

# SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



## ► WARM WELCOME IN LAND OF DRAGONS

Shipmates from across the country enjoyed a warm welcome in the Land of Dragons when the Association's Annual Conference was held in Cardiff. As well as essential business at

the AGM, Conference weekend is a chance for shipmates to gather socially, and the event proved a success on both counts. There was also the traditional Sunday service, this year under

bright blue skies in Cardiff Bay, which is where S/M Nigel Huxtable captured this image. For more pictures and a brief report of the Conference see **page 3**.

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**Semaphore Shorts and Semaphore Circular:** The monthly Semaphore Circular appears on the first Friday of each month, notes for branch officers on the second Friday and Semaphore Shorts on the remaining Fridays of each month. On occasions the publication date might be delayed for operational reasons – if so we will endeavour to tell you in advance by email and/or through our social media channels.

**The next Semaphore Circular will be published on Friday 2 August.**



Sea Cadets welcome VIPs to Conference (above); the National Standard is marched on by S/M Steve Champion (above right); Bishop John Lomas, Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, addresses delegates (left); National President Vice Admiral Duncan Potts discusses a point with a colleague (right). Images by S/M Nigel Huxtable



## ➤ NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2023 – CARDIFF

After a couple of years of ‘themed’ conferences the RNA returned to a more traditional format in Cardiff last month – and the result was a successful, productive and thoroughly enjoyable gathering in the heart of South Wales. 2022 saw an event in Portsmouth shaped by the 40th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict, while last year’s Conference in Liverpool

largely paid tribute to those who fought in the war-long Battle of the Atlantic against the scourge of the U-boats. So, this year was a chance to get back to normal business and concentrate on the Association and its shipmates. And that sense of being an almost insular gathering was further heightened by the announcement of the General

Election shortly before Conference weekend, which meant that the usual array of guest speakers were unable to attend because of purdah – the sensitive pre-election period when restrictions on political communications activity are in place.

One VIP guest who did attend was the Rt Revd John Lomas, Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, and a former Royal Navy air engineer who served in the Falklands. Bishop John also served as a Chaplain to the 3rd Destroyer Squadron serving in HM Ships Edinburgh, Glasgow and Liverpool, and at Conference, was a very able deputy to the Chaplain of the Fleet who was unavoidably engaged elsewhere. It allowed the Shipmate National President to point out that while we somewhat irreverently call our naval padres “The Bish”, this weekend we had an upgrade to a real Bish!

The weekend programme began with an evening reception at the Conference venue, the rather splendid Voco St David’s Hotel, which has a prime location overlooking Cardiff Bay. This gave



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**Area 1 National Council Member S/M Maurice Foley, who is standing down after 21 years**



shipmates a chance to meet up again in a relaxed setting before the formal business began on Saturday morning.

National President Vice Admiral Duncan Potts opened the Conference by noting the good news that King Charles had accepted Royal Patronage of the Association. After a couple of videos – one on 97-year-old D-Day veteran Peter Seaborn, the other on the work of

the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) by CEO Andrew Jameson – it was on to the AGM itself, including the acceptance of the minutes of last year’s AGM and the Association’s accounts from 2023.

National President Admiral Potts commented that the RNA had recently issued its 20,000th membership card, and thanked the RNRMC for supporting the post-

subscription financial model. He also thanked Area 1 National Council Member Maurice Foley who was standing down after 21 years, and congratulated former National Chairman S/M Keith Ridley, whose MBE was announced in the King’s Birthday Honours List shortly before Conference, and WO Claire Robson, who was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM).

Other items of note were the visit by the Princess Royal to Portsmouth Naval Base, when she officially named Lanyard House, the home of Central Office, and S/M Steve

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**National Treasurer S/M Ian Irvin (far left) and National Vice Chairman S/M Andy Christie (left) address Conference; General Secretary S/M Bill Oliphant congratulates former National Chairman S/M Keith Ridley on his MBE (below left)**





**Head of Governance S/M Nick Purkiss clarifies a point to delegates (above); scenes at the Gala Dinner at the Voco St David's Hotel (right)**

Champion's successful defence of his title as RNA National Standard Bearer. Admiral Potts went on to outline some of the challenges faced by the RNA, including engaging younger shipmates, tackling isolation and loneliness, refining the welfare offer and governance – ensuring the Association is fully compliant with our own regulations and those of the

Charity Commission. He also looked forward to next year, when the Association will celebrate its 75th anniversary. With National Chairman S/M Peter Godwin unable to attend Conference, his Address was delivered by National Vice Chairman S/M Andy Christie, who spoke of the need to maintain the right balance of capacity, skill and

experience in Central Office staff, a number of whom are funded by grants from other organisations. There were also thanks to the HMS Raleigh mentors, Branch and Area committee members, and to General Secretary S/M Bill Oliphant. There was one Motion of Urgency; with Area 8 unable to host next year's Conference it was proposed that it should be planned and

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delivered, probably in June, by Central Office in Portsmouth, reflecting the Association's 75th anniversary. The proposal was accepted unanimously without debate.

