

SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR

► WARM WELCOME FOR HMS PRINCE OF WALES



Shipmate John McAnally caught this image of aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales arriving back home in Portsmouth just before Christmas on completion of a three-month deployment to the United States, during which time the ship worked closely with American forces and carried out flying trials with both fighter jets and drones

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Semaphore Shorts and Semaphore Circular: Normal service has now resumed after the Christmas break with the monthly Semaphore Circular appearing on the first Friday of each month, notes for branch officers on the second Friday and Semaphore Shorts on the remaining Fridays of each month. On occasions the publication date might be delayed for operational reasons – if so we will endeavour to tell you in advance by email.



➤ RNA PRESENT MEDAL TO GEORGE ON BIRTHDAY

Lincoln care home resident and wartime Naval veteran George Pearson was presented with the Arctic Star medal by members of the Royal Naval Association as part of his 104th birthday celebrations on 21 December.

Boultham Park House, which is run by The Orders of St John Care Trust (OSJCT), organised a party and a cake for George, who has lived at the care home since 2019.

George received the Arctic Star along with a bottle of traditional Navy Pusser's Rum and a Certificate of Appreciation and Life Membership of the RNA. The Arctic Star is awarded to those who served on Arctic Convoys during World War 2.

Receiving the medal and gifts, George said: "Thank you very much – I didn't expect this!"

When referring to his grand age of 104, George said: "I'm older than sliced bread..."

George, who was born in 1919, was 20 years old when he was called up to active service in World War 2. He served in the Royal Navy between 1940 and 1945, maintaining aircraft.

He was stationed at Lee-on-the-Solent air station in Gosport before travelling to the United States and Malta, and George also served in HMS Illustrious and was present in the Orkney Islands when King

George VI visited to meet forces there.

George was born in Lincoln, and apart from his time away during the war he lived in the county all his life. He married Silvia in 1940 and they lived in Boultham after the war. The couple shared a long and happy marriage for 63 years until Silvia died in 2004.

Before the war George was an apprentice at a Lincoln manufacturing firm, and when he was demobbed he returned to the city and worked as a fitter of braking systems for 46 years, retiring in 1991.

George moved to Fosse House care home in 2017 where he celebrated his 100th birthday before he moved to Boultham Park House in 2020.

He is very proud of his cards from the late Queen Elizabeth II, to congratulate him on his centenary, and his diamond wedding anniversary in 2000.

George is an enthusiastic fan of Smooth Radio and the Top 100 chart countdown, and he was delighted to be featured on BBC Look North local news on his birthday, receiving his medal.

Boultham Park House is run by OSJCT, a not-for-profit care provider with 14 homes across Lincolnshire supporting individuals in residential, dementia, nursing, and respite care. For more information, visit www.osjct.co.uk

➤ CONTACTS



Central Office Contacts	
For all contacts and general enquiries 023 9272 3747	admin@royalnavalassoc.com
CEO/General Secretary	ceo@royalnavalassoc.com
COS (Chief of Staff)	cos@royalnavalassoc.com
Finance / Membership Support	kathryn@royalnavalassoc.com
Communications	hoc@royalnavalassoc.com
Semaphore Circular	mike@royalnavalassoc.com
Planning – Special Events	malcolm@royalnavalassoc.com
Membership Support	sara@royalnavalassoc.com
Wellbeing Programmes	gemma@royalnavalassoc.com
Project Semaphore	gemma@royalnavalassoc.com
Engagement	engagement@royalnavalassoc.com
National Advisors	
National Branch Retention and Recruiting Advisor	rna.brria@outlook.com
National Welfare Advisor	geoff@royalnavalassoc.com
National Rules and Bye-Laws Advisor	governancechair@royalnavalassoc.com

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Snail Mail – Postal Address

RNA Central Office,
Building 1/087,
Scott Road,
HM Naval Base,
Portsmouth
Hants PO1 3LT

► FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Ahoy Shipmates

A very Happy New Year to all our members. Short and sweet from me today – I'm off to the Fang Farrier this afternoon!

I hope everyone managed to have a restful festive season and the weather didn't upset your plans too much. I had a very testing round of golf with my daughter's boyfriend on the splendid Elie Links in Fife on 28 December and was fortunate enough not to be blown off the face of the planet! It rained frequently but the wind dried us in minutes. At one point I literally had to aim at least 20 degrees out to sea only to keep the ball on the fairway! The sight of an old Naval friend, Thomas Hetherington, at the Clubhouse window as we came off the 18th green beckoning us in was very welcome, as was the ensuing dram. Thomas had spotted my name on the tee-off list that day and made sure he was there to see us – proof that the Naval family is never far away. Thank you Thomas!

Christmas festivities were tempered however with attendance at the funeral in Inverness of our beloved former National Standard Bearer and National Ceremonial Advisor, S/M Bob Coburn BEM. Please take a minute to read his obituary later in this publication which our former National President, S/M John McAnally was kind enough to put together. June, our thoughts remain with you and your family.



As well as the announcement of Bob Coburn's BEM – fortunately predated to 27 November – the New Year Honours List also included Shipmates Robert Buchanan and Godfrey Harrison as BEMs. Robert is Chair of Londonderry Branch and DNCM, 12 Area, while Godfrey is a longstanding founder member and former Chair of Bude branch. Heartiest congrats to you both!

This is D-Day 80 anniversary year, and we are looking forward to our AGM/Conference weekend in the Coal Exchange, Cardiff on 14-16 June; the

Association will be represented in Normandy for the 80th commemorations and at services in the UK.

Also, there's still time to sign up for the activities later in the year including the Wellness Walking weekend in Wales and the Normandy D-Day cycling which are also detailed later in this Semaphore Circular with further dates/events to follow.

Monday evening online Fireside Chats restart 1830 this Monday (8th Jan) with the diver Julian Barnwell's amazing story of how he discovered the wreck of the 1682 HMS Gloucester off Norfolk – see you there! Link here <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2888305105?pwd=TmtwempUWGwwUEtOcY4ZU15RU5FZz09>

Very best wishes,

Bill

Commandos of No 4 Cdo, 1st Special Service Brigade, coming ashore on Queen Red beach, Sword area, 6 June 1944. Image from Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM BU 1184)





A heavily-doctored Japanese photograph of HMS Prince of Wales (upper) and Repulse (lower) after being hit by Japanese torpedoes on 10 December 1941, off Malaya. A British destroyer can also be seen in the foreground. The image is from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM HU 2762)

➤ NEW MEMORIAL HONOURS LOST SAILORS

An anchor recovered from those who desecrated one of the Navy's most hallowed sites was unveiled at the heart of a new memorial to two Royal Navy ships lost in World War 2.

The monument was dedicated in Kuantan in Malaysia, the state capital of the province of Pahang – and the city closest to their wrecks of battleship HMS Prince of Wales and battlecruiser HMS Repulse, sunk by Japanese bombers on December 10 1941 some 61 nautical miles east of Kuantan.

The attack cost the lives of 840 RN sailors – 513 from Repulse and 327 from Prince of Wales – while the tragedy also ushered in a series of defeats for Commonwealth forces at the hands of the Emperor's forces, culminating in the fall of Singapore.

Eight decades after the sinkings the Agong (King) of Malaysia, Yang Di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, commissioned a memorial to the sailors and marines who tried to prevent the invasion of his territories.

Paid for by private donations and installed at Teluk Cempedak beach, it features a kedge (or secondary) anchor from Repulse, which was seized by Malaysian authorities following illegal salvage from the wrecks.

Aside from the Malay King and Queen, the dedication service – exactly 82 years after the disaster – was attended by British and Malay civilian and military VIPs, including Rear Admiral Andrew Betton, Director Joint Warfare, who represented the First Sea Lord, and Henrietta Wood, whose grandfather Capt John Leach was one of those lost and whose father, Admiral Sir Henry Leach, was First Sea Lord during the Falklands conflict.

Mrs Wood told guests of the impact of the tragedy on

her father, aged just 18 in December 1941; serving in Singapore at the time, he had been itching to “have a crack” at the enemy, while his father feared the naval force was probably doomed.

A few days later Capt Leach was proved correct; his distraught son searched desperately for him among the survivors returned to Singapore until one man gently told him that his father had been lost.

“The memorial is, I hope, not just a grateful remembrance of the 840 men whose grave is the deep waters of the South China Sea but also a reminder to us to learn the lessons of history and look to a future of trust, understanding and respect between nations. The current terrible conflicts just cry out for humanity,” Mrs Wood said.

“This memorial is a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made in war but also it's a symbol of the bond between our countries and, I hope, will serve as an encouragement to others to accept their differences and work peacefully together.”

Ailsa Terry, the British High Commissioner to Malaysia, recited an extract from *For the Fallen* by Laurence Binyon.

“This memorial will provide an opportunity for visitors to reflect on the enormity of the loss and the cost of war,” she said.

“It is a fitting tribute to the personnel who perished along with the ships, and also serves as a reminder that important naval heritage like this must be protected as well as of the strength of the UK-Malaysia relationship.”

Seven sailors from HMS Spey provided a Guard of Honour for proceedings, less than a month after the patrol ship held a service of remembrance over the wrecks.

➤ DEEPS PROVE TO BE CAPABLE SKIMMERS...

Five submariners are well into a world-record attempt at rowing the Atlantic faster than anyone in history.

HMS Oardacious, in their seven-metre boat Captain Jim, hope to reach Antigua before January 12 after covering 3,000 miles from their departure point in the Canaries, beating 37 other teams competing in what is billed 'the world's toughest row'.

The Royal Navy's official ocean rowing team are currently well ahead of the competition, having covered more than 1,700 nautical miles so far – despite choppy waters with waves up to four metres high crashing down on their small boat. They have around 980 nautical miles to go, and are more than 100 miles ahead of the second-placed boat.

The team comprises skipper Cdr Matt Main, 39, and Cdr Dan Seager, 38, both marine engineer officers; 37-year-old Lt Rob Clarke, a medical services officer; marine engineer PO Ian Allen, aged 39; and 40-year-old Cdr Mike Forrester.

"We're really excited that we've set a really good pace in the race so far," said Rob.

The team are rowing around the clock – 2½ hours on the oars, followed by 90 minutes' rest – so that while three men are propelling Captain Jim through the Atlantic, two of their shipmates are snatching brief sleep in the tiny cabins at each end of the boat.

Their boat – named in memory of a former colleague – is self-sufficient, with solar panels providing power to two batteries which supply all the essential equipment, including the all-important watermaker, a mini reverse-osmosis plant which turns sea water into fresh.

The rowers have to carry over 1.5 million calories of food to feed themselves as they burn over 7,000 calories apiece every day – even so they can be expected to lose around 18kg (nearly three stones) by the time they reach the Caribbean.

The world record (by four rowers) is 29 days and 15 hours, set back in 2017, while the fastest five-crew team covered the distance in 33 days and 12 hours just 12 months ago.

Mid-December through to mid-January offers the best combination of favourable weather, sea and current conditions for a rowing crossing between La Gomera in the Canaries and Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua, a total distance of around 3,000 miles.

The crew of Captain Jim are the third team to attempt the crossing under the banner of HMS Oardacious, established in 2019.

Since then, says Oardacious campaign director Lt Cdr Hugo Mitchell-Heggs, it's grown from an adventurous training expedition into a major fundraiser for the submarine community – the first year's row alone brought in £100k – which raises the profile of the Silent Service, engineering via a STEM and outreach programme in schools and work with a string of youth organisations, including the Sea Cadets, to inspire future generations.

Having himself completed the challenge twice, Hugo says it's a mental challenge almost as much as a physical one.

"You're tired – you not getting much more than an hour's sleep at a time – you're dealing with sea sickness, salt sores on your bottom and feet, and you're away from your families over Christmas," he said.

"And although the start has been really impressive, it just takes one day of bad weather to knock you back.

"But being a submariner, you know how to deal with much of this: working as a team in close proximity, looking out for each other, and relying on good humour and teamwork to get through these difficult challenges."

Aside from a string of senior Royal Navy officers, the team have the backing of the Prince of Wales – the HMS Oardacious campaign raises funds for mental health, wellbeing and resilience projects in the submarine community in conjunction with the RNRMC – and legendary yachtsman Sir Robin Knox-Johnston.

You can follow the team's progress via @hmsoardacious on social media and www.hmsoardacious.com and donate via <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hmsordacious2023>

➤ THE RNA: WHO WE ARE, OUR VISION – AND WHAT WE DO

Imagine having a couple of minutes to pitch the RNA to someone who has shown some interest in joining. What would you say? To help us all articulate what the RNA is about and what our aspirations are Central Office have developed, and the AMC have approved, the Who are we, Vision, Mission & Values.

Who are we? The Royal Naval Association is a inclusive, diverse, multi-generational, rank-blind and free to join membership organisation. It is primarily for serving and former serving personnel of our Naval forces and their families. Membership is also open to those who may not have served but have an interest in the Naval Service.

Vision: To be the most relevant Naval Association offering support to our members and smaller Naval Associations, whilst ensuring they maintain the independence and unique identity. Working with other charities, organisations and Governmental agencies to create an environment that improves the wellbeing of all former Naval Forces personnel and their families. As well as offering comradeship to our members.

Mission: To successfully foster comradeship within our membership.

Values: Our core values are centred on the seven components (Seven Cs) of Comradeship which are, Companionship, Community, Connection, Compassion, Care, Commemoration and Celebration, we seek to maintain the naval ethos and enjoy sharing experiences with like-minded people while supporting each other in times of need.

➤ CHAMPIONS ARE THERE TO SUPPORT VETERANS

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has initiatives that help current and former Armed Forces personnel and their families access Jobcentre Plus services.



This includes having an Armed Forces champion in every Jobcentre Plus district who ensures the provision of support that meets your needs.

