals.

Most who experience a traumatic incident will recover. Others will need support, and the first six months is described as the 'acute' stage where the condition, with proper support, is frequently successfully resolved. Beyond six months, if there has been no resolution, the condition is described as 'chronic'.

Complex PTSD is where an individual has experienced a series of traumatic events; commonly found in Service personnel who have been exposed to 'war' situations, blue light personnel, victims of child sexual abuse and domestic violence.

Suicidal ideation is the term used to describe suicidal thoughts.

The majority of our beneficiaries have Complex PTSD, a number have tried to take their own lives, some on more than one occasion.

It is too simple to say that a veteran is experiencing PTSD as a result of their deployment to war zones such as Iraq or Afghanistan.

The origins of PTSD in some individuals goes back to their childhood or teens – alcoholism in the family, domestic abuse, child abuse, both physical and sexual.

However unpleasant it is to countenance, we have needed to deal with beneficiaries who have experienced each of the listed factors. We provide the necessary psychological first aid and ensure they are referred for appropriate professional help.

None of the team are doctors, medics, counsellors,

therapists; we are diving instructors who have a good deal of life experience.

Our advisor in all things psychological Dr Richard Castle, an independent, consultant psychologist, specialising in trauma, ran 11 Mental Health First Aid <https://mhfaengland.org/courses> for us.

Initially we ran the courses for beneficiaries only. We quickly expanded the programme to involve partners and/or parents. We learned that partners, parents, family members and friends of beneficiaries were often totally unaware of why, at times, their partner/child, would be grumpy, need chill out time, or display anger. They did not know how to care for or support their partner/child when they display symptoms of PTSD.

"Depththerapy is a charity that feels like a family."

*Kevin Pryke formerly Royal Anglian Regiment*

With PTSD it is good to be able to provide a secure and warm environment. As one of the studies into our work reported: "...in a supportive and knowledgeable community."

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is just that; it is to provide emergency help to those who are experiencing a crisis. It does not make you a medic, a counsellor, or a therapist. The course teaches you to identify and support an individual in crisis.

The MHFA mnemonic is **ALGEE**.

**A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm.

**L**isten nonjudgmentally.

**G**ive reassurance and Information.

**E**ncourage appropriate professional help.

**E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies.

Working with veterans and emergency service workers provides special challenges, especially when the beneficiary is a male.

For whatever reason it is not the 'done' thing for a man to admit he has a mental health problem. It certainly is not seen as 'macho' by veterans and blue light workers.

Partly this is a reflection of how society views mental health. There is clear evidence of stigmatisation and discrimination.

People see mental health as a weakness; they are scared and equate mental health, with not being normal, being violent.

This lack of willingness to talk openly about mental health is reflected in the fact that males account for 70 per cent of all suicides, the majority being under the age of 40.

Just as a note, despite assertions by some veterans' groups; there is no discernible difference in the rate of suicides among veterans compared to the general population.

In Part Two we will look at how PTSD manifests itself and how we can support those who have the injury/illness.



## ➤ FALKLANDS MEMORIAL TO BE DEDICATED

All RNA members are invited to a dedication of the 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. Organisers are very happy RSVP to Mike Colton, 2 Manor Road, Kings Bromley, Staffs DE13 7HZ, tel 07929 118598, or email [mikecolton@hotmail.com](mailto:mikecolton@hotmail.com) For more information on the site of the memorial see [www.alliedspecialforcesmemorialgrove.org/](http://www.alliedspecialforcesmemorialgrove.org/)

## ➤ SUPPORT IN JOB HUNT

Personnel leaving the military are to receive more support for finding jobs in civilian life thanks to a new contract between the Ministry of Defence and Reed.

- The number of professional training courses for soon-to-be veterans more than doubled.
- A new Career Transition Partnership (CTP) with Reed in Partnership will continue the award-winning work supporting service leavers.
- Training in areas ranging from transport to cyber security will give Service leavers the best opportunity of finding employment.

With approximately 15,000 service leavers benefitting from these services annually and 87% of those using the system gaining employment, the partnership will improve the advice on offer for service leavers around the country.

For more on this, see [www.gov.uk/government/news/more-support-for-service-leavers-transitioning-to-civilian-life](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-support-for-service-leavers-transitioning-to-civilian-life)

## ➤ FUNERAL ATTENDANCE

We were sad to hear of the passing of Louis Providence.

Louis was a Chief RS who served in the Falklands in 1982 on HMS Cardiff.

We are told that his family have requested representation at his funeral, if possible.

Although residing in North London at the time of passing, Louis was from St Vincent & the Grenadines, and his funeral details are as follows:

Louis Providence, Thursday 8

February at 1315,

South Chapel City of London

Crematorium, Aldersbrook Road, London, E12 5DQ

## ➤ RNA OFFICE OPEN DAYS

Shipmates are advised that the dates of Central Office Open Days 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](mailto:ams@rnassoc.org)

## ➤ SUBMARINERS WIN ATLANTIC ROWING RACE

A team of Royal Navy submariners arrived in Antigua on 17 January having won the world's toughest rowing race – 3,000 miles across the Atlantic.

After 35 days, 4 hours and 30 minutes in their tiny boat Captain Jim, the five men, known as HMS Oardacious, were greeted by hundreds of onlookers in Nelson's Dockyard, English Harbour – the first land they had seen since December 13 when they left the Canaries.

Shortly before 1pm – 9am local time – the rowers entered English Harbour, stood up in their boat and raised red flares in triumph – the traditional celebration of winners of the gruelling race, while boats in harbour sounded their horns in appreciation. Stepping ashore minutes later to receive the winners' silver trophy – the Royal Navy men beat 36 teams to the finish line – they were embraced by their families for an emotional reunion on the waterfront.

Bearded, tanned, and both ecstatic and exhausted, Captain Jim's skipper Cdr Matt Main said the race had been "tough, really, really tough".

"It's a really long way – and I don't recommend rowing it – try flying it... or perhaps cruising," he joked.

"We had some beautiful times – in the moonlight, racing through the night on big waves, great fun. But there were also lows, some awful crosswinds when you felt you were making no progress – sometimes it felt like it would never end.

"But overall, it's been a brilliant experience. It's demanded a lot of love – and tolerance at times – but

these four men are amazing. We made a real bond."

Alongside him in Captain Jim was fellow marine engineer officer Cdr Dan Seager, 38, 37-year-old Lt Rob Clarke, a medical services officer, marine engineer PO Ian Allen, aged 39, and 4Cdr Mike Forrester (40).

Their boat Captain Jim – named in memory of a former colleague – left La Gomera in the Canaries on December 13. Since then, the submariners have rowed in shifts of 2½ hours on the oars, followed by 90 minutes' rest in tiny cabins at each end of the boat. They consumed around 5,000 calories every day (the figure for the average adult is around 2,000 calories), all suffered salt sores, blisters and sea sickness, jumped into the ocean to scrape barnacles from the hull, and have been battered by 20ft waves which on occasions threatened to capsize the craft.

This is the third time a team of submariners has taken on the World's Toughest Row under the banner of HMS Oardacious. It has become a major fundraising initiative for the submarine community (Captain Jim's team have raised £15,000 alone since leaving the Canaries, and around £70,000 for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity).

Though they didn't beat the world record, the quintet posted the fastest time by any military crew – and they are also the first five-man team to lift the title.

You can find out more about the team and their voyage via their website <https://www.hmsoardacious.com/> and on Twitter/X: <https://twitter.com/hmsoardacious>



# ➤ ARMED FORCES VETERAN CARD CAN OPEN THE DOOR TO WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES

The HM Armed Forces Veteran Card is a quick and easy way to prove your status as a veteran. It's a recognition of your service and can be one of the ways that helps you maintain a link with your service identity and it's free to apply.

## Ways to use a Veteran Card

There are many services available to ex-members of the Armed Forces.

To access these services some organisations, including charities, may need to verify that you are a veteran. This is to ensure that only those who are eligible access services specifically for veterans and their families.

As a veteran you can prove your status in many ways, and an HM Armed Forces Veteran Card is a simple way to do this.

For example, you need to verify your veteran status when you:

- get a Veterans' Railcard, entitling you to up to a third off most rail travel in England, Scotland and Wales
- get a Defence Discount Service Card, to claim discounts in over 12,000 restaurants and shops, on the high street and online
- access specific offers during special events, such as free travel on public transport to and from remembrance events on the weekend of Remembrance Sunday.

There are other services and government initiatives available to veterans where your Veteran Card may be useful, such as Great Place to Work, Going Forward into Employment, Advance into Justice and Step into Health; National Insurance Relief for your employer in your first civilian role after service for up to 12 months; housing support and guidance from the Op Fortitude team; support and services from criminal justice agencies such as the Police, Probation Service and the Prison Service as part of Op Nova.

## Apply for an HM Armed Forces Veteran Card

It's free to apply.

You can currently only apply for a Veteran Card if you have a UK address. Veterans who do not have a UK address will be able to apply later this year.

## Who can get an HM Armed Forces Veteran Card

You can apply if you were in the regulars or reserves for the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, British Army or RAF.

If you served in another group in the UK Armed Forces, you may still be able to get a card. You can check when you apply online or when you call to request a postal form.

You cannot apply if you served in the armed forces of another country, even if alongside the UK Armed Forces, for example in the Canadian Navy or Royal Australian Air Force.



## What you'll need

When you apply, you'll be asked for:

- your service number for your last period of service
- your National Insurance number
- the approximate year you started and ended your service - it does not have to be exact
- a recent digital passport style photo, showing your head and shoulders

You can apply online, or by post, and if you need help with your

application you could try the VeteransUK Helpline on [veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk](mailto:veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk), tel 0808 1914 218, Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm.

For full details of the card and how to apply see <http://tinyurl.com/2ahf23p6>

## ➤ 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](mailto:rna.camping.caravan.motorhome.club@gmail.com)

Classic Cars – Mike Burnham: [hon.secretary@rnarayleigh.org](mailto:hon.secretary@rnarayleigh.org)

Cricket – Mark Smith : [Markmiff1962@gmail.com](mailto:Markmiff1962@gmail.com)

Cycling – Craig Fulton: [craig@govguide.co.uk](mailto:craig@govguide.co.uk)

Decorative Ropework – Bob Jones: [oldsalt69@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:oldsalt69@hotmail.co.uk)

Divers – Bill Lawless: [billylawless40@yahoo.com](mailto:billylawless40@yahoo.com)

Fishing – Gus Honeywood/Selwyn Davies/John Stephenson: [rna.fishing.sig@gmail.com](mailto:rna.fishing.sig@gmail.com)

Golf – Colin Dinsdale: [rna.golfers@gmail.com](mailto:rna.golfers@gmail.com)

\*Riders Branch – Mark Gayton: [secrnariders@gmail.com](mailto:secrnariders@gmail.com)

Model Makers – Gary Daisley: [RNA.Modelmakers@gmail.com](mailto:RNA.Modelmakers@gmail.com)

If you are interested in forming a Special Interest Group please contact [admin@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com)

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



## ► 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, from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 9126), shows two sailors on board HMS Hero cleaning and sharpening bayonet cutlasses whilst the destroyer steams in the Mediterranean during World War 2. See 5 February.

Date	Presenter	Subject
Mon 5 February	Mark 'Dicky' Barton	Naval Cutlasses
Mon 12 February	Chris Taylor	RN Test Pilot
Mon 19 February	Pete Sharples	Uncovering Financial Fraud
Mon 26 February	tbc	tbc

\* Lecture subjects may change at short notice.

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

## ➤ D-DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY CYCLE RIDE, 3-6 JUNE 2024

To coincide with the D-Day 80th anniversary commemorations next year, the Royal Naval Association will be hosting a cycle ride in Normandy in June.

This event is designed to be an inclusive event for all abilities, and the cycling programmes will be based around the cycling abilities within the group.

So, if you wish to bring a recumbent bike/trike or an E-bike, you are still more than welcome!

This event will be partially-funded by a sponsor, however a personal contribution will be required – estimated at approx £250 all in.

Accommodation and ferries are already booked so please act quickly if you want to secure one of the 15 spaces available.

