



# SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



The RNA is delighted to present S/M Steve Caulfield with Life Membership. The Ceremonial Mayor of Salford, Tanya Burch, paid tribute to Steve's service to the community, echoed by RNA National Chairman S/M Andy Christie (second right), who reflected on Steve's loyal service to the RNA for over three decades. Also pictured is RNA General Secretary S/M Bill Oliphant.

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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 4 April, and the deadline for material is 1000 on Thursday 3 April. Semaphore Shorts will be published on 21 and 28 March.**

On board battleship HMS Duke of York on VE Day at Malta. The Commanding Officer, Capt A D Nicholl, calls for three cheers for the King after announcing the defeat of Germany. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 29044)



## VE/VJ80 CELEBRATIONS PLANNED

The 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ Day will be marked this year with a series of events and celebrations that will share stories of the World War 2 generation. Victory in Europe (VE Day), which takes place on 8 May, marks the Allied victory in Europe. The news resulted in millions celebrating the end of the war, with street parties, dancing and singing across the country.

The war in the Far East did not end until 15 August 1945 with VJ Day (Victory Over Japan), with many Royal Navy sailors involved in combat long after the guns had fallen silent in Europe.

The commemorations will pay tribute to the millions of people across the UK and Commonwealth who served in World War 2, telling the stories of those who fought, the children who were evacuated, and those who stepped into the essential roles on the Home Front.

The early May Bank Holiday will see the beginning of the events to mark VE and VJ Day 80 with events planned including a military procession and flypast of current and historic military aircraft, the return of the poppies to the Tower of London and a nationwide call for families to delve into their lofts and discover their own World War 2 stories:

### **Monday 5 May:**

To ensure the commemorations act as a point of remembrance of the millions who lost their lives in the conflict as well as a celebration of peace, the commemorations will begin in Whitehall.

The Cenotaph, the nation's focal point of remembrance, will be dressed in Union flags for the duration of the four-day commemorations, echoing the 1920 unveiling of the monument to the fallen.

From Monday 5 May, it will

provide a focal point for the commemorations and a place to pay silent tribute to all those who died, both at home and abroad, during World War 2.

To honour and remember those who fell, there will be a military procession from Whitehall to Buckingham Palace, followed by a flypast of current and historic military aircraft, including the Red Arrows.

The VE Day 80 commemorations will continue with a street party on HMS Belfast, in the Pool of London. The cruiser fired some of the opening shots on D-Day, 6 June 1944, and protected Arctic convoys; she is the most significant surviving World War 2 warship. Street parties, barbecues and community get-togethers, supported by ideas and inspiration from The Together Coalition and The Big Lunch, will be held by communities across the country,

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echoing the celebrations 80 years ago as the population welcomed the end of the war.

**Tuesday 6 May:**

An installation of ceramic poppies will return to the Tower of London to mark the anniversary.

Nearly 30,000 of the original poppies from the 2014 display at the Tower, which commemorated the centenary of World War 1, will be displayed in a new installation within the walls of the fortress. This installation will resemble a 'wound' at the heart of the Tower, which was itself bombed during the Blitz and still bears some of those scars today. It will mark and reflect on the sacrifices made by so many during World War 2.

Historic landmarks across the UK will be lit up during the evening.

**Wednesday 7 May:**

On the evening of 7 May 1945, a newsflash announced that the following day would be Victory in Europe Day.

To commemorate this important moment in the nation's history, the Parliament Choir will host a Victory in Europe Day Anniversary Concert in Westminster Hall at the Palace of Westminster, 80 years to the day that victory was declared.

**Thursday 8 May:**

A service will take place at Westminster Abbey that will be both an act of shared remembrance and a celebration of the end of the war. It will be a moment to give thanks and to honour a generation that showed extraordinary courage and resilience.

The events will conclude with a concert at Horseguards Parade to finish the VE Day 80 commemorations in a celebratory tone, echoing how the nation reacted to the news 80 years before.

With more than 10,000 members of the public in attendance, the concert will feature stars of stage and screen and military musicians, and tell the story of victory and the legacy of World War 2 in Europe.

**Friday 15 August:**

To mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the war in the Far East, a service will take place at the

National Memorial Arboretum. In partnership with the government, the Royal British Legion will lead the nation in honouring and remembering those who fought and died during the War in the Far East.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said: "The 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ Day are important opportunities for communities to come together to pay tribute to all those who served in the Second World War and to reflect on the values that they were fighting for. "By taking part in these significant commemorations, people across society will be able to hear our veterans' stories first hand, to reflect and remember, and ensure that their stories of sacrifice and service are remembered for generations to come."

Ruth Bourne, 98, a World War 2 Wren working as a link in the chain of codebreakers who intercepted Nazi messages at Bletchley Park said: "There was an electric buzz among everyone and eventually the Royals came out and waved, and we cheered like crazy waving whatever we had on us.

"People climbed on every available lamppost, lit bonfires in Hyde Park and we sat around singing songs. Not many went to bed that night!" In partnership with Imperial War Museums, Letters to Loved Ones will encourage the public to delve into their family history to find

letters sent by their relatives to loved ones during World War 2. It is hoped that this will bring together first-hand testimonies from warriors on the front line, and the women and children on the home front. Letters to Loved Ones will culminate in an event in May, bringing together schoolchildren and their families from across the UK.

From April through 2025, Arts Council England will work with arts organisations to join with their communities and creatively commemorate, celebrate and reflect on the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Day.

Funding will also be made available through the National Lottery Community Fund Awards For All programme for organisations to bid for grants to host events, activities and projects this year for communities to come together to commemorate the war and its impact on individuals and communities across the country. Resources and educational material will be made available for schools and youth groups to help young people learn about World War 2 and the importance of the role played by their forebearers in securing the peace we enjoy today. The Royal British Legion, the nation's largest military charity, will be making resources available for schools and local communities across the country

**Continued on page 5**

**Churchill waves to crowds in Whitehall on the day he broadcast to the nation that the war with Germany had been won. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (H 41849)**





and working through its network of membership branches to mark the anniversary.

The commemorations will be UK-wide with activities across the nations and regions.

Further details on the flypast, national events and plans to mark the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ Day across the UK, and how the public can get involved, will be announced in due course.

Defence Secretary John Healey MP said: "80 years ago, the freedoms we enjoy today were defended by our remarkable Second World War generation.

"Our duty today is to safeguard the British values they sacrificed so much to uphold.

"As we mark 80 years since the end of the Second World War, our grateful nation looks forward to joining our brave Armed Forces and veterans to reflect, rejoice and remember."

Dr Tara Knights, the Royal British Legion's Head of Remembrance, said: "The Royal British Legion is proud to be marking the 80th anniversaries of VE Day and VJ Day and will put Second World War veterans at the heart of these commemorations.

"These are significant anniversaries, and we owe it to all those from the Second World War generation to thank them for their bravery and sacrifice in the defence of freedoms we still enjoy to this day.

"We will be running educational and community engagement programmes to encourage everyone to get involved in this momentous occasion.

"The RBL is inviting veterans, or their family or carers on their behalf, to come forward and register to join in the commemorations."

## SSAFA PARTY WILL MARK VE80

On a Monday morning in mid-February SSAFA marked 80 days until its upcoming VE Day 80 concert on 8 May with a display of a full-size replica Spitfire outside the Royal Albert Hall in London. World War 2 veterans and other special guests were invited along to mark the occasion.

The Spitfire was displayed just outside the northwestern entrances to the Hall and shone brilliantly in the clear morning sun. In attendance was 100-year-old Royal Navy Wren Ruth Barnwell, 98-year-old Normandy veteran Henry Rice and 87-year-old evacuee Doreen Simson, who chatted with media and took photos in front of the iconic fighter aircraft, a reminder of the few still with us with lived experiences of World War 2.

Lady Alex Walmsley, National Vice Chair at SSAFA, gave interviews on the importance of remembering those who served in the war and the lessons learnt. Dean Knowles, an Army veteran who turned to SSAFA in his moment of need, spoke about the lifesaving support that SSAFA provides to people like him.

Lady Walmsley said: "Each anniversary of VE Day serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces to ensure our safety and freedom.

"For 140 years, SSAFA has supported serving Armed Forces personnel, veterans and their families whenever they find themselves in need.

"We were there with the country through the war and at its end.

"Now, 80 years on, there are few who will remember VE Day first hand. This makes it even more important to celebrate veterans of the Second World War, publicly recognising the significance of what they achieved.

"The anniversary concert on 8 May offers a meaningful way of doing so."

SSAFA's 'VE Day 80: The Party' concert will celebrate a pivotal day in our modern history with



**A huge crowd of people gathered in Whitehall to listen to Churchill's Victory speech and to celebrate VE Day. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (D 24586)**

an evening of storytelling through music. The Squadronaires, part of the Central Band of the RAF, will take the audience back in time with iconic 1940s favourites, while the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra will perform the nation's best-loved classical anthems, both joined by special guests.

The concert will feature the untold personal accounts of those who were there for the Monday event, as well as stories about those involved in the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the involvement of the Gurkhas. The event will set the tone for the 80th anniversary of VJ Day in August.

Tickets for VE Day 80: The Party, at 7.30pm on Thursday 8 May, are available from the Royal Albert Hall box office on <https://www.royalalberthall.com/tickets/events/2025/ve-day-80-the-party>

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### **Find Semaphore Circular online at**

**[www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/news](http://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!

A brief note from me this month as I'm loafing on leave in France – where better to watch the final day of the Six Nations when Scotland face a rampant France!

Well, I'm supposedly on leave anyway; I have a Finance Administration Committee meeting this morning – the joys of modern ways of working – there's no escape!

What a fantastic party in Wrexham this month where two Branch members, Shipmates Donald Pritchard and Herbert Jones – who both became centenarians within a few days of each other – were feted by their shipmates.

RNA Deputy National President Mark Slawson was on hand to present each of our veterans with a bottle of Pusser's.

Happy birthday lads – I hope you have many more! We have the story on **page 29**.

I also have sadder news, unfortunately – Shipmate Frank Cooper has slipped his anchor and crossed the bar.

As a World War 2 veteran, Frank charmed us in Liverpool when we commemorated the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic in 2023 and last year he represented the Association at the D-Day 80 commemorations in Portsmouth.

Thank you to Shipmates Soapy and Anne Watson (3 Area President) for representing me at his funeral – see **page 34**.

RIP Frank – you are not forgotten.

Talking of World War 2, this year also marks Victory in Europe (VE) Day and Victory over Japan (VJ) Day 80 as well as our own 75th anniversary year (RNA75).

Please can I ask Branches to consider a fundraising event this year for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) as they support not only the RNA but also those in need across the Naval family.

A standeasy coffee morning after putting a wreath on your local war memorial around the VE80 commemorations would do the trick, or maybe later in August for VJ80.

Please contact Central Office for assistance – you can email [engagement@rnassoc.org](mailto:engagement@rnassoc.org)

Looking ahead to September, the Naval Associations Parade will be held in Whitehall, London, at the Cenotaph on Sunday 14 September. In our RNA75 anniversary year we want to have



1,000 personnel on parade – which means your Association needs you!

Please look at whether you can take part in this fabulous gathering which will be the very last meaningful anniversary of the end of World War 2 where we, as a Naval family, will be able to host veterans from that conflict.

Finally, BZ to Malcolm Little in the Central Office, who is pulling together a fantastic Conference of Naval Associations in Portsmouth on Friday 28 March.

Numerous Naval Associations will be represented and the Naval charities sector is turning out in force to ensure more Naval veterans across our Naval family are aware of the work going on behind the scenes to support them.

If you are a member of another Association, please ensure your Association is represented at this event.

Further details and registration, as well as any questions, will be dealt with by Malcolm – email [dcos@rnassoc.org](mailto:dcos@rnassoc.org)

Cheers,

*Bill*



## CHAT ABOUT SAILING EXPED

The RNA Fireside Chat on Monday 24 March is on the Association's Sailing Sports and Comradeship Group, by David Monks.

As it happens, the RNA would like to get a group together next year to join in with a sailing expedition.

If you are interested and want to know more about the group and the possibilities for an expedition, it would be worth your while joining the Chat. See [here](#) for how to access it.



## DISCOUNT TICKET PERIOD EXTENDED

We are happy to tell you that we have negotiated an extended period (just for Association members) to be able to buy discounted tickets for our fabulous Fisherman's Friends charity fundraising concert in October (see poster left for details).

The only way you can get £5 off per ticket is to follow this unique link: <https://tickets.portsmouthguildhall.org.uk/webshop/webticket/shop?kassierer=webpre&event=1608> Please do not share this link outside the organisation, but do book fast – discounted tickets only have a few weeks to run!

## CHANCE TO CELEBRATE NEURODIVERSITY

Some dates for your diaries from the Naval Children's Charity (NCC). Imagine a week where we celebrate all the different ways people's brains can work. That's Neurodiversity Celebration Week, which will be celebrated from next Monday, 17 March.

The week aims to transform how neurodivergent individuals are perceived and supported by providing schools, universities, organisations, and others with the opportunity to recognise the many skills and talents of neurodivergent individuals, while

creating more inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower every individual.

Keep your eyes on the NCC website and social media channels to find out more. If you have a neurodivergent child, then contact them to see how they can help – call 023 9263 9534 or email [caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk](mailto:caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk)

## GOLFERS VIE FOR NATIONAL TITLE

The RNA Golfers national competition will be held at Southwick Park Golf Course near Portsmouth on Friday 20 June – the start of Conference weekend.

This is a full handicap (max 24) Stableford individual and team competition as well as prizes for 'Nearest the Pin' and 'Pro's Approach'.

In 2022, we were met with glorious weather atop Portsdown Hill, shipmates new and old joined together, to battle it out for the 'McAnally Salver'. Some great, and not so great, golf was played – but most importantly some classic dits were dusted off and shared with new shipmates!

Places are limited, and everyone is welcome to participate, not just members of the RNA Golf Sports and Comradeship Group (SCG); contact the Golfers SCG via email or Facebook and register your interest so as not to miss out. See [rna.golfers@gmail.com](mailto:rna.golfers@gmail.com) or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/454684612304361>

## CONFERENCE TICKETS SELLING FAST

Tickets for the Conference Entertainment package are selling fast – don't delay if you want to secure your place for the weekend of 20-22 June.

You can buy tickets online at <https://buff.ly/4faHU8l>

Just a reminder – you can go to Conference even if you are not a

Delegate – you can be an Observer. Email [ams@rnassoc.org](mailto:ams@rnassoc.org) for details. And you do not need to attend the actual Conference in order to have a brilliant weekend of fun with us. We especially encourage partners to attend the festivities and enjoy a day, perhaps shopping or visiting museums, on Saturday.

## DARBY WANTS TO TALK TO YOU...

Darby Allen is an RN veteran of 35 years' service, and an RNA member. For some years he has been a WI Registered Speaker and has totalled more than 100 presentations. His most popular subject is 'Boys' training for the RN', based on his own experiences.

His presentation is "a light-hearted adventure including a sing-a-long, military music and an opportunity to dance the Hornpipe!"

Darby – based in Fareham, but willing to travel if fuel costs are covered – would also be happy to give his presentation to RNA and RBL groups. He does not charge charitable institutions.

Email [darbyallen15@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:darbyallen15@yahoo.co.uk)

## RETIREMENT PROPERTIES ON MERSEY NOW AVAILABLE



Properties have become available at Wirral's idyllic Mariners' Park retirement estate, and accommodation is available now for retired Merchant Navy, Royal Navy and maritime professionals. The stunning estate, located on the banks of the river Mersey, has a number of properties available to let, including two-bedroom apartments within its award winning

new development.

The estate has luxury facilities, , stunning views over the river Mersey and comes in much cheaper than most privately rented apartments, starting from £630 per month for one-bed properties and from £740 for 2 two-bed.

To enquire, call 0151 346 8840, email [welfare@nautilusint.org](mailto:welfare@nautilusint.org) or see <https://tinyurl.com/3bwrejw5>



## FREE TOUR OF SCOTTISH NATIONAL MEMORIAL

The Scottish National War Memorial is offering a free guided tour of the Memorial, in Edinburgh Castle, at 1100 on Wednesday 26 March. The tour will explain the history of the Memorial, some of the artists who contributed to it and why it is still relevant to today. The Memorial is a small, independent charity and relies upon public donations. The tour is free, but donations are encouraged and extremely welcome.

Use this link to obtain your (free) ticket: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1262851555999?aff=oddtcreator>

The charity is also delighted to arrange tours upon request for organisations – if that’s of interest to you please get in touch. See the charity’s website at [www.snwm.org](http://www.snwm.org)

The Memorial is situated within Edinburgh Castle, and access is via some steep cobbled paths. Suitable footwear is advised. Please note that admission to the Castle is NOT included with the tour booking, and should be booked separately via [www.edinburghcastle.scot/plan-your-visit/tickets](http://www.edinburghcastle.scot/plan-your-visit/tickets)

A minimum of five participants is required for the tour to run.



The RNA’s two England-based Community Choirs have met for the first face-to-face rehearsals. Everyone had a great time at the Portsmouth gathering (above) and found their voices beautifully. The South West choir’s practice was led by L/Cpl Ben Upfold RMBS from HMS Raleigh (left). The choirs (the third is based in Scotland) are looking particularly for male voices - email [cml@rnassoc.org](mailto:cml@rnassoc.org) for details. Everyone is excited to be singing with the Fisherman’s Friends in Portsmouth on 22 October.

## FIRST FLEET TO WORLD WAR: AUSTRALIA AND THE OCEANS

The Britannia Naval Research Association’s 2025 Oxford Symposium is finding a new horizon - by going Down Under. ‘From First Fleet to World War: Australia and the Oceans’ will headline leading naval author and historian Dr Andrew Lambert, Laughton Professor of Naval History at King’s College London.

There will also be presentations on HMAS Sydney in 1941, and previous ships of the name, along with film of the 1923-24 world cruise of the Special Service Squadron, led by the brand-new battlecruiser HMS Hood – and much more besides.

The Symposium will be held at Sturdy’s Castle Hotel and Conference Centre near Kidlington, Oxon, on Saturday 3 May, starting at 1000.

Please apply for tickets and information on the day to Susan Amos at [Tars1758@yahoo.com](mailto:Tars1758@yahoo.com), or call 01291 637407.

## VE80 HYMN OF TRIBUTE

On 8 May we mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, when the nation will unite to celebrate 80 years of peace since the end of World War 2 in Europe. VE Day 80 is not only a tribute to those who fought for freedom but also a powerful reminder of the resilience and unity that have defined our country ever since.

At 9:30pm, beacons and Lamp Lights of Peace will shine across the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, and UK Overseas Territories, symbolising the enduring strength of our communities.

Pageantmaster Bruno Peek is encouraging everyone to take part – raise the VE Day flag at 9am, gather in streets, gardens, town halls, clubs and pubs.

He is calling on everybody to sing the hymn ‘I Vow to Thee My Country’ at 9.30pm, uniting to honour the past and celebrate a future built on unity, hope, and peace.

For words and music for the hymn see and more VE Day events see [www.veday80.org.uk](http://www.veday80.org.uk)



# KINGS CAMPS ARE DEDICATED TO GETTING CHILDREN ACTIVE

One for our serving members...

Kings Camps is part of the Kings Active Foundation dedicated to getting children active, having fun and learning together.

Since 1991 they've operated globally to provide activity camps for children, create activity jobs for young people and provide people, programmes, training and resources to individuals and organisations that work directly with children.

As a charity, they work for children not for profit and they work in partnership with many organisations including the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

Sports and activity camps are available to children and young people aged 5-17 during school holidays.

Kings Camps provide activity camps exclusively for children from Royal Navy families at ten UK Royal Naval establishments from Cornwall to Helensburgh.