Next up for discussion was a National Council Motion to separate the roles of National Council Members and Trustees of the RNA, thereby relieving NCMs of the inherent conflict of interest

**President's Awards for Recruiting and Gift Aid Returns:**

**Brigg's Dirk for Large Branch Recruiting (30+ full members) – Sunderland**

**Brigg's Rose Bowl for Small Branch Recruiting – Woking**

**Tasker Bowl (Area with most Gift Aid returns) – No 6 Area**

**Lt Cdr Robert Evans Sherwood DSO RD RNR Memorial Sword (Branch with highest donations proportionate to membership numbers) – St Neots & District**

**Sword of Honour (Area with greatest increase in 2023) – No 6 Area**

**Overseas Branches Recruitment Certificate (Large) – Doha, Qatar**

**Overseas Branches Recruitment Certificate (Small) – Japan**

which currently exists between representing the Area as an NCM and doing what's best for the Charity as a Trustee and allowing the former to concentrate on operational matters and the needs of their Areas while Trustees focus on strategy.

The Motion was necessary to ensure the RNA complied with Charity Commission guidance, and also allowed the RNA to seek Trustees with the appropriate skillsets to steer the charity, which do not necessarily correspond with the skills and experience needed by National Council Members.

The Motion to establish a Working Group to take the proposal forward was agreed unanimously.

The first Branch Motion, proposed by Lee-on-the-Solent branch and seconded by Portsea and Portsmouth branch, called for the creation of a new category of membership – Life Associate Membership – allowing branches to fully acknowledge the crucial role played by Associate Members.

Speakers against the motion referred to Certificates of Appreciation (COAs), which could

be used to recognise outstanding contributions by Associate Members, but the counter argument was that COAs did not go far enough.

A proposed amendment was not accepted, and a large majority voted to accept the original Motion, with associated Motion 2 (sub sections a to h) also being voted through without debate.

A third Branch Motion, to accept adult uniformed instructors of RN/RM Sea Cadets and MOD-recognised Cadet Forces to be Full Members of the RNA, was defeated after some debate.

The proposal, by Haven branch and seconded by Swansea, recognised the fact that these Cadet groups are fully supported and promoted by the Royal Navy, and the organisations share the ethos and values that are espoused by the Senior Service and the RNA. There were arguments for and against this Motion, and a proposed amendment there was also a proposed amendment to include Sea Scouts, which was rejected. Although speakers recognised the value of the job that such volunteers do for Cadet

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**WO1 Claire Robson, RNA Vice President, the awards of whose Meritorious Service Medal was announced shortly before the start of Conference**

organisations, many felt that it was a step too far and the original Motion was defeated.

After lunch, Branch Motion Four, proposed by Nottingham and seconded by Mansfield, called on Trustees of the RNA to investigate returning to a subscriptions system of funding the Association, thereby guaranteeing financial independence if funding was to be withdrawn in the future. RNA officers assured delegates that there was no perceived threat to the income from RNRMC, and General Secretary S/M Bill Oliphant said the RNRMC regarded the RNA as a success story. After thorough debate the Motion was defeated by a large majority.

The final Branch Motion, proposed by Crosby and seconded by Pendleton, invited the RNA to discontinue membership of the International Maritime Confederation (IMC), saying that the Association did not appear to gain much from such membership. General Secretary S/M Bill Oliphant explained to delegates what the



IMC is and what benefits it provides, in areas such as discussing common issues and sharing ideas. During the ensuing debate speakers referred to building bridges and international comradeship, and hopes were expressed that it might even be expanded in order to bring further benefits. The Motion to leave the IMC was defeated by a large majority

After some more RNA admin and notices the AGM finished at 1445, and officials, delegates and observers headed off to their respective hotels to prepare for the

Gala Dinner.

Much credit is due to the volunteers who drove the Association's three minibuses on a shuttle system between the Conference venue and hotels in the vicinity.

Dinner proved another success, with great food, efficient and attentive service, an absorbing raffle and some spectacular postprandial dancing.

The following morning, under bright blue skies, shipmates paraded the short distance from the Wales

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Millennium Centre to the Senedd, where they held a Service to mark their 2024 National Reunion. Also at the Service were local Sea Cadets and members of the general

public, who watched the RNA's Standard Bearers and the act of Remembrance, led by Bishop John. Both the English and Welsh National Anthems were sung.

National President Admiral Potts concluded proceedings by observing: "We have been blessed by an excellent National Reunion, and good weather too. Wales has been very kind to us."



**CONFERENCE RAFFLE:** The winners were:

**1st Prize (£500):** Ticket 00756, **S/M Eddie Andrews** (Torpoint & Rame Branch)

**2nd Prize (£300):** Ticket 06019, **S/M Linda Davies** (Llanelli Branch)

**3rd Prize (£200):** Ticket 04641, **S/M Keith Geddes** (Eastbourne Branch)

Thank you to all for selling and buying tickets. We raised £1,052 profit from the raffle after the above prizes have been paid out and all for the RNA Central Charities Fund.