The outline programme is available towards the end of this Circular (click here) and if you want to register interest (£50 deposit secures your space) or have any questions please contact the RNA Sports and Comradship Coordinator, Chris 'Scouse' Reeves, in Central Office on email [scc@rnassoc.org](mailto:scc@rnassoc.org)

## ➤ 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).

## ➤ WORK BEGINS ON NEW NORMANDY CENTRE

**The Winston Churchill Centre for Learning and Education will be used not simply by visitors to the memorial complex at Ver-sur-Mer, close to Juno Beach during the 1944 landings, but also schoolchildren on educational visits as future generations learn about the sacrifices made. The memorial itself, opened in 2021, was created to honour the 22,442 British and Commonwealth personnel killed during the Battle for Normandy, spanning June to the end of August 1944. The new building will house two educational/exhibition galleries – entry will be free - which will be curated by the Royal British Legion and tell the story of both the invasion on June 6 and the subsequent Allied breakout, the destruction of Nazi forces in northern France and the liberation of Paris. In addition there will be a classroom facility for use by visiting pupils/students from all over the world, a shop selling official merchandise and a café. A £600,000 donation from BAE Systems was the last piece of the jigsaw to fund the centre, which is due to be opened on the 80th anniversary of D-Day in June.**

## ➤ ROYAL BRITISH LEGION URGES VETERANS AFFECTED BY LGBT BAN TO PUT IN CLAIM

Almost 25 years since the lifting of the military LGBT ban, the Royal British Legion is urging affected veterans to now apply for non-financial restorative measures and express interest in the upcoming financial award scheme

But the charity remains concerned about the imposition of a cap on compensation payouts

12 January, marked 24 years since the government lifted its ban on LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) personnel serving in the British Armed Forces.

Many of those who stepped up to serve prior to 2000 experienced criminalisation, loss of earnings and pensions, and abuse because of their sexuality.

A review into the ban completed by Lord Etherton last year, recommended to the government

that a scheme be set-up to compensate military personnel who were affected.

Non-financial restorative measures are now available, and the RBL is urging LGBT veterans affected by the ban to visit the MOD website and apply for these, as well as express an interest in the financial award scheme, due to open later this year.

Non-financial restorative measures include a letter of apology from Service Chief of Staff, replacement beret or cap badge and a written reproduction of the Prime Minister's public apology.

Lord Etherton's 2023 LGBT Veterans Independent Review made 49 recommendations, all of which have been accepted by the government.

The RBL backs the recommendations; however, it is concerned by the inclusion of a £50 million cap to the

total amount of compensation paid.

Without knowing how many people have been affected by the ban, setting a limit on financial awards could mean veterans miss out on payments that truly reflect their losses.

The RBL said it is hoped that applications for the non-financial restorative measures will help provide a clearer indication of veteran losses and encourage the government to scrap the cap.

To register interest for financial award and apply for further support, services and non-financial restorative measures, please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lgbt-veterans-apply-for-restorative-measures>

The Royal British Legion is available to support affected LGBT veterans. Please contact: 0808 802 8080.

## ➤ HEALTH SURVEY FOR VETERANS

In 2019, NHS England commissioned the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) to develop and introduce the Veteran Friendly Practice Accreditation scheme, a free support programme designed to help GP practices in England to deliver the best care and treatment to patients who have served in the UK Armed Forces.

Since then, over 2,760 practices have signed up.

To help encourage more practices to sign up, the Royal College of General Practitioners, NHS England and the Office for Veterans' Affairs are working together to increase awareness of veterans' healthcare needs and any challenges that prevent people who've served in the Armed Forces from seeking help from their GP.

If you have served in the Armed Forces and live in England, you are invited to spend a spare ten minutes filling in the online survey which can be accessed through this link – <http://tinyurl.com/4emn357d> If you are a veteran support organisation, please could you share the survey with your veteran members who live in England.

By filling in this survey, you are ensuring that your thoughts and experiences are more likely to be understood and acted upon. This will help to encourage more GP practices to sign up.

## ➤ HONOUR FOR T124 VETERAN SEAMAN

Honorary Life Membership of the RNA has been offered to 101-year-old mariner Tony Cash, a Merchant Navy sailor who served in the Royal Navy under a T124 agreement.

At the start of the war the Royal Navy was short of ships and men

to work them, so many members of the Merchant Navy were seconded – one of them being Tony (pictured above), who served under the T124 regulations from 1940-1942, and saw action in the Battle of the Atlantic.

Tony said they wore Royal Navy uniform and served under Royal Navy regulations and discipline but continued to receive Merchant Navy pay and conditions – for example, if a ship went down they received no pay...

Tony said that it would be a great honour and privilege to accept the RNA offer, not just for himself but for all the other members of the Merchant Navy who served under the T124 regulations as often this service is not recognised.



## ➤ 2024 RNA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

All branches – please see the AGM paperwork at the end of the circular, including an application form for delegates, a National Council Member and Deputy National Council Member nomination form, and the form for proposing motions and amendments at the Conference, which will be held in Cardiff from 14-16 June.

There is also further information on booking arrangements for accommodation as well as events over the weekend, such as the Gala Dinner, which will now 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.



## ➤ JOBS CHARITY SUPPORTS WOMEN

The Forces Employment Charity continues to support women from the entire Armed Forces community, welcoming those preparing to leave the Armed Forces, reservists, veterans of all ranks, military partners and spouses (including bereaved family members).

The charity is organising a day, 26 March, which will focus channelling your superpower, knowing your worth and overcoming imposter syndrome.

For more details see the 'Events' tab at <https://www.forcesemployment.org.uk/>

## ➤ MAC BACK AT ST VINCENT

The Royal Naval Communications Chiefs' Association (RNCCA)'s oldest member has just celebrated his 104th birthday.

CPO (Tel) Duncan 'Mac' McInnes BEM, whose birthday is on February 1, joined the Royal Navy in 1935 at HMS St Vincent in Gosport, and went on to serve for 25 years.

In World War Two he served in several HM Ships, including Nelson, Winchester, Ramillies, Saladin and Glory.

Which meant he saw plenty of action – including at Dunkirk, Normandy, the Atlantic Convoys, the Mediterranean, South Atlantic and Pacific.

After the war Duncan served in HM Ships Sheffield, Crispin and Maidstone.

On leaving the service Duncan enjoyed a very successful



career with the Civil Service, including at one point the installation of BFBS TV in Germany.

Interestingly though, Duncan is not quite the elder statesman – we know of one gentleman who has reached 106. Any advance on that?

We are proud to announce and reconfirm our association with

[www.uckers-ya-uckers.co.uk](http://www.uckers-ya-uckers.co.uk)



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**The Royal Naval Association's  
World Uckers Championships**

**Sat 12 Oct 2024**

**Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth.**

More details coming soon: [engagements@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:engagements@royalnavalassoc.com)

# ► WELFARE AND WELLBEING IS AT THE HEART OF RNA ETHOS

The RNA was founded on the need to support the welfare and wellbeing of shipmates at the end of World War 2, although at the time the term 'welfare and wellbeing' had probably never been heard of back then it was called compassion and comradeship (pulling together to help each other).

That ethos still remains within the RNA to this day; although the world, society and the Navy have moved on considerably since the RNA started, we still pull together to support one another.

Welfare and wellbeing has moved up the priority list at the RNA over the past few years, and the Wellbeing Delivery Team, which consists of Geoff Apperley (National Welfare Advisor), Selwyn Davies (Deputy National Welfare Advisor) and Gemma Swanson (Wellbeing Delivery Manager) have been working closely with staff in Central Office to ensure we are meeting the needs not only of our shipmates, and our stakeholders, such as our funding partners, but our legal, legislative and social obligations too.

The RNA Wellbeing Delivery Team has been working hard to ensure that both our members and volunteers are supported effectively and appropriately, and that those in need are signposted to those best placed to support.

We are aware that most will only ever need to spin a dit over a wet or catch up over coffee and cake but, where more is required, the RNA Welfare and Wellbeing volunteers (WWOs) are there to assist you in accessing the correct support; from financial support, home adaptations, legal support or family and relationship support, our WWOs have the information to get you to where you need to go.

The Wellbeing Delivery Team and Central Office have been creating, improving and enhancing our Safeguarding, Lone Working and Safer Recruitment policies, as well as our processes and procedures, to ensure that our practices are safe and in line with current legislation and good working practices, with the best outcomes for our members at the heart of what we do. Part of our improvement has been the work taking place to ensure our volunteers are DBS checked, which for those of our volunteers who may be required to visit someone in their home or healthcare setting, is vitally important.

We have also introduced a contact reporting form which is completed by our WWOs when providing support, advice or assistance – this helps to provide information to Central Office, the National Council and external agencies and organisations on the needs of our members. In addition, the information collected can support and advise the wider military charity sector on the needs of Naval veterans, meaning we as the RNA can advocate on your behalf, as we currently do with groups such as CONA and the Single Cap Badge Associations Network (SCAN).

The information provided in this form is held confidentially and in compliance with GDPR, and



personal details such as name, address or contact numbers will not be shared without prior consent from the member, or where there is a potential safeguarding concern.

The majority of our WWOs are not qualified caseworkers, however what they do have is extensive knowledge of the support available within their local areas, and a desire to help and guide those within their branch who need help, support and advice. We could not do what we do without the selfless dedication of our WWOs, who go above and beyond to ensure you are supported in a way that best suits you. Our WWOs can provide advice and guidance regardless of whatever stage of life you are at, whether serving, transitioning to civilian life, or those who are retired; we also support families of those who have served, with signposting to appropriate support organisations based on their needs. If you or someone you know is experiencing any difficulties or needs help, advice or support, please reach out to your branch WWO. If your branch does not have a WWO please contact your Area WWO who will be happy to help. If you do not have a branch or Area WWO, please do not hesitate to contact the Wellbeing Delivery Team, whose contact details are below. If you or someone you know is interested in supporting members by becoming a Welfare and Wellbeing volunteer, please contact Gemma Swanson, Wellbeing Delivery Manager, who can provide information and advice on the role and the benefits of becoming an RNA volunteer.

Wellbeing Delivery Team Contact Details

**Geoff Apperley**, National Welfare Advisor:

nwa@rnassoc.org or tel 07969101113

**Selwyn Davies**, Deputy National Welfare Advisor:

dwa@rnassoc.org or tel 07469081929

**Gemma Swanson**, Wellbeing Delivery Manager

wdm@rnassoc.org or tel 07542679819

## ➤ FOCUS ON... LONGEVITY

A Many people can name one or more of the oldest commissioned warships in the world. HMS Victory, permanently on display in Portsmouth Naval Base, takes the honours for being the oldest naval vessel still in commission, at almost 250 years – Nelson’s flagship at Trafalgar was laid down in 1759, the ‘Year of Victories’, hence her name. Another ship from the Wooden Walls era with an impressive claim is USS Constitution, which takes the laurels as the world’s oldest commissioned warship still afloat, having been launched in 1797 and making her maiden voyage the following year.

This month’s Swinging the Lamp section mentions aircraft carrier HMS Hermes (16 February), which has an impressive record for a modern-era warship; having served in both the Royal Navy and the Indian Navy, the Centaur-class ship – laid down in World War 2 and still in service until a few years ago, managed to clock up almost 60 years in commission.

For real, consistent longevity, you would need to look back to the age of sail, when technology developed at a slower pace and there were fewer moving parts to break (and those that did

could usually be patched up with wood, rope and canvas...).

When taken to extremes, it meant some warships could hang around for decades, and the records become confused in some instances when it is not clear whether a ship appearing on the Admiralty roster is a new ship with an old name or the same old ship with a new configuration, as a sound hull could be used as the foundation on which to ‘rebuild’ a ship into a very different vessel.

Take another of the most famous ships in the world, also in Portsmouth – King Henry VIII’s beloved Mary Rose, which sank off Portsmouth in 1545 while heading out to engage a French fleet off the Isle of Wight.

There is a widespread belief that the Mary Rose sank on her maiden voyage, but that could not be further from the truth. In fact, building work started on the Great Carrack in early 1510 in Portsmouth, less than a year after Henry became king at the age of 17, and he watched it sink at the age of 53, less than two years before his death. The Mary Rose was a veteran of

continues on page 18 →

**American battleship USS Missouri, a World War 2 era warship that was still serving in a war zone nearly half a century later. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM NA 26806)**



numerous battles, many as flagship; by the time she heeled over and sank in the Solent, and had undergone a radical rebuild in 1536 which may have contributed to her less-than-ideal stability, although there are no full records of the work, just tantalising mentions in passing about her being 'new made'.

The same applied to HMS Victory – the ship was a battle-scarred veteran by the time of her starring role at Trafalgar, 40 years after she was launched in Chatham, and she underwent a major mid-life upgrade which saved her from an ignoble fate. Returning to England from the Battle of Cape St Vincent in 1797, in which she served as Jervis's flagship, Victory was found to be in surprisingly poor condition and was left at anchor off Chatham, while plans were made to convert her to a hospital hulk for prisoners of war. But late in 1799 the first-rate HMS Impregnable grounded in the Channel and could not be refloated, so she was stripped of anything of value, left to break up, and a solution was sought to fill the gap in the line of battle that she had left.