Places are subsidised by the RNRMC to make camps affordable for as many families as possible. Royal Naval families can now also book their children onto any of Kings Camps' 55 nationwide non-military locations at the same subsidised rate, ensuring better accessibility for families who live away from Royal Navy and Royal Marines establishments.

Serving personnel can book places for their own children at a subsidised cost.

The cost for 2025 is £90 per week, per child – please check the venue page or call for details. See <https://www.kingscamps.org/kids-camps-at-military-bases/> for more details.

Children and young people have the opportunity to make new friends and develop a lifelong love of sport and being active.

Motivated staff teams ensure every child is welcomed and fully-engaged in a wide range of activities from the moment they arrive to the last activity of the day.

Easter Camps are as follows:

#### **Fareham – Cams Hill School**

Easter: 14 – 17 April – EASTER BOOKING NOW OPEN

#### **Helensburgh – Lomond School**

Easter: 7 – 11 April – EASTER BOOKING NOW OPEN

#### **Helston – RNAS Culdrose**

Easter: 7 – 11 April – EASTER BOOKING NOW OPEN.

#### **Yeovil – RNAS Yeovilton**

Easter: 7 – 11 April – EASTER BOOKING NOW OPEN.

## COME HEAR THE (RM) BAND

The Royal Marines Band Scotland will be presenting 'Cabaret' at the Carnegie' at Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline, on 3 April at 1930, featuring everything from elegant chamber music to rousing brass ensembles. Details and tickets from <https://tinyurl.com/mry92v5u>

## JOIN THE FIELD GUN CREW

**A group of veterans has been bringing Field Gun to a modern audience and is looking to expand the crews. The group has recruited a couple of ex-Field Gunners and PTIs as trainers and will be opening up crew places to anyone who is interested – and fit enough.**

**Whilst they realise the RNA demographic may be slightly on the senior side perhaps to be running crew, they are looking to fill the crews with sons, daughters and family members – and who better to promote the cause than the RNA (Rob da Silva, who contacted us, is a member) and those who got to see this magnificent sport back in the day.**

**Take a look at their website (<https://fieldgunsport.com/>) and get in touch if you think you might be able to help them in their bid to make Field Gun a recognised international sport.**

## RESEARCH STUDIES WOMEN'S COPING SKILLS

**ARE YOU A WOMAN WHO SERVED IN THE UK ARMED FORCES?**

**A new study wants to understand the coping skills and strategies you used during your military career and beyond.**



**Scan the code or visit the website to find out more**

**[tinyurl.com/veterancoping](https://tinyurl.com/veterancoping)**



Combat Stress is conducting a study exploring how female former Service personnel cope with challenging or stressful experiences. They want to understand the coping skills and strategies that were used during their military careers and beyond. It is hoped that the findings can inform how services and programmes can better harness women veterans' skills and respond to their needs.

Any women veterans of the UK Armed Forces can take part. Participation involves completing a series of online questionnaires, with a smaller number of participants taking part in an audio recorded interview conducted online at a time convenient to the participant.

The study is a collaboration between Combat Stress, the University of Bath, and Columbia University in the USA. It is funded by the Office for Veterans Affairs' but is fully academically independent.

This work is the latest in a series of co-produced studies, professional training programmes, and policy recommendations into women veterans, their Service experiences and mental health needs. Details of previous work can be accessed at: [www.combatstress.org.uk/women-veterans-research](http://www.combatstress.org.uk/women-veterans-research)



# UCKERS ACROSS THE UK

The World Championships are not until the autumn, but the Uckers season is already hotting up with activity across the country. Pictured right is the Scottish Uckers champion, S/M Andy Sears, Vice Chair of City of Edinburgh Branch. Andy beat S/M Dot Patterson from Rosyth and West Fife Branch in the final round, despite Dot's lucky six throwing streak! Andy is pictured (right) being presented with his Uckers Ya Uckers board by RNA Engagement lead Dave MacAskill. S/M Dave also put in an appearance on board HMS Dragon to present the destroyer's Executive Warrant Officer, WO1 'Eddie' Wearing, with an Uckers board for the Warrent Officers and Senior Rates mess (below). Dragon has just completed a brief maintenance period in Portsmouth and is due to sail any day now.

Earlier this month the RNA kicked off the first of the Ship Anson's Uckers events. The manager of the Portsmouth pub, Terry Rigg, is keen to set up regular game nights to encourage comradeship and community (below and bottom right). Pictured (bottom left) are Terry, Dave MacAskill and Steve Moffatt of Uckers Ya Uckers (<https://uckers.uk>), who has just pledged three years of sponsorship for the RNA Uckers World Championship, to be held in Portsmouth on 4 October. The beautiful board was personalised for the RNA and Ship Anson by Steve. If you would like to hold an Uckers competition which feeds into the World Championship (Portsmouth, 4 Oct) or if your ship or establishment needs an Uckers board, please get in touch: [engagement@rnassoc.org](mailto:engagement@rnassoc.org)





# NOMINATE A SHIPMATE FOR AN AWARD!

Nominations close at the end of this month for the 2025 Soldiering On Awards, and it's your chance to shine a spotlight on a shipmate, a branch or group that you think deserves credit for their achievements in the Armed Forces community.

The 15th Soldiering On Awards, a brand of X-Forces (XF) CIC, are the latest chapter in a programme that recognises outstanding achievements by serving personnel, veterans and family members in 12 separate categories.

The highlight of the process is a spectacular awards ceremony in London in the autumn which attracts national attention.

The 12 categories are:

- **Animal Partnership Award**, in partnership with Pets at Home (public vote)
- **Education, Training and Development Award**, in partnership with Reed in Partnership
- **Family Values Award** – in partnership with Pinnacle



- **Service Families**
- **Healthcare and Rehabilitation Award**, in partnership with Redwood Technologies Group
- **Defence Inclusivity Award**, in partnership with Barclays
- **Inspiration Award**, in partnership with NatWest (public vote)
- **Employee Champion Award**, in partnership with Landmarc
- **Working Together Award**, in partnership with Forces in Mind Trust
- **Business Start-Up Award**, in partnership with GKN Aerospace

- **Business Scale-Up Award**, in partnership with LSEG Foundation
- **Community Impact Award**, in partnership with BAE Systems (new for 2025)
- **Lifetime Achievement Award**, in partnership with Oracle.

Nominations can be made through the Soldiering On Awards Nominations Portal, which is at <https://soldieringon.org/soldiering-on-awards-2025-nominations-portal/> Nominations close on Sunday 30 March, with judging by a distinguished and wide-ranging panel taking place in April, May and June.

Finalists in each category will be announced on 23 June, and they will be celebrated at a reception in the House of Lords the following month. The overall winner will be announced at the Awards Night in London in October.

For full details see the Soldiering On Awards website at <https://soldieringon.org>



## REPAIR SHOP SEEKS VE80 ITEMS TO FIX

Ricochet, the makers of BBC One's hit show The Repair Shop, are seeking items for a new series – and gearing up to celebrate VE80 and honour our veterans with a special episode. Do you have a special item with a story from the VE Day era? Their team of expert craftspeople is looking for cherished artefacts in need of repair that capture the spirit and history of this significant moment. Do you have a treasured item with a special connection to VE Day?

Apply online at <https://tinyurl.com/bdb2uw85>

Email them at: [repair@ricochet.co.uk](mailto:repair@ricochet.co.uk)

## APART NOT ALONE IN HELENSBURGH

Glasgow's Helping Heroes (GHH), run by SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity in partnership with Glasgow City Council, has extended its reach from Glasgow into Helensburgh through a new initiative to help spouses and partners of RN personnel at Clyde Naval Base. Made possible through grant funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, GHH launched Apart Not Alone last month.

Apart Not Alone will take place each Monday morning during term-time from 0930-1130 at the Drumfork Community Centre, Churchill Square, Helensburgh G84 9HN. It will provide an informal, welcoming and supportive community to spouses and partners of serving RN personnel.

Attendees will be able to connect with others who share their experiences, have one-on-one

conversations with GHH Peer Support Workers to receive tailored support, and hear from the GHH team and guest speakers on a range of themes, all intended to help them for as long as they are stationed at Faslane.

Earlier this month, GHH held a working group with representatives from several organisations to plan themes for Apart Not Alone sessions. These organisations included the Royal Navy, Naval Family's Federation, Naval Children's Charity, the Argyll and Bute Service Pupil Advisor, Home-Start Lomond, Royal Navy Family and People Support, Fun First and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. Based on the input from this group, key themes for sessions will be deployment, mental health, navigating the education system, employment, finances and housing.

# GREENWICH HOSPITAL FUNDING HITS £6.26M

As the single largest funder of support for the Royal Navy community, Greenwich Hospital provides funding to meet the education, welfare, and acute needs of serving and former Royal Navy personnel and their families. This year, their total charitable funding reached £6.26 million, enabling them to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who served and continue to serve. For more than three centuries, Greenwich Hospital has been a steadfast pillar of support for the RN community. Evolving into a leading strategic funder across the Naval sector, they remain deeply committed to our mission of empowering individuals and families to thrive during and after military service. As a Crown body, they focus on delivering proactive and preventative interventions that address the unique challenges faced by the RN community. Their work ensures that serving and former personnel, and their families, receive the support they need. Through targeted funding streams, they

address the specific needs of the RN community. By collaborating closely with military charities and partner organisations, they deliver vital support where and when it is needed most, reaching Naval communities across the UK. Their partnerships extend far beyond financial support. They reflect Greenwich's commitment to collaboration and a shared purpose in addressing the community's needs. Together with partners, they amplify their impact, ensuring that those who need support can access it. Highlights of their funding work and its effects can be found in the 2024 Impact Report at <https://tinyurl.com/mr29b7zj>.

## LAUNCHPAD GRANT

**A grant of £130,000 from Greenwich Hospital will help homeless veterans' housing charity Launchpad continue its vital support for unemployed former Royal Navy and Royal Marines facing a housing crisis.**

**Since its establishment in 2013, Launchpad has assisted over 745 homeless veterans, providing housing and wraparound, person-centred support to former personnel often at critical times in their transition from military life. The charity supports veterans across the North West and North East of England with housing accommodation based in Durham, Newcastle and Liverpool.**

**To learn more about the work of Launchpad, see their website at <https://veteranslaunchpad.org.uk>**



**KBS Maritime recently hosted a quiz at the Royal Maritime Hotel in Portsmouth, and pictured above is the winning team, along with the RNA's Engagement lead Dave MacAskill (left). The evening raised more than £220 for the RNA – many thanks to all involved.**



## LEGAL GUIDE PUBLISHED

A Short Guide to the LGBT Financial Recognition Scheme and Your Legal Rights has been published by Bolt Burdon Kemp LLP (BBK) in partnership with Fighting With Pride (FWP) and is available as a pdf leaflet on their website at <https://tinyurl.com/4hen89eu> and from Fighting With Pride's website at <https://tinyurl.com/3s4nkr7>. FWP is extremely grateful to BBK for the time and commitment they have put in to providing this guide as a timely and helpful resource. It is intended to provide clarity on legal rights through general guidance on the FRS and any associated civil claims. It does not provide or substitute specific advice regarding individual concerns or questions. This should be sought from a solicitor and more information can be found at The Law Society. FWP has also been working with RBL, Irwin Mitchell (IM), and Latham and White (L&W), to provide a multi-sourced approach to advice on the legal aspects of the FRS Scheme and individual rights, to help support enquiries and advise on stronger narratives for Impact Payments. Generic advice and guidelines regarding FRS application and other reparations is available on the FWP website [here](#). RBL, IM and BBK have expertise in the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS), including in regard to trauma, serious injury, legal and financial matters. Latham and White has international experience in LGBTQ+ and other human rights causes. Fighting With Pride will assist with making applications, or with any other enquiries regarding all aspects of the Government's LGBT Veterans Reparations measures.





**S/M David Meehan took this picture of RFA Proteus sailing from Leith earlier this month. Proteus is a multi-role ocean surveillance vessel of 6,000 tons, and will act as a mother ship for remotely-operated underwater vehicles (ROUVs) and a testbed for new specialist capabilities, monitoring UK waters.**

## DISCOUNTS ON TOURS

RNA members have been offered a special deal by one of Britain's top tour companies.

Wendy Wu Tours claims to be the UK's leading touring specialist, offering "extraordinary tours to Japan, China and the Far East, Southeast Asia, India, Sri Lanka, The Middle East, Central Asia, South America and Europe".

Since Wendy sent her very first tour to China in 1994, they've gone from strength to strength and are proud of the multiple awards they've won and the unique travel experiences they offer to an expanding range of destinations.

Last November, for the tenth year in a row, they were awarded the accolade of 'Best Travel Company to the Far East and Central Asia' at the esteemed British Travel Awards – the UK's top consumer awards.'

RNA members are being offered an additional 5 per cent discount in their current March offers – see the poster later in this Circular **here**.

## HERMES DATE

HMS Hermes Association gala dinner/reunion, all commissions, is on 12 April at the Everglades Hotel, Widnes. Bookings via Just for Groups on 01603 886740. Non-members and guests welcome. Email [hmshermes.association@gmail.com](mailto:hmshermes.association@gmail.com) or see [www.hmshermesassociation.com](http://www.hmshermesassociation.com)

# LONDONDERRY SETS OUT BOA COMMEMORATIONS

The annual Battle of the Atlantic Commemoration held by Londonderry Branch will be a special extended event in May this year to also mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe.

The framework is as follows.

**Thursday 15 May: 1500:** Special event at the International Sailor Statue, on Ebrington Place, followed by a VIP reception in the Ebrington Hotel.

**1900:** Meet & Greet in the RBL Waterside Club, Iona Terrace, Waterside, Londonderry BT47 6EY. Hosted by Londonderry Branch. Dress: Smart casual. No charge.

**Friday 16 May: 1100:** World War 1 commemoration event in Fort Dunree, Co Donegal, remembering the huge loss of life when HMS Laurentic hit mines off Lough Swilly and sank on 25 January 1917. Transport leaving Londonderry at 0945. Dress: Association rig with beret or lounge suit, with medals.

**1930:** Concert at Foyle College performed by RM Band Scotland. Dress: Association rig or lounge suit, with medals.

**Saturday 17 May: 1200:** Civic reception at the Guildhall followed by interaction with the Museum Services at Ebrington Place (Formerly HMS Ferret and HMS Sea Eagle), with displays and information talks on the new maritime museum for the City of Londonderry. Re-enactment of the U-boat surrender and other World War 2 items. Dress: Smart casual.

**1900:** Battle of the Atlantic 80 Commemoration Dinner, 1900 for dining at 1930. Venue: Caw Camp, Limavady Rd, Waterside, Londonderry. Four courses with wine. Tickets available from RNA (£35), cash-only bar. Dress: Association rig or lounge suit, with medals. Serving personnel uniform.

**Sunday 18 May: 1015:** Parade

muster at RBL Club for the short parade to All Saints Church of Ireland, Clooney Terrace, Waterside, Londonderry, BT47 6AP, (500 metres) for 1100 service of commemoration and wreath-laying. On completion, return parade to the RBL Club, with the Lord Lieutenant of the County Borough of Londonderry, Mr Ian Crowe, taking the salute on the march past. Dress: Association rig with berets or lounge suit, with medals. Serving personnel uniform.

The 80th anniversary event will close with a light lunch in the RBL Club, hosted by Londonderry Branch, immediately after the parade falls out at the RBL Club. No charge.

The City Hotel Derry has once again agreed a rate with the RNA for the BoA weekend: double/twin B&B £159 per night, single B&B £149 per night. The hotel is currently being refurbished and will be joining the Hilton group shortly.

To secure accommodation, call the hotel on +44 2871 365800 and give card details to hold a room. Rooms are held under the "Royal Naval Association" Please update Robert Buchanan at [castlecooley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:castlecooley@hotmail.co.uk) if you have booked accommodation and cc Frank Brown at [frankjf22brown@gmail.com](mailto:frankjf22brown@gmail.com)

## MARCHING WITH PRIDE IN LONDON

**Fighting With Pride (FWP) will again be marching alongside uniformed personnel in the Defence section at this year's Pride in London event on Saturday 5 July. The LGBT+ military charity is also planning a tri-Service social event in the evening for all attendees to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the lifting of the 'Gay Ban'.**

**Please complete the registration link below, and FWP will confirm your attendance via email. They encourage you to register as early as possible to avoid disappointment.**

**Don't forget to bring your Fighting With Pride T-shirt. A limited supply of T-shirts will be available for those who haven't marched before. Please supply your size by email (S/M/L/XL/XXL). A nominal £10 donation for new T-shirts would be gratefully received.**

**Register here. The closing date is Friday 20 June at 5pm. Email John with questions and enquiries: [john.beckett@fightingwithpride.org.uk](mailto:john.beckett@fightingwithpride.org.uk)**



## MARY ROSE SHOWCASES SUPPORT

The RNA was delighted to be invited to attend the Mary Rose's Anchored in the Community evening in Portsmouth.

The event showcased the excellent work the Mary Rose does to support Portsmouth's youth and enable the local community to feel included, and even feel ownership of the Mary Rose collection.

Thanks go to Dominic Jones for the invite and all the other lovely organisations in attendance, including street artist My Dog Sighs, the Aspex Gallery and the Mary Rose Museum. With thanks to the Heritage Fund UK, who enabled this community engagement project.

## RACE ACROSS THE UK FOR RNRMC

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) has launched the Race Across the UK - an exciting new challenge to help support Naval families. This exhilarating event invites participants to race in pairs from Edinburgh to Dartmouth, covering the length of the UK in just four days.

You'll need to partner with someone you trust - someone who will motivate you and help power through when the journey gets tough.

Together, you will tackle the UK's stunning and diverse landscapes, testing both your physical endurance and teamwork.

But here's the twist - there are no navigation apps, no cars, and no planes.

You will rely solely on your wits, a traditional map, and whatever you can carry on your back as you make your way from

one checkpoint to the next.

This challenge offers a unique opportunity to test your limits, all while raising vital funds for an exceptional cause.

The Race will take place from 2-5 September, and there is a strict limit of 50 participating pair - 100 people in all.

There is a fundraising target of £1,500 per person, and RNRMC will give you plenty of support to reach and smash that target.

Participants must be 16+.

By signing up for Race Across the UK, you will play a significant part in improving the lives of those who serve our nation.

With spaces limited to just 50 pairs, apply now to secure your place and help the RNRMC make a difference.

For more details of what the event entails, see <https://lupine.co.uk/race/2025-rnrmc-race-across-the-uk.html>

# PRINCESS ROYAL IS NEW PATRON

The Naval Children's Charity (NCC) are delighted to announce that The Princess Royal is to become their new Patron, following on from many years of royal patronage from her mother, the late Queen, who was Patron for more than 70 years. As the NCC celebrate their bicentenary - 200 years of supporting Naval children - patronage of The Princess Royal is of particular significance.

Her Royal Highness has a long history of supporting military families and promoting the wellbeing of children. The Princess Royal's patronage of the NCC will bring significant attention to the charity's vital work and help to ensure that children of Naval personnel receive the support they need to thrive.

The Chief Executive of the NCC, Clare Scherer, said: "On behalf of all at the Naval Children's Charity we offer our warmest thanks to HRH for agreeing to become our Patron.

"The Princess has shown great interest, over the years, into the wellbeing of our families, and Her Royal Highness's commitment to the charities that she serves is outstanding.

"We look forward to introducing The Princess Royal to our team and our children and young people so that they can tell their stories to Her Royal Highness directly."

The Naval Children's Charity has been helping Naval children for two centuries, including serving personnel and veterans of the Naval Service (Royal Navy, Royal Marines, QARNNS, WRNS, Reserves or Royal Fleet Auxiliary).

To donate or find out more about the charity please visit their website at <https://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk>

## SEE RN TAKE ON RAF FOR FREE

The Royal Navy's senior men's team takes on the RAF at Fratton Park in Portsmouth on Wednesday 19 March.

