

SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



MORE THAN A LEAVE PERIOD

Three weeks ago, I arrived at HMS Raleigh to support a group of recruits and members of the ship's company who were remaining on board during the summer leave period, *writes Jon Everett, RNA Welfare and Wellbeing Support Coordinator.*

Most people naturally think of leave as a chance to go home, spend time with family and friends, and recharge before returning to training. For many recruits, that is exactly what happens.

For others, however, going home is simply not possible.

Many of those remaining at Raleigh during the leave period were from Commonwealth countries.

Some had only recently arrived in the United Kingdom and were just beginning their training, whilst others were further through their courses. Alongside them were recruits from across the UK and members of the ship's company who also remained at 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 (if required) 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 or editions switched – 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 2 October, and the deadline for material is 1000 on Wednesday 30 September. Semaphore Shorts will next be published on Friday 11, 18 and 25 September.



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establishment throughout the leave period. Everyone had their own reasons for staying, but they shared one common experience. Whilst much of the establishment emptied around them, they remained at Raleigh during one of the quietest periods of the training year.

This is the second leave period I have spent supporting recruits at Raleigh, having done something similar over Easter. Even so, I was not prepared for just how different the establishment feels once training stops.

Normally, Raleigh is full of activity. Recruits move between lessons, instructors get on with the business of training the next generation of sailors, vehicles travel around the site and there is a constant buzz of Naval life.

Then leave arrives.

The accommodation blocks empty, the shops and galleys all shut, the routine changes and the noise disappears.

I remember sitting in my cabin one evening looking across the accommodation block. Only a handful of lights were visible. The corridors were silent and the atmosphere felt very different from the busy establishment I was used to.

I'm someone who is generally comfortable in my own company, yet even I found the quietness noticeable. It made me reflect on how those remaining on board might be feeling.

Some were thousands of miles from home and adapting to life in a new country. Others lived much closer but were still spending the leave period away from family and friends.

Technology makes it easier than ever to stay connected, but a video call can never completely replace being with those closest to you.

It reinforced just how important it is to create opportunities for people to get out, explore somewhere different and spend time together.

What impressed me most over the past three weeks was the

attitude of those I met. Every single person was polite, respectful and appreciative of the opportunities available to them. I listened to stories about life back home, their families, their

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ambitions and what inspired them to join the Royal Navy. They were a remarkable group of young men and women, each bringing their own experiences and perspectives.

One thing became clear very quickly. The recruits valued every opportunity to explore beyond the gates of Raleigh, experience something new and enjoy time together.

With that in mind, we kept busy.

We travelled to Newquay, where recruits visited Newquay Zoo before spending time exploring Cornwall's famous coastline and beaches. For many, it was their first opportunity to experience this part of the country.

Watching them take in the scenery and simply enjoy a day out together was a reminder that often the simplest experiences have the greatest impact.

We also organised visits to Plymouth, giving people the chance to explore the city, enjoy the waterfront, do a little shopping and spend time away from their normal routine.

Ten-pin bowling proved equally popular and brought out a surprisingly competitive streak in more than a few participants, generating plenty of laughter along the way.

Another highlight was our regular minibus shuttle service to the China Fleet Club. The visits quickly became a favourite, giving recruits access to excellent facilities in a welcoming environment.

Whether enjoying the leisure facilities, spending time with friends or having a go on the golf driving range, there was always plenty to keep people occupied.

One of the biggest highlights was our visit to Adrenalin Quarry.

From karting to the thrill of the zip wire, recruits threw themselves into every challenge with enthusiasm. It was fantastic to watch them relax, enjoy themselves and create lasting memories.

The excitement throughout the day was infectious and demonstrated just how much these experiences were appreciated.

A particularly memorable occasion came when we attended Liskeard RNA's 40th Anniversary Parade and Freedom of the Town celebrations (see page 34).

The recruits received a warm welcome from veterans, RNA members and the local community. Conversations flowed naturally as stories of Naval service were shared between different generations and people from very different backgrounds.

Watching veterans engage with these young recruits was genuinely special. Many of the recruits were fascinated by the experiences being shared, whilst veterans took a great interest in the young men and women beginning their Naval careers.

It was a powerful reminder that despite differences in age, nationality or background, the Naval family remains exactly that – a family.

Another memorable visit took us to Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. For some of the recruits, this was a unique opportunity to visit one of the Royal Navy's most iconic establishments and learn more about its history, traditions and heritage.



I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the **Britannia Association** for giving up their time to show the recruits around the College. Their knowledge, enthusiasm and warm welcome helped make the visit both enjoyable and informative.

Throughout the leave period, the RNA minibus became far more than simply a means of transport. It gave people the freedom to explore the local area, but it also became a place where friendships developed and conversations flowed naturally.

Many of the journeys were filled with stories about home, hopes for the future and reflections on life in training.

Looking back, whilst the activities themselves were important, it is probably those conversations that I will remember most. It was a privilege to hear about the different journeys that had brought these young people to HMS Raleigh and ultimately into the Royal Navy.

The support we received throughout the programme was exceptional.

I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to the **China Fleet Club Trust** and all the staff at the **China Fleet Club**. From the outset they embraced what we were trying to achieve and went above and beyond to make everyone feel welcome. Their generosity played a significant part in the success of the programme and was greatly appreciated by everyone involved. My thanks must also go to the team at **Adrenalin Quarry**. Their support enabled recruits to participate in activities that many had never experienced before, creating memories that will stay

with them long after the leave period has ended. None of this would have been possible without the support of **Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity** (RNRMC). I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the RNRMC for the grant funding that helped make this initiative possible. Their support enabled us to provide activities, transport and opportunities that otherwise may not have been achievable.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported the RNA's **Boost a Recruit** fundraiser. The generosity of shipmates, branches and supporters has made a genuine difference to the opportunities we have been able to offer recruits during leave periods.

My thanks also go to the many **RNA shipmates** who expressed an interest in the project and offered encouragement, support and ideas throughout the three weeks.

The strength of the RNA has always been its people. Whether through volunteering, fundraising, offering support or simply taking an interest, shipmates continue to demonstrate the Association's commitment to supporting today's serving personnel.

Looking back on the past three weeks, I have been struck by the goodwill that exists throughout the Naval community. Charities, organisations, local businesses and individual shipmates all played their part in helping make the leave period a positive experience for those who remained at Raleigh.

Over those three weeks I drove hundreds of miles, spent countless hours behind the wheel of a minibus and enjoyed more conversations than I can remember.

And honestly, I loved every minute of it.

The recruits and staff with whom I spent time were a credit to themselves and to the Royal Navy. Spending time alongside them was both enjoyable and rewarding, and I feel privileged to have played a small part in their leave period.

As Raleigh returns to its normal rhythm and the accommodation blocks fill once more, I will look back on these weeks with great fondness. Not because of the miles travelled or the activities organised, but because of the people I had the privilege to meet. My thanks once again go to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, the China Fleet Club Trust, Adrenalin Quarry, the Britannia Association, everyone who has supported the Boost a Recruit fundraiser, the many RNA Shipmates who offered encouragement and support, and, of course, the recruits and staff who took part.

What could have been a quiet leave period became three weeks filled with new experiences, good company and lasting memories. For me, that made every mile worthwhile.



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FROM THE (INTERIM) GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear Shipmates,

Welcome to my second (and final) missive from the captain's chair. I hand over the tiller to our new General Secretary, Andy Coles, next week, which will allow me to concentrate on my main role as RNA Governance lead.

But before I do so, I thought it might be useful to give members an idea of what I have been up to over the summer, and the kind of business that the staff at Central Office deal with quietly, without any fuss, behind the scenes to support me.

On the principle that you deal with the crocodiles closest to the canoe, we have been particularly mindful of a couple of major events coming up fast.

The first is the **CONA meeting** in Portsmouth on Friday 11 September, in which the Association takes the lead role. Milly has been working hard on getting the programme together, with delegates, other organisations and our guests all being kept informed of how the day is shaping. The big decisions – the wheres and whens – were obviously made some time ago, but there are plenty of other aspects that need to be battened down before it starts, including what we present to delegates, catering and the like.

This year, it all has to also tie in with the National Council meeting which will be held at the same venue (the Royal Maritime Hotel) on the morning of the CONA event, and several of the Central Office team have been involved in preparing for that meeting besides myself.

National Council meetings are one of the driving forces behind the RNA where crucial decisions are made, but a lot of the legwork in preparing policy and gathering evidence has to be done at Central Office before we reach that stage. Also key in the National Council area is Malcolm Little, whose part-time role includes co-ordinating all the various strands which come together to ensure National Council members can concentrate on their vital role in moving the Association forward.

Once done with CONA our attention will shift to the **Uckers World Championships** on 3 October (also at the Royal Maritime Hotel!), and once again it is Milly in the hot seat, collating entries and finalising arrangements.

And all that while she carries on her day-to-day tasking as the Executive Assistant to the General Secretary, making sure I (and in the future Andy) are aware of what is happening in and around the Association, and that we are in the right place at the right time with the right information. Working alongside Milly in all this is Jon Boreham, who only joined us in the summer but is already up to his eyes in the daily business of dealing with our membership.

Queries directed to Jon could be anything from finance issues to funeral arrangements, branch meeting protocol to a 100th birthday, and Jon will either be getting the relevant information himself, signposting members to the appropriate organisation, or liaising within the Association to offer support, perhaps through Jon Everett, our welfare lead, or myself for governance.

Jon B also has the remit for our **Remembrance** activities this year, and is the point of contact for arrangements involving shipmates who wish to march at the Cenotaph in Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday, 8 November. This means close liaison with the Royal British Legion as well as other agencies, such as the Civil Service Club, where we will host a



lunch for some of those on parade. Milly and Jon are also heavily involved in arrangements for the RNA members' section at Twickenham for the annual **Army v Navy rugby matches**, and no sooner had the Navy seen off their opponents this year than planning for next year's big day (Saturday 1 May) was getting under way.

All these events – in fact, just about everything the RNA does – relies on effective communication with our shipmates, the wider veteran community and anyone else interested in our activities.

That means our Head of Communications, Alice Farrow, and Semaphore Editor Mike Gray are constantly pushing out information, letting you know what the RNA is doing, issues that might affect you and how other Branches and Areas approach matters; a great idea in Area 4 might be just as applicable to a Branch in Area 7, spreading good practice and sparking new initiatives.

Alice is also head of communications at RNRMC, which helps ensure the two organisations are aware of each other's activities, while Mike trawls the websites, news channels and social media, as well as editing submissions, to bring a broad range of material to shipmates through our free newsletters, the weekly Semaphore Short emails and the monthly Semaphore Circular.

They also have extra work on their hands at this time of the year as planning has already started on the 2027 RNA Yearbook, a key plank in our communications platform. Our former communications lead Sarah Bewley has not quite left the building – Sarah devotes time each week to creating bids attracting financial support for RNA programmes and initiatives (all on top of her day job!) As previously mentioned, Jon Everett works his socks off covering Welfare; he has spent the last three weeks in the West Country providing extra support for **overseas recruits at HMS Raleigh** who haven't been able to make it home during the longer leave period. We have been extremely grateful to RNRMC for their backing, as well as lovely donations from some of you all too – meaning Jon has been able to support more of the recruits.

Jon also racks up plenty of mileage supporting our Branch and Area welfare system, and personally attends many funerals of shipmates on behalf of the Association. Talking of quietly getting on with the hard yards behind the scenes, last but far from least is Kathryn Brindley, who works across both the membership and finance areas.

Kathryn maintains a low profile, but as with her colleagues, her output is crucial to the success of the Association and the support and wellbeing of our members.

While all the team at Central Office have their 'day jobs', each and every one of them all roll up their sleeves and muck in across the board whenever required. Their pooled expertise and knowledge is a huge part of the RNA's strength.