All eyes turned to Victory, and she was docked in Chatham to undergo a major refit. Many more defects were found as work progressed, and it was almost three years before she emerged more heavily armed, a project that cost three times the original estimate.

This pattern of rebuilding a more-or-less new ship from the bones of an older one, or patching a ship up to keep her in service, could work both ways, of course, and there are many accounts of ships that were well past their sell-by date when they were put on the spot – and found to be wanting. Nelson's favourite ship, HMS Agamemnon, which took part in the Battle of Trafalgar, was one example; although not particularly old by the time of the battle (she was launched in 1781) she was widely-travelled and had suffered in battle, and was notorious for requiring repairs and refits of various degrees of complexity. She was probably ripe for hulking by October 1805, but even after the battle she was kept in the front line, serving in the challenging conditions off South America, and it was her condition that is believed to have contributed to her demise, as she could not be saved after grounding in the mouth of the River Plate while sheltering from a storm. No one lost their lives in the incident, and most of her stores were saved, but the ship's timbers simply weren't up to the strain – her seams had been opening for some time, and metal bolts shearing through stress – and she was abandoned to the sea. Her CO was cleared of blame at a court martial in Rio de Janeiro when the extensive list of defects drawn up by the ship's carpenter and submitted

to the relevant authorities was produced.

There are some eye-catching examples of elderly warships still playing an active role today. Brazil has a river monitor, the Parnaíba, first commissioned in 1938, making her nearly 86 years old. Her shallow draft limits her use to coastal and river patrols (she was used for anti-submarine patrols in the war as it was thought torpedoes would simply pass beneath her), which means she has not had the stresses and strains of the high seas to contend with over the decades. She is still an effective ship, having been fitted with a small helicopter flight deck.

The Americans might be a technological powerhouse, but they are also happy to put their faith in well-tested kit. As we mention in *Swinging the Lamp* (25 February) USS Missouri took part in the Gulf War in 1991, and was the target of an Iraqi Silkworm missile when destroyer HMS Gloucester brought it down with a Sea Dart missile. At that time, the American Iowa-class battleship was 47 years old, having first commissioned in 1944, in time to see service in World War 2 (though she was out of commission for long periods in that period). Similarly, the 'Big E' – nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Enterprise had put in more than 55 years of service by the time she was decommissioned in 2017. Ironically, one of the most technologically advanced vessels in the American inventory is USS Mount Whitney, flagship of the US Sixth Fleet, which was first commissioned at the beginning of 1971, making her 54 years old. She has been active throughout that half-century and more, and is touted as the most sophisticated C4I (Command, Control, Communications, Computer and Intelligence) ship ever commissioned. She took that title from her slightly older sister, USS Blue Ridge, currently flagship of the Seventh Fleet, which was first commissioned in 1970 and is expected to run on until 2039, by which time she will be almost 70 years old.

But she can't compete with the oldest active duty naval vessel in the world, which was launched before the war – World War 1, that is. Russian salvage and submarine rescue vessel *Kommuna* was laid down in 1912 as the *Volkhov*, an unusual double-hull design that initially supported Russian and Royal Navy submarines in the Baltic. She has raised submarines, tugs, aircraft, vehicles and various small vessels from sea beds, and served throughout two World Wars and the Russian Revolution. She is still active today – she was deployed to the site of the sunken cruiser *Moskva* off Odessa in April 2022, after the warship was attacked by Ukrainian anti-ship missiles.



# RNA Book Club



**Start your own Book Club  
Whether it's romantic,  
classic, factual, fiction or  
non-fiction - members  
can choose and agree**

**Forming a Book Club is a  
lovely chance to enthuse,  
debate and join together;  
sharing a common interest.**

**if you are interested in  
starting your own RNA  
Book Club, contact  
Engagement:  
[engagement@rnassoc.org](mailto:engagement@rnassoc.org)**



### Cape Town Branch

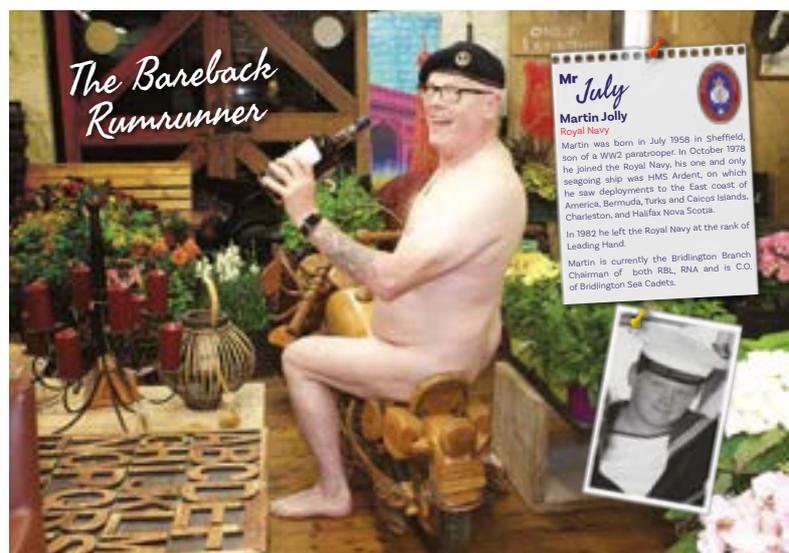
Greetings from the Cape Town Branch and belated best wishes for 2024! RNA Cape Town continues to function with a membership one can now count on one hand – unlike 20 years ago, in 2004, when the membership stood at 40 paid-up members and associates. Nevertheless, their standard continues to be paraded at

events in Fish Hoek and elsewhere, with the help of the Sea Cadets and the Memorial Order of Tin Hats (MOTH), Battledress Shellhole, Fish Hoek. The photograph above shows the RNA standard at the Hermanus Remembrance Parade 2023. Hermanus is a coastal town approximately 90 minutes drive from Cape Town, and the branch is immensely grateful for the assistance that they continue to receive from the MOTH.

## ➤ BRANCH NEWS

### Bridlington Branch

Several shipmates from Bridlington branch have been involved in a charity calendar, Privates on Parade, to raise money for Parkinsons UK – and gain a bit of publicity for the charity. The plucky veterans, two of whom suffer from Parkinson's, have even been featured live on national TV – ITV This Morning – in November last year. Bridlington branch secretary S/M Mike Rubery – also known as Mr October – said that the calendar is a 'calendar girls' style cheeky calendar and the 'models' are all Armed Forces veterans who meet up at the Bridlington Veterans Coffee Morning group, four from each of the three Services, with ages ranging from 58 to 92. The calendar was Mrs Rubery's idea, Mike said that some of the volunteers were very keen to go in front of photographer Ian Ellis's camera, while others took a little persuading. They raised just over £8,000 and they are also keen to raise awareness of Parkinson's disease. The pictures for the calendar were taken at the Victoria Mill Tea Room, Bridlington, whose owners Maxine and Russ support the group. For you keen calendar collectors out there we have had



news – the calendars sold out some time ago. But if you would like to know more about the group, see <https://www.bridlingtonveterans.com/>



### Plymouth Branch

In the presence of the Lord Mayor of Plymouth Cllr Mark Shayer RN (retd), members of Plymouth branch paraded their Standard along with others from the Federation of Plymouth and District Ex-Services Association at the memorial service for Quartermaster George Hinckley VC on the anniversary of his death, 31 December 1904. Also present were members of his family including George, aged 4, his great-great-great-grandson, who wore his miniature VC resplendent with the blue ribbon. As a 43-year-old AB, George won his VC at the Taiping Rebellion on 9 October 1862 by breaking cover under heavy fire to recover the master of his ship, HMS Sphinx, who was lying badly wounded in the open. He carried the injured man 140 metres to safety.



### Uttoxeter and District Branch

During 2023 Uttoxeter and District branch found themselves having to look for new premises due to the refurbishment of the Bank Hotel, Uttoxeter.

Fortunately, the licensee of the Plough Inn, Stafford Road, Uttoxeter, offered availability to the branch for the foreseeable future.

Following a meeting with licensee Keith Parks shipmates were able to remove fittings on the walls and replace them with their Honours Boards, ship's crests, framed pictures, and three framed items of HM Ships Cap Tallies. They were also told they could put into position their branch bell and stand which the licensee would remove and place in storage until next it was required. Consequently, they were up and running again as an

RNA branch.

During conversations with Keith, it was discovered that his grandfather had served in both World Wars at sea in the Merchant Navy. Then, by a unanimous vote of branch members, an Honorary Membership was offered to Keith – which was immediately accepted.

The branch meets on the second Wednesday of each month, the committee at 1900 and the general meeting at 1930, followed by a buffet. Any shipmate who may be passing is more than welcome to join them and enjoy a tot and swing the lamp. Please phone in advance to advise that you may visit – call 07780 702818 (S/M Mark Crutchley) or 07565 642874 (Hon Secretary)





### **Rushden and District Branch**

On Sunday 14th January, Rushden RNA members and guests from across Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire saw the dedication of our new branch standard at a service conducted in St Mary's Church, Rushden.

The dedication was an historic event which was last conducted some 41 years ago and was attended by branch members, representatives from other RNA branches from Area 6, Rushden Royal Air Force Association, Rushden Royal British Legion and the local community.

It was a rare opportunity to lay down an old standard and dedicate a new standard on the same day! The service was conducted by the Rev Linnet Smith, with 9 standards from various other branches & associations on parade. A reception followed at the Windmill Club where Branch Chairman, Michael Thompson thanked Rev Smith, standard bearers and members and supporters for attending.

The Chairman of Rushden and District Branch is Michael Thompson, formerly from Corby. Michael left home in 1977 and joined the Royal Navy at the age of 16. He enjoyed his ten years in the Navy and saw action in 1982 on board HMS Cardiff during the Falklands Conflict.

Our members are proud to have served and proud to have represented our

country and the Royal Navy. Our pride in serving our country never leaves us. We are deeply honoured to represent members across the county and proactively take part in local fundraising activities for the benefit of our members and the local community.



## Crosby Branch

Friday 26 January saw members of Crosby RNA invited to attend a Veterans in the Community networking event sponsored by Everton Football Club's Everton in the Community (EITC) initiative, held at the club's Goodison Park stadium

The invitation provided the opportunity to advertise the RNA as a national organisation but also as a local entity.

The Royal Navy has little representation within EITC, which is largely Army heavy; however, as a direct result of Crosby RNA engagement the branch will see five new members looking to join the branch at the first meeting in February.

Other stakeholders were present offering a variety of professional and legal service to veterans and their families.

Crosby shipmates said as a fledgling enterprise it was fantastic to be involved from the outset and therefore raising the RNA profile locally, but also to link with other veteran organisations in the area.

EITC provides 'stand easy' events every Friday in the local community hub with a network event held on the last Friday of the month – this allows veterans access to IT support, legal advice, mental health and many more services.



## St Neots Branch

On 20 December St Neots held their Christmas Lunch, attended by 45 branch members and guests, including eight from Royston Branch.

Members and their spouses always look forward to the monthly lunches, often with 30-plus attending. For those that are unable to attend branch meetings it gives them the opportunity to interact with others.

While on the Christmas theme, every year St Neots branch shipmates deliver boxes of Heroes chocolates to St Neots Fire Station, Ambulance Station, Huntingdon Police Station and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Accident and Emergency Unit with a card thanking them for the support given to the community.

So on Christmas Day, a box of chocolates was duly delivered to Huntingdon Police Station, with St Neots shipmates accompanied by members of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Pictured are members of the emergency services on duty over Christmas receiving their goodies. There was also a presentation by St Neots to another hero – this time from the Royal Navy.

A few weeks ago Branch Secretary Tony Webley received an email from the son of a soon-to-be 100-year-old requesting if a postcard could be sent to his Dad Henry (Bob) Patten, pictured above, who lives in St Neots and whose birthday falls on 26 January.

On that day four members of St Neots branch visited the home of this lovely gentleman in their RNA blazers.

Bob and the family were completely unaware of what was about to happen. S/M Keith Ridley a member of St Neots branch, presented Bob with his World War 2 Medal and a



Life Membership Certificate for the Association.

He was then presented with a Lapel Badge and Membership Card from S/M Tony Webley, Branch Secretary followed by a bottle of Pussers Rum from the Association by S/M Geoff Patterson.