And you can watch this top-level Inter-Services football clash for free!

Gates open at the ground at 1745, with kick-off at 1900.

Competition between the Service teams is always fierce, and there is even more at stake this year as the Royal Navy holds the prestigious Inter-Services football title.

Last year's competition saw the Dark Blues take the Mercury Cup by beating a strong Army side 2-1, again at Fratton Park, before travelling to the Croud Meadow Stadium in Shrewsbury, where they notched a 2-1 victory against the RAF to lift the championship for the first time in eight years.



# HELP SAVE HMS LUDLOW'S ENSIGN

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Allied victory in World War 2 – a triumph for freedom over oppression.

For much of that time, the White Ensign of destroyer HMS Ludlow has been laid up at St Laurence's Church in Ludlow, but before that the flag sailed with the officers and crew of the ship, named after the town, as they protected convoys in the Atlantic and North Sea.

The flag is a tangible link to the ship and its crew who, whilst performing their duty for the nation, would not have known each morning if they would survive to the next.

It is also a direct link to the people of Ludlow in war-torn Britain.

Now, the White Ensign of HMS Ludlow is in a very poor condition. It can be saved, but to do so, those who seek to save it need help.

The ship was originally built at Philadelphia in 1916 for the United States Navy as a Caldwell-class destroyer. She was launched in 1917 as the USS Stockton and so served until 1922, when she was mothballed.

In 1940 she was transferred to Britain with some 44 other vessels as part of a support package and recommissioned into the Royal Navy as HMS Ludlow, a Town-class destroyer assigned to the Rosyth Escort Force.

This British classification title recognised the link between towns in Britain and America sharing the same name.

Between October 1941 and March 1942, Warship Weeks were organised in towns and cities throughout Britain to raise funds for the war effort.

Once the target had been raised, the community adopted the ship and its crew. The people of Ludlow seem to have adopted HMS Ludlow of their own accord and sent the crew gifts such as board games, wireless sets and books.

The 'ladies of Ludlow' also used their sewing skills to produce the White Ensign flag in silk, which was ceremonially 'dedicated' at St Laurence's Church. Sent to the ship with the town's coat-of-arms, the ensign sailed with the crew during Atlantic and North Sea convoy escorts, including a search after a deadly attack on Convoy HX 84 by the German battleship

Admiral Scheer.

Ludlow later played a support role during the D-Day invasion in June 1944.

The ship was also 'adopted' by Hartlepool during a Warship Week in March 1942.

HMS Ludlow was decommissioned in June 1945, and at low tide her remains may still be seen off Fidra Island in the Firth of Forth, near Yellowcraig Beach, where she sank as a result of target practice by the RAF in July 1945.

As her White Ensign was never government issue, the Ministry of Defence has confirmed that no government regulation can prevent it being conserved for future generations.

The ship had four Commanders during her Royal Navy service. Guy Bouchier Sayer was the first, between October 1940 and August 1941. He went on to become Vice Admiral Sir Guy Bouchier Sayer OBE DSO. He was the Naval commander during the Allied invasion of Malaya in 1945, and in retirement he was involved with conservation on Dartmoor.

Lt George Blackler took command in November 1941. He was ultimately promoted to Lt Cdr and awarded the OBE in 1946 for his work as a member of Naval Party 1734, part of the Allied administration in occupied Germany.

Lt John Trevor Kay took command between August 1942 and March 1943, when he transferred to HMS Ulster, serving in the Far East. He died in 1999 at Ross-on-Wye.

The last of commander was Angus, Marquess of Graham (later 7th Duke of Montrose), who insisted his ship be piped in and out of port with bagpipes. He also gave that honour to HMS Montrose, when she left Harwich on 6 June 1944, laden with troops bound for the Normandy beaches.

Amusingly, he also kept a pet jackdaw onboard but, in his efforts to recapture his pet one day when it escaped, he less amusingly fell and broke both his arms. The bird was never seen again.

It was through the Marquess and his family that the Ensign and ultimately the ship's bell, were delivered for display in St Laurence's Church.

The White Ensign was recognised as being in a poor condition in 2016, when efforts were made to raise funds for its conservation. Donations were made

towards the £4,000 then needed, but due to various circumstances and then Covid, the project was not seen through.

Now, in 2025, urgent action is required if the flag is to be saved.

It is now likely that more than £6,000 is needed to conserve and then maintain this and other historic textile artefacts. It may be more, but the 'rescuers' have to start somewhere, if they are to start at all.

The church building of St Laurence in Ludlow is over 800 years old and presents a mammoth task to maintain. There is no spare cash to preserve textiles and thus, in the case of the White Ensign of HMS Ludlow, they must seek help from the public and interested groups.

If you can help, contact Eric Griffiths at [ludlow.ensign@stlaurences.org.uk](mailto:ludlow.ensign@stlaurences.org.uk)

**HMS Ludlow. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 3396)**



## SUPPORT TEAM IS ESTABLISHED

As you may be aware, the Association has upgraded its Welfare & Wellbeing (WW) Organisation, writes Andrew Clark.

A bottom-up branch-led National Welfare and Wellbeing Support Team (NWWST) has now been established with volunteers with extensive experience in Welfare and Wellbeing from branches across the country to better support our Shipmates and community, ensuring the RNA conforms to current legislation, guidelines and good practice.

As Chairman of the RNA's National Welfare and Wellbeing Support Team I am proud to lead the bottom-up approach using our own Shipmates' expertise.

We have come a long way from keeping a stiff upper lip, putting an arm around a shipmate asking "what's the matter?" and being told to "Man Up", which has now been replaced by the ethos "it's okay not to be okay".

My background: I joined the Portsmouth Branch of the RNA in the mid-80s whilst serving before moving to Cardiff, and joining the Cardiff branch, holding different positions and becoming Branch Chairman in 1999 with a brief stint as Area Chairman, retiring at the end of 2024 whilst working for the MOD leading a large multi-disciplined international diverse team.

My passion for welfare and wellbeing has stemmed from my own qualifications and experience, serving on various HM ships and shore establishment welfare committees, as a Divisional Officer looking after the welfare and wellbeing of my team, teaching welfare and wellbeing on the Divisional Officers and Commanding Officers course and setting up Diversity, Welfare and Wellbeing programmes within Industry and the MOD.

I am also involved with the Welsh Senedd in the excellent work they do to support veterans, Service leavers and families and their transition to civilian life, and I am a director of my local, Community of Interest, Veterans Support Hub.

No matter what our Service we do not know what demons or mental scars each other holds or problems that we have bottled up.

The biggest and bravest step is admitting that we have a problem and ask for help. Whether someone has worries with finances, physical or mental health or just feeling lonely and isolated, our Welfare and Wellbeing support programme is here to help.

The RNA's Shipmate-led National Welfare and Wellbeing Support Team is here to support our Shipmates, their spouses and dependants. My role is to work with our experts within our various branches and Naval charities to ensure we have the correct updated Welfare and Wellbeing documentation and artefacts and that they are available to all, particularly our



Welfare and Wellbeing Volunteers through Jon Everett, the Welfare and Support Coordinator, at [wws@rnassoc.org](mailto:wws@rnassoc.org).

We cannot do that in isolation, and we believe the key to our success is not only through our Area and Branch Welfare and Wellbeing volunteers, but signposting and working together with the Naval charity sector to offer the support our shipmates and families need.

Over the next couple of weeks all Branches will be issued with a hard copy of the latest version of the RNA Branch Welfare & Wellbeing Volunteer Handbook. A soft copy, along with our policies, can also be found on the RNA website.

We will also be organising training and additional support as required.

I encourage all Branches to engage with this update to safeguard Branch Welfare Officers and support shipmates, ensuring they are aware of current processes and practices.

Thank you for your continuing support; if we can help, please feel free to contact Jon Everett, the Welfare and Support Coordinator, at [wws@rnassoc.org](mailto:wws@rnassoc.org) or myself, Andrew Clark, at [cnwwst@rnassoc.org](mailto:cnwwst@rnassoc.org).



# DIVORCE: NO SIMPLE ANSWERS OVER ARMED FORCES PENSIONS

**What happens to my Armed Forces pension on divorce? An Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) is a complex creature and often an incredibly valuable asset. So, what happens to it on divorce?**

There are several Armed Forces pension schemes: AFPS1975, AFPS2005, AFPS2015 and the Reserves Forces Pension Scheme (RFPS).

Be sure to familiarise yourself which what scheme, or schemes you have. They each have their own rules and entitlements, and understanding those benefits is crucial on divorce.

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

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

The value of the pension scheme, especially for the purpose of the divorce, involves far more complex calculations than members often think. The values are subject to periods of service, rank, promotions and organic growth. There are also potential tax implications and, with the noise of the 2015 Remedy (McCloud), up-to-date valuation information is vital.

Request a CETV sooner rather than later – like most things lately, there will be a significant delay before it arrives. It may well be that input from a pension on divorce expert (PODE) is also required to assess benefits, so do not be alarmed if even more acronyms start popping up throughout this process (see more below).

## **Sharing, but how much?**

The duration of a marriage is usually a key factor when considering what percentage of the pension should be shared, but it is not the only consideration. It is often argued that the relevant duration period usually starts from the date of cohabitation (if this flows seamlessly to marriage) and ends at separation. But what about pension accrual prior to this period?

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

Emma Jones has significant experience in dealing with legal issues arising from the breakdown of relationships involving serving or former Armed Forces personnel, their families and current or former MOD individuals.

Emma – herself a member of the RNA – has represented several personnel in the Royal Navy, from ABs to Vice Admirals.

She understands the difference between civvie and military life and the impact this may well have on a relationship and/or a family.

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

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

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

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

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



## **Knights**

the correct approach.

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

Ringfencing is more likely to be successful if the marriage is short, the parties are young and they both have the opportunity to continue working and building their own pension pots. This is where a PODE input is almost certainly required. The experts (also known as pension wizards to me) can provide calculations for several scenarios as to how pensions could be shared on divorce, including: total accrual, pre-marital accrual, offsetting (cash in exchange for pension) and at various ages – because different schemes have different benefits at different pension ages.

Exhausting, right? It really is a complex area of the financial arrangements, and it's important to seek expert legal advice and actuarial input to make sure the issues are resolved correctly. Pensions can only be shared on divorce, not informal separation or on the breakdown of a cohabiting

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

The recipient of the PSO will receive a pension credit and becomes a member of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme. It takes some time to get to this stage, and resolving the financial arrangements (especially with an Armed Forces pension scheme) on divorce very rarely has a simple answer.

## **What happens to my Armed Forces pension on divorce?**

I'm here to help navigate this question, and for all other family law issues!

I am an Associate in the family team at Knights, but I am also the fiancée of a submariner, come from a military family and have spent perhaps too much time bulling shoes (that are not mine) in the last few years.

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

[www.linkedin.com/in/emmxjones](http://www.linkedin.com/in/emmxjones)

# PARTNERSHIP WILL HELP FAMILIES STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) and Marriage Care are happy to announce a new partnership, as part of RNRMC's Strengthening Families programme. The aim of the partnership is to help families from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary build better, more resilient relationships in preparation for the deployment cycle. The Relationship Sessions are group sessions, open to those serving in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and their partners, that will look at many aspects of relationships, including communication styles, managing conflicts and awareness of communication styles. It also includes a session about the part the Navy plays in a relationship and the impact of deployments.

The course dates are:

- Series 1, Monday 24 March - Monday 28 April, inclusive.
- Series 2, Monday 9 June - Monday 7 July
- Series 3, Monday 1 September - Monday 29 September
- Series 4, Monday 3 November - Monday 1 December

All sessions will begin at 7.30pm. Most are around 90 minutes in length, with one slightly longer one at 1h 50m.

To sign up please visit <https://www.marriagecare.org.uk/RNRMC/>

For almost 80 years, Marriage Care has been helping couples and individuals to build and sustain strong, fulfilling, healthy relationships, as well as providing counselling support in times of

relationship difficulty.

The RNRMC exists to support RN families through all aspects of life in service. The demands of Navy life often involve extended separations and unpredictable schedules, which may lead to increased stress.

For these families, fostering strong relationships is essential to protecting their wellbeing and maintaining a stable home environment. Michelle Hayes, Head of Relationship Counselling at Marriage Care, said of the new partnership: "Strong relationships are the foundation of resilient families, and we're delighted to partner with RNRMC to support those navigating the unique challenges of Navy life. "These sessions provide a safe and supportive space to strengthen communication, manage conflict, and prepare for the impact of deployments – helping couples and families stay connected, no matter the distance."

Mandy Harding, Head of Commissioned Grants at the RNRMC, said: "We are extremely proud to enhance our support services, and our partnership with Marriage Care will be instrumental in strengthening family relationships.

"Their expertise, compassion, and proven success in delivering relationship training makes them an invaluable partner in our mission to improve the lives of Naval families, now and for the future." Follow the link below for more information about this course and other support that the RNRMC provides for serving Royal Navy personnel and their families: <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/WhatsOn>

# READY TO TACKLE GAMBLING HARM

RNBT Wellbeing Support Advisors Phil Shuttleworth MBE and Chrissie Hughes have completed the Level 2 'Battling the Odds' programme, designed specifically to address gambling-related harms within the Armed Forces community. Training was delivered by Andy Gallie of the Beacon Counselling Trust and Matt Losing of Ara Recovery for All at their headquarters in Portsmouth, and included representatives from five other Naval charity partners – Veterans Outreach Support, the Royal Marines Charity, the Naval Families Federation, the Naval Children's Charity, and the Royal Naval Association. Those who attended are now better equipped to support people affected and to break the stigma surrounding gambling issues. 'Battling the Odds' aims to



educate and support military personnel and their leadership in understanding the links between Service life and gambling-related issues. Developed with funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, the programme promotes access to specialist treatment and support services for those

affected.

By focusing on education, stigma reduction, and facilitating access to support services, 'Battling the Odds' empowers Naval charities to identify and support members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines experiencing the adverse effects of gambling. The RNBT team was so grateful to receive the training. For more details see <https://tinyurl.com/2p2m745s> If your gambling – or the gambling of someone close to you – has had a negative effect on your life, please take that first step to talk to someone. Chrissie and Phil can confidentially discuss the support available. Contact the RNBT helpline by emailing [help@rnbt.org.uk](mailto:help@rnbt.org.uk) or by calling +44(0)2394 216294 during office hours: Monday to Friday from 0800 to 1600.



# SAIL OFFERS SPECIALIST ADVICE FOR SEAFARERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Did you know there's a Citizens Advice service for serving and former Royal Navy personnel and their families? And that last year they helped almost 700 men and women just like you and your shipmates?

The Seafarers Advice and Information Line (SAIL) is a specialist Citizens Advice service for UK seafarers.

Michael Edwards, SAIL's Manager (pictured right), explains what they do and the difference they can make.

"SAIL provides completely free and confidential advice on a wide range of issues, from debt and benefits to housing, immigration, and family problems," said Michael.

"We're just like any other Citizens Advice, with the same standards and training that make the service so well respected. The only difference is that we don't see clients in our offices – we operate mainly by phone and email, and offer online support.

"SAIL was established in 1996 as a specialist advice service for UK merchant seafarers, fishermen and their families run by Citizens Advice Greenwich, with funding from the Seafarers Hospital Society.

"We started small with only two members of staff. Today we have 12 members of staff and last year we helped 1,880 seafarers and their families.

"We're funded jointly by the Seafarers Hospital Society, The Seafarers' Charity and Greenwich Hospital.

"Initially we worked only with merchant seafarers and fishermen but in April 2016, thanks to funding from Greenwich Hospital, we launched a new service for serving and former Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel and their dependants.

"That service has grown significantly over the past eight or nine years and now we help over 50 RN personnel and their families every month. But there is scope to reach even more, which is why we're working hard to raise the profile of the service.

"One of the most pressing issues for SAIL's clients right now, whether they're from the Royal Navy or elsewhere, is the cost-of-living crisis.

"With the rising cost of fuel, food and housing hitting every household in the UK, including seafarers, the demand for help with debt and benefits has soared.



"For many of the families we work with there's just no light at the end of the tunnel. But there are levers we can pull, and funds we can access – we can always find a way to help in emergencies – and then we work with our clients to help them secure a firmer financial future.

"There's no such thing as a typical case in the Royal Navy. The sailors who come to us for help are from all areas of the Service and bring a wide variety of problems. About 40 per cent are serving and 60 per cent are veterans.

"One of the main issues we help them with is debt. We are the only advice agency supporting those from the Royal Naval community that holds FCA accreditation, which means we are fully insured and regulated to provide debt advice. And we really do make a difference.

"In 2023/24 we secured over £500k on behalf of our RN clients, including debt write-offs, debt repayments, benefits and charitable grants.

"That's a huge sum. And we know that there's a link between debt and poor mental health, so good debt advice is vital for health and wellbeing.

"Some of the other issues we help the RN community with most often include benefit entitlement, relationship breakdown, pension entitlement and care home costs. "So, if you or anyone you know is worried about any of these issues, just get in touch with SAIL. We're here to help, whatever the problem."

Here are two stories that show just how significant support from SAIL can be:

**Heidi** had been living with her partner for many years until they decided to separate. He was a Royal Navy veteran. When Heidi



approached SAIL she had left the family home and wanted help finding somewhere to live.

With support from SAIL, Heidi was able to claim the benefits to which she was entitled and renegotiate the tenancy so that when her partner moved out she could afford to pay the rent herself.

She finally moved back into the family home five months later – it took a while, but it was worth the wait! She was so relieved to be able to go back home.

**Anne's** late partner was a Royal Navy veteran who had served for 12 years. She came to SAIL for help with debts of over £20,000.

SAIL explored her income and expenditure, examined all the debts, then identified a range of options. She decided to choose a Debt Relief Order – a low-cost alternative to bankruptcy.

SAIL submitted the application for her and it was successful. The total debt will be written off in 12 months' time, as long as she complies with the terms of the Order.

She was enormously relieved to have the weight of the debt taken off her shoulders and looks forward to a life free from the worry that came with it.

## FUNERAL GUIDE LAUNCHED

"The RNA has launched our Funeral Guide, and reminds shipmates that we offer ceremonial and administrative support for our members and all those who have served in Our Naval Forces." – Jon Everett, Welfare and Wellbeing Support Co-ordinator [wws@rnassoc.org](mailto:wws@rnassoc.org), telephone 07591 829416  
Find the guide on our website: [Welfare>Funeral Guide](#)

# MEDICAL PLAN OFFER FOR SHIPMATES

An exclusive offer\* to provide private medical plans for members of Royal Naval Association has been arranged with HMCA, including a £50 gift card or £100 off your first-year subscription upon joining a private medical plan. If you already have a private medical plan, are you paying too much? You could save money by transferring to HMCA. Why not request a no obligation quote ahead of your renewal? You may transfer to HMCA at any age, without a medical examination and will receive guaranteed acceptance under our transfer facility. This offer is also available to you if you do not currently have private medical cover.

With hospital waiting lists at a record high, there has never been a better time to start a private medical plan. HMCA offer four levels of private medical plans for individuals, family groups and companies as well as dental plans and hospital cash plans. Their many years of experience ensures they have a plan to suit your needs at the best possible price.

## Who are HMCA?

HMCA was established over 45 years ago and has grown to be one of the most successful membership benefit providers in the UK.

HMCA membership is also one of the most exclusive as their plans are only available to the members of trade, professional and membership groups and subscribers of select publications.

Therefore, HMCA is not on any comparison website. You will not see HMCA advertising to the general public, and this means minimal marketing costs so they can arrange comprehensive and flexible medical plans that are great value for money.

For further information and quotations contact HMCA by



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telephone on 01423 799949 or visit the exclusive HMCA Royal Naval Association website here: <https://www.hmca.co.uk/rna>

HMCA/S PLC (trading as Hospital and Medical Care Association, HMCA and HMCA Members) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FRN:307587).