I hope that gives you all some idea of who we are and what we do for shipmates (you!), and I am confident that the RNA will continue to flourish as I step aside for Andy and the start of a new chapter.

Yours aye,

Kate

ROYAL NAVY CONGRATULATES BRIAN ON MILESTONE BIRTHDAY

A Naval war veteran who celebrated his 100th birthday was said to be thrilled to greet a special guest.

Brian Brown was visited by a Royal Navy officer who brought with him a letter from the First Sea Lord and a Naval medallion.

The letter from Gen Sir Gwyn Jenkins RM congratulated Brian on his longevity, and the depth of character and resilience he has shown throughout his life.

Brian, who now lives in a care home in High Wycombe, served as an Ordinary Telegraphist in South Africa and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) during the war and continued to serve after the end of hostilities, including spells at HMS Royal Arthur and HMS Pembroke.



Back in Civvie Street Brian worked as a bricklayer. The First Sea Lord said it was "a privilege to celebrate this extraordinary milestone with you," adding that "you and all your generation are an inspiration to today's sailors and marines, and I am delighted to be able to send you the Royal Navy's best wishes on their behalf." Brian was also



presented with a challenge coin from the Naval Regional Commander Eastern England, a much-prized military memento.

Brian celebrated his birthday at a golf tournament at the Harewood Downs club near Amersham, where he has been a member since 1987.

The competition was organised to honour the centenarian, a lifelong keen golfer, and attracted more than 50 players.

MYSTERIOUS DEATHS AT SEA

Author Lee Brickley, who has published numerous books on the paranormal, folklore and mysteries, has turned his attention to maritime matters. In **Dead Men Tell No Tales** he looks at suspicious and unexplained deaths at sea, including several with Royal Navy connections such as Lt Cdr Lionel 'Buster' Crabb's disappearance in 1956. The paperback, published in August (ISBN-13: 979-8191814643), in part attempts to examine how some events, such as stories of vanishing lighthousemen, have grown through repetition and attracted conspiracy theories, as well as outlining the events themselves. The book is available through Amazon at <https://tinyurl.com/6b8e7a98>

TAKE YOUR PLACE AT MUSEUM SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

The annual Eden Camp All Services Parade and Service of Remembrance will take place on Sunday 13 September.

The format and timings will be the same as in previous years – the museum will be open free to veterans and serving members and their husbands/wives/partners/carers/chaperones/chauffeurs and Cadet groups from 1000, and the parade will assemble at 1410 for the march to the Heritage Hall Display arena at 1430.

The Yorkshire Volunteers Band will lead the parade, followed by the Standards and those wishing to take part in the parade. If attending as a group, Eden Camp would be grateful if you could advise them of approximate numbers of members and whether you will be arriving by coach/mini-bus so that they



can arrange parking for you on site. Eden Camp Modern History Museum, near Malton in North Yorkshire, was originally a World War 2 prisoner-of-war camp, built in 1942 and housing up to 1,200 Italian and German personnel. Today, more than 20 of the original huts house immersive exhibits, inviting visitors to step back into the 1940s and experience life in wartime Britain. <https://edencamp.co.uk>

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MARCH IN RNA'S CENOTAPH CONTINGENT?

Shipmates who would like to march as part of the RNA contingent in the Remembrance Sunday parade in London are invited to email Central Office in order to register their interest.

The Association has been allocated 140 places for its squad at the Cenotaph parade on Whitehall on Sunday 8 November, and there are now around 40 places remaining to be

ANY INFORMATION FOR CONA MEETING?

More than 70 delegates will be meeting in Portsmouth next week as CONA comes to town.

But there is still time to make your point, even if you cannot be there in person.

The meeting takes place in the afternoon of Friday 11 September at the Royal Maritime Hotel in Queen Street, when representatives of Naval associations and organisations from across the UK gather to network, share ideas, strengthen connections and discuss issues of importance to their members and to the wider Naval community.

If your Association has any updates, promotional material, upcoming events they wish to publicise, or other items you'd like included, please send them over to Milly on ceo-ea@rnassoc.org by Monday 7 September.

Including your content is a great way to highlight your Association's activities and ensure delegates have a clear picture of the breadth of work taking place across our community.

READY TO ROLL (THE DICE)

We are now just a month from the World Uckers Championships which will be staged in Portsmouth – are you on board this prestigious competition yet?

Hosted by the Royal Naval Association at the Royal Maritime Hotel in Queen Street, the event takes place on Saturday 3 October, with registration between 0900 and 1000.

So if you think you have a chance of taking the title Uckers Champion of the World, join us for a day of dice, drama, and full-on matelot mayhem. Whether you're a seasoned pro or just fancy your chances, we want to hear from you.

And please bring your families and friends – this is an event for everyone. To help us plan, please email ceo-ea@rnassoc.org to register your interest. Include your name, contact details, and whether you're entering solo or with a teammate.

Spaces are limited – don't miss your shot at Uckers glory!

claimed.

To register your interest, please email Jon B at ams@rnassoc.org no later than 1200 on Friday 14 August. After this deadline, Jon will submit the final list of participants to the Royal British Legion so that the appropriate tickets can be issued.

Please note that those registering with RNA will be expected to march with the RNA contingent.

In order to march you must possess at least one of the following:

- Veterans Recognition (ID) Card
- Veterans UK Status Card
- Certificate of Service – this must include date of discharge

CLOCK IS TICKING FOR VETERANS ELIGIBLE FOR REPARATIONS

Fighting With Pride (FWP) launched its Battle for Lost Veterans campaign at its Community Dedication Event of the LGBT+ Armed Forces Memorial sited at the National Memorial Arboretum on 20 June.

In the first 30 days since the launch 50 new veterans came forward to secure the reparations owed to them.

However, FWP estimate that there are around 1,000 eligible veterans still to come forward.

The campaign is aimed at people who served in the UK Armed Forces from 1967-2000 and are part of the LGBTQ+ community.

You may or may not have been

■ Certificate of Discharge

■ Veterans Railcard

■ For Merchant Mariners – a copy of the personal details page of your Discharge Book, along with the vessel names on which you served and the operation names and date.

Please check the RBL website for full eligibility details: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/.../remembrance-sunday>.

Following the Cenotaph parade the RN will host a sandwich lunch reception for 50 members on a first-come, first-served basis at the Civil Service Club, which is at 13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London SW1A 2HJ.

dismissed or discharged during that time because of the 'Gay Ban' that existed.

Your career will have been impacted by the need to hide your true self from the homophobic and discriminatory environment you served in.

In either of those circumstances FWP can help you to gain the recognition and reparations that you are entitled to.

These include non-financial restorative actions such as the return of berets, medals and ranks, the award of the Etherton Pin and personal letters of apology from the State and the Service Chiefs.

These can also include Financial Recognition Scheme payments up to £70,000

FWP can help you in your application to these schemes, but you must apply before 12 December.

Follow [this link](#) for more details.

FIRESIDE CHAT

Former RNA General Secretary Bill Oliphant will talk about the RN attack on Fort Henry and the Star-Spangled Banner at our next Fireside Chat, which is scheduled for next Monday (7 September).

To access the chat, follow the Zoom link in the Online Events section of the RNA website – click [this link](#).



FINAL OPEN DAY OF THE YEAR BRINGS SHIPMATES TOGETHER

It was a pleasure to welcome shipmates and partners from the **Christchurch, Bracknell, Netley and District** and **Eastbourne Branches**, along with representatives from the **Lanyard Roll** (virtual) to Central Office in Portsmouth for a

successful RNA Open Day – the final one of this year. The day was a fantastic opportunity for members to learn more about the work of the Association, see how Central Office operates, share ideas, catch up with old friends and make new connections.

Most importantly, it highlighted the friendship and camaraderie that remain at the heart of the RNA.

The day included briefings from staff at Central Office and the chance to get a close-up view of ships of the Fleet alongside in Portsmouth Naval Base – and it proved to be a lovely day out on the water!

A huge thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the day such a success.

Your chance to give feedback

RNA Membership Secretary Jon Boreham is putting together the 2027 Open Day programme, and would like to hear from shipmates with ideas as to what could be added to (or removed from) the Central Office Open Days programme.

We already get valuable feedback from those who attend such events, but in order to improve the offering (and we appreciate some shipmates travel long distances for the occasion) we want to know what potential



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visitors would like to see and do when they visit us at Portsmouth Naval Base. What would really tempt you to make the journey? And for those who have already visited, what went well, and what could you have done without? Any thoughts on the matter, whether you have been to a previous Open Day or not, should be directed to Jon at ams@rnassoc.org





RUGBY TICKETS NOW ON SALE

The RNA Members Rugby Special offer is now live! Request We are delighted to announce that RNA members can now apply for tickets for the Army v Navy rugby doubler header at Twickenham on Saturday 1 May next year.

For the 2027 event the Association has an allocation of 1,350 tickets exclusively reserved for RNA members.

For 2027, tickets will be available through a dedicated members-only booking link, which will be sent directly to members who request tickets.

Please note: To protect our allocation, this booking link must remain confidential and must not be shared with anyone else.

Why book through the RNA?

Whilst we are unfortunately unable to offer the individual ticket discount available last year, the RNA experience still provides fantastic benefits, including:

■ Dedicated RNA seating

■ Exclusive access to our private clubhouse bar.

Enjoy the day alongside fellow RNA members, friends and family. The rugby kicks off at 1400 for the senior men's clash, with the women's match following at 1645.

Group Discount Available

Are you bringing a crowd? Purchasers of ten or more tickets will receive a **ten per cent discount** on their booking.

How to Request Tickets

Simply contact us to request your members-only booking link and secure your place before our allocation is exhausted.

Email: ceo-ea@rnassoc.org

Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to be part of a great day of rugby with the RNA community.

Tickets are available now. Request your booking link today!

RNA MEMBERS RUGBY SPECIAL IS NOW LIVE!

The Royal Naval Association is delighted to announce that **1,350 tickets**

have been reserved exclusively for RNA members for this year's Rugby Special.

When you book through the RNA, you'll benefit from:

- ✓ Dedicated RNA seating
- ✓ Exclusive access to the private RNA Clubhouse Bar
- ✓ A fantastic day alongside fellow RNA members, friends and family



Group Discount Available

Book 10 or more tickets and receive a 10% discount on your booking.

10%
DISCOUNT



To request your exclusive members-only booking link, contact:



ceo-ea@rnassoc.org



Please note: The booking link is exclusively for RNA members and must not be shared.



NAMES OF RFA SUPPORT SHIPS ANNOUNCED AT CEREMONY

The Royal Navy marked a milestone in the delivery of new support vessels with the keel-laying of RFA Resurgent at North Devon shipyard Appledore this week.

The first of three new Fleet Solid Support ships, which will form the logistical backbone for UK aircraft carrier operations, is being built in sections across Navantia's yards at Appledore, Cadiz in Spain and Belfast, with all the modules being transported to Harland & Wolff's Belfast facility for final integration.

During the keel-laying ceremony for RFA Resurgent, head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Cdre Sam Shattock revealed the second and third vessels would be named RFA Reliant and RFA Resourceful.

"Today represents the moment when vision becomes reality, when plans and drawings come to life, effectively becoming the ship's birthday," said Cdre Shattock, who added the occasion was particularly fitting as it fell on Merchant Navy Day (3 September).

"RFA Resurgent's name speaks of renewal, resilience and the ability to recover stronger from challenge," he added. "Those qualities are reflected not only in the ship itself, but also in the people who will design, build, support and ultimately sail her."

The 39,000-tonne ships are expected to be in service by the early 2030s, and will provide dry stores, such as food, ammunition and spare parts, to ships of the Fleet. They are also planned to be able to host two Merlin helicopters as well as unmanned aerial vehicles – ie drones. Construction of the ships officially began with a steel-cutting ceremony in December last year at Appledore. The new trio will replace two previous classes of store ships, the Fort Victoria and Fort Rosalie classes. The previous RFA Resurgent was an armament stores ship, originally built in 1950 as a commercial passenger and freight liner but converted and commissioned in 1957. She served until 1979.

DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR STAN AND IVY

A Midlands couple have marked an extraordinary double milestone in the space of two days.

Royal Navy veteran Stan Field turned 100 on 17 August, and the following day he celebrated his 70th wedding anniversary with wife Ivy.

The couple marked the occasions at Royal Star & Garter in Solihull, where they have lived together since March this year.

Stan was born in East London in 1926,

and was called up to the Navy in 1944. He trained as a radar mechanic and travelled the world before being demobbed in 1948.

He then trained as a teacher and moved to Birmingham for work. It was there that he met Ivy at a church in Yardley in 1950.

Stan said: "As soon as I saw her, I thought 'that's the one for me'. It was love at first sight – and I'm sure it was God-guided."

The couple didn't marry until 1956, as they wanted to save up before they wed.

Stan went on to teach for more than 30 years, becoming head teacher at Hawbush Middle School.

After raising their two daughters, Ivy, aged 97, taught shorthand and typing.

The couple enjoyed a family party at Royal Star & Garter, joined by children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Friends then gathered at the Home on

Stan's birthday before staff put on a special meal for the couple on their anniversary. Looking back on the life they built, Stan said: "If I had my time over again, I wouldn't change a thing."

The couple live just a few rooms apart at Royal Star & Garter, and Stan added: "It means a lot that we're both here at this home. We've had a very happy life together, and I'm deeply grateful that we're still together at Royal Star & Garter."

The charity provides care and support to veterans and their families living with disability or dementia, from homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe and Worthing.

It also runs services reaching out into the community including Day Care, Lunch Club and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

HELP PRESERVE OUR NAVAL MEMORIAL

The RNA has an appeal to raise £75,000 to preserve the stunning Naval Service Memorial (NSM) at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas.

The NSM was unveiled 12 years ago, and stands as a powerful tribute to the service and sacrifice of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and associated Services.

It now requires essential repair work and long-term maintenance planning to ensure its continued preservation.

One of the Memorial's glass panes has developed water ingress at its upper edge. To prevent further deterioration, and to protect the structure as a whole, remedial work is required to repair the pane and to install protective seals across all panes.

These seals were not available when the Memorial was constructed in 2014.

Alongside this work, appropriate arrangements for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the Memorial are essential to ensure it remains in a fitting condition.

RNA National Chairman Andy Christie said:

"The Naval Service Memorial is more than stone and glass – it is a place of reflection, remembrance, and pride for all who have served, and for their families.

"We have a responsibility to ensure it remains in the condition it deserves. This is about protecting our shared Naval heritage and ensuring future generations can stand here and remember those who served before them."

We strongly encourage all those with an interest in Naval history, service, and remembrance to visit the National Memorial Arboretum near Burton-on-Trent, to see the Memorial for themselves.

The RNA is calling on the wider Naval family and the public to support this vital appeal.

Any contribution, large or small, will help ensure the Naval Service Memorial remains a fitting and dignified place of remembrance for all future visitors.

All donations are gratefully received – follow this link: [Naval Service Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum - JustGiving](#)

WRECK OF DESTROYER FOUND AS PROTECTIONS ARE STRENGTHENED

A group of divers have announced the discovery of the long-lost wreck of Royal Navy warship HMS Tiger.

The ship, which was lost at sea 118 years ago, will be protected under new legislation to better protect military shipwrecks which is currently being considered by Parliament.

The remains of the torpedo boat destroyer, which sank off the Isle of Wight following a collision in 1908, were located after extensive research by shipwreck historians-divers from ProjectXplore.

Tiger's discovery comes as the government is changing the law to strengthen protections for shipwrecks through the Armed Forces Bill.

The graves of thousands of sailors and marines at sea will receive automatic legal protection through expanded powers.

Under the Armed Forces Bill, potentially thousands of shipwrecks, such as HMS Tiger, will be safeguarded from the moment they are found by a 'protected place' designation.

This will make it an offence to disturb or remove items from military wreck sites without permission, while permitting divers to visit freely, as long as they 'look but don't touch'.

Minister for the Armed Forces Louise Sandher-Jones MP said: "As well as protecting UK national security, Defence has a role to play in preserving our maritime heritage and the memory of those who gave their lives serving their country.

"These protections go further to ensure that these vulnerable and nationally significant monuments are protected from day one of discovery, giving lost sailors the dignity and respect they deserve.

"This Armed Forces Bill is wide-ranging in the measures it proposes – from protecting our rich cultural heritage, to transforming the lives of military

HMS Tiger. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © The rights holder (Q 75005)



families by upgrading and improving the Defence housing estate."

While dozens of military shipwrecks have been safeguarded against illegal activity since the mid-1980s under the Protection of Military Remains Act, only vessels lost within the past 200 years can currently be protected.

Expanding the Act to include wrecks more than 200 years old would mean that military vessels dating as far back as the Armada, including those of former foes, would qualify for protection.

The same would go for merchant ships sunk while on military service under Admiralty orders.

HMS Tiger had remained hidden in the Channel since her loss on 2 April 1908 some 20 miles south of St Catherine's Down on the Isle of Wight.

The 430-ton destroyer was taking part in night exercises with other units of the Home Fleet, and on that particular night she and another '30-knotter', HMS Recruit, were simulating torpedo attacks on the Fleet and running without navigation lights.

For reasons unknown, Tiger veered across the bow of 10,000-ton armoured

cruiser HMS Berwick and was cut in half, with her for'ard section sinking immediately taking 36 men, including her commanding officer, with it.

The stern section remain afloat long enough for 22 men to be taken off before it, too, sank.

ProjectXplore, the team of divers and historians who discovered Tiger, also found the wreck of cruiser HMS Nottingham in the North Sea last year. They spent five years in the archives working out the location of the wreck. Royal Navy Deputy Fleet Wreck Officer Lt Cdr Jen Smith said: "Protecting military wrecks helps to ensure they are preserved for future generations. This is beneficial for our rich maritime heritage and the diving community who keep the stories of our lost shipwrecks alive.

"Divers are still able to visit these sites and witness history first hand, which is key to ensuring that these ships and their crews are not forgotten.

"All we ask of divers is this – enjoy looking, learning and paying your respects at these incredible sites, but do so in a manner that does not disturb them."

RNA TRANSPORT IS AN ASSET FOR ALL

The RNA has three minibuses 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 RNA volunteers who manage the minibuses.

To book a minibus please contact Jon Boreham at Central Office in Portsmouth – ams@rnassoc.org or telephone 023 92 723747.

For the purposes of insurance cover, there are certain criteria which must be met in order to drive the minibuses; these and other details are available for shipmates at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/mini-bus-hire





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Change starts with a *will.*

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Write or update your will for **free today**

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PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE REPRESENTED ON HMS BELFAST

The White Ensign Association (WEA) has raised £48,478 to support its work in the Naval community through its flagship fundraising event of 2026, the HMS Belfast Past, Present & Future Dinner. Held on board HMS Belfast in the Pool of London on 2 July, the event brought together partners and supporters on the historic cruiser that has been home to the White Ensign Association for more than 50 years.

Marking 90 years since Belfast's keel was laid, the evening celebrated the enduring generations of people and vessels that together have shaped Royal Navy capability, looking ahead to the future HMS Belfast (F90), the Type 26 frigate now taking shape on the Clyde. The funds raised will directly support the White Ensign Association's work providing free, independent guidance on personal finance and life administration. Every year, the charity supports thousands of serving personnel, Service leavers, veterans and families, helping them make informed decisions throughout their careers, during transition from Service and long into civilian life.

The evening was delivered in partnership with BAE Systems, Headline Partner for the event and builders of the future HMS Belfast, an advanced anti submarine frigate. Their support brought the event's Past, Present & Future theme to life, recognising the enduring contribution of the people who design, build, maintain and serve in the ships that deliver Royal Navy capability. Admiral Sir Philip Jones, Chair of the White Ensign Association, said: "The

story of HMS Belfast is one of continuity. From this historic warship, home to the White Ensign Association for more than 50 years, to the future Type 26 HMS Belfast, it is the people who design, build, maintain and serve our ships who ensure the Royal Navy remains ready for the challenges of tomorrow.

"My sincere thanks go to our partners and supporters whose generosity enables the charity to continue providing trusted, independent guidance to the Naval community through every stage of life."

Simon Lister, Managing Director of BAE Systems' Naval Ships business, said:

"We are proud to support the White Ensign Association and the vital work it does for the Naval community. HMS Belfast is an important part of our maritime heritage, and we are honoured to be building the future HMS Belfast as part of the UK Government's Type 26 programme.

"With construction progressing well in Govan, our highly skilled teams and suppliers are helping provide the capability the Royal Navy will rely on for decades to come.

"The White Ensign Association reminds us that behind every ship are the people and families whose service deserves our support. This collaboration reflects our commitment to the Royal Navy and to delivering ships worthy of those who serve in them."

The Association is also sincerely grateful to further partners Lloyd's Register and



the Gosling Foundation, whose support helped make the evening possible.

Music throughout the evening was provided by the Royal Marines Association Brass Quintet, including the accompaniment to Ceremonial Sunset.

Performing at more than 75 events each year, the

Quintet enables former Royal Marines musicians to continue representing the Corps while raising vital funds for The Royal Marines Charity.

The WEA is also grateful to serving Royal Navy Observers Lt Cdr Dave Emery and Lt Cdr Phil Clark from RNAS Culdrose, who performed to the quarterdeck reception.

Their band Little Red Ambulance was first formed in Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, and they have been writing and performing together for 15 years, supporting charities across the Naval and wider Armed Forces community.

The City of London Sea Cadets welcomed guests with a Guard of Honour..

Guests also supported the White Ensign Association through a silent auction, with energetic bidding throughout the evening helping to raise vital funds for the charity.

The White Ensign Association extends its sincere thanks to everyone whose generosity and support made the evening such a memorable success.

NEW TOOLKIT WILL EMPOWER VETERANS

The Veterans Charity has launched the Veterans Toolkit, a new online resource designed to help veterans and their families take greater control of everyday finances, reduce household costs and build greater resilience for the future. Created in response to the financial pressures experienced by many members of the Armed Forces community, the Veterans Toolkit brings clear guidance, useful information and simple tools together in one accessible place.

It is intended to support people before difficulties reach crisis point, while also helping those recovering from hardship to build greater stability and independence. The Veterans Toolkit currently includes:

- A monthly budget planner to help households understand income and regular outgoings, identify pressure points and plan ahead
- Energy saving advice with straightforward ways to understand energy use, reduce unnecessary consumption

and manage costs

- Debt management guidance explaining possible next steps and where to find trusted, specialist support
- Food efficiency resources including practical shopping ideas, meal planning, batch-cooking guidance and nutritious recipes for tighter budgets

- Information on discount schemes available to eligible veterans and members of the Forces community.

The collection will continue to grow as the Veterans Charity adds further tools, guidance and resources. It does not replace professional advice but aims to give members of the Forces community the knowledge, confidence and practical skills to make informed decisions, seek specialist support when needed and take positive steps towards greater stability.

The Veterans Toolkit can be accessed via www.veteranscharity.org.uk/veterans-toolkit and is completely free to use.

RNA GROUP ENJOY ENTIRE WEEKEND SPENT AT E@SE

The Royal Naval Association Motorhome, Camping and Caravan Group (RNAMECC) headed off for a festival in the countryside for yet another weekend or so of R and R.

Members from Area 4 and several other RNA areas around the country arrived in units big and small, with 17 eventually making it.

Aptly named the AT E@SE Festival, the event encompasses music, activities and camping, and is organised by veterans for veterans, their families (and dogs – see S/M Roy Lumb with his pet below) and supporters.

