

SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR

SHIPMATES LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR MEMORABLE YEAR

A happy new year to all our shipmates – and what a year it promises to be.

We've had some major anniversaries and commemorations in the past few years – Falklands 40, Battle of the Atlantic 80 and D-Day 80 amongst them – and this year sees another significant date as the UK and nations around the world mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War 2, with a particular focus on the cessation of hostilities in Europe (VE Day, which is 8 May in the UK) and in Japan (VJ Day is 15 August in this country)

World War 2 veterans, their families and carers are invited to be a part of the commemorations and celebrations – you can read details on [page 3](#). The Royal Naval Association will, naturally, wholeheartedly support ceremonies and events, both national and local, to mark VE80 and VJ80, and shipmates will be prominent in these and other commemorative events, as they are every month of every year.

But we have an anniversary of our own to celebrate this year, because 2025 marks 75 years since the RNA first formally took on that title – the National Conference of 1950 recognised and used 'the Royal Naval Association' as a term for the organisation for the first time.

Areas and branches across the UK and abroad are being encouraged to celebrate RNA75 at a time and in a manner that best suits them.

But the RNA nationally also has a programme of five key events that will carry the RNA75 logo which you see displayed on this page. These events are intended to be as accessible, attractive, inclusive, nationally supported, future-looking, and cost



effective as possible.

The first is the **CONA gathering** in Portsmouth at the end of March – CONA being the Conference of Naval Associations. You can read more about this event and the relevance of CONA on [page 3](#). Next up will be the **Army v Navy rugby** clash at Twickenham, the home of English rugby, on 3 May. As well as top-quality rugby, the day is a chance to meet up with old shipmates and make new friends – and if you are quick you can take advantage of the discounted tickets available to

RNA members (and don't forget that membership of the RNA is now completely free!). See our display advert on [page 13](#) for more details.

In the middle of our anniversary year is the **National Conference** in Portsmouth (20-22 June) which will combine important business with a major gathering of shipmates on a social basis – see [page 6](#) for more on this.

14 September brings the **Biennial Parade of Naval Associations** which we co-ordinate in London, enabling associations large and small to take centre stage to commemorate and celebrate those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, those who served and those who serve.

Finally we have a **charity fundraising concert** at Portsmouth Guildhall on 22 October, featuring the famous Fisherman's Friends, Royal Marines bandies and the newly-formed RNA Choir (see [page 7](#)). Through these events, and others (such as the RNA's Uckers World Championships) the Association will be seeking to be true to the seven components of comradeship which act as guide rails for us – Companionship, Community, Connection, Compassion, Care, Commemoration and Celebration.

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

The next Semaphore Circular will be published on Friday 7 February, with Branch Notes on 17 January and Semaphore Shorts published on 24 and 31 January.

CONA MAKES THE MOST OF OUR SHARED VALUES

Many of RNA Shipmates are also members of other Naval associations, maybe based on their branch or a specific ship, reflecting where they have served or who they have served with during their Naval careers.

Those associations are welcome to be part of the Conference of Naval Associations (CONA). CONA brings together Naval associations to share comradeship and discuss the important issues facing our sector, and as the RNA holds the Chair of CONA, it is beholden on us to inform the smaller associations of what's going on in the veteran space.

The purpose of CONA is to encourage participation in commemoration, promoting increased co-operation and partnership – we believe we are stronger together! Naval associations vary in size from no more than a handful of enthusiasts to the RNA, the largest group, with 22,000+ shipmates including shipmates from across the Naval family – the RFA, RNR and Merchant Navy, both serving, former serving, and their families.

Smaller groups often find themselves running on little more than goodwill and a passion to maintain their pride and comradeship within our shared Naval Service.

Not all these associations are easily contacted, but we believe that there are some 80-100 active associations with considerable multi-generational

influence which would benefit from regular Royal Navy and Naval charity updates. One opportunity that springs from being part of the Conference is awareness of the Biennial Naval Associations' Parade, which will next be held at the Cenotaph in Whitehall on Sunday 14 September this year, providing an opportunity to parade all our Naval associations' standards together in the centre of London and reaffirm our allegiance to King Charles III.

CONA is not a membership organisation, rather a loose collaboration with the aim to share information and news, jointly attend relevant events, and extend the collective reach to a (mostly) veteran Naval audience. The RNA is currently the elected leader and executive for CONA, and our National President, Vice Admiral Duncan Potts CB, is the Chair.

Malcolm Little is the RNA Central Office point of contact for CONA, and he maintains a contact list of the known associations and their secretaries. It is worth checking with Malcolm that your association is on his list, in order to ensure that it is on the relevant contact group to be sent information of interest to your



members.

No matter the size, there are challenges that are common to most, if not all, associations. These challenges include governance, safeguarding, welfare delivery, culture and member age profiles, databases, funding and resourcing, as well as wider representation and championing.

Helpfully, the Royal Navy formally recognises the RNA's current CONA co-ordination role, partly because its growing membership do not pay subscriptions, and there is no conflict of interest with other associations. The RNA also extends the offer of administrative support for those branches and associations struggling to find committee members to step forward. This need not affect the sovereignty or independence of individual associations who, we believe, better achieve comradeship through smaller, tighter groups, but is merely offered to give dwindling associations added support and 'legs'.

Please check that your association is represented or, indeed, offer to represent it at the next CONA event in on Friday 28 March – a great, interactive, senior RN briefing and event has been organised.

The conference aims to highlight industry issues, show unity among the associations and work together for the benefit of all members.

It is an ideal opportunity to network and focus on improving the lives off all those with a Naval story.

The conference is to be held at Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard in the Princess Royal Gallery from 0900 to 1500.

If you are interested in being a delegate, or represent an association and would like to express an interest in joining the Conference of Naval Associations, email Malcolm on dcos@rnassoc.org

REGISTER FOR VE80 AND VJ80

2025 marks 80 years since the end of World War 2, with Victory in Europe (VE) Day on 8 May 1945 and Victory over Japan (VJ) Day on 15 August 1945.

The Royal British Legion is once again taking a leading role in the commemorations, and is planning events to mark these momentous anniversaries to ensure that the service and sacrifice of the World War 2 generation is always remembered.

Victory in the war would not have been possible without the combined efforts of all the Allied Forces, from the Commonwealth and beyond. Therefore, World War 2

veterans from the UK and Allied nations, will be at the heart of the commemorations.

RBL activities will thank surviving veterans and pay tribute to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and lost their lives, without whom the way of life we enjoy today would not have been possible.

If you are interested in hearing more about events in 2025, and having an opportunity to attend, see the RBL website at www.britishlegion.org.uk Planning for events in 2025 is ongoing and the Legion hopes to contact those who express an interest in attending these by mid-March.

➤ CONTACTS



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Find Semaphore Circular online at

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

or navigate to

RNA Website / About / News / Semaphore Circular

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FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Ahoy Shipmates!

Here's to a very happy and healthy New Year Shipmates; I wish you all the very best for 2025.

2025 is, of course, the 75th anniversary of the RNA having been officially formed at the 1950 Annual Conference.

It's going to be a cracking year and there's lots going on.

On 3 May, thanks to the Royal Navy Rugby Union, the RNA will be the nominated charity of the day at the Army v Navy match at Twickenham.

We have a large bar reserved exclusively for RNA members in the stadium (the Nightingale Suite) and we can offer tickets at a £5 discount on the face value. Please see the advert elsewhere in this Circular to bag your tickets for you and your oppo.

After coming so close to victory against the Army last year, the Navy boys have promised us a win this year as an anniversary present!

Top tip: for those of you who don't do the game with the odd-shaped balls and may not have done the AvN in the past, the rugby itself is merely the backdrop to get together with old oppos.

If you haven't been before, please come. It's a great occasion and you will never believe how many old friends you'll bump into.

Our Annual Conference in Portsmouth over the w/e of 20-22 June is also set to be a great few days.

Those who attended for the Falklands 40th anniversary in 2022 will recall we had a fantastic cocktail party on the Friday evening in HMS Warrior – that is set for a repeat this year with a gala dinner on the Saturday evening in the Historic Dockyard and, after church on Sunday, the Second Sea Lord has kindly invited us to a tea party at Admiralty House.

This is also Biennial Parade year, and in our



anniversary year we hope to have the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key, taking the salute, and it is our ambition to have 1,000 personnel across the wider Naval family on parade.

Get your Branch to request a grant from Central Office for transport – we've put money aside in the budget for this.

This term also sees the start of the RNA community choir, with three elements starting in Plymouth,

Portsmouth and Rosyth – which, spookily enough, align with the location of resident RM Bands, each one of which have kindly provided a Bandy to be the local choirmaster.

You can't beat a good sing-song and you don't have to be of the standard of the Taffies at Rorke's Drift or, for our younger members, Hugh Grant's close protection officer in Love Actually. If you are interested, see page 7 for local contacts.

For those awaiting news of how to get your tickets for the Fisherman's Friends/RNA Choir charity fundraising concert on 22 October, we're still pressing the promoters for details. We'll get this out asap.

For you sailors out there – and I'm talking about wind to puff your sails-type sailors as opposed to the matelot version – I am delighted to announce that we are in discussion with the RNVR Yacht Club with a view to their Club affiliating with us to effectively become the RNA's Sailing SIG or rather Sports and Comradeship Group, as we are referring to SIGs now.

If you're at a loose end in February and you fancy a bit of social sailing in Antigua, please see the separate article on this.

For those of us who can't either afford this jolly or are not able to get their diary squared away sufficiently in time, worry not as there will be opportunities to sail more locally in the summer.

Finally, thanks to those Area reps who were able to come to Portsmouth before Christmas – pictured left. It was a chance for the new National Chairman, S/M Andy Christie, to introduce himself and give his thoughts on how best to exploit the opportunity our 75th anniversary presents.

For those Areas not able to be represented, we will try, if at all possible, to get Central Office representation at your Area AGM.

For those who are celebrating it, have a great Burns Night!