Bob was called up in 1943, was kitted out at Bristol and joined the Fleet Air Arm where he served as an Armourer, drafted to the Home Fleet at Scapa Flow.

Bob's secret for longevity – a tot of rum every day at 11.30am (naturally)! It was a very proud day for Bob.





## Shipmate Craig Gibson

S/m Craig Gibson, aged 48, unexpectedly crossed the bar on the morning of New Year's Eve, 31 December 2023.

He was a popular and very active member of RNA Tyne and a Branch Committee member for the last four years.

Always a smile on his face, he was an excellent friend to us all.

Craig has been a key player in organising events such as our Trafalgar Dinners and was a great artist, creating our 75th Anniversary badge amongst many other drawings and designs; he always had a pencil in hand and some new project in mind.

Craig has always been very proud of his service with the Fleet Air Arm – a



## Shipmate Revd Canon Paul Bentley

Mansfield and District branch lost one of their shipmates shortly before Christmas with the death of the Reverend Canon Paul Bentley on 16 December 2023..

## Shipmate Kay Turner

Bolton Branch are mourning S/M Kay Turner, who crossed the Bar on 8 January at the age of 97.

Kay was a very popular member shipmate – she served as a VAD nurse in Malta in World War 2 where she met her future husband Philip. She was the last shipmate from Bolton who served in the war. Her lovely gentle sense of humour will be much missed. Fair winds and calm seas Kay.

**Type 22 frigate HMS Brave, pictured under way off Portland in Dorset in April 1986. From the Imperial War**

dedicated WAFU through and through, serving from 1995 to 2005 up to Leading Air Engineer Mechanic (Electrical).

He also held the Queen's Jubilee Medal.

Craig's service included HMS Raleigh, Daedalus, Sultan, Osprey, Brave (pictured left), Coventry and Heron.

Since leaving the Royal Navy, Craig has worked in engineering roles with a number of companies including BAE Systems, IHC Engineering, Northern Aerospace and Gardner Aerospace.

A dedicated and very happy family man, Craig leaves behind his wife, Anna, and two young children, Lilly and Archie - his 'munchkins'.

To quote one of his many friends: "Craig was a true gentleman who not only served but lived his life by the core values sought after by our Service – courage, commitment, discipline, respect, integrity and loyalty" – a sentiment on which I believe everyone who knew him will agree with.

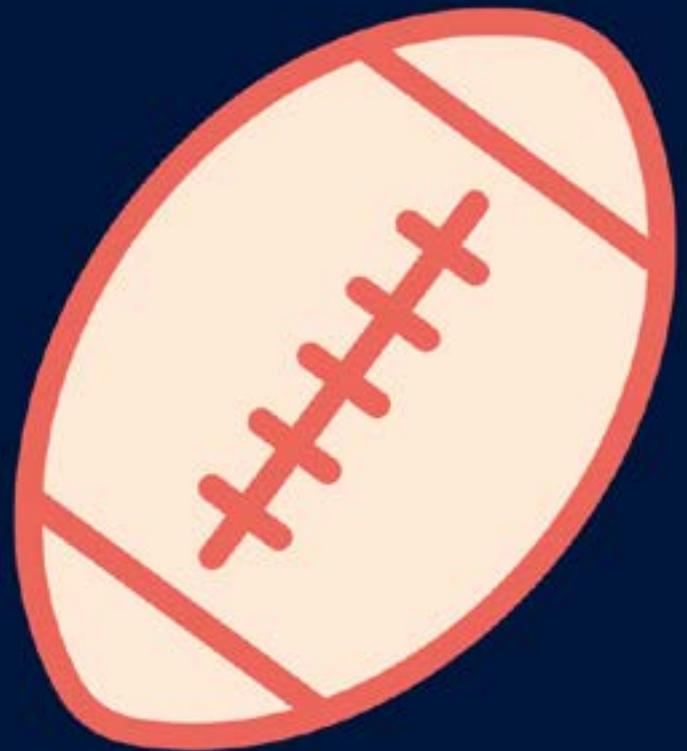
Rest in Peace Shipmate – we at RNA Tyne will miss you and will always remember you.



# 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 engagement@rnassoc.org](mailto:engagement@rnassoc.org)  
for more information

**ONCE  
NAVY  
ALWAYS  
NAVY**



HMS Exeter seen here on exercises in 2005. See 1 February. Image MOD – Crown Copyright

## ➤ FEBRUARY SWINGING THE LAMP

### 1 February 1995

HMS Exeter joined the American-led 23-ship six-nation force covering the withdrawal of United Nations peacekeeping ground forces from Somalia in East Africa, known as Operation United Shield. The Type 42 destroyer won praise from American command staff for her supporting role as the powerful international force operated off the country's capital Mogadishu. In a slick series of manoeuvres, the flotilla put a mechanised amphibious force of American and Italian marines ashore late on 27 February, which rapidly took control of the city's airport and sea port. Little over 70 hours later more than 6,000 Task Force and UN troops were whisked to safety, along with more than 100 combat vehicles, with no loss of life. Another ship in the coalition task force was a familiar sight to some on board Exeter – the Pakistan Navy provided Leander-class frigate PNS Shamsheer, formerly HMS Diomedea, which had been sold by the UK some seven years earlier. Op United Shield was formally wound up in mid-March 1995.

### 2 February 1941

In an operation reminiscent of the RAF's Dambusters raid (but far less successful, for various reasons), a small force of Fairey Swordfish torpedo bombers attacked the massive Santa Chiara hydroelectric dam on the Tirso River in Sardinia on 2 February 1941 as part of Operation Picket. At that time the lake created by the dam, Lake Omodeo, was the largest artificial reservoir in Europe,

and provided up to a third of the island's power. The eight Stringbags of 810 Naval Air Squadron flew from HMS Ark Royal, which was part of Admiral Sir James Somerville's Force H, but as they made their way towards their target from 60 miles offshore three of the aircraft drifted off course in the foul weather and low cloud. A fourth was shot down – the crew were taken prisoner – while the remaining four aircraft lumbered on at less than 90 knots and pressed home their daylight attack against strong anti-aircraft defences. The Fleet Air Arm did not have the advantage of specially-designed munitions and a rigorous training regime – no bouncing bombs here, just standard Naval torpedoes that were launched from less than 100ft above the surface of the reservoir right in front of the dam. The torpedoes failed to breach the dam, so the raid was technically a failure – but as was so often the case with Swordfish attacks, even in failure the endeavour could be inspirational, and the bravery of the air crews, plus the durability of the Swordfish, again stands up to scrutiny.

### 3 February 1940

Halcyon-class minesweeper HMS Sphinx was bombed by German aircraft in the North Sea, 15 miles off Kinnaird Head, Aberdeen, and foundered the following day. A total of 54 men – just over half of the ship's company – died in the attack or were lost when the ship capsized while under tow by sister ship HMS Harrier. Sphinx, a relatively new ship (she was commissioned the previous

continued on page 27 →

year) had been in the area two weeks before, searching for survivors of the destroyer HMS Exmouth, lost with all hands in a torpedo attack by U-22. In early February Sphinx, with HM ships Speedwell and Skipjack, was sweeping north of Kinnaird Head when two Dornier bombers attacked the flotilla shortly after 0900 in a snow storm. One bomb went through the bridge and fo'c'sle deck, exploding in a mess space, killing the ships Commanding Officer and crippling the ship. Although taken under tow, and despite efforts to take off the wounded to another ship and later to abandon ship (thwarted by heavy seas) early the following morning, in freezing conditions, the ship was struck broadside on by a large wave and capsized. Several men are thought to have died through choking on fuel oil that had been pumped from Sphinx's tanks to try to calm the waters around the stricken ship. The upturned hull later went ashore below cliffs at Occumster, just north of Lybster, and bodies were washed ashore at Wick and even as far away as Orkney. Sphinx was the first Royal Navy warship recorded as being lost to air attack in World War 2 – the Naval trawler HMT Valdora went down with all ten hands three weeks before

off Cromer, possibly the result of an air attack, but there is uncertainty about what caused her loss.

#### **4 February 1958**

Aircraft carrier HMS Victorious left Portsmouth Dockyard for sea trials following seven-year reconstruction – the latest phase in a high-profile service career at the heart of the action. The Illustrious-class ship was launched in the first weeks of World War 2, and her commissioning delayed until two years later as the need for escort vessels took priority. But when she joined the front line she quickly made her mark, being involved in the early stages of the hunt for Bismarck in May 1941, protecting Arctic convoys, taking part in Operation Pedestal, the heroic convoy battle that forced vital supplies through to Malta in August 1942, and also participating in the op Torch Allied landings in North Africa later the same year. In 1943, with the Americans losing carrier capacity in the Pacific theatre, Victorious was loaned to the US Navy and underwent modifications in Norfolk, Virginia, and Pearl Harbor in Hawaii to operate American aircraft. She was involved

**continues on page 28 →**

**HMS Victorious during trials in the Channel in April 1958 following her extensive reconstruction See 4 February. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 33970)**



in intensive operations (on one occasion she spent 28 days on continuous combat duties at sea, launching more than 600 sorties and steaming at an average speed of 18 knots. She was released by the Americans in the late summer when new US carriers became available and arrived back in the UK in late September. Before the war was over she had also taken part in the attacks on Tirpitz in Norway (Op Tungsten), and operations in the Far East with the Eastern Fleet and British Pacific Fleet, again working with the Americans and surviving two kamikaze strikes (which killed three men, though the ship was back in action within hours thanks to her armoured deck). While preparing for the final assault on Japan the enemy surrendered, and Victorious was in Australia when the war ended. After ferrying troops and war brides to the UK from the Far East, and taking part in flying trials with the Hawker Sea Fury, the carrier was reduced to reserve in 1947 and used for training purposes. She underwent a major refit in Portsmouth from 1950 to 1958 – a process that was regularly extended as emerging new technology was incorporated into the work. When she emerged, having burned through six times the original £5 million budget, she was essentially a new ship – wider, longer, deeper hull, new engines, angled flight deck, new catapults, new guns, new radar amongst the chief improvements. She went on to serve in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Far East before she was decommissioned (at very short notice - her CO found out she was being axed the day before her planned recommissioning ceremony in November 1967). Victorious was placed on the disposal list in 1969, and later the same year she was towed to Faslane where she was broken up.

### **5 February 1944**

Tacoma-class patrol frigate USS Harvey, ordered and built for the US Navy at Rhode Island, was transferred to the Royal Navy as Colony-class frigate HMS Labuan on 5 February 1944. Known briefly as Gold Coast before her launch, after she was transferred Labuan enjoyed a brief but successful career under the White Ensign. Largely confined to Channel patrols and escort duties, Labuan, which displaced 1,290 tons and had a ship's company of just under 200, took part in the sinking of U-1279 in a depth-charge attack in concert with HMS Loch Fada and HMS Wild Goose in February 1945. She was returned to the Americans in May 1946 and sold for scrapping in Massachusetts in 1957.

### **6 February 1915**

Destroyer HMS Erne was wrecked off Rattray Head, Aberdeen, in a severe gale on 6 February 1915, though no lives were lost amongst the crew. The 620-ton ship, built by Palmers at Jarrow on the Tyne and launched in January 1903, served with destroyer flotillas on the East Coast of the UK, mainly based at Harwich, before World War 2. In 1914, by now designated an E-class destroyer, Erne joined the 9th Destroyer Flotilla, initially at Chatham before switching to Scapa Flow at the outbreak of hostilities, from where she and her flotilla protected the anchorage against minelayers and submarines. Her war career was brief; on 6 February 1915 she was returning to Scapa Flow from Jarrow when she was driven ashore in a severe gale off Aberdeenshire in the early hours of the morning. Having struck a rock, the ship was not spotted for another four hours, during which time efforts to get boats away

Continues on page 29 →



**River-class destroyer HMS Erne. See 6 February. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Q 21225)**

were thwarted by the storm, which smashed them against the hull. The crew were eventually taken off by shore-based lifesaving apparatus. Attempts were made to refloat Erne, but to no avail, and she was abandoned in the autumn. Shortly after, a survey determined her keel had been broken, and in early 1916 she was sold for scrap with a value of just over £400.