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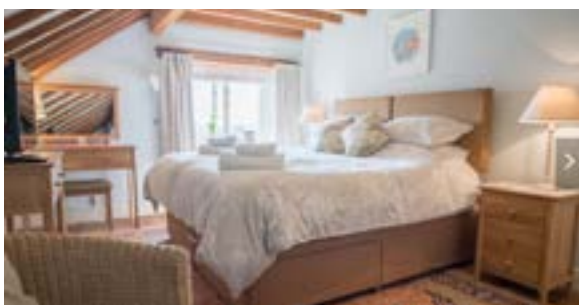
\*Exclusive offer available to members of Royal Naval Association and other selected membership groups.

# FROM NAVY COMMAND HQ TO JAMAICA INN

When Ian Wheatley retired from the Royal Navy in 2018, after many years of 'Service separation', his family decided to move West and work together, supporting themselves in business, and after a long search they found Mennabroom, a 13th century farmstead on the edge of Bodmin Moor. Here, a couple of miles south of Jamaica Inn, they offer B&B in the farmhouse and run three holiday cottages converted from the old farm buildings across the yard. They are set in a valley, sheltered from the weather, and have a half-mile of the River Dewey (which joins the Fowey further downhill) running through their 15 acres, producing an amazing area which is both 'temperate rain forest' and bluebell woods (April to early May).

They are very close to Colliford Lake with its renowned brown trout fishery, surrounded by great walks, 30 minutes from both coasts and, with the recent A30 improvements, about an hour from St Ives. Ian keeps his hand in as a 'Sin Bosun' in the parish (church helpfully situated next to their local) and is proud to be Chaplain to Liskeard Branch.

If you fancy a week in Cornwall, touring round, or just a few days' 'flop', they'd love to see you and, better still, as fellow RNA members, would be delighted to offer a 10% discount when you book with them at [www.mennabroom.com](http://www.mennabroom.com)





## LISBON MARU FILM GOES ON GENERAL RELEASE

The general release in the UK of the documentary film 'The Sinking of The Lisbon Maru' starts later this month.

The first tranche will be shown in Everyman Cinemas in the cities listed below on Monday 24 March:

- Barnet
- Bath
- Bristol
- Cambridge
- Cardiff
- Cheltenham
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow
- Leeds
- Lincoln
- Manchester
- Newcastle
- Plymouth
- Salisbury

The Lisbon Maru was a Japanese freighter carrying Allied prisoners of war from Hong Kong to Japan which was unwittingly torpedoed by an American submarine on 1 October 1942.

More 800 British POWs died in the sinking, either by drowning or being shot by Japanese soldiers as they attempted to escape from the sinking ship. Almost 400 British POWs were rescued by nearby Chinese fishermen, but were recaptured by the Japanese. The remaining 650 or so POWs were plucked from the sea by nearby Japanese naval vessels and taken back into captivity.

## HMS VENTURER VISIT PLANNED

West Lothian Branch is organising a ship's visit to Type 31 frigate HMS Venturer on Monday 28 April, and would like to hear from members of branches in the area who might be interested in joining the trip. Visitors are to muster outside Rosyth Main Gate at 0930, then 1230 lunch at HMS Caledonia. Names to westlothianrna@gmail.com by 1 April if you are interested.

## 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](mailto:lesyeo3@gmail.com) – 07795  
231397

**Manchester** – David Barlow  
– [dbarlow@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dbarlow@hotmail.co.uk) -  
07747 006100

**Portsmouth** – Sara Field –  
[ams@rnassoc.org](mailto: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](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/mini-bus-hire)

## FILMMAKER BAGS WORLD RECORD IN MARATHON

Renowned filmmaker – and RNA member) – Chris Terrill has set a world record for the fastest marathon on crutches while raising money for Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

An Honorary Royal Marine and Ambassador for the RNRMC, Chris was ratified as the Guinness World Record holder for the fastest marathon on crutches (male), completing the Brighton Marathon in 2024 in an incredible time of 6 hours, 11 minutes, and 11 seconds.

Chris, 72, took on the challenge to raise funds for the RNRMC to honour the memory of his friend, Cdr Robert 'Bob' Hawkins. He accomplished this extraordinary feat just four months after undergoing a hip replacement.

"I am delighted to have had my time ratified by Guinness World Records," said Chris. "I'm even more delighted that I was running in RNRMC colours and wearing my Green Beret which, as everyone knows, imbues a certain sense of determination.

"All the way round all I could hear in my mind were my old training team from Lympstone urging me to go faster!"

A long-time advocate for military personnel and a passionate supporter of wounded veterans, Chris has dedicated much of his career to documenting the lives of Servicemen and women. His latest endeavour not only

shattered records but also highlighted the strength and resilience of the military community.

Sam Nicolson, Chief Operating Officer at the RNRMC, said: "It is an absolutely phenomenal achievement, particularly while running in memory of his friend, Cdr Bob Hawkins, one of the Royal Navy's biggest characters.

"All at the RNRMC want to say a big thank you to RNRMC Ambassador Chris for his dedication and efforts in raising awareness and funds to support the Royal Naval community past and present."

To learn more about Chris's inspiring journey and to support the RNRMC, please visit <http://www.rnrmc.org.uk>

## PICK UP THE BATON OF HOPE

You may have heard that the Baton of Hope is coming to Portsmouth on 26 September this year.

The first tour was in 2023 and it is the UK's largest ever suicide prevention initiative.

Please have a look at the following link to see more information about the charity: <https://batonofhopeuk.org/the-baton/>

Lara Kynvin is am proud to say that she submitted a bid to bring the Baton to Portsmouth and was successful. A Facebook group has been set up to share information as planning gains momentum: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1128060455636768>

Lara is looking for charities and organisations to be involved on the day, so if you would like to be kept up to date with plans and have any ideas you would like to share please message her.

See <https://batonofhopeuk.org/events/>



# COMMEMORATIVE STONE FOR DAEDALUS

A huge BZ to S/M Richard Hobbs of Lee-on-the-Solent and Stubbington Branch, who has been instrumental in the organisation of a beautiful commemorative stone, soon to be erected on the site of the old HMS Daedalus airfield in Hampshire. With the co-operation of Fareham Borough Council, the stone is to be unveiled in June, on site at what is now Solent Airport. Thanks go to all those organisations that helped the RNA with the project, including the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC), the Fleet Air Arm Armourers

Association, the Fleet Air Arm Association and the Fly Navy Federation. Naval aviation first came to the area in 1917 with a seaplane base at Lee-on-the-Solent. An airfield was commissioned in May 1939 as HMS Daedalus, and the aerodrome became one of the Fleet Air Arm's most important sites. It spent a brief spell (1959-65) as HMS Ariel, but then reverted to its original name and continued as a Fleet Air Arm asset until 1996. S/M Richard is picture (right) with the memorial stone.



## Ex-Military

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



Sign up to our 40+ travel insurance scheme to enjoy  
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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. ALL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHEME AVAILABLE AT:  
[WWW.COMBINEDSERVICESTRAVELCOVER.ORG.UK](http://WWW.COMBINEDSERVICESTRAVELCOVER.ORG.UK)



## ► TAKE A CHANCE ON RNA LOTTERY

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

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

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

Visit [www.RNALottery.co.uk](http://www.RNALottery.co.uk) to sign up.

## TREASURER NEEDED

The Royal Naval Association is looking for an Honorary National Treasurer to take up the reins following the resignation of our much-valued colleague S/M Ian Irvin.

For full details see the Terms of Reference at the back of this Circular ([here](#)) and email General Secretary Bill Oliphant on [ceo@rnassoc.org](mailto:ceo@rnassoc.org) to register your interest.

## 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](http://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](mailto:rna.american.football.sig@gmail.com)

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

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

Collectors: Insignia and Badges – Paul Banyard: [rna.insignia@gmail.com](mailto:rna.insignia@gmail.com)

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

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

Genealogy – Mike Wilkinson: [mike.j.wilco@gmail.com](mailto:mike.j.wilco@gmail.com)

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

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

Motorhome, Camping and Caravanning – Ron Shilton: [rnamcc@outlook.com](mailto:rnamcc@outlook.com)

RNA Football Club – [scc@rnassoc.com](mailto:scc@rnassoc.com)

Rugby Union – Steve Phillips: [rna.rugby.union.sig@gmail.com](mailto:rna.rugby.union.sig@gmail.com)

Woodcraft – Graham Warner: [vicechair@rna-7area.org](mailto:vicechair@rna-7area.org)

If you are interested in forming a Sports and Comradeship Group please contact [cml@rnassoc.org](mailto:cml@rnassoc.org)

## MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

The subject of next Monday's Fireside Chat (17 March) will be the UK's Carrier Strike Group, and will be delivered by Charlie Knight.

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

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

\* Lecture subjects may change at short notice.

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

Date	Presenter	Subject
Mon 24 March	David Monks	RNA Sailing SCG
Mon 31 March	Anthony Moth	Nautical Curiosities
Mon 7 April	Michael Edwards	CEO SAIL Charity
Mon 14 April	Emily Witcher	Serving RN Navigator
Mon 21 April	EASTER HOLIDAY	EASTER HOLIDAY
Mon 28 April	David Griggs	Disaster at Freshwater West
Mon 5 May	MAY BANK HOLIDAY	MAY BANK HOLIDAY
Mon 12 May	Kathryn Hearn	Aggies
Mon 19 May	Rob White	HMS Hood – recovery of the bell



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





# BRANCH NEWS

## EASTBOURNE Branch

At the recent Eastbourne RNA Annual General Meeting held on 6 March, shipmates finally managed to obtain a branch photo! "A motley crew, but they're ours," as one member commented. "It's like herding cats, getting everyone to look in the same direction all at once..." The result can be seen right.



## BRIXHAM Branch

HMS Smiter one of the Royal Navy's P2000 Patrol Vessels and part of the Coastal Forces Squadron (CFS) visited Brixham earlier this month. Shipmates from Brixham and Torbay Branches took the opportunity to have a closer look at Smiter and to talk to her ship's company about the role of the Coastal Forces Squadron.

## TYNE Branch

Four shipmates from Tyne Branch – Knocker Tony White, Roslyn Hastie-Murray, Dusty Miller and Shaun Rigby – attended the Royal Navy Service Leavers Event (SLE) on 13 February at HMS Calliope on the Gateshead Quays, Tyneside.

These events are a way to formally thank the Service Leavers (SL) and their invited guests for their support of their service.

The Royal Navy recognises that the family/spouse/partner of a Service Leaver also endures significant disruption caused by Service life and wishes to thank them at a Service Leavers Reception.

Rear Admiral Jude Terry (pictured with the Tyne Branch quartet) made all of the presentations, following



the citations read out for each of the Service Leavers and the veterans. The five Service Leavers received their Valedictory Certificates. As part of the LGBT Veterans Independent Review (IR) published in June 2022, one of the recommendations stated that

## BRIDPORT Branch

A dedicated member of Bridport and Lyme Regis Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA) was honoured with the highest accolade the organisation can award at a lunch, attended by family and friends, at Haddon House Hotel, West Bay.

Alan Kidson, 86, who is also a member of Bridport Branch of the RNA, joined the RAF as an engineering apprentice at the aged of 15 in 1954. He was presented with the National Presidential Certificate by RAFA President Air Marshal Sir Barry (Baz) Mark North, a former Deputy Commander at RAF Air Command, accompanied by his wife Lady Fiona North. Alan retired as a Master Air Engineer having transferred to aircrew, spending his professional life on transport aircraft and the Hercules Meteorological Flight aircraft 'Snoopy'. Alan was awarded the certificate for his outstanding support and devotion to the RAF Association over the past 32 years. He joined the RNA at a time when membership for the local RAFA branch was low, and the two association branches were working together closely.



veterans who were affected by the pre-2000 ban on LGBT people serving should be offered the opportunity to attend a Service Event for restoration. The Royal Navy decided to offer these Veterans the chance to receive their Restorative Measures at a Service Leavers event.

At this event there were seven veterans and their guests attending; they received berets, Certificates of Service, an apology letter from the First Sea Lord, a copy of the apology statement from July 2023 and an Etherton Ribbon.

It was an emotional day, as for many of these veterans, it was the first time they had been back to a Service establishment since they were dismissed, discharged or forced to resign.





**AYLESBURY No 1 Branch**

Aylesbury Branch was commissioned on 8 March 1935 as members of the then Royal Naval Old Comrades Association (RNOCA), and remained an active branch of that association until 1954, when the Royal Naval Association received its Royal Charter whereby the branch changed from RNOCA to RNA. On 8 March 2025 the Branch celebrated its 90th anniversary in commission, having continually been active since its conception. On Friday 7 March, the Branch held a celebration evening at Rivets Sports and Social Club, Aylesbury, with the Guest of Honour being Cdre Mark Slawson, RNA Deputy National President. Branch President S/M Ken Satterthwaite provided a welcome introduction to the 58 attendees and introduced Cdre Slawson who, after

a short address, presented a 90th Certificate to the Branch (accepted by S/M Ken Satterthwaite, right). A Certificate of Appreciation for 50 years service to the Branch was presented to S/M Glen Beck (above right). The fun evening included bingo with a £90 prize, a raffle, and music provided by the Halton & High Wycombe Military Wives Choir (above left). The evening concluded with a Nautical Quiz (won by the team orchestrated by Cdre Slawson, ably supported by older members of the Branch). Cdre Slawson was invited to cut a cake which had been baked for the event. No Naval event would be complete without Pusser's Rum, with S/M Trevor Hooper ensuring even distribution; the Loyal Toast and Toast to the Branch was made by Cdre Slawson." Images provided by S/M Dave Thexton.







**NORWICH Branch**

Norwich Branch shipmates joined shoppers at Tesco's store in Harford raising awareness of the Association and funds for the branch – all in all a successful day. Some of the team are pictured right.

Norwich City Football Club held its annual Armed Forces celebration match at their Carrow Road stadium at the end of February.

Royal Marines abseiled from the roof of the stadium to deliver the match ball, and shipmates were invited to parade around the pitch at half-time along with other veterans, standards and serving personnel (above).

A great afternoon – especially as it ended with a winning scoreline for the Canaries!



**PLYMOUTH Branch**

Plymouth Branch held their annual skittles night with the June Shaw Decanter up for grabs.

And pictured above is the winning team – from left, S/Ms Mike May, Zoe Scott, Sean Ryan, Sue Setterfield, Kevin Adamson, Daes McCarthy and Kath Riley.

**JAPAN Branch**

One of the Association's more exotic branches is that in Japan – and they have asked to remind shipmates that they are there for you!

Although due to location none of Japan's 15 members will be able to attend the Annual Conference in June, they would very much like to be a part of this and connect with all branches, or at least make themselves known.

Their members include Canadian and UK Defence Attaches, and the Djibouti Ambassador; they are also friends with the Suikokai (Japanese Retired Naval Officers Association), Japan RAFA and Royal British Legion.

Their big event this year will be the visit of HMS Prince of Wales, due to dock in Tokyo later this year.

If any branches, members or friends would like to come to Japan they are there to help in whatever way they can. Many of their members have lived and worked in Japan for over 20 years, so they all share a wealth of information.

See <https://www.rnajapan.com> for more.





### WREXHAM Branch

RNA Wrexham recently hosted a very special double birthday celebration.

Herbert Pritchard from Wrexham, a former Royal Marine and veteran of the Burma Campaign, and Donald Jones, from Mold, formerly of the Royal Navy and a D-day veteran, were both recently 100 years old and the RNA was delighted to help them celebrate with a tot of rum and a run ashore.

The two men are pictured above with various visitors, including Wrexham Branch's Royal Naval Association President and National Vice-President, Cdre Mark Slawson (on left), who presented them with bottles of Pusser's rum. Herbert and Don, were presented with many gifts; most poignant of all were personal letters detailing their service during the war from the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Keys, which were read out to a silent room.



### UXBRIDGE Branch

Uxbridge Branch held a race night in aid of their local Mayor's charities and managed to raise £1,248.

Their Mayor of Hillingdon this year is one of their own local councillors, Cllr Colleen Sullivan, who, over many years, has always been very supportive of their Branch and Club, so it was decided to hold this event to help out with her chosen charities.

In true Uxbridge fashion it was well supported by the membership and a remarkable amount of cash was raised on a fun evening.

Pictured above is the cheque being presented to the Mayor by the Race Team; from left to right – S/M Charles Beckley (the Bookie), S/M Vihar Shah (IT), Mayor Cllr Colleen Sullivan and S/M Kevin Slinger Wood (Chairman and Assistant Bookie).

### SPENNYMOOR & FERRYHILL Branch

Spennymoor and Ferryhill Branch last month celebrated their 25th year since recommissioning in 2000. They started with seven Full Members and four Associate Members, and over the years all Founder Members were granted their Life Membership and all Founder Associate Members their Certificates of Appreciation. Sadly, over the years their

Founder Members are fewer – only two Life Members remain along with 3 COA Associate Members but their Membership moves on. They are associated with Chester-le-Street Sea Cadets. They held their celebration at The Last Post in Stockton, a veterans pub and museum, where **Stockton** members joined them. Guest of honour was the Durham Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Cdr Ian Berry.

### RHONDDA Branch

**S/M Colin Boughton (SBA) joined the Association in 1954 – 70 years of membership – and became a paid-up Life Member in 1960. During that time, he has been Branch Secretary, Area 7 Vice Chairman, Chairman and Secretary.**

**Until recently, Colin could be found at every Remembrance parade reciting the Kohima Prayer on behalf of the RBL.**

**Although his health has taken a knock recently – he has trouble walking and he is registered blind – he is still very interested in Rhondda Branch and Area affairs.**

**His wife Anita is also registered blind, and they are grateful for the support of their community and know they only have to ask, and assistance is available from the branch.**







#### CHARD Branch

Chard Branch welcomed two new members to their Branch.

Peter and Julie Burnett met members whilst attending the Remembrance Day service prior to meeting others members at the local Chard Veterans Breakfast Club in December.

Their first visit to one of our monthly meetings was on 9 January where they joined, completing their on-line forms there and then, to join our happy band of shipmates.

On attending the next meeting on 13 February they were made officially welcome by Branch Chairman S/M Andy O'Brien, and provided with their RNA cards and RNA Welcome Pack (see above).

They then joined other members for a quiz night. The team who won outright was made up of S/M O'Brien, Treasurer S/M Mike Kirkland and S/M Liz O'Brien (below).



#### AREA 4

Twenty years after taking on the role of Deputy Chair for Area 4, S/M Peter Shoemsmith (right of picture) has passed on the baton.

At the recent AGM, hosted by **Dorchester Branch** in January, Peter stepped down and handed over to S/M Ben Cartwright of **Portland Branch** (left of picture). Ben was also the Area 4 Standard Bearer.

S/M Shoemsmith has now been elected as No 4 Area Deputy National Council Member and looks forward to serving the RNA for many years to come, albeit at national level now.

S/M Cartright was on hand in his new role at the presentation of trophies to the newly-appointed No 4 Area Standard Bearer.

Pictured with S/M Cartwright (left), is S/M Malcolm Day, No 4 Area Ceremonial Advisor, of **Chard Branch** (centre).

On the right is the new No 4 Area Standard Bearer, S/M Mike Morton, of **Street Branch**, holding his well-earned trophies, which were presented at Bridgwater Sea Cadet HQ. Image contributed by S/M Josie Cartwright.



#### AREA 5

As well as the Association's 'big five' events (CONA gathering on 28 March, Army v Navy rugby on 3 May, National Conference on 20-22 June, Biennial Parade on 14 September and Fisherman's Friends concert on 22 October), branches are also organising their own events to mark the 75th anniversary of the RNA.