Bill



PACKAGE DEAL FOR CONFERENCE EVENTS

Central Office is in the advanced planning stage for this year's Annual Conference in Portsmouth, and have put together a package deal that covers the three main 'social' elements of the weekend – 20-22 June.

Dave MacAskill, who is leading on this year's Conference, has taken a different approach this year, dictated in part by the location of the events and the security issues that the location requires.

The weekend's entertainment, outside the core business of the Annual General Meeting on Saturday morning, is all under the jurisdiction of Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and HM Naval Base Portsmouth.

Most activities are in the Historic Dockyard, but entry to St Ann's Church and the home of the Second Sea Lord on Sunday requires higher levels of security – and a touch of exclusivity in this, the Association's 75th year.

In outline, the weekend begins with evening drinks and canapés on board HMS Warrior in the Historic Dockyard.

Saturday morning and part of the afternoon will be taken up with the Annual General Meeting, while the evening brings a Gala Dinner with entertainment in Boathouse No 7, again in the Historic Dockyard. The Dockyard closes to the public in the late afternoon, hence the need for additional security measures on Friday and Saturday evenings. Sunday morning brings the dedication of the National Standard and a service in St Ann's Church, followed by 75th anniversary celebrations at Admiralty House/the RN Embassy, which are within the secure perimeter of the Naval Base.

All events have wheelchair access.

There will be additional activities over the weekend that will contribute to what we hope will prove to be a memorable period of celebration, commemoration and reunion.

Because of the heightened security and the paperwork

A look back to the Sunday service in Cardiff during the 2024 Conference weekend



required, the weekend's activities are predicated on shipmates attending all three social activities (Warrior, Gala Dinner and Sunday morning celebrations), with prices set and confirmed on this basis.

The price of this weekend package, which is being subsidised, is £120, and just to reiterate, the elements cannot be separated. Tickets are available for purchase now at www.rnagizzet.co.uk

It is non-refundable, and bookings will only be deemed complete when security details for each person are submitted.

These details – name, address, place of birth, date of birth and nationality for guest lists and security access – will need to be sent to engagement@rnassoc.org

Dave has worked hard to ensure that the package provides best value for money while providing the most exciting opportunity to get together. When you book your places, please be aware of this package deal.

Turning to accommodation, our partners UK Holiday Group put a lot of work into securing attractive room rates in Portsmouth, but as with most hotels in these times the prices vary massively.

When we discussed booking rooms last year for occupation this summer hotel rates were well above normal, and we thought it unfair to recommend or block book rooms at inflated prices when a search of the internet by individuals could well yield a substantial discount.

So while UK Holiday Group remain our Conference partner beyond 2025, ready to arrange future activities and reunions, for this year

we have decided to ask shipmates to book their own accommodation for Conference weekend.

Portsmouth has more than 7,000 hotel rooms available, many of them within easy reach of the Historic Dockyard, and we know that a number of shipmates have already secured their accommodation for Conference weekend, and we would urge you to do the same as soon as possible if you are planning to attend.

All activities are focussed in and around the Dockyard area, which is also convenient for Portsmouth Harbour railway station and national and local buses

While we have focussed mainly on the social aspects of the weekend, you should not lose sight of the fact that it is also an important administrative occasion for the Association, and a chance for Branches to play their part in the life of the organisation.

Significant matters are discussed and debated at Conference, and important decisions made by those who really count – the delegates, who represent their fellow shipmates.

The more Branches that are represented, the better the National Council and Central Office can reflect the wishes of members, so please consider attending as a delegate for your Branch if possible, or as an observer, though the latter does not have the representative power of a delegate.

At the back of this Circular ([click here](#)) you will find the relevant forms for those who wish to be a delegate, for the proposal of a motion or amendment, and for the nomination of certain national Council Members/Deputy National Council Members and members of the Standing Orders Committee.



Fisherman's Friends



DON'T BE SHY – MAKE YOURSELF HEARD

The RNA Community Choir is taking shape and rehearsals in the three areas – Plymouth, Portsmouth and Scotland – will be starting in the next month.

All areas need more male voices, so if you fancy it, no matter what your singing capabilities (this is a community choir after all)!, please email your regional representative for more details.

They are:

Plymouth: Jane Allen, ejaneallen@btinternet.com;

Portsmouth: Jenny Frank, Jenworking41@gmail.com;

Scotland: Karen Elliot,

kelliott250666@gmail.com

The regional choirs will practise separately, possibly do some local engagements, but are specifically convened to support the Fisherman's Friends Charity Fundraising Concert in Portsmouth Guildhall on 22 October as one large RNA Choir.

Remember – membership is open to all, and to all abilities.

Organisers are not concerned about balancing voices, but rather making sure they include everyone who wants to take part.

Singing is known to be good for the soul, and it should be fun!



RNBT IS ADVERTISING FOR CASEWORKERS

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT) is advertising for two Outreach and Engagement Caseworkers, based in Plymouth and Rosyth respectively.

The permanent full-time posts, offering up to £35,000pa, will be largely home-based, but covering areas around Plymouth and Rosyth, so will require the post-holders to be based within a reasonable distance of the two locations.

Key responsibilities include dealing with enquiries and correspondence from beneficiaries, liaising with caseworkers from other organisations (such as RN

FPS, SSAFA, the Royal British Legion), carrying out home visits, and investigating beneficiary entitlement to statutory funds.

This role would suit an empathetic, highly-organised individual, preferably who has experience as a Caseworker or similar role; a Naval, Armed Forces or non-profit background would be beneficial but is not essential.

Candidates will have access to their own vehicle and a full UK driving licence. To see full details for each post, and other vacancies in the RNBT, see their website at www.rnbt.org.uk/vacancies/

LISBON MARU MEMORIAL UNVEILED

Dennis Morley was the last survivor of the sinking of the Japanese prisoner of war transport ship Lisbon Maru.

He died peacefully in 2021 at the age of 101.

After the ship sank, he was picked up by a Japanese naval ship, but he had always been very clear that he owes his survival to the Chinese fishermen of Zhoushan.

Lisbon Maru was a Japanese cargo ship which on 1 October 1942 was transporting Allied prisoners of war from Hong Kong to Japan when it was torpedoed by American submarine USS Grouper, which was unaware of the ship's true purpose. The ship sank and more than 800 British men died from drowning or being shot trying to escape;

Almost 650 POWs were picked up by Japanese ships, but nearly 400 were rescued by Chinese fisherman, although most of them were subsequently recaptured by the Japanese.

In rescuing 384 British prisoners of war, the intervention of the Chinese fishermen also caused the Japanese army to abandon their policy of slaughtering the men in the water and instead to start picking up survivors.

Dennis said of these brave fishermen: "They don't know it, but they saved a hell of a lot more lives than they thought they saved".

After he died, his daughter, Mrs Denise Wynne, wrote to President Xi Jinping of China, explaining that her father's dying wish was for a memorial to be erected in China to honour the courage of the Zhoushan fishermen.

As reported in our December Semaphore Circular, in August 2022



the Chinese Ambassador in London, Zheng Zeguang, travelled to Mrs Wynne's home in the West Country to hand over in person President Xi's reply, which said that a suitable memorial would be built.

On Thursday 6 December 2024 the memorial was unveiled in a local ceremony.

The images on this page show the local gathering before the unveiling and some images of the memorial itself, overlooking the East China Sea where the Lisbon Maru sank in 1942.

Brian Finch, a former Army officer and diplomat who has dedicated his time to honouring those who died in Lisbon Maru, those who survived, and those who rescued them, said the memorial is a thoughtful and sensitive work, honouring the courage of the fishermen and stressing the importance of friendship between Chinese and British people.

Alongside the tributes in Chinese and English on the monument is a depiction of the arm of a fisherman grasping that of a British prisoner of war pulling him out of the water. Brian added that it is a welcome coincidence that this event happened at the same time as the UK distribution of the documentary film 'The Sinking of The Lisbon Maru' was announced.

The documentary has proved an unexpected hit in China, and has garnered very positive reviews from Western critics as well – see the official trailer on YouTube at <https://tinyurl.com/3yjj2dx6> Following this local ceremony there is to be a formal unveiling ceremony in 2025 which will be the official inauguration of the memorial. The date has not yet been decided, as much will depend on forecasts of weather conditions nearer the time. Once the date has been confirmed, as much notice as possible will be given to allow time for those who want to attend the ceremony to make the necessary arrangements to take time off work.

In particular, relatives of British POWs who were on the ship will be encouraged to attend. Further announcements will be made in due course.



NEW YEAR'S (HIGH) RESOLUTION...

A picture is supposedly worth a thousand words – but some pictures barely mumble...

In this, the year of our 75th anniversary, Central Office is really keen to make sure that the RNA is seen in all its glory, using social media and the Semaphore publications to highlight the activities of shipmates.

We get some great images to illustrate stories, but sometime the pictures we get don't quite measure up, and a poor picture can do more harm than good.

So here is a little reminder how you can best help us spread the message when you send us words and pictures to use online or in the Semaphores. Perhaps most importantly, when you email us, send images as separate files – jpegs if possible. Don't embed them in Word documents or emails as the quality can suffer.

Don't compress them or reduce them in size too much either – a jpeg file of around 1MB or thereabouts would be just fine – anything under 100KB

will end up looking like a convention of Lego figures.

Images taken on most smartphones or tablets usually fit the bill perfectly.

And when you send an image, please identify people featured in them so we can refer to them in the story if necessary.

Remember to ask their permission before you send them to us for publication.

Please try to make sure that the accompanying words tie in with the images and tell the story of your Branch or Area.

It might be a grand annual dinner, or a modest ceremony at a regular monthly meeting – the thought behind the story is the same.

Remember the journalist's 'Five Ws' – who, what, where, when and why.

Who is the story about? Who is affected? Who took part?

What happened? What are the consequences?

Where did this take place? Where can readers find out more?

When did it happen? When will there be an update, of necessary?

Why did the event take place? Why is it important?

And just check to make sure the basics are in there as they are easy to overlook little details like which branch or area you are writing about!