Armed Forces champions provides Jobcentre Plus support to veterans, Service leavers, serving personnel within

their resettlement period, and spouses and civil partners of serving and ex-Service personnel.

Champions maintain close contact with Jobcentre Plus staff, who make the

champion aware of Armed Forces issues and raise issues with them if requested.

The role of the armed forces champion is to:

support members of the Armed Forces community and build staff capability to provide Armed Forces support within their Jobcentre Plus district; develop and maintain joint working arrangements between Jobcentre Plus and the Forces community

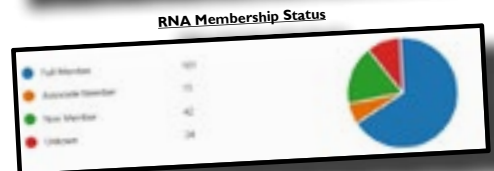
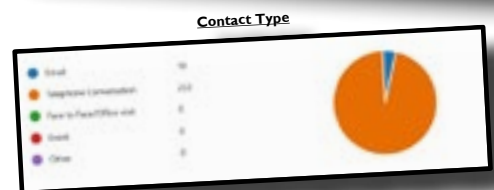
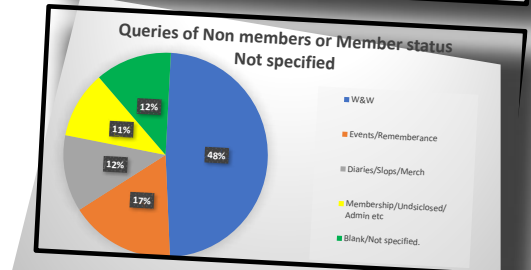
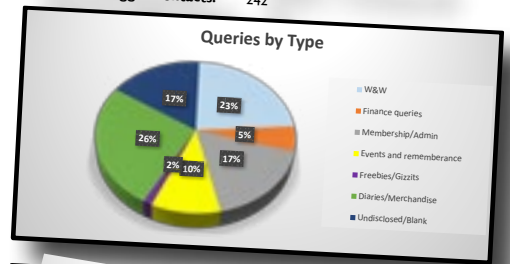
in their Jobcentre Plus district; provide information to Jobcentre Plus staff about specific Armed Forces initiatives; be the first point of contact for Jobcentre Plus staff, the Service Charities and Single Service organisations and services to advise on queries regarding individual cases.

They support Jobcentre Plus district staff to identify and work with employers and partners, maximising opportunities for the Armed Forces community, and raise the profile of the Service community in terms of skills, knowledge and experience they can offer.

You can tell your champion about an issue through a Universal Credit online account, via a Jobcentre Plus Work Coach or through your local Jobcentre Plus office.

Central Office Contact Record Form Data Insight

Data Collection Period: July 2023 – 14th November 2023
 Number of Logged contacts: 242





► MOUNTBATTEN FESTIVAL OF MUSIC TICKETS

The Mountbatten Festival of Music returns, featuring the Massed Bands of His Majesty's Royal Marines, performing over two days at the Royal Albert Hall including a Saturday matinee performance. – but if you want to see the show you will have to act quickly!

These concerts display the outstanding versatility of some of the world's finest military musicians and are given the 'West End' treatment with spectacular lighting effects.

The Festival sees the Royal Marines showcase their incredible musicianship and pageantry and features a wide range of musical styles, including music from the big screen and superb solo items, as well as the traditional marches and overtures that have proved such a hit with audiences over the years.

There will be evening performances on Friday 8 March and Saturday 9 March (both 1930), with a 1400 matinee on the Saturday, but only a handful of tickets remain for the three shows.

These performances will also be raising funds for Royal Navy and Royal Marines charities.

For more details on tickets etc see the Royal Albert Hall website at <https://tickets.royalalberthall.com/production/84667>

► SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Shipmates might be interested to become involved with the popular and successful RNA Specialist Interest Groups. Whether you are already a part of a group or are yet to join one we highly recommend you get involved and see what it's all about. For more information on each group please contact the designated leaders, listed in no particular order:

Camping and Caravanning – Ron Shilton: rna.camping.caravan.motorhome.club@gmail.com

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

Cricket – Mark Smith : Markmiff1962@gmail.com

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

Decorative Ropework – Bob Jones: oldsalt69@hotmail.co.uk

Divers – Bill Lawless: billylawless40@yahoo.com

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

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

*Riders Branch – Mark Gayton: secrnariders@gmail.com

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

If you are interested in forming a Special Interest Group please contact admin@royalnavalassoc.com

**Please note – the Riders are a Branch, not a Special Interest Group.*



► MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

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

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

Our image, from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 9127), shows two sailors on board HMS Hero cleaning and sharpening bayonet cutlasses whilst the destroyer steams in the Mediterranean during World War 2. See 5 February.

Date	Presenter	Subject
Mon 8 January	Prof Claire Jowitt/ Julian Barnwell	The discovery of the wreck of HMS Gloucester 1682
Mon 15 January	Tony Moth	Admiral Thomas Cochrane
Mon 22 January	Richard Jones	Lost at Sea in Mysterious Circumstances
Mon 29 January	Cdre Craig Wood	NATO Update (tbc)
Mon 5 February	Mark 'Dicky' Barton	Naval Cutlasses

** Lecture subjects may change at short notice.*

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

D-DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY CYCLE RIDE, 3-6 JUNE 2024

To coincide with the D-Day 80th anniversary commemorations next year, the Royal Naval Association will be hosting a cycle ride in Normandy in June.

This event is designed to be an inclusive event for all abilities, and the cycling programmes will be based around the cycling abilities within the group.

So, if you wish to bring a recumbent bike/trike or an E-bike, you are still more than welcome!

This event will be partially-funded by a sponsor, however a personal contribution will be required – estimated at approx £250 all in.

Accommodation and ferries are already booked so please act quickly if you want to secure one of the 15 spaces available.

The outline programme is available towards the end of this Circular (click here) and if you want to register interest (£50 deposit secures your space) or have any questions please contact Chris 'Scouse' Reeves in Central Office on email scc@royalnavalassoc.com

► SLOPS STILL AVAILABLE

Shipmates are reminded that items such as blazer badges, pin badges, ties, beret badges etc are still available for purchase from Central Office.

If you would like to obtain such items, please contact Central Office on the main office number (023 9272 3747).

► STARRY SKIES AND SEAS

Join the National Museum of the Royal Navy Hartlepool this month for an out-of-this-world experience including stargazing!

The museum has teamed up with Wonder Dome to provide a fantastic pop-up planetarium where you can watch the stars in the night sky and learn more about our solar system.

Afterwards, make your way on board HMS Trincomalee and discover how sailors used the stars to navigate the ocean over 200 years ago.

This exciting experience is happening throughout the day on 20 January (the 19th is completely sold out).

To book your tickets for this event, you will need to purchase a ticket to the museum. This means that you can visit the museum as many times as you like throughout the year for no extra cost.

When purchasing your ticket, you can add on stargazing activities for only £4 per person – see <https://www.nmrn.org.uk/events/stargazing-wonder-dome-19th-sold-out>

► SPORTS AND COMRADESHIP

THRIVING TOGETHER PROGRAMME 2024

For most of us, being a big part of the Royal Navy and the Royal Navy family was through sports, events and comradeship. When you catch up with old shipmates, this is often the thing they miss most about the old times. To that end, our 'Thriving Together Programme' gives members of the RNA the opportunity to attend experience days, sports and challenging activities across the UK and Europe to reunite, step outside their comfort zones or connect with new /old shipmates.

We have a varied range of activities planned and confirmed so far this year, with more dates, venues and activities to be confirmed later in the year. If there is something you would like to see more of or experience within our reach, then please don't

hesitate to contact our Sports and Comradeship Coordinator (Chris 'Scouse' Reeves) on scc@royalnavalassoc.com

Please see below the list of events for this year so far. If you would like any further information on any of these, please don't hesitate to contact us.

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
16 Mar	Chainsaw Experience – A look at life day with guided chainsaw awareness and maintenance	Somerset
12-14 Apr	Walking and waterfall weekend	Brecon - Wales
27-28 Apr	Deer meal preparation, bush craft, axe throwing, archery, camp out and coastering	Dorset
18 May	Snowdon Walk	Snowdon - Wales
3-6 Jun	Normandy Cycle Event	France
28-30 Jun	Woman only walking and waterfall weekend	Brecon - Wales
Jul TBC	Introduction to Surfing Weekend	North Devon
13 Jul	Introduction to dry stone walling	Dartmoor

After the success of 2023 - We are proud to announce and reconfirm our association with

www.royalmaritimehotel.co.uk



THE ROYAL MARITIME
HOTEL

Offering our members 10% discount
on stays.

OFFICIAL

HOSTS

2024

OFFICIAL

VENUE

**The Royal Naval Association's
World Uckers Championships**

Sat 14 Oct 2024

Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth.

More details coming soon: engagements@royalnavalassoc.com

➤ FOCUS ON... SUBMARINES AT WAR

A glance through this month's **Swinging the Lamp** reveals a good many tales of submarines – many of them somewhat sobering.

From the successes of David Wanklyn's Upholder to several incidents involving the bumbling K-class – more on them shortly – submarines are a prominent thread in the tapestry of the Royal Navy in recent decades.

Of course, submarines have not been around for very long in the history of the naval warfare, but they made a very rapid and powerful impact on conflicts in the 20th century.

Part of their fascination lies in the mystery that surrounds them – hidden in the depths of the ocean, striking without warning, and requiring a very special kind of discipline and routine that most civilians (and many sailors) can neither imagine nor hope to emulate.

Simply as machines, they are intrinsically dangerous. They operate in a hostile environment, with very little margin for error, and if something goes wrong it can often spell disaster with a very slim chance of escape. Submarine development, right from the first Royal Navy Holland boats of 1901, moved at a breakneck pace, with boats increasing in size and complexity at a bewildering rate – to put it

in perspective, Holland 1 displaced just over 100 tons, was around 20 metres long and had a crew of eight. The troublesome HMS A1, built just two years later, displaced 200 tons, was half as long again as Holland 1 and had a crew of 13. HMS E1 was launched in late 1912 (just a dozen years after Holland 1) but displaced around 800 tons submerged, was almost 60m in length and had a crew of almost 60.

Performance also raced ahead – Holland 1 had range of just over 20 miles and a speed of seven knots submerged; E1 could roam up to 3,500 miles and had a top speed of 15 knots.

Such leaps in technology inevitably brought risks, with men dying in accidents and sinkings as the Royal Navy – like its rivals around the world – came to grips with the benefits and drawbacks of underwater warfare.

As if that wasn't risk enough, those men had to operate their boats as instruments of war, pushing them to and beyond their limits, and all the while attempting to avoid an enemy intent on sinking them...

This will not be an (pardon the pun) in-depth study of submarine – others, many of the Royal Navy officers, have done splendid jobs in that department.

continues on page 14 →

HMS C3, one of a class of 38 Royal Navy submarines that served in World War 1. C3 was packed with explosives and used in an attempt to blow up a viaduct during the Zeebrugge Raid on St George's Day 1918, in which her CO, Lt Richard Sandford, won a Victoria Cross Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Q 74803)



03 submarine

The harvest of an attack on a submerged U-boat begins to make its appearance on the surface of the sea and members of HMS Starling's crew look over the side for U-boat wreckage. Image from Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 22037)



It will be particularly concerned with critical clashes in the World Wars – the battle to blunt the menace of the German U-boat and its threat to Britain's links with the rest of the world.

So let's get straight into the Battle of the Atlantic – the first one, that is, the one that raged through the Great War and almost strangled Britain's supply lines. As the combatants learned about operating submarines in war their tactics developed. The Germans, for example, started the war with a smaller submarine fleet and adhered to 'prize rules', surfacing to warn a merchant ship's crew that they were under attack before using any weapons, allowing them to escape unharmed. When they started to fall foul of Allied Q-ships – armed vessels disguised as merchantmen – the so-called 'prize rules' were quickly abandoned and unrestricted submarine warfare was waged around the British coast for a period.

It risked angering neutral nations as their ships were also attacked – amongst them the United States – and that was a factor in the Americans entering the war on the Allied side when unrestricted warfare was reinstated in 1917. There was no doubting the reason behind the initiative – between February and April 1917 U-boats sank more than 500 merchant ships, and by the end of April that year the Germans were sinking an average of 13 ships each day.

German U-boat numbers were relatively modest in the Great War, as the Germans also possessed a strong surface fleet, but as in World War 2

the Allies were constantly playing defensive catch-up. A combination of factors – amongst them the introduction of convoys, aerial reconnaissance, early sonar and effective depth charges – eased the situation and the U-boat threat was gradually blunted.

The Royal Navy had started the war with around 80 submarines, though they were regarded by the Admiralty as a fringe element in the grand scheme of things. The Germans had 48 (including those in build) – they had come late to the party, having obtained their first boat in 1906, but they built up a formidable force of reliable, effective submarines with a limited number of classes, bringing benefits in terms of training and maintenance. By the Armistice the British Submarine Service had a fleet of 137 submarines in service with 78 in build, having lost 54 vessels during the war. The Germans had put 375 boats to sea during the war, more than half of them smaller with limited range or employed as minelayers – and they lost around half that total number, with some 5,400 men perishing with their submarines. The toll they took was significant – more than 30 Allied warships, and 5,700 merchant ships of various sizes were sunk (a total of more than 15,000 sailors killed and 11 million tons of shipping lost).

Towards the end of the war, and into the peace that followed, there were renewed efforts to explore the possibilities of submarines – and in the case of the Royal Navy, more failed experiments or blunders, and more loss of life.