All bands have Armed Forces links and all profits go

to a chosen military charity.

The Festival aims to be a gathering where you can be yourself and mix with other like-minded individuals – an ethos very much mirrored by the RNAMECC. It involved a lot of socialising with quizzes, stores and slops to purchase, raffles, singing (some of it dubious) and sometimes just chilling with a glass of wine – read that as staying hydrated in the fourth heatwave of this year.

The RNAMECC group was the smallest of all those who joined in, but the wave of flags



and ensigns shone bigger and brighter and they aim to attend again next year with even more members. Indeed, they left the Festival having encouraged another three possible members to join.

AT E@SE have their own Facebook page – full details can be found at [this link](#).

Further details about the RNAMECC can be found at [this link](#) or contact Ron Shilton (Lead Admin) at rnamecc@outlook.com or Annette Laurie (PRO and Communications Lead) at commsrnamecc@outlook.com



PIONEERING COURSE LEAVES RALEIGH

The first officer cohort have completed their ten-week Initial Naval Training course alongside ratings at HMS Raleigh.

The updated system, designed to ensure all new entrants develop the skills, values and resilience needed for service in a warfighting-focused fleet, sees all officers and ratings complete a ten-week Initial Naval Training course at HMS Raleigh before officers move on to a redesigned 14-week commissioning course at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

The first officer cohort saw 67 Officer Cadets, including 15 from overseas, mark the completion of their initial training with divisions on the parade ground at Raleigh.

A short ceremony saw Raleigh's training staff hand over responsibility for the officer training to a team from BRNC. "The successful completion of initial

naval training by this first cohort of officer cadets at HMS Raleigh marks a significant milestone, both for the individuals concerned and for the Royal Navy," said Col Chris Hall, Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh.

"Throughout their training they have demonstrated the commitment, resilience and leadership potential required of today's Naval officers, rising to every challenge with determination and professionalism.

"They should be immensely proud of what they have achieved. As they progress to the next stage of their careers, they do so with the firm foundations of Naval ethos, teamwork and service that will enable them to lead with confidence and distinction in the years ahead."

The new Initial Naval Training course replaces the previous separate pathways for officers and ratings,

creating a consistent starting point for everyone joining the Royal Navy which removes duplication across the training pipeline.

This modernised approach reflects how the Royal Navy operates today, with officers and ratings working together from the outset.

Following completion of the foundation course, Officer Cadets will progress to an updated Officers' Commissioning Course.

Co-locating the foundation phase at HMS Raleigh enables more effective use of training facilities and specialist equipment. It also provides a more flexible modular structure that can support future entry routes and adapt to changing operational requirements. These changes sit alongside wider work already underway to strengthen officer training at Britannia Royal Naval College.

RIDING THE TRAFALGAR WAY TO TAKE BATTLE TO CANCER

Military Veterans will be riding the Trafalgar Way from Falmouth to Admiralty Arch in London to raise money for the Military v Cancer charity.

Starting on Monday 21 September the riders will follow the trail set by Lt John Richards Lapenotiere, the commanding officer of the sloop HMS Pickle, when he took the news of the Royal Navy victory at the Battle of Trafalgar to London.

The gruelling 270-mile 37-hour journey included more than 20 changes of horses and carriages at various places that now form the Trafalgar Way.

At each location a commemorative plaque has been erected.

The Mayor of Falmouth, Cllr Alan Jewell, will officially launch the charity bike ride on Sunday 20 September at 4pm at the starting plaque.

The ride, organised by Russ Timpson, will raise money for Military v Cancer, a charity dedicated to supporting military veterans and their families.

Military vs Cancer's focus is on alleviating the effects of cancer for military personnel past and present, as well as their immediate families. The charity provides:

- Additional family/nursing care funding
- Travel costs for treatment, including hotel stays for family



members

- Home adaptations
- Respite breaks
- Memory-making trips
- Special experiences, especially for those with a terminal diagnosis
- Peer group/community support for serving Forces members and their families.

2026 is also the 125th anniversary of the Royal Navy Submarine Service. During the charity ride along the Trafalgar Way, the riders will be staying at various locations and delivering a presentation called 'RN Subs 125'.

From Holland 1, the Royal Navy's first operational submarine, to HMS Agamemnon, the latest RN submarine, the presentation will give a history of the 'Silent Service' and give insights into the life and working

of submariners.

There will be an opportunity for those attending to contribute to the charity.

Evening presentations will take place on:

- Sunday 20 September, 1800 at the Athenium Club, **Falmouth**, hosted by Falmouth RNA Branch
- Monday 21 September, 1800 at the Gateway Centre, **Launceston**, hosted by Launceston Royal British Legion
- Tuesday 22 September, 1800 at the Conservative Club, **Honiton**, hosted by Honiton RBL
- Wednesday 23 September, 1800 at Royal British Legion Club, Legion House, Church Lane, **Blandford Forum**, hosted by Blandford Forum RBL
- Thursday 24 September, 1800 at Royal British Legion Club, **Old Basing**, hosted by Old Basing RBL (to be confirmed)
- Friday 25 September, 1800, **London** (to be confirmed).

You can follow the Trafalgar Way by visiting the official website:

The Trafalgar Way - homepage

Details of Military v Cancer Charity:

Home - Military vs Cancer | One Team - One Fight

Submariners Association:

About Us - Submariners Association | We Come Unseen

Just Giving Page:

Russ Timpson is fundraising for Military vs Cancer

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE DATES FOR ROYAL OAK

The HMS Royal Oak Association will be holding services of remembrance later this year to commemorate the 87th anniversary of the loss of the battleship and 835 men and boys from her ship's company.

Services will take place as follows:

- **Saturday 10 October** – service of remembrance at St Barbara's Church, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth at 11am. Further details are available by contacting the HMS Royal Oak Association at info@hmsroyaloakassociation.com.
- **Wednesday 14 October** - service of remembrance at Scapa Flow at 9.30am.
- **Wednesday 11 November** – a Remembrance Day service at the HMS Royal Oak Memorial, The Hard, Portsmouth, commencing at 10.45am. All are welcome.

More information on the Association is available at their website – click [here](#).

HMS Royal Oak pictured in 1937.
Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 12252)



WHITE ENSIGN ASSOCIATION PUTS PENSIONS IN SPOTLIGHT

The White Ensign Association (WEA) is once again joining the Ministry of Defence for Pension Awareness Week, from 14–17 September.

This year, the charity is calling on serving personnel, reservists and veterans across the Naval community to ask: Are you pension aware?

Working together with the Ministry of Defence and Royal Navy Remuneration, the WEA be supporting a programme of events and activities throughout the week to raise awareness and help the Armed Forces community better understand their pensions, entitlements and choices.

Your Armed Forces pension is one of the most valuable benefits of Service. But do you know which scheme you're in, what you're entitled to and the choices that could affect what you receive?

Think you're already pension aware?

It's still worth checking. Pension arrangements and the information affecting your entitlements can change, so Pension Awareness Week is a good opportunity to refresh your knowledge, make sure you're up-to-date and check you fully understand the options available to you.

Throughout the week, the WEA will be highlighting tools, factsheets and practical tips, alongside opportunities to speak to their team in person, helping you get to grips with your pension



whether you're at the beginning of your career, approaching resettlement or already a veteran.

Understanding Your AFPS: Free Live Webinar

A highlight of the WEA's Pension Awareness Week campaign will be a free live webinar, Understanding your AFPS, led by WEA Armed Forces Pension experts David Scholey and Marty Small.

RN/RM veterans themselves, Dave and Marty will take attendees through the three main Armed Forces Pension

Schemes – AFPS 75, AFPS 05 and AFPS 15 – explaining how they work, the key differences between them and what they mean for their members.

They'll also cover Early Departure Payments (EDP) and help make some of the terminology around Armed Forces pensions easier to understand.

Whether you have many years of Service ahead of you, are approaching resettlement, serve as a Reservist or have already left the Armed Forces, understanding your pension can help you make informed decisions and plan confidently for the future.

The webinar is on Wednesday 16 September between 1300 and 1430, and can be joined online via MS Teams.

It is free and open to serving personnel, reservists and veterans from across the UK Armed Forces.

Register to join the WEA webinar through [this link](#).

More than 500 people joined them for their Pension Awareness Week webinar last year, and this year they are aiming to reach even more.

Whether you're confident in your pension knowledge or starting from scratch, join them to make sure you understand the scheme, entitlements and choices that apply to you.

For more on the WEA see <https://www.whiteensign.co.uk>

OVERPAYMENT ISSUES MAKE HEADLINES



**CHAMPIONING
ARMED FORCES PENSIONS
SINCE 1946**

There has been a growing interest in the media about the issue of overpayment of some Armed Forces pensions and the requirement for veterans to repay sums of money that have, in some cases, run to several thousands of pounds.

Reports indicate that there have been particular issues relating to Pension Sharing Orders, Early Departure Payments, Guaranteed Minimum Pension and National Insurance Abatement, though there also appear to have been examples of more general errors in calculations.

If you have been affected by this situation – possibly through a letter from an organisation called Equiniti – then the experts at Forces Pension Society have advice on what your next steps should be. Their advice includes the need to first of all verify that the Equiniti letter is genuine, as such situations could attract scammers.

For further information see the FPS website at <https://forcespensionsociety.org/2026/08/overpayment-of-pension-errors/>

In further developments this week, the matter was raised in the House of Lords during debate on the latest Armed Forces Bill.

And a petition has been started which calls for the write-off of Armed Forces Pension overpayments "as the veterans were not at fault for the incorrect calculations".

The petition – which you can access through [this link](#) – is not sponsored by the Forces Pension Society, but they encourage interested parties to sign it to further raise awareness.

The Forces Pension Society is an independent, not-for-profit membership-funded organisation that acts as a pension watchdog for the whole military community. For more details of their services, and how to become a member, see <https://forcespensionsociety.org>

The White Ensign Association is another organisation which specialises in dealing with issues over Forces pensions – see <https://www.whiteensign.co.uk>

RNA KEEPS SCOUTS ON THE MOVE OVER SUMMER

The RNA was delighted to support the 17th Fareham Scouts by loaning the Portsmouth-based minibus for their summer camp in South Wales.



Lt Cdr Lee Bodkin kindly shared his thanks, telling us how valuable the minibus was in transporting both scouts and equipment throughout the whole trip.

Not only did it provide essential logistical support, but it also helped reduce costs for families, making the adventure more accessible for everyone involved.

We at the Royal Naval Association are proud to play a small part in helping young people enjoy opportunities like these and to support the fantastic work of Scout groups.

A big thank you to Lt Cdr Bodkin and



all the leaders who made the camp such a success.

We hope the scouts had a truly unforgettable experience!

GREENWICH HOSPITAL BACKS NOT FORGOTTEN INITIATIVE

Greenwich Hospital has awarded a £25,000 grant to The Not Forgotten to support a series of regional events in the Southwest of England designed to reduce loneliness and increase social contact among former Royal Navy, Royal Marines and RFA personnel. The funding enabled the charity to deliver a week-long programme of activities in June, bringing together injured serving personnel, veterans and their families through social, recreational and community events promoting wellbeing, strengthening connections and fostering belonging. The Southwest Regional Connect Week featured five events, including a concert in a care home in Taunton, community parties in Lympstone, Ivybridge and Helston, afternoon tea in Barnstaple and a garden party in Honiton. Alongside the activities, the programme strengthens partnerships with local veterans' organisations, care providers and community groups, helping to ensure support is coordinated and accessible for those who need it most. Established in 1920, the Not Forgotten is one of the UK's longest-standing military charities, supporting members of the Armed Forces community struggling with injury, illness and isolation. Through events and activities across the country, the charity helps combat isolation, improve wellbeing and create opportunities for veterans to reconnect with others who share similar experiences.