## ➤ CONTACTS



Central Office Contacts	
For all contacts and general enquiries 023 9272 3747	admin@rnassoc.org
CEO/General Secretary	ceo@rnassoc.org
COS (Chief of Staff)	cos@rnassoc.org
Executive Assistant to the CEO	ceo-ea@rnassoc.org
Governance Support Officer	gso@rnassoc.org
Sports and Comradeship Coordinator	scc@rnassoc.org
Engagement	engagement@rnassoc.org
Plans Manager	dcos@rnassoc.org
Wellbeing Delivery Manager	wdm@rnassoc.org
Editorial Manager	sce@rnassoc.org
Semaphore Circular and Short	comms@rnassoc.org
Membership Manager	ams@rnassoc.org
South West Engagement	swe@rnassoc.org
Finance	dams@rnassoc.org
Head of Communications	hoc@rnassoc.org
RNA Communications Lead	cml@rnassoc.org
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
National Ceremonial Advisor	nca@royalnavalassoc.com

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 Portsmouth  
 Hants PO1 3LT



## ► D-DAY 80 – NORMANDY CEREMONIES

**S/M Ralph Dodds, of Ferndown branch, writes:** Back in January or early February S/M Bill announced, during a regular Fireside Chat, that there was going to be an RNA visit to Normandy in June to commemorate D-Day 80. Apparently the original plan had been for the cycling Special Interest Group to do this but the recce proved that the risk assessment would be challenging. As a result, Shipmates Mike Milne, Gareth and Linda Peaston and Ralph and Fiona Dodds soon had their names down, along with about 19 others.

We sailed from Portsmouth to Ouistreham on 3 July, sharing our ferry with a number of military vehicles, and then went on a Magical Mystery Tour, to quote from the Beatles, to find our accommodation, the grandly titled Château Amayè. In reality, Château Amayè was a large and basically equipped farmhouse with capacity to sleep up to about 40.

On Tuesday, after a quick breakfast, we headed out to visit the beaches.

Our first stop was La Pointe Du Hoc where Shipmate Ralph Dodds gave a short dit about how Lt Col James Earl Rudder and the 2nd Battalion US Rangers stormed the 100ft high cliffs to capture the battery that threatened both Utah and Omaha beaches. Despite losing 72 of his men and with only 90 of the 225 men who landed with

him being capable of bearing arms after 48 hours, it was deemed a complete success.

We then fought against incredibly busy roads, full of military vehicles and coaches, to get to Omaha Beach where no more than a couple of hundred yards from where in just two days time President Biden and other world leaders would gather to commemorate the sacrifices of the D-Day veterans, Shipmate President Duncan Potts explained what happened at that beach and in particular emphasised the Naval element of D-Day.

He reminded us that of the 1,200 warships involved, nearly 900 were Royal Navy. One of the key things that Duncan spoke about was the weather and how, as a result of the Royal Navy successes in the Battle of the Atlantic, the Germans had

no weather observations west of Ushant so were unsuspected that a lull was going to come through on the 6th, so sent people home on leave.

After Shipmate Bill successfully negotiated with the maitre d' at Restaurant l'Omaha we somehow managed to find space to fit us all in for lunch, and then it was off to Arromanches where from the top of the hill overlooking Gold Beach, Bill gave us a short dit on the logistics of D-Day and in particular, the Mulberry harbours which were floated across the Channel.

Bill made the very valuable comment that one of the reasons why we were victorious in World War 2 was that from the outset,

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the government put the entire economy on a war footing so that every available industrial unit was contributing to the war effort. Our final stop for the day was the new British Normandy Memorial at Ver-sur-Mer where the names of every one of the 22,442 Servicemen under British Command who gave their lives during the Landings and the ensuing Battle for Normandy are recorded. It includes the RNA memorial seat to remember those Shipmates who paid the ultimate price, and we also saw the Standing with Giants memorial, 1,475 life-sized two-dimensional statues that represent every Serviceman – and woman - who gave their lives when under British Command on D-Day itself. The following day we donned our best No 1s and headed off to the Caen Memorial museum and to attend the ceremony at the former British memorial garden in Caen. It was a poignant service, led by the British Army chaplain to UK 3 Division, after which we were invited into the memorial to keep up Anglo-French relations by helping them to consume their champagne. Suitably refreshed by an excellent barbecue served up by Scouse Reeves (ably assisted by the two former Chief Cooks whom he had discovered in the party) we awoke on Thursday knowing that with the French security cordon around all of the beaches, getting anywhere

in France was going to be challenging. But Pegasus Bridge was outside the cordon so we started there, where Shipmate Mike Milne gave an excellent update on how Major Howard and his team of glider-borne airborne troops took the Germans by complete surprise. Mike is repeating this at the Fireside Chat on 29 July; it will be well worth tuning in. Finally, we headed inland to Ranville Cemetery where 2,236 Allied Servicemen, including 90 Royal Navy or Royal Marines, are laid to rest. S/M Sarah Ayton gave a short talk about the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission before we moved to the Stone of Remembrance where S/M Chaplain Bernard Clarke led a short service of remembrance and S/Ms Bill and Gareth laid wreaths on behalf of the RNA and the Merchant Navy. It was then time to reboard the minibuses and make our way back to the ferry which, despite being inside the security zone, was actually very slickly managed by the French authorities. We did leave behind S/M President