### **7 February 1967**

Submarine HMS Tabard sailed from New Zealand to provide shore working parties following outbreaks of major bush fires in southern Tasmania. Tuesday 7 February 1967 was dubbed Black Tuesday locally when more than 100 separate fires raged in conditions that could not have been more conducive to destruction – strong winds, hot air and much dry vegetation debris littering the forest floors. More than 60 people died in the fires on that Tuesday, with almost 1,000 more injured, while 7,000 people found themselves homeless as the fires came within a couple of miles of the centre of state capital Hobart. Tabard was a Group 3 T-class submarine, launched a few months after the war ended. After some service in the Mediterranean, the boat took passage to Australia, along with HMS Taciturn and HMS Trump, spending several years operating with the Australian and New Zealand navies as part of the 4th Submarine Squadron, including a year on loan to the Australians. She returned to the UK in the spring of 1968, becoming a static training vessel at HMS Dolphin in Gosport until 1974, when she was replaced by HMS Alliance, which is now a major attraction at the RN Submarine Museum. Tabard was the last of the T-boats to be in service with the Royal Navy, finally being sent to the breakers in March 1974.

### **8 February 1917**

A British government request for naval assistance from Japan made in December 1916 was finally approved when Britain agreed to support Japanese territorial claims over former German colonies and Chinese territory in the Far East. By April that year a Japanese cruiser (Akashi) and two destroyer flotillas, totalling eight ships, had reached Malta, and this so-called Second Special Squadron had grown to 20 ships, including three cruisers and 14 destroyers. Working out of Malta, the ships carried out convoy escort duties as well as anti-submarine operations under the direction of the British Commander-in-Chief in Malta, Admiral George Ballard, who praised the Japanese for their contribution to the Allied war effort. By the end of the war, Japanese records indicate their ships had carried out almost 350 escort missions, escorted nearly 800 Allied warships and troopships and taken part in more than 30

**Lt Jimmy Launders, the Commanding Officer of HMS Venturer. See 9 February. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 18834)**

combat missions. They also rescued thousands of Allied combatants from sinking ships – in one incident alone, the attack on the transport ship SS Transylvania by U-63 in May 1917, more than 2,500 of the 3,000 or so British men on board were picked up by the two escorting Japanese destroyers Matsu and Sakaki, despite the threat of U-boats remaining in the vicinity. No Japanese ships were lost in the Mediterranean during the war, though more than 72 of their sailors died. Although the Japanese effort undoubtedly helped the Allied cause, Japanese Naval staff returned home after the war with greatly improved knowledge of modern naval tactics and equipment, and they took with them a clutch of German U-boats, which they used to help develop their own submarines...

### **9 February 1945**

HMS Venturer claimed a little piece of history when she became the first (and to date, remains the only) submarine to sink another boat while both vessels were submerged. Her

**Continues on page 30 →**



victim was U-864, a large ocean-going U-boat, on a secret mission taking tons of mercury and cutting-edge jet engine technology to the Japanese, which could have had a major impact on the Pacific war, but she had to return to base in Norway shortly after leaving as she had mechanical problems. The British had intercepted German signals and sent *Venturer*, a relatively modern V-class boat, to find and intercept the U-boat. *Venturer*, under CO Lt Jimmy Launders, picked up a faint sound from U-864 off the Norwegian coast north of Bergen on the morning of 9 February, and despite losing the contact *Venturer* picked it up again less than an hour later and continued to follow her for three hours, hoping it would surface. When it became clear that the German was going to remain submerged, and was zigzagging to avoid attack, Launders decided to attack before his batteries were depleted. A firing solution would have to be calculated from scratch as the usual factors (time, distance and bearing of target) was complicated by the fourth variable – depth, not normally an issue with surface ships. Using the U-boat's movements as a pattern to work from, Launders made the calculations, fired two pairs of torpedoes with a delay between them and aimed at different depths, then took rapid evasive action – the British boat had just eight torpedoes in total, the German carried a total of 22, so a counterattack could have been fatal. U-864 heard the torpedoes approaching and successfully evaded three of them, but moved straight into the path of the fourth, which blew the submarine apart, killing everybody on

board. U-864 was not *Venturer*'s first submarine victim, as she sank U-771 off the Lofoten Islands of Norway in November 1944, again with all 51 hands. *Venturer*, which also sank five Axis merchant ships, survived the war and was saved from the scrapyard when she was sold to Norway in 1946. Renamed *Utstein*, the submarine continued in service until 1964, after which she was broken up.

### 10 February 1913

News broke to the world of the fate of Capt Robert Falcon Scott, Royal Navy officer and Antarctic explorer, whose *Terra Nova* expedition had ended in tragedy the year before. Scott had set out from Cardiff on what turned out to be his final voyage in June 1910. Scott's Naval career was generally smooth, with the occasional blip (grounding a torpedo boat earned a modicum of official disapproval), but with his family falling into straitened circumstances, and the deaths of his father and brother, Scott became the family's sole breadwinner by the end of the 19th century. Promotion became a key motivator, and when an Antarctic expedition was initiated with strong Naval support he volunteered to lead it; contacts he had made earlier helped him achieve that aim and he was promoted to Commander before sailing from the UK in *Discovery* under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society in August 1901. The explorers had little polar experience, but rapidly learned in the harsh southern continent, culminating in his discovery of the Polar Plateau in the second year, as well as a raft of scientific discoveries. On his return

Continues on page 31 →

**HMS *Venturer* in Holy Loch in late August 1943 the day after she was commissioned. See 9 February. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 18832)**



home, Scott became a popular hero and embarked on an extensive programme of lectures, appearances and publishing before resuming his Naval career in 1906, spending a period in Naval Intelligence. With his great rival Ernest Shackleton having narrowly failed to reach the South Pole on the Nimrod Expedition of 1907-09 (they fell just over 100 miles short) Scott was prompted to try again, and organised the Terra Nova Expedition which had a primary aim of reaching the Pole, as well as gathering more scientific data. A series of mishaps, including the loss of a motor sledge through the ice and being trapped in pack ice for three weeks, hampered the venture, but the final march to the South Pole set off on 1 November 1911, with the size of the party reducing periodically to allow a final dash to the Pole by a five-man team led by Scott himself. The team reached the Pole on 17 January, to find (to their horror) a tent left by Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, who explained in a letter that he had achieved Scott's great goal just a month earlier. Totally dispirited, Scott's party began the 860-mile return journey. After initial good progress, a combination of extreme weather, hunger and exhaustion caused the deaths of Edgar Evans (RN) and Lawrence Oates (Army), while a pre-arranged rendezvous with support teams, which would in all likelihood have saved the three remaining men, was not kept. The three died in a makeshift camp just 12 miles short of a depot, and trapped by a fierce blizzard, for well over a week, their supplies ran out. Scott is thought to have died on 29 March 1912 or shortly after, along with Edward Wilson and Henry Bowers. Their bodies were discovered by a search party on 12 November 1912, and news reached the outside world when the ship Terra Nova reached New Zealand on 10 February 1913, catapulting Scott's reputation into legendary status – and while that reputation suffered a bit of a battering (portraying him as something of a narcissistic bungler) in the late 20th century, more recent findings, including the study of the particularly extreme weather Scott faced, and the discovery of some written orders that proved his plan for the return journey was sound, have rehabilitated his standing.

#### **11 February 1941**

S-class submarine HMS Snapper is believed to have been sunk south of Ushant on 11 February 1941, though the exact nature of her demise is still unclear. The 980-ton submarine, launched at Chatham in October 1934, largely operated in home waters during World War 2. She survived an attack by a British aircraft while returning to Harwich after a North Sea patrol, taking a direct hit

which caused no damage – the accident led to further work on air attack techniques on U-boats, as it was clear that the 100lb bomb dropped by the Coastal Command aircraft did no more than dent the casing of the British submarine. The boat sank a number of small merchant ships and German auxiliaries before her final patrol, when she left the Clyde at the end of January for a sweep of the Bay of Biscay. She was due to meet an escort vessel on 10 February, at the end of her patrol, but she failed to keep the rendezvous and was never heard of again. She may have struck a mine, or been the victim of an attack reported by a minesweeper on 11 February in the area, but other sources suggest she may have been the submarine that attacked three German minesweepers, M-2, M-13 and M-25, on the night of 10-11 February, and was subjected to a fierce counterattack in which 56 depth charges were dropped.

#### **12 February 1970**

Amphion-class submarine HMS Auriga was badly damaged by an explosion early in the morning of 12 February 1970. The boat was on the surface east of Gibraltar when, at shortly after 0130 while charging her batteries, No 1 battery exploded, causing the boat to lose all power except the emergency 24-volt system. The interior of the submarine rapidly filled with thick smoke but the effects of the blast were somewhat dissipated by the fact that she was surfaced, and some of the blast could escape through the open hatches in the fin. A prompt, calm response by the boat's command team and crew meant Auriga could return to port safely where the ten injured sailors from the forward accommodation space were evacuated.

#### **13 February 1942**

River gunboat HMS Scorpion was sunk by Japanese warships north of the Banka Straits off Sumatra on 13 February 1942. The 700-ton gunboat was built by Whites at Cowes on the Isle of Wight and completed in November 1938. She immediately took up a role on the China Station, based at Shanghai, where she remained until December 1940, when she sailed to Singapore. She was sunk in an attack by Japanese light cruiser Tura and destroyers Asagiri and Fubuki while attempting to escape Singapore for Batavia. Her speed had been reduced by damage in an air raid five days earlier but she had put around 70 miles between her and Singapore when she was engaged by one of the destroyers at just before 1900 and quickly sank, engulfed in flames. Contemporary reports state that between 14 and 20 survivors were picked up, while nearly 80 men died in the incident.

Continues on page 32 →

**Polaris nuclear missile submarine HMS Resolution on trials in the Atlantic during September 1967. See 15 February. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 35106)**



#### **14 February 1779**

Capt James Cook was killed by islanders in Hawaii on 14 February 1779 during his third voyage of exploration following a dispute that spiralled out of control. Cook, a hugely influential explorer and cartographer as well as a Royal Naval officer, undertook three major voyages of discovery between 1768 and 1779, with much focus on the Pacific Ocean, Australia and New Zealand. He was put in charge of HMS Endeavour for the first Pacific voyage as a result of his outstanding survey and mapwork of the St Lawrence River during the Seven Years War, and went on to demonstrate first-rate surveying and cartography skills as well as being a renowned seaman and a courageous leader. His maps, including charts of Australia and New Zealand, proved to be extremely accurate, and his observations of the people he met fascinated the British public. The second three-year voyage set out in 1772 to find the fabled Terra Australis, thought to exist beyond Australia, and the third was an attempt to find the Northwest Passage around America. In 1778 Cook became the first European to make formal contact with the Hawaiians, after which his expedition headed north, mapping much of the Pacific North West coast of what is now the United States and Canada, including Alaska and the Bering Strait, only being forced back south by sea ice. The expedition returned to Hawaii in 1779 and sailed around the islands for some weeks before going ashore during a religious festival which led some to suggest that Cook was regarded by some as a deity (citing similarities between religious artefacts and the shape of Cook's ships, as well as the movements of Cook's flotilla before landfall, resembling sacred ceremonial patterns recognised by the Hawaiians. Cook

remained in Hawaii for a month before setting sail again, but he was forced to return for repairs when the foremast of his ship, HMS Resolution, broke. Cook was by this time believed to have been suffering from a chronic stomach condition that made him ill-tempered, and relations between the British visitors and the Hawaiians quickly turned sour. When a group of islanders supposedly stole a Naval longboat, and the islanders took umbrage at Cook raiding a sacred grove for wood, Cook and a group of his men attempted to take the King of Hawaii hostage on 14 February 1779, forcing him to the shore. A crowd gathered, tension mounted and the British party fired several shots, reportedly killing some locals. Cook was struck on the head then stabbed, falling in the surf, while another four Marines also died in the incident. The islanders took Cook's body and, treating it with a reverence usually reserved for royalty, it was preserved, with some of the remains being returned to the ships for burial at sea. The somewhat remote spot where he was killed, at Kealakekua Bay on the Big Island, is marked by a white stone obelisk, built in 1874 and only reached by a difficult one-hour hike along the coast or by sea.

#### **15 February 1968**

HMS Resolution, the first of the Royal Navy's ballistic missile submarines (colloquially known as 'bombers') test-fired her first Polaris missile on 15 February 1968. The boat had been launched in September 1966 and commissioned in October the following year. The firing, by the Port crew some 30 miles east of Cape Kennedy in Florida while the 8,400-ton boat was submerged, was carried out during an extensive trials programme, and the submarine left for her first

**Continues on page 33 →**

patrol on 14 June the same year, in doing so assuming responsibility for the nation's strategic nuclear deterrent from the RAF, a role that the Royal Navy has fulfilled without break ever since. Resolution was decommissioned in October 1994, while the phased transition from Polaris to Trident nuclear missile systems was completed in May 1996.