This funding reflects Greenwich Hospital's commitment to the long-term wellbeing of serving and former Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel by investing in programmes that tackle

loneliness, promote independence and strengthen community connections.

Deirdre Mills, Director of Greenwich Hospital, said: "Maintaining strong social connections is fundamental to good health and wellbeing, particularly for those living with injury, illness or the challenges of later life. The Not Forgotten has a long history of bringing

people together through inclusive activities that reduce isolation and promote belonging. We are pleased to support the Southwest Regional Connect Week, helping more members of the Royal Navy community access meaningful opportunities to reconnect, build friendships and improve their wellbeing."

GO LEARN

FREE ONLINE TUTORING

for serving Royal Navy families

Funded by

**GREENWICH HOSPITAL**
Supporting the Armed Forces since 1804

Managed by

**Naval Children's Charity**

Delivered by

mva
Tutors





BORNEO VETERANS MARK ANNIVERSARY

A remembrance service was held at the National Memorial Arboretum to mark the 60th anniversary of the cessation of hostilities, reports Glenn Bramble-Stewart of the National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association (NMBVA).

It was a very special occasion for the veterans, families and friends who gathered together at Alrewas in Staffordshire to remember and honour all those who served in Malaya and Borneo, and to pay tribute to those who did not return.

It was a hot day but the Arboretum is a fitting and peaceful place for this important service.

The guest of honour was Lynda Atkins DL from the Royal British Legion, who spoke very eloquently at the service and the delicious lunch afterwards.

■ **New name for National Memorial Arboretum – see page 27**



ARE ANY SHIPMATES WILLING TO TACKLE THE LAPLAND CHALLENGE?

Are you looking forward to snow, ice and dark skies? Not convinced? What about the possibility of a focus for getting fit and challenging yourself in beautiful, unspoilt Arctic wilderness, possibly under the dazzling Northern Lights, with some of your RNA shipmates?

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, works closely with the RNA network to help with welfare and support wherever it is needed.

In turn you might consider coming with us on a little venture – but it's not for the faint of heart...

Welcome to the Warrior Challenge, which will take place in Swedish Lapland on 23-26 January 2027.

It is perhaps the ultimate bucket-list challenge... a 25 or 50k run under the spellbinding Northern Lights, surrounded by Arctic wilderness.

Just imagine running across frozen lakes, through dense pine forests, and over sweeping white landscapes, all beneath vast Arctic skies.

Lapland offers a rare combination of isolation, challenge, and breathtaking natural beauty. This is not just a run – it's a test of resilience, teamwork, and sheer determination.

Fully supported, this is one heck of an adventure – gather your buddies and make a team or test yourself to the limit alone.

Whether you choose to run, walk, or trek, this adventure is open to all abilities. With the right training plan and support, participants of **any** fitness level can successfully complete this challenge.

SSAFA's expert team will help you prepare from day one, offering training guidance, kit advice and fundraising support to ensure you feel confident, capable, and ready for the Arctic wilderness.

If you're motivated, determined, and excited to push yourself for a cause that matters, this challenge is for you.

There are limited places left, so act now, and join Sarah – the RNA's recently-departed Comms lead – and Big Phil Champion on this epic adventure.

On a personal note, Sarah said she would love to see an RNA



veterans team taking up the challenge.

There is a registration fee of £200, which includes two nights accommodation and local transport, and a fundraising target of £1,500. Certain elements are not included – such as flights to Lapland

But if you fancy this once-in-a-lifetime challenge, you can find out more by going to the SSAFA website ([click here](#)) or by emailing Sarah on sarah.bewley@ssafa.org.uk.

You can also call on 0204 5586644.

Don't forget – every step you take in the frozen north helps support serving personnel, veterans, and military families in need.

Why choose HMCA?

- > Guaranteed acceptance
- > 90% of people saved money transferring to HMCA
- > Your choice of hospital and specialist
- > All calls answered by a team member
- > Exclusive premiums for membership groups



MALDIVES PRIZE ON OFFER

This summer, Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity is one of the beneficiary charities of the RaiseHero 50/50 Raffle.

And the grand prize winner could find him or herself soaking up the sun on a beautiful tropical beach with a partner, relative or friend...

Enter from just £5 for your chance to win incredible prizes – including a holiday for two in the Maldives – while helping to support those who serve in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

The main draw takes place on 30 September, with the prize being a luxury Maldives holiday for two, with white-sand beaches, crystal-clear waters and £10,000 cash to spend. Or you could take home a £20,000 cash alternative.

And if you spend £25 or more and you'll be entered into a bonus draw to win £1,000 cash.

There are also weekly bonus prizes, so the earlier you enter, the more bonus draws you'll be eligible for:

- Fortnum & Mason hamper – 9 September
- Ninja coffee machine – 15 September
- Nintendo Switch – 22 September

A £5 stake will get you 50 entries, £10 will pay for 120 entries, £25 means 340 entries and £50 will get you 800 entries.

Every entry supports the Royal Navy &



Royal Marines Charity, with 50 per cent of tickets purchased helping those who serve, have served, and their families.

So don't delay – remember, the deadline to enter the main draw is 30 September, and the lucky winner will be contacted shortly afterwards.

The draw is open to UK residents only, who must be 18 or over.

For full details of the draw and the rules, see <https://rnmcc.the5050raffle.com>

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.

REQUEST FOR EMAIL DETAILS

Branch Secretaries – you can help us improve the accuracy of shipmates' details on the Central Office database.

Could you ensure all your members have an email address recorded – even if it is that of a friend or relative who could handle emails on their behalf..

We are striving to refresh our data and want to ensure that we are communicating with as many shipmates as possible on a regular basis.

If any Secretaries require assistance, or a new link into their portal access to the database, please contact the office on admin@rnassoc.org

Every Royal Naval Association member is entitled to £150 off the cost of making a will with our trusted partner, Octopus Legacy

ONCE NAVY ALWAYS NAVY

royal-naval-association.com

In partnership with **octopuslegacy**

SHOP ONLINE AND HELP US RAISE FUNDS

You could raise money for the Royal Naval Association simply by shopping online using a website called **easyfundraising**.

easyfundraising turns your everyday online shopping into **FREE** donations when you use them to shop with more than 8,000 retailers such as eBay, John Lewis & Partners, Argos, ASOS and Booking.com.

Retailers then make a small donation by way of saying 'thank you', and easyfundraising gives those free funds to the cause. If you would like to get involved, please register using this link – just click **here** to sign up, and once you've raised your first donation, easyfundraising will give the RNA a £1 bonus donation!

There are no catches or hidden charges and the Association will be really grateful for your donations.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Assoc Management Committees:

Fortnight ahead(ish) of NC, preferably pre FAC (Advisor/Area input two weeks pre-AMC)

Thurs 15 Oct (Zoom 1800)

FACs (finance):

Fortnight ahead(ish) of NC,

preferably post AMC
Fri 13 Nov (Zoom 0930)

National Councils:

Fri 11 Sept (F2F 0900, pre-CONA, Royal Maritime Hotel, Queen Street, Portsmouth)

Fri 20 Nov (Zoom 0900) Annual Report

OFFICE REFIT BEGINS

Essential maintenance work on the RNA's Central Office building begins this month, which means staff will have to vacate Lanyard House for several weeks.

Friday 18 September is our moving-out day, which means staff will not be able to attend to our normal business and routines.

From the following Monday (21 September) a limited number of Central Office staff will be operating from an alternative, smaller location in the Naval Base, while other staff will work from home.

This maintenance work,

on the roof and electrical wiring, is scheduled to last for 11 weeks, although any problems uncovered during the programme could prolong that period.

Whilst we will make every effort to maintain business as usual, you may very well experience some delays, including responses to questions you send our way. Please accept our apologies for any disruption, and thank you all for your patience and understanding.

See our social media and Semaphore publications for further updates.



IF THE CAP FITS, WEAR IT...

We have a new line of baseball caps just in at Central Office, but there is a very limited number available. There are two types, as can be seen pictured above, and each also has the Royal Naval Association lettering on the back.

They are available for £20 each +p&p – contact Jon on ams@rnassoc.org for details if you are interested.



TRINITY

YOUR INSURANCE PARTNER



ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

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



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



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

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

Trinity Insurance Services Ltd www.talktotrinity.com hello@talktotrinity.com

WILL YOU HELP THE ASSOCIATION?

Change starts with a will... and it couldn't be easier. Writing a will isn't really for you, it's for the people you love, to make their lives easier. It's your chance to leave a legacy that lasts long after you've gone.

A will doesn't just save your loved ones time, money, and stress. It's also an opportunity to be part of something bigger. By including a gift in your will, you can help support the Royal Naval Association and make a meaningful difference to shipmates for generations to come.

That's why we've partnered with expert estate planners Octopus Legacy to offer you the chance to write or update your will for free, online, over the phone, or in person with

one of their professional will writers or solicitors. We cover the cost of wills up to £150, meaning you can write a simple will at no charge, or receive a discount on a will with trust. For more information, click [here](#).

BIMBLERS TAKE ON EDINBURGH KILT WALK

Four shipmates from Scottish Area are participating in the Edinburgh KiltWalk on Sunday 13 September.

The quartet are tackling the Big Stroll – approximately 11 miles – starting at 1030 and definitely hoping to be finished and home in time for Sunday lunch!

They have registered individually, but also form a unit – the RNA Bimblers.

They would be very grateful for any donations to help us on our way and all monies raised will go direct to the RNA.

Use this link for their JustGiving page.

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Eager to travel more this year? ✓

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You could make a saving by

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TAKE A CHANCE ON THE RNA LOTTERY

You could win up to £25,000 in our Weekly Lottery, which gives supporters the chance to win cash prizes as well as backing the RNA. Once players have registered online they will be entered into the draw every Friday they are in credit (£1 per line, per week).

The 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.

PUTTING US ON THE MAP

The RNA now has a location on Google Maps in the shape of Central Office in Portsmouth Naval Base.

And our entry has a range of photographs available on the site which you are free to browse and download.

If this trial proves popular then more images will be added which highlight the ethos and activities of your Association and fellow shipmates.

These are all RNA Copyright images, and the vast majority was taken by our talented official photographer S/M Nigel Huxtable.

Any feedback to the RNA Communications team please.

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

Shipmates might be interested in becoming involved with the popular and successful RNA Sports and Comradeship Groups (SCGs). 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

Choir – Jon Everett: wws@rnassoc.org

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

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

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

Motorhome, Caravan and Camping – 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

ARBORETUM TAKES A NEW NAME

Following its recent integration with the RBL, the National Memorial Arboretum will from this month become known as the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens.

Over the past 25 years, the 150-acre estate has grown from the seed of an idea into a living landscape of Remembrance, with more than 300,000 people visiting each year to reflect, learn and remember the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces, emergency services and civilian organisations.

The RBL became the Arboretum's parent charity in 2003, with full integration completed in April this year, and the new name reflects the RBL's commitment to the site and its ambition to evolve Remembrance and widen participation. The Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens will continue to invite people not only to reflect, but to take an active part in Remembrance, helping to bring society together to recognise, remember and support the

Armed Forces community.

RBL Director General Mark Atkinson said: "The National Memorial Arboretum is a remarkable place that has long held a special place within the Royal British Legion. Founded on an inspirational vision, its dedicated team has worked tirelessly over the past 25 years to solidify the site as the nation's year-round place to remember.

"This integration of governance opens the next chapter in its history, placing the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens at the heart of our Remembrance work. This strengthens our ability to invest in the long term future of the site."

Cdr David Childs RN (Rtd), founder of the Arboretum, said: "When the Arboretum was founded, my ambition was to create a living place of Remembrance, rooted in trees, offering a dedicated space to reflect on service and sacrifice for our nation.

