



SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN

The UK Armed Forces marked the 80th anniversary of Victory over Japan (VJ Day) with a solemn and reflective service held at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, hosted by the Royal British Legion.

Those at the event included the King and Queen, around 30 veterans of the Far East campaign, and representatives from across the Commonwealth – a total of some 1,500 people.

The commemoration honoured the bravery and sacrifice of those who served during the Far East campaign of World War 2 in Asia and the Pacific.

In the case of the Royal Navy the contribution to the defeat of Japan was massive – by the end of the war the British Pacific Fleet (BPF) numbered some 600 ships, led by and mostly consisting of Royal Navy and Commonwealth navy vessels.

This force was involved in a bitter struggle for supremacy on the far side of the world while the folks back home were celebrating victory in Europe and looking forward to peace and a return of normality.

That gave rise to the feeling that the forces fighting in the Far East were being overlooked, and the BPF took on the

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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 3 October, and the deadline for material is 1000 on Wednesday 1 October. Branch Notes will next be published on Friday 12 September, and Semaphore Shorts on Friday 19 and 26 September.



nickname the Forgotten Fleet, just as British troops in the region were known as the Forgotten Army.

That sense of being forgotten was cemented by the fact that many ships did not return home directly after the Japanese surrender, but remained in South-East Asia to transport personnel and equipment, to repatriate prisoners of war, and to help stabilise newly-liberated territories including Hong Kong and Singapore.

When these men finally returned home in their ships or transports, there was no public fanfare or recognition for their efforts – the joyous scenes of VE Day were long

gone, the units returned singly or in small squadrons and Britons were coming to terms with the grim reality of trying to rebuild a nation wracked by war and short of money.

The VE80 service recognised the diverse backgrounds – from India, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and beyond – that contributed to the allied victory.

The event included music by the Bands

of HMS Royal Marines Portsmouth and Collingwood, the Bands of the Welsh Guards and the Scots Guards, the Duchess of Edinburgh's String Orchestra and the Central Band of the RAF.

The King and Queen were welcomed to the ceremony by Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin. They laid wreaths together in front of the Armed Forces Memorial.

The ceremony began with the nation observing a two-minute silence, a powerful moment of reflection broadcast live on BBC One.

The service featured a guard of honour made up of men and women drawn from the Royal Navy, British Army, and RAF.

The veterans in attendance included recipients of the Burma Star, veterans involved in the Battles of Kohima and Imphal and Far East prisoners of war.

One of the veterans was John Harlow, pictured above talking to Defence Secretary John Healey. John was a telegraphist in submarine HMS Rorqual which laid more than 1,200 mines throughout the conflict, more than any other boat and the only minelaying submarine to survive the war.

The Red Arrows flew over the ceremony in a celebration of peace and a tribute to the veterans, while later in the proceedings a flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, featuring a Lancaster, Spitfire, and Hurricane, soared overhead.

The Royal Navy also marked the occasion both at home

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and overseas.

For example, one of the more poignant ceremonies marking VJ Day was held on board aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales in the Japanese naval base at Yokosuka, when past foes turned present-day allies gathered on the flight deck for a simple ceremony.

The carrier hosted personnel from the UK Carrier Strike Group, plus US and Japanese sailors, at a drumhead service of thanksgiving, commemorating the end of World War 2.

The carrier's Commanding Officer, Capt Will Blackett, along with Lt Cdr Ihara of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force and Lt Cdr Rogeness of the United States Navy, laid wreaths, while a Royal Marines musician played the lament Battle's O'er on the bagpipes, synchronising with other military pipers around the world to provide the haunting melody for the occasion.

The flagship is half-way through her Operation Highmast mission, working with allies and partners from the Mediterranean to the western Pacific Rim.



➤ CONTACTS



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FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Ahoy Shipmates!

Penning this note rather hurriedly in a cafe in Dartmouth, having completed the Race Across the UK with my partner Jon Everett.

Having watched the series on the TV, Jon and I have been caught up in the pace of the journey and have occasionally lost focus on the primary purpose of the event, which of course is fundraising. Nevertheless branches and members across the country have donated extremely generously and, as I write, the RNA Team is at the top of the fundraising leaderboard, having raised over £10,000. A magnificent sum!

For those who have not followed us on social media, we started in Edinburgh on Tuesday morning, cheered on by members of the Edinburgh Branch, and made our way to the Western Approaches Museum in Liverpool. From there we headed to the Painted Hall in Greenwich, via Oswestry Castle. Operating on a tight budget of £500 for the pair of us for food, accommodation and travel, and not knowing exactly where we were going, cheap accommodation was the order of the day. A small room astern of Euston Station sufficed.

Next morning we jumped on Voi scooters, navigating London's morning traffic to Blackfriars, where Jon blagged a free ride for us on the water bus up to Greenwich. Being the 3rd of September, we were proud

to be able to sail under the Red Duster on Merchant Navy Day.

Having complete the challenges in the Painted Hall it was off to Portsmouth via Chatham, but no rail travel allowed. Again, Chatham Branch supported us with our task at Fort Amherst before taking National Express coaches to Pompey.

Day three started at HMS Victory where we completed a Field Gun challenge, then headed off to the Isle of Wight before getting our evidential photo at the race start guns of the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes. Thank you S/M David Hilton.

From there it was a scoot down to Dartmouth and a run up the hill to the College, finally getting in at 1805 – an appropriate time for a Naval challenge!

Today we complete our final challenges at Dartmouth Castle and around the town before meeting the other contestants later this evening to find out who won. Phew!

A special thanks to all those who actively assisted us on the route, it was very much appreciated.

See you at the Biennial Parade,

Bill

THEIR RACE IS NOW RUN – BUT HOW DID TEAM RNA FARE?

Good question – and one we can't answer here just yet.

The reason for that is that the RNRMC Race Across the UK (RATUK) is not simply a race.

Competing teams also had to undertake a series of challenges along the way from Edinburgh to Dartmouth, and points gained in these challenges are also taken into account before the final race positions are determined.

So Team RNA – Ready N Able also known as RNA CEO Bill Oliphant and Welfare and Wellbeing Co-ordinator Jon Everett – crossed the finish line in 16th place out of 24 teams that entered, according to speed.

The actual RATUK winner was being calculated as this Circular was being published, and the winners will be announced later today.

We will publish Team Ready N Able's final result on our social media channels and include a report on their journey in the October Semaphore Circular.

So all we can say with any certainty at the moment is that Team RNA know that they were up against fierce competition for honours.

They have been buoyed up by the superb support they have received from Branches and shipmates across the country, both by turning up to cheer them on and by donating to a great cause.

As Bill said: "It really has been a task! Nothing can prepare you for how caught up in the race you get – the excitement among the teams was phenomenal. "I'd like to thank everyone, especially Shipmates who helped us along the way.

"The amount of fundraising done by branches and individuals has been extraordinary and their

generosity has really helped get us through the hard times on the race.

"The RNRMC are a brilliant charity and we are very proud to be fundraising for them.

"They fund a lot of our welfare projects so it's a real joy to be giving a little back." Jon added: "It has been an amazing journey and we have made loads of friends along the way.

"Currently, the fundraising figure stands at £10,723 - we'd really like to raise over £12,000, and if shipmates donate a



couple of quid we'll be there!"

The team's journey south (and east and west, on occasions) has been covered on social media, while the fundraising leaderboard has also featured extensively as Team RNA battled it out for top spot with closest rivals Sea Dust. Fundraising is still open for the next couple of weeks so you can still send cheques (made payable to RNRMC) in to Central Office for them to be credited to our fundraising account.

You can also make a donation through the RATUK page [here](#).

WHAT IS RNRMC – AND WHAT IS ITS ROLE?

You will often see Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity mentioned in the pages of the Semaphore publications, but who are they and why are they so significant? RNRMC is the principal charity of the Royal Navy, supporting sailors, Marines and their families for life.

They do this both directly – by funding projects or initiatives that meet a perceived need – or through other charities that act as the delivery vehicle for funds, where the aims of both the RNRMC and the delivering organisation are aligned.

That is the case with the RNA, where our goals – such as encouraging comradeship and banishing loneliness and isolation – are in tune with the RNRMC's aims of improving the lives of serving personnel, veterans and their families.



Since its foundation in 2007 the charity has funded projects and facilities to make life better and boost the morale of those who serve today, and distributed millions of pounds annually to military charities which care for the children, families and veterans of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Indeed, since 2007 RNRMC, in partnership with Greenwich Hospital, has distributed almost £30 million in grants to more than 30 front-line charities which help care for older age veterans, improve the relationships within Naval families, assist those in times of need, help sailors and marines

transitioning into civilian life, as well as improve morale of those serving and deployed.

Among the charities which works with RNRMC are SSAFA, Combat Stress, Veterans Outreach Support, the Poppy Factory, Forces Employment Charity, the RNBT, Fighting With Pride and the Royal Star and Garter Homes.

Voluntary income is raised through donations received from the Royal Navy's Payroll Giving scheme, the Royal Marines' Corps Subscriptions, fundraisers, high-net-worth individuals and other activities and events.

The remainder of their income is generated from an investment portfolio and from grants received, such as those of their partner Greenwich Hospital.

For more information on RNRMC see www.rnrmc.org.uk



SALFORD QUAYS IS SET TO DELIVER A NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO REMEMBER

National Conference 2025 in Portsmouth was less than three months ago, but the 2026 version is already taking shape and promises to be a weekend to remember.

The programme is being handled by City of Salford Branch, and although some details are yet to be finalised and confirmed, the main events of the weekend will take place around the impressive Salford Quays area.

In outline, the Conference weekend will look something like this:

Friday 12 June 2026 – Meet and Greet at 11 Central - **A Unique Food & Drink Experience at Central Bay | 11 Central**
Saturday 13 June 2026 – AGM, at The Lowry - **Lowry**

Saturday 13 June 2026 – Formal Dinner – at the Imperial War Museum North – **Visit IWM North - Plan Your Visit | Imperial War Museums**

Sunday 14 June 2026 – Drum Head Service in Salford Quays - **Salford Quays and MediaCityUK | Visit Salford**

We hope to have finalised details regarding accommodation and how to book for the weekend soon – watch out for further information on our social media channels and in the Semaphore

publications.

For those of you not familiar with Salford, the city has a population of around 280,000, according to the City Council, and the city centre sits just across the river Irwell from Manchester City Centre.

Salford was granted city status in 1926, and although parts of it are densely populated – a result of the original rapid industrialisation and more recent redevelopment – around a third of Salford is open rural space.

Salford Quays – the location of the Conference – was built on the site of the former Manchester Docks, on the Manchester Ship Canal.

The docks were once the third busiest port in Britain, but with the rise of containerised freight and restrictions on ship size because of the dimensions of the canal, the docks fell into decline in the 1970s and were closed in 1982.

Part of the site, amounting to around 220 acres, was bought by Salford City Council in 1983, renamed Salford Quays and a development plan was created.

Using a compressed air system, water pollution was tackled, and within two years coarse fish were able to live in the

docks.

In the last half of the 1980s infrastructure was improved, with new roads and bridges created, hotels, offices, housing and recreation facilities introduced, and the Quays were linked to the Manchester tram network in 1999.

Salford Quays will be familiar to many people through **MediaCity UK**, a newer development in the area which houses numerous media and communications organisations, principally the BBC and ITV Granada – the **Coronation Street** set is located nearby.

Other major buildings at the Quays – which feature in the Conference weekend – include:

The Lowry theatre and gallery complex, named after painter L S Lowry, famed for his 'matchstick men' pictures of the industrial north-west of England in the mid-20th century.

Imperial War Museum North, which has an extensive collection of historical artefacts, primarily from the wars of the 20th century, though it also houses a section of twisted steelwork from the ruins of the World Trade Centre in New York.

MARCHING IN THE NAVAL ASSOCIATIONS PARADE? HERE IS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

With just over a week to go (at time of publication) before the Naval Associations Biennial Parade in London, here are some more details for those of you who are taking part.

■ The **muster point** is King Charles Street (SW1A 2AH) which is between the Foreign and Commonwealth Building and the Churchill War Rooms.

■ **Standard Bearers** are to muster at **1010**, and those **marching in a platoon** are to muster at **1025**.

■ The **entry points** to King Charles Street will be via the entrance on **Whitehall** and at the **Sir Clive of India Steps on Horse Guards Road**.

■ RNA staff will be at both entry points – **please remember to bring your RNA Membership card with you as ID. All other Naval Associations must have photo ID with them.**

■ For access, and for those wishing to observe the Parade, the pavement on the Richmond House side will be open to the general public.

■ Please be ready to take direction and Parade Orders from our Parade Commander, S/M Mike Smyth, who will be assisted by the Standards Marshall S/M Steve Susans and our key members of Parade Staff.

■ **Rig** for those participating from the RNA will be RNA Number 1s. Rig for Service and entitled will be Uniform 1B. Rig for other Naval Associations will be in accordance with their own guidelines.

■ Please be prepared for all **weather conditions** and be mindful of your own limitations and that of your oppos. Remember there will be a significant amount of time stood to **'Attention'** and **'at Ease'**.

■ You are strongly advised to check your **travel arrangements** closely as we have been made aware of disruption on some routes into London.

■ Please **do not bring bags and large personal items with you**. There are **no secure storage areas** to leave items whilst on Parade and bags and items must not be left unattended.

■ **Standard Bearers** have use of the Milner Barry Room in the Civil Service Club should they need to. The Civil Service Club will not take responsibility for items left at the Club during the Parade.

■ If necessary, **Standard Bearers** may leave their carry bags in the RNA minibus which will be parked in King Charles Street



by prior arrangement – email ams@rnassoc.org

■ Please **remain vigilant at all times** and be mindful of the security surrounding the Parade. Any concerns are to be raised to the Metropolitan Police at the event or a RNA member of staff.

■ It is anticipated that **the Parade will be concluded by 1145** at the latest.

We look forward to seeing you on Parade in this, our 75th Anniversary Year.

Photo of Cenotaph in London by **Jay Alexander** on **Unsplash**

LAST CALL FOR MALAYA AND BORNEO VETERANS

John Black is the Cenotaph organiser for the National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association, the tri-Service collective for all those who served in Malaya/Malaysia/Borneo between 1948 and 1966, and who are holders of the PJM (Pingat Jasa Malaysia), and/or the GSM with the bar for either Malay Peninsula and/or Borneo.

The Association has a limited number of spaces available for qualifying veterans who wish to march at the Cenotaph in Whitehall for the Remembrance ceremonies on 9 November this year.

Association numbers are dwindling and this may be the last year in which they can have a contingent.

As the Association has a more than passing connection to VJ Day, this 80th anniversary year is quite significant for its members, and organisers are keen to have as many as possible for this final parade.

If the RNA has any qualifying members, or members know of any such individuals, who would like to join their contingent for the march, they should get in touch with John who will help to get them registered – johnmblack46@gmail.com. The image, from the IWM collection, shows an RN Wessex helicopter and HMS Bulwark operating off Borneo in September 1964 (© Crown copyright reproduced under delegated authority from The Keeper of Public Records. Image: IWM (A 34861))



TON UP FOR D-DAY VETERAN

A retired Royal Navy officer who was part of the D-Day bombardment force has celebrated his 100th birthday. Douglas Edward Parish, who retired from the Navy as a Commander, can still remember the events of 6 June 1944 quite clearly.

As the Allied invasion force hit the coast of Normandy Douglas was a 19-year old Midshipman in cruiser HMS Mauritius. The warship was already an old hand at amphibious landings, having been part of the covering force at Sicily (July 1943), Salerno (September 1943) and Anzio (January 1944).

The Italian landings were merely a prelude to the greatest amphibious invasion in history, when more than 150,000 Allied troops – predominantly British, American and Canadian – landed on five beaches along the Normandy coast on D-Day, opening a new front in the war and initiating the advance that eventually liberated France and helped defeat Germany. The cruiser's role during the maritime element of the landings – Operation Neptune – was to bombard targets at Sword Beach, and in the following days and weeks she prowled the French coast on the lookout for German warships. Douglas remembers the ship taking out enemy guns on D-Day, and being attacked by German E-boats which, luckily for Douglas and his shipmates, missed their target.

In 2015, following the 70th anniversary



of the landings, Douglas and surviving D-Day veterans received the prestigious Legion d'Honneur from the French government as a sign of appreciation for their efforts to liberate the country. Douglas said: "I am very honoured; I will never forget being there," while remembering the men who deserved the medal but who died before the 70th anniversary.

Douglas went on to serve in the Royal

Navy until 1967, including a spell in the light Fleet aircraft carrier HMS Centaur in 1963-4.

Having left the Navy, Douglas trained as a college lecturer and moved to Salisbury, where he is a member of the RNA branch. His work saw him "teaching soldiers how to mend aeroplanes" in the Aircraft Engineering Training Wing at Middle Wallop.

As well as his activities with the RNA, Douglas was also a lay pastor at Porton Baptist Church for many years, and has also had a long association with the Salisbury Sea Cadet unit. Originally from Portsmouth, Douglas now lives in a care home in Salisbury.

Jon Everett, RNA Welfare and Wellbeing Co-ordinator, said: "The RNA is proud to look after its World War 2 veterans. I helped organise Doug's birthday and was delighted to organise some top brass from the Royal Navy to attend"

The RNA is reaching out to all World War 2 Royal Naval veterans to offer support in any way they can.

Milly Luxford, RNA Veteran Co-ordinator, said: "We are particularly wanting to hear from World War 2 veterans, or their carers, who would like to attend the Remembrance Parade in London in November.

"Commemoration and celebration are at the core of all we do, and we would be delighted to take these veterans to the Cenotaph with us this year."

If you are, or know of, a World War 2 veteran who would like to march with the RNA in November please contact Milly on ceo-ea@rnassoc.org



ENGLAND EXPECTS YOU TO HAVE A GREAT TIME

Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity invites you to be part of history next month by joining **Trafalgar Night at Home** – the world's largest Trafalgar Night dinner.

For more than two centuries, Trafalgar Night has honoured Admiral Lord Nelson's famous victory and the courage of those who served.

Features of a traditional Trafalgar Night mess dinner include the parading of a baron of beef, and maybe the appearance of a fleet of chocolate ships-of-the-line, meticulously created by dedicated chefs.

And while we don't expect the whole works, now you can bring this proud tradition into your own home.

Gather your family and friends, set the table, and raise a glass in tribute – all while making a real difference to today's Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel and their families.

Why support the RNRMC? Every pound raised helps them stand beside sailors,

marines, and their loved ones through every challenge they face – from the pressures of deployment and separation, to financial hardship, to recovery from injury and the transition back to civilian life. Your generosity ensures that no one in the Royal Navy community is ever left to struggle alone.

How to take part:

1. Register today – choose your postal or digital fundraising pack.
2. Plan your Trafalgar Night – set a date, cook up something delicious (or even order a takeaway with a twist).
3. Celebrate in style – enjoy an evening steeped in heritage, laughter, and good company.

4. Donate generously – every pound raised helps them provide vital support where it's needed most.

Whether you host a traditional dinner or a fun Trafalgar-themed night of your own, your event will be Victorious! Register [here](#) now for your Trafalgar Night at Home pack.



FAREWELL OLD TRIUMPH – HELLO NEW TRIUMPH...

CPO Iain Hamblin was one of the last crew of submarine HMS Triumph, and he is organising a raffle for a motorbike donated by Triumph motorbikes.

To mark the decommissioning of Triumph and the end of the Trafalgar-class submarines, Triumph Motorcycles have kindly donated a Triumph Speed Twin 900CC to be raffled in aid of HMS Triumph's two chosen charities, Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity and Brian House Children's Hospice.

The motorcycle will include a bespoke submarine/HMS Triumph painted fuel tank.

Tickets are £2 each and the draw will take place at the Submarine Awards on 4 October 2025.

Tickets are available online at the RNRMC website – you will find them in the shop or [click here](#). Ticket stubs will be completed on your behalf.