In Area 5, for example, we have:

**RNA Stowmarket:** Dedication of Naval Memorial in Bury St Edmunds, 1300 on Sunday 4 May in the Rose Garden at the Cathedral- the anniversary of HMS Sheffield having been hit by an

Exocet missile off the Falklands in 1982, which led to the loss of 20 of her crew. Contact Branch Sec S/M Chris Faulkner [cfvchair@rumoldboys-rna.org.uk](mailto:cfvchair@rumoldboys-rna.org.uk) for more details.

**RNA Rayleigh:** Mess Dinner, Saturday 19 July at the Rayleigh Club Golf Resort. Contact Branch Vice Chairman S/M Mike Sandbrook [mike.sandbrook@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mike.sandbrook@hotmail.co.uk) for more details.

**RNA Norwich:** Celebration afternoon tea, live music and drinks by the river, Saturday 26 July at the Rivergarden, Norwich. Contact Branch Sec S/M Diana Sadler [rna.norwich@gmail.com](mailto:rna.norwich@gmail.com) for more details.

#### FOLKESTONE Branch

New members, husband and wife Mick and Gill Watt, both Full Members, were welcomed to Folkestone Branch by Chairman S/M Derek Smith who presented them with their membership cards at the branch AGM last month. Folkestone Branch meets at 1900 on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Cheriton Bowls Club, Weymouth Road, Folkestone, CT19 4LS.





### AREA 3

Shipmates attended the Area 3 AGM on 22 February which was held at RNA Waterlooville – BZ to S/M Dean Deakins for his car-parking attendant c/w hi-vis vest!.

Along with the routine business there were a number



of personnel changes and awards presented. First up, S/M Bob Scott stood down as Area 3 President after a huge amount of years' service, including roles serving as Area Chairman and serving on the National Council as Area 3 NCM. BZ Bob – thank you for all your hard work and effort on behalf of Area 3, and bon voyage shipmate! Pictured (left) is S/M Soapy Watson presenting Bob with a small gift to recognise him stepping down.

S/M Soapy himself featured next as he stood down as Area 3 Chairman – and was instantly 'rated up' Area 3 President. We can't get rid of him...

Next up was S/M Paul



Stone, who is the new Area 3 Chairman. Congratulations Paul, and good luck in your new role. Pictured (above) is Soapy handing over the Chairman's regalia.

Finally came the changing of the Social Secretary Guard. S/M Ken Chandler has stood down as Social Secretary



due to ill health and has been succeeded by 'volunteer' S/M Brian Farnon, despite blaming the National Chairman who, he reportedly said, "detailed him off!" Ken was recognised for years of hard work and presented with a gift as a token of appreciation (above).

### TORBAY Branch

A branch of the Royal Naval Old Comrades Association was formed on 26 September 1945, later changing to the Torbay Branch of the Royal Naval Association.

Branch members intend to hold a Thanksgiving and Laying-Up Service for the Old Comrades Standard in Paignton Parish Church, where their Book of Remembrance is situated. The Branch will also be celebrating with an informal 80th lunch in September, and they intend to plant an oak sapling with a plaque in a local country park subject to approval.

Torbay's anniversary year got off to a frantic start. They held their AGM (see pic2) in late January when Cdr Jane Allen RNR (Retd) handed Chairman S/M Terry Membery a bottle of Pusser's to mark joining the Branch as their Patron (pictured right).

Jane succeeds Capt Chris Wreford-Brown, who shared the top table with Jane and Terry at their Festive Lunch held at the Livermead House Hotel, Torquay, on 2 February (bottom right). The 40 guests included friends from **Brixham Branch, Newton Abbot Branch**, Paignton RBL and Torquay RBL. Torbay MP Steve Darling and his wife enjoyed the occasion along with other dignitaries.

Attendees were entertained by guest speaker David 'Fitz' Fitzgerald, who regaled them with tales of his times in ITV and Sky Broadcasting (not least about his sidekick Gus Honeybun). He also shared some of his exploits with Simon Weston. Thanks to an invite from **Brixham**



**Branch**, some Torbay shipmates enjoyed a visit to patrol boat HMS Smiter when she visited the port (pictured left). Torbay Branch is always seeking new members. Serving RN, ex-RN personnel, Commonwealth Navies, WRNS and QARNNS are very welcome to join and enjoy an hour or so every month in the company of like-minded people. Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month, 1930 for 20.00 (except December) at Paignton Conservative Club.





## SOUTHEND Branch

Southend's Branch AGM came and went with some of the most positive notes since shipmates saw the back of Covid.

They have said hello to new members and goodbye to some old friends. They have said thank you to those who have served (and continue to serve) the Branch and freely give so much of their time

They have seen shipmates cross the bar and others who have raised the bar too.

S/M John Hawes (below left) was re-elected to serve as Branch Chairman and will continue to steer the Branch on its course for a further two years.

Members said goodbye to S/M Mick Horner (top right), who is stepping down as Branch Treasurer, but who has also served as Chairman and Secretary in his time on the Committee.

They have paid tribute to the outgoing Welfare and Wellbeing Officer,

S/M Wendy Aston, who is to take a sabbatical, and to S/M Christine Cox (lower right), who has also supported shipmates in need of welfare care throughout the years.

In summing up, the Branch has performed exceptionally this year, observing its usual Acts of Remembrance in honouring those who have fallen, those who have served and those who continue to serve.

The Branch has also brought home the bacon (and silverware) this year by winning the Inter-Branch Uckers Trophy (fought every year between Southend and Rayleigh, bottom of page), and by winning the first No5 Area Uckers Championship (below right).

The Branch has also seen one of its Branch Members, S/M Gary Daisley, win the John Newsome Trophy for Area Shipmate of the Year for services to the Branch and the RNA's wider community.



# OBITUARIES

## S/M James Martin BEM

S/M James Martin, of **City of Edinburgh Branch**, Crossed the Bar on 18 February at the age of 93. He was born in March 1931 in Partick, in the west of Glasgow, and in February 1949, at the age of 17, he joined the Royal Navy as a stoker – he always said that he intended to join the NAAFI but he spelt it wrong! During his service, he served in cruiser HMS Bermuda, which took him to both the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal during the Crisis. He left the Royal Navy in 1956 and joined the Glasgow Fire Service, transitioning from stoking fires to extinguishing them.

In 1960, James was present at the Cheapside whisky bond fire disaster in Glasgow, where 14 firefighters and five members of the Salvage Corps lost their lives. Later, he had to be rescued from a 30ft ladder due to a locked cartilage, an incident that amused his colleagues and the Glasgow public.

After recovering from his cartilage operation, he was, sidelined for nearly 12 weeks, and it was during this time he accidentally came into acting...

Freddie Young, a casting agent, requested he show a London TV producer around the River Clyde landmarks for a production called 'Songs of the Clyde', resulting in a small payment.

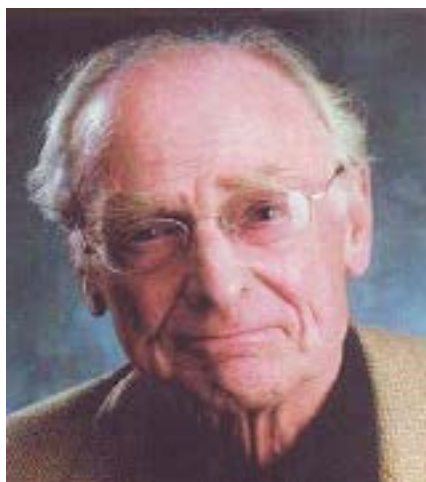
Freddie kept him on the books as a client doing Bits and Pieces on TV.

Jim retired from the Fire Service after 16 years and moved to East Lothian

James turned professional actor in 1972. Once he played a murdered burglar in 'Sutherland's Law', where he was placed in a mortuary drawer at Gartnavel Hospital. The drawer was to be pulled out and James identified. However, they were about to go for a take when the refrigeration motor cut-in. James waited patiently but when the motor stopped and nothing happened he started knocking which resulted in an unearthly scream. Due to a lighting fault, the Assistant Director had called a coffee break (forgetting about James), leaving a young Production Assistant on her own who got the fright of her life when the knocking started.

Over his career, he portrayed diverse characters, ranging from flashers to High Court Sheriffs, and has played roles in 'Taggart' and 'Take the High Road'. In film, he played a ghost in 'Solid Air'.

During World War 2 James was evacuated to Mauchline, where his interest in Rabbin Burns took root and stayed with him throughout his career. He was a superb Burns speaker who was happy to 'Toast the Lassies' and he did a stunning 'Immortal Memory'. He worked with the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Dundee Rep, Tron Glasgow, and Pit Prop Theatre Greater Manchester, performing in Shakespearean and other classic roles. James's breakthrough came in 2002 when he joined the cast of the



new sitcom 'Still Game', where he portrayed Eric, a bookie-loving pensioner and one of the few genuinely senior citizen cast members.

He remained with the show until he decided that it was time that he retired; he was consequently written out in the eighth series when his character, Eric, died of a heart attack.

James lived in Musselburgh on the outskirts of Edinburgh for the past 30 years and joined the RNA in 1997. James, with the help of his showbiz friends, organised many events for the Branch, from Old Time Music Nights to Burns Suppers and

Trafalgar Night dinners.

He organised and wrote a new event, the Fish Supper Supper, which was like a Burns Supper but was based around Sir Walter Raleigh. Instead of the haggis being piped in, it was Billy Bass the singing fish, the bill of fare was fish and chips served in their wrappers, and the toasts were done with Irn Bru.

This event was so good and entertaining that it was recreated for several branches in the Scottish Area and several times for the Veterans and residents of Musselburgh.

James worked tirelessly for the veterans community, supporting them by raising funds whenever he could and always championing the veterans community at every opportunity.

He was also one of the founding members of the Musselburgh Veterans Group, and until his health failed, served as their chairman. He could command any room and within minutes of entering would have the whole room in fits of laughter with his stories, poems, and humour.

In 2000 he served as the City of Edinburgh Branch chairman, and when the President of the Branch, the late Vice Admiral Douglas Dow, stood down, James was elected as the new Branch President. He remarked that this was his greatest achievement – "the first Stoker to ever relieve an Admiral!"

James's sight started to deteriorate in 2019, and by 2024 was left blind. He was awarded a British Empire Medal in the King's Birthday Honours List in June 2024, "in recognition of his services to military veterans and to charity".

Following a fall in hospital in 2024 he was left bedridden and was eventually moved to the Erskine Edinburgh care home. He received his BEM at the Erskine Home from the Lord Lieutenant of East Lothian in November 2024.

James will be greatly missed by his wife Christine, his family, and the veterans community in the Area. He was a one-in-a-million character who will be greatly missed by the Branch, but always remembered.

It was a pleasure to know you – Calm Seas, and Fair Winds, Shipmate.





**S/M Frank Cooper**  
 Naval veteran S/M Frank Cooper, from Middlesbrough, has Crossed the Bar. Frank featured in national coverage of the 80th anniversary of D-Day last year, making the pilgrimage to Portsmouth to mark this special anniversary (pictured above with William, Prince of Wales). Frank served in U-boat hunter HMS Loch Fada, protecting the invasion armada from enemy submarines. Frank said: "I'm not a hero, them that didn't come home are the heroes." Area 3 President S/M Soapy Watson represented the Association at Frank's funeral.



**S/M John Lewcock**  
 S/M Ron Hargest, Chairman of the Bognor Regis branch, is saddened to announce the Crossing the Bar on 22 January of a respected member and former President of the Branch, S/M John Lewcock. John retired from the Royal Navy as a Lieutenant Commander, Electrical Branch, having served from September 1944 until December 1972. Ships included aircraft carriers HM Ships Albion, Victorious, Ark Royal and Hermes. Establishments at which John served included HM Ships Condor, Daedalus, Sanderling, Tamar, Fulmar, Heron and Ariel. He played his part in a number of campaigns, including World War 2, Malaysia, Borneo and East Africa. His absence at meetings of the branch will be sorely missed. May he find safe anchorage.

**Capt Roger Richardson-Bunbury**  
 Members of **Launceston Branch** are very sad to announce that their President, Capt Roger Richardson-Bunbury, crossed the bar on 16 December 2024 at the age of 90. He had been the President of the branch since its formation Roger joined the Navy in 1948 at Dartmouth (BRNC, or Britannia Royal Naval College).

He joined heavy cruiser HMS Devonshire for some of his training and then battleship HMS Vanguard and destroyer HMS Barrosa as a Midshipman. In 1953 he joined HMS Thunderer (the Royal Naval Engineering College) where he commissioned.

His ships and establishments included cruiser HMS Kenya, air station HMS Gannet, ice patrol ship HMS Protector, RAF Henlow, aircraft carrier HMS Victorious, HMS Collingwood, frigates HMS Torquay and HMS Sirius and destroyer HMS Glamorgan.

He had hoped to be able to fly, but his eyesight wasn't up to the required standard, so he became an Aeronautical Engineer instead.

He worked with the Ministry of Aviation on the Seaslug missile project, and later worked on the Sea Wolf project at the Admiralty Surface Weapon Establishment (ASWE).

He also worked at the National Defence College at Latimer, as well the Chief Executive Dockyard's Department at Bath.

On promotion to a Captain, he spent time at the NATO Defence College, Rome, and he was then in the MOD as Director Project, PINDAR.

He retired in October 1998.

His desire to fly never left him and he acquired a civilian Private Pilot's Licence which enabled him to enjoy flying his private plane from Cardinam airfield near Bodmin. He was a keen gardener and enjoyed time in his garden and also in the surrounding countryside.

He was married to Carol, and they had four children and nine grandchildren, all of whom he loved and enjoyed spending time with.



**S/M Dave Flampson**  
 With sadness **Wansbeck and District Branch**

report that former branch member S/M Dave Flampson, who resigned from the branch in 2015 on health grounds, has died. Dave was a former submariner who attended branch meetings continuously for many years before losing his wife Muriel, who was in a care home for a number of years.

Due to an injury Dave had a cochlear implant

in his head so he could hear properly. He was himself in a care home at Stakeford near the Half Moon pub for many years before passing away at the age of 88. He died on 31 January this year, and his funeral was on 26 February at Northumberland Crematorium, Bockenfield, followed by a gathering at the Half Moon. If anyone would like to make a donation in memory of Dave it is suggested it should go to Alzheimer's Research UK.



## MARCH 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](http://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 March 1956

Submarine HMS Thorough bombarded terrorist positions in the Malayan jungle on 1 March 1956 using her 4in gun. The T-class submarine had already seen service in the Far East in World War 2, gaining the Malaya 1944-45 Battle Honour. Built by Vickers Armstrong in Barrow-in-Furness and launched on 30 October 1943, she was commissioned on 1 March 1944 and quickly sent off to join the 4th Submarine Flotilla in the Eastern Fleet. Her main role was patrolling against coastal shipping off Burma and Siam (now Myanmar and Thailand), taking in the Malacca Straits and various islands in the Pacific, as well as some minelaying. She later operated out of Fremantle, in Australia, and Subic Bay in the Philippines with the British Pacific Fleet, and in the course of the war she accounted for 27 enemy ships of various sizes, from a Japanese gunboat to sailing vessels. She continued in service after the war ended, including her contribution to the Malayan Emergency (1948-60) when Commonwealth forces aimed to stamp out an uprising by pro-independence Malayan communists. The 1,560-ton vessel was scrapped on the Tyne at the end of June 1962.

### 2 March 1914

Submarines HMAS AE1 and AE2 left Portsmouth for Australia, manned by a mix of Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy crews. The 760-ton E-class boats, built by Vickers Armstrong at Barrow, reached Sydney on 24 May. At the outbreak of World War 1 the vessels – Australia's first venture into submarine warfare – were sent as part of a task force to attack German New Guinea, which was rapidly occupied by

the Allied group. AE1 left Blanche Bay, Rabaul (now in Papua New Guinea) early on 14 September 1914 on patrol with torpedo boat HMAS Parramatta, but failed to return to the harbour, parking a search. No trace was found of the submarine, and she was officially recorded as being lost with all hands – 34 men – making her Australia's first major loss of life in the conflict. AE1 would not be found again for more than a century; a dozen searches organised between 1976 and 2015, but it wasn't until the 13th, in December 2017, that the vessel was found in good condition 300 metres deep off the Duke of York Islands. An examination of the hull revealed that a ventilation valve was partially open, suggesting the submarine had flooded and dived past its design limit, leading to an implosion which would have killed the crew instantly. Sister ship AE2 did not last much longer. After the German New Guinea expedition she patrolled Fiji before returning to Sydney. On New Year's Eve in 1914 she was towed to Egypt by SS Berrima, part of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) Convoy 2, and joined the British 2nd Submarine Flotilla in the Dardanelles Campaign. On 10 March she ran aground at Mudros on the Greek island of Lemnos when the navigation lights were turned off, necessitating repairs in Malta. On 25 April, after an initial failed attempt the day before, AE2 managed to negotiate minefields, shallows and enemy craft to break into the Sea of Marmara. For five days she popped up around the sea, causing the Turkish to believe there were several submarines operating; in fact, that myth became reality as a number of other Allied submarines followed AE2's example. On 30 April 1915 a rendezvous was arranged with HMS E14, but as she headed for the agreed meeting place she spotted the Ottoman torpedo boat Sultanhisar and dived to take a closer look. By this time the submarine was plagued with mechanical problems, and she suddenly bobbed to the surface. A crash dive took her dangerously deep and attempts to rectify the problem caused her to broach again, at which point Sultanhisar hit the submarine several times, forcing the Australian vessel to be abandoned and scuttled. The crew survived (though four subsequently died of disease and illness), and AE2 was the only Australian

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warship to be lost to enemy action in World War 1.

### 3 March 1940

On 3 March 1940 heavy cruiser HMS York intercepted German freighter SS Arucas in the Denmark Strait on 3 March 1940. York had sailed from Scapa Flow on 1 March on Northern Patrol, and two days in she spotted the 3,400-ton German blockade runner Arucas, 50 miles off the south-east coast of Iceland. The German crew, who had been heading to Vigo in north-west Spain, attempted to scuttle their ship and set fire to her, but it was eventually sunk by gunfire from the British cruiser. Three German sailors died in the scuttling, but the remaining 39 were picked up from their boat and delivered ashore at Kirkwall in Orkney a week later while the ship was returning to Shetland. York, one of a class of two with sister HMS Exeter, was launched in July 1928, and began World War 2 on Atlantic convoy duties and hunting German commerce raiders, running out of Halifax in Nova Scotia. After a refit in December 1939 York took part in the Norwegian campaign before switching to the Mediterranean in the autumn of 1940, escorting convoys, carrying out strikes against Axis shipping and covering carrier HMS Illustrious as her aircraft attacked the Italian fleet at Taranto on 11-12 November. The cruiser was badly damaged by two Italian explosive motorboats in Suda Bay, Crete, on 26 March 1941, and she was run aground to prevent her sinking. Submarine HMS Rover was brought alongside her to provide electrical power, allowing York to bring her anti-aircraft guns into play, but

Rover herself was badly damaged in an air raid and had to be towed away for repairs. A further bombing raid on 18 May caused more damage to York, and she was abandoned four days later, her guns deliberately wrecked, as Allied forces began to withdraw from the island. York was eventually salvaged in the early 1950s by an Italian shipbreaker and broken up in Bari.