"Over time, that vision has grown

organically, shaped by those who cared for it and by the many communities who found meaning here. Today, the site is defined not only by its trees, but by the sculptures, symbolic planting and gardens that together encapsulate the spirit of Remembrance.

"In 2003, just a couple of years after opening to the public, the RBL became our parent charity. Since then, as custodians of the Arboretum, the RBL has provided the care, stewardship and investment needed to help the site flourish and truly become the Nation's year round place to remember. I am excited to see how this inspirational place will continue to grow and evolve in the next chapter of its journey."

The site's collection of more than 420 memorials, including the stunning Naval Service Memorial, will continue to grow, alongside plans to invest further in the visitor experience, ensuring the Gardens remain a welcoming and meaningful place for generations to come.

RUM BARREL IS UP FOR GRABS

Shipmate Wally Blagden has created a unique 2.5 litre anniversary rum barrel that celebrates several historic Naval anniversaries, and the barrel is up for auction, with bidding standing at £500. Money raised will be donated to the RNA Central Charity Fund.

The barrel includes several

special coins, including a King George VI 1950 halfpenny (representing the RNA's 75 anniversary last year), a 1970 Galleon halfpenny (for the 56th anniversary of Black Tot Day), and a King Charles III 2026 £5 crown, marking 500 years of the crown coin.

The new barrel was created following a similar initiative

marking the 50th anniversary of Black Tot Day.

Bidding will close on 3 October to coincide with the RNA World Uckers Championships.

If you would like to make a bid, you can send it to RNA Central Office at ceo-ea@rnassoc.org and we will pass it on to Wally.

AUTHOR TELLS STORY OF ARCTIC CONVOYS

Best-selling author Hugh Sebag-Montefiore has already published books on momentous Naval events.

Having previously written on Dunkirk and the capture of Enigma cipher machines, last year the author published the hardback book **Battle of the Arctic: The Maritime Epic of World War Two**, a study of the brutal Arctic Convoys of World War 2. And on 5 November this year the paperback version will be published by William Collins (ISBN: 9780008335816, £12.99).

The convoys – and the multifaceted Battle of the Arctic that had to be fought to get them through to Russia – remain one of the war's most undercelebrated feats.

Allied Naval and merchant seamen faced determined German attempts to hunt them by air and sea, including long-range bombers, U-boats and the powerful battleships Tirpitz and Scharnhorst.

When ships were attacked and went down, the seas were so cold that a man could die in just minutes, or if they made it to land they could find themselves stranded on deserted Arctic islands, beset by freezing weather and prowling polar bears.

To secure your signed **hardback** edition, simply email ceo-ea@rnassoc.org.

Copies are available on a first-come, first-

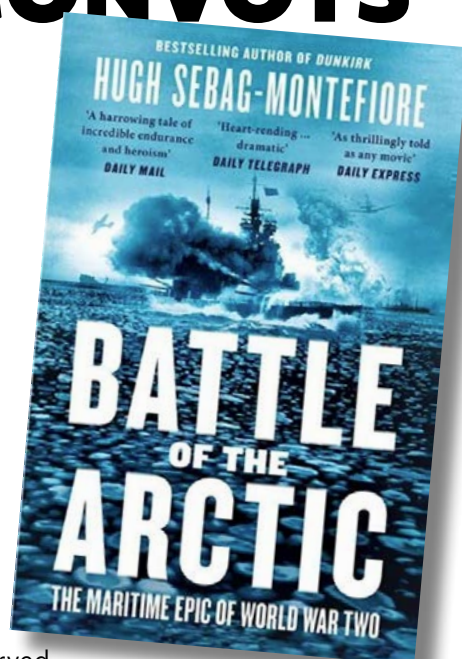
served basis.

RNA members can also register their interest in attending either of Hugh's upcoming speaking engagements:

■ **CONA meeting in Portsmouth** – 11 September

■ **Online Fireside Chat** – 2 November.

To register for either event, please email: ceo-ea@rnassoc.org



EX-WREN CELEBRATES CENTENARY

Former Wren Mabel Boyle celebrated her 100th birthday last month at the care home in which she now lives in Prescott, Merseyside. Originally from Scotland, Mabel moved to Liverpool with her husband Edward, a paratrooper, although the couple later divorced. The centenarian told the Liverpool Echo that she had very fond memories of her time in the Women's Royal Naval Service, saying that she loved every minute of her time in the Service and made a mistake in not marrying one of the "very nice" sailors with whom she worked.

Her love of the Naval Service has passed through the generations – her son Billy and grandson Ian both followed in her footsteps into Naval careers.

LATEST OFFERS ON NEW CARS

The September offers from Forces Cars Direct are here, just in time for the new 76 registration plate! Save an incredible £18,253 off the new Toyota bZ4X and £7,514 off the Chery Tiggo 7, plus fantastic savings across a wide range of makes and models.

For more details see the poster at the end of this edition of the Semaphore Circular – [click here](#).

TICKETS AVAILABLE 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 in London on Wednesday 14 October from 1630-1800.

The service 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.

This year's service will celebrate several significant milestones, including the 100th anniversary of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, the 150th

anniversary of the Aggie's charity, which is dedicated to supporting serving members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, and the final laying-up of the Association of Old Worcesters Standard.

The service honours seafarers from all maritime sectors – the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy, 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 free to attend.

Book tickets through Eventbrite using [this link](#).

Find out more about the Seafarers' Charity at <https://www.theseafarerscharity.org>

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**



DEVELOPING OUR NETWORK OVER THE COMING SEASON

As summer begins to draw to a close, planning is already under way for the Royal Naval Association's next programme of Welfare & Wellbeing training, awareness sessions and networking opportunities.

From October through to April, a series of online sessions will be available to support Area Welfare & Wellbeing Officers (AWWOs), Branch Welfare & Wellbeing Officers (BWWOs), Branch Support Volunteers (BSVs), and anyone interested in finding out more about becoming involved in welfare and wellbeing within the Association.

The Welfare & Wellbeing role can be one of the most rewarding volunteer positions within the RNA.

Whether it is helping a shipmate access support, offering a listening ear, or simply knowing where to point someone for specialist assistance, volunteers make a real difference to the lives of our members and their families.

These sessions are designed to build confidence, share knowledge and strengthen the support network that exists across the Association.

The monthly Awareness Sessions will take place on the first Saturday of each month, from 1000 until midday. The aim is to provide practical information, increase understanding of key welfare topics and give volunteers the tools they need to support others effectively.

Several subjects are already planned for the coming programme, including GDPR, Basic BWWO Training and Signposting.

However, the programme is being shaped with volunteers in mind, and ideas are actively being sought from those working on the front line of welfare support.

Alongside these sessions, the popular Wellbeing Wednesdays will continue on the first Wednesday of each month between 1900 and 2000.

These informal online gatherings provide an opportunity for all RNA members from across the country to come together, discuss current issues, exchange ideas and learn from each other's experiences.

Are there topics you would like explored in more detail?

Is there a guest speaker you would like to hear from?

Have you come across a welfare issue that other volunteers would benefit from understanding?

If so, your suggestions are very welcome.

One of the greatest strengths of the RNA's welfare team is the willingness of volunteers to share knowledge and support one another.

No one is expected to know everything, and these sessions provide a valuable opportunity to ask questions, seek advice and discover new approaches that may help branches better support their members.

All sessions will be delivered via Zoom, making them accessible wherever you are in the country.

Whether you are an experienced Welfare & Wellbeing Officer, a Branch Support Volunteer, or simply considering getting involved for the first time, there will be something for everyone.

By continuing to learn from one another and sharing good practice, we can strengthen the support available to RNA members and ensure that nobody faces challenges alone.

To suggest topics or find out more, please contact Jon Everett at wws@rnassoc.org.

Together, we can continue to build a stronger, more connected and supportive RNA community.

Zoom links

■ Awareness Saturdays

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89582756392?pwd=4TCCxH04WVz29PzVguQzbmo0KhPkAy.1>

Passcode – WELFARE

■ Wellbeing Wednesday

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81235280172?pwd=vX2KPb1ntgJsv6AikieXzATfpVaUgA.1>

Passcode - WELLBEING

WELFARE CONTACTS

Organisation	Telephone	Website
Aggie's	079 7764 1876	www.aggies.org.uk
Association of Wrens	02392 725 141	https://wrens.org.uk
Cobseo	-	www.cobseo.org.uk
Combat Stress	0800 138 1619	helpline@combatstress.org.uk
CRISIS	0300 636 1967	www.crisis.org.uk
Fighting with Pride	0203 981 3810	www.fightingwithpride.org.uk
For all Ops - GOV.UK	0808 802 1212	www.gov.uk/support-for-veterans
Help for Heroes	0300 303 9888	www.helpforheroes.org.uk
Home-Start	0116 464 5490	www.home-start.org.uk
Kids	0121 355 2707	www.kids.org.uk
Marriage Care	0800 389 3801	www.marriagecare.org.uk
Mind Solent	023 8202 7810	www.solentmind.org.uk
Naval Children's Charity	02392 639 534	www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk
Naval Families Federation	02392 654 374	https://nff.org.uk
Op Courage	-	www.nhs.uk
PTSD Resolution	0300 302 0551	https://ptsdresolution.org/
REFUGE	0808 2000 247	https://refuge.org.uk/
Relate	-	www.relate.org.uk
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity	02393 871 520	www.rnrmc.org.uk
Royal British Legion	0808 802 8080	www.britishlegion.org.uk
Royal Marines Charity	0800 468 1664	https://rma-trmc.org
Royal Naval Benevolent Trust	02392 690 112	www.rnbt.org.uk
Royal Navy Royal Marines Widows' Association	07462 376850	https://rnmwidows.org
SAIL	0800 160 1842	https://sailine.org.uk/
Samaritans	116 123	www.samaritans.org
Seafarers UK	020 7932 0000	www.theseafarerscharity.org
SSAFA	0800 260 6780	www.ssafo.org.uk
The Poppy Factory	020 8940 3305	www.poppyfactory.org
Veterans Outreach Support	02392 731 767	https://vosuk.org/
Walking With The Wounded	0330 058 5800	https://walkingwiththewounded.org.uk
White Ensign Association	07384 575598	www.whiteensign.co.uk

FLAGS SUPPORT EXPANDS ACROSS UK FOR SERVING NAVAL PERSONNEL

Serving in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines can be immensely rewarding, but like any profession, it can also bring challenges.

Issues relating to alcohol use, gambling and financial difficulties can affect anyone, and seeking support is often the hardest step.

Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC), working alongside Greenwich Hospital, the Royal Marines Association and the Society of St James, has announced an expansion of the FLAGS programme, helping ensure that more serving personnel can access support wherever they are based in the UK.

FLAGS (Forces, Link Alcohol & Gambling Support) provides free, confidential, and non-judgemental support specifically designed for members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines community.

Delivered by experienced counsellors who understand the unique demands of military life, the programme offers a safe space for personnel to discuss concerns and seek practical help.

The expansion sees two new team members joining the service, strengthening support in key naval regions.

Based in Scotland and the South West respectively, they will work alongside Portsmouth-based Lead Psychotherapist and Service Manager Leanne Gallagher-Costello, increasing opportunities for face-to-face support while maintaining access to online and telephone services.

The enhanced service will support personnel based at Portsmouth, Devonport and Clyde Naval Bases while also ensuring that sailors and marines serving elsewhere in the UK or deployed overseas can continue to receive help when they need it.

FLAGS offers a range of support services including one-to-one counselling, alcohol and gambling interventions, self-help resources, financial advice, and ongoing aftercare. Importantly, support is available not only to regular personnel but also to RN and RM Reservists.