The motorcycle is brand new, bespoke and currently being built – the image is shown as an example of the bike to be won

Tickets are sold under license GAM/27307/1 on behalf of HMS



Triumph. RNRMC are also licensed with the local authority 25/03057/GALOTT

■ If you need to talk to someone about problem gambling then please contact GambleAware. GambleAware is a registered charity that provides

confidential telephone support and counselling to anyone who is affected by problem gambling. GambleAware can be contacted on 0808 8020 133 (Freephone) or see www.gambleaware.org

BOOK NOW FOR HMS GANGES ASSOCIATION 2026 REUNION

The HMS Ganges Association is holding its 50th anniversary reunion weekend in Stratford-upon-Avon next April, and bookings are now being taken.

The reunion will be at the Crowne Plaza Hotel from Friday 17 to Monday 20 April, and the organised package includes:

- Three nights en-suite accommodation
- Full English breakfast
- Three-course buffet evening meals on Friday and Sunday
- Annual General Meeting and Tot Time on Saturday
- Saturday night five-course Gala Dinner with wine reception and tot of port
- Star cabaret act on Saturday night featuring 60s band 'The Fourmost'
- Sunday remembrance church service
- Cabaret act Sunday night featuring vocalist Aimee Rose
- Complimentary car parking and use of leisure facilities
- Drinks promotion with 25 per cent off all beverages.

The cost of the package is £349 per person for three nights with two adults sharing a twin or double room or opting for a twin

share when you will be allocated a room shared with another Association member, or £424 per person for single occupancy of a double room.

Places are limited, and a non-refundable deposit of £10 is required when you return a booking form.

Final payment is due on 20 February 2026. Cancellation charges will apply, and booking terms and conditions will be sent to you with your invoice – a copy can be found on the website of group travel specialists Nina Young Travel Design (www.nytd.uk). You can also call NYTD to make a card payment on 0191 380 5344, or pay direct by bank transfer to NatWest Bank, Durham, sort code 52-30-44, account number 46103228 using the reference: 'GANGES/*your surname*'. Cheques are also accepted for payment.

payable to NYTD, and should be returned with a completed booking form to NYTD, 23 Ennerdale Street, Hetton le Hole, Tyne and Wear DH5 0DT.

NYTD can also be contacted by email on info@nytd.uk if you have any questions. Their website is at www.nytd.uk.



QUICK QUOTE FOR TRAVEL INSURANCE

As a member of the Association, you have access to an exclusive annual travel insurance scheme from our insurance partner Trinity. You can access this via the quick quote tool below to find out the annual price. Select your age band, European or Worldwide cover and who is to be covered to get your premium. Once completed, you'll be directed to the website to sign up. It's that easy! Any questions call: 02392 419 856.

https://51bwhwzvnuu.typeform.com/to/UU6CIVe3#association_members_area=xxxxx

Trinity's benefits don't just cover travel insurance – there are also offers and discounts on Personal Accident cover, Buildings and Contents Insurance and Life Insurance.

Speak to the Trinity team on 0345 241 1001 during office hours for insurance help.



BANDIES ON TOUR IN SEPTEMBER

Audiences will be in for an unforgettable evening of music, precision, and pageantry as the world-renowned Massed Bands of His Majesty's Royal Marines take to the stage for their spectacular UK tour this month. Featuring a mix of military classics, rousing film scores and breathtaking solo performances, this concert will leave you full of pride.

Witness the impeccable discipline of the world-famous Corps of Drums and the unmistakable sound of one of the finest military ensembles in the world.

An unforgettable experience of music, tradition and excellence – secure your tickets now and be part of this event.

The 2025 UK Tour Dates are as follows:

- **11 September** – Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham
- **12 September** – The Glasshouse, Gateshead
- **13 September** – Usher Hall, Edinburgh
- **17 September** – Bristol Beacon, Bristol
- **18 September** – Symphony Hall, Birmingham
- **19 September** – Bridgewater Hall, Manchester
- **20 September** – Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool

Tickets are on sale now – don't miss your chance to witness one of the finest military ensembles in the world live in concert. For ticket information and more details, visit: www.royalmarinesbands.co.uk

WILDFIRE SERVICE

This year's Wildfire III service of remembrance will be held on this Sunday (7 September) at Queenborough, Kent. The details of timings are as follows:

13.30 Parade musters outside Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Queenborough.

13.45 Parade marches to the park.

14.00 Service and wreath-laying ceremony in the park.

Royal Naval Association Lottery



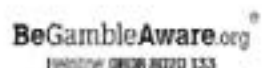
Win up to £25,000

**We rely on your help to
deliver outstanding
support throughout
every stage of our
members' lives.**



**Help us continue our work
by playing the RNA lottery**

**Enter by using the QR Code
or visit RNAlottery.co.uk**



GIANTS OF UCKERS GATHER TO BLOB IT OUT FOR ULTIMATE TITLE

The giants of Uckers will be gathering in Portsmouth once more for the ultimate tournament – the RNA's World Championships. The event will be hosted at our regular venue, the Royal Maritime Hotel in Queen Street, on Saturday 4 October – and you could be part of the competition.

Registration begins at 0900, and the first dice will be thrown an hour later, but you could spend some of that hour fuelling up for a busy day by tucking into breakfast. Other refreshments will be available. There are no official qualifiers for the tournament – you can turn up on the day, sign on and play, though there have been regional competitions in order to find the best players around the Areas.

There were new faces on the podium last year, with former Royal Marine Stan Patterson taking the singles title and the Burntwood Blobbers – triumphing in the doubles.

For those of you not familiar with the game, it looks a lot like Ludo, and is played on a similar board.

But Uckers players would argue that it is infinitely more subtle and competitive than Ludo, and tactics



can play a big part in success or otherwise.

Although its origins are lost in the mists of time and the smoke of cannon fire, it is undoubtedly one of the Royal Navy's greatest gifts to the world.

Some say it was being played during the Napoleonic wars; it was certainly around as the Victorian navy helped

expand the boundaries of empire. It was well-established by the 1930s – a newspaper report of 1934 described it as “a form of gigantic ludo, played with huge dice, with buckets for cups” on board cruiser HMS Sussex, while the Imperial War Museum has images of Uckers being played in battleship HMS Rodney in 1940. The profile of this venerable board game is, ironically, undergoing a renaissance in the era of electronic gaming, a trend which was kick-started when the RNA staged the first Uckers World Championships.

Its growing popularity can be seen in the wide range of organisations, chiefly military, which play the game, from far-flung Commonwealth navies to British Army units.

Different interpretations of the rules have evolved, with sharp differences of opinion even

between branches of the Senior Service.

And so, all eyes turn to Portsmouth, and the next golden boys and girls of the Uckers sphere. Could one of them be you?

Further details from ceo-ea@rnassoc.org

SIGN UP FOR A THUMPING GOOD DINNER

The Royal Navy Physical Training Branch Association (RNPTBA) Dinner Boxing Show will be held on Thursday 16 October in the HMS Nelson gym in Portsmouth.

Tickets for annual subscription members are only £20, or £40 for everyone else (including family and guests), which gives you a quality night of boxing, a three-course meal and wine. There will also be a raffle and tote, and the Association is honoured to have the Royal Marines Corps of Drums in attendance.

Pictured (right) are some of the attendees at last year's Dinner Boxing Show.

Please email Michael.Farrage701@mod.gov.uk with names for the number of tickets you require, including nationality, date of birth and place of birth for non-Serving people.

Monies to be paid to:

■ The Royal Navy Physical Training Branch Association Boxing 2025 (this is a business account):

■ Account number 52322080

■ Sort Code 40-37-15

■ Please use your name as the reference in the bank transaction.

If you would like to take the opportunity to join the RNPTBA subscription membership at only £15 per year – so you get more than your money back from this one event – then please contact Chris Bate, the membership secretary, on rnptba@hotmail.co.uk



hotmail.co.uk

Future events for your diaries include:

Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 June 2026 – Scottish mini reunion and golf, Dunfermline. Full details in due course.

Friday 10 July 2026 – Annual RNPTBA golf, CFCC - Cornwall. Full details in due course.

July 2027 – Biennial RNPTBA Reunion, CFCC - Cornwall. Full details in due course.

CRUISES DEPARTING IN 2026...

S/M Mike Critchley, of Maritime Heritage Tours, has details of the ship lined up for his group's February 2026 cruise in the Caribbean.

The vessel chosen by the Ambassador Cruise Line is the new French liner Renaissance.

More details on the ship can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y2kyzde9>

Very few balcony cabins remain available (if any), but please quote Group 1384 when phoning Ambassador (0808 256 5952) to discuss your cabin options.

There are still a few cabins the company are holding for the party – see the details of this and our other holidays on the horizon at www.maritimeheritagetours.co.uk

Another group will be heading to Malta on 7 January, and at present there are no single supplements to pay. Email Maritime Heritage Tours via their website if you are interested in further details.

GET YOUR GIZZETS AT ONLINE SHOP

Our lanyards and pin badges are now available from our online shop! Visit the website and click on the SHOP link, or go to: <https://www.rnagizzet.co.uk/>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Assoc Management Committees:

Fri 17 Oct 2025 (Zoom 0900)

Fri 27 Feb 2026 (F2F RMH)

Fri 8 May 2026 (Zoom 0900)

Fri 17 July 2026 (Zoom 0900)

Fri 16 Oct 2026 (F2F RMH)

FACs (finance):

Fri 14 Nov 2025 (Zoom 0930)

Fri 13 Mar 2026 (Zoom 0930)

Accounts ready

Fri 15 May 2026 (Zoom 0930)

DATE FOR SEAFARERS SERVICE

The Annual National Service for Seafarers (ANSS), organised by The Seafarers' Charity and Trinity House, will be held at St Paul's Cathedral on Wednesday 8 October 2025. The ANSS was first held in 1905 and has been observed annually ever since.

Its purpose is to recognise and give thanks for the vital work of seafarers, whose contributions are often overlooked. The service is a reminder of their enduring importance.

Many attendees have served at sea, often in dangerous conditions. Others come to honour loved ones who died in service. Their personal tributes are shared by others who recognise this island nation's duty to remember those "that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters."

The Service holds deep meaning for many, especially older members of the congregation

who travel long distances to attend. They find comfort and connection in the familiar words, music, and shared remembrance.

The ANSS honours seafarers from all maritime sectors: the Merchant and Royal Navies, fishing fleets, workboats, cruise liners, commercial ships, ferries, yachts, and others working at sea. It also welcomes maritime welfare charities, nautical schools, youth groups, veterans' associations, and people of all faiths and backgrounds.

The ANSS is open to all, and it's free to attend. Seafarers from all countries, faiths, and backgrounds, as well as those who support them from ashore, are encouraged to join us in this solemn celebration

Book tickets here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-annual-national-service-for-seafarers-2025-tickets-1057903701449>

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.

We are also extremely grateful to our RNA volunteers who manage the minibuses regionally, including the bookings.

To book a minibus, the contact details are:

Plymouth – Les Yeoman
- lesyeo3@gmail.com –
07795 231397

Manchester – David
Barlow – dbarlow@hotmail.co.uk – 07747
006100

Portsmouth – Sara Field –
ams@rnassoc.org – 023 92
723747

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





TRINITY

YOUR INSURANCE PARTNER

Enjoy the following member benefits:

- Special Premium Rate for Veterans' Personal Accident cover
- 15% discount on Travel Plus holiday insurance
- 15% discount on Free Spirit travel insurance
- Buildings & Contents Insurance – on purchase, choose a military charity for your donation
- Life Insurance – on purchase our partner, LifeSearch will donate £50 to a military charity of choice
- Eligibility for Trinity's 40+ travel insurance scheme

† From those charities listed that includes the Royal Naval Association Charity



ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Associations Line
Speak to the Trinity team on 0345 245 9006 during office hours for insurance help.

Go to your members area
To access all of the products and discounts

Trinity Insurance Services Ltd www.trinity-insurance.com helpline@trinity-insurance.com

TICKETS ON SALE SOON FOR ARMY NAVY CLASH

Pre-sale tickets are going on sale in mid September for the 2026 Army v Navy rugby clash at Twickenham. The game is on Saturday 2 May, and the Navy will be defending the title they won in thrilling fashion this year when they withstood a late Army surge to claim a thrilling 37-33 victory. RNA members will again get access to their own private bar, enclosed seating area –the best seats in the

Allianz Stadium. Seats for disabled shipmates are also available - email ceo-ea@rnassoc.org to reserve. We will publish links for tickets in the Semaphore newsletters and our social media channels as soon as they are available. Both the senior men's and women's XVs will take on the Army at Twickenham on 2 May, with the veterans playing the day before at a venue yet to be confirmed.

The Royal Navy men and women take on the RAF at the cinch Stadium, Franklin's Gardens in Northampton on 18 April, with the Masters playing the day before,

again with the venue to be confirmed. For more on the Inter Service Rugby Championship follow [this link](#).

BOAT SHOW BENEFIT

The Southampton International Boat Show has chosen Royal Navy & Royal Marine Charity as its official Charity of the Year for 2025.

The ten-day show, which starts on 19 September, also offers military concessions on tickets, starting at £23. Tickets can be booked at www.southamptonboatshow.com

Are you:

Ex-forces?

Eager to travel more this year? ✓

Tired of rising insurance costs? ✓

You could make a saving by

Joining our 40+ travel insurance scheme to benefit from cover that can continue into your later years, with no upper age limit*

Get A 30 Second Quote

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



BE A WINNER WITH THE RNA LOTTERY

You could win up to £25,000 in our 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."

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

PLEASE TAKE NOTE(BOOK)

The Royal Naval Association 75th anniversary notebook with pen is now available – looking gorgeous, and a great little gift! Black ink, £6. See the Gizzet store on the RNA website at <https://tinyurl.com/3ufm4fbd> where you will also find the RNA 75 jute-style bag for £7.50.



GET YOUR SLOPS HERE

Shipmates are reminded that items such as blazer badges, pin badges, ties, beret badges etc are still available for purchase from Central Office. If you would like to obtain such items, please contact Central Office on the main office number (023 9272 3747) or via the 'Shop' button at the top of the RNA website home page at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

SPORTS AND COMRADESHIP GROUPS

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

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

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

Cricket – Mark Smith : Markmiff1962@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RNA Football Club – scc@rnassoc.com

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

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

Yachting – David Monks: david.c.monks@gmail.com

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

MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

■ 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 8 Sept	Cheryl Jewitt and Ian Barbeary	The Triangle Girls
Mon 15 Sept	David Fields	The Royal and Russian Navies
Mon 22 Sept	Terry Barnes	My Falklands War – 40 Cdo RM
Mon 6 Oct	Alison Baverstock	Reading Force
Mon 13 Oct	VAdm Duncan Potts	2025 Defence Review debrief
Mon 20 Oct	Cdr Dicky Barton	Battle of Trafalgar – the other bits!
Mon 27 Oct	Capt Mark Hamilton	CO HMS Sultan
Mon 3 Nov	Stew Kilby	RND Battlefield Tour brief

BRANCH NEWS

RAYLEIGH Branch

Rayleigh Branch held a Mess Dinner at Saxon Hall in Southend-on-Sea to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Royal Naval Association. The event was organised by Vice Chairman S/M Mike Sandbrook, with help from members. The evening started with welcome drinks, which allowed everyone to arrive and socialise before they were called for dinner. Once everyone found their tables the Branch Standard was marched on by Standard Bearer SM Brian Dobinson and presented to Chairman S/M Terry Barker (right). The Carry On was then piped and everyone

was seated for the Chairman's welcome speech. The food and service was excellent. As tea and coffee were served at the end of the meal S/M Iain Hendry gave a speech on the history of the RNA and what it has become for Naval veterans and Associate Members. This was followed by Honorary Members and owners of the Living Memorial (Operation Sweet Pea), Fran and Peter Theobald and their nephew Rob Jordan, making a presentation to Rayleigh Branch of a book containing photos of RN/RNA Memorial and branch members. S/M Chris Coleman then took over, doing an excellent job of keeping people on the dance floor until the raffle. Before the entertainment resumed, Branch Chairman Terry Barker thanked everyone for attending. At the end of the evening Chris Coleman played the National Anthem. Next year Rayleigh plan to hold another Mess Dinner as it is the 40th Anniversary of the branch.



TORFAEN Branch

On 28 April 1941, an air-raid shelter within HMS Raleigh sustained a direct hit during a bombing raid, with the loss of 44 sailors and 21 Royal Engineers. The engineers are believed to have been members of two troops stationed in the Plymouth area, assisting in the preparation of assault boats for the North Africa campaign. They are all interred in war graves at Horson Cemetery in Torpoint. Early in July, following the receipt of a £380 grant from RNA Central Office to assist with minibus and fuel expenses, six members of Torfaen branch travelled to the Plymouth area.

They were accompanied by shipmates from **Caerphilly, Swansea, Cardiff and Carmarthen** branches, as well as two comrades from the Royal Engineers Association. The group grew again in numbers as they were joined by members of local RNA branches from **Torpoint, Plymouth and Bodmin** at the cemetery in Torpoint for a moving memorial service led by Dr Louise Pitman, Padre of HMS Raleigh, which featured a parade of Association standards. Following the service, the party returned to HMS Raleigh for lunch in the Wardroom and shipmates



were subsequently invited to join the families and guests at the Passing Out Parade for the latest crop of young sailors. Lead RNA Liaison Mentor at Raleigh, S/M Terry Whitty, played an important role in helping to host the visitors and sorting out arrangements for them to attend the Parade at Raleigh. The entire event left a strong impression on all and prompted the 'spinning of dits' from some of the more experienced members. Before heading home, there was a visit to The Hoe in Plymouth to pay their respects at the memorials and lay a wreath at the Royal Naval Memorial.



EASTBOURNE Branch

Eastbourne Branch shipmate Val Thornton was honoured to be invited by the RBL to join them in the VJ Day Remembrance service at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. Val recalls that ten years ago she and her father, RNA member George Thornton (inset), who sadly crossed the bar five years ago, were invited to the VE and VJ Day Remembrance ceremonies in London where they both met the then Prince Charles and Camilla. Val is pictured (right) with wreaths she laid, one for her father and one on behalf of Eastbourne Branch. Her father George was one of the few who served at both ends of the world during the war. He was decorated for his service on the Arctic Convoys, by both the British and the Russians, receiving his Arctic Star in 2013. He served in HMS Cumberland, which stopped off at Malta, Cyprus, Suez Canal, South Africa Cape Town, Ceylon, Burma, Java, Rangoon, Sri Lanka and Australia amongst others during his service in the Far East. Before he joined Cumberland he served in HMS Marigold in North Africa – when it was torpedoed by an Italian plane, he was one of only 20 men to survive. Val's father should also have been in HMS Hood but missed the boat, so it sailed without him and he was put in Cumberland instead – luckily for Val! S/M Val said that, on their arrival at the Arboretum, they were shown to their seats in the front row with the King and Queen less than nine meters away, adding that it was such an honour to be that close to the Royal party and the surviving veterans. The service was very moving, and the Red Arrows flew over the site, followed by the Battle of Britain flight (above). The king didn't speak but turned around and saluted all the veterans, then they were escorted away and served lunch in the banqueting dining room.



WANSBECK Branch

Former Branch Treasurer S/M Ken Walton went back into hospital because he was unable to balance or walk, and made a difficult decision to have his right leg amputated above the knee. He was allowed home from hospital around three weeks later after arrangements were made for a care plan at home as a follow-up to the operation. He was visited in hospital prior to and after the operation, and again since his homecoming, by Wansbeck Branch Secretary/Welfare Officer, who enquired as to what help he might need. There was also a home visit to George Benning, the Branch's 101-year-old Honorary Life Member (ex-RN during World War 2), and Maureen Dyer (ex-WRNS) at the care home where she permanently lives. Both are keeping well – Maureen's 85th birthday was early this month, when she is due to be visited again with a birthday card signed by Branch members after their meeting the night before. VJ Day saw members attend a memorial service and wreath-laying ceremony at Ashington Memorial Park, in the presence of the Lady Mayoress, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland and around 60 or more veterans (pictured). The ceremonies were followed by refreshments at the Masonic Hall, organised by the Fusiliers Association. On 3 September members will be attending a Red Ensign Day event with a flag-raising ceremony at Lynemouth Memorial Hall, as they do every year for the Merchant Navy, who do an excellent job, including support to the Royal Navy through the Royal Fleet

Auxiliary. A group of Wansbeck shipmates will be at Eden Camp on 7 September for the Veterans Parade and associated activities. The Branch had an invite to attend a Battle of Britain Remembrance event at the Spitfire Memorial on 21 September at Old Eshott Airfield, organised by the RAFA in Northumberland. Members will also attend a Walk/Talk event in Ridley Park in Blyth with their Fusilier friends, some



of whom are Branch Associate members. Refreshments will be served afterwards at the Pavilion. A similar coffee event at the same venue will be held the following week organised by the Blyth All Arms Association. Looking ahead to next month, the Branch has booked a Trafalgar Dinner on the 20th at the Half Moon in Stakeford. In November Wansbeck shipmates will attend Remembrance weekend events, then they will be into the Christmas party events organised by various Associations who invite them, with reciprocal invitations being issued by the Branch for their events.