If your story covers most (if not all) of these questions then it's ready to publicise to the readers of our social media channels or Semaphores.

If it doesn't, then you could be leaving readers with more questions than answers (and us scratching our heads trying to make sense of it!)

Hopefully in such a busy year we will be able to show the breadth of activities undertaken across the Association, and the best way to do that is through lively, relevant stories and bright, eye-catching images.

Unless otherwise stated, send your stories and images to comms@rnassoc.org

Over to you...

CORPS HONOURS JEFF ON BIRTHDAY

Royal Marines honoured one of the oldest members of their 'family', laying on a special birthday treat for Jeffrey 'Jeff' Broadhurst in Fareham. At 102 the former NCO is one of the nation's oldest Marines.

Jeff was treated to some classic tunes courtesy of the Royal Marines Band from nearby HMS Collingwood, whose musicians joined Jeff's friends, family, the Royal Marines Association and residents of Parker Meadows Care Home.

"I really enjoyed today, it was very unexpected. I was just expecting a little group of us in the corner having a nice quiet drink and a chat!" said Jeff.

His daughter, Kay Dunleavy, added: "It's just so special to have the Band Service perform for Dad today. Mum and Dad used to go to all the band's concerts together when they lived in Exmouth, and the last one he went to was actually here in Portsmouth with my mother. It's very special."

Band Sgt Martyn Chapman said his musicians were only too happy to perform for one of the Marines' family on a milestone birthday."

Originally from Wolverhampton, Jeff Broadhurst was forced to cut short his education aged 14 and help support his family by earning a wage, settling on an apprenticeship

as a butcher.

The war intervened, and after first joining the Home Guard, when he came of age Jeff was called up and joined the Army.

His athleticism and sense of adventure led to special duties, which resulted in Jeff transferring to the Royal Marines as a sergeant with 40 Commando.

The unit was heavily engaged in the Mediterranean theatre; the Marines saw action in Italy – including the landings at Anzio – Albania and Greece.

40 Cdo's war ended on Corfu, where Jeff earned his 'wings', qualifying as a parachutist working with the RAF. After the war he worked on a sheep farm on Exmoor, managed a dairy farm in Wiltshire, ran a dairy/pig farm in Somerset and finally piggeries in Hampshire and Somerset.



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Before moving to Fareham in 2016 with his wife Dorothy – the couple enjoyed 72 years together before she died – Jeff worked as a gardener and maintenance man for a care home in Exmouth.

Though he has largely lost his sight he enjoys the love of a large family – a son and daughter, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren – and is supported by a strong Christian faith.

GINGERBREAD KIT PROVES A KITCHEN HIT

Towards the end of last year we ran a competition to mark the launch of the RNA Gingerbread Sailor mascot, with gingerbread baking kits as prizes.

One of our winners, Melanie, got in touch to thank us for the gingerbread kit: "It was a lovely surprise just before Christmas. We went to visit Grandma to do some family baking – the biscuits were quite delicious!"

Pictured are members of Melanie's family (including Grandma, of course!) getting stuck in with their baking kit.



IS THIS MAN DODGER LONG?

The Royal Naval Association is asking for anyone who knew the Shipmate in the foreground to contact them. His son writes: "My brother recently found this picture of the crew, off duty aboard HMS Superb.

We believe the guy in the foreground on the right might be our Dad – Chief Petty Officer Malcolm (Dodger) Long. Does anyone recognise him or anyone else in this picture?

"With Dad gone since 2014, we are trying to piece together the biggest part of his life – spent in the Royal Navy."

If anyone has any information, or, better yet, dits, about Dodger, please get in touch via cml@rnassoc.org



HEALTH STUDY WANTS TO HEAR FROM VETERANS

Healthwatch Hertfordshire are working with the NHS to hear from the Armed Forces Community about their experiences of healthcare.

This includes hearing from veterans, non-mobilised reservists, serving personnel, and families.

The study will provide them with a valuable opportunity to shape how care can be improved for the Armed Forces Community. Healthwatch Hertfordshire are offering the Armed Forces Community an opportunity to take part in one-to-one interviews or focus groups. Participants will each receive a £10 voucher for taking part.

If you are interested, the study's sign-up form can be accessed here: <https://www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk/stories-frontline-healthcare-and-armed-forces-community>



CREWS FOR A CRUISE IN THE SUN

The RNA is delighted to welcome the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Yacht Club (RNVRVC) as one of our Sports and Comradeship Groups.

Details of the arrangement are yet to be finalised, but in the meantime they have invited RNA members to join them on their 2025 Antigua Charter Rally – but you will have to be quick, as the rally is next month!

We are aware that this is a little last minute, but doesn't it look wonderful? That's Antigua pictured above, in case you were wondering.

Next year we will be actively looking to fill a charter with RNA members....

In case we have piqued your interest, the Antigua Charter Rally is a cruise that will be held in the Caribbean from 13-20 February.

Members will join their chartered yachts at Jolly Harbour on the 13th (and enjoy a pontoon party) before a short 15 nautical mile hop round the south-west corner of Antigua to English Harbour the following day, allowing plenty of time for crews to enjoy the scenery and the spectacular beaches.

Subsequent legs in the programme include a nine nautical mile sail to Green Island and a trip to North Sound (seven nautical miles).

Participants are not required to adhere to the suggested rally programme but will need to be back in Jolly Harbour on Wednesday 19 February in order to

hand back their yacht first thing on Thursday 20th. A range of charter yachts are available, including monohulls and catamarans, and yacht charter bookings can be made direct with nautilus Yachting Ltd on 01732 867445. Mention that you are part of the RNVRVC charter to obtain our negotiated rate.

Family members or friends who do not want to cruise will be able to join in the fun with shore parties as the yachts will be mainly at anchorages and Marinas on one island.

Bookings for yachts are filling up fast as it is High Season in the Caribbean – as a rough guide you should budget for around £2,000 per person to including charter share and flights.

Getting to Antigua from the UK is relatively straightforward, with regular flights with British Airways and Virgin Atlantic; you can also fly to the island via St Lucia and Barbados.

The island is a great holiday destination in its own right; there is a wide range of hotels, some great restaurants, and the scuba diving is said to be excellent.

See the RNVRVC website at www.rnvryc.org for more details of the club and its 2025 programme. Lots more sailing opportunities will be available during the coming months so keep an eye out in the Semaphore Circular and Semaphore Short.



HMS Triumph sails into Devonport for the last time

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TRIUMPH IS BACK FOR FINAL TIME

The last of the Royal Navy's Trafalgar-class attack submarines arrived home in Plymouth for the final time before decommissioning. The seventh of the class, Triumph sailed into Devonport Naval Base shortly before Christmas after her final voyage from Scotland, the final chapter in a career of almost 34 years. Triumph, flying her decommissioning pennant, was escorted in by a flotilla of vessels as she entered Plymouth Sound. Her Commanding Officer, Cdr Aaron Williams, said: "As HMS Triumph prepares to decommission, we reflect on her legacy with immense pride. This submarine has served not just as a vessel, but as a symbol of commitment, courage and camaraderie. "And while this chapter of HMS Triumph's story ends, her spirit will endure in the memories of all who served aboard her, and in the gratitude of the nations she helped protect." Triumph was laid down in Barrow in February 1987 and commissioned in October 1991. The boat deployed to Australia in 1993, travelling 41,000 miles submerged without support – at the time the longest solo deployment by a Royal Navy nuclear-powered submarine. She also served in Afghanistan in 2001, launching Tomahawk missiles at targets, and later deployed to Libya – again firing her weaponry at positions from the Mediterranean Sea as part of international efforts to protect civilians.



Last year was a busy one. This year will be even more so. The RNA 2024/25 Yearbook aims to capture what the Association is all about – and you will be receiving your copy very shortly. The first consignment arrived at Central Office this week, and members should see theirs in the coming days.

MINIBUSES ARE AN ASSET FOR ALL

The RNA has three minibuses, located in Plymouth, Manchester and Portsmouth, for use by shipmates. The minibuses are a great asset to us all, and we are proud to offer this membership benefit. As you can appreciate, it costs a significant amount of money to keep all three minibuses on the road, and this year we have received a generous grant from the Seafarers' Charity, for which we are extremely grateful. We are also extremely grateful to our RNA volunteers who manage the minibuses regionally, including the bookings. To book a minibus, the contact details are:
Plymouth – Les Yeoman -



lesyeo3@gmail.com – 07795 231397
Manchester – David Barlow – **dbarlow@hotmail.co.uk** - 07747 006100
Portsmouth – Sara Field – **ams@rnassoc.org** – 023 92 723747

For insurance purposes, there are certain criteria for driving the minibuses and these, along with additional details, can be found on our website at **www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/mini-bus-hire**

3rd May Twickenham Stadium



Army v Navy Rugby



**Reserve your RNA
subsidised tickets now**

Only £43 per person

**including access to our exclusive
RNA Bar**



**Our seats are in the Cat1 section M33/34 - an excellent
position on the centre line.**

The bar is next-door - no long trek or queues for drinks.

**The RNA is delighted to announce it is the
Army v Navy Chosen Charity in 2025!**

**The RNA's Branch Support Fund can help out with transport
costs (tickets must be purchased via the RNA)**

engagement@rnassoc.org for more details

MENTORS CELEBRATE

The HMS Raleigh Veteran Mentors celebrated receiving a new plaque for their garden in the families area of the training establishment. The Veteran Mentors give pastoral support to the new recruits and offer a friendly face to their families on passing-out days.

Their encouragement is often instrumental in getting everyone through the 'Raleigh Rollercoaster' in one piece.

Lead Mentor, Terry Whitty, has just completed the mentoring of his 96th course - a truly impressive achievement.

Recruits and their families are encouraged to join the RNA for lifelong support, discounts and savings, comradeship and connection. Membership is free, and anyone can join.



FREE JOURNALS

If you saw our article on the Britannia Naval Research Association in the December Semaphore Circular and were interested in joining, then you may have even more incentive now.