Referrals can be made through medical staff, the Chain of Command, chaplaincy teams, and other welfare organisations, but personnel can also refer themselves directly, ensuring confidential access to support without unnecessary barriers. At a time when wellbeing and resilience are increasingly recognised as

essential components of operational effectiveness, the continued development of programmes such as FLAGS demonstrates the commitment of Naval charities and support organisations to ensuring that no member of the Naval Service has to face these challenges alone.

For those who may be struggling, or who know someone who could benefit from support, the message is simple: help is available, support is confidential, and

nobody needs to face these issues alone. For further information about FLAGS and the support available, visit the Society of St James or Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity websites:

Forces, Link, Alcohol & Gambling Support (FLAGS) - The Society of St James

FLAGS project expands to reach more naval personnel across the UK | The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

THE ANSWER TO THOSE LONG WINTER EVENINGS

As the evenings draw in and the weather becomes less inviting, it can be easy to spend more time at home and see fewer people. For many members, winter can be a particularly isolating time of year. That's why the RNA is once again inviting members, families and friends to come together online for a regular evening of fun, laughter and friendly competition. Starting on Friday 6 November, the RNA Online Quiz will run from 1900 to 2100, with further quizzes taking place on the second Friday of every month through to April.

The quiz is about far more than testing your general knowledge. It is an opportunity to stay connected with the wider RNA family, meet new people and enjoy a relaxed social evening from the comfort of your own home. One of the great strengths of the Association has always been the friendships formed through shared experiences and a sense of belonging. However, not everyone is able to attend branch meetings or social events in person. The online quiz helps bridge that gap, bringing together members from across the country for a few hours of conversation, camaraderie and good humour.

Whether you are a regular quiz enthusiast or simply looking for an enjoyable way to spend an evening, everyone is welcome. You can join as part of a team or

simply come along and get involved.

The emphasis is on participation, friendship and having a good time rather than on winning.

Over the years, online events have shown just how effective they can be in bringing people together. They offer a valuable opportunity for members to remain engaged with the Association, particularly during the winter months when social isolation can become a challenge for some people.

The monthly quizzes provide a chance to catch up with familiar faces, welcome new ones and strengthen the connections that make the RNA such a supportive community. You never know, you may even make a few new friends along the way.

So why not put the dates in your diary, make a cup of tea, gather your thinking cap and join us online?

We look forward to welcoming both familiar and new faces for friendship, fun and friendly competition.

Zoom Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82304597780?pwd=9cded385FufK3RrV1gbkZC3aKADqVp.1>

Passcode – RNAQUIZ

This will remain the same link and passcode for all the quizzes.

FUNERAL GUIDE AVAILABLE ONLINE

The RNA has created a Funeral Guide, and reminds shipmates that we offer ceremonial and administrative support for members and all those who have served in Our Naval Forces. Find the guide on our website: <https://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/rna-funeral-guide>

BRANCH NEWS



STREET Branch

After the Street Branch meeting on 24 August shipmates of Street Branch enjoyed a fish and chips lunch at the National Award winning Knight's Fish & Chip Restaurant in Glastonbury. The meal was – naturally – delicious and the service excellent which, along with the light-hearted conversation, made it a most enjoyable social occasion.



FOLKESTONE Branch

During 'Heatwave 5' of the summer, the Branch Assistant Social Secretary, Shipmate Wendy Geere, decided to organise an Afternoon Tea at the Clifton Hotel, an IHG VOCO establishment, in Folkestone on 21 August.

A total of 14 members enjoyed a fine spread of freshly-made sandwiches, cakes and warm scones with lashings of cream and jam (or jam and cream, depending on your preference!) and a plentiful supply of individual pots of tea or coffee. Everyone agreed it was a very enjoyable way to pass an afternoon.



FORTH VALLEY Branch

Forth Valley Branch was proud to be represented at this year's Grangemouth Armed Forces Day. The Branch turned out in good order, with Chairman Ali Barber, Vice Chairman Kenny MacIntosh, Secretary Andy McDonald, Treasurer James Mann and S/M Ray Wyatt on parade, with Standard Bearer David Lewis carrying the branch standard through the town. They were also joined by two visitors from **Rosyth Branch**, S/Ms Mike Firth and his son, Scottish Area Standard Bearer Mark Firth, who paraded the Area standard alongside that of Forth Valley Branch. It was a fine show of support for the Armed Forces



community, and those who took part said it was a pleasure to march alongside the fellow veterans and cadet units who came out on the day. Following a march through the town, the parade made its way to the Grangemouth Royal British Legion, where they were made very welcome with refreshments and entertainment, rounding off the day nicely. The thanks of the Forth Valley shipmates go to the organisers of Grangemouth Armed Forces Day and to the Royal British Legion Scotland for their hospitality, and to their shipmates from Rosyth for making the trip across to join them.

NEWPORT (SHROPSHIRE) Branch

Black Tot Day at Newport Navy Club in Shropshire (Area 8) was celebrated in style with some fun photos of shipmates marking the occasion with the odd tot of Pussers Rum.

Black Tot Day, for those who might not be aware of its significance, is 31 July, recalling the day in 1970 when the Royal Navy ended a tradition of more than 300 years.

Sailors on British man o'wars were issued a daily ration of alcohol for centuries, with spirits being preferred for long voyages as they took up less space than beer and didn't spoil in warm climates.

At first it was French brandy that was the standard issue, although it varied according to the location of the ship – wine was easily obtained in the Mediterranean while arrack – distilled from sugar cane, rice or the sap of coconut palms – was widely found in the Far East.

But regular spats with the French affected the supply of brandy, so when the British effectively took control of the Caribbean in the 17th Century – particularly after the capture of Jamaica from Spain in 1655 – rum became plentiful and cheap. And it became the Navy's spirit of

choice, remaining so to this day. Along the way the half-pint of neat spirit was gradually watered down (producing 'grog', a name reflecting the instigator of this initiative, Admiral Edward Vernon, known as Old Grog because of his signature coarse grogg boat cape).

But it was 'Dry Ginger' – First Sea Lord Michael Le Fanu – who finally put paid to the daily tot in 1970, as it was felt that daily rations of alcohol did not sit comfortably with the operation of increasingly hi-tech machinery and weaponry.

The reaction from the Fleet was swift and pointed, with mock funerals and symbols of mourning such as black armbands being seen around the world wherever the White Ensign could be found.



Black Tot Day has been marked ever since by veterans who remember the daily 'Up Spirits' with fondness. Le Fanu, incidentally, appreciated the seriousness of his actions; his final signal to the Fleet on leaving his post was: "Most farewell messages try To jerk a tear from the eye But I say to you lot Very sad about tot But thank you, good luck and good-bye."



LISKEARD Branch

A parade through the heart of Liskeard marked a major milestone for the town's RNA branch, celebrating four decades of supporting veterans, serving personnel and the local community. Veterans, standard bearers, civic dignitaries and local organisations joined residents for a special 40th anniversary parade and remembrance service, highlighting the enduring bond between the Association and the people of Liskeard.

The event included a march through the town, wreath-laying at the Castle Street war memorial, and a formal salute led by Rear Admiral John Weale alongside local civic leaders.

The celebrations were not only a chance to reflect on the branch's history, but also to honour those who have served and remember members of the Armed Forces who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Liskeard Branch has maintained a strong presence at civic and remembrance events throughout its 40-year history and was awarded the Freedom of the Town in 2024 in recognition of its contribution to the community.

Adding to the occasion were overseas and Commonwealth trainees from HMS Raleigh, supported through the



RNA's Boost a Recruit campaign. Their presence highlighted the connection between the RNA's proud heritage and the next generation of sailors, many of whom face the challenge of spending leave periods far from home when fellow recruits return to family and friends across the UK.



ST NEOTS Branch

St Neots Armed Forces Weekend on the first weekend in July was a successful event, well-attended by veterans, cadet groups and the public.

It took place on Regatta Meadow in St Neots, alongside the River Great Ouse. Veterans and cadet groups took part in the opening ceremony at midday on Saturday.

After the Armed Forces Flag was raised, the Deputy Lieutenant and Deputy Town Mayor inspected the parade and made a point of talking to many of the participants, which was much appreciated, despite their melting in the heat!

A fly-past by a Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Dakota on Saturday afternoon was a highlight of the event. The St Neots Branch stall was well-manned by shipmates, standing two-hour watches, as they couldn't manage four-hour watches in sweltering hot weather!

It raised a good sum for their charity funds. As ever, 'Up Spirits!' was very



popular with shipmates and veterans from nearby stalls.

Area 6 Standard Bearer David Corrigan and Ken Brown, from **Aylesbury branch**,

took part in the opening ceremony and it was good to welcome visiting shipmates from **Rushden Branch** and share a tot.



Pictures courtesy St Neots Town Council

REIGATE Branch

On 26 July members of Reigate Branch gathered at St Peter's Churchyard, Tandridge, Surrey, for the Branch's annual commemoration of the escape of HMS Amethyst down the Yangtze River in July 1949 and to remember her captain, Cdr John Kerans DSO RN, who is buried in the churchyard.

The ceremony has become an important annual commitment for the Branch. In 2019, on the 70th anniversary of the Yangtze Incident, Reigate Branch gave an undertaking to the Amethyst Association – subsequently disbanded – and to the families of the ship's company that it would continue to hold an annual memorial to remember those who served in Amethyst.

The Branch has honoured that undertaking every year since, including throughout the difficulties of the pandemic.

This year's commemoration was particularly significant as it was attended by Cdr Kerans's daughter Charmian, who joined representatives of the local community and the Armed Forces community to remember her father and the men who served under his command.

The ceremony also remembered Ernie Munson, the last surviving member of the Amethyst crew, who died earlier this year. His passing marks the end of a direct living connection with one of the Royal Navy's most remarkable post-war episodes.

His memory, together with that of the

other members of the ship's company, was an important part of this year's commemoration. Among those attending were the Mayor of Reigate and Banstead, the Chair of Tandridge Council, representatives of the Royal British Legion, members of the RNA and members of Reigate Sea Cadets.

A notable feature of the ceremony was the presence of standards representing the RBL, the RNA and the Sea Cadets, together with a standard from the RBL in Minden, Germany.

Their presence reflected the continuing interest in and respect for the story of Amethyst well beyond the local community.

Cdr Kerans assumed command of Amethyst after the ship had been trapped on the Yangtze following the heavy Chinese Communist forces' attack of 20 April 1949.

The ship and her company endured more than three months of uncertainty, danger and hardship before Kerans led the ship on a daring night-time escape on 30 July.

The damaged frigate eventually reached the safety of the British fleet at Hong Kong.

The story remains one of the Royal Navy's most remarkable post-war episodes, but the annual commemoration is about more than the escape itself.

It is an opportunity to remember the courage and sacrifice of the whole ship's company, including those who lost their lives and those who carried the experience with them for the rest of their lives.

This year's ceremony also provided an opportunity to recognise another important development in preserving the memory of the Yangtze Incident. In June, a new memorial plaque and storyboard were unveiled at Macedon



Point in Hazelbank Park, overlooking Belfast Lough.

The memorial commemorates the Northern Irish sailors involved in the Yangtze Incident and was the result of a campaign by Andy Bannister and Raymond McCullough Jr, whose fathers, Stoker Sammy Bannister and AB Raymond McCullough, served in Amethyst.

The new storyboard provides visitors with a permanent account of their involvement and of the wider story of the Yangtze Incident.

The Belfast memorial and the Tandridge commemoration therefore represent two different but complementary acts of remembrance: one creating a new permanent memorial to members of the ship's company and the other ensuring that the grave of her captain continues to be visited and remembered.

Following the ceremony at St Peter's, those attending gathered for a reception at the Barley Mow, Tandridge. As another anniversary of the escape passes, Reigate Branch remains proud to maintain the promise made in 2019. Although the Amethyst Association has now disbanded and, with the passing of Ernie Munson, there are no longer any surviving members of the crew, their story continues to be remembered.