PORTLAND Branch

Community spirit was on full display at Portland Branch's Island Bash Fundraiser in early August. Blessed with fine weather and high enthusiasm, the event highlighted the camaraderie and teamwork that define the RNA. Special thanks go to Shipmates Lin Davies, Ben Cartwright, Michael Howard and Dusty Miller, whose dedication ensured the stall was set up and packed away with care. Additional recognition goes to Mike for his tireless presence on-site throughout the day, and to Christine Tuck, Kev and Charlie for stepping in and enabling others to enjoy the festivities. Led by S/M Karen Miller, the fundraising stall featured generously-donated items that helped raise an impressive £147.10 in support of ongoing RNA initiatives. This success is a testament to the commitment and generosity of the Portland community. Events like this continue to reflect the strength and spirit of the Association, bringing shipmates and supporters together for fun, fellowship and service.



PURLEY Branch

Purley Branch's annual barbecue was held last month at the home of S/Ms Jill and Patrick Cannon – the Cannons been hosting the event for Branch members for more than 15 years, with only two years missed, one for Covid and one through very unfriendly weather. There were 40 guests this year, and they were honoured with the presence of Vice Admiral John McAnally, Capt Bill Oliphant and Nigel Huxtable. Their joining us, together with the added bonus of Nigel's photography skills and efforts, made it a truly special occasion, with members thoroughly enjoying the chance to chat and swing several lamps with the Central Office guests as well as other members and friends. All members are regarded as special, but in particular being able to spend a lovely relaxing and sunny afternoon with the truly incredible Anne Macleod Carey (a centenarian pus one) and the wonderful Margaret Matthews, both from the Royal Alfred Seafarers Association in Banstead, and the much-respected long-serving 90 years-plus young



S/M John Hailey, all of whom bring such joy and add so much to our merry band, was so special. Vice Admiral McAnally offered some wise

words and gave the traditional toast with the generous bottle of Pusser's from Central Office, to The King, and absent friends, followed by an informative and interesting address from Capt Bill Oliphant, particularly on the importance of welfare and wellbeing and the support the RNA have had from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. The event was a group effort with many helpers. Any regrets? Only that they didn't take a photo of the wonderful but tiny Fiat 500 of Capt Oliphant and their departure, trundling down the road the 50-odd miles home. Pictured above are (back row) Nigel Huxtable, Branch President Patrick Cannon, Branch Treasurer Jill Cannon, Vice Admiral John McAnally, Capt Bill Oliphant, Branch Chairman Glenn 'Jacko' Jack and (front row) Shipmates Anne Macleod Carey, John Hailey and Margaret Matthews.





CARDIFF Branch

Members of Cardiff Branch attended the charity rugby match that took place at Cardiff Arms Park in memory of Lt Rhodri Leyshon, who died when his helicopter ditched in the sea. Lt Leyshon, who was based at RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset, died on 4 September last year when his Merlin Mk4 helicopter made an emergency landing in water off the Dorset coast. He had previously played

rugby for Cowbridge Rugby Football Club and the Welsh University Royal Naval Unit. The match saw a team of serving military personnel, veterans and friends of Lt Leyshon play against his former clubs at Cardiff Arms Park stadium, raising money for the Wales Air Ambulance. The afternoon featured a minute's silence and a flypast by 846 Naval Air Squadron, his former unit, which took place before the match started.

SOUTHEND Branch

Royal Navy officers have celebrated Lord Nelson and victory at the Battle of Trafalgar for over two hundred years with a traditional Trafalgar Night Dinner. Meanwhile, the 'lower decks' celebrate with what is known as 'Pickle Night', which marks the anniversary of the return of the schooner HMS Pickle as the first ship back to the UK carrying the message of the great victory over the Franco-Spanish fleet and the death of Lord Nelson on 21 October 1805. Participants typically wear Georgian-era Royal Navy ratings' uniform and, unlike the grandeur and ceremony of Trafalgar Night, those attending Pickle Night eat everything out of one bowl, drink beer and rum and sing sea shanties. On 7 November, Southend Branch will be hosting its own Pickle Night. Come and join them (fancy dress optional) for a raucous night of songs, music, sea shanties, jokes and skits. Everyone is encouraged to participate. It's what the Navy calls a 'SODS opera', where everyone gets up and has a go! If you fancy joining them, drop them a line at rnasos.comms@gmail.com – if you fancy 'having a go', even better! They will be contacting all of the groups who share their premises to join in too, so it will be a great opportunity to find out what everyone else gets up to...



CITY OF EDINBURGH Branch

Shipmates from City of Edinburgh Branch were delighted to join Jennies from the Association of Wrens (AOW) Edinburgh & District Branch in an outing on the evening of 11 August – great to get out of the City for a few hours to escape the tourists during the Edinburgh Festival !). They enjoyed a visit to John Muir House, Haddington, hosted by the Provost and Veterans Champion Cllr John MacMillan. The Provost, a huge supporter of the Armed Forces and Veterans, had arranged a lovely spread (big eats!) for us and then talked about some of the highlights of his term as Provost, since 2017. Shipmates also tried on the Provost cloak and chains for size too, beside indulging in plenty of dit-spinning and comradeship.



ISLE OF WIGHT Branch

S/M Sue Waddleton of the Isle of Wight Branch has carried out a tandem parachute jump in aid of a veterans charity. The jump raised about £1,200 for the Pigsty Farm CiC, which was set up to allow respite in farmland near Thorness Bay for veterans and the local mental health community, enabling them to seek peace amongst the animals. Tea, coffee and lavatory facilities as well as seating are available. Sue was well supported by the Parachute Regiment Association and by Isle of Wight shipmates, who donated £100 to the cause. Sue served in the Royal Navy, leaving in 1978, and having just turned 70 she felt she would like to raise money for a charity, in this case the Pigsty Farm, a 17-acre farm

of tranquillity close to Thorness Bay, to the west of Cowes on the north coast of the island. It is a working farm with free-range chickens, pigs, goats and sheep – a Community Interest

Company with a mission as a Social Enterprise to support the mental wellbeing of veterans and the local community. Sue decided to do a tandem parachute jump from 12,000ft over Sandown Airport –



and, needless to say, she loved every minute of the experience and would like to do it again! If anybody else would like to donate then the link can be found on the **Pigsty Farm Facebook page**.



SPALDING Branch

Spalding Branch held a poignant service of remembrance to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day at the World War 2 Memorial in the Peace Gardens at Ayscoughfee Hall. This year's service was made especially memorable by the presence of Guest of Honour S/M Charles Giles, aged 103. Charles, who resides at Glenholme Residential Home, served with distinction in the Pacific Fleet during the war and was present when the Japanese formally surrendered. His attendance brought great significance and a personal connection to the day's remembrance. The service included prayers, a two-minute silence and speeches reflecting on the sacrifices made by all those who served in the Far East campaign. S/M Anthony Briggs piped the Still and the Carry On, adding a traditional Naval touch to the occasion. The wreath-laying was led by S/M Charles Giles himself, a moving moment which honoured the fallen and paid tribute to those who never returned. The ceremony concluded with Nelson's Prayer and a heartfelt rendition of God Save the King, echoing across the Peace Gardens. The event was well-attended by ex-military personnel and members of the public. Among those present was Harry Henderson, a former Royal Navy sailor now living in Australia, who had returned to Spalding – his birthplace – on a family visit. After the service, Harry remarked that the past couple

of hours had been the best time he had experienced during his visit to the UK. Spalding Branch would like to thank all who attended and supported the service. It was a powerful reminder of the importance of remembering the efforts and sacrifices of those who served in the often-overlooked Pacific theatre, and a fitting tribute to their courage and endurance.



CROMER Branch

Members of Cromer Branch enjoy their annual get-together and VJ Day hogroast at the home of one of their shipmates.



AREA 6

Branches from Area 6 joined forces to attend the annual Armed Forces Fair on the last day of August in the town of March in the Fenland district of Cambridgeshire. Shipmates from these branches turned to: **Huntingdon:** Catherine and Mark Fearon and Colin Jones; **St Neots:** Mike Milne, Tony Webley and Terry Brown; **Royston:** Geoff Apperley; **First**

Garden City Letchworth: Penny and Rory Jarvis; **Rushden:** David Hawker. The group was located next to other veterans organisations in the food and drink area, which was handy when they felt peckish. There was even a Royal Navy Catering Van dispensing free scran not far from them. Right in front of them was a Merlin engine, which burst into life from time to time, attracting large crowds, but making conversation a bit strained... It was a huge event, with many exhibits and stalls covering a large park in the

centre of March, which was very well-attended. Shipmates were delighted to represent the RNA at such a prestigious event, and even managed to recruit a few new members. It was great to meet other veterans, serving personnel and cadets and swap reminiscences and dits with them. The event concluded with an impressive parade and remembrance service, with David Corrigan and Tony Webley leading the standards into the arena and showing the rest how it should be done.





CARMARTHEN Branch

Here are some snapshots from the Carmarthen Branch Black Tot Day event, marking the anniversary of the last Royal Navy official daily rum issue on 31 July 1970.

FALMOUTH Branch

Falmouth Branch shipmates commemorated VJ Day with a parade in the morning. Joined by the Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall, Sir Edward Bolitho, the Mayor of Falmouth, representatives of HMS Tamar and other veterans associations, the parade in the bright sunshine was a moving and fitting tribute. It culminated with a Lone Piper, Falmouth S/ Dave Maitland, playing a lament simultaneously with pipers around the world. Later in the day 88 Branch members and their guests enjoyed a harbour and river pasty cruise before arriving back in the evening for a firework display. Although the display was



to mark the end of 'Falmouth Week' it also provided a fitting end to a Day of Remembrance. On the theme of anniversaries, Branch members

decided on a Mexican-themed barbecue to celebrate the RNA's 75 birthday. More than 30 members enjoyed a (mainly) sunny afternoon, great food, a cake supplied by Branch Secretary Jim Argo, a couple of beers and a tot (or two) in order to toast to another 75 years.





ST NEOTS Branch

St Neots Branch held a very successful dinner to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the RNA. The top table featured Guest of Honour Cdre Tony Williams and his wife Lucinda, herself a former Naval officer, as well as RNA Membership Secretary S/M Sara Field and her husband Bob. Guests were greeted with a glass of prosecco on arrival at the Jubilee Hall, Eaton Socon, and an excellent carvery was provided by Ben Harris from the Three Horseshoes, Graveley. Speeches were made by S/M Keith Ridley and Cdre Tony Williams (now S/M Tony Williams!), followed by presentations, a raffle and the cake-cutting by Sara Field and S/M Lucinda

Williams. BZ to S/M Maureen Ridley for organising this very successful event, which was also attended by shipmates from **Royston, Huntingdon, Peterborough, Hemel Hempstead and Letchworth** Branches. RAFA members who are also shipmates were also present. The Branch was privileged to welcome World War 2 veterans – S/M David Berry, 102, who was an observer in Swordfish torpedo bombers, and S/M Dick Wood, 101, who was on a destroyer covering Canadian troops going ashore on D-Day. Also at the dinner was S/M Terry Brown, a founding member of St Neots Branch. During the evening S/M Mike Milne was presented with life membership by Cdre Williams (pictured right). Mike has been a real stalwart for the Branch and the RNA, having been Chairman, currently Treasurer, and also at present Chairman of Area 6. Shipmates may well recognise Mike from his presentations on the RNA's popular online Fireside Chats on Monday evenings. Meanwhile, S/M Tony Webley received Life Membership of the Association (pictured left). Tony has been Branch Secretary for many years, and although he is a Dabtoe he drives the engine room of the St Neots Branch in every aspect. Shipmates will notice his Whale Island upright stance! Photographers on the night were S/M Simon Ellis (group photographs), S/M Geoff Apperley (presentation photos) and S/M Ian Cameron (top table photos).





ROSYTH AND WEST FIFE Branch

Rosyth & West Fife Branch marked the anniversary of the Japanese surrender to the Allied Forces on 15 August – 80 years to the day after the occasion. Japan's formal unconditional surrender did not take place until more than two weeks later, on 2 September 1945, on board American battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, accompanied by 250 Allied warships. With the kind permission of the Captain of HMS Caledonia, Capt Stuart Cantellow, shipmates were privileged to hold a Commemoration Ceremony and Service within the establishment. The Commanding Officer HMS Scotia, Surg Cdr Rob O'Donnell RNR, kindly gave the Branch permission to hold the Commemoration Service within Scotia's Garden of Remembrance, located within the Caledonia estate. They were also given full support by Paul Smyth, civilian Head of the Establishment, and his administrative staff. Lt Cdr Gary Nicholson RNR, Executive Officer HMS Scotia, generously provided a reception with refreshments of tea, coffee, cake and biscuits for guests and participants on arrival at Scotia, and was on hand (with a group of RN Officer Cadets) to welcome guests. HMS Caledonia was represented by Lt Cdr Morgan McDonald and VIP Guests in attendance included Mrs Margaret Dean, former Lord Lt of Fife, Capt Tom Sunter, former Captain of HMS Caledonia and former Deputy Lord Lt. of Fife, and Paul Smyth. The Revd Elané Sassenberg, who has only recently arrived in Scotland from her native South Africa, is the Minister of Inverkeithing Parish Church and kindly accepted the Branch's invitation to officiate at the service. At 1050 Branch Chairman Richard Wardrope called the parade to fall in at the Garden of Remembrance. The parade, led by Branch Standard Bearer S/M Mike Firth, was followed by a platoon of 24 Branch members, a platoon of Royal Navy Officer Cadets, two Royal Marines Buglers and the Branch Piper and Honorary Branch Member S/M Brooklyn Morris. S/M Richard welcomed the VIPs and guests then delivered a brief but moving address on the background to and events leading up to Japan's surrender. There then followed a very powerful and poignant address by Revd Sassenberg, after which S/M Norman Thoroughgood read the National Tribute. Following prayers and a hymn, Piper Brooklyn Morris piped 'Celebrate', the official music composed for VE80 – a very polished and professional interpretation of the music which

raised the hairs on the back of the necks of those present. S/M Jim Stewart recited Binyon's Lines, after which the RM buglers played the Last Post and (after a two-minute silence) the Reveille. S/M Jim Stewart recited the Kohima Epitaph and there followed the ceremonial laying of poppy wreaths at the Memorial, led by Lt Cdr McDonald and S/M Norman Thoroughgood on behalf of Rosyth and West Fife Branch. S/M Jim Stewart laid a poppy cross and photo of the memorial at Taukkyan Cemetery in Myanmar in memory of his uncle, Pte George Kimpton, a Chindit who at the age of 31 was laid to rest there. He died on 13 April 1945 in Burma, a victim to malaria and dysentery. Jim then read the full timeline of events occurring in South-East Asia, from the Potsdam Declaration

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issued by the United States, Britain and China on 26 July 1945, to the formal surrender on board USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on 2 September. A very poignant moment on the day was the unexpected presence of long-serving former Chairman and current Branch President Lt Cdr Alan Bayliss RN Retd. Alan is a very dearly-loved and respected member of the Association and is highly regarded by those who served with him throughout his career as a Clearance Diver. One of his proudest achievements as a Diver was the recovery of the Ship's Bell from the wreck of HMS Royal Oak at Scapa Flow. He was very looked after throughout the service by S/M Ray Nolton who, following the Service, took him back to the Wardroom of HMS Caledonia for the weekly gathering of Caledonia Old Codgers, for lunch and the swapping of treasured old sea dits which have grown arms and legs over the years. Ray then delivered him safely back home, into the care of his beloved wife Ella. The Branch would like to offer a very special thank you to Revd Andrea Fraser, residing Minister at the Parish Church Dalgety Bay, for providing Alan and Ella with very caring pastoral care. With the kind permission of the Mess President of the WOs and NCOs Mess, Branch members and their guests retired to the Mess for lunch, drinks and a toast, to King Charles, with genuine gold-standard Pusser's Bubbly. The Branch is very fortunate to have amongst its membership a very talented ex-Naval Photographer and Royal Yachtsman, Michael Gilbert, who took the official photographs of the event. Mike unselfishly gives his photographic services to the Branch for all of formal, social and fundraising events. That was not the only Branch activity in August. S/M Norman Thoroughgood, along with a number of volunteers from the Branch, organised, set up and manned a stall at the annual Hillend Fair to promote the RNA, engage with the local community and raise funds for the Branch's adopted charities. Norman also organised a games night against the WO & SRs Mess. The usual games of darts, snooker, pool, uckers and crib were played, and despite their declining years, and not-too-steady hands, the Branch members emerged victorious. The Mess treated them to pizzas for supper. Following an appeal by Central Office, which had received a request from the family of a retired RN Veteran, for a member of the RNA to pay a visit to their father, 93-year-old Dave Nigel Bonnar. Recently-appointed Branch Welfare Representative S/M Ralph Payne paid a home visit to Dave in July and immediately struck up a strong rapport with him. At the monthly meeting, Ralph briefed Branch members on the outcome of his visit, saying how chatty and upbeat he was, that his memory was as sharp as a tack and how much he enjoyed talking about his life on the ocean wave to a fellow sailor. Ralph says he got as much enjoyment out of the visit as Dave did, and has since made a further visit with Norman Thoroughgood. Looking ahead to



this month, 26 September marks the 100th anniversary of the inauguration of the City of Dunfermline's World War 1 War Memorial. Rosyth & West Fife members have been invited to participate in the rededication of the Memorial and to parade their Branch Standard. The ceremony is to be followed by a Civic Reception, hosted by the Town Council, in Dunfermline City Chambers. Some Branch Members will be attending the Armed Forces Biennial Parade in London on 14 September. Finally, the Branch will be holding their annual barbecue, auction and fun night in the WO & SRs Mess, HMS Caledonia, on 6 September.





TYNE Branch

S/M Ron Cunningham celebrated his 101st birthday with his friends and family during the August Bank Holiday weekend. S/M Roslyn Hastie-Murray (NCM11) visited with the many cards sent by his Tyne Branch shipmates, where he reported on his recent visit to HMS Calliope and told her that he has been visiting local schools to share his experiences with the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy. Ron is a D-Day veteran and holds the French Legion d'Honneur; he also served during the Battle of the Atlantic. Shipmate Ron transferred to Tyne Branch just prior to Covid lockdown in 2020, having moved to North Shields from Bournemouth to be closer to his family. He is a Life Member of the RNA and a Life Vice-President of Ferndown & District, his previous Branch. During the VJ80 commemorations Tyne Branch members paid their respects across

Tyneside at North Shields, Whitley Bay, Newcastle, Washington and South Shields. A statue to commemorate the Forgotten Army (by Ray Lonsdale, who created the Eleven-O-One statue, known as 'Tommy' at Seaham) was unveiled at South Shields Town Hall prior to its permanent installation near the Veterans Walk in the North Marine Park, South Shields. Photos: Newcastle – Steve Brock Photography; South Shields – Ken Nyberg. A flag raising ceremony in honour of Merchant Navy Day, with an address by Cllr Nigel Huscroft, Chair of North Tyneside Council, was held at the Memorial for Lost Seafarers in North Shields. Shipmates Tony 'Knocker' White Snr, Jim Houghton and Roslyn Hastie-Murray accompanied S/M Ronald Cunningham, with Knocker employing his skills to raise the Merchant Navy flag. A local councillor expressed his interest in joining the Branch – he's a former RN



chef who served in HM Ships Norfolk and Ark Royal amongst others. They also met Nick Jobson, a former Royal Marine who is currently the Armed Forces Officer for North Tyneside Council.