### **16 February 1953**

Centaur-class light aircraft carrier HMS Hermes was launched on 16 February 1953 at the Vickers-Armstrong yard at Barrow-in-Furness, almost ten years after she was laid down as HMS Elephant. Building work on the ship was halted at the end of hostilities in 1945, and even when she was launched (as HMS Hermes) she was some way from completion – the hull was parked for several years until she was completed (with extensive modifications) in 1957, and she finally entered service in late 1959, resembling the much-modified carrier HMS Victorious (see February 4) than her Centaur sisters Albion, Bulwark and Centaur, and capable of operating Supermarine Scimitar and de Havilland Sea Vixen jets as well as Fairey Gannet ASW aircraft. The 27,000-ton Hermes was converted to a helicopter assault ship – a 'commando carrier' – between March 1971 and August 1973, then refitted as an anti-submarine warfare carrier in 1977, taking part in subsequent Sea Harrier trials. In May 1980 she was underwent more conversion work, emerging a year later as a general purpose carrier for a mix of Sea Harriers and helicopters, and perhaps her finest moment followed in 1982 when she was the flagship of the Task Force that sailed to the South Atlantic

and retook the Falkland Islands following the invasion by Argentina. She was paid off by the Royal Navy in 1984, but was bought by India and renamed INS Viraat following an extensive refit at Devonport. She entered service under the Indian naval ensign in 1987 and ran on for another 30 years, finally being scrapped in 2020, some 76 years after she was laid down.

### **17 February 1783**

Royal Navy frigate HMS Fox came out on top of a scrap with a Spanish frigate in the somewhat prosaically-named 'Action of 17 February 1783'. The British had wrested control of the Caribbean from the French and Spanish the previous year and were now strangling the supply lines of their opponents while taking out privateers of both nations as part of the American Revolutionary War. Fox, a frigate of 32 guns, was sailing to Jamaica with a captured Spanish privateer when a lookout spotted a sail, so the frigate moved in to investigate. The sail proved to be that of the 22-gun Spanish frigate Santa Catalina, which cleared for action, prompting Fox to attack. In an action lasting nearly four hours the Spanish vessel was dismantled and finally captured. Four British sailors died in the action, with one injury, while the Spanish suffered a total of more than 30 casualties. Santa Catalina was taken back to Port Royal as a prize, but was found to be too badly damaged to be of practical use so was broken up. Fox continued to serve in home waters as well as the Mediterranean, North America and Far East, and in 1812 was refitted as an armed troopship. She was broken up in 1816 after more than 35 years of service.

**Continues on page 34 →**



**HMS Hermes seen pre-wetting in June 1961 – a procedure in which jets of water spray the surfaces of the ship to counter the effects of nuclear fallout that might occur on the fringe of a nuclear explosion. See 16 February. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 34469)**

### 18 February 1861

Mrs Ng Muk-kah BEM – better known to generations of British and Commonwealth sailors as Jenny of Jenny’s Side Party, died at the age of 92. Side parties were groups of women who met ships on arrival in Hong Kong, cleaned the hulls, chipped away rust and repainted them, and undertook other ship husbandry tasks, as well as washing and ironing laundry for sailors. The group at times consisted of almost 40 women, and their unofficial remit even stretched as far as waiting on guests at cocktail parties (for which they would swap their paint-splattered overalls for traditional dress). Jenny’s Side Party dealt almost exclusively with Royal Navy and Commonwealth ships, and gained almost legendary status for their high quality work, efficiency and speed (a status ‘Gash Jenny’ shared with the ‘Garbage Queen’, Mary Soo, whose side party worked with American ships). A much-loved figure, almost a mother (or grandmother) figure to sailors far from home, Jenny’s Side Party worked on Royal Navy warships from 1928 until Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997. Back in the 1920s Jenny was a very young girl working for her mother (‘Jenny One’) and she eventually took over the business. She was a familiar sight around the dockyard – a short figure with black baggy trousers and high-collared smock with a long pigtail and a prominent gold tooth lighting up a wide grin – and although always kind and thoughtful, she was also an astute businesswoman; she took no payment for the work, but was allowed to sell soft drinks to

sailors and also received any scrap material that could be recycled or sold on. In her later years Jenny was very much a VIP in Naval circles, and was awarded the BEM in 1980 to go with her LSGC and dozens of letters of commendation, including one from the Duke of Edinburgh.

### 19 February 2009

Landing parties from HMS Arrogant and HMS Torch, with detachments of the 1st and 2nd West India Regiments, burned two towns up the Gambia River in a skirmish described in somewhat incredulous fashion by The Times as ‘The War on the Gambia’. In an apparent desire to show errant tribal leaders that the British were to be shown respect, a flotilla of some 14 warships (including the warlike HMS Dove) sailed around 40 miles upriver on 15 February on the ‘Baddiboo Expedition’, in response to raids on British commerce in the region by the King of Baddiboo. A blockade on Baddiboo trade the previous year had failed to persuade the King to step back in line, so a considerable force of troops and ships was assembled at Bathurst (now Banjul, capital of The Gambia) while the 570-ton gunvessel HMS Torch was sent to Swarra Cunda Creek to parlay with the tribal elders. The King of Baddiboo refused to engage, so the flotilla, along with hundreds of troops, proceeded eastwards until they reached the Baddiboo stronghold, a heavily-defended earthwork complex. Refusing to lay down their arms, the Baddiboo force endured three hours of naval bombardment before they withdrew – at which point the British had to fend off a

Continues on page 35 →

**Ice patrol ship HMS Endurance in the Antarctic in 1972. See 20 February. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM HU 129823)**



cavalry charge. The expeditionary force camped overnight of 16-17 February on the river bank under the guns of the warships, and over the next two days were reinforced by a naval brigade from frigate HMS Arrogant and further troops from the local allied militia, allowing the force to venture from the river to destroy the towns of Kinteh Kunda and Saba on 18-19 February. The King of Baddiboo attempted further attacks on the British force, which were beaten back, and within days the King of Jocardo – a territory adjoining the lands of Baddiboo – had negotiated an armistice which opened the way for the King of Baddiboo to also come terms on 26 February, agreeing to pay compensation for damage down to commercial interests.

### **20 February 1967**

Greenland cargo and supply ship MV Anita Dan was bought by the Royal Navy to replace ice patrol ship HMS Protector as Falklands guardship. The 2,640-ton Anita Dan was built in 1956 in Germany for the Lauritzen Line of Denmark, but in February 1967 she was taken up by the Royal Navy and placed with Harland and Wolff for conversion to an ice patrol vessel. She was formally renamed HMS Endurance on 27 July 1967, and she made her first deployment to the Southern Ocean in 1968. The ship, unofficially known as the Red Plum, was due to be axed under the MOD's proposed defence cuts, and her intended withdrawal is widely thought to have encouraged the Argentine ruling junta to

carry out the invasion of the Falkland Islands in April 1982. Ironically, Endurance played a major role in the south Atlantic campaign, particularly retaking South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The final years of Endurance's service was plagued by mechanical problems, and her end was hastened when she struck an iceberg in 1989 – she was patched up, but a survey two years later revealed that her hull was too weak for another season in the Antarctic, so she was decommissioned and replaced by the Norwegian icebreaker Polar Circle, which was later given the name HMS Endurance.

### **21 February 1945**

First flight of the Hawker Sea Fury, the last piston engine aircraft in front line service for the Fleet Air Arm. The aircraft originated in World War 2 when the RAF placed a requirement for a new fighter; with the war drawing to a close the RAF cancelled the requirement but the Royal Navy saw the aircraft as an ideal replacement for a number of elderly models flying from aircraft carriers, so the development of the Sea Fury continued. Based on the predecessor Tempest fighter, the Sea Fury was initially developed in tandem with the RAF version, but once the RAF withdrew the original prototypes were switched to the Sea Fury programme. The first Sea Fury prototype took to the air at Langley in Berkshire,, just outside Slough, on 21 February 1945, followed eight months later by a more 'navalised' aircraft, with folding wings. Sea

**Continues on page 36 →**

**A Hawker Sea Fury takes off from HM Ocean in Sasebo Harbour Japan, with the help of Rocket Assisted Take Off Gear (RATOG) during the Korean War. See 21 February. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM KOR 32)**



trials were carried out with HMS Victorious in late 1946, with the model being approved to enter service with the Fleet Air Arm at the end of July 1947. 807 Naval Air Squadron was the first operational Royal Navy unit to fly the aircraft, starting in September that year. More than 600 aircraft in several variants were built for the Royal Navy, with the Mark X being capable of speeds of 460mph, making it one of the fastest production reciprocating engine fighters ever produced. Although designed as a fighter, the machine also proved a very capable fighter-bomber, especially in a ground-attack role as demonstrated during the Korean War. The Sea Fury won legendary status on 8 August 1952 when an aircraft of 802 NAS, flying from HMS Ocean, shot down a Chinese MiG-15 jet, although the identity of the pilot who achieved this rare feat remains subject to conflicting claims. The Sea Fury stayed in service with the Royal Navy until 1955, by which time jets such as the Hawker Sea Hawk and Supermarine Attacker had taken over front-line duties, though it also saw service with a number of foreign forces including Australia, Canada, Egypt, West Germany, the Netherlands and Pakistan, seeing service into the 1960s in some cases.

#### **22 February 1940**

The Royal Marines Depot Exton opened its doors for its first trainees on 22 February 1940, the forerunner of the present-day Commando

Training Centre RM at Lympstone. Towards the end of World War 2 the site was renamed the RM Depot Lympstone, working in tandem with the RM Infantry Training Centre at Dalditch Camp, close to Lympstone on Woodbury Common, which is still used today for commando training. With the cessation of hostilities Dalditch Camp closed and all training was carried out at the newly-renamed Infantry Training Centre RM from 1 November 1946. Lympstone originally housed up to 3,000 officers and other ranks in 74 buildings of various types spread across the 54-acre site, but as the role of the commando developed the estate was gradually modernised and training became more sophisticated. The present title CTC RM was first used in 1972, and the site now provides selection, recruitment, basic training and leadership and career training for the Royal Marines, as well as Commando training for the rest of UK Defence. The establishment handles around 1,300 recruits, 2,000 potential recruits and 400 potential officers on training and acquaint courses each year, and organises more than 320 courses each year for a further 2,000 students.

#### **23 February 1942**

T-class submarine HMS Trident torpedoed and seriously damaged the German heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen off Norway on 23 February 1942, practically destroying 30ft of the warship's stern. Trident had been commissioned just weeks after

**Continues on page 37 →**

**HMS Trident returns home to depot ship HMS Forth on Holy Loch on 19 March 1942 following her attack on German cruiser Prinz Eugen. See 23 February. The image is from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 7934)**



the outbreak of World War 2, spending the early part of hostilities in home waters and the North Sea, periodically based at Polyarnoe in Russia. She had already sunk or damaged a number of German merchant ships and auxiliaries by the time she spotted Prinz Eugen and heavy cruiser Admiral Scheer, displacing 19,000 tons and 15,000 tons respectively, off Norway in late February 1942. The British submarine fired seven torpedoes in total against the two warships, one of which struck the stern of Prinz Eugen, jamming her rudder and damaging her engines, forcing the ship back to Germany for repairs. It is likely that the submarine had an additional crew member on board at the time – Trident had been presented with a young female reindeer by the Russian the previous summer as an unexpected gift. When her normal rations (moss and lichen) had been exhausted her shipmates found she had a liking for table scraps and condensed milk, and the occasional navigational map if given the chance. Pollyanna (named after the Russian port) had grown to such an extent that when it was time for her to leave the boat she had to be