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That was particularly the case with the K-class (also known as the Kalamity or Killer class) – steam-powered monsters that had problems designed into them. Intended as fast, powerful vessels to accompany a surface fleet, they were huge by contemporary standards (2,500 tons submerged, twice the size of the preceding J-class) and at more than 100 metres long they were very difficult to control – in addition to which they had a very limited dive capability; their maximum safe diving depth was just 60 metres, which meant a K-boat diving at around 30 degrees of angle could have her stern on the surface and her bows at crush depth. In fact, the boats could go as deep as 81 metres – K3 found this out in an uncontrolled dive to the bottom of the Pentland Firth

Their steam propulsion also caused problems; in order to dive there were boilers to damp down, funnels to collapse, vents and exhausts to close and hatches to seal – any one of those failing or being left open by mistake (both happened in practice) could sink a boat, and it took precious minutes to prepare to dive – up to 30 minutes from a surface cruise to slipping below the waves.

The class of 18 never claimed a success against an enemy vessel, but six sank in various accidents and incidents, with significant loss of life, including the 'Battle of May Island', a disastrous exercise in January 1918 (see *Swinging the Lamp*).

For the Germans, submarine development was tricky – they were banned from doing so under the Treaty of Versailles – so they set up camp abroad, chiefly in the Netherlands, where German designers and engineers created bigger and better boats ostensibly for other nations.

By the start of World War 2 a clearer policy was

emerging in terms of submarine deployment, and on the German side that meant the main burden of maritime warfare fell on the shoulders of the U-boatmen, with chilling consequences. The build-up was rapid – Germany started the war with just 46 operational boats, almost half of them restricted to the North Sea. By 1945 the Germans had put more than 1,150 U-boats to sea, but the survival rate was frightening; well over half that number (785 boats) were lost and a German submariner had only a one in four chance of surviving the war – 28,000 died in battle.

By contrast the Royal Navy lost 79 submarines during the war, and almost 3,200 submariners died, but that branch of the Senior Service was not under the same pressure to achieve such far-reaching goals as their German counterparts.

Just as in World War 1 much German effort was expended in attempting to starve Britain of vital supplies – food, war materiel and later on troops and equipment in the build-up to the Normandy Landings – only this time the U-boats were expected to do the bulk of the work, and they built a fearsome reputation, eventually sinking some 3,000 vessels, of which 175 were warships.

Just as in World War 1 the Germans enjoyed significant early successes, giving Churchill sleepless nights as the Battle of the Atlantic – the longest campaign of the war, which began on the first day of hostilities and lasted until VE Day – seemed to be rapidly slipping away from the Allies.

But just as in World War 1 the Allies quickly developed ships, aircraft, equipment and tactics that slowed the carnage and turned the tide in mid-1943, ending the Germans' so-called Happy Times and eventually sinking U-boats faster than they could be built.

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HMS K3 steaming through heavy seas during World War 1. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Q 69713)



With losses running at catastrophic levels, the U-boat wolf-packs were withdrawn from the Atlantic and convoys sailed relatively unhindered in the latter stages of the war.

On the Allied side, in some 3,000 patrols, British submarines sank 158 enemy combatant ships, damaged 54 others, and destroyed almost 1.7 million tons of enemy merchant shipping. In addition, they carried 105 minelaying operations and 250 other operations.

It is worth noting that life on board the average U-boat in the Atlantic was miserable – one officer compared it to like living in a washing machine, as the relatively small vessels operated far out to sea, relying on rendezvous with supply

ships; if a support vessel failed to show, a U-boat risked running out of food, fuel and ammunition with little chance of getting back home.

But despite the beating that the U-boat force took, their suspected presence meant convoy lookouts could not rest, and that basic threat – of the hidden menace that might pounce at any second – was still effective almost 40 years later during the Falklands Conflict, when the fear of British submarine activity seriously inhibited Argentine naval operations, particularly after the sinking of the General Belgrano by HMS Conqueror – and the Royal Navy task group was not immune from that fear either, with many alarms raised over the possible presence of Argentine submarines.

HMS Starling launches a shallow pattern of depth charges which brought a U-boat to the surface in early 1944 – one of six kills for Capt Johnnie Walker's Second Escort Group on this patrol. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 21992)





BOOK CLUB

The club agrees a book over a monthly period.

All readers read that book and then come together online (or if demand allows in person) over a coffee and discusses their thoughts, likes and dislikes.

Whether it's romantic, classic, factual, fiction or non fiction - the members choose and agree.

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Contact engagements to express interest. Starting January/February.

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TEAM



2023 WORLD SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS Cali, Colombia

December 5-15, 2023



► BRANCH NEWS

Christchurch Branch

Christchurch branch is proud to have a new World Champion amongst its membership

Shipmate Lynn Squibb represented Team England Super Seniors' Ladies' team at the 2023 World ten pin bowling championships, held in Cali, Colombia, in December.

double event.

The England team brought home 15 medals in total, which was only one short of the USA team – a great achievement for the whole team and a 'once in a lifetime' experience.

It was also a major achievement for Lynn since starting ten pin bowling as a leisure pastime while serving in the Wrens in Portsmouth 30 years ago.

Senior Team England manager Tony Brown said: "Lifetime memories have been made over the last ten days. The people of Cali have made us feel very welcome.

"There have been some outstanding performances from the Team England players. The Senior Men have utilised their Purple Power to the max, while the Grand Seniors have exploited the finer points on the Johnson-Ellis-Squibb technique to perfection.

"I'm sure a Team England training session on this is forthcoming.

"This has been a real team event; everyone has been supporting each other on and off the lanes.

"I've now been to five World Championships and two European Championships and have never experienced such strong team bonding. The players here are a real credit to Team England.

England Ladies won Gold in the team event, and Lynn also won a Bronze medal in the Ladies'

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
USA	6	2	5	13
England	4	2	3	8
Colombia	3	2	3	9
Mexico	1	6	2	5
Dominican Republic	1	2	2	4
Venezuela	1	1	2	5
Italy	0	1	4	3
Puerto Rico	0	0	3	1
Czech Republic	0	0	1	0
Brazil	0	0	0	0
Canada	0	0	0	0
Costa Rica	0	0	0	0
Ecuador	0	0	0	0
France	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	0	0	0	0
Panama	0	0	0	0
Peru	0	0	0	0
Romania	0	0	0	0
Spain	0	0	0	0



Plymouth Branch

Saturday 18 November 2023 saw HMS Drake Senior Rates Mess once again host the Plymouth Branch Annual Gala Dinner.

The black tie event was attended by 165 shipmates and involved members of **Bodmin** Branch, the ASW (Anti Submarine Warfare) Association and the Royal Marines Association, as well as Plymouth Branch.

Plymouth were delighted to have the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Cllr. Mark Shayer – himself a former Naval Artificer – together with his wife Samantha, as Guests of Honour. The other Guests of Honour were the National President of the RNA, Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, accompanied by his wife Pamela, and Base Warrant Officer WO1 Steve Harvey and

partner Marie Quinn.

Following an extremely tasty five course meal, loyal toasts and speeches from Carl Beeson (Vice Chair), Des McCarthy (Chair) and Honoured Guests were heard.

Afterwards flowers were presented to Mrs Samantha Shayer, Mrs Pamela Potts and Marie Quinn.

Presentations of Life Membership were made to Branch Chair Des McCarthy, presented by the Lord Mayor (**pictured right**). This was followed by a presentation of Life Membership to S/M Debbie Beeson (**pictured below left**). Life Membership is usually awarded for long service, dedication and duty to a branch - both well deserved. There was a further presentation to Mrs Ann McCarthy, wife of the Branch Chair, where she was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation, given to Associate Members for their

dedication and service.

There was live music to accompany the dinner and for dancing later in the evening from the Levie Duet.

£720 was raised for branch funds from the end of evening raffle. It is those same funds that allowed the branch to heavily subsidise the occasion.



➤ 2024 RNA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

All branches – please see the AGM paperwork at the end of the circular, including an application form for delegates, a National Council Member and Deputy National Council Member nomination form, and the form for proposing motions and amendments at the Conference, which will be held in Cardiff from 14-16 June.

There is also further information on booking arrangements for accommodation as well as events over the weekend, such as the Gala Dinner.





Torrevieja Branch

Members of Torrevieja branch enjoyed plenty of festive cheer at their Christmas Dinner and Dance held at the Lakeview Restaurant in Ciudad Quesada, Alicante.

The festive spirit was set in motion at the Cava reception by the 15-strong Melody Makers ensemble, who performed carols for the first hour to almost 50 shipmates and guests.

The Melody Makers regularly practice at the Lakeview Restaurant and are a group that stage public performances at various times during the year, all in aid of their designated charity of Age Concern, On this occasion they raised almost 60 Euros during their performance.

The raffle was something of an extravaganza, with 28 prizes ranging from a big cuddly Santa, huge 'his and hers' individual hampers, through to vouchers for a local butcher, all funded by the branch at a cost of Euro 400.

Santa put in an appearance after the reception, and although he left the reindeer outside, he did bring in two of his elves to help distribute presents to all the ladies while having their photos taken by Tom Crawford of KSC. Photography. Services@gmail.com, who also took photos during the reception – several of which are on the branch Facebook page.

Shipmates and guests then tucked into their del-ious meal provided by the Lakeview staff.

The shipmates are a combination of not only ex-Royal Navy, but also ex-Royal Marines, ex-Merchant Navy, ex-Army, and ex-RAF, along with civilians from nations including, Spain, Ukraine, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Ireland and Russia, to name but a few. It is truly fitting that so many nations should especially come together in harmony at this time of year to celebrate 'peace and happiness to all mankind'.

One of the branch's guests was a lieutenant submariner from the Spanish Navy, who was also 'Elf Smiley' who assisted Santa with distributing presents; the other was Elf Happy, a former RN helicopter engineer.

These events do not happen overnight by accident and take an enormous amount of thought, planning and resourcing, and therefore after the toasts were special thank yous and rounds

of applause to all those shipmates involved and included Assistant Social Secretary, Lenny Manning, the branch Treasurer, Raffle Co-ordinator, S/M Nicola Louden (and her foot soldier, Carl), the Planning Team of Kim and Steve Hemingfield and Maureen Jenkins.

Santa and the Elves were ably supported by S/M Kim Hemingfield and S/M Maureen Jenkins.

Credit with a round of applause was given to the Elves who came out of the workshop the night before, after the branch meeting, to help add decorations to the venue and decorate the tables; they were referred to through their aliases of S/M's - Lenny the Lion; Angie the Fairy; Ruth the Crab... someone had to join the RAF; Paul the 'I didn't do much sea time'; not forgetting Kath the 'I'm a Janner', where's the oggies?; the 'stoker boy' Tony with wheel spanner in hand somewhere in the background making a lot of noise; and all lead by Maureen the 'I'm a Poppy Lass'. They did a fabulous job.





Shipmate Bob Coburn BEM – an appreciation by Vice Admiral John McAnally, RNA Vice Patron and former National President

On 13 December, former National Chairman Shipmate Keith Ridley, National Vice Chairman Shipmate Andy Christie, National Ceremonial Officer Shipmate Mike Smyth, General Secretary Shipmate Bill Oliphant and I travelled to Inverness to join a large congregation of Bob's family, Shipmates and friends to mourn the passing, and celebrate the life, of a good friend and one of the greatest contributors to our Association.

The National Standard was impeccably carried by Shipmate David Corrigan to whom, as to many others, Bob had been mentor and friend. It was joined by the Scotland Area Standard, City of Inverness Branch Standard, the Royal British Legion Beaully Standard and by three others.

Moving tributes to this beloved husband, father and grandfather were delivered by Bob's children and grandchildren. Shipmate Brian Mackenzie, Scotland Area Chairman and City of Glasgow Branch Secretary, and I spoke on behalf of the RNA.

Bob was born in Aberdeen in 1946 and after leaving school began an apprenticeship as a butcher, but three years later, fed up with "bathing in potted meat", he saw the light and joined the Royal Navy, becoming a Steward. His ships included HMS Bulwark, Keppel, Nubian and Abdiel. It was in the latter ship that Bob earned the General Service Medal he so proudly wore, following Abdiel's leadership of Operation Rheostat, the mine clearance of the Suez Canal after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. As a Steward and reaching the rate of Petty Officer Bob also served in many shore bases and in the retinue of the Port Admiral at Rosyth, where he drove the staff car while still only entitled to wear L plates.

It was while serving at Lossiemouth that on weekend leave Bob met trainee nurse June MacIntyre at the Palace Ballroom in Aberdeen. Bob hitchhiked most weekends and the couple married in 1969, soon becoming proud parents with daughter Carmina later that year and son Andrew in 1972. Bob also found time for a lot of sport including marathon running, golf and Navy hockey and fencing.

Retiring from the Royal Navy in 1982 Bob and June built a new home on the family croft owned by June's parents in Beaully, near Inverness. Here they lived the "good life" with, among other animals, dogs, goats and geese, and grew potatoes and turnips. Bob became an insurance agent and then a travelling book salesman, in which occupation he was known as "Bob the bookman".

In 1997 then General Secretary Bob McQueen asked retired Lieutenant Commander Mike Bull to provide a group of guides for the visit to Inverness of a replica of Captain Cook's Endeavour. This led to the formation of City of Inverness Branch, of which Bob and June were early members. In due course Bob followed Mike as Branch Chairman.