Duncan and National Standard Bearer S/M Steve Champion, who represented the Association at the main memorial at Ver-sur-Mer. I'd like to finish by simply thanking Bill and his merry band for organising this trip which was excellent. It was great to be part of

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something that will never happen again, even if most of us were only on the periphery.

There was talk on the last night about organising something similar for next year, not necessarily Normandy-related, and Bill is looking at options.

All I can say is that if it is even half as good as this year's, book your places now; but book them after Fiona and I have booked ours!

Bill Oliphant said: "The trip to Normandy was an excellent opportunity for us to give veterans from all over the UK the chance to travel to France and pay their respects at D-Day 80. Many of them said the camaraderie on the trip really helped their mental health and that they felt more connected to their shipmates after the week away.

"Celebration and commemoration were at the forefront of our minds during the events. We aim, through comradeship, to alleviate loneliness and isolation in our members, and this trip certainly did just that."





S/M Bernard Clarke and Sarah at the Naval Memorial Caen (above). The remaining images on this and the following pages are by MOD photographers at the D-Day 80 ceremonies around Normandy on June 6, including the image (below) of First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key chatting to a Naval veteran at the British Normandy Memorial at Ver-sur-Mer







**(Above) Shelter for a veteran at the D-Day 80 ceremony in Arromanches, Normandy (MOD)**

**The images left (the D-Day Stone on Southsea seafont) and below (the Red Arrows at Portsmouth's Armed Forces Day event) are by Shipmate Nigel Huxtable**





## ► FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

### Ahoy Shipmates,

Well what a great Annual Conference in Cardiff last month on the back of D-Day 80 the weekend before! There are reports on both activities in this edition of the Semaphore Circular which I would recommend taking a few minutes to read, but I take my hat off to No 7 Area organising committee again for the excellent job they did pulling Conference weekend together after the original venue went bust earlier in the year. In addition, I certainly also take my hat off to the way the Conference was conducted with real decorum – we're not a political organisation, but maybe we ought to invite our politicians in future as they might learn something from us on how to debate and make arguments in an articulate and grown-up way! I'm writing this on the day of the General Election so my senses are heightened, but I must say, there is stark contrast about the way we did our business in Cardiff and what goes on in Westminster.

Thank you, Ralph Dodds, for your account of the Normandy Battlefield Tour which I'm glad was enjoyed by all. It's important to do these things and it was only through conversations with folk over the week that you realise the wellbeing benefits of the comradeship our organisation brings. One participant had lost his wife a few years back and was a bit lost but found his local Branch last year and it has given him a new lease of life. Another participant wasn't desperately keen on groups and contemplated pulling the Covid card to withdraw from the trip the day before but managed to summon the strength to come. He told me he was so glad he did and it had done wonders for him. Another chap confided that the week was just what he needed as respite from looking after his very elderly and increasingly difficult mother. On my part, I'd managed to have a silly row with CINCNVHOME the night before departure so a few days cooling off with something else to think about in Normandy was just perfect.

What I'm trying to say is that we all carry our stresses and strains; some cope with it better than others but no matter what our state of mind, a trip away for a few days with some like-minded people is just good for the soul. And the fact that everyone on the trip was just lovely

really made it.

Looking ahead, we've got a cracking couple of Fireside Chats coming up. This Monday, 1830, we have a talk from an amazing lady called Victoria Schofield whose father was a junior officer during World War 2 and served in the Convoy Rescue Ships. He rose to Vice Admiral before retiring and wrote about the Rescue Ships in the 1960s. Victoria has now edited and expanded the book and will tell us the story on Monday. The following week, we

are again privileged to hear Naval historian and author Angus Konstam talking about the Pirate Hunters – the Royal Navy's fight against the piracy menace 1715-25. I think Keith Ridley was there! Link here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2888305105?pwd=TmtwempUWGwWUEtOcjY4ZU15RU5FZz09>

On the subject of Fireside Chats, I should also report that I had a very successful meeting with the senior echelon of our Welfare and Wellbeing structure recently in an effort to get our welfare organisation working together better for our shipmates. More of that later, but one of the outcomes is that on the first Monday of the month, the Fireside Chat will be on a Welfare and Wellbeing-related

topic. To that end, on Monday 5 August, S/M David Griggs, as a SSAFA Caseworker, will brief on the workings of SSAFA and how to make use of their resources should it be necessary. I would encourage all Branch officials who are involved in any way with Welfare and Wellbeing to come to this if you can as SSAFA is probably the most important organisation that we need to understand if the needs of one of our people is beyond the comradeship of the RNA. Link above, 1830, 5 August.