### 4 March 1941

An Anglo-Norwegian raid on the Lofoten Islands (Operation Claymore) took place on 4 March 1941, during which several fish-oil factories were destroyed, stocks of fish oil burned, and a set of Enigma code rotors and codebook were seized. Fish oil was a source of glycerine, used by the occupying Germans in their war economy. The raiding force, known as 'Rebel', gathered at Scapa Flow in on 21 February and spent a week familiarising themselves with the escorting flotilla, which was led by Tribal-class destroyer HMS Somali. 250 men of 3 Cdo (an Army formation) were assigned to the landing ship HMS Princess Beatrix, a converted passenger steamer, with another 250 from No 4 Cdo going to sister ship HMS Queen Emma. 50 Royal Engineers, and 52 Norwegian troops, were divided between the two steamers. The flotilla, which also included destroyers HM Ships Bedouin, Eskimo, Legion and Tartar, sailed in the early hours of 1 March, refuelling in the Faroes before heading north then east, reaching the Lofoten Islands in the early hours of 4 March. The only opposition was provided by German armed trawler Krebs, which was quickly put out of action. 3 Cdo landed at Stamsund and Henningsvaer,

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Commandos watch fish oil tanks burn during the raid on the Lofoten Islands in 1941. See 4 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (N 396)

where they blew up the islands' cod-boiling plant and two fish oil factories. The men of 4 Cdo dealt with facilities at Solvaer, where 13 processing plants were put out of action. The riding group also set fire to around 3,500 tons of fish oil and paraffin, while the Royal Navy warships and commandos also sank ten merchant ships, a total of 18,000 tons, associated with the transport of fish oil, and took more than 200 prisoners. All troops were back on board the landing ships by early afternoon and the force returned to the UK, bringing with them their prisoners and 300 volunteers who joined Norwegian forces based in Britain. Just one man suffered a wound on the Rebel force. While the disruption of fish oil processing was of value, perhaps the most useful result of the raid was the recovery of the Enigma codes and equipment, which enabled German naval signals to be read for several weeks and allowed Allied convoys to be rerouted to avoid enemy activity.

#### **5 March 1967**

HMS Valiant arrived in Singapore on 5 March 1967 after an impressive passage from the UK, during which she spent almost all the time submerged apart from a four-day visit to Mauritius. The submarine was the second British nuclear-powered boat, built at Barrow-in-Furness by Vickers, and had been commissioned the previous July. Valiant, at 4,900 tons submerged, was a slightly larger development of the first British nuclear submarine, HMS Dreadnought, and was a hunter-killer armed with torpedoes rather than a ballistic nuclear missile platform. Having achieved the notable passage to Singapore, the submarine then took it a step further on the return trip, clocking up more than 12,000 miles in 28 days without surfacing – a record for a British boat at the time, though submerged patrols of well over a month soon

became routine with the introduction of the Polaris-carrying nuclear 'bombers' of the Resolution class in 1968. Valiant, one of a class of two (the other being HMS Warspite) served in the Falklands in an early-warning role, patrolling off the coast of Argentina and reporting aircraft movements to the Task Force hundreds of miles to the east. She developed engine problems in the early 1990s and was paid off in August 1994.

#### **6 March 1838**

Schooner HMS Pincher capsized off the Owers with all hands on 6 March 1838. The five-gun schooner was built in Bermuda in 1827 and spent most of her service life on the Atlantic coast of North America and in the Caribbean, on slave trade suppression duties. It was a frustrating mission – on at least two occasions (the Santa Rosa in April 1839 and General Laborde in December 1836) the schooner intercepted slaving ships off Cuba, only for the local authorities to turn a blind eye to the anti-slavery treaty between Great Britain and Spain, allowing the slavers to continue unhindered. On 20 May 1837 the little warship, displacing less than 180 tons, crossed the Atlantic to Gambia on the west coast of Africa, then made her way to England. She was lost with her crew on 6 March 1839 when she capsized in a storm on the Owers, a group of rocks and ledges that stretch for several miles south of Selsey Bill in Sussex, while heading for Spithead. Pincher was recovered from 25 metres of water and sold on 31 August the same year, and is believed to have been subsequently employed in transporting fruit.

#### **7 March 1941**

German submarine U-47 attacked Allied convoy OB 293 on 7 March 1941, but herself came under attack

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**HMS Valiant. See 5 March. Image © Crown copyright reproduced under delegated authority from The Keeper of Public Records. IWM (CT 120)**





by convoy escorts, leading to the death of U-boat ace Korvettenkapitan Gunther Prien – and a measure of revenge for the loss of HMS Royal Oak at Scapa Flow less than 18 months before. Prien had taken his submarine through a narrow gap in the defences of Scapa Flow on 15 October 1939, on only his second war patrol, and sank the battleship Royal Oak, killing 835 men and boys. The action was a massive propaganda coup for the Germans, with Prien and his crew being flown to Berlin in Hitler's personal aircraft to meet the Fuhrer and be awarded medals. Prien – a disciplinarian who was reportedly disliked by his crew for his lack of humanity – went on to sink more than 30 Allied ships, totalling more than 200,000 tons. He met his death on the U-boat's tenth war patrol. The 850-ton U-47 had left Lorient in France on 20 February 1941, and her fate has never been established with any certainty. It is generally thought that she could have been sunk by Royal Navy destroyer HMS Wolverine in the early hours of 8 March, as Wolverine and another destroyer, HMS Verity, defended convoy OB 293 en route from Liverpool to North America, but later analysis of wartime records suggest that the two ships may have been attacking UA (a U-boat originally built for Turkey but retained by the Germans, which survived the attack). Various alternative theories about the fate of U-47 include an attack by corvettes HMS Camellia and HMS Arbutus, a mine strike, mechanical failure or even falling victim to her own torpedo. Whatever the boat's fate, her attack on OB 293 in the North Atlantic west of Ireland on 7 March was the last time she and her crew of 45 was seen or heard from.

### 8 March 1918

Three members of the Royal Navy were gazetted on 8 March 1918 for Albert Medals for saving or endeavouring to save life after two RNAS airships crashed and caught fire in Sussex. On 20 December 1917 Submarine Scout Zero Class airship (SSZ) 7 was returning to its base at Polegate Royal Naval Air Service Airship Station, north of Eastbourne in Sussex, having gone out on patrol with four sister airships that morning. A thick sea fog developed at Polegate, and the five airships were ordered to return to base, but with thick snow on the ground, fading light and swirling fog, the lack of visibility forced their crews to follow the recommended procedure and land at a suitable spot to await better conditions. Two (SSZ 7 and SSZ 19) landed near Beachy Head Coastguard Station, SSZ 9 and SSZ 10 secured at Jevington Down, to the south-west of Polegate, and SSZ 6 took refuge near Hailsham. When the fog had lifted somewhat, SSZ 7 took to the air again, hugging the ground as it inched towards a safer mooring at Polegate, but mistaking a navigation light on SSZ 10 as a light at the air station it collided with its sister, ripping a hole in the latter. SSZ 7's engine ignited the leaking gas and both airships immediately caught fire, with SSZ 7 rearing 400ft into the air before crashing back to the ground, killing its captain and injuring the other two crewmen; SSZ 10 burned fiercely but remained on the ground. Without hesitation Flt Lt Watson went to the assistance of SSZ 7, believing one of the crew to be trapped in the burning wreckage and despite the risk of the airship's bomb load exploding. In the event, no one was found in the airship's car, but as Watson

retreated to see what else needed to be done a bomb detonated, smashing the lower part of his arm which had to be amputated in an emergency operation. Two other men, Air Mechanic Harold Robinson and 17-year-old Boy Mechanic Eric Steere, went to the assistance of SSZ 10, dragging the badly-injured pilot and two crewmen clear of the burning car before returning to unclip and remove the bombs – by now red hot and liable to explode at any moment – from the wreckage. The pair suffered scorch injuries to their hands. All three were awarded the Albert Medal – Watson's was Bronze, Robinson's and Steere's Gold – which were gazetted on 8 March 1918, but only Flt Lt Watson lived long enough for his medal to be converted to the George Cross, second only to the Victoria Cross in the UK's honours hierarchy, presented "for acts of the greatest heroism or for most conspicuous courage in circumstance of extreme danger" not in the presence of the enemy. Steere died aged 21 in August 1921 in the R38 airship disaster over Hull, Yorkshire, and his body was never recovered.

### 9 March 1941

Destroyers HM Ships Southdown repulsed attacks by German E-boats (fast attack boats generally armed with torpedoes, referred to by the Germans as Schnellboots or S-boats) on Convoy FS 429A (FS = Forth South) in the North Sea off East Anglia in the early hours of 9 March 1941. The convoy left Methil in Scotland on 7 March with most ships bound for Southend, though individual ships left the group at Hull and Harwich. Southdown, a 1,450-ton Hunt-class destroyer, was built by J S White at Cowes on the Isle of Wight and completed on 8 November 1940. Unusually for her class she spent almost the entire war in home waters, escorting North Sea convoys, though she also joined the Naval escort force for the D-Day landings in June 1944. After the war she served briefly as an air target ship, then went into reserve until she was scrapped at Barrow-in-Furness in later 1956.

### 10 March 1944

Isles-class Naval trawler HMT Mull sank German submarine U-343 in the Mediterranean on 10 March 1944. Mull was one of a class of 145 ships, though they were almost identical to the Dance, Tree and Shakespeare classes, which together numbered almost 200 vessels. Displacing 550 tons with a ship's company of around 40, Mull and her sisters were mainly used for minesweeping and harbour defence work, though Mull proved that they were capable of far more than that. Mull was built by Cook, Welton and Gemmell at Beverley, near Hull, and commissioned on 19 August 1941, and the following year found Mull in the Med, accompanying convoys to North Africa and joining the support ships for the Operation Torch landings in the autumn of 1942. She was also part of the force that took the islands of Pantellaria and Lampedusa (Op Corkscrew) in June 1943. On 10 March 1944 Mull was operating off the coast of Tunisia when she was able to carry out a depth charge attack on U-343, sinking the submarine with all 51 hands lost. The U-boat had not sunk a single ship in her short career but anti-aircraft fire when under attack from the air resulted in her downing three Allied aircraft and damaging a fourth in January 1944, during which time the boat also

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**HMS Southdown throwing up a bow wave as she follows sister destroyer HMS Eglinton in July 1943. See 9 March. Image from the IWM collection © IWM (A 17923)**

sustained considerable damage. Mull survived the war and was sold in 1946.

#### **11 March 1854**

The first Royal Navy steam fleet sailed from Portsmouth for operations in the Baltic on 11 March 1854. The man in charge of the 15 ships that sailed – or steamed – from Spithead was the colourful Admiral Sir Charles Napier, a man of many contrasts, as suggested by some of his nicknames, including Mad Charlie and Dirty Charlie. He spent much of his Naval career at odds with the Admiralty and causing grief to his superiors, but he was a progressive, far-sighted sailor who strongly supported a modernised Navy and much better conditions of service for the ordinary seaman. He joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman in 1799 at the age of 13, and had a narrow escape early in his career – he left his first ship, the sloop HMS Martin, in May 1800, just five months before she was lost with all hands in the North Sea. He served in numerous ships, and spent some time in the Caribbean where he proved a bold and very capable leader; in 1808 his ship HMS Recruit (18 guns) slugged it out with a well-matched French sloop Diligente, during which Napier's leg was smashed by a cannonball. Napier had a senior role in the American War of 1812, and after peace came to Europe in 1815 he spent time (and money, from his wife's connections) in Italy, Switzerland and France, occupying much of his time writing to the Admiralty in support of modern (including steam and iron) ship design, better training of the officer cadre and better conditions for those on the lower deck, including pensions and an end to flogging. He was seen by Their Lordships as an irritation, but he put his money where his mouth was by funding and helping to design and build an iron steamship, the Aaron Manby, that was assembled at

Rotherhithe on the Thames in 1822 before steaming downriver, crossing the Channel and continuing up the Seine to Paris under the command of Napier, making her the first iron ship to cross open seas. The ship spent the best part of ten years in the French capital where it was a major attraction, though Napier's venture into shipbuilding did not end well – the six ships he produced were impressive feats of engineering that gave decades of service, but the company went bust and put Napier's family under considerable financial strain. In 1829 Napier was appointed in command of HMS Galatea, a 42-gun frigate, and he was allowed to add paddles of his own design to the ship, allowing it to work independently of the wind, though once again the Admiralty ignored his work. In the 1830s, having failed to win the Portsmouth seat in Parliament, Napier led the naval (and later land-based) forces of the beleaguered Queen Maria II of Portugal against her usurper uncle Dom Miguel, ultimately winning the campaign (strongly supported by British sailors) and becoming something of a hero to the Portuguese. He repeated this success in the Syrian War of 1839-41 when he nominally commanded the 84-gun HMS Powerful, but acted far beyond those wooden walls, including leading an army of British, Ottoman, Austrian and Russian troops to victory against the Egyptians at the hard-fought Battle of Boharsef (in order to do so Napier ignored orders from his superiors, an act that was overlooked because of his success). He also risked opprobrium by unilaterally agreeing a peace settlement with the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali, which angered politicians and diplomats but turned out to be almost identical to the final, official version of the treaty that was signed, sealed and delivered a few days later. Returned to Parliament in 1841, and much decorated by European allied nations for his activities in the Syrian campaign,

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Napier continued to argue for better conditions for seamen and follow his interest in ship design, producing the plans for the innovative paddle-frigate HMS Sidon (1846). He became a household name in Britain through his actions and words, and when placed in command of the Channel Fleet in May 1847 he presided over one of the Fleet's most active periods, including a spell off the coast of Morocco to suppress piracy. Denied the command of the Mediterranean Fleet (because he could not be trusted to follow orders) Napier was still sufficiently highly thought of to take command of the Baltic Fleet in 1854 at the outbreak of the Crimean War (and at the age of 68). His steam-powered fleet was far from ideal when he sailed from Portsmouth on 11 March 1854, with insufficient shallow-draught vessels for some tasks, and a large percentage of inexperienced seamen, but Napier still managed to make a success of the expedition, keeping the Russian fleet in port. Cutting army resupply routes and creating an effective fighting force. On his return to Britain in December 1854 Napier retired and never served at sea again. Suffering ill health in his final years, Napier died on 6 November 1860 at the age of 74.

### **12 March 1821**

Capt William Broughton, Pacific explorer and discoverer of Chatham Island, died in Florence on 12 March 1821 and was buried in the English Cemetery in Livorno (Leghorn). The officer joined the Royal Navy in 1774 at the age of 12 – a few months as a captain's servant on the yacht Katherine before switching to the sloop Falcon which sailed to North America. At 15 he was a midshipman, and served on numerous ships, including HMS Victory, in the East Indies, the Mediterranean and the Channel. On 18 December 1790 he took command of the brig HMS Chatham and joined Capt George Vancouver's expedition to the Pacific. Over the next eight years Broughton ranged far and wide, surveying coasts and islands around New Zealand, the west coast of North America, Japan, Korea, Russia and Taiwan. He went on to command first rate ships in battle in the Channel (the Battle of the Basque Roads 1809) and Indian Ocean (the Mauritius Campaign of 1809-11). His name appears on maps and charts from around the world, including Broughton Island (Australia), Broutona Island (Russia) and the Broughton Archipelago (Canada). His charts of the Columbia River area of western Canada and the United States were a key element in the planning of the famed American Lewis and Clarke Expedition which opened up the American west.

### **13 March 1940**

Armed Merchant Cruiser (AMC) HMS Maloja intercepted a mysterious vessel to the south-east of Iceland on 13 March 1940 – an encounter that ended with the sinking of a German civilian ship. HMS Maloja started life as the RMS Maloja, a luxurious P&O ocean liner built to shuttle between the UK and Australia via the Suez Canal. One of a pair of steamers, the 21,000-ton Maloja was fitted out to a high standard with the emphasis on comfort and reliability rather than speed. Her first voyage started at Tilbury on the Thames on 2 November 1923, and she and sister ship

RMS Mooltan served the Australia route with much style and little fuss until the outbreak of war. Both ships were taken into service by the Admiralty, with Mooltan on the South Atlantic station and operating out of Freetown until conversion to a troopship in early 1941. Maloja was converted to an AMC in Bombay and went straight onto the Northern Patrol, covering the seas between Iceland and Shetland. It was in this area that Maloja spotted a ship on 13 March 1940, and when she hailed the vessel she received a reply claiming that the intercepted ship was the Japanese steamer Taki Maru. The weather prevented Maloja sending a boarding party to confirm her identity, but as the weather cleared it became apparent that she was the SS La Coruna, a Hamburg-South America Line ship. Before the Royal Navy ship could act, the German crew had scuttled their ship to avoid capture, and all Maloja could do was hasten her sinking with her guns. Maloja was converted for trooping duties at the end of 1941 and safely saw out the rest of the war. She returned to civilian service in 1947 and finished her last voyage on 19 January 1954 back at Tilbury, where it had all started more than 30 years earlier. She was moved to Inverkeithing in Scotland later that year where she was broken up.

### **14 March 1943**

Submarine HMS Thunderbolt was sunk by Italian corvette Cicogna off Cape St Vito on 14 March 1943 – the second time the submarine was sunk with heavy loss of life. Thunderbolt started life as T-class boat HMS Thetis, launched by Cammell Laird at Birkenhead on 29 June 1938, and was undergoing trials in Liverpool Bay the following June when she sank. The boat had been too light to dive, so checks were carried out on water tanks and the torpedo tubes. In order to confirm whether a tube was flooded (ie the outer bow cap was open to the sea) a small test cock was provided on the inner hatch which, when opened, would reveal a trickle of water. When the test cock for number 5 tube was opened no water was detected, but when the hatch was released seawater gushed in and caused the bows to sink rapidly into the mud at the bottom of the bay, 46 metres deep. Enamel paint had clogged the test cock, giving a false 'shut' indication. Despite the fact that the stern of the submarine was still visible above the surface, it took several hours before it was realised that the boat had sunk, and then many more hours to attempt a rescue from the steeply-angled hull. Only four men escaped – three Royal Navy personnel and a Cammell Laird worker – while 99 men died, many of carbon monoxide poisoning, with two drowning during a failed escape attempt. Of those, 51 were crew members and 26 were from Cammell Laird, including key personnel responsible for designing submarines – a significant loss with war looming. One further life was lost during subsequent salvage operations when a diver died of the bends. The hull of the boat was finally recovered and beached on Anglesey on 3 September – the day war broke out – and the remaining bodies were removed for burial with full Naval honours. One result of the accident was the introduction of the 'Thetis clip' – a latch that prevented the inner tube door from being forced open by flooding. Once repaired, the submarine was repaired and commissioned on

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26 October 1940 as HMS Thunderbolt, enjoying a moderately successful war career. Serving at first in the Atlantic, Thunderbolt sank Italian submarine Capitano Tarantini in the Gironde estuary on 15 December 1940, with just five of the Italian crew of 50 surviving. In the latter part of 1942 Thunderbolt was converted to operate Chariot manned torpedoes and she transferred to the Mediterranean, carrying out successful attacks on shipping in Palermo and Tripoli harbours in January 1943. She met her fate on 14 March 1943 off Sicily when she was detected by Italian anti-submarine corvette Cicogna, which attacked with depth charges, and Thunderbolt sank for the second and final time, in more than 1,300m of water with all 62 hands.

#### **15 March 1918**

Submarine HMS D3 was accidentally sunk by a French airship in the Channel on 15 March 1918. The 600-ton craft, built by Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness, was launched on 17 October 1910 and had a busy war, starting off protecting the eastern flank of the British Expeditionary Force as it crossed to France in August 1914. There followed offensive patrols the North Sea, hoping to catch the German High Seas Fleet, before moving on to anti-submarine patrols off the coast of Ireland in 1917 and the Channel in 1918. On 15 March D3 was patrolling off Dieppe when she was seen by French airship AT-0. When D3 fired signal rockets to identify herself, the French thought they were being attacked, prompting them to fire on D3 with machine guns and drop depth bombs. D3 submerged, briefly resurfaced then sank. A handful of British submariners managed to escape, and when the crew of the airship heard their shouts it dawned on them that the submarine had been British, so a lifebelt was dropped and the airship set off to find a ship nearby which could effect a rescue, but they drowned before

help could arrive; all 25 men on board D3 died in the attack.