But it was as our longest standing National Standard Bearer and subsequent National Ceremonial officer that most of us will remember Bob, offices he filled quite immaculately for some twelve years. This was far from Bob's only contribution to the RNA or, indeed, the wider community. He was Chairman, Standard Bearer and welfare officer of the Beaully branch of the Royal British Legion for about 30 years. He served on the Highlands and Islands committee of the RBL Scotland and for 40 years was poppy convener for Beaully and District. He drove the local community bus taking pensioners to lunch clubs from



2015 and delivered meals during Covid. He was a Santa Claus at Christmas events in Beaulieu. Besides being Branch Chairman Bob was also a Branch Life Vice President and Vice Chairman of the Scottish Area. I was so glad to present a National President's commendation at this year's City of Inverness Branch Trafalgar Dinner, and there also to acknowledge the great contribution June had made being always in support and at Bob's side. What a team they made. At that dinner we also saw Bob wearing the newly-issued Coronation Medal from his last appearance carrying the Highlands and Islands Standard. Typically Bob answered this call while still undergoing chemotherapy for lung cancer, diagnosed in January. Tragically despite early good signs the cancer

spread to Bob's brain and he crossed the bar on 28 November, just ten days after hearing that his huge contributions to national life had been recognised by the so-well deserved award of the British Empire Medal in the 2024 New Year Honours List. Bob is survived by June, his wife, and by his children Carmina and Andrew, and by three grandchildren. He will be greatly missed not just by them but by all of us who had the privilege of his friendship. He would do anything to help. We recall the ever-present twinkle in his eye and his wonderful sense of humour, such as in offering a tot and RNA application form to the then Prince of Wales at Armed Forces Day in 2011. The world is a better place for him having been here. Rest in peace Shipmate.



Dave Butler

S/M Dave Butler, of Warwick branch, crossed the bar on 6 December 2023 at the age of 88.

Dave was an active member of the Midlands branch, although he had been unable to attend meetings there in more recent times.

He served in the Royal Navy between 1952 and 1974, attaining the rank of Chief Stoker, and his ships included Leander-class frigate HMS Arethusa and Rothesay-class frigate HMS Londonderry.

Dave was also a branch delegate for Warwick branch in wider Association business, and was also a past president of Area 8.



Leander-class frigate HMS Arethusa. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM HU 129730)





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An RAF Sikorsky R4 helicopter at a rotor flying school opened by RAF Fighter Command in 1945 see 2 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM CH 15125)

IWM

➤ JANUARY SWINGING THE LAMP

1 January 1919

Admiralty yacht HMY *Iolaire* sank close to Stornaway harbour in the Outer Hebrides early on New Year's Day 1919, resulting in the death of more than 200 sailors, many of them from the Isle of Lewis. The armed steam yacht, taking men home after their service during World War 1, left Kyle of Lochalsh late on New Year's Eve, sailing into deteriorating weather conditions in poor visibility. Around 0230, a mile from the harbour entrance and less than 50 metres from shore, the yacht struck the dangerous rocks known as the Beasts of Holm, causing her to sink. Local man John Macleod managed to scramble ashore with a line, allowing 40 of his shipmates to drag themselves to safety, but the majority of those on the overcrowded vessel died, weighed down by heavy boots and uniforms – the official toll was put at 205 (more than 180 of them from the Western Isles) with fewer than 80 surviving, but it is believed the actual figure was somewhat higher as there was a lack of proper official records. An Admiralty inquiry could not determine a cause for the disaster, though the channel into the harbour is not an easy course to navigate. A monument to those

who died stands at Holm, on the Isle of Lewis, and an unlit pillar was erected on one of the rocks as a warning.

2 January 1944

Helicopters were first used in sea warfare – two Sikorsky R4s (the Hoverfly) were embarked on former CAM (Catapult Armed Merchantman) MV *Daghestan* for Convoy HX 274 (New York to Liverpool). The Royal Navy was interested in the work of Igor Sikorsky early in the war, and when the R4 model was unveiled the British signed up for a number of machines, both for the Fleet Air Arm and the RAF. *Daghestan* (7,200 tons) had already completed a number of Atlantic convoys by the time she was tasked with helicopter trials in Long Island Sound on the east coast of the United States. The American HNS-1 (Helicopter, Navy, Sikorsky, Model 1) was known as the Hoverfly Mk 1 in British circles, and flew trials with *Daghestan* in late December 1943 and early 1944 before flying on board for the eastbound convoy, during which the two aircraft flew test convoy protection patrols.

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Jan 3 2005

Frigate HMS Chatham arrived off the east coast of Sri Lanka to provide humanitarian aid following the Boxing Day 2004 earthquake and subsequent tsunami as part of Operation Garron. The Sumatra-Andaman earthquake occurred in the morning of December 26 2004 100 miles west of northern Sumatra in Indonesia and was the third most powerful quake recorded since 1900, the most powerful ever in Asia, and lasted up to ten minutes, triggering other earthquakes as far away as Alaska. The tsunami that followed created waves up to 30m (100ft) high and devastated communities around the Indian Ocean, killing more than 220,000 people in 14 countries. Chatham had been on patrol in the Gulf when she was sent to Sri Lanka, where she was joined by RFA Diligence on 5 January – the auxiliary had been in Kochi, India at the time. Ocean survey vessel HMS Scott later conducted seabed surveys of the earthquake epicentre and fracture zone between 24 January and 15 February.

4 January 1983

The last vestiges of naval gunnery training ended in the Portsmouth area with the transfer of remaining facilities at Fraser Gunnery Range

at Eastney to HMS Cambridge at Wembury, Plymouth. Fraser, close to the Royal Marines facilities at Fort Cumberland, was in existence in all but name before World War 2, and was used to train Naval gunners in director sight firing throughout the Cold War period. At various times the range was equipped with a 4.5in gun, a Seacat and Sea Wolf missile launcher, and was later used for radar research work. The facilities, on the beach at the south-east corner of Portsea Island, also make an appearance in the 1972 Doctor Who series The Sea Devils, standing in for the fictional HMS Seaspire.

5 January 1942

Celebrated wartime submarine HMS Upholder sank Italian submarine Ammiraglio Saint Bon off the Lipari Islands, near Sicily – one of four warships sunk by Upholder during a brief but highly-successful career. The boat, which was commissioned on 31 October 1940, was the most successful British submarine of the war, sinking more than 93,000 tons of Axis shipping, and was commanded throughout her life by Lt Cdr David Wanklyn, who was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1941 for an attack on a particularly well-defended Mediterranean convoy in which Upholder sank an 18,000-ton troopship

Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel from HMS Chatham and RFA Diligence help locals in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, one of the areas worst hit by the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, by repairing and refloating fishing vessels which had been swept along the shoreline see 3 January (Image: MOD – Crown Copyright)

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(Wanklyn was awarded his VC in Malta just eight days after the attack). Upholder was lost in the second week of April 1942 with all hands during her 25th patrol – the last scheduled before she was to return to the UK. Post-war research suggests she was sunk by a mine some 15 miles off Tripoli on or around 13 April.

6 January 1944

Isles-class Naval trawler HMS Wallasea, 545 tons, was sunk by a torpedo from the German E-boat S-138 south of Mounts Bay, Cornwall, killing 35 of her ship's company. Wallasea was one of the escorting warships for Convoy WP 457 in rough seas between the Bristol Channel and Portsmouth, when the group was attacked by seven E-boats ten miles west of Lizard Point.

Bad weather had prevented a planned air patrol to cover the convoy, and the German ships sank three merchantmen as well as Wallasea. The attack was part of the Germans' attempt to disrupt preparations for an expected Allied landing on the northern shores of mainland Europe.

7 January 1940

Two Royal Navy submarines were lost within hours of each other. HMS Undine was lost in an attack by German auxiliary minesweepers M-1201, M-1204 and M-1207 in the shallow waters of the Heligoland Bight – possibly the first submarine lost through enemy action in World War 2. The boat, which had been commissioned in August 1938, was on her fourth war patrol

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Officers of submarine HMS Upholder: left to right: Lt F Ruck-Keene, Lt Cdr Wanklyn, VC, DSO, Lt J R Drummond, Sub Lt J H Norman, RNVR. The occasion was the award of Wanklyn's VC at the British submarine base at Mandel Island, Malta, on 13 January 1942 – see 5 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 7295)



as part of the 6th Submarine Flotilla when her sonar failed. Shortly before 1000 on 7 January she was attacked by the German ships and she hit back at the leader, but the submarine was eventually forced to dive. Running blind with no sonar, after several minutes of enemy inactivity she came to periscope depth but was badly damaged by an explosion. The crew abandoned their boat and scuttled Undine; all survived and were captured. Sadly the submariners of HMS Seahorse did not fare so well when their boat was attacked in the same area by ships of the German 1st Minesweeping Flotilla. Seahorse had been launched in late 1932 and was on her sixth war patrol off Heligoland Bight when she was sunk, having had much bad luck on earlier forays – she was attacked by a British aircraft on her first patrol (she was damaged as she struck the seabed trying to evade the bombs, which brought down the aircraft which dropped them), and narrowly missed sinking a German submarine and two destroyers on subsequent patrols. She had sailed on Boxing Day 1939 and was due back in Blyth on 9 January, but German

records indicate that she was possibly sunk by minesweepers of the same flotilla that attacked Undine, and could also be a candidate for the first submarine lost to enemy action as that attack took place shortly before the Undine sinking. Seahorse was lost with all hands.

8 January 1942

Veteran river gunboat HMS Aphis bombarded the strategically-important Halfaya Pass – known as Hellfire Pass – in support of the Army advance from Egypt into Libya. Aphis, a member of the Insect class of ships, was a useful vessel to have around, despite her relatively small size; she displaced 625 tons and had a ship's company of 55. Launched in Ayrshire in 1915 and designed to operate in shallow, fast-flowing rivers, Aphis served in Egypt and on the Danube in World War 1, then shifted to the China Station from 1929 until 1940, when she returned to the Mediterranean. Her design, which provided her with two 6in guns, two 12pdrs and six machine guns, made her useful in providing inshore artillery support for the Army,

HMS Wallasea in the Firth of Forth – see 6 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM FL 9349)

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as she did at Halfaya Pass, close to the Libyan border, during Axis attempts to hold the pass which they had taken in April 1941.

9 January 1942

World War 1-veteran destroyer HMS Vimiera was sunk by a mine in the Thames Estuary off the East Spile Buoy. The V&W-class destroyer was launched in June 1917 and converted to an escort destroyer shortly before World War 2, joining the Nore Command to undertake coastal convoy escort duties in the Channel and North Sea. Vimiera had been escorting the three-ship Convoy FS 693 – which had sailed from Methil in Scotland on 7 January 1942 with just one merchantman and arrived at Southend two days later with two different ships, the first having left the convoy at the Tyne – when she struck the mine off Sheerness. Almost 100 of her crew died in the mining, most of them going down with their ship and a handful succumbing to their injuries later; almost 40 men survived. She was the first of 46 Royal Navy destroyers lost in 1942 alone.

10 January 1964

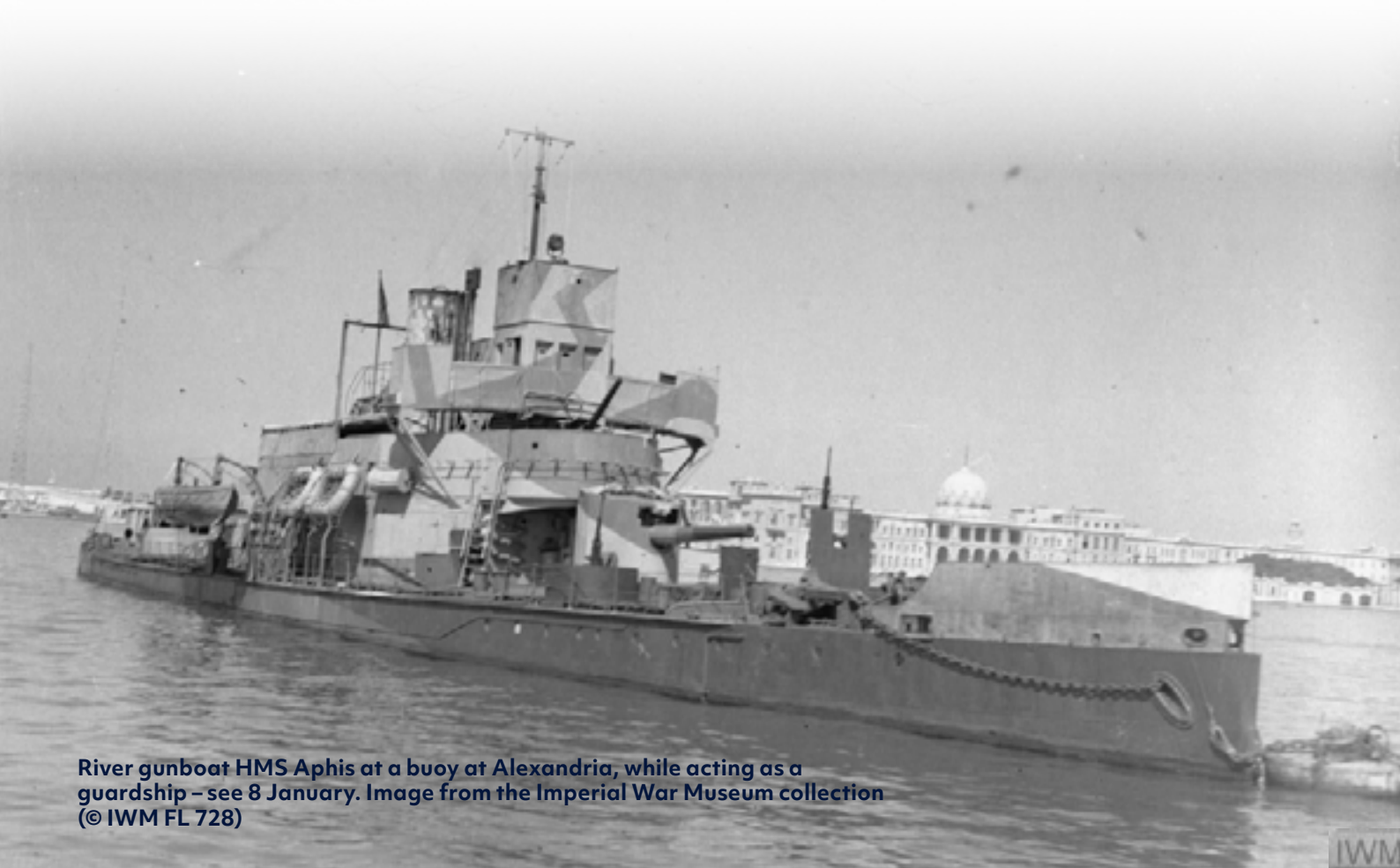
Submarine HMS Tiptoe ran aground in thick fog – and when the fog cleared the boat was found to have grounded on mud just 40 metres off the esplanade, directly opposite the house of the Captain-in-Charge of Clyde. At the resultant court martial the CO, who was newly in command and had a relatively inexperienced crew, was given a severe reprimand. Tiptoe

was a long-serving Group III T-class submarine launched in 1944 that saw service in the Far East, sinking several smaller coastal vessels in a handful of war patrols before August 1945. Her post-war service was eventful, including an extensive rebuild, two cinematic links (she was the boat featured in the film *Morning Departure*, and was closely associated with ballet dancer Moira Shearer, including being presented with the satin ballet shoes she wore in *The Red Shoes*), being struck by a coaster in Norway, taking part in deep-sea escape trials, and colliding with frigate HMS Yarmouth. On decommissioning in 1969 she was the oldest serving submarine in the Royal Navy, and she was scrapped in Portsmouth six years later.