AREA 7 and RHONDDA Branch

Members of Area 7 attended a service to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day at the Church of St John the Baptist, Cardiff, on the evening of VJ Day itself. S/Ms Graham Warner (Area 7 Chairman), Andrew Clark (Cardiff Branch Chairman), Dave Adams and Les Macgregor are pictured at the church door in the centre of Cardiff. A one-item raffle is to be drawn on the evening of 25 October during the Area 7 Trafalgar Night Dinner at Blancos Hotel in Port Talbot, with a beautiful hand-made rum maiden being the prize. Tickets are £5 each, with payments to be made to 'Royal Naval Association number seven area': sort code 30-96-72 Acc No 62855368, ref MAIDEN. Please write the account name as shown. Once payment has been made, the Area Treasurer will confirm and your ticket will be written out and send a photo sent as confirmation. Please

email Area 7 Chairman S/M Graham Warner on chairman@rna-7area.org informing him of the number of tickets and your phone number. Delivery will be paid to UK addresses only. S/M Graham Warner, who is also Branch Secretary of Rhondda Branch, made the rum maiden as a means of raising funds for the Area. He said: "It is a celebratory item with a hidden access to the rum, made from different woods, and commemorates the 75th Anniversary of the RNA and the 220th battle of Trafalgar."



SWANSEA Branch

The photograph (left) was taken on the occasion of the Swansea Branch President, Lt Cdr Andrew Davies, being made a Deputy Lieutenant for West Glamorgan by the Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Louise Fleet. The ceremony was performed at the Swansea Sea Cadet Unit, where Lt Cdr Davies is also Chairman of the Unit Management Committee. Swansea now has four Deputy Lieutenants who are members of Branch – they are Capt Brian Thorne, Wing Cdr Steve Fry, Lt Cdr Andrew Davies and Lt Cdr Jill Johnson. Shipmates in South Wales reckon there are not too many Branches can match that. Pictured below are members of Swansea Branch with Lord Lieutenant Mrs Fleet and the Lord Mayor of Swansea, Cllr Cheryl Philpott





NORWICH Branch

Shipmates at Norwich Branch held their RNA 75 summer celebration afternoon by the river – and oh! it rained and rained... But in true matelot tradition they didn't let that stop them from having a great afternoon of food, drink and spinning dits while being entertained by the Wicked Hamptons. They were joined by shipmates from **Stowmarket** Branch and the Sheriff of Norwich, Stuart Wright. Here's to the next 75 years of the RNA! Speaking of anniversaries, on the 80th anniversary of VJ Day a total of 19 Norwich Branch shipmates joined other veterans, cadets and an impressive 40 standards for a parade

and service at Norwich Cathedral. The salute was taken by the Duke of Gloucester and the Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk The Lady Dannatt. It was great to see the cathedral full for the service at which Gen The Lord Dannatt laid a wreath on behalf of the veterans of Norfolk. More than 30 shipmates enjoyed the annual branch barbecue, hosted this year by Branch President S/M Phil Coates and S/M Rhian Coates. Fabulous food, great company – a fantastic afternoon all round. Coming up are the Branch Run Ashore (26 September) at the Garden House, Norwich, and the Branch Trafalgar Night Dinner (18 October) at the Wensum Valley Hotel, Taverham.



OBITUARIES

S/M JOHN MCGREGOR

Cdr John McGregor OBE, who died on 12 August at the age of 88, was a Royal naval nuclear engineering specialist who also played a crucial role in the Falklands Conflict.

The son of a Naval officer killed in action in 1941, John made a name for himself working on nuclear reactors in British submarines. But it was in the South Atlantic that he proved invaluable to his country, when he led a team that successfully removed bombs from RFA ships Sir Galahad and Sir Lancelot, risking his life over many days to create a safe route by cutting through decks to allow the unexploded 1,000lb bombs to be lifted clear.

After John retired he devoted time to uncovering the truth about the death of his father, discovering that the cruiser HMS Neptune had strayed into an uncharted minefield and sank with heavy loss of life – along with destroyer HMS Kandahar, which attempted to rescue sailors and sank herself, some 838 men died.

S/M ALAN BAYLISS

The funeral of Shipmate Alan Bayliss, the former President of Rosyth and West Fife Branch, who crossed the Bar on 25 August at the age of 87, will be held at Dunfermline Crematorium, Masterton Road KY11 8QR, at 1400 on Thursday 18 September, and afterwards at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel at North Queensferry.



S/M JOHN GIBBS

S/M John Gibbs crossed the bar at Hinchbrook Hospital on 10 August. John served in the Royal Navy, initially as a 'Ganges Boy', then as a seaman. He spent time in HMS Victory (the ship, not the shore base!) and was messed onboard as a tour guide. His knowledge of Victory and Trafalgar was encyclopedic, and often in demand at Trafalgar events. When he left Victory to join his next draft in Hong Kong, his thoughtful messmates secreted a 12lb cannonball in his kitbag as a souvenir! John was a Leading Seaman UC1 in the minesweeper HMS Wilkieston, based at HMS Tamar and, as Buffer, was responsible for the sweep deck. In 1958, he was in HMS Scarborough at Christmas Island (now Kiritimati) in the Pacific during the UK's nuclear test programme, Op Grapple. The Whitby-class frigate is pictured above – image taken from the Imperial War Museum



on the brewery floor, but he eventually became an Area Manager, responsible for many public houses over a wide area in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. He was a great source for recommending the best pubs to visit.

John and his wife, Stella, settled in St Neots and he joined the **St Neots Branch** in 1975. He served as Vice Chairman from 2015 to 2020 and was appointed President in 2016, holding that position until March 2025, when he stood down due to ill health.

He was one of nature's gentlemen and his gentle humour and wise council will be sadly missed - RIP John!

S/M CYRIL OLIVER

Rhondda Branch is mourning the death of World War 2 veteran Cyril Oliver. He was 98. Cyril joined Rhondda branch eight years ago when his daughters Julie and Sally relocated him to South Wales, where Julie lives. While in the Royal Navy he was a Yeoman of Signals, and had a very interesting Naval career. Unfortunately, he had health issues and was doing no more than existing in London, where

he had retired after serving in the Metropolitan Police, rising to the rank of Inspector. Julie paid the Branch the ultimate compliment when she told shipmates, about a year after Cyril joined them: "The RNA, and in particular Rhondda Branch, have given Dad a new lease of life, and if it weren't for you, I don't think he would still be alive." Cyril always looked forward to attending meetings and was loved and respected by all who

knew him.

He enjoyed the repartee and dit sessions enormously. Sadly, Cyril crossed the bar on 21 July and his funeral was held on 13 August.

His coffin was draped with a White Ensign that he was instructed to obtain from a Canadian ship in exchange for rum as it was made from a man-made material instead of the traditional cotton. Unfortunately, it disappeared after falling into the bottom of his kit bag, where it remained until his discharge.

It was Cyril's wish that it be given to the Rhondda branch on completion of his funeral. His shipmates are humbled and honoured to be the custodians of this small piece of World War 2 history.

The final piece of music at his funeral was 'Paddy McGinty's Goat'. Rest in Peace, Cyril.

The funeral will be with full RNA honours and rig will be RNA rig with medals.

It is hoped as many shipmates as possible will turn out to celebrate the life of a true Naval legend.

Alan, who retired as a lieutenant commander, qualified as a Mine Clearance Diver in 1973 and had a number of roles within the specialisation, many of them based in Scotland.

WELFARE AND WELLBEING

TAKE STOCK AND TAKE TIME – WELLBEING STARTS WITHIN

Firstly in our monthly update, the end of summer is nearing, and as golden leaves begin to fall, let this be your gentle reminder – wellbeing starts within.

The Season of Self

As summer quietly slips away and golden leaves begin to gather at our feet, it's a good time to pause and take stock – not just of the months gone by, but of how we're really feeling. The change in season gives us a natural moment to slow down, reflect, and reset.

For our RNA shipmates – especially those in welfare and wellbeing roles – this is a chance to breathe. You've spent so much time being there for others, listening, supporting, lifting spirits, and often doing so without much recognition. That kind of care takes energy, and it's easy to forget that your own wellbeing matters just as much. It's not a luxury or something to squeeze in when there's time – it's the foundation that keeps everything else steady.

So, before autumn's rhythm picks up and the pace of life starts to quicken again, take that breath. Make space for rest, for connection, and for whatever helps you feel grounded. Self-care doesn't have to be big or complicated. It might be a quiet walk beneath golden trees, a shared laugh with someone close, or simply a moment of peace with no distractions. These small acts aren't indulgent – they're essential. They remind us that we're human, and that we deserve the same care we give to others.

Think back to a moment this year when you felt truly connected – whether to a person, a purpose, or a place. What helped you feel steady then? What might help you feel that way now? These reflections aren't just personal – they're powerful. They shape how we show up, how we lead, and how we support our communities.

Looking after yourself doesn't mean stepping away from the mission – it means strengthening it. When we're rested and recharged, we're better equipped to support those around us, not just with energy, but with clarity, patience, and heart. Let's carry that spirit into the months ahead: grounded in

kindness, united in purpose, and always mindful of the legacy we're shaping together. A legacy built not just on service, but on compassion. Not just on tradition, but on care – for others and for ourselves.

Thank you – for all that you do, and all that you give.

Mindfulness and Wellbeing Resources

- **Free Resources | Breathworks** – Guided meditations, weekly events, and self-led courses designed to support wellbeing and resilience
- **Good mental health: Mindfulness | RNIB** – Practical mindfulness tips especially helpful for those managing stress or anxiety
- **Wellbeing Support | Activities & ideas | British Red Cross** – Activities and advice to help tackle loneliness, build resilience, and support mental health

A quick round up:

Funeral Support

We have seen a noticeable increase in requests for funeral-related support, including coffin drapes, standard bearers, and general assistance. Please remember **we support both RNA members and non-members**, along with their families. If you or someone you know needs help, do not hesitate to get in touch.

Funeral Guide - Royal Naval Association

Photo ID Cards

A steady stream of Photo ID cards continues to go out. If any Branch Welfare and Wellbeing Officers (BWWOs) would like one, please send a passport-style photo to wws@rnassoc.org

Welfare & Wellbeing Shipmate of the Month

Brett's Compassionate Commitment to Naval Veterans

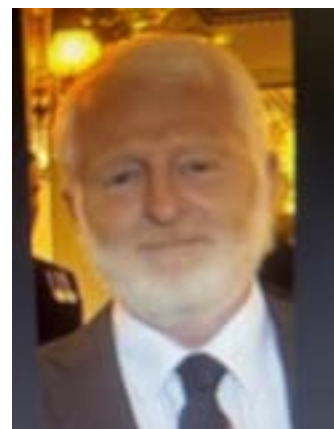
Each month, we will shine a light on a shipmate whose dedication to welfare and wellbeing exemplifies the absolute best of our community spirit.

This month, we proudly honour **Brett Crabtree**, Redruth and Camborne Branch and Area 4 Welfare and Wellbeing Officer, whose recent work in Cornwall reflects the heart of what it means to serve – long after the uniform is hung up.

Here are just a couple of examples.

In two separate cases, referred through the Southwest Caseworker from the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT), Brett quietly stepped in to support veterans living near the edge of the country – both geographically and, at times, emotionally. His approach was simple: listen, understand, and act with empathy.

One veteran expressed a need for a cordless phone and



LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY WITH YOUR WILL

If you need to update or create a new will you can take advantage of a free service, where you can also leave a lasting legacy by helping the Royal Naval Association to continue to support Shipmates in need. We've partnered with expert estate planners Octopus Legacy, so you can write or update your will for free – over the phone, or in person, and home visits can be arranged as well.

Call 020 4525 3605 and quote 'The Royal Naval Association' to make your appointment. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 0900-1730.

All they ask is that you consider leaving the Royal Naval Association a gift in your will.

For more information see the web page at <https://buff.ly/44BjG39>

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WELFARE AND WELLBEING

answer machine to stay connected. Brett researched options, printed details, and discussed the merits of the device during a home visit. The veteran later purchased the phone and has since found it to be a helpful addition to daily life.

Another veteran, seeking ways to stay active during the winter months, was supported with a second-hand pedal exerciser sourced and delivered personally by Brett. He took time to explain its use, ensuring the veteran felt confident and cared for. The visit also offered a chance for meaningful conversation – a reminder that wellbeing is as much about connection as it is about equipment.

In both cases, Brett's observations were thoughtful and reassuring. He noted the veterans' resilience, the pride they take in their homes, and their continued independence, all while promising to stay in touch with regular calls.

"Once Navy, always Navy," Brett reflected. And it is that enduring sense of duty, camaraderie, and care that makes him this month's standout shipmate. His work has been duly reflected in Area 4's welfare and wellbeing returns, but more importantly, it is felt in the lives of those he has supported. Brett's actions remind us that legacy is not built in grand gestures – it is built in quiet moments of service, one shipmate at a time.

Thank you, Brett, for your unwavering commitment to our community.

Do you know a shipmate who has gone above and beyond to support others in our community?

We are inviting nominations for Welfare and Wellbeing Shipmate of the Month – a chance to shine a spotlight on those whose dedication, compassion, and quiet service deserve recognition.

Nominees must have their contributions reflected in the monthly Welfare and Wellbeing report forms – this ensures transparency and helps us celebrate work that is already making a documented difference.

Whether it is a thoughtful visit, a creative solution to a welfare



needs, or consistent follow-up that uplifts others, we want to hear about it.

To nominate, simply send a brief summary of the shipmate's actions and confirm that they have been included in your latest monthly return.

Let us keep honouring the spirit of "Once Navy, Always Navy" – one shipmate at a time.

RNRMC Race Across the UK — Support Our Journey!

As many of you will know, Bill Oliphant and I have been taking part in the RNRMC Race Across the UK, raising funds to support the incredible work of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Pictured are Bill and I being given an enthusiastic send-off by Scottish shipmates in Edinburgh

Although we should finish our journey today – the day that this Semaphore Circular is published – it's not too late to sponsor us. Every contribution helps make a real difference.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity - Team RNA - Ready N Able

GAMBLING HARM – THE UNSEEN ENEMY

The Armed Forces Gambling Support Network (AFGSN), led by Beacon Counselling Trust, is a gambling-related harms collaborative partnership committed to preventing and reducing gambling-related harms within the Armed Forces and veterans community. The collaborative includes specialist agencies from across the UK, including Beacon Counselling Trust, Ara Recovery for All, Betknowmore, Breakeven and RCA Trust.

The Ministry of Defence has declared it takes gambling harm seriously and

is committed to reducing stigma, supporting those affected, and improving access to help across the Armed Forces community. Evidence shows that veterans are ten times more likely to have gambling issues adversely impacting them and those around them than the UK population.

The AFGSN has a clear mission, to reduce the risk and incidence of gambling-related harm amongst the military and veterans' community by creating an enduring support service

for Forces personnel, veterans and the colleagues, friends, and families of both. On Tuesday 16 September the AFGSN, in association with the North West Reserves Forces and Cadet Association is staging 'The Unseen Enemy', a national conference concerning gambling harms and the Forces community.

If you would like to attend the conference, at the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Training and Development Academy in Long Lane, Aintree, please follow the link [here](#)

WHAT IS CHILD MAINTENANCE – AND WHO AM I PAYING FOR?

Parents separating = logistical and practical issues. It might mean changing who lives at the family home, spending time between two different houses and agreeing the arrangements for the children. There is also the issue of child maintenance. The purpose of the payment is to ensure that the living costs for a child/children are covered. Here are some FAQs:

1. What is it?

Child maintenance is not designed to support the other parent. The paying party will be contributing towards the child's costs such as clothing, food, activities.

2. Who has to pay?

Child maintenance is payable between parents. The parties do not have to have ever been in a relationship, but if named on the birth certificate = parental responsibility (PR). It is the parties who have PR that are responsible for the child, and that includes financially. This is even the case if the paying party who has PR has never spent time with the child. If the child/children live with both parents equally, then in most cases neither would pay the other child maintenance.

3. How much do I have to pay?

Child maintenance payments can be agreed voluntarily between parents. Often, the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) calculator can be a helpful resource when considering what would be an appropriate payment to make. The CMS calculator considers:

- What is the income of the paying parent?
- What affects that income – ie pensions.
- Child maintenance rates. There are five different rates; one will be applied subject to the gross weekly income of the paying parent.
- Does the paying parent pay child maintenance for any other children?
- A child maintenance amount is calculated based on (a)-(d) above.
- That child maintenance amount is then reduced subject to how many overnights the child/children spend overnight with the paying parent (if at all).
- You can ask the CMS to take other income and expenses into account

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 civvy 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

when working out payments via a variation application. This might be appropriate if there are other types of income such as rental payments, dividend payments, significant shares or savings or if you are the paying party, where you already pay expenses like travel costs, disability support, school fees or household outgoings.

The CMS calculator can be used informally. No details are shared with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the government or your employer. The resource can be found online: <https://www.gov.uk/calculate-child-maintenance>.

4. How do I pay?

If an agreement is reached (whether you have used the CMS calculator as a tool or agreed an amount directly), payments can be made simply by bank transfer between the parties. If an agreement is not reached or the paying parent refuses to send money to support the child/children's costs, the receiving party can ask the CMS to help. The CMS will make a formal assessment and then contact the

paying parent. If the party still refuses to engage, the receiving parent can use the CMS Collect and Pay Service. This currently incurs an uplift of 20 per cent to the paying parent, and a 4 per cent reduction from the receiving parent.

Be aware, however, that the DWP have proposed new rules. If the CMS is contacted to make a formal assessment, it will automatically trigger the Collect and Pay Service = % charge to both parents. On the new rules (which are expected to be introduced in 2026/2027) it is anticipated there will be a change to both % charges, so perhaps the parents will be encouraged to resolve the arrangements without CMS involvement.

CMS is overseen by the DWP, not the family court. If there are any questions or queries, speak to CMS first. Only in certain cases where the paying party has a significant income would the court interfere and consider making a 'top-up' award. In these circumstances, it is worth speaking to a specialist family solicitor. Of course, you are welcome to contact me if you have any questions relating to child arrangements or CMS payments. It can be stressful deciding the

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WELFARE AND WELLBEING

CHILD MAINTENANCE

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contact and financial arrangements for your child/children following divorce or separation, and/or navigating the CMS process if an agreement cannot be reached. It is important to seek legal advice to make the process as simple as possible. I'm here to help navigate these issues, and for all other family law questions! 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 a little girl who is one year old.

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

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LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH PENSION AWARENESS WEEK

Your pension plays a crucial role in securing your future financial stability, and the Forces Pension Society (FPS) believe there is always more you can do to better understand its value.

Pension Awareness Week is the perfect opportunity to help raise awareness of the importance of your pension, so ultimately you can improve your long-term financial wellbeing from which to launch your second career, and lay the foundations for a dignified retirement.

In addition to raising awareness among those currently serving who may not have yet considered the implications of their pension choices, their aim is also to reach out to individuals in the resettlement process/Service leavers, veterans, and families in the military community, ensuring they are equipped with the information needed to make informed decisions for a brighter financial future.

This year's Armed Forces Pensions Awareness campaign will run from 8-12 September.

During this year's campaign the FPS will be including online myth busting, FAQs, and helpful tips whether you be serving (including reserves), or retired, and there will be something for military families.

The programme includes:

Monday 8 September Online: A focus on Serving Personnel with tips, Q&A, and myth-busting.