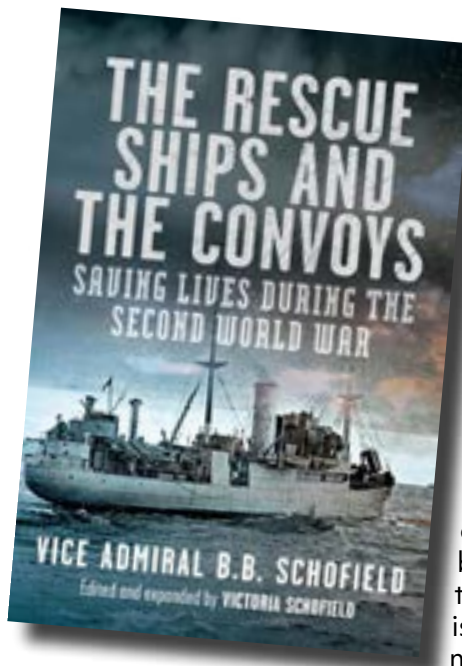
A quick dit to finish. A chum of mine's father was in hospital recently. He's a fine specimen at 6ft 4in and still quick-witted despite his advancing years. "Oh Mr Jones, you're very tall," said the nurse in a flirtatious way. Somewhat cheekily, she carried on, "Can I ask, is everything in proportion?"

"Crikey!" replied Mr Jones "That's a bit personal love. But, now that you've asked, if everything was in proportion I'd probably be about 6ft 10in!!"

Mr Jones used to be a Stoker...

Best wishes,

*Bill*



## ➤ ENJOY AN EVENING WITH THE ROYAL MARINES BAND

You are invited to go along and enjoy an evening with the Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines and Guests on 18 and 19 July. This event is a fundraising event for the development of Boathouse 6 in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard as the Royal Marines Experience Museum. The Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth will beat retreat in front of HMS Victory, the flagship of the First Sea Lord and the oldest commissioned warship in the world. Standard tickets cost £35, and gold tickets are also available, at £50 each, which will include front row seats, a drinks reception including one drink before the event, the chance to have a look at the project for

the new Royal Marines Museum Experience, and to meet the curator and discover artefacts from the Royal Marines Collection.

Please be aware that this event has unallocated seating. Gates will open at 5.45pm for gold ticket holders and 6.15pm for standard ticket holders, with the event starting at 7pm. Please arrive at the time on your ticket to ensure that you see all of the show.

Latecomers will be admitted at a suitable break in the performance.

You can buy tickets online at <https://tickets.historicdockyard.co.uk/webstore/shop/viewitems.aspx?cg=phdevent&c=rmevent>

## ➤ TYPE 22 REMEMBRANCE CALL

Calling all Type 22 shipmates. The Type 22 Association (T22A) will be part of Column E at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London, at the Remembrance ceremony this November.

This is the first time the T22A has been fortunate enough to receive an allocation of tickets and it's a great opportunity for shipmates to get together and mark this annual event. A number of tickets are still available – if you are interested please contact Paris Barber at [Type22asso@gmail.com](mailto:Type22asso@gmail.com)

## ➤ ALMSHOUSE FLAT IS VACANT

The Sir John Hawkins Hospital has a vacant two-bedroom flat within their almshouse in Chatham, and are welcoming applications from disadvantaged people and their family (can be extended family).

Whilst priority will be given to Naval beneficiaries, including members of the QARNNS and Naval Reservists who have been mobilised, in exceptional circumstances applicants who have served in other branches of the UK Armed Forces, the RFA or the Merchant Navy may be considered.

For further details and an application form go to [www.hawkinshospital.org.uk/apply](http://www.hawkinshospital.org.uk/apply) or email [hawkinshospital@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:hawkinshospital@yahoo.co.uk)

[yahoo.co.uk](http://yahoo.co.uk)

The hospital has been providing accommodation on this same High Street site in Chatham since 1594.

## ➤ OPEN DAYS

Shipmates who would like to see for themselves how the RNA is supported by the Central Office team will need to act quickly as tickets to the Central Office Open Days are now in very limited supply. There are a few spaces left for 9 August, but 6 September is now fully subscribed.

For more details, or to register interest, contact Sara on [ams@rnassoc.org](mailto:ams@rnassoc.org)

## ➤ SLOPS 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).

## ➤ HONOURS FOR KEITH AND CLAIRE

Keith Ridley, of St Neots Branch, has been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours with an MBE for his selfless dedication to the Royal Naval Association.

Keith, 77, has volunteered tirelessly for the RNA for the past 47 years to promote its core tenets of comradeship and connection to all with an interest in the Royal Navy. Rising through the RNA ranks, Keith was Branch Secretary at St Neots for ten years and then became the Chairman to save the branch from closure. He remained in office for 20 years, only standing down when he became National Chairman.

The branch now has a strong membership and is active within the veteran and wider community.

