



**ROYAL NAVAL  
ASSOCIATION**

Project Semaphore  
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### **Project Semaphore wins national award!**

As one of the Royal Naval Association's flagship initiatives, we were delighted to come top in the People's Choice poll at the Soldiering On Awards. Thousands of individuals and organisations were nominated for the 13 awards, and the short-listed candidates gave judges a tough job to select the worthy winners. Project Semaphore won in recognition of a group that has provided a significant contribution in support of the Armed Forces community.

RNA General Secretary, Bill Oliphant said: "Project Semaphore is a perfect example of the ethos of today's Royal Naval Association. A need was identified, funding was secured and Sarah, with a dedicated team of volunteers, has managed the project through to the success it is today. Not only does it make life easier and more rewarding for our veterans, but it brings the whole Naval family together for the greater good, reinforcing the RNA watchword of 'once Navy, always Navy. I am delighted that the project, and Sarah's role in developing it, have been recognised in such a prestigious awards ceremony."

More about the Soldiering On Awards at these short videos [Click here](#) and [here](#)

### **What is Project Semaphore and who is it for?**

Project Semaphore is funded by the Aged Veterans Fund, RNRMC and The Royal British Legion to help naval veterans realise the benefits of being online and to address issues of social isolation and loneliness.

Eligibility criteria is set by the Aged Veteran Fund); in order to receive an iPad, Veterans must:

Be over 65 years of age - Have served in the Armed Forces; this is a Royal Naval Association led Project however we are able to offer iPads to eligible members of the Army and RAF too if they can be supported in a group - Not have regular, personal access to the Internet.

The Project has been hugely successful and over 700 iPads are now being used by Veterans exploring the Internet for the first time. We have engaged with over 50 organisations including Care Homes, Associations and armed forces charities: some collective iPad training sessions in RNA Branches has created the added benefit of community spirit and social gatherings.

### **What do eligible Veterans use the iPad for?**

To keep in touch with family and friends using email, create Memory Books to capture stories from their service career and to research ships, learn how to use FaceTime to have video conversations with old shipmates and friends from the comfort of their own homes, explore Facebook and join groups to interact, take up a new hobby (perhaps photography using the iPad camera), reading, puzzles or to access audio books. The options are endless! We have found that Veterans like to learn from each other and those initially not interested often engage when their curiosity gets the better of them!

Project Semaphore aims to combat loneliness and social isolation but also has financial benefits, providing access to considerable savings through energy deals, price-comparison websites, online shopping, paper-free banking and the like which are not available outside cyberspace.

Estimates available at the start of the project in 2016 indicated that an individual could be £1,000 a year worse off, if they did not have access to offers available online. A range of benefits and advice services are also most easily accessed through the Internet.

## What do Veterans say about the Project?

Providing an iPad and exploring the Internet with the support of a fellow Shipmate, Oppo or family member is really making a huge difference to Veterans lives:

“I use the iPad to keep in touch with my grandchildren and daughter. Following a nasty fall, I am in hospital for the long haul. The iPad is invaluable, using Facetime to catch up with family keeps me included in family life. I love Words with Friends Scrabble too! “

“Truly, I would never have bothered with one of these things and now I am able to be in contact with friends and relatives all around the world – it is truly amazing”.

“I don't know what we ever did before we got our iPad – we're learning so much and researching everything – it's absolutely great”

“Receiving the iPad as well as attending the training sessions has been great – coming here is a like a little oasis away from everything else that is going on in my life – it's great”



Find [Case Studies](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/help) at the RNA website: [www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/help](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/help)

## What is the key to the success of this Project?

Reaching Veterans by working in collaboration with others. The Project team consists three members (all Veterans); Julie in the South West, Alan in the North and I am at RNA Central Office in Portsmouth. Therefore, we couldn't deliver this Project without our network of willing and capable Volunteers as well as those already supporting Veterans in the community.

## How can I get involved?

If you are supporting eligible Veterans, and would like to apply for an iPad, please contact me for an Application Form. The iPads are free of charge and for those without Broadband at home, we provide a model that takes a SIM card; we provide the first SIM card and thereafter costs are met by the Veteran. All is explained in our short Agreement.

If you are IT savvy and can spare time to support others, we would love to hear from you. The key to our success is ensuring that Veterans have someone on hand to answer questions and develop their knowledge...the Internet can be quite daunting and some of the iPad terminology quite confusing at first.

If you already provide training or activities, contact me to explore if we could provide iPads to enhance your programme of events.

Spread the word and help us to promote Project Semaphore in order to reach more eligible Veterans. I look forward to hearing from you!



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