Tuesday 9 September Online: A focus on Reserves with tips, Q&A, and myth-busting. Webinar: 'Benefits of AFPS15' hosted by MoD

Wednesday 10 September Online: A focus on Service Leavers with tips, Q&A, and myth-busting. Roadshow: Career Transition Partnership Employment Fair Bournemouth

Thursday 11 September Online: A focus on Veterans with tips, Q&A, and myth-busting

Friday 12 September Online: A focus on Families

Webinar: 'AFPS15 Remedy. What to Consider on Receipt of your RSS'

Saturday 13 September Families Day: Royal Marines Corps Families Day, Lympstone

This important campaign comes once a year, so don't miss this opportunity to get involved – make a note in your calendar, and follow the FPS on social media @ForcesPensions #AFPAW25 #ArmedForcesPensions For full details on the FPS website click the link [here](#)

Organisation	Telephone	Website
Op Courage	-	www.nhs.uk
Samaritans	116 123	www.samaritans.org
SSAFA	0800 260 6780	www.ssafa.org.uk
Naval Children's Charity	02392 639 534	www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk
Royal Marines Charity	-	www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk
Association of WRENS	02392 725 141	https://wrens.org.uk
RNBT	02392 690 112	www.rnbt.org.uk
RNRMC	02393 871 520	www.rnrmc.org.uk
RBL	0808 802 8080	www.britishlegion.org.uk
Naval Families Federation	02392 654 374	https://nff.org.uk
COBSEO	-	www.cobseo.org.uk
Seafarers UK	020 7932 0000	www.theseafarerscharity.org
CRISIS	0300 636 1967	www.crisis.org.uk
REFUGE	0808 2000 247	https://refuge.org.uk/
Veteran Outreach Support	02392 731 767	https://vosuk.org/
PTSD Resolution	0300 302 0551	https://ptsdresolution.org/
White Ensign Association	-	www.whiteensign.co.uk
GOV.UK for all OPs	0808 802 1212	www.gov.uk/support-for-veterans
Officer Association	020 7808 4175	www.officersassociation.org.uk
Fighting with Pride	-	www.fightingwithpride.org.uk
Help for Heroes	0300 303 9888	www.helpforheroes.org.uk
The Poppy Factory	-	www.poppyfactory.org
SAIL	0800 160 1842	https://sailine.org.uk/
Combat Stress	0800 138 1619	helpline@combatstress.org.uk

DON'T MISS OUT...

The Semaphore Circular and Semaphore Short publications are an important part of the RNA's '7Cs' provision to its members, so it is important that Branches have an accurate record of members' email addresses – please make sure members keep you abreast of any changes, or would like to be added to the dist list.

Lanyard Branch members should email Sarah Bewley on cml@rnassoc.org if they are having issues with receiving the newsletters.

FUNERAL GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE

"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 wsw@rnassoc.org, telephone 07591 829416 Find the guide on our website: <https://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/rna-funeral-guide>

COULD VICTOR HELP YOU?

VICTOR (Veterans' Intensive Complex Trauma Organised Recovery) is a treatment service for PTSD and Complex PTSD, provided by Combat Stress, a long-established UK veterans mental health charity.

The online VICTOR service was commissioned by NHS England in October 2024 for a period of two years. VICTOR delivers time-intensive, evidence-based, trauma-focused psychological therapy online, with an emphasis on holistic recovery, providing a complementary service offer to Op Courage: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service.

The service aims to help those veterans who may have used Op Courage and wish to try an alternative approach to support them on their recovery.

VICTOR is delivered to veterans by a team of clinicians with expertise in PTSD and Complex PTSD from Combat Stress, is driven by latest research and seeks to optimise outcomes.

The multidisciplinary team of clinicians work together to tailor care to the veteran's individual needs so each has a personalised treatment plan, that includes partners or family where possible.

The team consists of psychologists and psychotherapists, occupational therapists, art therapists, nurses, substance misuse nurses, and peer and family support workers.

The service takes a holistic approach to recovery with a focus on psychological recovery as well as a focus on family, social and physical well-being.

The aim is that recovery in one area should support recovery in others.

Families and supporters are integral to all phases of VICTOR.

VICTOR service offer

VICTOR is a three-phased treatment programme comprising two weeks of preparatory work, a two-week time-intensive treatment phase, and three months follow-up support.

Veterans taking part in VICTOR progress through treatment as part of a cohort of up to eight veterans.

Phase 1: two-week preparation

The veteran and family meet with multidisciplinary team members online over two weeks to ensure that veterans are fully prepared and ready to start the time-intensive trauma-focused therapy.

Phase 2 is the core of VICTOR and comprises a two-week period of time-intensive evidence-based trauma-

focused psychological treatment (up to 24 hours of therapy).

Phase 3: The three months following the time-intensive treatment phase provides veterans with an opportunity to embed the changes and learnings made through treatment within everyday life, at home, at work and with those close to them.

The follow-up phase concludes with an appointment with their psychologist or psychotherapist to review progress. After this point, a small number of veterans access the peer support service for up to a year, particularly those who are most socially isolated.

Treatments that include group-work aren't appropriate for a small number of veterans, who may benefit from time-intensive trauma-focused therapy, without the need for additional multi-disciplinary care within VICTOR.

Access and referrals

The VICTOR service operates between 0900 and 1630, with additional nursing support available until 1900, and

provides access to the 24/7 Combat Stress helpline.

Referrals to VICTOR follow the usual routes into Combat Stress, which are:

■ **Self-referral:** Veterans can self-refer by calling the Combat Stress helpline on 0800 138 1619 or by texting 07537 173683 or email helpline@combatstress.org.uk (NB referrals can only be completed by phone, but initial contact can be made via text or email). The helpline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for veterans and their families for emotional support.

■ **Professional referral:** clinicians (including Op Courage, military charities and secondary care services) and GPs can complete a referral on behalf of a veteran **here**, which includes guidance on referring a veteran to Combat Stress. Referrals are not accepted from families and carers; however, they can use the helpline for emotional support and advice.

For further information or to discuss a veteran prior to making a referral please use this [link](#).

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

Greenwich Hospital has awarded a grant of £76,600 to the Armed Forces Education Trust, providing vital support to schools with a high proportion of children of Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel.

The funding will enhance educational opportunities and wellbeing for Service children, ensuring they do not miss out on learning and development opportunities, especially where their education is at risk of being impacted by parental service.

For over 150 years, the Trust has supported Service children whose education has been disrupted by factors such as frequent moves, parental deployment, separation, gaps in learning, or additional educational needs. By offering grants to schools and individuals, the Trust helps children overcome barriers to learning and development, ensuring no child misses out.

The funding reflects a new partnership between Greenwich Hospital and the Trust. This year, the Trust received 30 applications from schools seeking support, with 21 approved by its Board. Of these, four schools had particularly high numbers of RN/RM children, and Greenwich Hospital stepped in to provide targeted funding through the Trust to meet their needs.

Schools supported through this grant are:

- **Parc Eglos Primary School, Helston, Cornwall** – a full-day adventure programme with structured challenges for Key Stage 2 and indoor activities for younger pupils.
- **Widewell Primary School, Plymouth** – outdoor learning enhancement; training for teaching assistants to lead activities specifically designed for Service children.
- **John Logie Baird Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Centre, Helensburgh** – Forget-Me-Not Room – a safe, welcoming environment for Service children to access art therapy, 1:1 support, and family use.
- **Helston Community College, Cornwall** – employment of a Service Student Teacher to provide bespoke academic interventions for 43 Service children with Special Educational Needs.

See [here](#) for more on the Trust's work, and [here](#) for more on Greenwich Hospital and its work.

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS HEALTH CHALLENGES FOR VETERANS

A new comparative study by the University of Chester, funded by Forces in Mind Trust, has highlighted the unique physical and mental health challenges that ex-Service personnel of the Armed Forces can experience compared to the national population. Anonymised data from 2,729 veterans and 2,729 demographically-matched members of the general population across 13 primary health care practices in North-West England was analysed to compare health conditions using medical records.

The analysis showed that:

- Ex-Service personnel were generally not more likely to have a mental health diagnosis than the general population, and were recorded as having depression at lower rates than the general population.

- Ex-Service personnel were more likely to experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), with 2.9 per cent recorded as having the condition, compared to 0.8 per cent of the general population.

- Hypertension (high blood pressure), Type 2 diabetes mellitus, and physical problems associated with alcohol misuse were more prevalent in veterans than non-veterans.

For the full data, including how it was collected, and the recommendations, the full report can be read [here](#).

Project lead Professor Alan Finnegan, from Northumbria University, said:

"This study should assist in a better understanding of the healthcare needs of the veteran population to potentially inform better patient-centred care.

"Veterans in this study were more likely to be diagnosed with PTSD, and less likely to have depression.

"They were also more likely to be diagnosed with hypertension and Type 2 diabetes mellitus.

"For the veterans diagnosed with hypertension and Type 2 diabetes, a possible cause was the reduction of a physically-demanding regime after leaving the Armed Forces, whilst continuing the same level of calorie consumption as they progress into more sedentary employment.

"The data suggests that veterans are not a vulnerable population for



mental ill health, but that there are some areas where physical health interventions and preventative measures may help.

"A proactive measure is to provide veterans with free gym passes and/or connection to health promotion

activities with organisations such as professional sports clubs."

Michelle Alston, Chief Executive of Forces in Mind Trust, said: "Ex-Service personnel share many of the common health problems of their comparable population that has never served in the Armed Forces.

"Nevertheless, this report shows that ex-Service personnel may also face unique health issues.

"Understanding and supporting these unique health needs will help more ex-Service personnel have better health and a successful transition to civilian life."

WAR WIDOWS PAYMENT SCHEME: FINAL CALL

Families who have lost loved ones during military service are being urged to apply for the War Widows Recognition Payment Scheme before its planned closure next month.

The scheme was introduced to address a specific historical issue affecting some bereaved spouses who lost their pensions when they remarried or entered new relationships before 2015. Since launching in October 2023, more than 240 individuals who had previously received no financial recognition for their sacrifice have been supported to the tune of £21 million in total.

Ministers are urging any eligible bereaved spouses to come forward without delay, as the two-year scheme ends on 15 October 2025.

Minister for Veterans and People Alistair Carns said: "The War Widows Recognition Payment Scheme has provided vital redress to those who have sacrificed so much for our country. With the scheme closing on 15 October, I urge anyone who believes they may be eligible to apply.

"The government remains steadfast in our commitment to the Armed Forces community to ensure those who have given the most receive the recognition and support they deserve."

The War Widows Recognition Payment Scheme was always intended to operate for a fixed period of two years.

Applications have slowed in recent months, with fewer than five received since January, but the MOD believes there may still be eligible individuals who have not yet applied.

Applications must be submitted before 15 October 2025.

The government remains committed to supporting the Forces community through various ongoing programmes and initiatives that provide comprehensive assistance to veterans, Service personnel, and their families.

The War Widows Recognition Payment Scheme provides a one-off tax-free payment of £87,500 to war widows and widowers who forfeited their service-attributable pensions prior to 2015 due to remarriage or cohabitation under the old pension rules and were in receipt of no other payments to recognise the loss of their partner.

To be eligible, applicants must have forfeited their entitlement to a Service-attributable survivor's pension due to remarriage or cohabitation, where the service-attributable death occurred before 2015, and must not have had their pension restored because they remain in a relationship. The scheme is open to widow(er)s, including civil partners and unmarried cohabiting partners, of regular and reservist members of the Army, Navy, or RAF. Full details, eligibility criteria, and application forms are available [here](#).



FAIR CHANCE OF FINDING WORK...

Spaces are still available at upcoming Career Transition Partnership (CTP) employment fairs. These free-to-attend fairs are designed to help Service leavers with their resettlement and feature hundreds of Forces-friendly recruiting employers. The CTP is the official resettlement service for the Armed Forces. Accordingly, the fairs are only open to serving and ex-military personnel pre-registered to attend through the CTP.

Fairs also feature on-the-spot interviews, educational resources, and financial advice to help individuals successfully navigate their transition. A typical fair will have representatives of employers from a wide range of sectors, including management, logistics, healthcare, the Civil Service, the emergency services, construction and manufacturing.

There are currently six fairs scheduled for the remainder of the year:

- **Bournemouth** (10 September)
- **Newmarket** (8 October)
- **Belfast** (15 October)
- **Cardiff** (5 November)
- **Telford** (19 November)
- **Wrexham** (4 December).

For more details of these fairs click [here](#).

To register with the CTP in order to attend a CTP event use [this link](#).

WHITE ENSIGN UPGRADE JOB-HUNT TECHNOLOGY

The White Ensign Association charity offers help to the Naval community on resettlement and employment matters – and now does so through an upgraded website and digital hub.

Founded in 1958 as a joint venture between the Royal Navy and the City of London, the charity provides free, impartial guidance or all serving and former members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, RFA and their families.

That guidance could be on the subject of finance, legal matters, Armed Forces pensions – and employment, including their Career Compass, which uses advanced technology to help people find the right job for them.

The White Ensign Association has a dedicated Employment Services team.

Through them you can chat about where you



are and what you would like to do next, they can introduce you to potential employers or perhaps link you to an expert mentor.

Their Career Compass platform offers such features as a professional CV builder, job search and applications, AI-powered interview practice and interview analysis and feedback. The charity, which is based on HMS Belfast in the Pool of London, counts RNRMC and

Greenwich Hospital amongst its principal supporters, and in 2024 supported more than 7,200 members of the Naval community. For more information, and to see what the White Ensign Association can offer you as you travel down your career path, see www.whiteensign.co.uk

XTRA FUNDING FOR XFE

Greenwich Hospital has awarded a £47,855 grant to X-Forces Enterprise (XFE) to deliver expert advice and training to members of the Royal Navy community who are interested in starting self-employed careers or developing their business ideas.

XFE has a strong, proven track record over 12 years of supporting former military personnel and their partners in turning business ideas into successful enterprises. The organisation works closely with those exploring self-employment as a post-military career option, providing expert guidance on both business start-up and career planning to help individuals make informed and confident decisions about their futures.

As the leading provider of business support within the Armed Forces community, XFE offers comprehensive services, including expert-led training, dynamic networking opportunities, personalised

mentoring, and tailored financial guidance. Their support extends beyond the start-up phase, ensuring long-term assistance for veterans and their families as they navigate civilian enterprise and build sustainable careers.

The Greenwich Hospital funding will enable XFE to continue providing self-employment training courses as well as training courses and workshops in subjects that will support individuals as they work to build their civilian careers and financial knowledge base.

Last year, XFE ran ten self-employment training courses with 93 per cent of course



attendees rating the course content as excellent. Similarly, the XFE series of Masterclasses also elicited strong feedback from more than 50 former Royal Navy and Royal Marines attendees, with 98 per cent of them rating the classes as 'excellent'.

For more details on X-Forces Enterprise click the link [here](#).



Royal Naval Reserve cadets ready to march to instruction classes at the Nautical College, Pangbourne, in November 1917. See 1 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (Q 54216)

SEPTEMBER SWINGING THE LAMP

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

1 September 1917

Pangbourne Nautical College in Berkshire was formally opened under the command of 52-year-old retired Royal Navy officer Capt Superintendent William Montanaro on 1 September 1917. The establishment, on the site of the former Clayesmore School, was designed to prepare boys for careers as Merchant Navy officers, although the founder – shipowner Sir Thomas Lane Devitt, a partner in Devitt and Moore – also ensured that the students had a well-rounded education in case a life at sea was not their ultimate career choice. But as the war at sea was raging at the time the Admiralty was very interested, and cadets from Pangbourne emerged with RNR uniforms and ranks. The 'Nautical' element of its name was dropped in 1969 when the focus shifted to academic rather than maritime subjects, and that shift was reflected in the institution taking on its first civilian headmaster. That is not to say that the nautical element was forgotten – despite its shift to a more civilian curriculum, and the fact that Pangbourne is not a military school, Naval traditions are still strong; pupils wear Naval uniform, sleep in cabins rather than

dorms, eat from galleys rather than kitchens and relax in gunrooms rather than common rooms. Pangbourne College campus is the site of the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel, opened in 2000 by the Queen, which commemorates the courage and sacrifice of those who served in the South Atlantic in 1982 – the college was chosen for its Naval history, and for the fact that 47 Old Pangbournians served in the Conflict.

2 September 1917

SS Olive Branch was torpedoed by U-28 on 2 September 1917 off Hamsfort, destroying both vessels. The 4,650-ton steamer had already come in for some punishment under her original name – she was built on the Clyde as the Bellorado – when she was damaged by gunfire from submarine UC-22 on 27 February 1917, killing three of her crew. In September that year the newly-renamed SS Olive Branch was part of an Allied convoy en route from Liverpool to Arkhangelsk in Russia when she was torpedoed 85 miles to the north of North Cape in Norway by U-28 in the late morning of 2 September. The 860-ton pre-war submarine, which had conducted five war patrols and sunk 40 ships for a total of 90,000 tons, was two weeks into what turned out to be her final patrol out of Emden. As the German submarine closed in to finish the steamer with gunfire, all but one of the British ship's crew scrambled into lifeboats and hurriedly pulled away from the area, as they knew (and the German commander didn't know) that Olive Branch was carrying a full cargo of ammunition. One shell detonated the cargo in hold number 4, sending Olive Branch sky-high, and the explosion fatally damaged the U-boat – one version of events reports that a truck carried on

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the steamer's deck fell from a great height onto the submarine, inflicting the major damage. Uncertain as to the presence of other enemy ships or submarines, the convoy steamed on, leaving the 39 German submariners to perish in the Arctic Ocean.

3 September 1988

Type 42 destroyer HMS Southampton collided with container ship MV Tor Bay on 3 September 1988 while on escort duties in the Straits of Hormuz, ripping a ten-metre hole in her hull and injuring 11 of her ship's company. The destroyer, built by Vosper Thornycroft in her namesake city, was on Armilla Patrol at the time, and with the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) at a ceasefire stage warships were still escorting merchant vessels through the narrow entrance to the Gulf. Tor Bay, a 33,200-tonne Overseas Containers Ltd (OCL) ship, was en route from Nagoya in Japan to Bahrain and had made contact to rendezvous with Southampton, at 4,800 tonnes much the smaller of the two ships. There was some initial confusion in the twilight as there was a second merchant ship close to Tor Bay, but the merchantman and warship teamed up – only for Southampton to cross the path of Tor Bay and take the full force of the container ship, steaming at 13 knots, on her port flank. Tor Bay sustained some damage, but was able to steam on to Dubai, where she underwent two weeks of repairs. Southampton also manage to continue under her own power to Fujairah, in the United Arab Emirates, but the damage was sufficient to take her out of the Armilla Patrol, and it was eventually decided to transport the warship back to the UK on board the heavy-lift semi-submersible MV Mighty Servant, with repairs being carried out by Swan Hunter on the Tyne some time later as part of a scheduled refit. Type 22 frigate HMS Boxer took Southampton's place on the Armilla Patrol. A Batch 2 Type 42 destroyer, Southampton had been in service for seven years at the time of the collision, and she went on to serve another 20 years and more under the White Ensign before she was decommissioned on 12 February 2009. She was towed from Portsmouth in October 2011 for Turkey, where she was scrapped.

4 September 1995

The Royal Navy Detention Quarters in Portsmouth closed on 4 September 1995, with all personnel moving to the Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC) at

Colchester. The DQs, as they were known, opened in Portsmouth on 1 January 1911, and in 1931 this facility took on responsibility for dealing with those sailors who had previously been incarcerated in the DQs of Chatham and Devonport. The introduction of DQs, generally hated though they were, was a major step in the direction of a more humane regime which had been developing since the mid-Victorian period, when the huge Royal Navy found itself transitioning from the brawn and muscle of the age of sail to the more technologically-challenging era of steam and rifled, long-range guns. Instead of summary justice, with a range of often cruel punishments being meted out on board ships, those who transgressed were more commonly transferred to civilian prisons (particularly Winchester for Portsmouth, Maidstone for Chatham and Exeter for Plymouth) with the military element often taking up quite a sizable amount of the available space. It did, however, mean that the errant sailors were beyond the reach of the Admiralty, and the obvious solution was Royal Navy-run prisons. The first such establishment, was at Lewes in Sussex, acquired by the Admiralty in 1853 and which immediately housed large numbers of Finnish prisoners of war from the Crimean War. The second RNP was at the already well-established prison at Bodmin, and in World War 1 this facility was used to contain German naval prisoners; the prison became a fully civilian establishment in the early 1920s. Hard labour and cruel regimes gradually gave way to a more enlightened approach. The opening of the RNDQs brought the system back fully within the Admiralty's grasp, and thus it remained until the responsibility was farmed out to Colchester and a tri-Service approach was undertaken, giving sailors the unique chance to train in infantry skills and learn new crafts to either help resume their Naval career or take up a new path once outside the military.