Keith has also been instrumental in raising money for other local charities, and last year galvanised his Branch, and the wider RNA, into supporting the St Vincent volcano appeal as Naval shipmates from the Islands had requested support for their families.

Keith said: "This is such an honour, and I am overwhelmed by it. I have volunteered for years, but never expected anything like this!" In addition to his former role as RNA National Chairman, Keith is also the Treasurer of St Neots Branch of the Royal British Legion and, for the past ten years, has organised the town's Remembrance Day Annual Parade. Until 2019, he was the Chairman of St Neot's Armed Forces Day Committee, which he founded, and which is now the most successful event of its kind in Cambridgeshire.

More recently he has organised three very successful Royal Marines Band concerts in St Neots, on each occasion raising more than £2,000 for the Poppy Appeal.

Bill Oliphant, General Secretary of the RNA, said: "Keith has supported the RNA tirelessly and we are very proud to count him as one of our volunteers. This honour is well deserved, and we are delighted for Keith."

The RNA is also delighted to congratulate RNA Vice President WO1 Claire Robson on her selection for the King's Birthday Honour's list. Claire was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM), which is given to Senior Non Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers of the British Armed Forces for long and meritorious service.

**BEATING RETREAT 2024** The RNA is delighted to offer some financial support to shipmates wishing to attend this event at Horse Guards Parade, London, on 11-12 July. Please ask your branch to complete a Branch and Club Support Fund form (see RNA website under Downloads / Accounts / Branch and Club Support Fund) and submit to [ceo-ea@rnassoc.org](mailto:ceo-ea@rnassoc.org) or send a hard copy to Central Office. If you are part of the HO (remote) membership, please contact the email above in the first instance. Tickets can be purchased here: <https://buff.ly/4bYtzuy>



# Christmas

## COMPETITION

IT MIGHT SEEM LIKE A LONG WAY OFF  
BUT IT'S ONLY A FEW MONTHS AWAY!

GET CREATIVE WITH CHRISTMAS IMAGES  
FOR THE RNA CHRISTMAS CARD AND  
CALENDAR COMPETITION.

SEND YOUR  
PHOTO OR PIECE OF ARTWORK TO

[ENGAGEMENT@RNASSOC.ORG](mailto:ENGAGEMENT@RNASSOC.ORG)

Judging 31st August  
deadline 29th August



## ➤ LODGE IS TRUE TO WHITE ENSIGN

White Ensign Lodge No. 9169 (regulated by the United Grand Lodge of England) meets at Redditch Masonic Hall five times a year on the last Friday of January, March, May, and October, and on the first Friday of December (Installation).

At the October Lodge Meeting, they celebrate the Battle of Trafalgar and traditionally have a large number of fraternal visitors. They normally finish their meetings by 2000 and then move to the bar for a traditional tot, enter the Mess Deck and dine in style enjoying the company of their members and visitors.

White Ensign Lodge was originally established as a Freemason's Lodge with strong Royal Navy and Royal Marines links and traditions in late 1985; the Lodge now has members with links to all branches of the Armed Services or who have served under the Crown – criteria.

White Ensign Lodge is a proud member of the Circuit of Service Lodges.

White Ensign Lodge, as the name and the references to seafaring suggest, was consecrated as a Naval Lodge, in December 1985. It all started when Charles Shave, a Royal Navy Artificer, used to travel from the Midlands with a couple of shipmates to the Installation at his mother White Ensign Lodge in Gillingham, Kent.

He formed the idea of creating a White Ensign lodge closer to home, and the Province of Worcestershire was happy for it to drop anchor in the Province.

In the event, there were 17 founders.

The requirement from the start was that Brethren should have served in any rank in the Royal Navy or the Royal Marines for a minimum of 12 months.

The voyage got off to a great start, with new Brethren recruited from the Nautical Services Club based in Birmingham.

But more recently they have broadened the scope to include any Brother who has served under the Crown, and that includes Civil Servants.

They also welcome initiates who have a connection – for example, the son of a former Serviceman or who has served under the Crown. All members wear a White Ensign pin badge, but 'Special Reservists' (permanently invited guests) receive a certificate and wear a Red Ensign pin.

However, everyone is welcome, whatever badge they wear: they are Brethren, after all, look out for each other and collectively do a huge amount for charity, particularly Service and local charities.

The Lodge originally met, oddly, on the first working day of the fifth week at Kings Heath, which began to prove difficult to schedule.

In 2012, the Lodge set sail for Redditch, where it now meets. Not every Brother may have served in the RN or RM, but the Lodge follows many Naval traditions.

They raise and lower the Ensign to a bugle call at the opening and closing of the Lodge, for example. And when they move to the Mess Deck (to landlubbers, the Festive Board) they start with a tot of rum – so you may be sure they are going to enjoy themselves in the best

Naval tradition.

Order is kept using a ship's bell while a Master-at-Arms issues 50p fines for errors in the Lodge Room and misbehaviour at the Festive Board!