The article stated that the £36 minimum annual membership did not include two free BNRA Journals a year. In fact it does! To become a member, please contact the Association's Membership Secretary, Susan Amos, on susan_amos2005@yahoo.co.uk

Ex-Military

Tired of your health affecting the **cost** of your travels?



Sign up to our 40+ travel insurance scheme to enjoy
worldwide cover with no medical declaration required.

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

➤ TAKE A CHANCE ON RNA LOTTERY AND HELP US TO HELP SHIPMATES

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

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

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

"The RNA is free to join but relies on donations to help continue the good work.

"Since Covid, we've done so much more in the welfare/wellbeing space with our veterans, and having an RNA Lottery allows us to do even more.

"Please do sign up and play our lottery, and if you're not a member – join us!"

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

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) or via the 'Shop' button at the top of the RNA website home page at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

SPORTS AND COMRADESHIP GROUPS

Different name but same objectives... Shipmates might be interested to become involved with the popular and successful RNA Sports and Comradeship Groups (SCGs), formerly known as Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Whether you are already a part of a group or are yet to join one we recommend you get involved and see what it's all about. For more information on each group please contact the designated leaders, listed below:

American Football – Steve Phillips: rna.american.football.sig@gmail.com

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

Cricket – Mark Smith : Markmiff1962@gmail.com

Collectors: Insignia and Badges – Paul Banyard: rna.insignia@gmail.com

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

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

Genealogy – Mike Wilkinson: mike.j.wilco@gmail.com

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

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

Motorhome, Camping and Caravanning – Ron Shilton: rnamcc@outlook.com

RNA Football Club – scc@rnassoc.com

Rugby Union – Steve Phillips: rna.rugby.union.sig@gmail.com

Woodcraft – Graham Warner: vicechair@rna-7area.org

If you are interested in forming a Sports and Comradeship Group please contact cml@rnassoc.org

MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

The subject of next Monday's Fireside Chat (13 January) will be the British Inspiration Trust, and will be given by Phil Packer. The Trust, known as BRIT, exists to support and improve the mental health, fitness, and wellbeing, of young adults, students, and staff, throughout the UK, and aspires to be an integral part of sustained change within the Education Sector.

■ 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](#)

Date	Presenter	Subject
Mon 13 Jan	Phil Packer	The British Inspiration Trust
Mon 20 Jan	Charlie Knight	UK Carrier Strike Group
Mon 27 Jan	Ralph Dodds	FAA Palambang Raids – 80th Anniversary
Mon 3 Feb	Debbie Dollner	Chief Executive Officer of the RNBT
Mon 10 Feb	Bill Oliphant	Plans for RNA75

* Lecture subjects may change at short notice.

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



REASONS TO ATTEND YOUR AGM

YOUR BEST CHANCE TO BE HEARD

If you have any concerns of branch/area life or want to propose changes to the association, then the AGM is the perfect opportunity for you to raise this with and in front of your fellow shipmates.



TAKE CONTROL OF IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Remember, the Royal Naval Association is YOU, the members who have joined collectively. Your AGM is the perfect opportunity to take part in the decision making process



REPRESENT YOUR BRANCH

Your voice and attendance matters; and the conference is the chance to take any issues from a local level to a National platform. Shipmates from all around the UK gather - ideally this is the ONE time your branch can stand up and be counted



MORE THAN A MEETING

What happens in branches under the name of the Royal Naval Association is remarkable

A number of prizes are awarded at Conference for shipmates' contribution to the Association - These are presented during Conference - the only time of the year the RNA is ALL together

COMRADESHIP

CONNECTION

Comradeship is the lifeblood of our Association - friendships are secured by getting to know each other sharing experiences and making new memories

COMMEMORATION

Tradition, respect and honour
We are all rightly proud of our Naval history and service; commemoration and ceremony is a huge part of the RNA's identity

**ONCE
NAVY
ALWAYS
NAVY** royal-naval-association.co.uk



► BRANCH NEWS

PORTSEA AND PORTSMOUTH Branch

There was a good turn out from the members of Portsea and Portsmouth Branch on a cold and windy day in early December at the Operation Frankton (Cockleshell Heroes) Memorial Service held at the Royal Marines Memorial Gardens at Eastney.

This was followed by the unveiling of the refurbished memorial to Brigadier General Frederick Lumsden VC CBO and DSO with Three Bars.

The event was organised by the Portsmouth Branch of the Royal Marines Association and attended by the Lady Mayoress, Cllr Helen Mitchell, who is also a Portsea and Portsmouth Branch Member.

S/M Richie Farman laid a wreath on behalf of the RNA. On completion of the ceremonies many attendees made their way to the Sirloin of Beef for a buffet and port, provided by the Bootnecks.





PLYMOUTH Branch

Pictured above are members of Plymouth Branch at their annual remembrance service for Quartermaster George Hinckley VC. At the age of 43 Hinckley was an Able Seaman aboard HMS Sphynx. On 9 Oct 1862 he was part of the Naval Brigade at Fenghua during the Chinese Taiping Rebellion, where he won his Victoria Cross by rescuing two wounded shipmates whilst under fire. He is buried in Ford Park Cemetery, Plymouth, where his grave is tended by the Branch. The wreath-laying ceremony is always on 31 December, the date of his death.

The branch celebrated their Christmas with a dinner in the WOs & SRs Mess at HMS Drake (see right).



CARMARTHEN Branch

These pictures were taken at Carmarthen Branch's 'Meet the RNA' open day in the foyer of the Curry's store in town on Black Friday, at the end of November. Unfortunately, shipmates couldn't recruit any new members, but they did raise £75 for the Branch's Welfare Fund.



NORWICH Branch

In the week before Christmas the Norwich Branch elves were busy preparing and delivering 48 hampers to senior branch members - some of the happy recipients are pictured above.

Norwich shipmates were invited to join **Cromer Branch** for their Christmas Meeting and Lunch (pictured right and below).

Norwich Hon Sec S/M Diana Sadler said: "Thank you to Bish and all at Cromer Branch for the invitation, lovely spread, tot and for letting us win several prizes in the raffle!"



CAERPHELLY Branch members are pictured above at their Branch Christmas dinner

TORFAEN Branch

At Torfaen Branch's last meeting before Christmas Branch Chairman Jim Attenborough presented an RNA membership card to new member Stephen Whitehorn (below).

During the meeting the two RNA shipmates organized a colouring competition (bottom right) – and as they were the only two who entered it was difficult to announce a winner, but it was decided S/M Dave Thomas won as he kept within the lines!

Torfaen regularly holds their branch meetings at Panteg House, Griffithstown, which is the hub for the local community. At each branch meeting they donate carrier bags of food to the hub.

Recently a joint evening with the Hub and Branch held a community Pickle Night and Fire work evening and raised £305, to be shared between the branch and food bank.

At a quiz night (incidentally the Branch won), Bryn Carr and Gordon Williams on behalf of the branch presented £250 to Council Leader Cllr Anthony Hunt (bottom of page), which included a £100 donation from the branch towards the food bank.





WANSBECK AND DISTRICT Branch

Wansbeck and District Branch held their Christmas meal at the Cherry Tree pub Stakeford Northumberland, with 20 in attendance out of possible 22 – two were unable to make it due to illness. Shipmates enjoyed a very good night, with an excellent meal and good service, followed by a raffle with some really nice prizes, and free entertainment as well.



WEYMOUTH Branch

This is the Weymouth Branch Christmas lunch at the Crown Hotel in the town, enjoyed in glorious sunshine – but some members with the sun in their eyes decided to improvise sun shades using their serviettes stuck under the Xmas cracker paper hats. Improvise, adapt, overcome...



WARTIME BOMB DISPOSAL EXPERT DIES AGED 100

Wartime bomb disposal expert Boyd Salmon has died at the age of 100. Mr Salmon was one of the last surviving members of specialist Royal Navy teams of bomb disposal/mine warfare experts whose job was to make safe the vast quantities of unexploded ordnance which littered Europe. He joined the Navy as a 17-year-old rating and served on Atlantic convoys as well as in the Mediterranean before being selected to become an officer, commissioning on Trafalgar Day 1944. As Allied forces pushed across Europe, the RN Enemy Mining Section followed in their wake to clear harbours and ports of unexploded ordnance and booby traps left by the retreating German forces.

Among those performing the dangerous task was then Sub Lieutenant Boyd Salmon, who volunteered for RMS duties before he knew what the acronym stood for –

Render Mines Safe. When he completed his training, which was split between the South Coast and Cumbria, he was sent to Normandy to deal with ordnance on Sword Beach before moving on to the Dutch island of Walcheren, liberated thanks in no small part to the Royal Marines in the autumn of 1944.

That bomb disposal work ended when a large device detonated some 20 metres away from him, embedding a large piece of shrapnel in his stomach. It ended his career as recuperation took years, but also led to a 64-year marriage for Boyd, who fell for Jacqueline, one of his physiotherapists. In civilian life Boyd became a chartered engineer and settled with his family in Lymington, where he enjoyed playing golf and painting. He remained active into the final months of his life – he celebrated his 100th birthday with a 40-minute

helicopter flight over the Solent, visited the modern-day home of RN diving and bomb disposal on Horsea Island in Portsmouth – divers replaced his set of missing wartime medals – and he helped launch Lymington's annual poppy appeal.

Boyd died shortly before Christmas, and his remarkable life was celebrated by fellow residents at the Lymington care home where he spent his final years.

WREN PLAYED CRUCIAL ROLE IN TRAINING OF SPIES

A former Wren who played a vital role in training wartime spies has died at the age of 98.

Noreen Riols was one of the last-surviving veterans of the World War Two Special Operations Executive (SOE), which ran a network of spies in Occupied Europe and carried out acts of sabotage behind enemy lines.

The daughter of a Royal Navy officer, Noreen was born in Malta and educated in France.

She joined the WRNS at the age of 17 and her fluent French and knowledge of the country helped her train SOE spies in passing messages covertly, tailing people – and testing their resolve as a decoy in 'honeytrap' scenarios – at secret locations in Baker Street, London, and Beaulieu in the New Forest. After the war Noreen worked for the BBC World Service and trained as a nurse, later working as a journalist.