5 September 1914

HMS Pathfinder was sunk by U-21 in the Firth of Forth on 5 September 1914. This was the first successful self-propelled torpedo attack by a U-boat against a warship, and the first Royal Navy warship to be sunk by a submarine. Pathfinder was a 2,950-ton scout cruiser built at Cammell Laird in Birkenhead, launched in 1904 and commissioned in 1905. She was an experimental class of ship, designed to bridge the gap between destroyers and large cruisers; lightly-armed and relatively fast,

HMS Pathfinder. See 5 September.
Image from the Imperial War Museum
collection: © The rights holder (Q 74969)

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she was intended to lead destroyer flotillas and provide reconnaissance for the capital ships and heavy cruisers of the main fleet. However, rapidly-evolving technology and design rendered scout cruisers obsolete in short order. She spent the pre-war period with the Atlantic, Channel and Home Fleets, and at the outbreak of war in the summer of 1914 was with the 8th Destroyer Flotilla at Rosyth. On 5 September 1914 Pathfinder was patrolling off the Firth of Forth, to the north of St Abbs Head, when smoke from her funnels was spotted by a lookout in the German submarine, which was recharging its batteries on the surface. Pathfinder steamed past the 830-ton U-21 out of range, and the German continued to recharge, but Pathfinder then doubled back, allowing U-21 to submerge and fire a single torpedo which caused one of the cruiser's magazine to explode. The ship broke in two and sank rapidly, killing some 260 men. U-21 proved a thorn in the side of the Royal Navy, switching to the Mediterranean theatre in 1915 where she sank battleships HMS Triumph and Majestic at Gallipoli, as well as French cruiser Amiral Charner. U-21 (also known as U-36 while on service with the Austro-Hungarian Navy) survived the war and sank under tow in 1919.

6 September 1914

HMS Dwarf rendezvoused with cruiser HMS Cumberland on the evening of 6 September 1914 to begin operations in Cameroon. The following day she helped to cut out four lighters in the estuary of the Cameroon River, which were added to the British flotilla in the area. Dwarf was a 700-ton Bramble-class First Class gunboat, built on the Clyde by London and Glasgow Shipbuilding in 1898

and commissioned the following year. She spent her entire active service around the coast of the African continent, from the Strait of Gibraltar to South Africa. She saw action during the Boer War between 1899 and 1902, and went on to play a leading role in the campaign against the Germans in West Africa in World War 1, winning the Battle Honour Cameroons 1914. In the month of September 1914 Dwarf was attacked three times by German 'infernal machines' – improvised torpedoes/ attack craft, including the 150-ton auxiliary armed steam vessel SMS Nachtigal, which rammed Dwarf amidships, causing the British ship some superficial damage. In all three cases Dwarf survived – two craft were sunk before they got close to her, while Nachtigal was set on fire and sank shortly after the two vessels collided. Dwarf spent her later years in reserve in Gibraltar, was paid off in 1925 and sold for scrap the following year.

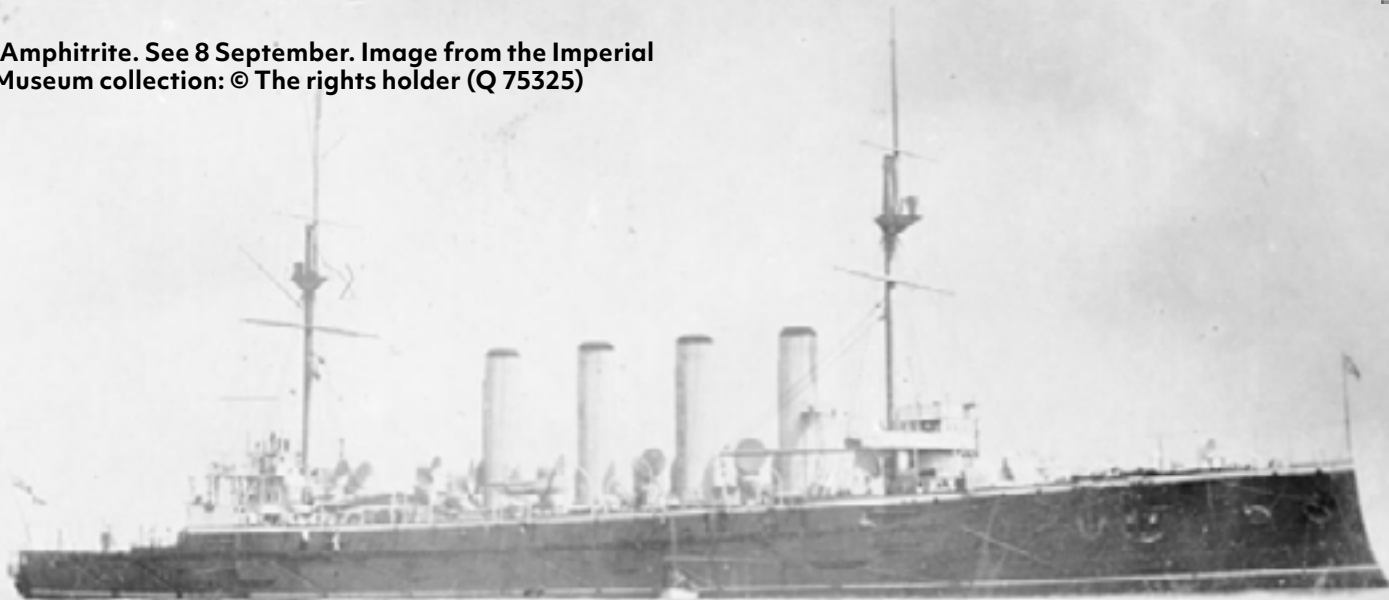
7 September 1943

Submarine HMS Shakespeare sank Italian ocean-going submarine Velella in the Gulf of Salerno on 7 September 1943. The 1,010-ton S-boat, built at Barrow by Vickers Armstrong and launched in December 1941, spent the first part of her career in the Mediterranean before moving on to the Far East in late 1944, although her first war patrols, from 15-26 August 1942 and 7-23 September, took her from Lerwick into the Norwegian Sea – an uneventful debut. She reached Gibraltar on 21c October, and took part in the North Africa (Operation Torch) landings, protecting convoys, carrying out reconnaissance missions and providing covering patrols. In December 1942 she was forced to return to the UK

HMS Shakespeare returning to Devonport after operations in the Mediterranean. See 7 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 21261)

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for repairs to her main motors, arriving at Chatham just before Christmas. Her return passage to the Med turned unto her further war patrol as she was ordered to intercept an enemy blockade runner, though the vessel never showed up. On 13 April 1943, during her fifth war patrol, she was struck by an enemy bomb, which hit her hull as she dived through 40ft, making a loud cracking noise, but fortunately the device failed to explode. On her next patrol she sank a couple of small Italian sailing craft and bombarded Italian aircraft hangars on Corsica. On her next patrol Shakespeare was lining up an attack on a U-boat, possibly U-73, when an Allied aircraft attacked the British submarine with rockets, forcing her to break off her own attack run and allowing the U-boat to escape. Again, Shakespeare was undamaged. July and August 1943 saw her carrying out reconnaissance and acting as a beacon for the landings in Sicily, but she was unsuccessful in an attack on two Italian light cruisers. On 7 September the Italian Navy sent two submarines to attack the Salerno landings, but only one survived – and the other turned out to have been an unnecessary sacrifice. Shakespeare picked up Velella and Benedetto Brin on ASDIC almost 20 miles off Licosa Island, south of Salerno, as light faded in the evening, and fired six torpedoes at them. At least four struck Velella, which disintegrated and sank with all 52 hands. Benedetto Brin, which had been partially masked by the background shoreline, escaped. The sad aspect of this kill was that the Italian armistice came into effect just a few hours later. Once transferred to the Eastern Fleet, Shakespeare was damaged by gunfire and an air attack of the Andaman Islands on 3 January 1945 while itself attacking the Japanese minesweeper Wa 1. Both vessels sustained serious damage, and although the British submarine was able to make it to a safe port, she was written off as a constructive total loss. She was sold in July 1946 and broken up soon afterwards.

8 September 1918

Destroyer HMS Nessus was lost after colliding with converted cruiser HMS Amphitrite in the North Sea on 8 September 1918. The 1,120-ton Admiralty M-class warship was one of a class of 85 near-identical ships, in her case built by Swan Hunter on the Tyne and launched

on 24 August 1915. She was considerably smaller than Amphitrite, launched as an 11,000-ton first-class protected cruiser at the Vickers yard in Barrow in July 1898 but converted to a minelayer in 1917. Both ships saw service in World War 1, with Amphitrite serving in the Atlantic for a year before sitting in reserve until 1917 when she was reactivated as a minelayer. On the afternoon of 7 September 1918 Amphitrite finished minelaying in the Northern Barrage and set a course for home, zig-zagging to avoid attack by any submarines lurking nearby. In calm seas, the cruiser and her two escorts, Nessus and sister-ship Maenad, were making 16 knots when they ran into a bank of thick fog. The cruiser signalled that she would stop zig-zagging in the poor visibility, but the ships lost sight of each other, and the destroyers slowed to 11 knots, aiming to drop behind the bigger ship. At just after 1500 Amphitrite suddenly loomed out of the fog heading for Nessus, and though both warships took immediate avoiding action the cruiser ploughed into the flank of the smaller ship, holing her in two places, including her engine room. As she took on water, her CO took stock and decided she could be saved, so Maenad took her in tow and they headed north-west at around seven knots while Amphitrite felt confident enough to leave the two ships. All went well at first, but by early evening bad weather had moved in quickly and the two destroyers were forced to hove to overnight in a rising gale. The weather continued to deteriorate in the morning of 8 September, and by 0900 Nessus had lost steam, could no longer operate her pumps, and was quickly filling with water. Her remaining crew were taken off by destroyer HMS Paladin, and at shortly before 1030 she sank, though fortunately there were no casualties in the incident.

9 September 1583

The Squirrel was lost with all hands while returning to England from Newfoundland, taking her captain, famed Elizabethan explorer and adventurer Sir Humphrey Gilbert, with her. The tiny exploration vessel, built in the 1570s and said to be no more than ten tons, was Gilbert's favourite ship, and was part of the flotilla he took on his expedition across the Atlantic in June 1583. The five-strong flotilla, with around 160 men, reached

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Newfoundland the following month and Gilbert claimed the territory for Queen Elizabeth – the first overseas colony thus claimed – but the ultimate aim of finding a passage on to the Pacific and China was abandoned. With supplies running low the four ships prepared to head back across the Atlantic with Gilbert sailing in Squirrel – the fifth, Bark Raleigh, had been lost to a mutinous crew shortly after the expedition set out from England. That soon became three as Swallow was sent directly back to England with disgruntled and sick sailors on board while the remaining three ships sailed south to do a little exploring. During that passage Gilbert, who was the half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, ordered a change of course that conflicted with that preferred by more experienced mariners, and in short order the main supply vessel, the Delight, ran aground with many of the charts and much equipment. The remaining two ships turned eastwards, but hit heavy weather off the Azores, experiencing huge waves. His men told Gilbert – a favourite of the Queen – to transfer to Golden Hinde, a much larger ship that was part of the flotilla, but Gilbert refused, despite warnings that Squirrel was carrying too many guns and was thus unstable. He was last spotted from Golden Hinde calmly reading a book. Soon after, in fading light, Gilbert was heard to cry out “we are as near to Heaven by sea as by land,” pointing upwards. At around midnight Squirrel’s light disappeared, and the crew of Golden Hinde reported that the little ship had sunk with all hands. Sir Walter Raleigh took up his half-brother’s Royal Patent the following year and crossed the Atlantic to set up the first established colony at Roanoke, now part of North Carolina. While Gilbert never established a colony in the Americas, his actions in the summer of 1583 mean he is still acknowledged as the first English coloniser.

10 September 1939

Submarine HMS Oxley was sunk by friendly fire on 10 September 1939 off Obrestad in Norway – the first Royal Navy warship lost in World War 2, and the first of 76 Royal Navy submarines lost in World War 2. She was built for the Royal Australian Navy by Vickers Armstrong in Barrow in 1925-7 and sailed with sister HMS Otway to Australia in 1928, though repairs had to be carried out on cracks in the engine columns of both boats en

route (Otway in Gibraltar, Oxley in Malta) meaning they reached Sydney in February 1929, more than a year after setting out. Oxley spent a year in reserve before economic pressures of the Great Depression led to her and Otway being reactivated and commissioned into the Royal Navy in April 1931. Back in Europe, Oxley was a member of the 2nd Submarine Flotilla based at Dundee on the outbreak of war, and her first task was a war patrol off Norway. Just before 2000 on 10 September submarine HMS Triton, also on patrol some 30 miles south-west of Stavanger in southern Norway, spotted what appeared to be the outline of a submarine. Triton issued three challenges by signal lights, then fired three green flare grenades, none of which the mystery boat answered, so Triton launched two torpedoes and sank the submarine. Moving over to investigate, Triton found three men swimming amidst the debris, one of whom was the sunken boat’s commanding officer – and they were clearly British. The third man suddenly sank from view, meaning 53 of Oxley’s crew were lost in the ‘friendly fire’ incident. Subsequent enquiries found that Oxley was some four miles out of her patrol zone and Triton had acted correctly, though the boat’s loss was at first simply attributed to an explosion, which became a collision after the war – it wasn’t until the 1950s that the true nature of the sinking was revealed. The reason Oxley had not responded correctly was explained by her CO – the first light signals had been answered but he believed the process had been botched and the light could not be seen, while Oxley’s own grenade-refill malfunctioned and could not be fixed before Triton launched her attack. Triton went on to serve in the Mediterranean, but was lost with all hands in December the following year, possibly to a mine in the Strait of Otranto off Italy.

11 September 1886

HMS Rattlesnake, the first Torpedo Gunboat, was launched on 11 September 1886. The 560-ton vessel, built by Laird Brothers at Birkenhead, was prompted by the fear of war as Russia expanded her boundaries, and was designed as a gunboat capable of countering smaller torpedo boats. But within a decade the torpedo boat destroyer became the preferred option, and Rattlesnake, and four further classes that followed her in rapid succession, had become all but obsolete.

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HMS Oxley. See 10 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: IWM (FL 3245)



Rattlesnake, whose efficient engines could propel her at almost 20 knots, took part in the 1893 British Naval Manoeuvres in the Irish Sea and was one of the few torpedo gunboats that actually lived up to the vision of a destroyer of torpedo boats. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1902 she was converted to tender to HMS Narcissus, a training cruiser attached to the Gunner School in Portsmouth. Four years later she took up another role, as experimental submarine target ship, and was sold in 1910.

12 September 1917

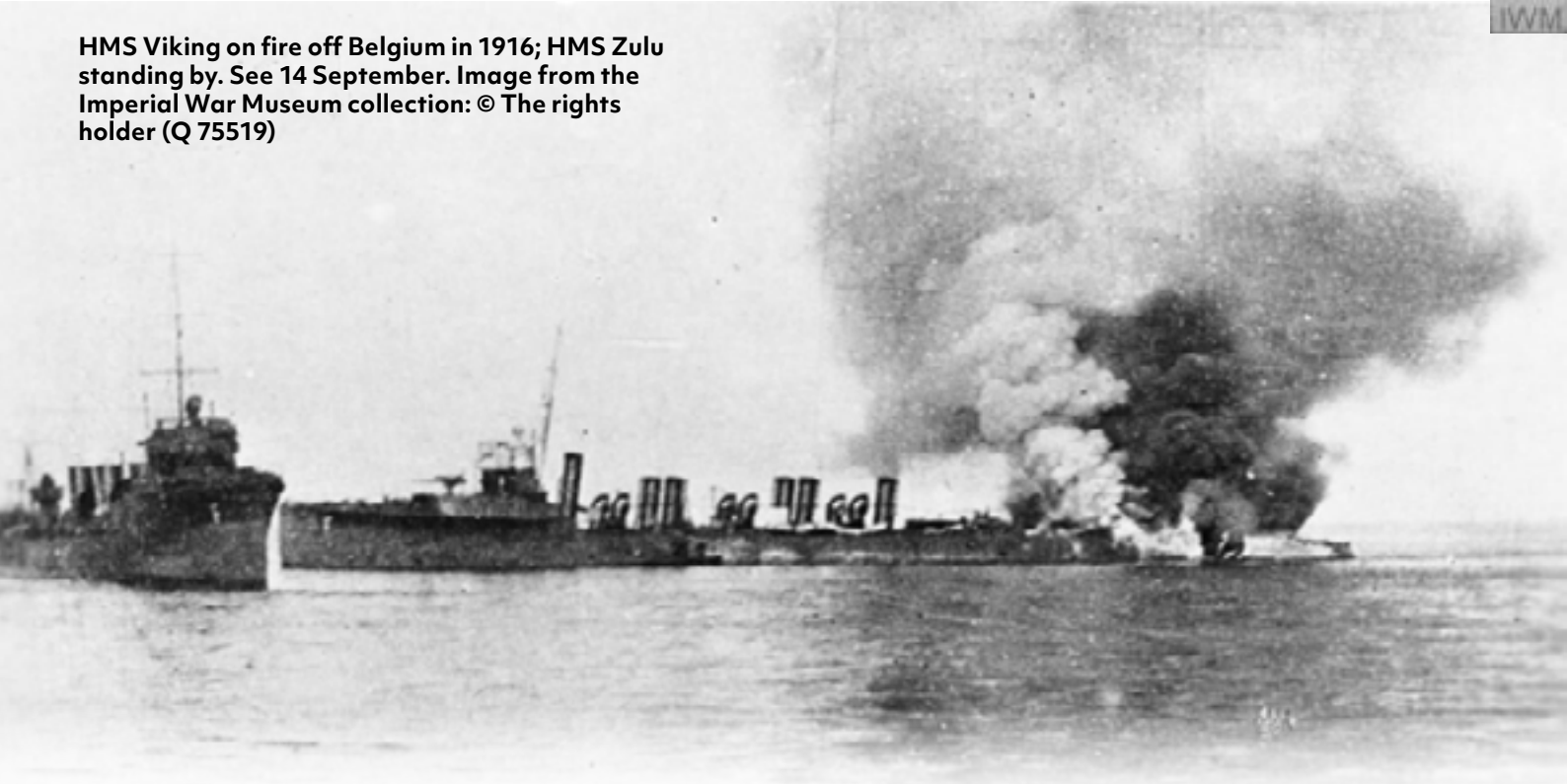
Submarine HMS D7 sank German U-boat U-45 in the North-West Approaches on 1 September 1917. D7 was one of eight 600-ton D-class submarines built for the Royal Navy before World War 1, and was launched at Chatham on 14 January 1911. With a crew of 25 and safer diesel engines than earlier classes, the D-boats proved a huge step forward in submarine design, and introduced several innovations, including the first radios fitted as standard, the first class to have deck guns forward of the conning tower, and twin screws. They were also roomy enough in terms of accommodation and sufficiently sturdy to operate longer patrols beyond coastal waters. D7's strike against U-45 came on 12 September to the north of Ireland when she saw the German boat on the surface and fired a single torpedo from her stern tube. The prolific German submarine – she had sunk 27 merchantmen totalling nearly 50,000 tons – went down with all but two of her crew of 45. The following February D7 was mistaken for an enemy boat by destroyer HMS Pelican, which commenced a depth-charge attack, but D7 survived. She also collided with a U-boat three months later, damaging her periscope. The submarine survived the war and was sold for scrap to the Pounds yard just before Christmas 1921.