Their social events are a lot of fun too, not least Trafalgar Night, when the Mess Deck is dressed overall with bunting and it's fair to say, they really push the boat out. Similarly, they enjoy Burn's Night and, in April, a triple event of revelry when they will celebrate St George's Night, Shakespeare's birthday, and the start of the asparagus season.

They have a Golf Society and the 'White Ensign Tourist Society' – which aims to visit all of the Naval and Royal Marine Lodges in the country. Then there's Ladies' Night, a dinner cruise on the Avon, a Spring lunch, and much more.

It's clear that White Ensign Lodge is extremely lively and has a healthy membership of 40.

White Ensign Lodge is always looking to the future and encourages new members to join them, particularly those who have served under the Crown in any capacity and are looking to rekindle the camaraderie and esprit de corps that they enjoy or enjoyed during their Service life.

For more details see <https://whiteensign.org.uk>

## ➤ LIGHTNING REACH HELP

Lightning Reach help is available via the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust website for small grants up to £750 for assistance with food, clothing, pre-payment of utilities and the like.

Please note this Lightning Reach application form is for one-off financial assistance. For all other forms of assistance, these can be accessed by contacting SSAFA or the Royal British Legion.

If your application is likely to require assistance above £750 then the RNBT will need a report from a caseworker. Please contact either SSAFA or the RBL to arrange for them to contact you. RNBT will then take action on their report.

If you are serving you should consider contacting your local Royal Navy Family and People Support (RN FPS) first.

See <https://www.rnbt.org.uk/how-we-help/wide-ranging-financial-help/how-to-apply/>

## ➤ INFORMATION SOUGHT FOR GRANT ALLOCATION

**The Veterans Places, Pathways and People programme (East) wants to know how to spend their next budget allocation of funds. Help them, and veterans, by giving them more information about what is needed in the East of England area. Don't forget, some of the RNA's offerings are funded by organisations like this. Our Thriving Together programme would benefit from a grant from this organisation, local branches have their**

**own needs, and enabling D-Day, and other World War 2 veterans to attend events in their local areas are all things which Central Office can support, if we can gain funding. Please do fill in the form. You need to live in the East of England: Beds, Luton Milton Keynes, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk to fill it in. See <https://positivebridge.media/index.php/vppp-east/vppp-feedback>**



## ➤ HOMES FROM HOME IN ST NEOTS

The second annual event for the RNA Camping and Caravanning Special Interest Group (SIG) took place at St Neots, Cambridgeshire, over five days and was organised to coincide with St Neots Armed Forces Day.

43 units attended with 84 personnel, including Wrens WRAF QAs as well RN Veterans.

The Friday night Pirate cocktail party was the ice-breaker so everyone could get to know each other (see picture above). On the Saturday the group participated in the opening ceremony along with members of St Neots RNA and the RNA Bikers plus two AS Air Force

serving members.

The barbecue was held on the Saturday evening, when the Group members, RNA Bikers and other veterans ate with them.

On the Sunday Bernard Clark held a short church parade and the rum barrel that was made by the late Eric Holmwood was blessed – this was recorded and sent to Wrexham Branch.

There was also a Wrens social where 11 Wrens sat and talked about their lives in the RN – the feedback from this was amazing as most had never met each other.

The Sunday consisted of a Giant Quiz, Tot Time Sing song and other games, followed by the remaining food being eaten and Defaulters, which was left in the capable hands of two Masters-at-Arms a Leading



Continued on page 22





regulator.  
It was amazing that most of the people attending had never met each other, but so many friendships were once again made – it's special every time there is a meet; it can't be explained and no one wanted to work out why. It's just Jack and Jenny in their comfort zone, no pressures.  
Just enjoy!

*Ron Shilton  
Hon Secretary Selby Royal Naval Association*





**Standards from various veterans associations and groups are paraded on Plymouth Hoe during the city's Armed Forces Day event. Shipmates from RNA branches across the country were involved in events large and small as the nation paid tribute to those who serve, those who have served, and those who represent the future of our Armed Forces. ©UK Ministry of Defence Crown Copyright, 2024**

## ➤ BAE DONATIONS TO RNRMC TOP A MILLION

Donations from BAE Systems to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) have reached the landmark figure of £1 million. The Defence giant has supported the charity since it was established in 2007. The RNRMC is the principal charity of the Royal Navy, supporting past and present personnel from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary and their families.

Last year the charity helped more than 60,000 serving personnel, veterans and their family members through a range of initiatives.

BAE Systems assisted the charity on a number of these, including employability and resettlement programmes for those who need support transitioning to civilian life, a number of sports projects and employee-led fundraising days across the year.

The company also sponsors prestigious events such as the RNRMC Trafalgar Night Dinner and Heroes Cycle Challenge.

Glynn Phillips, Managing Director of BAE Systems' maritime and land business, said: "At BAE Systems, we work every day to protect and equip the men and women of our Armed Forces and we're privileged to continue that support for sailors, marines and their families through our relationship with the RNRMC. We are proud

to reach the £1 million figure and look forward to continuing our important work together."