#### **16 March 1712**

The English Navy of the 17th Century got their money's worth when it came to warships, and the 38-gun fourth-rate HMS Dragon was a good example. Built at Chatham and launched in 1647, the frigate served for more than 60 years before she was wrecked off the Channel Islands on 16 March 1721. Dragon took on several forms throughout her life, starting as a 414-ton ship some 37 metres long and nearly 9 metres broad, with 38 guns in times of war reducing to 32 in peace. In 1677 her armament increased to 46 guns, with a crew of around 160 men. She spent her early years serving in the Irish Sea, but at the end of the English Civil War, in 1651, she became part of the Commonwealth Navy, taking part in the Battles of Dungeness (29 November 1652) and Portland (28 February 1653), the latter under the command of the appropriately-named Capt Edmund Seaman. She served for a year in 1655-6 in the Mediterranean before resuming patrols in the Channel, and took part in several battles in 1665-6 in the Second Anglo-Dutch War. There was further war service in the Mediterranean and home waters in the early 1670s, and she served as flagship of the Mediterranean Squadron from 1686 before undergoing an extensive rebuild in 1689 which increased her tonnage to 515 and her crew to around 220. The 1690s saw the new version of Dragon serve once again in the Irish Sea, in the Channel, the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, but was once more earmarked for rebuilding. She was dismantled at Rotherhithe in 1706-7, emerging at almost 720 tons with a wartime crew of 280. Further service in the North Sea and the Atlantic seaboard of North America was followed by a minor refit in 1711. That was to be her last; on 16 March 1712, by now

**HMS Thunderbolt returns to harbour after a patrol in 1940. See 14 March. Image from the IWM collection © IWM (A 2579)**

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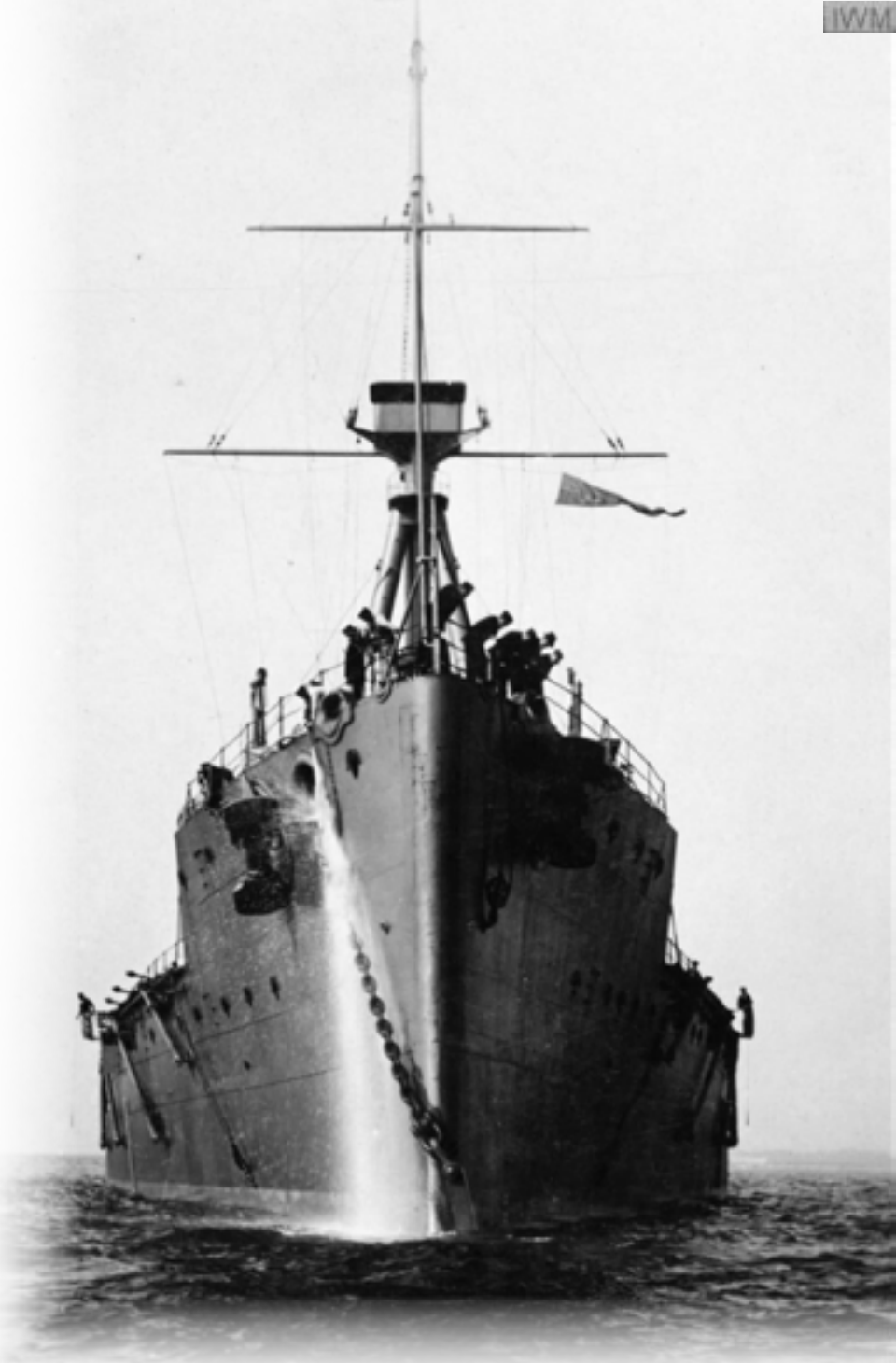




with almost 65 years of service (and four Battle Honours) to her name, Dragon struck the Casquets off Alderney while en route from Guernsey to England with a convoy. She sailed from St Peter Port in a moderate gale during the afternoon, but the fleet split near Alderney, with Dragon taking a course up the Great Russell, which left her at the mercy of a strong current that put her closer to the Casquet Rocks than was prudent. On a dark, windy night she became wedged between two rocks and was wrecked, though at the subsequent court martial there was mention made of a merchant ship that impede her course and may have actually tangled with the warship as the latter tried to manoeuvre away. There are no reports of any rescue, nor any details of any fatalities, and the court martial decided that Capt George Martin had sailed his ship properly and her loss was down to the irregular set of the current.

#### **17 March 1800**

HMS Queen Charlotte (100 guns) blew up at Leghorn (Livorno) on 17 March 1800, killing the majority of her ship's company. The first-rate ship had been built at Chatham and was launched on 15 April 1790, and spent most of her service life as a flagship, including at the Glorious First of June in 1794 (Admiral Lord Howe), though life aboard the warship was not always glorious – in 1798 a number of her crew were court-martialed for mutiny. She met her end less than ten years after entering service when, in the early morning of 17 March 1800, she was operating off the island of Capraia off the west coast of Italy. Vice Admiral Lord Keith's flagship caught fire when a sailor dropped hay on a match tub. A handful of American ships lying off Leghorn harbour came to the ship's aid, losing sailors in the process as loaded guns on the British ship fired accidentally in the heat, but the spread of the flames could not be halted and in the late morning the flagship exploded, killing 673 of her 829 sailors, though Vice Admiral Keith was not one of them – he had been ashore at the time the fire started, and was a helpless onlooker as the drama played out just offshore.



**HMS Dreadnought. See 18 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © The rights holder (Q 74896)**

#### **18 March 1915**

Battleship HMS Dreadnought rammed and sank U-29 in the Moray Firth on 18 March 1915 – relatively small fry for a massively significant ship. Dreadnought was built at Portsmouth, regarded as the fastest ship-building yard in the world at that time, and she raised steam on her initial trials on 3 October 1906, a year and a day after construction started (although materials had been stockpiled and some elements prefabricated to speed up the process, and the shipyard workers had a punishing 69-hour week over six days, with just a half-hour break and compulsory overtime. At a stroke this revolutionary, all-big-gun,

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steam-turbine driven battleship of 21,000 tons, the fastest in the world, consigned all existing battleships ('pre-Dreadnoughts') to the dustbin of history, and sparked a worldwide naval arms race. She served as flagship of the Home Fleet from 1907-11, then of the 4th Battle Squadron from 1912, losing that position at the end of 1914. Though designed to duel it out with enemy battleships, she earned a minor note in the history books by becoming the only battleship to ever purposely sink an enemy submarine when she encountered U-29 in the Pentland Firth in Scotland on 18 March 1915. U-29 was commanded by German ace Kapitanleutnant Otto Weddigen, who in the submarine U-9 had sunk four British cruisers in quick succession – HMS Aboukir, Hogue and Cressy in less than an hour in the North Sea on 22 September 1914 (which he admitted he had achieved with a good deal of luck), and HMS Hawke on 15 October the same year. A total of around 2,000 British sailors lost their lives in the attacks. Weddigen took command of U-29 on 13 February 1915, and set out from Zeebrugge for its first war patrol under the German war hero on 10 March. Four merchant ships, totalling 13,000 tons, were sunk in the Irish Sea over the course of a few days, and on its homeward journey U-29 spotted the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet heading for Scapa Flow. Weddigen loosed off a torpedo at battleship HMS Neptune, but the German periscope was spotted dead ahead by Dreadnought, which ploughed into the submarine and carved it in two, killing Weddigen and his crew of 34. Dreadnought missed the Battle of Jutland as she was in refit, but the most warlike action she managed was to fire her anti-aircraft guns at German formations heading to and from London. She was paid off into reserve on 7 August 1918, and sold for scrap on 9 May 1921, finally being broken up in early 1923.

### 19 March 1943

Destroyer Derwent was hit by an air-dropped torpedo in Tripoli Harbour on 19 March 1943, and although she survived the attack she never served in anger again. The 1,460-ton Hunt-class destroyer, ordered as part of the 1940 War Emergency Programme, was launched by Vickers-Armstrong at Barrow-in-Furness on 22 August 1941 and entered service nine months later. She was straight onto convoy escort duties, starting with an Atlantic group before turning left into the Mediterranean; she was part of the heavy warship escort force for the legendary Operation Pedestal Malta convoy in August 1942, eventually escorting a damaged cruiser HMS Nigeria back to Gibraltar. On 19 March 1943 she was lying at anchor in Tripoli Harbour in Libya when an Axis air raid took place. A torpedo struck Derwent, killing six sailors and flooding her boiler room. She was driven ashore to prevent her from sinking, and once patched up she limped back to the UK where further repairs were started at Devonport, but she was deemed beyond repair, and work stopped in January 1945, after which she was reduced to reserve status. She was scrapped in 1947.

### 20 March 1944

Submarine HMS Graph, formerly German vessel U-570, was wrecked on the west coast of Islay in Scotland on 20 March 1944. The 860-ton U-boat was built by Blohm and Voss at Hamburg and commissioned in May 1941, but was captured by the Allies on her first war patrol on 27 August that year as she headed from Trondheim in Norway to her located area south of Iceland. She had a very inexperienced crew, and had spent most of the morning submerged to mitigate against seasickness, which had incapacitated several of her crew. She surfaced beneath a patrolling RAF Hudson bomber and was attacked with depth charges. The rookie

**HMS Derwent leaving carrier HMS Illustrious after refuelling at sea in October 1942 in the Mozambique Channel. See 19 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 13485)**

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crew were horrified by the attack – the submarine rolled violently, glass gauges smashed and leaked, and there was thought to be a chlorine gas leak which terrified them, forcing them to surface and surrender. Attempts to destroy secret codes and equipment were half-hearted, providing useful material for codebreakers at Bletchley Park, and a small flotilla of Allied warships gathered to escort the boat to Iceland. Her crew were sent off to POW camps, and the submarine beached for examination; she was found to be capable of being repaired and returned to service, so she was sailed by a Royal Navy crew to Vickers in Barrow where her torpedoes, trapped in tubes by buckled plating from the air attack, were removed (earning Naval officer Lt Martin Johnson a George Cross). U-570 was repaired and, despite Churchill's wish to hand her over to the Americans or Yugoslavs, put to work under the White Ensign as HMS Graph (G being a German designator, and graph because of the amount of testing done on her, as well as a play on the German word 'Graf' meaning 'Count'. a serviceable warship and a host of valuable information about German submarines. Among the secrets she revealed was the fact that her safe diving depth was 230m, much deeper than the Allies had thought, and thus her type of U-boat was capable of diving deep enough to evade depth charges, which were set for a maximum of 170m. She also had optics and hydrophones which were far superior to those of the British and Americans, whose experts closely examined the boat. She also allowed the Allies to create mock-ups of Type VII U-boat control rooms, meaning Allied sailors could train to operate such a submarine after capture. After a refit she sailed on the first of her three war patrols as HMS Graph on 8 October 1942, but two forays into the Bay of Biscay and one off Norway failed to bring

any kills, though she attacked a U-boat and a pair of destroyers. She thus became the only U-boat to serve on both sides in World War 2. However, problems in maintaining her and an understandable lack of spare parts led to her being withdrawn from service, and decommissioned in June 1943. She was used for depth charge testing, then towed from Chatham to the Clyde for scrapping, but she never completed that final voyage. On 20 March 1944, in gale-force winds, the tow line from Naval tug HMRT Growler parted and Graph was driven ashore on the west coast of Islay, in the Inner Hebrides in Western Scotland. There she was abandoned, and while some material was salvaged, she broke up where she lay, and some of the wreck is apparently still evident in around five metres of water.

### 21 March 1800

16-gun sloop HMS Peterel, commanded by novelist Jane Austen's brother Francis, captured French ship *Ligurienne* (16) and two ships in her convoy off Cape Courenne, near Marseilles, on 21 March 1800. The sloop had a colourful history, including being lost and recaptured on consecutive days. Launched on the Medway on 4 April 1794, she was completed at Chatham and spent her first months in service in the southern part of the North Sea. By the spring of 1796 she was part of Horatio Nelson's squadron in the Mediterranean. The difficulty of communication in the Royal Navy was demonstrated by the handover of command from Cdr Bartholomew James to Cdr Philip Wodehouse in the summer of 1796; the latter officer spent four months roaming the continent of Europe trying to find his ship, finally locating her in November. The following month a party from Peterel landed in Corsica and sacked a Martello tower, throwing its 32pdr gun into the sea, and the ship

**HMS Graph under way at Barrow prior to docking and refit. See 20 March.  
Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 951)**

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went on to capture a couple of French privateers in the following months. On 12 November 1798, while patrolling off Menorca, Peterel encountered a flotilla of four Spanish warships – two bearing 40 guns and two with 34. The sloop was hopelessly outgunned and forced to surrender, with a 72-man Spanish prize crew taking possession of her (and reportedly helping themselves to their British counterparts' clothing and possessions). The officer in charge of the British flotilla which had just taken Menorca, Cdre John Duckworth, sent the 44-gun frigate HMS Argo to retake Peterel, which she did the following day. The rest of Duckworth's squadron chased the Spanish flotilla, but were outpaced; the Spanish landed their British prisoners at Cartagena before sailing and marching them, often under harsh conditions, to Gibraltar, where they arrived early in 1799 and were cleared by a court-martial of any wrongdoing shortly after. Francis Austen, a future Admiral of the Fleet, took command of Peterel on 3 February 1799, embarking on a spree where she cut out or captured more than 20 ships. On 21 March 1800, while sailing off the coast near Marseille, Peterel spotted a large enemy convoy and quickly captured a couple of small merchant vessels carrying grain. She was set upon by the three French escorts; the 14-gun corvette Cerf and six-gun xebec Lejoille were swiftly driven ashore, the former being written off, then the 16-gun brig-sloop Ligurienne engaged Peterel in battle in shallow waters beneath two gun batteries (so shallow that Peterel ran aground for a few minutes). An hour and a half during which the British suffered no casualties, Ligurienne surrendered. From 1800-01 Peterel took part in various operations against French forces in Egypt, then in the spring of 1804 sailed to the West Indies and continued to take prizes regularly around Jamaica. The sloop ended her days back in home waters, being fitted out as a receiving ship in Plymouth in the summer of 1811 and continuing in that role for 14 years until she was sold for £730 in July 1827.

### **22 March 1918**

Sloop HMS Gaillardia was lost on 22 March 1918 while escorting minelayers working on a test minefield for the North Sea Mine Barrage (also known as the Northern Barrage) off the Orkneys, designed to address the U-boat threat. Gaillardia was an Aubretia-class vessel, part of the larger Flower class, originally designed as a minesweeper (with strengthened bows and an above-water magazine) but found to be rather better suited to convoy escort duties. Launched by Blyth Shipbuilding in Northumberland on 19 May 1917, 1,250-ton single screw ship sailed from Lerwick for the eastern side of the Orkneys early on 22 March 1918, accompanied by minelayers Princess Margaret (a 6,000-ton converted liner that had the honour of laying the most mines of any Royal Navy ship in the Great War) and HMS Angora, slightly smaller than Princess Margaret but with a similar story. Accompanied by M-class destroyer HMS Musketeer, the group began minelaying at 0800, with the two warships following astern of Princess Margaret. At several points the warships were called on by the minelayer to take care of 'floaters' – mines that had broken from their moorings and were a threat to Allied shipping. Around midday Gaillardia was rocked by a large explosion,

followed by two almost simultaneous detonations, and began to sink on an even keel. Sailors scrambled to escape the sinking ship, but only a dozen or so made it and were picked up by Musketeer – the sloop went down with 66 men, including her commanding officer. Initial investigations suspected that a German mine was to blame, but subsequent court-martials decided that although she was in a designated safe area beyond the edge of the minefield, the sloop had hit a British mine (or passed over one – the CO of Musketeer reported that mines being laid seemed particularly sensitive) that had somehow broken loose and drifted into her path.

### **23 March 1791**

Sixth-rate HMS Pandora arrived at Tahiti in search of the Bounty mutineers on 23 March 1791, almost two years after the incident that saw Lt William Bligh and loyal shipmates set adrift in an open boat in the South Pacific. Pandora, a 24-gun post ship with a ship's company of around 160 built at Deptford in 1778-9, ranged along the Atlantic coast of North America in her early career, picking off privateers and merchant ships, before returning to England in 1783 to be placed in ordinary. Pandora was reactivated in June 1790 as tension between England and Spain increased, but two months later she was sent to the Pacific to recover HMS Bounty and return the mutineers to England to stand trial for their crimes. She sailed from Portsmouth on 7 November 1790 with one of the survivors of Bligh's epic journey to safety, and reached Tahiti on 23 March 1791, having sailed round Cape Horn. Within a week eight men had been arrested or handed themselves in, and over the following fortnight the remaining six fugitives, who had all been living a subsistence life as beachcombers on the tropical island, were captured and placed in a small prison cell structure on the warship, known to her crew as 'Pandora's box'. Pandora then spent three months ranging across the South Pacific in search of the Bounty of her remaining nine mutineers, but only came across an anchor and some timbers. At one point she sailed to but did not call in at the previously-uncharted Pitcairn Island; had a party gone ashore they might have found evidence of the men they sought. Pandora made a grand tour of numerous South Pacific islands as the hut went on, but on 29 August 1791 it came to a grinding halt when the ship went aground on the Great Barrier Reef and sank the following morning, taking the lives of 35 men (including four mutineers). The remaining 89 sailors and ten prisoners spent 18 days hopping from island to cay seeking refuge and fresh water, during which time another 16 died of various illnesses. Pandora's officers were exonerated at court-martial for the loss of the ship, and four of the ten surviving prisoners were acquitted of mutiny; six more were convicted, of whom three were returned to Portsmouth where they were executed in October 1792, two received a Royal pardon and the sixth evaded a similar fate on a legal point. The hiding place of the nine remaining mutineers, on the tiny, remote Pitcairn Island, was not discovered until 1808, by which time just one survived, along with descendants of the other eight who had settled there with Polynesian women and a motley group of followers.