She also published four novels based on her experiences in the SOE.

Noreen also visited schools taking of her work in the war, the role of women and how important it was that the story should be known by later generations.

She was awarded the French Légion d'Honneur in 2014, and was made MBE in 2023.

Noreen died on 2 January in Marly-le-Roi, to the west of Paris.

S/M JOHN PALMER

Falmouth Branch Shipmates are mourning the loss of their fellow Branch Member S/M John Palmer. John, a regular at Branch meetings, functions and events, attended the Royal Marines School of Music in 1961 and had a variety of drafts, including Singapore, where he was part of the HMS Terror Band.

After a short illness John crossed the bar overnight on 27-28 December 2024.

He will be missed by his daughter Rachel, his grandchildren, family and friends. John described himself as "just an ordinary guy who has a lovely daughter who has given me two lovely grandchildren."

Fair winds and following seas Shipmate.



S/M KEITH CRAWFORD

In the December issue of the Semaphore Circular it was reported that No 9 Area and Spalding Branch Chairman S/M Keith Crawford crossed the bar on 1 December 2024.

It was also reported that funeral arrangements will be promulgated when at hand.

The funeral of S/M Crawford will be held at South Lincolnshire Crematorium, Gosberton Road, Spalding PE11 4AA, at 1200 on Monday 13 January.

Details for the wake will be given out during the Service.

S/M BRIAN KING

S/M Brian King, aged 86, passed away on 9 December 2024.

Brian requested that his son Rod King-Grant should let his old shipmates know that he had crossed the bar.

Rod believes that his father was a member of an affiliate club at Liphook, but has no details of that Branch or club through which he can contact them directly.

Brian's family have arranged a small send-off for him at his local fishing club on Friday 17 January between 2-6pm.

Anyone former shipmates and friends who knew Brian and wishes to come along to pay their respects are welcome.

The address for his 'salty send-off' is:

The Eastney Cruising Association
Ferry Road
Southsea
Hampshire
PO4 9LY



➤ JANUARY SWINGING THE LAMP

'Swinging the Lamp' events are drawn, by permission, from the definitive Naval history reference book *The Royal Navy Day by Day*, written by Honorary Shipmate Lawrie Phillips and published by The History Press (www.thehistorypress.co.uk). The book is issued to all HM Ships and Establishments and is 'probably one of the most well-thumbed and valued books that Captains of HM Ships possess'. It is currently available online for around £45 (search ISBN number 978-0750982665)

1 January 1915

Pre-dreadnought battleship HMS Formidable was sunk with heavy loss of life by submarine U-24 in the Channel off Portland on 1 January 1915. The 16,100-ton warship, built at Portsmouth and completed in September 1901, started her service career with the Mediterranean Fleet, including a spell as escort for the Royal Yacht HMY Victoria and Albert during a tour of the region by King Edward VII. She transferred to the Channel Fleet in April 1908 for a brief period before a refit before resuming her career with the Atlantic Fleet in 1909, having spent a month or so with the Home Fleet. On the outbreak of war she was back with the 5th Battle Squadron of the Second Fleet of the Home Fleets, based at Portland, though by that stage she was suffering from significant machinery problems. Formidable helped cover the transfer of the British Expeditionary Force to France in August 1914, then moved to Sheerness to guard against a possible German invasion. On 30 December 1915 the 5th Battle Squadron was switched to Portland, and the following day the formation undertook gunnery practice in the Channel, supported by two light cruisers. Despite reports of submarines in the area,

the squadron completed their exercises that night and went straight onto a patrol, cruising at ten knots in line abreast through rough seas. Unknown to the senior officer, Vice Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, submarine U-24 had been shadowing the squadron since early afternoon, waiting for an opportunity to strike. That opportunity presented itself shortly after 0200 on 1 January when U-24 fired a torpedo that hit Formidable, which was at the end of the line of battleships some 30 miles south of Lyme Regis. Formidable slewed out of line as her CO, Capt Loxley, tried to head for shore, but she was already listing heavily and counter-flooding to correct that left her low in the water. Capt Loxley ordered his men to abandon ship, though some remained on board to attempt to save their battleship. Shortly after 0300 U-24 fired a second torpedo into Formidable, at which point escorting Gem-class cruisers HMS Topaze and Diamond moved in to rescue sailors, though the heavy seas made that a difficult task. Some 150 men were saved by Diamond, a Brixham trawler and the battleship's own pinnace, that struggled into Lyme Regis some 22 hours later, but almost 550 lives were lost when Formidable sank just before 0500, with Capt Loxley still on the bridge overseeing the evacuation of his ship as it went down. Formidable was the second victim of U-24, which served throughout World War 1, accounting for 35 ships in all, two of them military. The U-boat was surrendered on 22 November 1918 and broken up in 1922.

2 January 1879

An explosion on board ironclad turret ship HMS Thunderer on 2 January 1879 killed 11 members of a gun crew. The Devastation-class ship, essentially an ocean-going monitor of 9,500 tons with four

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12in muzzle-loaded guns paired in two turrets, was a Pembroke-built ship, completed in May 1877, which was assigned to the Mediterranean Fleet the following year. Thunderer had a reputation as an unlucky ship, the first incident being on 14 July 1876, before she entered service, during full-power trials as she left Portsmouth Harbour, when a boiler burst, killing 15 men on the spot (including her commanding officer) and injuring 70, of whom 30 later died of their injuries. The cause of the explosion was a corroded safety valve that jammed in place, and a broken pressure gauge. She then ran aground in November 1878 leaving Gibraltar, requiring repairs in Malta. On 2 January 1879 she was carrying out gunnery practice in the Sea of Marmara in Turkey when one of her 38-ton main guns exploded, killing 11 and injuring 35. The most common theory is that the gun had been double-loaded – another charge had been placed in the muzzle after a misfire, which could happen in the noise and smoke of a rapidly-firing turret, though an alternative view is that the gun had been fouled during the loading procedure, carried out by a hydraulic power ram. Whatever the cause, the incident helped persuade the Admiralty to switch to breech-loading guns. Thunderer continued in service until 1907, at one point hosting the future King George V (1885-6) but machinery problems and her reputation as an unlucky ship meant she spent plenty of time in reserve or as a guardship before being scrapped in September 1909.

3 January 1941

Battleships HM Ships Barham, Valiant and Warspite – part of Force A, supported by a flotilla of destroyers – bombarded Bardia in Libya on 3 January 1941, covered by aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious and anti-aircraft cruiser HMS Calcutta. The three battleships had sailed from Alexandria the previous evening as part of a much larger force to carry out Operation MC5, supporting the wider Operation Compass assault by Allied troops against Italian forces in North Africa. The bombardment began at 0610, spotted by Allied ground forces who surrounded the heavily-fortified port, and firing stopped at 0900, though smaller ships including monitor HMS Terror and a number of gunboats continued to hit the fortress during the so-called Battle of Bardia. Operation Compass was the first British military push of the Western Desert campaign and was heavily supported (and planned) by the Australians, and was an early success for the Allies as the town of Bardia and its strategic fortress were taken within three days.

4 January 1915

Submarine HMS C31 was lost off the Belgian coast on 4 January 1915. The 330-ton boat, built by Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness and commissioned in November 1909, was one of a class of 38 submarines that were somewhat outdated by the start of the Great War, being developments of the rudimentary Holland-class boats and consequently being hampered by a limited range (little over 900 nautical miles), limited attacking potential (they sailed with two loaded torpedo tubes; they could carry a pair of reloads but this significantly cut their range) and reliance on a petrol engine – the last class of full-

sized Royal Navy submarines to be thus equipped. The class were often used for coastal defence work or patrols in waters close to the UK, and it was on one such patrol, off Zeebrugge, that C31 met her end, most likely by striking a mine. Her entire crew of 17 died in the incident, and she was declared lost on 7 January.

5 January 1814

Brigs HMS Saracen and Bacchante forced the surrender of the French-held fortress of Cattaro, now Kotor in Croatia, after a campaign of blockade and bombardment that lasted ten days. Saracen, a Portsmouth-built Cruiser-class brig sloop of 18 guns, was a feisty ship, capturing a brand-new French privateer on 22 August 1812, just days after commissioning, with a crew of Marines and clapped-out sailors. Fully-manned, the brig sailed for the Mediterranean in November 1812, initially on convoy escort duty but from June 1813 also staging a number of daring raids and assaults, starting with the capture of the small island of Zupano off Dubrovnik in Croatia on a stormy night with a landing party of 40 men, who were forced to fight using bayonets when the foul weather rendered their ammunition useless. Saracen and sister ship HMS Weazel then raided the nearby island of Mezzo to prevent the French reinforcing its fortress, again using landing parties, this time to bombard French positions, the French surrendered after five days. Over the course of the summer of 1813 Saracen, Weazel and the brig HMS Wizard tormented French shore positions along the Adriatic coast, blockading ports and bombarding forts and batteries. Cdr John Harper, the commanding officer of Saracen, was a bold officer – when the other two ships left for other tasks he carried out night raids using Marines who were manning the island of Mezzo, leaving just one lame man to move lights and convey the impression of activity; the Marines were returned to their shore positions by dawn. In October a party from Saracen and frigate HMS Bacchante captured two forts on the island of Ragusa, the forts being manned by almost 300 men and mounting 25 guns. In November 1813 Harper's men began to move an 18pdr gun to the top of Mount Theodore, overlooking the fort of St John in Cattaro, and with further batteries in place the British began firing on the town on Christmas Day. Further batteries were added on 3 January 1814, and it took just two more days for the French to decide enough was enough, with the surrender being formally signed on 5 January. By the end of the month Saracen, Bacchante and a force of 400 Austrians had taken the whole of Ragusa island, giving the British and their allies effective control of the whole of the Adriatic coast and its islands. The plucky 387-ton Saracen went on to wreak havoc among American forces on the Eastern seaboard, and she was used to carry dispatches until she was sold at Chatham in the summer of 1819. She subsequently embarked on a new career as a whaler until she was wrecked on the coast of Chile in March 1828, though her entire crew managed to survive.