13 September 1782

A Franco-Spanish assault on Gibraltar was repulsed on 13 September 1782 with heavy losses for the attacking forces. The so-called Grand Assault was part of the Great Siege of Gibraltar, itself a feature of the American Revolutionary War, and saw the French and Spanish join forces; France was supporting their allies the Americans while the Spanish had Gibraltar as their goal – the strategically-crucial Rock had been in British hands since 1713. The siege began in the summer of 1779, but was confounded by the successful arrival of two convoys to resupply the garrison, in 1780 and 1781, and in late 1781 a grand attack was foiled when the British sortied out and destroyed the batteries which the Spanish had been preparing for more than a year, spiking guns, capturing stores and ammunition and killing more than 100 men, for the loss of just two of their own. The Spanish plan prompted the British to start tunnelling through the Rock, creating embrasures high up from which the defenders could fire down on Spanish attackers. The besieged garrison continued to fight as merchant ships ran the Spanish (and later Franco-Spanish) blockade, and British warships continued to slip through a well. On 8 September 1782 a fierce bombardment was launched from the Rock, featuring red-hot shot (known as 'hot potatoes') which did much damage to Spanish land-based assault equipment and positions. The Franco-Spanish alliance instead decided to launch a Grand Assault by sea using a flotilla of ten 'battery ships', supposedly unsinkable and impervious to

fire, mounting a total of 142 guns (with 70 in reserve) and operated by 5,260 men. Every care had been taken to ensure the batteries would be effective – layers of wood were added to strengthen the flanks, infilled with wet sand, and water would be constantly pumped over them to prevent fire taking hold. A web of cables would snag some shot, and the guns were mounted on one side only, with ballast to counterbalance the weight. Conventional ships of the line would add their firepower, along with an array of bomb ships – a further 110 ships of various sizes (almost half of them ships of the line) manned by 30,000 sailors and marines. The final touch was a total of almost 90 artillery guns ashore, backed by more than 40,000 Spanish and French troops, ready to move in when the Rock capitulated. And all this was watched by more than 80,000 onlookers, who flocked to high ground to watch the British beaten into submission. They were to leave disappointed. When the floating batteries moved in on 13 September 1782, some were in the wrong position and smaller ships were too far away to have any effect, while the conventional ships hovered just out of the picture. A number of batteries ran aground, and were thus unable to manoeuvre. At first, the attackers seemed to have the initiative – British shot was bouncing off the Spanish hulls – but when the British started firing red-hot shot, things started to go wrong for the attackers. Smoke began to rise from two of the larger batteries, but there was no chance of moving another ship in to assist, while the shore-based guns ran out of powder and ceased to fire. By nightfall on the 13th the situation for the Franco-Spanish force was desperate – two batteries were engulfed in flame and the rest had taken a fearful pounding. Rockets went up as a distress signal, and the order went out to scuttle the batteries. The British had already seen that the attackers were facing annihilation, and a flotilla of gunboats had been sent out to take the floating batteries without minimal bloodshed. The ships made their way from one battery to the next, taking prisoners and rescuing men as they went. Two batteries, Pastora and Talla Piedra, exploded when the flames reached their magazines, killing many Spanish and at least one Briton. The flotilla was forced to withdraw as more batteries caught fire, and in the confusion some of these batteries continued to fire guns as word had not got through to abandon the attack. By 0400 on 14 September all ten batteries had either blown up or burned to the waterline, and the Spanish and French had suffered more than 700 casualties compared to 15 dead and around 70 wounded on the British side. It was a crushing blow to both Spanish and French hopes, and while there was a further (abortive) attempt to strangle the Rock, a large British relief convoy broke through the following month bringing supplies and further troops, prompting diplomats at peace talks to accept the reality of the situation – Gibraltar would remain in British hands. Over the course of late 1782 and early 1783 treaties were signed, including a peace treaty between the British and Americans that effectively signalled the end of the American Revolutionary War. The French were running out of funds and the Spanish lost interest without any hope of regaining Gibraltar, although the British did not enjoy a complete victory – the need to tie up men and ships in the European theatre meant they were unable to pursue the war in America with full vigour, and arguably that is a major factor in the loss of the American colonies, though Canada was retained.

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14 September 1909

Destroyer HMS Viking launched at Palmers, Jarrow – the only six-funnel ship built for the Royal Navy. Although one of only a dozen Tribal-class destroyers, the details of each ship's design was left to the builder, so the final vessels varied considerable from each other. In the case of Viking, Palmers of Jarrow built a 1,230-ton warship with six boilers, powered by fuel oil and steam turbines, and capable of 33 knots, with a range of almost 2,000 miles at 15 knots. She was armed with two 4in guns and two 18in torpedo tubes, and had a complement of around 70. Viking commissioned in June 1910 as part of the First Destroyer Flotilla, switching to the 6th Flotilla in early 1914, and it was this flotilla that formed part of the Dover Patrol at the outbreak of war, as these destroyers did not have the legs to operate in the open ocean. She had an inauspicious start to her war record – her forward gun exploded in October 1914 while she was bombarding shore positions during the Battle of the Yser, wounding two sailors and forcing her withdrawal. She struck a mine off Belgium in January 1916, killing ten of her ship's company, and later that year an attempt to counter a German torpedo boat raid on the Dover Barrage went wrong when two groups of British destroyers, one led by Viking, failed to co-ordinate their attack, and German shellfire damaged one of Viking's group (HMS Mohawk), jamming her steering and blocking Viking's path, allowing the German raiders to escape. Viking was briefly re-equipped with a 6in gun in 1916, but the experiment merely proved that the gun was too big for a destroyer, and by the end of the year it was replaced with a new 4in quick-fire gun. She survived the war and was sold for scrap in December 1919.

15 September 1920

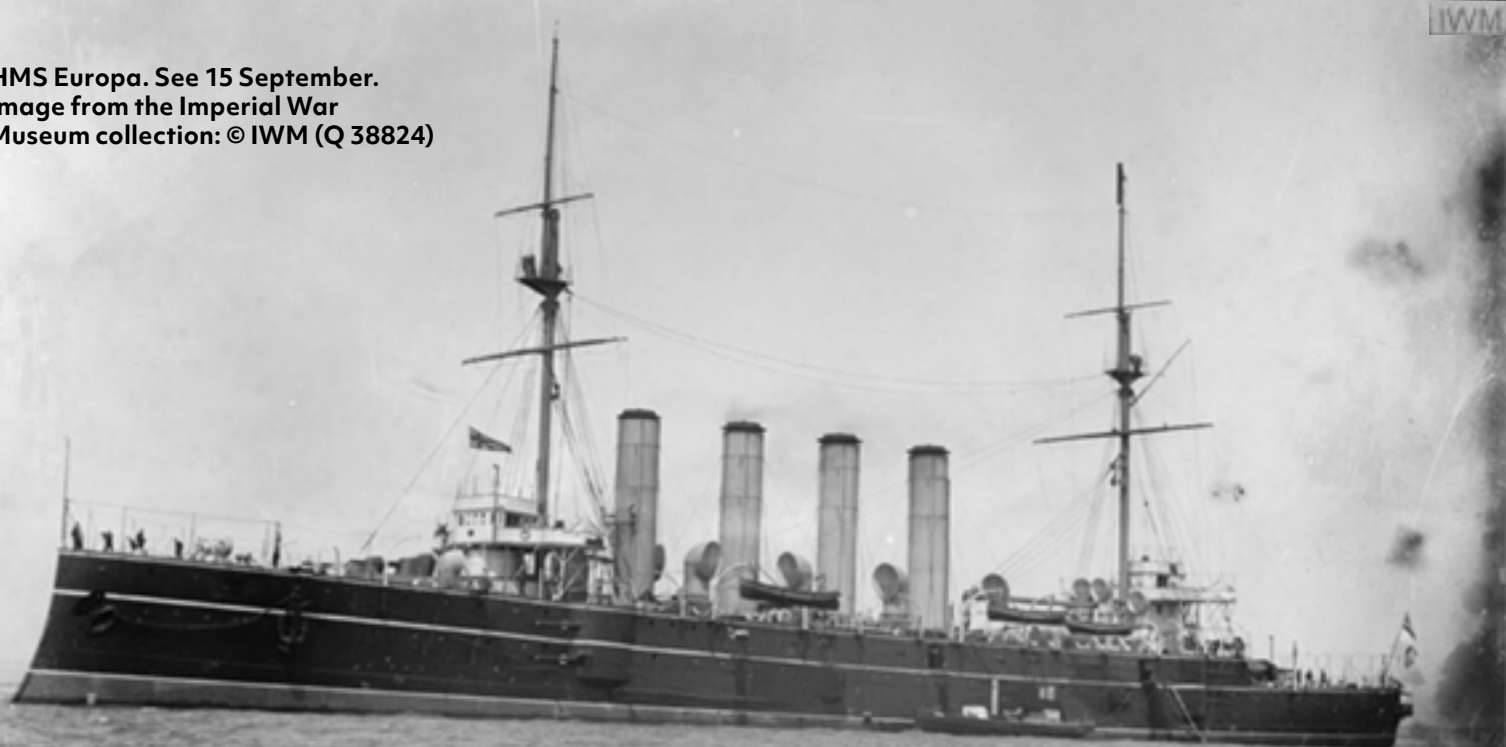
Protected cruiser HMS Europa was sold on 15 September 1920 for conversion to an emigrant carrier. The 11,000-ton Diadem-class ship was built by J&G Thompson on Clydebank and launched on 20 March 1897. Two years later she was equipped with wireless equipment and took part in that year's Summer Manoeuvres, achieving a notable success by sending a wireless message some

95 miles to ironclad HMS Alexandra via a relay through cruiser HMS Juno – the longest such transmission at the time. Her early years were spent with the Channel Squadron, though in 1900 she also did two crew transfers – one for battleship HMS Ramillies, which took her to Malta, and then for the Australia Station. She spent the subsequent dozen years or so in and out of reserve, and was with the 3rd Fleet on the outbreak of war in 1914. She was assigned to the 9th Cruiser Squadron in the Atlantic, acting as flagship on station off Cape Finisterre, and later operated off Mudros as part of the Dardanelles Campaign. Europa was paid off at Malta in March 1920 and bought by G F Bletto for conversion on 15 September the same year, but her civilian career was brief – she sank in a gale off Corsica in January 1921, although the wreck was later raised and broken up in Genoa.

16 September 1917

HMS G9 was rammed and sunk by HMS Pasley in poor weather off Norway on 16 September 1917, with just one submariner surviving. G9 was an 840-ton G-class boat, launched on 15 June 1916 by Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness, and designed for long-range patrols in the North Sea and the German Bight to counter the growing threat of German U-boats. G9's loss was the result of a mutual friendly-fire incident. The submarine had sailed from Scapa Flow to patrol the seas between Shetland and the Norwegian coast, and on 15 September she was ordered to move north to avoid fleet exercises. Destroyer HMS Pasley had been escorting a convoy from Russia to Lerwick via the Norwegian Aspo Fjord, and was attempting to round up straggling merchantmen, displaying a white light halfway up her mast to guide them. In heavy seas and poor visibility, G9 spotted the light and, having been warned a U-boat was in the area, launched her attack. Two torpedoes were fired; the first struck a glancing blow but failed to detonate, while the second missed all together. G9's Commanding Officer realised his boat was attacking friendly forces and attempted to signal with an arc light, and although the signal was recognised it was too late – Pasley had been swung round and driven towards the submarine, and

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rammed her before she could be slowed. G9 was struck close to midships, almost cutting the boat in half. G9 began to sink rapidly, but there was still time for her crew of 34 to muster at the foot of the conning tower in an attempt to escape. Stoker William Drake was second up the ladder, struggling onto the casing of the submarine before being swept into the water by the wild waves. Five men got off the boat before it sank, but four were swept away, and Drake was only saved by an able seaman from Pasley going over the side of his ship to secure a rope to the exhausted, numbed submariner. No blame was attached to the crew of Pasley at the inquiry four days later. Drake went on to serve in World War 2 as well, and died in 1974 at the age of 80.

17 September 1879

Battleship HMS Agamemnon was launched at Chatham on 17 September 1879, though she and her Pembroke-built sister HMS Ajax were plagued by erratic steering throughout their careers. Agamemnon displaced 8,500

tons and was markedly broad, with a length of just over 90 metres and a beam of 20 metres. It was hoped this ratio would make her economical in terms of fuel, but that did not happen, and in addition her ship's company had to contend with the fact that she needed a large degree of helm, both to port and starboard, to keep her on a straight course – it was reported on one occasion that with her helm firmly amidships the ironclad turret battleship turned a complete circle in under ten minutes. Agamemnon's first tasking was on the China Station in 1884, and true to form, she managed to hold up traffic in the Suez Canal for a few days by grounding several times. She also served on the East Indies Station, and carried out anti-slave trade patrols off Zanzibar, suffering a bad outbreak of Dengue fever – 80 per cent of her ship's company of 400 caught it, but all recovered. She then joined the Mediterranean Fleet in 1890, going into reserve two years later. She was taken off the Navy's books in 1901 and sold for scrap in 1903, just one year before her sister.

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18 September 1942

A Wren senior rate was the sole victim of an air raid on Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth on the night of 18 September 1942. PO Telegraphist Ellen Whittall, who is believed to have been married and in her 40s, was the only casualty at BRNC throughout the entire war, though it could have been very different. It is thought that the raid, carried out by six Focke-Wulf aircraft which approached from the east, along the river, to avoid anti-aircraft fire, was timed to coincide with the return of officer cadets to the college for the start of the new term. However, every six years the summer leave was extended by a week to even up the terms, and this was one such year, meaning there were much fewer people at Dartmouth than would normally be the case. The buildings were badly damaged, as was the Quarterdeck, in the raid, and plans were put into action to evacuate staff and students, with officer training resuming at Eaton Hall in Cheshire for the remainder of the war, not returning to Devon until the autumn of 1946. Dartmouth was still put to good use; after a period training Combined operations personnel in amphibious warfare, the college was temporarily taken over by American forces in preparation for D-Day.

19 September 1944

HM Ships *Terpsichore*, *Troubridge* and Polish ship *ORP Garland* sank U-407 off Crete on 19 September 1944 – the last enemy submarine to be sunk in the Mediterranean in World War 2. *Terpsichore* and *Troubridge* were T-class destroyers, with the former being commissioned on 20 January 1944 at William Denny's in Dumbarton and the latter on 8 March the same year at John Brown's in Clydebank. These two utility warships, displacing 2,550 tons, were joined on 19 September by the smaller Polish G-class destroyer *ORP Garland*, built for the Royal Navy at Fairfield in Govan, completed on 3 March 1936 and loaned to the Polish Navy in May 1940. The three destroyers were operating south of the Greek island of Milos when they carried out the depth-charge attack on the German submarine, supported by destroyers HM Ships *Brecon* and *Zetland*. U-407, which had sunk three merchantmen and damaged two warships in her 1 war patrols, sank

with the loss of five of her crew of 53. She was reportedly the 62nd and last U-boat lost to enemy action in the Mediterranean during World War 2. *Garland* was returned from her loan in 1946 and went into reserve before being sold to the Netherlands as a training ship, though she was refurbished as an operational frigate in 1952, by which time she had been renamed *HNLMS Marnix*. She was finally decommissioned in early 1964 and subsequently scrapped. Both *Terpsichore* and *Troubridge* also survived the war and were converted in later life; *Terpsichore* spent seven years from 1946-53 in reserve before being converted to a much-needed but cheaper Type 16 fast anti-submarine frigate, while after six years in reserve *Troubridge* was uprated to a more-effective Type 15 frigate in 1955-7. *Terpsichore* spent a further six years in reserve until she was sold for scrap in 1966 while *Troubridge* left front-line service in March 1969 and was scrapped the following year.

20 September 1914

Veteran cruiser HMS *Pegasus*, while repairing her engines in Zanzibar, was sunk by German cruiser SMS *Konigsberg* on 20 September 1914. The protected cruiser had been built by Palmers at Jarrow and launched in March 1897, and in her early years saw service around the world, including South America, the Mediterranean, Australia, China and South Africa. Like her ten *Pelorus*-class sisters, *Pegasus* suffered throughout her career from boilers which were not really up to the job, and only seven of the class remained in service on the outbreak of war in 1914, when *Pegasus* was on the Cape of Good Hope Station. The ships on that station were ordered to keep a watch for the more powerful 3,800-ton German light cruiser *Konigsberg*, and the theory was that the Royal Navy ships should support each other, but on 12 August 1914 the second-class cruiser HMS *Astraea* – a contemporary of *Pegasus* – was ordered south to help station flagship HMS *Hyacinth* protect troop convoys, leaving *Pegasus* to operate alone out of Zanzibar. On 18 September, having patrolled the coast for several days, *Pegasus* sailed into Zanzibar Harbour to carry out repairs on her engines, and early in the morning two days later, while alongside with engines shut down, she was attacked by *Konigsberg* from a range of around

HMS *Terpsichore*. See 19 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 3118)

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7,000 metres. The outclassed 2,800-ton British cruiser was incapacitated within ten minutes and set ablaze soon after – an attempt to strike her colours to prevent further bloodshed was unsuccessful as the flag was obscured by thick smoke. Pegasus capsized and sank at her berth some 50 minutes into the so-called Battle of Zanzibar, having lost more than 30 sailors killed in the action with a further 55 wounded. Bizarrely, this was not the last time the guns of Pegasus and Konigsberg were ranged against each other. The German cruiser was sunk in the Battle of the Rufiji Delta on 11 July 1915 when, having been blockaded on the river and initially attacked and damaged on 6 July, the Konigsberg was pounded into submission by monitors HM Ships Mersey and Severn, and scuttled her ship's company. The guns from both Pegasus and Konigsberg were salvaged by their respective navies and used in the East Africa land campaign as artillery pieces, facing each other once more in 1915.

21 September 1744

HMS Colchester (50 guns) was lost off the Kentish Knock on 21 September 1744, very much in the unhappy tradition of her predecessors. The fourth rate ship was built at the Harwich yard of John Barnard and launched on 13 August 1744, but was barely out of harbour when she came to grief. She sailed from The Nore anchorage on 21 September 1744 (some reports put the date exactly one month later) and ran aground on the notorious Kentish Knock shoal off the Essex coast, in reasonable weather. A boat was sent back to seek help, while the remaining crew cut the two smaller masts away to reduce the strain on the hull. With the weather deteriorating the main mast was also cut away, but the ship began to flood and the remaining crew were forced to gather on the uppermost decks, unable to reach ships that had come to Colchester's aid because of the rising wind. Lots were drawn to see who could take the ship's longboat to safety, but reportedly as the lots were being drawn,

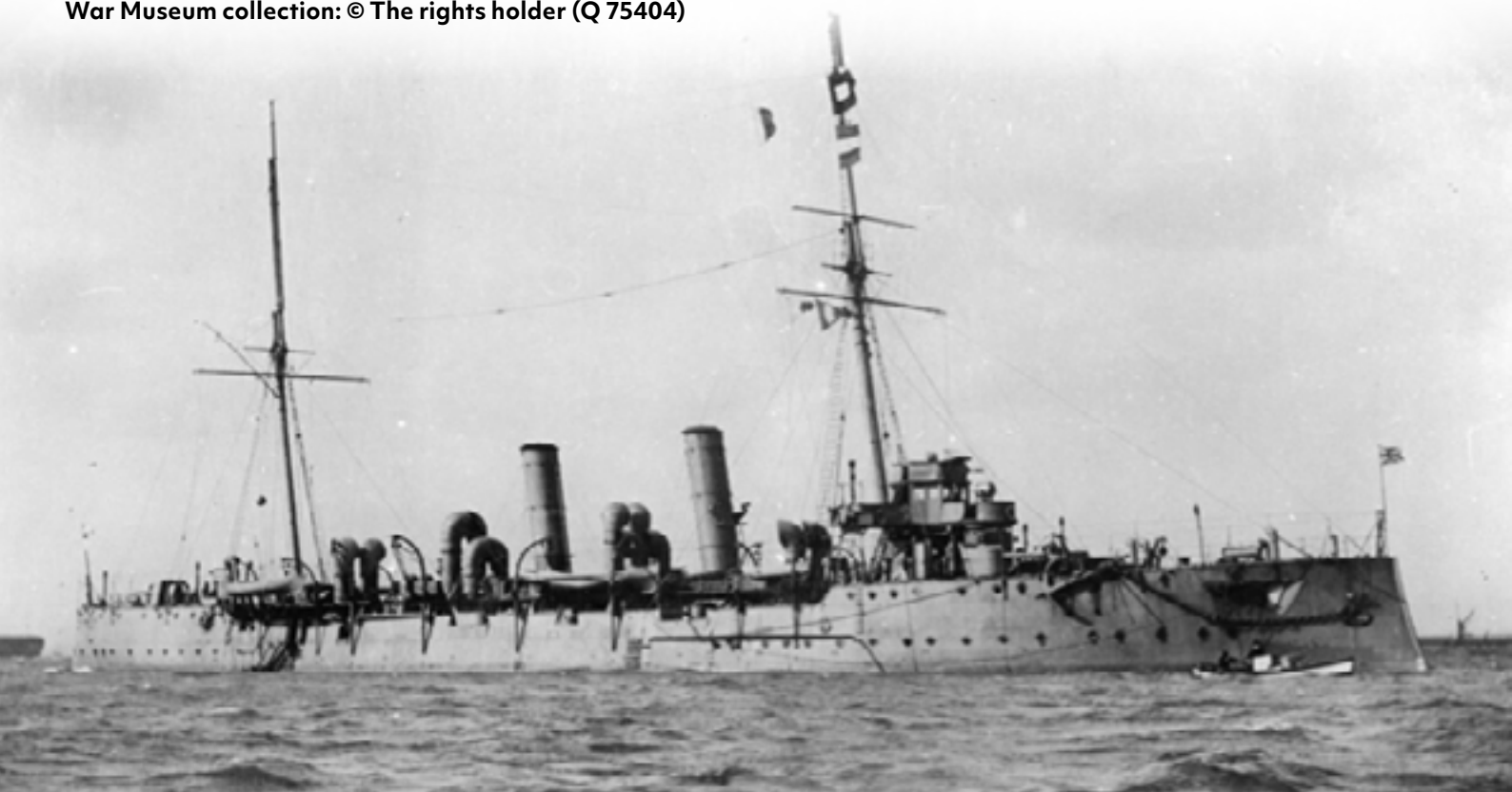
a group of sailors – including the ship's surgeon – seized the boat and pulled away, though it sank shortly after, drowning 13 of the 31 aboard. Four more sailors drowned attempting to jump into it from the stricken warship. A group of six fishing vessels, alerted by Colchester's first boat away, returned on 23 September but could not approach until the 24th, when the weather grew calmer again; more than 360 men were saved, while more than 40 died. A subsequent court martial pointed the finger of blame at the pilot, who was sentenced to 12 months in Marshalsea Prison. The name Colchester was not a particularly lucky one for Royal Navy ships. The first, a 24-gun warship built in 1654, sank in action 12 years later, while the eight-gun ketch of 1664 was captured by the French in 1667. The third was 48-gun fourth rate launched in 1694 which foundered ten years later, and it was only the fourth of the name, a 54-gun fourth rate of 1707, that stayed the course, being rebuilt in 1721 and broken up in 1742.