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### 24 March 1878

More than 300 sailors – the vast majority young and inexperienced - died when training corvette HMS Eurydice was lost in a sudden snowstorm off Ventnor on the Isle of Wight on 24 March 1878 – one of Britain's worst peacetime Naval disasters. Eurydice, a fast 26-gun frigate with a shallow draught for operations in littoral waters, was built in Portsmouth and launched in May 1843. Her design, built around speed, meant that she was not the easiest or most stable of ships to handle. She spent her early years on the North American and West Indies, and South African, stations, at one point (in July 1845) going ashore in Cuba; her guns and other equipment needed to be removed before she could be refloated. She spent 20 years without seagoing service between 1857 and 1877, initially being used as a static training ship, then being converted at Portsmouth Dockyard and White's yard in Cowes, Isle of Wight, as a seagoing training vessel in November 1877. That same month she left on a three-month training cruise to the North America and West Indies Station, based in Bermuda, setting off on her return passage eastwards on 6 March 1878. The streamlined corvette made a rapid crossing of the Atlantic, and was almost back to the relative safety of Spithead when she was caught in a sudden violent snowstorm in Sandown Bay, which swept south over the chalk downs of the Isle of Wight and caused her to swiftly capsize. Only two of the ship's 319 crew and trainees survived – many went down with her, the remainder died attempting to struggle ashore in cold seas. One of those to witness the tragedy was three-year-old Winston Churchill, whose family were staying at Ventnor at the time. There are several tales of a ghostly Eurydice appearing off the Dunnose headland in subsequent years, including an account by Prince Edward, now the Duke of Edinburgh, who said he saw

the ship while filming in the area, and another by a Royal Navy submarine commander, whose boat took evasive action only for the ship to disappear. The loss of the Eurydice was put down to the extreme weather, and no blame was apportioned to the officers or men who died. But there were those who felt Eurydice was unsuited to the role of training ship because of her streamlined design, shallow draught and known lack of stability. However, an almost identical ship, the 26-gun frigate HMS Juno, was chosen as Eurydice's successor, and with the new name HMS Atalanta (having been also named HMS Mariner for just two weeks) took on Eurydice's role. She made two successful training voyages to the Atlantic seaboard of North America, but was lost in the Atlantic on a passage back to England from Bermuda in mid-February 1880 with the loss of 281 lives – once again, many of them young and essentially novice sailors. It is presumed she was overwhelmed by a severe storm that would have crossed her path between 12 and 16 February, though no survivors were found and no wreckage identified as being that of Atalanta, though it is thought a mass of timbers and flotsam spotted off the Azores in April by gunboat HMS Avon could have been the remains of the corvette. In subsequent investigations, a former crew member reported Atalanta as being prone to excessive rolling, and that in poor weather trainee sailors were either laid low by seasickness or too afraid to climb the masts to deal with the sails. Eurydice was salvaged and refloated later in 1878 but was too badly damaged to be of any use and was broken up.

### 25 March 1804

Third-rate man o'war HMS Magnificent, blockading the French port of Brest, hit an uncharted reef on an ebb tide on 25 March 1804 when standing out

**HMS Myrmidon. See 26 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © The rights holder (Q 74999)**

**Continued on page 47**



to sea in worsening weather and was wrecked. Launched at Deptford in September 1766, and commissioned 12 years later, the 74-gun warship served in the Caribbean during the American War of Independence, participating in three battles (with a record of W1, D1, L1) before knuckling down to the unexciting but crucial role of blockade enforcer off the coast of France during the Napoleonic Wars. She was extensively refitted from 1798-1800 to better suit her for blockade duties, but while carrying out that task on the morning of 25 March 1804, off the port of Brest, she ran aground on an uncharted reef close to the Black Rocks, and began to sink. There was no loss of life - other ships of the Royal Navy's blockading flotilla managed to get close enough to Magnificent to take off many her ship's company, while the remainder took to the ship's boats; one such boat, with almost 90 sailors on board, was swept ashore and the men captured, spending almost a decade as prisoners of war. Magnificent sank at around 1030, within 90 minutes of having grounded, and quickly broke up in the unforgiving Atlantic swell.

#### **26 March 1917**

Destroyer HMS Myrmidon was lost in a collision with a merchantman in the Channel on 26 March 1917. The 350-ton B-class ship was built by Palmers at Jarrow on the Tyne and launched on 26 May 1900, one of a pair of four-funnel, 30-knot ships. After commissioning in August 1901 she served on the Mediterranean Station for four years then spent a year with the Atlantic Fleet. Myrmidon spent most of the remainder of her career in home waters, mainly the English Channel. When the Great War broke out the destroyer operated with the 6th Destroyer Flotilla out of Dover as part of the Dover Patrol, which blocked the Channel to German ships and U-boats. On 26 March 1917 the by-now obsolete destroyer collided with SS Hamborn six miles off Dungeness. One sailor died in the incident, with the remainder of the crew of 63 being picked

up by destroyer HMS Mermaid and the freighter SS Tambour.

#### **27 March 1918**

Destroyer HMS Kale was sunk by a mine in the North Sea on 27 March 1918 - and the finger of blame was pointed at her Commanding Officer. The River-class destroyer (named after Kale Water in the Scottish Borders, not the cabbage) was built by Hawthorn Leslie at Hebburn-on-Tyne, and launched on 8 November 1904. Initially stationed at Harwich on the East Coast, the 545-ton warship underwent a refit at Chatham in 1912, and shortly after switched to the Kent port to join the Ninth Flotilla, one of several formations that were equipped with veteran destroyers and torpedo boats which were only really useful for patrol duties. Kale was refitted again in 1913-14, and in the early part of the war she and her flotilla were reassigned to the Humber, where she remained for the rest of the war. On 27 March 1918 she was on passage in the North Sea from the Humber to Portsmouth with two sister ships, HMS Exe and HMS Waveney, when she struck what is assumed to be a British mine. According to reports of the subsequent court martial, her Commanding Officer, Canadian Cdr Harold Denison, took her several miles outside a safe, swept corridor and straight into a British minefield, the details of which had been made available weeks before but he had failed to read them or see that the updated information was transferred to the destroyer's charts. 40 men died in the sinking, and another five died in HMS Exe, which also hit a mine and sustained some damage. Denison was severely reprimanded and dismissed the ship with two of three charges against him having been proven, but he later went on to command the light cruiser HMS Cleopatra (1922-23).

#### **28 March 1916**

On 28 March 1916 battleship HMS Zealandia was

**Continued on page 48**



**HMS Zealandia. See 26 March. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (Q 75238)**



the first ship to pass through the lock and into the dry dock at Rosyth Dockyard. Rosyth, on the north side of the Firth of Forth near Edinburgh, was designed and built as a base for Royal Navy battleships, with plans being laid in the first decade of the 20th century and construction starting in 1909. The Admiralty believed future clashes between Britain and a powerful enemy (ie Germany) would probably occur in the North Sea, and the existing major naval bases of Portsmouth and Devonport were too far away, so with dreadnoughts being built by both sides, land was obtained and work begun on the base. There was friction between the government and construction firms over the methods used (the base was ready for use by 1916 but contracts were not settled until 1922). The central feature as planned was a 52-acre main basin that could host up to 22 battleships if they were doubled up. The facility was first put to use on 28 March 1916 when the 17,600-ton pre-dreadnought battleship HMS Zealandia entered the dock – the first of many. Zealandia began life at Portsmouth when she was launched on 4 February 1904 as HMS New Zealand. In the years before World War 1 she served in the Atlantic, Channel and Home Fleets, including service in the Mediterranean; in 1911 she assumed the name Zealandia. As part of the Grand Fleet, the battleship spent 1914 and 1915 hunting German vessels in the North Sea but saw no significant action. At the end of 1915 she was switched to the Gallipoli Campaign, arriving on 14 December, but with that campaign over in early January 1916 she was back in home waters in February. By now considered obsolete, Zealandia was retired from the front line in late 1917 and earmarked as a gunnery training ship, but that role was never taken up. She was converted to an accommodation ship based in Portsmouth in 1919 and sold for scrap in 1921, finally being broken up (ironically in Germany) two years later.

#### **29 March 1779**

12-gun sloop HMS Kite had a brief Naval career, perhaps the highlight of which was an encounter with a French 20-gun privateer 30 miles south-west of the Needles Point on 29 March 1779. Kite had been bought the year before as a cutter before being rated as a sloop in 1779. She was sold out of service in 1793.

#### **30 March 1811**

HMS Arrow, a plucky 14-gun cutter or armed schooner, launched on the Thames shortly before the

Battle of Trafalgar, engaged the French shore battery at St Nicholas, northwards of the Ile de Re near La Rochelle on the Atlantic coast, and captured French chassesarmes Frederick and Paix Desiree, while under the command of Lt William Knight on 30 March 1811. She ended her days as a breakwater in May 1815, and was broken up in Plymouth 13 years later.

#### **31 March 1941**

Minelaying submarine HMS Rorqual sank Italian submarine Pier Capponi around 20 miles SW of Stromboli in the Tyrrhenian Sea on 31 March 1941. The British Grampus-class submarine was launched by Vickers Armstrong at Barrow-in-Furness on 27 July 1936 and went on to become one of the most successful minelaying submarines of World War 2, mainly in the Mediterranean but also in the latter stages of the conflict in the Far East. She is estimated to have accounted for almost 36,000 tons of shipping with her mines, but she was also a threat with torpedoes and her gun, which sank a further 20,000 tons or more – one of the victims being Pier Capponi. The 1920s-vintage 1,000-ton Mameli-class boat did not have a particularly distinguished war record, having sunk a Swedish freighter in June 1940 but also fired and missed at a handful of merchantmen and warships. She could have made a name for herself had her aim been true in the early hours of 10 November 1940 when she spotted the Royal Navy group en route to Taranto for the famous attack on the Italian fleet. Three torpedoes were fired and two hits claimed, but aircraft carrier was unscathed and two nights later her Swordfish aircraft dealt a heavy blow to the Regia Marina. Pier Capponi was on passage on the surface from Messina in Sicily to La Spezia when she was spotted by Rorqual, which fired five torpedoes at around 1,000 yards. Three hit the Italian boat, which blew up, killing all 38 men on board. Because of her size – she displaced nearly 2,200 tons when submerged – Rorqual also proved useful transporting stores, and in June 1941 she was the first submarine to carry vital supplies to the besieged island of Malta, going on to carry out four further such 'magic carpet' runs over the course of a year. Supplies included aviation fuel, cooking fuel and mail. She was switched to the Far East in 1945 to join the British Pacific Fleet, sinking coasters and sailing craft as well as laying minefields. She was sold shortly after the war – the only survivor of her class of six – and was broken up in South Wales in 1946.

**HMS Rorqual setting out on patrol from Algiers.  
See 31 March. Image from the Imperial War  
Museum collection: © IWM (A 16327)**



## 2025

<b>28 Mar 2025</b>	CONA meeting, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard
<b>3 May 2025</b>	Army v Navy rugby match, Twickenham
<b>10 May 2025</b>	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting hosted by RNA Romford & Hornchurch
<b>15-18 May 2025</b>	Londonderry Battle of the Atlantic 80th Anniversary Commemoration
<b>17 May 2025</b>	4 Area meeting, St Austell
<b>20-22 June 2025</b>	RNA75 Annual Conference 2025, Portsmouth
<b>28 June 2025</b>	HMS Collingwood Open Day, Fareham
<b>9 August 2025</b>	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting online
<b>14 Sept 2025</b>	Naval Associations Biennial Parade, Whitehall
<b>22 Oct 2025</b>	Fisherman's Friends Charity Fundraising Concert, Portsmouth
<b>15 Nov 2025</b>	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting hosted by RNA Stowmarket

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



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



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<b>Royal Maritime Hotel 182 Queen Street</b>	A 10% discount on food, selected drinks and hotel rooms
<b>Sea Urchin's Gin</b>	10% to RNA from the sale of each bottle
<b>Navy Strength Gin</b>	Don't forget to tick the box for RNA.
<b>Arctic Convoy Vodka</b>	P&P is free for orders over £40, otherwise it is £4.50.
<b>China Fleet Country Club</b>	Click on the link for offers for Serving and ex-Serving RN and RM
<b>Trinity Insurance</b>	For offers see <a href="https://tinyurl.com/ssy8vt5s">https://tinyurl.com/ssy8vt5s</a>



## **Honorary National Treasurer (HNT)**

### **Terms of Reference**

The principal role of the HNT is to approve, as the Finance Trustee, the Statutory Accounts for the Royal Naval Association (RNA), <https://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/> . The RNA is a Charity and operates under UK statute regulated by the Charities Commission of England and Wales.

The HNT will also provide advice to the RNA Executive (Exec), and to the RNA National Council (NC), being the Board of Trustees, on all aspect of financial management and governance, and, as necessary, liaise with professional advisors to ensure that the Exec and NC are properly advised.

Liaise with the administration function of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC), <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/> , who manage day to day finances of the RNA, doing so on behalf of the Exec.

Member of Finance and Admin Committee (FAC), being a sub-committee of NC.

Member of the Investment Committee (IC) of RNRMC, who manage the RNA surplus invested funds. The RNA funds held are modest relative to the funds managed by RNRMC, but RNA Shipmates take comfort by the attendance at the IC by the HNT.

Review RNA Annual Budget with Exec prior to submission to FAC and NC for approval.

Review RNA Annual Accounts with Exec prior to submission to FAC and NC for approval.

Liaise with the RNA external reporting accountant.

Present Accounts to Shipmates at the RNA National Conference.

The HNT also sits on the Governance Committee and Governance Working Group

### **Candidate Requirements**

Member of a recognised UK accounting body.

Ideally serving or former serving Royal Navy.

Ideally with knowledge of charity workings.

### **Time Commitment**

The NC meets quarterly, with occasional additional meetings. Generally, two meetings per annum are in Portsmouth, with the others being held online. The meetings are weekdays and are generally held in the forenoon.

The RNA National Conference weekend, which is held annually at different locations around the UK.

The FAC generally meets quarterly with meetings usually held online (usually 2 – 3 hours).

The IC meets quarterly in London at the offices of the RNRMC Fund Manager. Meetings are hybrid, with attendance either in person or online (usually 2 – 3 hours).

Budget planning meeting with the EX, usually in London (3 – 4 hours), ahead of presentation, by EX, to FAC and NC.

The Governance Committee and Governance Working Group meet on an 'ad hoc' basis, usually in London.

### **Future**

The RNA is currently redrafting the Royal Charter, working with the Privy Council. The plan is to establish a separate, smaller Board of Trustees and for the NC to become a Management Operational Board. The HNT would become the Finance Trustee (FT) on the restructured Board of Trustees.

### **Summary**

The HNT is a Senior Trustee within the RNA and, despite the complexities and challenges of the role, it should be, for the right candidate, great fun to be part of a well-focused and well led group of Trustees and Shipmates within the RNA.



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## **Royal Naval Association Annual General Meeting and Conference Weekend 2025**

The format of this year's conference and AGM weekend is as follows:

### **Friday 20 June 2025**

National Council gathering Approximately 40 persons	<b>1530 -1630</b>	Keppel's Head Hotel, Portsmouth Dress code: casual
Reception, HMS Warrior Approximate 150-200 persons	<b>1830-2130</b>	Portsmouth Historic Dockyard Drinks and canapes evening with music and traditional Sunset Ceremony (weather dependent) Rules apply for footwear on the ship. Dress code: lounge suits, jacket and tie <b>Date of birth and place of birth required for security detail.</b> This needs to be forwarded to <a href="mailto:engagement@massoc.org">engagement@massoc.org</a> If these details are not completed - no entry!

### **Saturday 21 June 2025**

Boathouse 5		Portsmouth Historic Dockyard
Annual General Meeting	<b>0815</b>	Coffee/tea
	<b>0900</b>	National Standard arrives via Riders Branch
	<b>0915</b>	Conference begins
		Dress code: RNA No 1s
		Tea/coffee break
		Lunch



## Saturday 21 June 2025

Gala Dinner, Boathouse 7

**1830 - 2300**

Approximately 150-200 persons

Welcome drinks reception

Photographs

Live performance/entertainment

Three-course dinner with wine

Tombola draw (fundraiser)

Dress code: Black tie and miniature medals

## Sunday 22 June 2025

St Ann's Church service

**0930 for 1000**

Approximate numbers 150-200

Church service in St Ann's Church conducted by Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet

Dedication of National Standard (nb: **not** laying up of old standard)

Service will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour

**1100**

Standards will gather outside of church for the congregation to follow (bimble at your own speed) to 2SL Home – RN Embassy

You are not required to march as there will not be anyone organised to take a salute

Gather in front of 2SL Home for an official RNA 75 photograph (RN photographer)

**1115-1130**

An even shorter walk to the rear of the garden where tea/coffee and light finger food will be served, accompanied by music

Approximately **1230** - ceremonial anniversary cake-cutting ceremony and photos

**1330**

Conclusion

Dress code: RNA No 1s

**Weekend concluded**

## 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.

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

**NB: A Delegate will not be confirmed as such unless or until the Branch Balance Sheet for 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](mailto:ams@rnassoc.org)

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



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FRIDAY 9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2025

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Please support SSAFA, The Armed Forces Charity  
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Tee times 09.30 to 11.30



Teams of 4 players, may be mixed, playing off Full Course Handicaps. Two scores to count.



Those with 'inactive' handicaps are permitted to enter.



Raffle, and other prizes, on the day.



Team entry fee £220 (£55 per player (£30 if YGC member), no cheques banked until 4th May), includes coffee/bacon roll on arrival, 18 holes of golf, and one course meal.

For further information – please contact:

Colin Stockman Email: [colin.stockman@plymouth.ssaafa.org.uk](mailto:colin.stockman@plymouth.ssaafa.org.uk) Tel: 07896 729076  
Trebar, Rock Hill, Tamerton Foliot, Plymouth PL5 4NY





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# Charity Golf Day

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025 – at Yelverton Golf Club

**ENTRY FORM – To be returned by *Friday 25th April 2025***

Teams of 4 players – may be mixed – Playing off full course handicaps - Best 2 scores to count on each hole – those with inactive handicaps may enter.

Name of Team .....

Name of Team Captain..... WHI/Handicap .....

Email contact ..... Home Club.....

Address including post code.....

Phone (day)..... (evening).....

Player No 2...Name..... WHI..... Home Club.....

Player No 3...Name..... WHI.....Home Club.....

Player No 4...Name..... WHI.....Home Club.....

Preferred Tee time between - 09.30 – 10.30 /10.40 – 11.30 (Please circle)

The Captain will be emailed the start time sheet by *Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025*

I enclose a cheque – payable to SSAFA Plymouth – for £220/.....

**OR** I have transferred £220/..... to Plymouth Admin Account, sort code 60-00-01, Account No. 48631086 (*delete whichever is not applicable*) to include green fees, coffee and bacon roll on arrival and a one course meal after play (£55 per player or £30 for YGC member.)

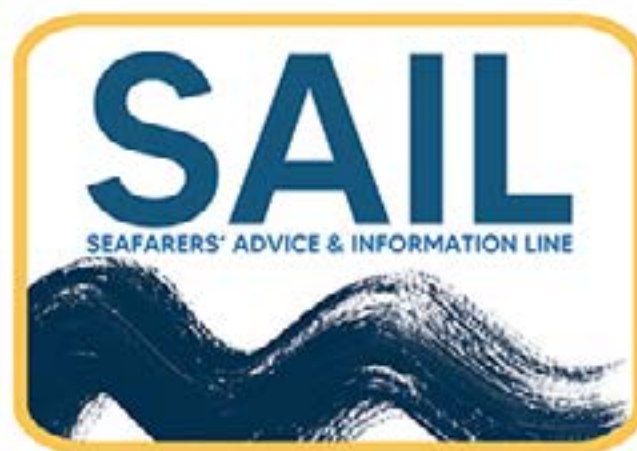
**OR** I am unable to play but I would like to make a donation which is enclosed.

Please return this form with the payment and any donations to –

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