6 January 1916

Pre-dreadnought battleship HMS King Edward VII struck a mine off Cape Wrath on the morning of 6 January 1916, sinking that evening with the

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HMS King Edward VII. See January 6.
Image from the Imperial War Museum
collection: Image: IWM (Q 39362)



loss of a single life. The 17,600-ton warship, built at Devonport, had been commissioned in February 1905 and had been flagship of both the Atlantic and Channel Fleets before the war. She became part of the Grand Fleet on the outbreak of hostilities, though her involvement tended to be as part of speculative sweeps of the North Sea that yielded little of consequence. On 6 January 1916 the battleship steamed from Scapa Flow en route to Belfast for a much-needed refit. Unknown to the commanding officer of King Edward VII, the German auxiliary cruiser SMS Mowe had laid more than 250 mines off Cape Wrath at the turn of the year, and the battleship struck one of these mines shortly before 1100, immediately flooding her starboard engine room. Efforts to beach the ship failed when the helm jammed hard over and both engines failed, and an attempt to tow the ship to port was abandoned when the sea became rougher and the wind rose. As darkness approached the order was given to abandon ship and three destroyers – HM Ships Musketeer, Marne and Fortune – took off the entire ship's company with the loss of one man, who fell into the sea between the doomed battleship and a rescue destroyer. The warship rolled over and sank shortly after 2000, around nine hours after she struck the mine.

7 January 1941

Flower-class corvette HMS Anemone sank Italian submarine Giacomo Nani 500 miles west of Ireland on 7 January 1941 – possibly... The British escort was en route to join Convoy HX99 when she spotted a U-boat almost two miles away a little before midday, prompting her to steam in firing her gun. The sixth round was believed to have struck the submarine,

which submerged and was promptly depth-charged. Subsequent searches of the area failed to confirm a kill, and according to Italian records the Marcello-class submarine Giacomo Nani, based in Bordeaux, was supposed to be operating much further south at the time of the attack – but Giacomo Nani was lost around that time, and two other claims against the boat (by HMS Skate on 2 January and a Sunderland flying boat on 5 January) have possibly even less merit than that of Anemone, which survived the war and served as a Norwegian buoy tender and whale catcher until she was scrapped in late 1964.

8 January 1943

Submarine HMS P311 was reported as overdue on 8 January 1943, and is believed to have been lost to an Italian mine off the Maddalena archipelago north of Sardinia shortly after the turn of the year. P311 has the dubious honour of being the only T-class submarine to never have a name. Built by Vickers-Armstrong in Barrow-in-Furness and commissioned on 5 March 1942, she served almost exclusively in the Mediterranean during her brief career. In December 1942 Prime Minister Winston Churchill informed the Admiralty that all submarines should have names rather than simply numbers, and he helpfully provided a list of suggestions on 27 December, insisting that all unnamed submarines should be named within a fortnight. However, P311 was lost in late December or early January 1943, before the name Tutankhamen could be formally assigned to her, and she remains P311 in the records. She was based in Malta, and had been on her way to attack two Italian cruisers when she was lost with all 71 hands. Her last report back to base was on 31 December, and she is believed to have struck a

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mine around 2 January. The wreck of a submarine was found off Sardinia in May 2016, and the diver who found her reported seeing two Chariot manned torpedoes attached to the hull – exactly how P311 was configured on her final mission. The wreck is said to be generally in good condition except for the bow, indicating a mine explosion which would have sunk her.

9 January 1918

Beagle-class destroyer HMS *Racoon* was wrecked in a snowstorm off the Irish coast on 9 January 1918 with the loss of all on board. The 930-ton *Cammell Laird* ship, built at Birkenhead and completed in October 1910, initially served out of Malta before switching to the Home Fleet a couple of years later, with Harwich as her home port. As hostilities became inevitable, *Racoon* was moved to Durazzo, then Malta, though her early activities were restricted by a lack of coal, after which she joined patrols of the Suez Canal and Red Sea in order to protect Allied shipping passing through. She was heavily involved in the Dardanelles campaign, escorting Allied warships from battleships to minesweeping trawlers, and she sustained serious damage on one foray but managed to limp to safety and was repaired. She spent much of 1916 escorting troopships through the Mediterranean as German submarine activity increased, but in 1917 she moved to Bunrana on Lough Swilly in the north of Ireland to help escort Atlantic convoys in the Northern Approaches. *Racoon* was lost in a blizzard when she ran aground on the Garvan Isles off Malin Head during a passage from Liverpool to Lough Swilly, and all 91 souls on board died in the heavy seas.

10 January 1797

36-gun fifth rate frigate HMS *Phoebe* captured French brig-sloop *Atalante* in the Channel on 10 January 1797 after an eight-hour chase. *Phoebe* was a typically useful warship in the time of the Napoleonic wars, and in the course of her 20-year career served around the world and proved her worth in the heat of battle. Built at Deptford on the Thames and launched in September 1795, she first served in the waters

around Ireland, and the capture of *Atalante* was her earliest notable success. The French ship was around half the size of *Phoebe*, with a crew of 112 and 16 guns, and was a useful addition to the Royal Navy's books, serving under her existing name until she was wrecked off the west coast of France in 1807. *Phoebe* claimed another victory in December 1797 when she captured the French frigate *Nereide*, which was a very similar size to the British warship, and it set the pattern for the following years during which *Phoebe* challenged and captured or destroyed numerous warships and privateers. She also played key roles in the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805; she was part of a frigate squadron which disrupted the flow of supplies to the combined Franco-Spanish fleet in the weeks before the battle, and it was *Phoebe* that spotted the departure of the combined fleet from Cadiz and alerted Nelson. The frigate squadron then shadowed the enemy fleet until battle was joined, and during the battle itself *Phoebe* stayed close to the action in order to repay Nelson's orders to the rest of the fleet. Thereafter *Phoebe* made her presence felt in home waters, in the North Sea and the Baltic. The Indian Ocean and Far East, the Atlantic and off the coasts of North and South America. She was laid up at Plymouth in 1815 and served as a slop ship and receiving ship from 1823-6 before being hulked and eventually broken up in May 1841.

11 January 1944

Submarine HMS *Tally-Ho* sank Japanese light cruiser *Kuma* in the Malacca Strait on 11 January 1944. The Vickers-Armstrong T-boat, launched at Barrow-in-Furness at Christmas 1942, spent most of the war in the Far East, sinking numerous Japanese craft from small sailing vessels to Japanese army troopships. While based at Trincomalee in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, *Tally-Ho* spotted Japanese light cruiser *Kuma* and destroyer *Uranami* on anti-submarine exercises north of Penang in the Malacca Strait. Unfortunately for the Japanese, their training failed to pay off, and a salvo of seven torpedoes from *Tally-Ho* resulted in two strikes on the cruiser, which caught fire and sank soon after. *Tally-Ho* had a lucky escape the following month when a

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Japanese torpedo boat, searching for the British submarine, ran so close to her that its propellers ripped open Tally-Ho's port ballast tanks; the British vessel managed to evade her foe and spent three days limping home to Trincomalee. After the war the 1,600-ton submarine served in Australia and Canada, and was only the second Royal Navy boat to sail across the Atlantic while submerged using her snort mast – a voyage that took three weeks. She was scrapped in South Wales in early 1967.

12 January 1930

Naval rescue tug St Genny foundered in the Western Approaches on 12 January 1930, resulting in the death of 23 men, though five were saved by sister ship St Cyrus. The 430-ton ship, built in 1918 and attached to the Atlantic Fleet as part of the Fleet Target Service, was caught in a severe gale while she was passing around 30 miles north of the French island of Ushant. The little ship, heading out to Gibraltar to join the Atlantic Fleet's annual Spring Cruise, sank when caught by a huge wave, killing 23 men and leaving five survivors. Although the wind was gusting up to 100mph at the time, the tug had coped with similar conditions on previous occasions, and both St Cyrus and accompanying sloop HMS Snapdragon, positioned close to the doomed vessel as they attempted to ride out the storm, both survived the wave which sank St Genny. It is thought the wave smashed in hull plates of the tug, causing a massive inrush of water, and that only those on deck at the time were able to escape. St Cyrus was lost 11 years to the day after the sinking of St Genny when she struck a mine in the Humber estuary.

13 January 1855

12-gun brig HMS Bittern and her boats destroyed two armed pirate junks off Flap or Flat Island near Foochow (now Fuzhou) in China. The port of Foochow

became one of the five Chinese treaty ports on the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing, which ended the First Opium War of 1839-42, fought between the British Empire and the Qing Dynasty of China. Treaty ports were completely open to foreign (mainly Western) merchants and to missionaries, and the increased trade naturally attracted the attention of those intent on making a quick buck. Bittern, a 2nd-class brig of 12 guns displacing nearly 500 tons, and launched in 1840, had served for some time off the coast of Africa before turning up in the Far East, and was on the Royal Navy's books until 1860.

14 January 1918

A German naval attack on the East Anglian town of Great Yarmouth on 14 January 1918 resulted in two civilian deaths. The raid, believed to have been carried out by torpedo boats some way out at sea during a storm, was the fifth German attack on the town during the Great War – two by Zeppelins and three by conventional warships. The 14 January incident began without warning just before 2300 when a starshell lit up the rain-lashed houses of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston in Norfolk. In the following few minutes around 50 high-explosive shells fell on the area, killing a woman as she lay in her bed; her husband died of his injuries shortly after. Two merchant sailors were also killed in the raid; their ship, which had arrived from Hull that morning, was struck by a shell which killed a teenaged sailor instantly while a shipmate died of his injuries just hours later. There was no military response to the raid; aircraft would not have been able to take off in the storm, and the German ships would have been long gone by the time any submarines based nearby could have got to sea.