PORTSEA and PORTSMOUTH Branch

It has been a good couple of months for the Portsea and Portsmouth Branch, with the highlight being an invitation to the Ceremony of the Keys at the Tower of London, thanks to Social Security Louise Purcell, who also organised the Summer Quiz, which was won by a team including former National President, Vice Admiral John McAnally. The branch was also represented at the Flag Raising for India Independence Day.

S/M Richie Farman also did his bit for Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) being 'Toots' at the RM Band Beat the Retreat in Guildhall Square – then being Nelson to welcome Cdr Andrew Plenty after his epic walk from Culdrose to Fratton Park.



RHONDDA Branch

Members of Rhondda Branch held a quiz and games evening at their Treorchy HQ.

Shipmates and guests from the local and surrounding valleys areas turned out to assist in making the evening a fun social gathering and resounding success.

To assist in whatever way could, the Rhondda Branch had planned and voted back in May that all proceeds raised from the evening would be donated to the RNA Naval Service Memorial Repair Fund. Planning took hold in earnest through

June with event advertising passed along to all 7 Area branches.

Rhondda Branch Chairman S/M Kevin Rowan researched and pieced together a sterling quiz before becoming Quiz and Games Master Extraordinaire for the evening. It was fantastic to see so many shipmates and guests come together socially for such a worthy cause, and also pleasing to report that as a result of that gathering (and a whole feast of games including the obligatory three hands of bingo), the Branch raised the grand total of £300.20 for the Repair Fund. A special thanks go out to Chairman S/M Kevin Rowan, who was ably assisted by S/Ms Cath John, Heather Owens and Colleen Rowan through the night.



OBITUARIES

S/M TRISH CORNWELL

One of Bodmin's earliest Shipmates, Patricia Cornwell, affectionately known as Trish, was laid to rest in Bodmin on 11 August, at 93 years of age. Standard bearers from Bodmin, **Plymouth, Falmouth** and **St Austell** lined the route as she arrived to more than 100 mourners, many of them friends from her 'RNA family'. Trish was the wife of the late Vic Cornwell, Treasurer and Secretary of Bodmin Branch and nationally respected Standard Bearer, and indeed the donor of the Vic Cornwell Trophy. One of ten children, Trish was a mother with children from her first husband Gerald and to Vic's children, all of whom were at the ceremony to remember and celebrate her life, which began on 8 April 1933 in Pool Street – she only lived in three houses her entire life, all in Bodmin. Trish would often recount when space was tight, and would laugh as she recalled sleeping head to toe with her brothers and sisters, with Army coats serving as extra blankets during the winter. She also had a cheeky mischievous streak. Pennies given to her for Sunday School somehow found their way to the sweet shop instead... From an early age, Trish discovered what would become one of her greatest gifts – caring for others. She trained

as a student nurse at St Lawrence Hospital, a role she absolutely loved. She had a natural kindness, endless compassion and a genuine love for her patients, qualities that would remain with her throughout her life. After raising her family, Trish returned to St Lawrence Hospital, this time working evenings in the laundry, fitting work around family life. Life dealt Trish some incredibly difficult chapters. Her first husband Gerald sadly passed away in 1986, but as she proved time and again throughout her life, she found the strength to keep moving forwards. A wonderful new chapter began when she reconnected with an old childhood friend, Victor Cornwell. They married and enjoyed many happy years together. Trish embraced Victor's family as her own and, through him, discovered another family – Bodmin Branch, which became a huge part of her life, bringing lasting friendships, wonderful memories and countless social events. She loved every opportunity to dress up, and the shoes had to be comfortable,



because Trish intended to spend the evening on the dance floor. She even won jiving competitions in her younger days with Gerald, and family weddings always found Trish leading the way, still dancing well into her eighties. Trish also had an adventurous side. At 55, having never travelled further than

Bodmin, she boarded a plane alone to visit her sister Shirley in Australia. But home was always where Trish's heart truly belonged. She adored her garden, especially her roses, and even in recent years would venture outside with her walking frame to lovingly tend to them. She also had the softest of hearts for animals, especially dogs. Trish's family meant the world to her. She was a devoted mum, a much-loved mother-in-law, a proud Nan and Nana to eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. She also showed remarkable courage throughout her life, facing cancer not once, but three times, along with many other health challenges.



S/M MICHAEL MARTIN

Michael Sherman Martin, Petty Officer, Royal Navy (retired), of Pevensey Bay, East Sussex, died on 6 May 2026 at Ersham House Care Home, Hailsham.

Michael was born in 1941 in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, after his family had been evacuated to Lower Slaughter.

A few years later, the family moved to Hampden Park, Eastbourne, where he spent his childhood. He did very well at school and was appointed Head Boy of Hampden Park Secondary Modern School.

He was also a member of the St John Ambulance Cadets, an experience that influenced his choice of career in the Royal Navy.

Michael joined the Royal Navy at the age of 16. However, he was unable to enter his chosen field of medicine until he was 18. He therefore spent his first two years in the Gunnery Branch, gaining the relevant qualifications before transferring to the Medical Branch.

Michael subsequently served in a medical capacity on board several ships and at a number of shore establishments.

He trained as a Sick Berth Attendant at the Royal Naval Hospital Haslar, and also qualified as a ship's diver.

In 1971, he was promoted to Petty Officer Medical Assistant.

Michael met his future wife, Mary, at the Royal Naval Hospital Stonehouse in Plymouth.

As a qualified diver, he later served aboard the Royal Navy deep diving and submarine rescue vessel HMS Reclaim. Later, he served at RNAS Yeovilton, including Air Sea Rescue duties.

He was subsequently posted to the Institute of Naval Medicine in Gosport, where he became a member of the Royal Navy Saturation Diving Team, and remained there for the rest of his Naval career.

After retiring from the Royal Navy, Michael spent several years working in the offshore oil industry as a Diving Life Support Technician, both in the North Sea and in India.

Following his retirement from the oil industry, Michael joined HM Coastguard. He worked first in Kirkwall, Orkney, and later as Sector Officer for the north coast of mainland Scotland.

After retiring from the Coastguard, he skippered tourist RIBs operating from John o'Groats and Wick.

Following his final retirement, Michael remained in Scotland, enjoying its scenery with Mary.

After Mary died, he returned to his roots and settled in Pevensey Bay, where he spent time with his family during the remaining years of his life.

Michael is survived by his son, Stephen, his three daughters, Denise, Helen and Christine, seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

SEPTEMBER SWINGING THE LAMP



Morning Colours on the quarterdeck of battleship HMS Queen Elizabeth in Alexandria Harbour in 1941. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (A 7520)

'Swinging the Lamp' events are drawn, by permission, from the definitive Naval history reference book **The Royal Navy Day by Day**, written by Honorary S/M Lawrie Phillips and published by The History Press (www.thehistorypress.co.uk). It is currently available online for around £65 new (search ISBN number 978-0750982665)

Just before Christmas 1941, World War 1-era battleship HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister HMS Valiant were attacked by Italian combat swimmers at Alexandria.

The Italians, riding 'manned torpedoes', placed limpet mines beneath the hulls of the British ships, which caused serious damage to both warships, which settled on the harbour bed. The attack was potentially catastrophic for the Allies – had the Axis powers realised how much damage had been done they could have taken the initiative in the Mediterranean, but the British managed to maintain the appearance that both ships were still operational while emergency repairs

Continued on page 40

For more events and actions on dates in September see our History section on the RNA website (<https://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/history>) – more will be added in the coming months.

Continued from page 39

were carried out, much of which was done by specialist South African personnel.

Valiant, which suffered less damage, was initially repaired in Admiralty Floating Dock 5 in Alexandria before steaming to Durban in South Africa for full repairs, returning to service in the summer of 1942.

Queen Elizabeth was then patched up to make the journey to the United States for full repairs, and left North Africa in late June 1942 for the long voyage through the Suez Canal and round the southern tip of Africa heading for Norfolk, Virginia. She was escorted across the Atlantic by destroyers HM Ships Vimy, Pathfinder and Quentin, which detached off Virginia to head for Trinidad on 31 August 1942 while the 33,800-ton capital ship safely continued to the American yard, arriving on 6 September 1942.

The battleship would eventually return to active service in late summer 1943.

The destroyers took up convoy escort and anti-submarine duties in the Caribbean, and on 3 September they came under torpedo attack by U-162, a relatively successful German submarine which had accounted for 14 merchant ships totalling more than 80,000 tons on her three war patrols. The German had set out from its base in Lorient, France, on 7 July for an extended patrol in the Caribbean and off South America, and in the last ten days of August sank four merchantmen.

The German's attack failed and the U-boat was set upon by the destroyers, resulting in a prolonged search. U-162 surfaced after five hours and was immediately picked up by Vimy's radar.

The three destroyers resumed their counter-attack, with Vimy making a ramming attempt before depth charges were dropped onto the beleaguered submarine, which sank, though only two of her crew of 51 went down with her.

The remainder of the German survivors were picked up by the Royal Navy warships and landed in Barbados and the United

States – one of their number being the U-boat's commander Fregattenkapitan Jurgen Wattenburg.

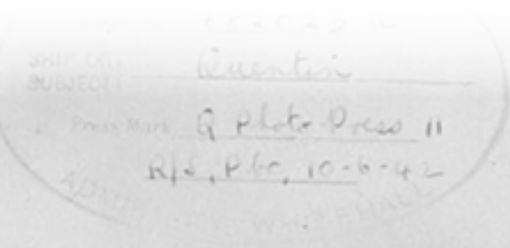
Wattenburg had been an officer on board pocket battleship Graf Spee when the trapped German raider was scuttled in the River Plate estuary off Montevideo in December 1939, but had escaped from internment in South America and made his way back to Germany where he trained for service in submarines.

True to form, Wattenburg escaped once again, this time one of a group of 25 from Camp Papago Park in Arizona, and managed to remain at large for more than a month before being recaptured. He served out the rest of the war as a prisoner, returning to Germany in 1946 where he later took up a career as a regional manager of a brewery; he died in September 1995 at the age of 94.

After ramming U-162 HMS Vimy, a V-class warship displacing 1,200 tons originally named HMS Vancouver on her launch in 1917, was forced to undergo repairs to her propeller shaft but was back in service within a week.

She saw out the remainder of the war before being scrapped in 1948, having spent most of her time escorting convoys, attacking U-boats and being part of the Normandy Landings. 2,300-ton P-class destroyer Pathfinder also had a busy war, much of it on convoy escort duties as well as screening Royal Navy capital ships; she took part on the North African landings (Operation Torch) but was in the Indian Ocean over the D-Day period.

She was badly damaged by a near miss in a Japanese air attack off Burma (now Myanmar) in February 1945 and made her way back to the UK after emergency repairs, but was deemed a Constructive Total Loss and ended her Naval career as a post-war bombing target before being broken up in 1948. The last of the trio, Q-class warship HMS Quentin (1,720 tons), also carried out further escort duties after accounting for U-162, but was not as fortunate as the other two destroyers. In December 1942, while part of Force Q, she took part in an attack on an Italian convoy off North Africa; she was struck by an air-launched German torpedo and sank with the loss of 20 of her crew.



Destroyer HMS Quentin at anchor in Plymouth Sound. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection: © IWM (FL 9023)



LONGCAST

2026

11 Sept	CONA Conference, Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth
12 Sept	Scottish Area Quarterly Meeting (City of Edinburgh Branch)
19 Sept	Area 4 Meeting (Weymouth Branch)
3 Oct	RNA Uckers World Championships, Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth
8 Nov	Remembrance Sunday
14 Nov	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting
13 Feb 2027	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting
1 May 2027	Army v Navy rugby matches, Twickenham
4-6 June 2027	RNA National Conference, Durham
19 Sept 2027	Naval Associations Biennial Parade, London
16-18 June 2028	RNA National Conference, Plymouth

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



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