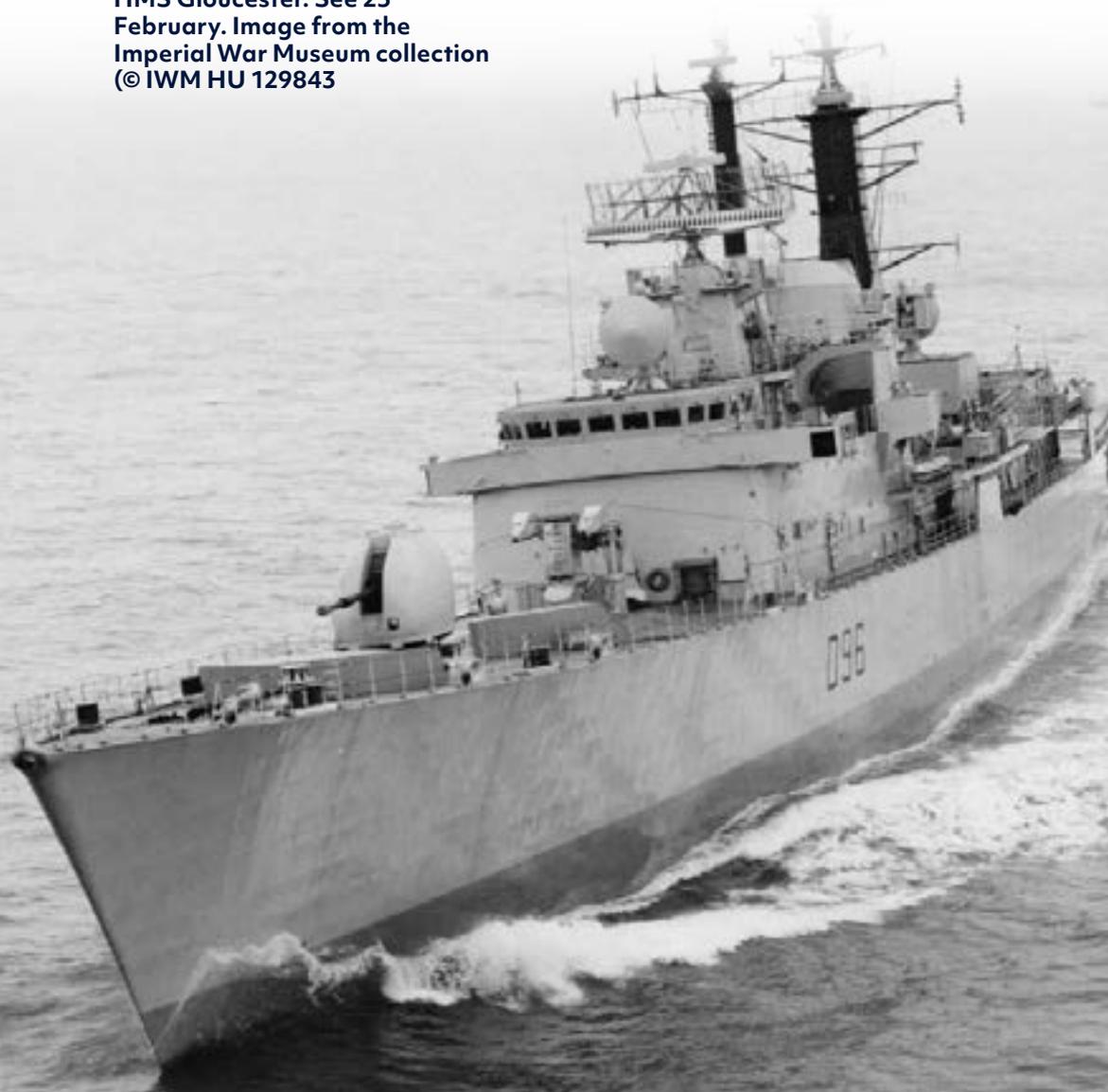
tied securely to fit through the boat's hatches; she spent the rest of her life in a zoo. Trident went on to serve in the Mediterranean and Far East, building a modest tally of success against smaller merchantmen and auxiliaries, and survived the war to be scrapped in early 1946.

#### **24 February 1857**

The names of the first recipients of the newly-created Victoria Cross were published in the London Gazette on Tuesday 24 February 1857. Of the first 85 listed, 27 went to members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, with the very first name printed being that of Cdr Cecil William Buckley, who was recognised for his bravery on two occasions while serving as a lieutenant on board HMS Miranda during the Crimea campaign two years earlier. A total of 1,358 VCs have been awarded for "most conspicuous bravery, or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy", with 117 of them going to members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Continues on page 38 →

**HMS Gloucester. See 25 February. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM HU 129843)**



### 25 February 1991

Type 42 destroyer HMS Gloucester destroyed an Iraqi anti-ship missile (commonly referred to as a Silkworm) with her Sea Dart anti-aircraft missiles on 25 February 1991 as it homed in on American battleship USS Missouri during the First Gulf War. On receiving a missile warning, both the Missouri and American frigate USS Jarrett fired decoy chaff, but the command team on Gloucester did not activate chaff; the Royal Navy had seen incidents in the Falklands Conflict (particularly in the case of the Atlantic Conveyor) when incoming missiles – in those cases Exocets – had reacquired targets after decoys had been used. Indeed, the RN view was that such missiles should be shot down, and the presence of chaff complicated the situation. Accordingly, Gloucester turned sharply and fired two Sea Darts to starboard, one of which intercepted and destroyed the Silkworm between three and four miles from the destroyer – the first successful missile-to-missile strike of its kind. The whole engagement, from detection of the missile to its destruction, took less than 90 seconds, and was all the more remarkable as the command team had to make a snap decision on whether to launch missiles in the knowledge that the USS Vincennes had mistaken an Iranian airliner for an incoming aerial threat less than three years earlier in the same region, shooting down the civilian plane with the loss of 290 lives. The Chinese-built Silkworm was a substantial land-based anti-ship cruise missile weighing almost three tons and carrying a warhead of around half a ton of high explosive, travelling at over 600mph. Gloucester later destroyed a number of small Iraqi naval craft through her Lynx

helicopter, spending more time in the combat zone than any other coalition warship. The 'Fighting G' went on to complete almost 26 years of service for the Royal Navy, racking up almost 800,000 miles, before she was scrapped in 2015.

### 26 February 1955

Aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal started acceptance trials on 26 February 1955, the day after a commissioning ceremony was held in the ship's hangar at the Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead. The build process was a long drawn-out affair; the ship was ordered in March 1942 as HMS Irresistible, one of four Audacious-class carriers, though her name was changed to Ark Royal before she was laid down a year later, in tribute to her predecessor, which had been lost in 1941. She was the largest warship to be built at the yard, but with the end of the war two of the class were cancelled and work on Ark Royal and her sister Eagle (originally Audacious) was suspended to allow the design to be updated, allowing them to handle more modern aircraft. Ark Royal was launched by Queen Elizabeth in May 1950 and completed almost five years later. She was originally meant to take part in the Suez operations of 1956, but a damaged propeller shaft bearing forced her back to the UK and her place was taken by Eagle. She was a test platform for the Hawker P1127, the forerunner of the Sea Harrier, and also had a role in the Beira Patrol off East Africa. By the 1970s her air wing would typically comprise McDonnell Douglas Phantoms, Blackburn Buccaneers, Fairey Gannets, and Westland Sea King and Wessex helicopters. The ship gained a nationwide

Continues on page 39 →

**HMS Ark Royal on exercises in stormy seas off Scotland in November 1957 – three of her jets had been recovered, and five more still in the air landed safely shortly after. See 26 February. The image is from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 33933)**



following when she was the subject of a fly-on-the-wall documentary – Sailor – that followed her progress on the six-month Westlant deployment to the United States. Ark Royal decommissioned in February 1979 after a service life of less than 25 years (almost half of which was spent in reserve, refit or undergoing modernisation, as she was somewhat dated even before she was commissioned). There were tentative plans to preserve her but they came to nothing and she was towed to Cairnryan in Scotland in September 1980 for a three-year breaking process.

### **27 February 1941**

Light cruiser HMS Leander sank Italian commerce raider Ramb I in the Indian Ocean, almost 400 miles west of the Maldives, in the short but decisive 'Action of 27 February 1941'. Leander was part of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy in early 1941, and was escorting Convoy US 9 when she was detached while off Bombay on 22 February 1941 to investigate reports of commerce raiders in the area. Mid-morning on 27 February Leander spotted and approached a ship, which they suspected to be an Italian fruit carrier. The Italian ship at first hoisted a British merchant flag, but when challenged with code words she swapped it for an Italian flag and trained her two 4.7in guns on the Royal Navy vessel. Although in a vulnerable position, when the Italians opened fire their aim was erratic and slow; Leander responded within 30 seconds, firing five salvos in a minute then pausing to gauge the effect. Leander asked if her foe, which turned out to be Ramb I, wished to surrender, and though there was no reply it was obvious that the Italian crew was abandoning their burning ship, and the merchant flag was lowered. The warship sent a boat to attempt to save Ramb I but an Italian officer warned them off, saying the ship's cargo included ammunition. Sure enough, the ship was wracked by two explosions soon after, and sank within a few minutes. The Italians were picked up and transferred to tanker RFA Pearleaf under armed guard, which took them as POWs to Colombo in Ceylon. Their ship had been operating in the Red Sea, but with the Allied advance she had left to make a run to a friendly port, in this case in the Dutch East Indies. Leander saw further service in the Mediterranean before she was transferred to the Royal New Zealand Navy, created from the Royal Navy's NZ Division in the autumn of 1941, at which point the ship became HMNZS Leander. She was badly damaged by a torpedo strike in the summer of 1943 in the Pacific, killing 26 of her ship's company, and she took no further part in the war. After hostilities were over the newly-repaired and refitted Leander was returned to the Royal Navy, and in 1946 she was involved in the Corfu Channel Incident. She was scrapped in 1950.

### **28 February 1842**

Queen Victoria paid first visit to Portsmouth and stayed at Admiralty House in the dockyard.

The young queen – she was 22 at the time of the visit, and had been on the throne for four years – and her husband Prince Albert had a busy programme, including dinner with a host of dignitaries, amongst them the Duke of Wellington, who stayed at the George Hotel in the High Street. There were fireworks for the Royal visitors, the Prince Consort visited Brunel's Block Mills in the yard, and the Royal party also made a tour of ships at Spithead, braving poor weather conditions in the steamer Black Eagle. The party visited one of the three-decker ships at anchor, HMS Queen, where Queen Victoria met sailors and asked to try a tot of rum...

### **29 February 1916**

Our third 'Action of...' encounter in February is from World War 1, when armed merchant cruiser (AMC) HMS Alcantara fought a close-range duel with German auxiliary cruiser SMS Greif 70 miles north east of Shetland. Alcantara was about to leave her patrol line to the north of Shetland on 28 February 1916 when signals from the Admiralty ordered her to remain as a commerce raider, accompanied by a U-boat, was expected to pass through the area. The following day Alcantara, a 16,000-ton converted liner, spotted a suspicious-looking vessel flying Norwegian flags. Reports from other Royal Navy ships in the patrol line caused some confusions; the crew of Alcantara was not sure if they were looking for a ship with one funnel or two as auxiliary cruiser HMS Andes reported that it had spotted the enemy ship elsewhere (it had, in fact, encountered a genuinely innocent Norwegian freighter). Alcantara approached their Norwegian vessel, which appeared to be legitimate and tallied with papers lodged with the Admiralty by steamer named Rena. The CO of Alcantara assumed this could not be the enemy ship spotted by Andes as it was hove to in a different area all together. Details were signalled to Andes, which replied that was indeed the mystery ship – just as 'Rena' revealed hidden guns and opened fire on Alcantara at very close range, hitting both the ship and a British boarding party in a small boat. Rena was, in fact, the 5,000-ton converted freighter SMS Greif, and caused considerable damage to Alcantara in the opening moments of the encounter. Once the British gunners opened fire the two ships slugged it out for about 15 minutes at close quarters as Greif attempted to steam away to the safety of the Norwegian coast, until Andes joined the fray, knocking out the German ship's bridge and steering gear. But by this time Alcantara had been shelled heavily and struck by at least one torpedo, and she sank shortly after, just as the Germans were abandoning their ship, which was sunk by British warships within an hour. Almost 200 Germans died in the incident, and another 125 were taken prisoner, while 72 British sailors died on board Alcantara.