15 January 1704

32-gun fifth rate HMS Lyme fought off an attack by

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a more powerful French ship on 15 January 1704, but lost her commanding officer in the process. Lyme, built in Plymouth in 1694-5, was employed almost entirely on trade protection and counter-piracy duties, but she roamed far and wide to carry out those tasks, including the Mediterranean, the Baltic, North America and the Caribbean. In 1702 command of the ship passed to Capt Edmund Letchmere, under whom Lyme captured two French privateers. The ship's luck changed on 15 January 1704 when a convoy being escorted by Lyme was attacked by a French 46-gun privateer south of Cornwall. Around a quarter of her ship's company of 145 were killed or wounded in the action, and the British ship was so badly damaged that she could not chase the French ship when they broke off the action. One of those who died was Capt Letchmere, who was replaced four days later by Capt George Doleman, who lasted just over a year before he too was killed. The ship was dismantled at Deptford on the Thames in 1720 and rebuilt as a 20-gun sixth rate and served almost 20 more years before being broken up back at Deptford in early 1739.

16 January 1914

Submarine HMS A7 was lost on 16 January 1914 when she dived into mud in Whitsand Bay, Cornwall. The A-class coastal submarine, displacing 210 tons when submerged, was built by Vickers at their Barrow-in-Furness yard, and was commissioned in January 1905. The submarine, which operated with a crew of 11, was part of the first class of all-British submarines, and the development of such vessels

was still at a very early stage. As such they were often used on trials, both for submarine development and for anti-submarine tactics by surface ships. On the morning of 16 January 1914 A7 and sister boat HMS A9 were carrying out practice torpedo attacks on a depot ship HMS Onyx and her tender Pygmy in Whitsand Bay in Cornwall when A7 suddenly sank while diving to 'attack' Pygmy, burying her stern deep in the soft mud of the sea bed, 37 metres deep. Broken water on the surface of the sea suggested attempts by the submarine to blow her tanks, so the spot was marked with a buoy and Pygmy returned to Devonport to raise the alarm. When rescue ships returned to the area the sea had become rougher and Pygmy's buoy could not be found; it was another five days of painstaking searching by up to 16 ships before A7 was spotted once more, and several attempts to haul her from the floor of the Channel over the following weeks using steel hawsers failed as she was stuck fast. A7 remains in that same spot to this day, a controlled site under the Protection of Military Remains Act since 2001.

17 January 1813

32-gun frigate HMS Narcissus took the American USS Viper in a duel off Havana on 17 January 1813. The Deptford-built fifth rate, launched in 1801, spent her first years in the Mediterranean, taking part in Nelson's blockade of Toulon for much of the latter half of 1803. She was then part of an expedition to South Africa, capturing and wrecking privateers en route, before switching to South America where she helped capture Buenos Aires and sailed back to England loaded with Spanish silver. On 17 January 1813 the Virginia-built 12-gun brig USS Viper was patrolling in the vicinity of Cuba during the War of 1812 when she encountered Narcissus off Belize; the American was no match for the more powerful British frigate and after her capture she was taken to the Bahamas. Viper was taken up by the Royal Navy as HMS Mohawk and used on operations in Chesapeake Bay. Narcissus continued to take and destroy enemy ships until she was converted for a convict ship in 1823, and finally sold for breaking up in early 1837.

18 January 1816

Boats from 20-gun sixth rate HMS Bann captured the armed schooner Rosa, a Spanish-flagged ship carrying more than 270 slaves, on

HMS Tally-Ho in Trincomalee in March 1944 showing the damage to her ballast tanks caused by an encounter with a Japanese torpedo boat. See 11 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © Image: IWM (A 22887)



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18 January 1816 off the Gallinas River coast in Sierra Leone, close to the mouth of the Kerefe River. The capture was reported back ashore on 26 January in Sierra Leone. *Bann*, built in 1814, had sailed from the Thames at the end of 1815 to take up Atlantic slavery suppression patrols based around the island of Goree in Senegal, to the north of Sierra Leone. Britain formally abolished the slave trade in 1807, and anti-slavery patrols by the West Africa Squadron came to be regarded as particularly onerous as conditions were harsh and rates of mortality and sickness were much higher than other stations of the Royal Navy in the 19th Century.

19 January 1875

Cormorant-class gunboat *HMS Nassau*, an 875-ton screw ship, joined gunboat *HMS Rifleman* and boats from 90-gun second rate *HMS London* in bombarding Fort Mozambique in Mombasa on 19 January 1875. The former Portuguese fort has been seized by rebel forces the previous summer, and the Sultan of Zanzibar requested help from the British to remove the 400-strong rebel garrison, who supplied to two gunboats, reinforced by around 200 men from *HMS London*. After a parley with the rebels failed, the ships fired on the fort, which surrendered in little

over three hours, with control returning to the Sultan.

20 January 1943

Early in the morning of 19 January 1943 Italian submarine *Santorre di Santarosa* ran aground off Tripoli in Libya during a resupply mission to North Africa – her third attempt in three days, the first two having been thwarted by the discovery of a newly-laid minefield and mechanical problems. Attempts to free her, including the use of tugs, carried on through the day, but later that evening she was attacked by three Royal Navy motor torpedo boats – MTBs 260, 264 and 313, which were on their way to take part in a planned operation. MTB 260 struck the submarine with a torpedo, but the Italian replied with machine gun fire that raked all three boats while doing little damage and slightly wounding two ratings. Fearing the arrival of other, larger Allied vessels, *Santorre di Santarosa* was scuttled in the early hours of 20 January and her crew of more than 50 evacuated, leaving two comrades who died in the skirmish.

21 January 1866

The design of parachute lightballs was approved by the British. 'Lightballs' of various sorts had been used by military commanders since the 17th Century

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Left to right: MTB 313, MTB 260 and MTB 77 moored at Malta. See 20 January. Image from the IWM collection © IWM (A 14545)



and approval was given by British top brass to 10in, 8in and 5.5in calibre balls, with the 10in remaining in active service until 1920. These lightballs eventually became far better known as starshells, used to illuminate an area of sea or land for night-time operations, and used extensively by the Royal Navy during World War 1 to illuminate enemy ships, rather than searchlight.

22 January 1809

Frigates HM Ships Cleopatra and Jason captured the French frigate Topaze during the 'Action of 22 January 1809' off Pointe Noire in Guadeloupe. Part of the Napoleonic Wars, the action in the Caribbean arose during a blockade of Guadeloupe and Martinique by a Royal Navy squadron, aimed at cutting supplies to the islands and easing a planned invasion. On this occasion 44-gun Gloire-class fast frigate Topaze had been despatched from Brest for French Guiana with a cargo of flour, but had been forced back by the Portuguese, who were allied with Britain. Seeking shelter off Guadeloupe, and covered by a small gun battery, Topaze was flushed out by the 16-gun brig HMS Hazard and attacked by HMS Cleopatra and HMS Jason (both 32 guns); although the British ships were each smaller than Topaze, their combined strength eventually allowed them to overpower the French ship, causing her severe damage before they seized her, her crew and her cargo. The Royal Navy group also managed to escape much damage themselves from Topaze and the shore battery. Topaze was eventually repaired and put to work as the Royal Navy frigate HMS Jewel, which was later changed to Alcmena. She was broken up in 1816.

23 January 1944

Javelin-class destroyer HMS Janus was sunk with heavy loss of life by German aircraft off Anzio on 23 January 1944. The 2,400-ton warship, built on the Tyne by Swan Hunter and commissioned less than a month before the outbreak of war, served in the North Sea for the first months of the war, mainly on convoy duties, then switched to the Mediterranean in May 1940, based in Alexandria, having a role in both the Battle of Calabria in June 1940 and the Battle of Cape Matapan in March 1941. In early 1944 the destroyer was off the Anzio beachhead in Italy, having fired almost 500 salvos from her main

4.7in guns over two days, when she was struck by either a torpedo, a guided bomb or an air-launched glider bomb on 23 January. The ship sank in around 20 minutes, taking 160 of her ship's company of 240 down with her.

24 January 1794

Cdr James Cook, eldest son of renowned explorer Capt James Cook, drowned off Poole on 24 January 1794 along with six of his crew while returning to his 14-gun sloop HMS Spitfire in an open boat in heavy seas. Cook's body came ashore the following day near the Needles on the Isle of Wight. His teenaged brother, Midshipman Nathaniel Cook, had also died in service, having been on board the 74-gun third rate HMS Thunderer, which foundered in the 'Great Hurricane' in the Caribbean on 5 October 1780, 90 miles east of Jamaica, with the loss of all 617 men on board.

25 January 1943

Fish-class minelaying trawler HMS Corncrake foundered in the North Atlantic off the coast of Donegal in Ireland on 25 January 1943, resulting in the loss of 23 sailors. Corncrake, a 670-ton vessel formerly known as Mackerel, was on escort duties with Gibraltar-bound convoy KMS 8 (a slow convoy of 60 merchantmen from the Clyde to the Mediterranean) when she fell foul of a fierce Atlantic storm. Two merchant ships, Empire Banner and Empire Webster, were sunk during the convoy, both by U-77, while Canadian Flower-class corvette HMCS Louisburg was sunk by bombers on the Gibraltar to Oran leg of the convoy on 6 February, killing 38 of her crew.

26 January 1826

HMS Sulphur was launched at Chatham on 26 January 1826 – the last bomb vessel in the Royal Navy. Sulphur was a ten-gun Hecla-class vessel which went on to gain fame as a vessel of exploration. Her first action of real note was carrying a detachment of troops to the Swan River Colony in western Australia, which later developed into Perth in 1829; the following year she helped pull immigrant ship Medina from a reef off the Swan River. In 1835 she was converted into a survey ship, spending much of the next four years investigating the Pacific coast of the Americas as far north as Alaska, which was at that time a Russian territory. Sulphur then crossed the Pacific via French Polynesia, losing her masts in the 1841 Hong Kong typhoon. After surveying the harbour there (Sulphur Channel on the north shore of Hong Kong Island was named after her) she made her way back to Britain, arriving in 1842; after several years of harbour service the weary ship was broken up in 1859.