11 January 1917

Former ferry HMS Ben-my-Chree, converted to a seaplane carrier, was sunk in action by guns from Turkish batteries off Castellorizo, Asia Minor. The 2,600-ton ship was built in 1907 for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company and was chartered by the Royal Navy in 1915 to be used in attacks on Germany. She switched to the Gallipoli Campaign in June 1915, and one of her aircraft carried out the first ship-launched aerial torpedo attack on a ship that August. After the evacuation from Gallipoli the ship continued in the Eastern Mediterranean as the seaplane squadron flagship, acting as a base for attacks on Turkish positions and reconnaissance missions. She sank having been hit by Turkish

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River gunboat HMS Aphis at a buoy at Alexandria, while acting as a guardship – see 8 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM FL 728)

shells while at anchor off the recently-occupied island of Castellorizo, with five of her crew sustaining injuries. Ben-my-Chree was salvaged in 1920 and scrapped three years later.

12 January 1949

A new Royal Naval Hospital, built on The Peak in Hong Kong to replace a building damaged during the war, received its first patients. The first RN Hospital in Hong Kong was a makeshift affair in 1841 which was destroyed by a typhoon, with medical support being provided on board various frigates until 1873, when the Navy used the Seaman's Hospital – originally set up by the East India Company – and then a facility at Mount Shadwell in Wan Chai. That hospital was destroyed during World War 2, so after lodging in the Queen Mary Hospital for a period, the RN Hospital relocated to the War Memorial Nursing Home in Mount Kellett Road on The Peak, where it remained until 1956, when the final chapter saw Naval medical services move to the British Military Hospital in Kowloon.

13 January 1901

Cruiser HMS Forte and gunboats HMS Dwarf and HMS Thrush were involved in operations on the Gambia River in West Africa, with all three ships setting armed parties ashore. Forte was an 4,400-ton Astraea-class cruiser, launched in late 1893, which operated almost entirely on the Cape and West African Stations. Dwarf was a Bramble-class gunboat of just over 700 tons,

built to serve in the shallows and narrow channels of the rivers and estuaries of Africa, Asia and the Far East. Their size limited their range of operations, as there was barely enough coal on board for a week of cruising, and they were also designed for operations far from supply depots – much machinery on board was man-powered, a sailing rig was provided to supplement the small reserve of fuel, and the ship was lit by candles rather than electric light. Dwarf still packed a punch, with two 4in guns, four 12pdrs and at least four machine guns, and their accommodation was spacious and comfortable, being built for operations in tropical climates. Dwarf, like Forte, spent her service life around the west and south African coast, and took part in the Second Boer War. She paid off in 1925 and was scrapped the following year. The 800-ton composite gunboat HMS Thrush, 800 tons, was launched in 1889 and at first served on the North America and West Indies Station, where her Commanding Officer was Prince George, later King George V. In 1896 she took part in the 40-minute Anglo-Zanzibar War and also served in the Second Boer War. She later served as a Coastguard and cable-laying ship, and was involved in the rescue of sailors from the submarine HMS K13, which sank in the Firth of Clyde in January 1917, helping to raise the boat sufficiently to rescue a number of sailors on board.

14 January 1969

Phantom Operational Conversion Unit 767 Naval Air Squadron was formed at RNAS

HMS Vimiera in a rough sea at the end of World War 1
– see 9 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Q 75517)

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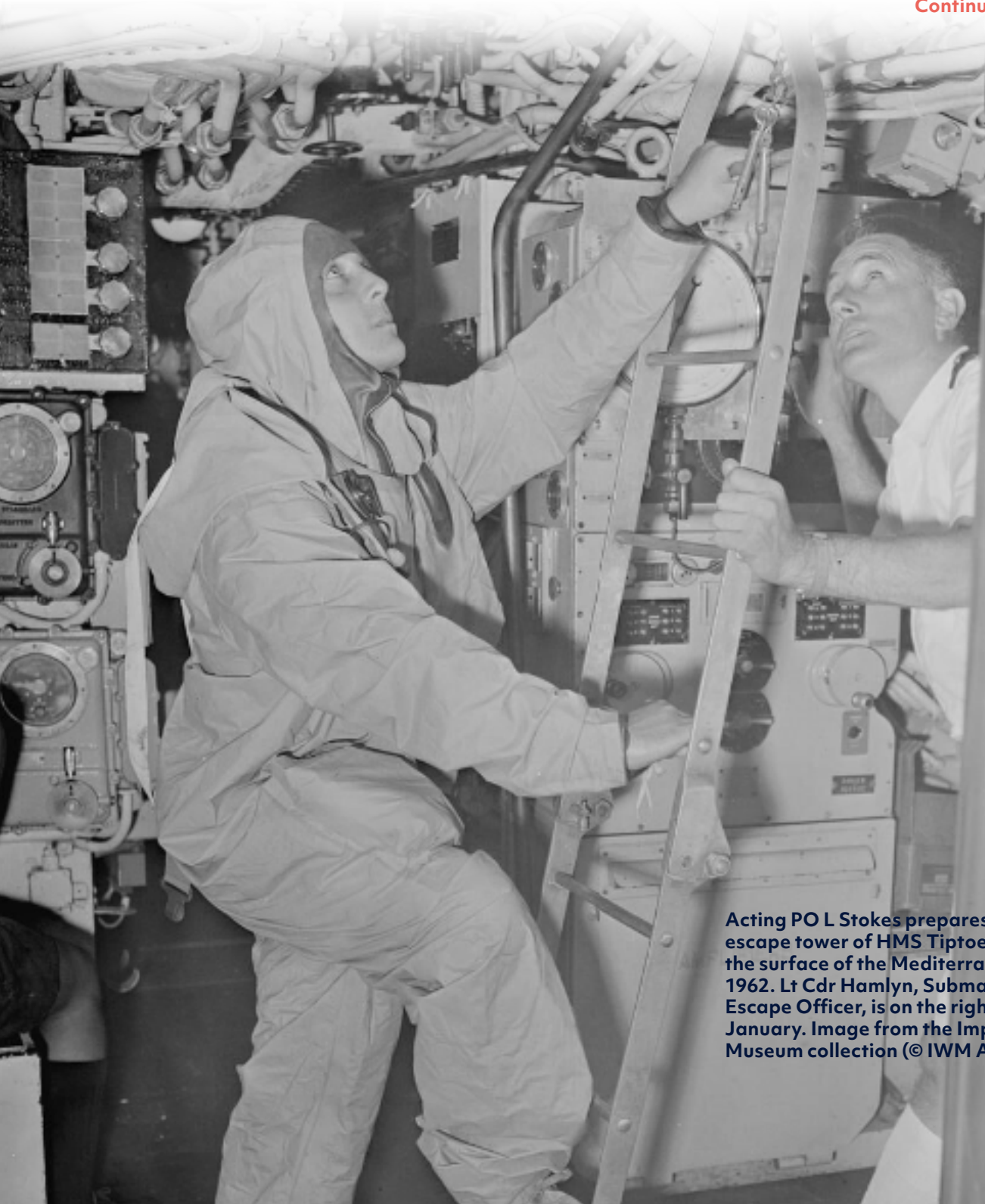


Yeovilton to convert Fleet Air Arm aircrew to the American McDonnell Douglas F-4K Phantom II FG1 supersonic interceptor and fighter-bomber, bought as a replacement for the Royal Navy's de Havilland Sea Vixen. The unit was disbanded once its work was completed in August 1972. The Royal Navy received its first Phantoms in April 1968, and 700P NAS served as the Intensive Flying Trials Unit, while the first Phantom operational unit, 892 NAS, was commissioned in March 1969.

15 January 1969

The first Type 42 destroyer, HMS Sheffield, was laid down by Vickers at Barrow in Furness. The second ship to be named after the Yorkshire city, Sheffield was commissioned in February 1975 after a troubled build – an explosion killed two dockyard workers and a section of sister ship Hercules, being built for Argentina, was used to replace the damaged section. Sheffield was ordered to leave Exercise Spring Train and head south on 2 April 1982 to take part in what

Continues on page 31 →



Acting PO L Stokes prepares to enter the escape tower of HMS Tiptoe, 260ft beneath the surface of the Mediterranean, in October 1962. Lt Cdr Hamlyn, Submarine Command Escape Officer, is on the right – see 10 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 34660)



Royal Navy F4K Phantom of 700P Squadron, of RN Air Station Yeovilton, overflies the aircraft carrier HMS Hermes in the Channel during trials. 700P Squadron was the first Phantom Squadron in the UK – see 14 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 35140)

became the Falklands Conflict a black line was painted on her funnel to prevent her being confused with the identical Argentine ships Hercules and Santísima Trinidad. Sheffield was attacked by two low-flying Argentine Super Etendards, armed with Exocet missiles, on the morning of 4 May 1982. One missile missed, the other struck the destroyer, setting it ablaze and destroying the main firefighting system. The ship was abandoned after four hours, with many of the ship's company climbing aboard frigate HMS Arrow, while others transferred by boat to frigate HMS Yarmouth and helicopter carrier HMS Hermes. Sheffield continued to drift for six days and was taken in tow by HMS Yarmouth with the intention of moving her to safety off South Georgia, but the damaged hull caused the

ship to slowly flood, and she capsized and sank on 10 May 1982, the first Royal Navy ship sunk in action since World War 2. 20 members of the 281 ship's company died in the attack.

16 January 1914

Submarine A7 lost while dived on a training exercise in Whitsand Bay, Cornwall. The boat, one of the first class of British-built submarines, was launched in 1905 and carried a crew of 11 – two officers and nine ratings. On 16 January 1914 she and sister boat HMS A9 were carrying out dummy torpedo attacks on HMS Pygmy when a disturbance on the surface of the sea was seen, later thought to be A7 blowing her ballast tanks in an attempt to surface. Pygmy marked the position with a buoy then returned

Continues on page 32 →

to Devonport to report the incident. When she returned to the spot later that day the buoy had been swept away in poor weather, and it was another five days before the hull of the submarine could be found almost 40 metres deep. Some six metres of her stern was embedded in mud, trapping the submarine. Attempts to lift her over the following weeks failed, and the wreck still lies where it was found 110 years ago, controlled by the Protection of Military Remains Act.

17 January 1895

The Navy League was founded in London “to urge upon government and the electorate the paramount importance of an adequate navy as the best guarantee of peace”. The organisation aimed to be apolitical, in that it supported whichever party offered the best support for its aims, and it was born of a sense that the world was becoming a more dangerous place, requiring Britain to maintain her superiority at sea. Similar organisations were set up in other countries around the same time, including Germany, France and the United States. Part of the Navy League’s success was its publicity

campaigns, including the honouring of Nelson by the laying of a wreath at the foot of Nelson’s Column on Trafalgar Day. The League also endeavoured to inform the public of the importance of protecting seaborne trade and the importance of a strong Navy for an island nation such as the UK – messages which are still being repeated more than a century later.

18 January 1972

Prototype mine countermeasures vessel (MCMV) HMS Wilton, the first warship in the world built of glass reinforced plastic (GRP), was launched by Vosper Thornycroft at their Woolston yard in Southampton at a cost of £2.25m. Much of her machinery and equipment was reconditioned after being salvaged from scrapped Ton-class minesweeper HMS Derrington. Use of GRP meant that the ship presented a very low magnetic signature, and was thus less likely to set off magnetic mines. Unofficially known as HMS Tupperware, amongst other nicknames, Wilton became Dartmouth Training Vessel in 1991 and paid off in Portsmouth in July 1994. She was bought by the Essex Yacht Club in 2001, and after three years of extensive conversion work

A Royal Naval Sea King helicopter hovers at the stern of Type 42 destroyer HMS Sheffield in October 1974 – see 15 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM HU 129985)

Continues on page 33 →



Royal Marines of 42 Cdo double across the flight deck to their Whirlwind helicopters in an exercise on board HMS Bulwark, the Royal Navy's first Commando carrier, in August 1960 – see 19 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 34330)



she became the club's HQ ship, based at Leigh-on-Sea on the Thames Estuary.