22 September 1914

Ships Aboukir, Cressy and Hogue were sunk by U-9 off the Maas Light Vessel on 22 September 1914 in a huge blow to British morale so early in the war. The 12,000-ton armoured cruiser Aboukir, built by Fairfield at Govan and launched in May 1900, spent much of the pre-war period in the Mediterranean, and at the start of World War 1 she was part of the 7th Cruiser Squadron, patrolling the Dogger Bank and Broad Fourteens supported by destroyers, to protect the sea lanes between England and France. These ships were already showing signs of wear and tear, with their original top speed of 21 knots now reduced to around 15, and their vulnerability, allied to the relative inexperience of their ships' companies, had caused concern among top-ranking Naval officers. So much so that the squadron (nicknamed the Live Bait Squadron in typical sardonic Naval fashion) had come to the attention of First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill. He and senior officers decided that the cruisers

HMS Pegasus. See 20 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © The rights holder (Q 75404)

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should be withdrawn from the asking, but a counter-argument – that there were no other suitable vessels to carry out this vital tasking – swung the argument, and it was decided that these cruisers should continue until newer vessel, then in build, would be available. Tragically, the doubts expressed about the obsolete ships were to prove well-founded. Around 0600 in the morning of 22 September 1914 the three Cressy-class sisters Aboukir, Cressy and Hogue were pottering along at ten knots without any cover – their sister and flagship HMS Euryalus had returned to port with the destroyer and light cruiser screen. Sailing line astern with lookouts posted, the three ships were spotted by U-9 which submerged and approached them. The Commanding Officer of U-9, Lt Otto Weddigen, fired a single torpedo at Aboukir at close range, which shattered the cruiser's keel and sank her in 20 minutes, killing almost 530 men and boys. The commanding officers of Cressy and Hogue, assuming the ship had struck a mine, moved in to pick up survivors, and Weddigen was presented with a second easy target. Two torpedoes were loosed at Hogue, which was badly damaged, but at least the British now knew what they were up against, as U-9 surfaced and was fired on. Being so early in the war, and with little experience of submarine warfare and tactics, the commanding officer of Cressy did not consider escape, and instead moved in to pick up survivors of the

two sunken warships, but became the third victim as two further torpedoes sent her to the sea bed. Distress signals had alerted a couple of Dutch coasters and a British trawler, which managed to rescue almost 840 sailors between them, but almost 1,460 died in the action – almost three times the number of Royal Navy sailors lost at Trafalgar. Amongst those who died were a large number of one term of Dartmouth cadets. Weddigen was feted in Germany, and awarded the Iron Cross First Class while all his crew were awarded the Second Class version of the medal. Less than a month later Weddigen sank another cruiser, HMS Hawke, with the loss of a further 524 lives. But the first U-boat ace of the war did not live long to enjoy his successes; in March 1915, in command of U-29, Weddigen came up against HMS Dreadnought in the Pentland Firth, and the battleship rammed the U-boat, killing her crew of 35. It is believed to be the only example of a submarine being sunk on purpose by a battleship alone. The shocking loss of the three cruisers on 22 September was a pivotal moment; from then on the tactic of zig-zagging when a submarine attack was possible, and the principle established that major units of the Fleet should not stop to pick up survivors of vessels sunk by mine or submarine, but should escape the situation and leave rescue to the smaller escorting vessels.

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HMS Aboukir alongside at Devonport. See 22 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © Image: IWM (FL 39)



23 September 1941

The award of a posthumous George Cross for Henry Herbert Reed, DEMS gunner in SS Cormount, was published in a supplement to the London Gazette on 23 September 1941. A 29-year-old Army Bombardier, Reed was a gunner on board Defensively Equipped Merchant Ship (DEMS) SS Cormount, part of a convoy steaming south from Blyth in the North Sea, when the formation was attacked by German aircraft on the night of 20-21 June 1941. The 2,800-ton collier fought back in a hail of bullets, cannon shells and bombs, but Reed was hit and badly wounded, but when the Master asked him how he was he said he would carry on firing. The ship's Chief Officer was also badly injured, so Reed carried the wounded man down two ladders from the bridge to a sheltered spot near a lifeboat, placed him on the deck and died shortly afterwards. When his shipmates attended Reed it was found that his stomach had been ripped wide open by machine gun bullets, but his brave action, in extreme pain, had saved the life of the Chief Officer. He was buried in Sunderland, the town where he was born, and his mother received her son's George Cross from the King at a ceremony in Buckingham Palace in March the following year. SS Cormount was damaged by a mine in the North Sea in November 1943, and sank under tow.

24 September 1922

Destroyer HMS Speedy was lost in a collision with a tug in the Sea of Marmara on 24 September 1922. The 1,075-ton Thornycroft-built S-class warship was commissioned on 14 August 1918, so served for the last three months of World War 1 with the 12 Destroyer Flotilla, part of the Grand Fleet, though she saw no significant action and was placed in reserve after the Armistice. Speedy was recommissioned 1 February 1919 and joined the Mediterranean Fleet which was tasked with protecting British interests in the Black Sea during the Russian Civil War. She went on to support Greek forces in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-22, but it was during the Chanak Crisis of September 1922 that she met her end. The Crisis was a period of tension between the UK and France on one hand, and Turkey on the other, when popular opinion in the UK was against another war, and allied nations (including Canada and France) refused to entertain an ultimatum or any other measures other than a negotiated settlement. On 24 September Speedy collided with a Turkish tug near the Gulf of Gemlik in the Sea of Marmara, causing the destroyer to sink with the loss of ten of her ship's company.

25 September 1925

The giant submarine HMS X1 was completed on 23 September 1925. Displacing 2,780 tons and mounting four 5.2in guns in two twin turrets, she was the largest submarine in the world at the time, and the largest in the Royal Navy until HMS Dreadnought commissioned on 17 April 1963. Designed to carry out the role of a cruiser, and adopting principles discovered from German U-boat development, the experimental X1 was in the minds of naval architects since 1915 but the technology was against them until long after the Armistice. The 1922 Washington Naval Treaty banned the use of submarines against merchant shipping, which was one of X1's proposed main roles – that of commerce raider – so the boat was shrouded in secrecy during her build at Chatham. Her gun system was somewhat cumbersome – the ammunition hoists on board could not keep up with

the rate of fire, it required almost 60 men to operate the guns, and the submarine needed a special ballast tank system to compensate for the weight of ammunition expended. The machinery and magazines for the guns also meant that the boat's torpedo room was somewhat cramped, and X1 could only carry one reload for each of her six torpedo tubes. Despite her speed (almost 20 knots on the surface) and her impressive handling underwater and good rate of dive and ascent, her career was far from successful. After her first voyage, to Gibraltar in 1926, it was discovered that her main engine drive wheels were damaged requiring urgent repairs. A full-power run in the Mediterranean in January 1926 broke her starboard camshaft driveshaft, requiring a new set of gears to be fitted in Malta; no sooner was that sorted in Malta than her port camshaft driveshaft also broke, in April the same year. Her engines continued to cause trouble throughout her career, and life on board was not pleasant, with reports of cramped accommodation spaces, high humidity and poor ventilation. She was placed in reserve in the early 1930s and scrapped at Pembroke in December 1936.

26 September 1942

HMS Veteran was sunk by U-404 with all hands plus 80 Merchant Navy survivors from Convoy RB1 on 26 September 1942. The modified W-class destroyer, displacing 1,550 tons, was ordered during the Great War, but launched at the John Brown yard in Clydebank on 16 August 1919. She saw service with the Atlantic and Mediterranean Fleets, and also on the China Station, where she played a part in the Nanking Incident in March 1927, when foreign warships bombarded Nanking to protect their citizens as soldiers of the Nationalist Revolutionary Army of the Kuomintang rioted and looted foreign-owned businesses. Veteran was in reserve when World War 2 started, and as with similar elderly destroyers she was put on escort duties and modified accordingly, with guns replacing torpedo tubes and space made for depth charges. She escorted convoys for the Norwegian campaign in 1940 and moved on to North Sea convoys and patrols, during which she suffered some damage when she struck a mine. In September 1940 she switched to Atlantic convoy duties, based out of Londonderry, sharing the credit for sinking U-207 a year later. Early in 1942 she underwent conversion in London to Short Range Escort, and spent the summer of 1942 off the east coast of North America on convoy defence. On 16 September 1942 she sailed from Halifax, Nova Scotia, with Special Convoy RB1, reportedly standing for 'Rivers to Britain' and comprising a number of Great Lakes river steamers that were transferred to Britain under the Lease Lend arrangement. The formation, which also called in at New York, was spotted by U-380 a week later, and the Blitz wolfpack of U-boats was called in, with two other packs also alerted – a total of 17 U-boats. The German submarines began their attacks on 24 September, and the following day sank two steamers (SS Boston and SS New York). The convoy was ordered to scatter, but on 26 September the ships were ordered to reform the convoy, and Veteran set about gathering some of the merchantmen back into the fold. In doing so she found survivors of the SS New York, but while rescuing them she was struck by two torpedoes fired by U-404 and exploded, sinking with all 161 hands and taking a number of rescued merchant sailors with her. U-404 enjoyed moderate success on her seven war patrols, sinking 14 merchant ships totalling

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more than 70,000 tons, and was sunk with all hands on 28 July 1943 by depth charges from three Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers, two American and one British – all three aircraft lost one of their four engines through accurate fire from the submarine before it was destroyed.

27 September 1778

HM Ships Experiment and Unicorn engaged the American Raleigh in Penobscot Bay, Maine, and took her the next day after she had been run ashore. Raleigh, a 32-gun frigate of the Continental Navy built at Maine in 1775-6, spent her early years harassing British ships and convoys in the Atlantic, and on 25 September 1778 sailed from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with a brig and sloop in convoy. Just six hours in to their passage lookouts spotted two sails on the horizon, which turned out to be 50-gun fourth rate HMS Experiment and 20-gun sixth rate post ship Unicorn. Raleigh ordered the merchant ships back to port and drew off the British ships, which gave chase through the rest of the day and overnight. Late in the afternoon of 27 September Raleigh was finally overhauled and forced to fight, with a fierce seven-hour action taking place. Around midnight the British pair pulled back and Raleigh was taken into the islands of Penobscot Bay, south of Maine. Before the ship could escape the British resumed the battle, and Raleigh was driven aground on Matinicus Island, where her crew took to the boats and made it to shore. A party returned to the ship to salvage anything useful, but the British continued to fire on the stricken ship, forcing her crew to abandon her. Unicorn had been badly damaged, but the British managed to refloat Raleigh the following day and she was taken into service with the Royal Navy, taking part in the American Revolutionary War on the 'other' side. She was sold in Portsmouth in July 1783. Some of her American crew were captured after the action, but most escaped and made it back to Boston. Experiment remained active on the American coast, but on 23 September 1779 she was captured by the French 50-gun Sagittaire and put into service with the French navy, playing an active role in French activities in the Atlantic, the Caribbean and North America. In 1794 she was cut down to a frigate, and continued to be a thorn in the side

of British mariners on the west coast of Africa until late 1797, when she was converted to a horse transport. She was finally hulked in Rochefort in the summer of 1802. Unicorn suffered a similar fate – in September 1780 she was sailing off Tortuga, near Haiti, when she saw a sail on the horizon. On approaching it she realised it was a full French fleet, and she fled, pursued by two ships of the line and a frigate. The frigate caught her after an hour, and the two were locked in battle for an hour until one of the other ships, the 74-gun Andromaque, also entered the fray. With her rigging in tatters and four guns down, Unicorn surrendered, and entered service with the French as *Licorne*. Her stint under the tricolour was brief, as she was recaptured in the Caribbean in April 1781 by 28-gun frigate HMS Resource, and she returned to the Royal Navy under the name Unicorn Prize. After a refit in Portsmouth she served in the Channel and Irish Sea until 1783. The following year she recommissioned and returned to the Caribbean for a final two-year spell before sailing back to England and being broken up at Deptford in August 1787.

28 September 1956

Inshore minesweepers HM Ships Broadley, Bisham and Edlingham, held in reserve in Hasler Creek off HMS Hornet in Portsmouth Harbour, were destroyed by a fire that started in Broadley on 28 September 1956. The three ships, one Ley- class and two Ham class, were relatively young. Edlingham was built in 1953, Bisham and Broadley in 1954, and all were held in operational reserve at the coastal forces base HMS Hornet in Gosport. The Ley class displaced 167 tons and were of composite construction, designed to act as inshore minehunters, with divers locating and destroying individual mines in rivers, estuaries and harbours – a new concept in dealing with the danger of such devices. Ham-class ships shared the same hull as the Ley class, but were more traditional in their use of sweeps to deal with mines. They were also far more numerous – almost 100 were completed for various navies, mainly the Royal Navy, compared to ten Ley-class ships. Fire was discovered to have broken out on board Broadley on 28 September, spreading quickly to the two ships berthed alongside, so the three mine countermeasures vessels were towed

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HMS Veteran. See 26 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: Image: © IWM (A 9724)



into the centre of the harbour to prevent the blaze spreading even further. They were subsequently put into dock in Portsmouth with a view to repairing them, but all three were deemed beyond repair and were scrapped – Bisham and Edlingham in 1957, Broadley in 1959,

29 September 1918

Destroyers HM Ships Ouse and Star sank UB-115 off Northumberland on 29 September 1918. Ouse was a 635-ton River-class destroyer built by Cammell Laird at Birkenhead and launched on 7 January 1905. Before World War 1 she was almost exclusively based on the East Coast at Harwich and the Nore. On the eve of war she moved to the Tyne with the 9th Destroyer Flotilla, carrying out patrols along the coast of North-East England, moving to the Humber Patrol in 1915. On 3 May 1917 Ouse and destroyer HMS Bat mistakenly attacked submarine HMS C10 of Blyth, killing one sailor and wounding a second, but the submarine survived. Ouse depth-charged and sank UC-70 off the Yorkshire coast on 28 August 1918 – the submarine had been damaged in an attack by an RAF Blackburn Kangaroo reconnaissance aircraft, but was finished off by Ouse with the loss of all 31 men on board. She repeated that success on 29 September in a joint enterprise with HMS Star. Star was a somewhat elderly Palmer three-funnel 30-knotter, launched in August 1897 on the Tyne and displacing 450 tons. Star spent much of her life along the South Coast of England, starting as an instructional ship then joining the Channel Fleet, though she did venture as far as Gibraltar in 1905. Star moved to Chatham at the outbreak of war to undertake anti-submarine and counter-mining patrols, a task she continued when she moved to the Humber in November 1916. On 29 September 1918 the former RNAS airship R29, escorting

a convoy, noticed an oil slick in the sea to the north-east of Blyth and homed in Ouse, Star and two armed trawlers to the spot. The two destroyers carried out a depth-charge attack which destroyed UB-115, killing all 39 men on board. The 640-ton U-boat, which had only been commissioned in May 1918, was on her second patrol, having sunk just one 340-ton ship, and is thought to have been the last U-boat to leave Zeebrugge on a war patrol in the conflict. Having survived the war, both Ouse and Star were deemed surplus to requirements and sold for scrap in 1919.

30 September 1944

HMS Terrible, the only British carrier built in a Royal Dockyard, was launched at Devonport on 30 September 1944. The 19,550-ton vessel never actually served as Terrible. One of six supposedly 'disposable' Majestic-class light Fleet carriers, Terrible was not completed until after the war, and in 1947 was sold to Australia as HMAS Sydney. Acting as flagship early in her career, she saw service during the Korean War before being switched to training duties from 1955 after the arrival of her upgraded sister ship HMAS Melbourne. She went into reserve in 1958, but was reactivated in 1962 after undergoing modification to undertake the role of fast troop transport. She made 25 trips to Vietnam between 1965 and 1972 (earning the nickname the 'Vung Tau Ferry'). The Australian government decided in July 1973 to decommission the ship and she was paid off in November the same year. Plans to preserve the carrier as a floating museum, convention centre or even a car park came to nothing, and on 23 December 1975 she was towed from Sydney to South Korea, where she was scrapped. She was not replaced.

A Sea Fury of 805 Naval Air Squadron is warmed up on the flight deck of HMAS Sydney in action off Korea. See 30 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © Image: IWM (A 31995)



2025

13 Sept 2025	Area 4 meeting hosted by Saltash Branch
14 Sept 2025	Naval Associations Biennial Parade, Whitehall
4 October 2025	World Uckers Championships, Portsmouth
22 Oct 2025	Fisherman's Friends Charity Fundraising Concert, Portsmouth
9 Nov 2025	Remembrance Ceremonies, Cenotaph, Whitehall
15 Nov 2025	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting hosted by RNA Stowmarket
2 May 2026	Army v Navy rugby match, Twickenham

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BRIAN WOOD MC
KEYNOTE SPEAKER



SAVE THE DATE
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TUESDAY
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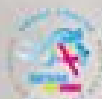


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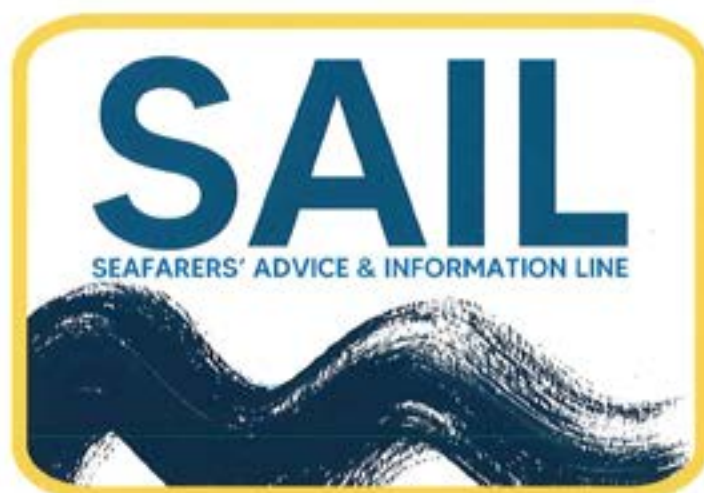


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