27 January 1953

Battleship HMS Vanguard went into No 1

Image shows starshells falling over a large German convoy which was intercepted by a cruiser-led Royal Navy force in November 1944 off Listerfjord in Norway. See 21 January. Image from the IWM collection © IWM (A 27101)



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Dock in Gibraltar on 27 January 1953 for a short refit – at 44,500 tons standard she was the largest warship to be dry-docked at the Rock. Secure dock facilities were first developed in Gibraltar in the 1720s, including a careening wharf, though it was a small-scale operation for a further century or more. It was only in 1895 that Parliament was able to consider Admiralty plans to totally transform the yard, with a revamped scheme, including three dry docks, being put forward the following year. Mooring points were built in the harbour for battleships in the interim while work was carried on ashore, and the smallest of the docks, Number 3 with a capacity of 50,000 tons of water, was formally named (King Edward VII) in 1903. Dock Number 2 (60,000 tons) was named after Queen Alexandra in 1906 and the largest, Number 1 Dock with a capacity of more than 100,000 tons, was named after the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1907. Docks 1 and 2 were extended in 1937 as the likelihood of war loomed, allowing the Rock to handle aircraft carriers and the largest Royal Navy battleships. Vanguard, launched in November 1944 at John Brown's in Clydebank, was at 52,250 tons the largest and fastest of the Royal Navy's battleships, and the last such vessel ever built. Design work began before World War 2, but she was much amended during build and was the only one of her class to be built. By the end of the 1950s she was considered obsolete and was decommissioned the following year. When she made her final departure from Portsmouth Harbour, watched by thousands of spectators along the seafront, she famously slewed across the harbour entrance and ran aground close to the Still and West pub, where she lay for an hour before being pulled clear by tugs. She was scrapped at Faslane by the summer of 1962.

28 January 1927

R-class destroyer HMS Sylph, sold for scrap in December 1926, became stranded at Aberavon in Wales on 28 January 1927 and was subsequently broken up locally. The 1,100-ton ship, built at Govan on the Clyde by Harland and Wolff, was completed in February 1917 and immediately took up convoy duties in the North Sea based at Harwich. Sylph never laid a glove on an enemy warship, but unfortunately sank sister ship HMS Setter during an action in thick fog on 17 May 1917; Setter had turned

sharply in poor visibility to avoid another Royal Navy vessel during a torpedo attack by German torpedo boats, but the manoeuvre put her right in the path of Sylph, which sliced into Setter's hull; the ship was lost but her crew managed to escape with no loss of life. Sylph was put in reserve after the war, then transferred to the Royal Navy's Torpedo School at HMS Vernon for four years. She was sold for scrap on 16 December 1926, scheduled to be broken up by Cashmore in Newport, South Wales, but became stranded at Aberavon near Port Talbot in South Wales on 18 January 1927, and was broken up there instead.

29 January 1915

Walney Island Airship Shed at Barrow-in-Furness was shelled by U-21 on 29 January 1915 – the first operation by a German submarine in the Irish Sea. The sheds were an obvious target – they were crucial to the development of Royal Navy airships, and the Vickers site was home to the first RN airship, R1 (better known as the Mayfly). Among the design team working on the aircraft were a young Barnes Wallis, of World War 2 Dambusters bouncing bomb fame. SM U-21 was something of a trailblazer, having been the first U-boat to sink a warship with a self-propelled torpedo when she attacked light cruiser HMS Pathfinder off the Firth of Forth in September 1914. She sank several transports in the Channel and Irish Sea in 1914, and the attack on the airship sheds was one of her last actions before she was transferred to the Mediterranean to support the Axis defence of the Dardanelles – U-21 sank battleships HM Ships Triumph and Majestic at Gallipoli and also accounted for a French armoured cruiser in 1916. After a year attacking Italian shipping under the Austrian flag as U-36 in 1916 she resumed her old identity and rejoined the commerce war against British and Commonwealth ships, though she spent the last few months of the war on training duties. She sank while under tow from a British warship in 1919.

30 January 1942

Submarine HMS Thorn was a T-boat with a short service career, but she managed to sink the Italian submarine Medusa south of Brioni Island in the northern Adriatic on 30 January 1942. Thorn, built by Cammell Laird at Birkenhead, was commissioned

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HMS Janus on pre-war contractor's trials. See 23 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 3695)



on 26 August 1941 and began her service life in the Mediterranean literally with a bang, sinking a German and an Italian tanker in her first weeks at war. On 30 January 1942 she came across the Italian submarine Medusa, a veteran but singularly unsuccessful boat which had first gone to sea in 1932. She had been on numerous patrols during the war but rarely came across any ships, and certainly did not hit a single one. On 30 January Medusa was returning to base after exercises off Pola, in western Croatia, when her bridge team spotted torpedo tracks. The first three were evaded, but the fourth hit the submarine, throwing the six men on the bridge into the water and quickly sending Medusa to the seabed, 35 metres down. An Italian steamer which was close by rushed to the rescue but found only three wounded survivors, two of whom subsequently died. The wreck was quickly located and attempts to raise her planned, as divers established that 14 men had survived the sinking and were trapped aft. However, bad weather hampered the attempt, and when no more contact was heard from the boat the rescue bid was called off on 3 February. In all 58 men died in the Medusa sinking. HMS Thorn did not complete a year in service. On 6 August she was detected on sonar by the Italian torpedo boat Pegaso, which carried out seven depth charge attacks, after which contact was lost. Thorn failed to return from her patrol, and was declared overdue on 11 August; 60 men died when she was lost.

31 January 1880

Spartan-class frigate Atalanta foundered during a training cruise in the Atlantic with the loss of all 113 of the ship's company and 170 trainees. The ship was originally built as HMS Juno at Pembroke in 1844 and her first brush with the history books was in 1857 when she annexed the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean for Britain. In January 1878 she was renamed HMS Mariner, but two weeks later was given a third name – HMS Atalanta, taking up the role of a training ship. She left the Royal Dockyard in Bermuda on 31 January 1880 en route to Falmouth but never reached the Channel. It is believed that she was struck by a violent storm in mid-Atlantic that crossed her path around two weeks after she sailed. There was much controversy over the loss of the ship, as a former crew member reported that she was regarded by his shipmates as somewhat unseaworthy and liable to roll excessively, while the inexperienced trainees on board tended to succumb to seasickness and thus be of little use in a crisis. A gunboat which arrived in Portsmouth from Chile in April reported seeing masses of debris off the Azores, including spars, and later that year the bow of a floating wreck were seen by a German merchantman that could also have been the remains of Atalanta. There is a memorial in St Ann's Church in Portsmouth Naval Base to those who died in the accident.

HMS Vanguard enters Number 1 Dock in Gibraltar for her annual below-waterline inspection. See 27 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 32820)



➤ LONGCAST

2025

18 Jan 2025	4 Area AGM, Dorchester
8 Feb 2025	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting and AGM hosted by Cromer branch
28 Mar 2025	CONA meeting, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard
3 May 2025	Army v Navy rugby match, Twickenham
15-18 May 2025	Londonderry Battle of the Atlantic 80th Anniversary Commemoration
17 May 2025	4 Area meeting, St Austell
20-22 June 2025	RNA75 Annual Conference 2025, Portsmouth
14 Sept 2025	Naval Associations Biennial Parade, Whitehall
22 Oct 2025	Fisherman's Friends Charity Fundraising Concert, Portsmouth

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



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Delegate to Annual Conference 2025 - PORTSMOUTH

Branch secretaries should note the following before submitting their application.

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

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

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

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

NB: A Delegate will not be confirmed as such unless or until the Branch Balance Sheet for 2024 and Branch Annual Report for 2024 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, Lanyard House, Scott Road, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth, PO1 3LU or email to ams@rnassoc.org

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

PROPOSED MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

Proposals must reach The General Secretary by **1600 28 February 2025**

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 **28 February 2025**.
- 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)

NOMINATION FORM
ELECTION OF MEMBERS AND DEPUTY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL 2025
(Revised RNA Bye-Law 7)

For the attention of All Branch Secretaries:

NCM in Areas 1, 6, 7, 8, 11, Scottish and DNCM in Areas 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, Scottish

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 28 February 2025.**

Alternatively, you can scan the fully signed form and email it to ams@massoc.org

Nominations for Governance Standing Orders Committee 2025

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 **28 February 2025**

Nominations received after this date cannot be included in any Ballot required if more than two apply

Armed Forces & Veterans LGBTQ Stand-Easy



**Our Next
LGBTQ Coffee Morning
Monday 3rd February 2025
10.00 - 12.00**

**@ The ELM Centre, Leypark Dr, Leypark Walk,
Estover, Plymouth PL6 8UE**

**Open to any Veteran or current member of our
Armed Forces, their Partners or Carers.**

For more information Contact: Glenn at glenn.jordan@fgct.co.uk,
Larry at Larry,Holmes@helpforheroes.org.uk or Colin at colin.davey@fgct.co.uk

**HELP for
HEROES**
SUPPORT FOR OUR WOUNDED

FIGHTING WITH
PRIDE

 **Rank**
Foundation



FOUR GREENS
COMMUNITY TRUST
people. changing lives

Promoted by FGCT Veterans Outreach

Female Veterans Stand Easy



**Thursday 6th February
10.00 till 13.00**

**Woodland Fort,
Crownhill Road, PL5 3SQ**

**Open to all Female Veterans
and Serving Female Personnel.**



**FOUR GREENS
COMMUNITY TRUST**
Helping people, changing lives

**PIE & MASH
VETERANS SUPPER NIGHT
FUND RAISER**



**6TH FEBRAURY 2025
FROM 18:00**

**This Months Charity:
TEAM ENDEAVOUR**



Tamar View Community Centre,
Miers Close,
Barne Barton, PL5 1DJ

**Recommended
Donation
£2.00**

EVERY FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH



**DEVON &
CORNWALL
FOOD ACTION**



**FOUR GREENS
COMMUNITY TRUST**
Helping people, changing lives

**HELP for
HEROES**
SUPPORT FOR OUR WOUNDED