19 January 1960

The UK's first converted commando carrier, HMS Bulwark, was commissioned at Portsmouth. The ship was launched in June 1948 at Harland and Wolff in Belfast as a 22,000-ton Centaur-class light aircraft carrier, though she was not commissioned until late 1954. She took part in Operation Musketeer – the Suez Crisis – in 1956, launching hundreds of air sorties, but in 1958 paid off to prepare for conversion to a commando carrier. She recommissioned in 1960 with 42 Cdo Royal Marines attached, alongside 848 Naval Air Squadron. She took part in operations off Kuwait in 1961, when Iraq threatened to invade, and in the Borneo Confrontation in the mid-1960s. She was also a trial ship for the Kestrel project, which eventually evolved into the fabled Sea Harrier (the trials

for which Bulwark also participated in). Further service in the Far East, Aden, the Mediterranean and the Arctic followed, including acting as HQ ship for the Royal Navy's withdrawal from Malta in the early 1970s. Her focus then switched to the Atlantic and Caribbean, returning to the Mediterranean before being put into reserve in 1976. A proposed sale to Peru was halted when the Royal Navy decided to keep Bulwark on and refit her as an anti-submarine warfare carrier as a stop-gap to cover for the delays in the arrival of HMS Invincible. Boiler and hangar fires while in the US and Norway respectively were patched up at minimal cost to keep her running until early 1981, when Invincible was finally commissioned. At that point she was mothballed; a plan to reactivate her as a support ship during the Falklands Conflict, to remain in Port Stanley after the fighting was over as an HQ ship, was abandoned when a survey found her machinery to be in a poor state. She was towed

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from Portsmouth to Cairnryan, near Stranraer in Scotland, for scrapping in the spring of 1984.

20 January 1921

The large steam-driven submarine HMS K5 – one of the Kalamity (or Killer) Ks – was lost with all hands in the Bay of Biscay more than 100 miles to the south-west of the Isles of Scilly during the Atlantic Fleet's spring cruise to the Mediterranean. The submarine was one of a flotilla of five K-class boats that took part in a mock battle with the Fleet while on passage south, and on 20 January she signalled that she was diving but she never resurfaced. An oil slick and some debris was later recovered, and it was assumed that the submarine ran out of control and dived below her safety depth, being crushed by the pressure of the water and killing her crew of 57. The K-class boats were notoriously dangerous (or unlucky, depending on your point of view) – built to keep pace with a battle fleet, the boats were large (2,600 tons submerged, almost three times the size of the near-contemporary E-class submarines), technologically-advanced and required careful handling and management. Senior Royal Navy personnel, including future First Sea Lord Admiral Jacky Fisher, were vehemently opposed

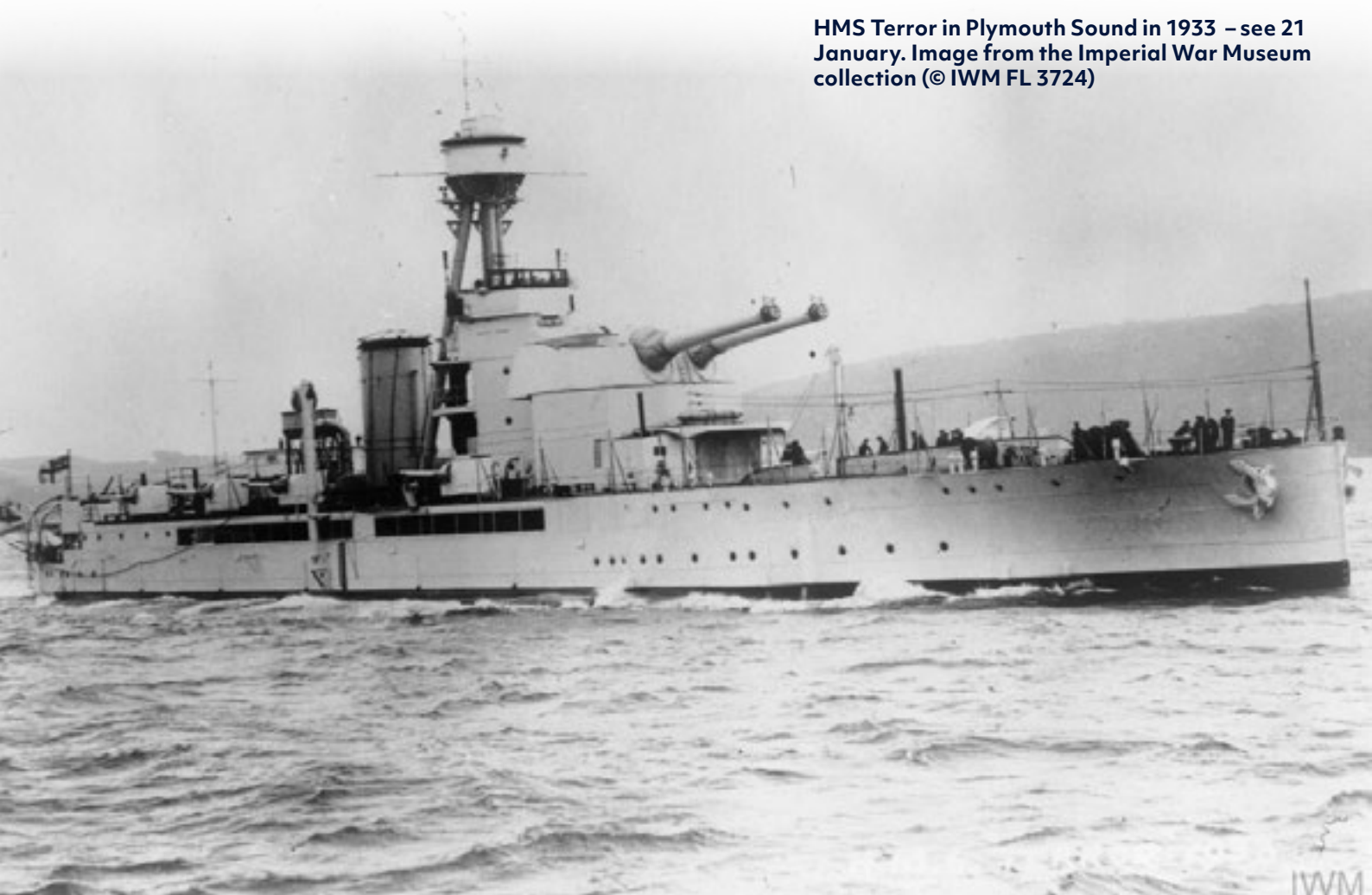
to the principle of steam engines in submarines, requiring many vents, intakes, exhausts and even funnels, which were liable to leakage or failure and the closing of which slowed the ability of a submarine to dive. Of the 18 K-boats built, six were lost in accidents.

21 January 1941

Monitor HMS Terror bombarded Tobruk in the successful assault to capture the Libyan port from Italian forces. Terror was an 8,500-ton Erebus-class monitor, commissioned in July 1916, which had seen service in World War 1 including bombardment of the occupied Belgian coast and the Zeebrugge Raid of April 1918. She also provided gunnery support for the Fifth Battle of Ypres in September 1918, making good use of her main armament of two 15in guns in a single turret. She spent some time between the wars in Singapore following gunnery trials in Portsmouth, though the shallow draft and poor handling of the monitor meant the voyage was miserable, and the crew was particularly hard-pressed during autumn storms in the Atlantic and Mediterranean in 1933. On the outbreak of World War 2 Terror returned to Europe in early 1940 and was attached to the Mediterranean Fleet, at first helping to defend

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HMS Terror in Plymouth Sound in 1933 – see 21 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM FL 3724)



Malta against daily air attacks. At the end of 1940 she was allocated to Operation Compass, the Allied attack on Italian forces in North Africa, and Terror proved her worth in both shore bombardment and anti-aircraft duties, as well as resupply tasking. On 21 January Terror, along with destroyers HMS Stuart, HMS Vampire and HMS Voyager, and river gunboat HMS Gnat, bombarded Tobruk in support of Australian forces. The monitor's gun barrels had been worn smooth by constant firing and her previously very accurate gunfire was becoming somewhat wild and unreliable, so after the port city was taken the following day she was allocated to anti-aircraft duties instead. The following month she was badly damaged by a series of air strikes at Benghazi and at sea off Tobruk, and although she was taken in tow by the Hunt-class minesweeper HMS Fareham, she was flooding badly and was scuttled 25 miles off the North African coast on 24 February, with the skeleton crew on board being safely evacuated.

22 January 1913


Dreadnought battleship Rio de Janeiro was launched by the Armstrong Whitworth yard at Elswick for the Brazilian navy on 22 January 1913, but the following year, with the ship almost complete, financial and political considerations prompted Brazil to withdraw from the deal and sell the ship to the Ottoman Empire, which used public subscriptions to buy the vessel. The newly-renamed Sultan Osman 1 was promptly seized

by the Admiralty on the outbreak of World War 1 and renamed HMS Agincourt, meaning the battleship was owned by three nations within a year. The seizure was significant – Britain was not yet at war when the ship was taken, and a Turkish crew was waiting in Tyneside to man the ship. The fact that it was part-funded by small public donations, the seizure of another Ottoman ship in build, and the German gift of two warships, are thought to have helped turn the Ottoman Empire against the Allies and join the war on the side of the Germans and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Agincourt was unusual as the original Brazilian design spec had called for a particularly impressive-looking warship, so she carried 14 12in guns in seven turrets, informally named after the days of the week. The 31,000-ton battleship took part in Jutland, but much of her war service was spent on routine patrols. She was known as a very comfortable ship and a good sea-keeper, though a passing knowledge of Portuguese was an advantage as many of the instruction plates on board took some time to be replaced. After the war the ship was offered to the Brazilians, who declined, and she was decommissioned in the spring of 1921, with a view to being refitted for support duties, but under the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 she was scrapped in Scotland in early 1925.

23 January 1936

Light cruiser HMS Newcastle was launched on 23 January 1936 by the Duchess of Northumberland

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Cruiser HMS Newcastle passing Fort St Angelo on arrival in Malta in early January 1946 – see 23 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 31119)

at Vickers Armstrong on Tyneside with very little ceremony, the event having been overshadowed by the death of King George V three days earlier and thus taking place during a period of national mourning. The ship had a variety of roles in World War 2, including convoy protection, blockade patrols, providing starshell illumination for the bombardment of Cherbourg, Mediterranean convoy escort tasks and a South Atlantic sweep for German raider Thor, which saw Newcastle continually at sea for 133 days, almost all out of sight of land – a record for a Royal Navy warship during the war. She also served with the Easter and Mediterranean Fleets, taking damage from a torpedo strike in June 1942 off North Africa requiring repairs in Bombay and subsequently New York. She continued to carry out commerce protection duties, often in the Indian Ocean, and in 1944 took part in attacks on Japanese forces and infrastructure in Sumatra. He also supported the Burma campaign in 1945, and was on a much-needed refit in the UK when the war ended. After some troopship work she was deployed to intercept ships carrying Jewish refugees who were trying to enter Palestine illegally, then given a major refit and upgrade in 1950-52, in time to take part in the Korean War on patrols, carrier escort work and providing naval gunfire support. She also took part in the Malaya Emergency later in the 1950s before being decommissioned and sold for scrap in 1959.

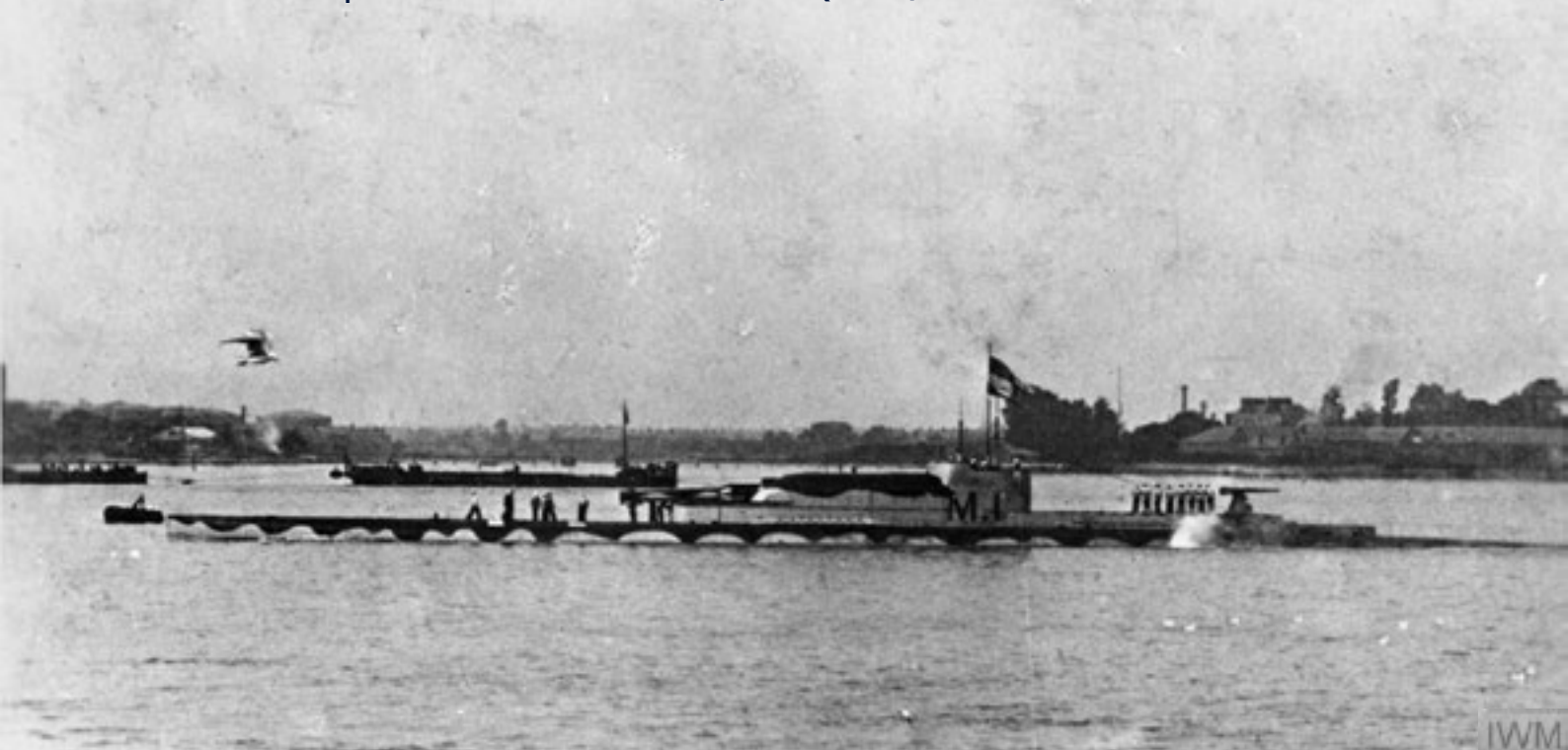
24 January 1940

HMS Gladiolus, the first of the World War 2 Flower-class corvettes, was launched at Smiths Dock Co in Middlesbrough on 24 January 1940. The class of 294 ships was a significant factor in the Battle of the Atlantic, acting as