# 2025 Calendar Competition

**WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE  
THE ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION  
PORTAYED IN BOTH ORIGINAL  
ARTWORK & PHOTOGRAPHY.  
WINNING 12 IMAGES WILL BE  
MADE INTO THE 2025  
CALENDAR.**

**COMPETITION ENDS 30TH AUGUST 2024**

**75 years  
since the  
formation  
of the  
ROYAL NAVAL  
ASSOCIATION  
(1950)**



**The image needs to be replicated digitally A4 in size- send email to  
[engagement@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:engagement@royalnavalassoc.com)/07596530499**

# ➤ LONGCAST

2024	
<b>From 22 Mar</b>	HMS Mohawk Association reunion in Blackpool. Details from IOW Tours
<b>12-14 Apr</b>	Thriving Together weekend away, Brecon Beacons
<b>4 May</b>	Army v Navy rugby, Twickenham
<b>18 May</b>	No 4 Area meeting to be hosted by Christchurch and District branch
<b>18 May</b>	National Standard Bearers Competition
<b>3-7 Jun</b>	RNA Battlefield Memorial Tour to Normandy
<b>14-16 Jun</b>	RNA National Conference, Cardiff
<b>12 Oct</b>	World Uckers Championships, Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth
<b>Autumn (tbc)</b>	D-Day Memorials Cycle Event in Normandy

Please check the RN Shipmates.co.uk website for a list of further reunions: [www.rnshipmates.co.uk](http://www.rnshipmates.co.uk)



**ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION**

[www.royal-naval-association.co.uk](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk)



## A SPECIAL OFFER

A 10% discount on food, selected drinks and hotel rooms for members of the Royal Naval Association

The Royal Maritime Hotel is a stone's throw from Gunwharf Quays, the Spinnaker Tower and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, HMS Victory, The Mary Rose Museum and HMS Warrior. Facilities include Horatio's restaurant, the Victory bar, a small swimming pool, sauna, spa pool and skittles!

Run by a charity to benefit veterans and serving military personnel




Visit [royalmaritimehotel.co.uk](http://royalmaritimehotel.co.uk) for more information and to book

info@royalmaritimehotel.co.uk 02392 982 182 Queen Street, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 3HS

### MORE OFFERS

<a href="#">Ship Anson pub, 10 The Hard, Portsea</a>	10% off food and drink
<a href="#">Portsmouth Historic Dockyard</a>	£20 for a day ticket 30% off annual Ultimate Explorer tickets
<a href="#">Royal Maritime Club 182 Queen Street</a>	A 10% discount on food, selected drinks and hotel rooms
<a href="#">Sea Urchin's Gin</a> <a href="#">Navy Strength Gin</a> <a href="#">Arctic Convoy Vodka</a>	10% to RNA from the sale of each bottle  Don't forget to tick the box for RNA.  P&P is free for orders over £40, otherwise it is £4.50.
<a href="#">China Fleet Country Club</a>	Click on the link for lots of different offers for Serving and ex-Serving Royal Navy and Royal Marines

**Watch this space for RNA offers on event tickets and lots more to come!**

# Peregrine Trophy



Every year the Royal  
Naval Association  
sponsors a prize in the  
Royal Navy's Peregrine  
Trophy Photo  
Competition

## ROYAL NAVY AMATEUR MARITIME IMAGE

Sponsor: Lockheed Martin UK

An individual award for the best  
Maritime photograph of a ship,  
submarine or aircraft.

In particular, the judges look for eye-  
catching material.

## ROYAL NAVY AMATEUR OPEN PRIZE

Sponsor: FOSGlobal

Awarded to the single best photograph of  
a Royal Navy or Royal Marines theme.

A combination of creativity and impact is  
desired.

More details on how to enter will be  
published in upcoming Semaphore circulars

[engagement@rnassoc.com](mailto:engagement@rnassoc.com)

# LET'S MAKE 2024

## FUNDRAISING FOR US



kindness



giving



care

That's  
Members,  
Branches,  
Area &  
Central Office



A fundraising tin in your local pub  
could raise £100 per year and only cost £10.



Playing the [www.rnalottery.co.uk](http://www.rnalottery.co.uk) each week  
will help generate money to be spent  
on branches, area & opportunities  
to support members. Just over £1 per week.

National 'flag' day Date TBA - A Call to Action  
to fundraise for the RNA  
50% share to branch/Central Office.

Make a point of raising your  
money to send a branch member  
to National Conference.  
Your voice IS important.

Has your branch booked a spot in your  
local supermarket? Branches report  
generating £350-£750 a session.

Have you got a calendar of local  
fayres and fetes to attend?  
Battleships, tombolas & raffles make  
standing around more engaging &  
worth your time.

Plan the BIGGEST gathering of your  
branch and supporters for the  
Next TRAFALGAR night NOW  
Invite family & friends to partake  
& learn our traditions.  
Generate monetary fines  
and donations,

Then there are the usual  
social events : horse racing,  
games nights, quizzes,  
raffles sponsored events and draws.  
Do you interact with cadets, reserves  
or local RN? to boost numbers.

If you haven't got enough people  
Invite nearby branches, clubs and associations  
to join in.

We rely on donations and know there are so  
many causes to give to.

Our interaction Give people the reason to choose RNA first.

contact: [engagement@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:engagement@royalnavalassoc.com) for any assistance

## Ex-service women with physical health conditions/injuries needed for research

*Are you a woman who has previously served in the UK Armed Forces?*

*Do you have a current physical health condition, illness or injury that significantly impacts your life?*

*Would you like to contribute to research focused on improving provision for female veterans?*

### What are we looking for?

At the Centre for Military Women's Research (CMWR) at Anglia Ruskin University, we have been commissioned by the Office for Veterans Affairs to carry out research focused on women veterans' physical healthcare needs and experiences of support provision.

We would like to speak to women from across the UK, who have previously served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces as a full-time regular and have a current physical health condition, illness, or injury that significantly impacts their life. This does not need to be service related, or attributable.

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

You will be asked to take part in a virtual interview via Microsoft Teams, that will take approximately one hour. This will be arranged at a time that is convenient for you. During the interview you will be asked about your experience of physical health conditions and of accessing support.

You will be provided with a £15 Amazon voucher after the interview, as a thank you for your time.

**If you are interested in finding out more, please contact us at:**

[female.veterans@aru.ac.uk](mailto:female.veterans@aru.ac.uk)

**For further information about the CMWR, visit**

<https://www.centreformilitarywomensresearch.com/>



**HOW TO BOOK:**

**01603 886 740**

[www.justforgroups.com/royal-naval-association](http://www.justforgroups.com/royal-naval-association)

[sales@justforgroups.com](mailto:sales@justforgroups.com)

# RNA CONFERENCE 2024 CARDIFF

June 14th - 16th June 2024 (Friday - Sunday)



Gala Dinner  
Only  
**£40<sup>PP</sup>**



Area 7 is hosting the annual RNA Conference in Cardiff.

The Welsh capital has undergone a transformation in recent years. Once a busy industrial port, it is now a cosmopolitan city of culture, character and charm.

*Just for groups!* have secured some bedrooms at a choice of two hotels and the gala dinner (£40 per person) will now be held at the voco St David's Hotel in Cardiff Bay on Saturday 15th June.

Please contact our friendly team on **01603 886740** to book the gala dinner – at a cost of **£40pp**, and/or bed & breakfast accommodation.

Alternatively you can book on our website:

[www.justforgroups.com/royal-naval-association](http://www.justforgroups.com/royal-naval-association)



## HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS - CARDIFF

The Holiday Inn Express Cardiff Bay is located within Cardiff Bay and Cardiff city centre overlooking Bute East Dock.

All bedrooms are en-suite with complimentary WIFI, air conditioning, iron/ironing board, flat screen TV, direct dial telephone and hairdryer.

The hotel offers car parking (charges will apply) and Cardiff Bay train station is within a 10 minute walk.

<b>2 nights</b> £145 per person sharing £249 single occupancy	<b>3 nights only</b> £215 per person sharing £369 single occupancy
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## FUTURE INN - CARDIFF

The Future Inn Cardiff is located within Cardiff Bay and walking distance of Mermaid Quay and the Welsh Millennium centre.

The hotel hosts 197 air-conditioned en-suite bedrooms fully equipped with tea/coffee making facilities, flat screen TV, hairdryer, and iron/ironing board. There is complimentary on-site car parking.

<b>1 night</b> £115 per person sharing £190 single occupancy	<b>2 nights</b> £199 per person sharing £329 single occupancy
<b>3 nights</b> £269 per person sharing £439 single occupancy	

Booking conditions apply



## Delegate to Annual Conference 2024 - CARDIFF

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.

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

**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](mailto:sara@royalnavalassoc.com)

**To check ahead of Conference, please call Sara on 023 92 723747**

**NOMINATION FORM**  
**ELECTION OF MEMBERS AND DEPUTY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL 2024**  
**(Revised RNA Bye-Law 7)**

**For the attention of All Branch Secretaries:**

**NCM in Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12 and DNCM in Areas 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12**

Each Branch may nominate **one full or life member** from any Branch within its own Area, as a Candidate for election to the National Council, and **one full or life member** for election as the Deputy National Council Member **subject to the approval of the Branch to which both persons belong.**

Please note that our current governance construct means that National Council Members are automatically Trustees of the Royal Naval Association (Charity no: 266982). Nominees for NCM should therefore ensure that they are not in any way disbarred from holding a trusteeship. If unsure, please check the Charity Commission website.

**Names of Nominees**

**NCM** ..... **DNCM** .....

**Proposed by** ..... **Branch** ..... **Area**

**Address of Nominee**

**NCM**.....

..... **e mail** .....

**DNCM**.....

..... **e mail** .....

**Brief history of nominees in the Association.** (Continue on separate sheet if necessary)

**NCM -**

**DNCM -**

Chairman ..... (signed) .....(dated).....

Secretary..... (signed) .....(dated).....

If the Candidate is **not** a member the proposing Branch, this section is to be completed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Candidate's **own** Branch.

Candidate's Branch .....

We are aware of the above nomination.

Signature of Chairman (Candidate's Branch) .....

Signature of Secretary (Candidate's Branch) .....

**Candidate**

**I accept the nomination and promise to attend as many National Council Meetings as is possible and to sit on any Committees to which I may be elected.**

Signature of Candidate ..... Dated .....

The envelope containing this completed form should be marked **NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL** and must reach RNA HQ no later than **1600 on 16 February 2024.**

Alternatively, you can scan the fully signed form and email it to [sara@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:sara@royalnavalassoc.com)

## Nominations for Governance Standing Orders Committee 2024

For the attention of All Branch Secretaries

Applications are sought for the Governance Standing Orders Committee.

Each Branch may nominate **one member** as a candidate for election to the Standing Orders Committee, **subject to the approval of the Branch to which the candidate belongs**. Applicants should be Full or Life members. A nil return is not required.

NAME OF NOMINEE .....

PROPOSED BY ..... BRANCH

ADDRESS OF NOMINEE .....

.....

.....

E mail ..... Post code .....

**Brief history of nominee in the Association.** Continue on separate sheet if necessary.

Chairman ..... (signed).....(dated)

Secretary ..... (signed).....(dated)

If the Candidate is **not** a member of the proposing Branch, this section must be completed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Candidate's **own** Branch.

Candidate's Branch .....

We support this Nomination.

Signature of Chairman (Candidate's Branch) .....

Signature of Secretary (Candidate's Branch) .....

**Candidate - I accept this nomination and undertake to attend as many Standing Orders Committee Meetings as is possible.**

Signature of Candidate .....

This form should be forwarded to Central Office to be received no later than **16 February 2024**  
Nominations received after this date cannot be included in any Ballot required if more than two apply

## PROPOSED MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024

Proposals must reach The General Secretary by **1600 16 February 2024**

Name of Proposing Branch: .....

### Motion / amendment

**Explanation of the Motion / Amendment** (To be included in the notes for Conference)

Hon Secretary .....(signed).....(dated)

---

Name of Seconding Branch: .....

Hon Secretary .....(signed).....(dated)

---

### Notes

- a. A motion is submitted in the name of a Branch. Secretaries of proposing and seconding Branches are **certifying** that the motion or amendment reflects the view of the Branch meeting (not a committee); and that voting was conducted in accordance with Rule 20.
- b. A separate form is required for each Motion or Amendment
- c. A manuscript copy is acceptable for additional Motions or Amendments if the printed form is not available.
- d. The Motion or Amendment should be as short and precise as possible avoiding ambiguity. A Motion should normally start with the word 'THAT'
- e. The explanation is to assist the scrutiny of the Standing Orders Committee in understanding the intention behind the Motion so that they may be able to consider its presentation so it can be improved and implemented as soon as possible (Conference Bye Law C4)
- f. Motions may be submitted at any time but must reach the General Secretary by **16 February 2024**.
- g. Motions of Urgency should reach the General Secretary not less than 48 hours before Conference. (In accordance with Conference Bye Law C6.) and include an explanation about the urgency.
- h. Amendments to Motions should also normally reach the General Secretary not less than 7 days before Conference. The provision for the submission of amendments during Conference is in the Conference Bye-Laws.
- i. Bye-Laws. A Motion to Conference may propose that a Bye-Law be set aside or it may ask the Council to consider making or amending a Bye-Law.
- j. The Branch Proposing a Motion **must** have it Seconded by another Branch before forwarding it to the General Secretary. (Conference Bye Law C3a)