Allied anti-submarine escorts, and their design was based on the Smiths-built whale-catcher Southern Pride. Originally intended as cheap, quickly-built warships that were larger and faster than trawlers – and earmarked for coastal convoy work – their endurance meant they were extensively used for Mid-Ocean Escort Force duties until frigates and destroyers could be built in sufficient numbers to replace them. The ships were slow, lightly-armed and notoriously uncomfortable, with the crews suffering constant drenching, coldness, violent motion at sea (they were the epitome of the ship that “rolled on wet grass”, often rolling up to 40 degrees either side of upright) and often weeks of boredom interspersed with intensive action, though the threat of attack was constant. By late 1940 increased manning levels meant sailors had to sleep on tables or the deck (when dry), and limited storage meant a tedious diet of tinned and powdered food. However, they were very sturdy and reliable as well as seaworthy, and their value was more accurately measured in terms of ship tonnage saved on convoys by driving off U-boats than the number of submarines sunk. Gladiolus was perhaps typical of the class, rescuing survivors of a merchantman in late June 1940 and three days later being involved in the sinking of U-26 – the first such kill by a Flower-class ship. In April 1941 she was sent to reinforce the escort cover for convoy HX 121, and two months later on HX 133 Gladiolus helped severely damage one U-boat and sink a second. She was sent to reinforce convoy SC 42 in September 1941; SC 42 was one of the worst-hit convoys, with a quarter of the 64 commercial participants being sunk for the loss of two U-boats. Gladiolus was then reassigned to the Newfoundland Local Escort Group, and

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HMS M1, sister ship of M2 – see 26 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Q 74873)



during convoy SC 48 the corvette was lost. Her exact fate is unknown – she detached from the main group on the night of 15 October to hunt down a U-boat and seek survivors from a sunken merchantman, and at 2200 signalled that she had recovered one crewman, but no more was heard from her and no debris was ever found. One former crewman suggested she may have capsized while manoeuvring owing to the instability of the ship in heavy seas – a problem with early ships of the class which was partially solved by ballasting.

25 January 1943

Fish-class anti-submarine trawler HMS Corncrake, initially named Mackerel but renamed and converted to a 700-ton minelayer in late 1942, foundered in a North Atlantic gale on 25 January 1943 off Donegal in Ireland. She was escorting slow convoy KMS 8, consisting of 60 ships bound from the Clyde for Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, and was lost with all 23 hands.

26 January 1932

Submarine HMS M2, formerly K19, sank during exercises off Portland on 26 January 1932 with the loss of all hands, including two RAF aircrew who were embarked with the Parnall Peto seaplane. M2 was one of three Royal Navy submarine monitors which replaced the final four K-class submarines, and was launched by Vickers in Barrow in 1918. Like her sisters she had a single fixed 12in gun, taken from the stores for Formidable-class battleships, and as such she was a very large submarine – at almost 2,000 tons submerged she was similar in size to the jinxed K-class boats, though they were

powered by diesels rather than steam engines. Following the accidental sinking of M1 in 1925 (she was struck by a Swedish merchant ship while submerged in the Channel, and went down with all 69 hands) M2 and M3 were taken up for experimental work. In M2's case her gun was removed and replaced by a small hangar for a Parnall Peto reconnaissance seaplane equipped with folding wings. On 26 January 1932 M2 sailed from Portland for an exercise in West Bay, Dorset. Shortly after 1000 she signalled her depot ship to say she would be diving at 1030, and a passing merchant ship saw her dive 45 minutes later – though the significance of the fact that she dived stern first was lost on the crew of that coaster. M2 sank with 60 men on board, and was only found eight days later. A year-long attempt to raise her finally failed when a gale blew in as she was close to the surface, but she sank again and now lies in 30 metres of water. Her hangar door was found to be open with the aircraft still inside, and it is believed the boat was swamped when water entered the open door, either through premature opening of the door on surfacing or through stern hydroplane failure, which would have dragged the boat below the surface and allowed water to enter the open hangar door. Sister ship M3 survived to be sold out of service and scrapped in April 1932, but she too was a tricky vessel to handle, with the head of the Submarine Service in 1930 saying she was not efficient or reliable, and could not be used safely in war.

27 January 1953

The Royal Navy's last, fastest and largest battleship, HMS Vanguard, entered No 1 Dock in Gibraltar for a brief refit – the biggest warship

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MGB 613, a Fairmile D Motor Gun Boat, similar to the 11 MTBs lost in the Mediterranean – see 30 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM FL 15329)



ever to be dry-docked at the Rock. The 44,500-ton warship had just 8ft clearance either side as she entered the dock.

28 January 1802

Hired armed cutter (also described as a lugger) HMS Black Joke caught fire and sank in Sutton Pool, Plymouth on 28 January 1802. Named after a popular bawdy 18th Century English folk song, the ship was on the Royal Navy's books from January 1795 until October 1801, although in 1799 she was given the name Suworow, following which she captured a number of prizes. She was armed with ten 6pdr guns and is reportedly the vessel that warned the Royal Navy fleet as to the Dutch foray into the North Sea before the Battle of Camperdown in 1797. She continued to pick off prizes under the name Suworow, more than once taking on and beating or chasing off more powerful opponents or making daring raids, such as the cutting-out of the French brig Providence from under the French gun batteries at Camaret Point in Finisterre. On 23 June she was spotted by a Spanish 44-gun frigate and a gun-brig, and was chased for 14 hours, jettisoning all her guns to speed up, and she eventually escaped as night fell. Once peace broke out in March 1802 Suworow was paid off and reverted to the name Black Joke. It was reported that the ship was found to be fiercely ablaze in Sutton Pool on 28 January 1802, and as she was in close proximity to other ships she was scuttled. But there is a possibility that she is the 'armed lugger' Black Joke that continued to serve in the Royal Navy from 1808 until 1810 when she was captured by the French – one contemporary report refers to her involvement in the battle of Camperdown, which would make her the same vessel as the one that was supposed to have burned in Plymouth.

29 January 1917

Steam-powered submarine HMS K13 foundered during builder's acceptance trials in the Gare

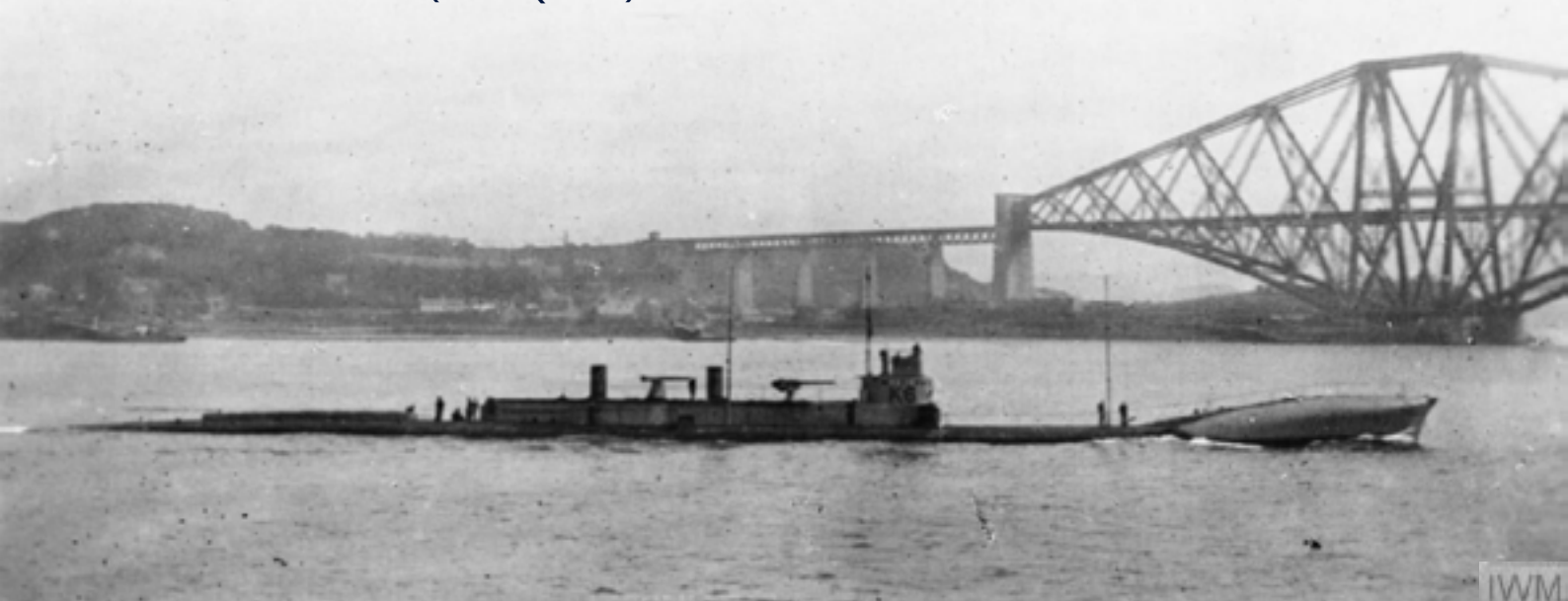
Loch on 29 January 1917. It was found that four 3ft-diameter air intakes into the boiler room had been left unsecured. 32 men died in the accident while 48 survived. The boat, one of the notoriously accident-prone and ill-fated 'Kalamity K-class', was salvaged and later commissioned as K22. Launched on 11 November 1916, the boat was undergoing acceptance trials in the Gare Loch off the Clyde Estuary the following January with 80 men, including shipbuilders and Admiralty officials, on board. K13 was found to have a leak in the boiler rooms during a morning dive, so a second dive was planned for the afternoon. She dived around 1500 but seawater flooded into her engine room, and despite their best efforts the 53 crew could not halt her plunge to the sea bed where she became stuck. Another submarine on trial, HMS E50, saw what happened and raised the alarm as the dive did not look normal to them. Rescue attempts began late that evening, but it was not until the CO of K13, Lt Cdr Godfrey Herbert, carried out a daring escape (his co-escapee did not survive) and managed to reach the surface that the rescue efforts became more effective. An air line was connected the following afternoon allowing tanks to be blown and the bows raised sufficiently for a hole to be cut and trapped sailors released. The following day, 1 February, the submarine broke loose and sank again, and was not salvaged until the middle of March. She was subsequently cleaned up and repaired and entered service under the name HMS K22, though her troubles were far from over – she was badly damaged a year later at the so-called Battle of May Island (see 31 January). K22 was eventually scrapped in December 1926.

30 January 1946

Eleven Fairmile D-class MTBs, stripped of guns and engines, were lost in sudden storm in the eastern Mediterranean under tow from Malta to Alexandria.

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HMS K6, one of the submarines involved in the Battle of May Island, in the Firth of Forth earlier in World War 1 – see 31 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Q 74870)



31 January 1918

The Battle of May Island took place in the Firth of Forth, resulting in more than 100 deaths – but no enemy vessels were involved in the incident. Named after the island in mid-river, the ‘battle’ was actually a series of accidents, at the heart of which were – you probably guessed – the blighted K-class submarines of the 12th and 13th Submarine Flotillas. On the afternoon of January 31 1918 some 40 vessels of various sizes sailed from Rosyth bound for Scapa Flow and a series of exercises scheduled for the following day. Amongst the ships were three battleships, four battlecruisers, two cruisers, numerous destroyers and nine K-class submarines – the large, unreliable and accident-prone steam-driven boats that have featured throughout our look back to Januaries of old. The ships steamed line astern at more than 20 knots in a formation that covered almost 40 miles, and to avoid attracting the attention of enemy U-boats they were minimally lit and maintained radio silence. As they passed the Isle of May a mist formed on the sea, and a lookout with the 13th Submarine Flotilla spotted a pair of lights approaching – possibly Naval trawlers. The K-boats of the 13TH Flotilla altered course sharply to avoid the lights, but the helm of the middle of the five submarines, HKS K14, jammed and she ran out of line. The last boat, HMS K22, lost sight of K14 and HMS K12, which was fourth in line, and also veered off course, colliding with K14 and killing two sailors. Both submarines stopped to assess the damage, falling out of line; K22 reported that she could reach port but that K14 had been badly damaged and was sinking. Some 15 minutes later the 2nd Battlecruiser Squadron

passed May Island, and despite the firing of a red Very light by K22, HMS Inflexible struck K22 a devastating blow, causing her to settle by the bows until only the conning tower was above the surface. The leading ship of the Flotilla, destroyer HMS Ithuriel, had by now received a message about the collisions and turned back, followed by HMS K11 and HMS K17, also passing on a message to battlecruiser HMAS Australia informing them of her intention, but the message was delayed by 40 minutes, and Ithuriel, K11 and K17 narrowly avoided colliding with the battlecruisers as they passed through. From then it was chaos as ships and submarines retraced their paths or pressed on out to sea, with little communication and confusion on all sides – HMS K4, of the 12th Submarine Flotilla, came to a halt on hearing sirens from flotilla lead ship HMS Fearless; HMS K3 couldn't stop but avoided K4, while HMS K6 ploughed straight into K4's flank, almost cutting the boat and two and sinking her almost immediately with all her crew. As K4 sank, she was also struck by HMS K7. For good measure, light cruiser Fearless also rammed K17 of the 13th Flotilla as that group returned upstream, sinking the submarine in less than ten minutes. The final act of this tragedy saw the battleships and destroyers of the 5th Battle Squadron, at the rear of the line and unaware of what had happened, pass through the area, running down numerous sailors from K17 who had jumped from their sinking boat. Two submarines had been sunk and three badly damaged in just over an hour, killing 105 men, while several surface ships also suffered varying degrees of damage.

Battlecruiser HMS Inflexible, which struck submarine HMS K22 in the so-called Battle of May Island – see 31 January. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Q 39267)



➤ LONGCAST

2024	
20 Jan	Area 4 AGM – Dorchester Branch to host
20 Jan	SSAFA Norfolk branch Burns Night event, Wensum Valley Golf and Country Club
29 Jan	Scottish Area AGM and 1st Quarterly Meeting (on Zoom)
From 22 Mar	HMS Mohawk Association reunion in Blackpool. Details from IOW Tours
12-14 Apr	Thriving Together weekend away, Brecon Beacons
4 May	Army v Navy rugby, Twickenham
May (DTBD)	National Standard Bearers Competition
3-7 Jun	RNA D-Day 80 Memorial Cycle event to Normandy
14-16 Jun	RNA National Conference, Cardiff
14 Oct	World Uckers Championships, Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth

Please check the RN Shipmates.co.uk website for a list of further reunions: www.rnshipmates.co.uk



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D-Day 80 – Proposed Outline Programme RNA Memorial Cycle

DTG	Event	Notes
Monday, 3 Jun 24		
1300-1400	Muster at Temeraire sports accom	
1430	Ride out to D-Day Museum	On Southsea Common only 5 minutes from Temeraire
1500	Official start – to Dryad	VIP to be organised
1600	Dryad – Map Room visit	Access and Briefer to be organised
1730	Rtn to Temeraire	
o/n	Temeraire Sports Accom	
Tuesday, 4 Jun 24		
0645	Depart Temeraire	To Ferry Terminal
0700	Check in for ferry	
0815-1500	Portsmouth – Caen	(Ouistreham)
1500	Cycle to Amaye-sur-Orne	Via Sword, Juno and Sword Beaches
o/n	Amaye-sur-Orne	
Wednesday, 5 Jun 24		
0830	Depart for days cycling	Routes dependent on group abilities. Intend to recce a social route and a longer route. To include attendance at British Memorial Garden Commemoration Caen and visits to well known sites around the Normandy battlefield.
o/n	Amaye-sur-Orne	
Thursday, 6 Jun 24		
0830	Depart accom	
	Cycle to Pegasus Bridge	Visit Pegasus museum
	Cycle to Merville Battery	Depart in good time to check in for ferry
1630	Ferry Caen - Portsmouth	
2100	Arr Portsmouth	Cycle to Temeraire Sports Accom
o/n	Temeraire Sports Accom	
Friday, 7 Jun 24		
Tbc	Arrival event	Maybe standeasy in Leach Building, Navy Command
Mid morning	Disperse	

Recce being conducted in Jan. Route details to follow.

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Please contact our friendly team on **01603 886740** to book the gala dinner – at a cost of **£40pp**, and/or bed & breakfast accommodation.

Alternatively you can book on our website : **www.justforgroups.com**

or via post, by completing the booking form and returning this to us at:

Just for groups! The Old Bakery Queens Road, Norwich, NR1 3PL

Gala Dinner: £40pp



HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS - CARDIFF

The Holiday Inn Express Cardiff Bay is located within Cardiff Bay and Cardiff city centre overlooking Bute East Dock.

All bedrooms are en-suite with complimentary WIFI, air conditioning, iron/ironing board, flat screen TV, direct dial telephone and hairdryer.

The hotel offers car parking (charges will apply) and Cardiff Bay train station is within a 10 minute walk.

2 nights £145 per person sharing £249 single occupancy	3 nights only £215 per person sharing £369 single occupancy
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FUTURE INN - CARDIFF

The Future Inn Cardiff is located within Cardiff Bay and walking distance of Mermaid Quay and the Welsh Millennium centre.

The hotel hosts 197 air-conditioned en-suite bedrooms fully equipped with tea/coffee making facilities, flat screen TV, hairdryer, and iron/ironing board. There is complimentary on-site car parking.

1 night £115 per person sharing £190 single occupancy	2 nights £199 per person sharing £329 single occupancy
3 nights £269 per person sharing £439 single occupancy	

Booking conditions apply

CALL: 01603 886 740
 Email: sales@justforgroups.com

Delegate to Annual Conference 2024 - CARDIFF

Branch secretaries should note the following before submitting their application.

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

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

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

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

NB: A Delegate will not be confirmed as such unless or until the Branch Balance Sheet for 2023 and Branch Annual Report for 2023 have been received in RNA Central Office.

Should either not have been received in Central Office, the Delegate's Status will be deemed to be that of an Observer.

Branch Secretaries are to ensure that their nominated Delegate, receives the copies of the agenda and minutes of the previous years' AGM prior to representing their Branch at the AGM. Copies will be made available at the AGM, but sight of these prior to the day is considered essential. Branch Secretaries will be forwarded this paperwork from Central Office as soon as it is finalised.

Please forward the completed form to RNA Central Office, Building 1/087, Scott Road, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth, PO1 3LU or email to sara@royalnavalassoc.com

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

NOMINATION FORM
ELECTION OF MEMBERS AND DEPUTY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL 2024
(Revised RNA Bye-Law 7)

For the attention of All Branch Secretaries:

NCM in Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12 and DNCM in Areas 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12

Each Branch may nominate **one full or life member** from any Branch within its own Area, as a Candidate for election to the National Council, and **one full or life member** for election as the Deputy National Council Member **subject to the approval of the Branch to which both persons belong.**

Please note that our current governance construct means that National Council Members are automatically Trustees of the Royal Naval Association (Charity no: 266982). Nominees for NCM should therefore ensure that they are not in any way disbarred from holding a trusteeship. If unsure, please check the Charity Commission website.

Names of Nominees

NCM **DNCM**

Proposed by **Branch** **Area**

Address of Nominee

NCM.....

..... **e mail**

DNCM.....

..... **e mail**

Brief history of nominees in the Association. (Continue on separate sheet if necessary)

NCM -

DNCM -

Chairman (signed)(dated).....

Secretary..... (signed)(dated).....

If the Candidate is **not** a member the proposing Branch, this section is to be completed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Candidate's **own** Branch.

Candidate's Branch

We are aware of the above nomination.

Signature of Chairman (Candidate's Branch)

Signature of Secretary (Candidate's Branch)

Candidate

I accept the nomination and promise to attend as many National Council Meetings as is possible and to sit on any Committees to which I may be elected.

Signature of Candidate Dated

The envelope containing this completed form should be marked **NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL** and must reach RNA HQ no later than **1600 on 16 February 2024.**

Alternatively, you can scan the fully signed form and email it to sara@royalnavalassoc.com

Nominations for Governance Standing Orders Committee 2024

For the attention of All Branch Secretaries

Applications are sought for the Governance Standing Orders Committee.

Each Branch may nominate **one member** as a candidate for election to the Standing Orders Committee, **subject to the approval of the Branch to which the candidate belongs**. Applicants should be Full or Life members. A nil return is not required.

NAME OF NOMINEE

PROPOSED BY BRANCH

ADDRESS OF NOMINEE

.....

.....

E mail Post code

Brief history of nominee in the Association. Continue on separate sheet if necessary.

Chairman (signed).....(dated)

Secretary (signed).....(dated)

If the Candidate is **not** a member of the proposing Branch, this section must be completed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Candidate's **own** Branch.

Candidate's Branch

We support this Nomination.

Signature of Chairman (Candidate's Branch)

Signature of Secretary (Candidate's Branch)

Candidate - I accept this nomination and undertake to attend as many Standing Orders Committee Meetings as is possible.

Signature of Candidate

This form should be forwarded to Central Office to be received no later than **16 February 2024**
Nominations received after this date cannot be included in any Ballot required if more than two apply

PROPOSED MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024

Proposals must reach The General Secretary by **1600 16 February 2024**

Name of Proposing Branch:

Motion / amendment

Explanation of the Motion / Amendment (To be included in the notes for Conference)

Hon Secretary(signed).....(dated)

Name of Seconding Branch:

Hon Secretary(signed).....(dated)

Notes

- a. A motion is submitted in the name of a Branch. Secretaries of proposing and seconding Branches are **certifying** that the motion or amendment reflects the view of the Branch meeting (not a committee); and that voting was conducted in accordance with Rule 20.
- b. A separate form is required for each Motion or Amendment
- c. A manuscript copy is acceptable for additional Motions or Amendments if the printed form is not available.
- d. The Motion or Amendment should be as short and precise as possible avoiding ambiguity. A Motion should normally start with the word 'THAT'
- e. The explanation is to assist the scrutiny of the Standing Orders Committee in understanding the intention behind the Motion so that they may be able to consider its presentation so it can be improved and implemented as soon as possible (Conference Bye Law C4)
- f. Motions may be submitted at any time but must reach the General Secretary by **16 February 2024**.
- g. Motions of Urgency should reach the General Secretary not less than 48 hours before Conference. (In accordance with Conference Bye Law C6.) and include an explanation about the urgency.
- h. Amendments to Motions should also normally reach the General Secretary not less than 7 days before Conference. The provision for the submission of amendments during Conference is in the Conference Bye-Laws.
- i. Bye-Laws. A Motion to Conference may propose that a Bye-Law be set aside or it may ask the Council to consider making or amending a Bye-Law.
- j. The Branch Proposing a Motion **must** have it Seconded by another Branch before forwarding it to the General Secretary. (Conference Bye Law C3a)

Branch Hon Secretary (Signed) Dated

PART III – The Area

Number Area in which the Branch is situated recommends that National Council approves this application.

Area National Council Member (Signed) Dated

PART IV – The National Council

This application is approved by the National Council, the Bye-Laws, if amended, are approved

On behalf of the Council (Signed) Dated

Notes and conditions

- a) Under Association Rule 11 the Council requires all Branches forming a club to register it and its name with the appropriate authority through RNA Central Office, and thereafter to apply for an Annual Permit.
- b) The application for the Annual Permit should be submitted by the Branch having first received the Area's endorsement, to RNA Central Office by the 8 December 2023. If either the Branch or the Area cannot approve the application, it should endeavour to resolve the reasons with the Club, but failing this should report full details to the General Secretary with a copy to the Council member for the area.
- c) RNA Central Office will issue the permit dated 1 January 2024 as soon as practicable.
- d) If the premises are not owned by the Branch it is a condition that adequate facilities are provided by the owner or lessee for the conduct of Branch business.
- e) If the Secretary's address for correspondence is not the same as the registered office for the club, this should be shown after their signature.
- f) The conditions specified on the Permit as being accepted by the Club include the following:
- g) All members of the Club shall be members of the Association with not less than 20 Full and or Life members as defined by clause 7 of the Royal Charter.
 1. The Club will, in general, do all possible to further the objects of the Association and will support and encourage the work of the Branch with which it is associated.
 2. The Club will abide strictly by its registered rules which shall be those approved by The Council and accepted by the Licensing authority. Amendments to the Rules may only be made by the Council; they shall apply to each Club. Clubs are to use the registered Model Rules for the RNA, which ensures that they are always compliant with the Law and RNA Charter.
 3. Each Club shall review its Bye-Laws annually and submit amendments to the Council for approval.
 4. Two copies of the audited accounts of the Club shall be forwarded to the General Secretary each year.
 5. The Council shall be entitled to appoint a representative to inspect all documents, accounts and books of the Club on giving seven days notice.
 6. The Council and the appropriate Area Committee may from time to time pay a visit of inspection to the Club.
 7. The Council can give seven days written notice of cancellation of the permit, whereupon the Club shall thereupon cease to trade under the title of the "Royal Naval Association" and to use the RNA registered model Rules.



Clerk to The Worshipful Company of Coachmakers & Coach Harness Makers

Salary - Full time 5 days £60,000 + benefits
Home based - with frequent travel, primarily to the City of London

Our mission - An active Livery investing in young people.

The Worshipful Company of Coachmakers & Coach Harness Makers was incorporated by Royal Charter on the 31st of July 1677 by King Charles II. It is one of the 111 Livery Companies of London, 72 in the order of precedence. The Coachmakers are a part of the tradition of the City of London and fully support the civic City, the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Corporation of London.

The Clerk of the Company will be its principal employee. Our current Clerk, who has been in role for over a decade, plans to retire in July 2024.

The successful candidate Clerk will demonstrate:

- Genuine interest in both the Company's and its Charitable Trust activities
- Confidence and capability to enrich the life of the Company
- Ability to fully contribute to the Strategic direction of the company, whilst having proven & highly competent planning and delivery skills
- Maintain and develop positive relationships
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and event management
- Sound administrative acumen
- Up to date skills in business, IT finance and social media
- Unquestionable commitment
- Honesty, integrity, and confidentiality
- Willingness to work flexibly and patiently
- The confidence to think innovatively and act positively

HOW TO APPLY

Please download further details of the position from our website:

www.maryleboneexecutivesearch.com/jobs

For an informal confidential discussion call Richard Evans on 07958 984161 or 020 3126 4858

Apply online with a full curriculum vitae detailing your skills and experience together with a Personal Statement clearly outlining your motivation to undertake the role and how you meet the competencies required for the position as stated in the Person Specification.

Closing date for applications:

4 February 2024

Long List interviews:

7-23 February 2024

Final Panel Interviews:

w/c 4 March & w/c 11 March 2024

To find out more visit:

www.coachmakers.co.uk