Andrew Jameson, Chief Executive of the RNRMC, said: "Surpassing the £1 million milestone in donations from BAE Systems marks a momentous achievement, highlighting the extraordinary impact of our partnership in supporting the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel and their families.

"We couldn't begin to do what we do without the backing of our corporate partners. To reach this milestone is a testament to our close working relationship with BAE Systems."

## ➤ BID FOR TICKETS FOR CENOTAPH CEREMONY

**This year the annual Service of Remembrance will be held at the Cenotaph on Whitehall on Sunday 10 November.**

**The RNA has submitted their usual bid for tickets, and we have been given 130 places by the Royal British Legion for the high-profile parade.**

**Further information will follow and, in the meantime, if you would like to register your interest in parading this year, please email Sara on [ams@rnassoc.org](mailto:ams@rnassoc.org)**

# ➤ CENTRAL OFFICE OPEN DAY IS A CHANCE TO THANK STALWARTS

Central Office of the RNA held one of its regular Open Days at the end of June, giving staff the chance to thank a couple of Association stalwarts.

Open days see shipmates from the wider RNA community travelling to Portsmouth Naval Base to visit the office, meet the staff and see how they support all aspects of the RNA.

Deputy National Chairman Andy Christie welcomed everyone and presented Trisha Lee, from Christchurch Branch, with a Certificate of Appreciation for her many years of loyal service (**right**).

Shipmate Soapy Watson was delighted to have Happy Birthday sung to him – Soapy volunteers for Central Office tirelessly and is a highly valued and much-loved colleague.

You can see a brief clip of Soapy's birthday tribute on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/shorts/4\\_q7nU5CH-l](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/4_q7nU5CH-l) There are still some spaces available for an Open Day on 9 August – email [ams@rnassoc.org](mailto:ams@rnassoc.org) if you are interested in attending.





## ➤ TAKE A CHANCE ON THE RNA LOTTERY

Just a reminder that you could win up to £25,000 in the Royal Naval Association Weekly Lottery, which gives supporters the chance to win some wonderful cash prizes as well as backing our rank-blind network of serving, veterans and family members of the Royal Navy. Once players have registered online they will be entered into the draw every Friday they are in credit (£1 per line, per week). Captain Bill Oliphant, Chief Executive of the RNA, said: "Our lottery is an exciting way of fundraising for and with at least 50 per cent from each £1 donated supporting the work we do, we will be able to help those in our community who need it most. "The RNA is free to join but relies on donations to help continue the good work. "Since Covid, we've done so much more in the welfare/wellbeing space with our veterans, and having an RNA Lottery allows us to do even more. "Please do sign up and play our lottery, and if you're not a member – join us!" Visit [www.RNALottery.co.uk](http://www.RNALottery.co.uk) to sign up.

## ➤ TORFAEN MEETINGS

Please note that Torfaen Branch of the RNA now meets on the third Monday every month, 1930hrs, at the Panteg Employees Club, Panteg House, Greenhill Road, Griffithstown, Torfaen NP4 5BE, contact [torfaen@rna-7area.org](mailto:torfaen@rna-7area.org)

## ➤ MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

Next Monday's Fireside Chat promises to be worth dialling in for when historian Victoria Schofield talks about the rescue Ships of World War 2. Expanding on the book *The Rescue Ships and the Convoys* by her father, Vice Admiral Schofield, Victoria looks

at the fleet of 30 small Merchant Navy ships that carried medical teams and rescue equipment and accompanied close to 800 convoys, rescuing more than 4,000 lives from ships sunk in the Battle of the Atlantic and Arctic convoys. Despite it being one of the

least known aspects of the war at sea it is a record of courage, fine seamanship and devotion to duty under the harshest of conditions – and Vice Admiral Schofield should know as he was closely involved in the creation of the fleet.

■ 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](#)

\* Lecture subjects may change at short notice.

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

## ➤ 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](mailto:rna.camping.caravan.motorhome.club@gmail.com)

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

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

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

Decorative Ropework – Bob Jones: [oldsalt69@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:oldsalt69@hotmail.co.uk)

Divers – Bill Lawless: [billylawless40@yahoo.com](mailto:billylawless40@yahoo.com)

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

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

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

If you are interested in forming a Special Interest Group please contact [admin@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com)

Date	Presenter	Subject
Mon 8 July	Victoria Schofield	The Rescue Ships
Mon 15 July	Angus Kostam	Pirate Hunters: The Royal Navy and the Pirate Menace 1715-25
Mon 22 July	Geoff Parsons	National and Naval Flags of S America and Antarctica as seen during voyage of MV Oosterdam Jan 24
Mon 29 July	Mike Milne	D-Day: the taking of Pegasus Bridge



## ► CHINA FLEET – THE NAVY’S COUNTRY CLUB

Dear Shipmates,  
Of the UK’s Armed Forces only the Senior Service, the Royal Navy, has a ‘Country Club’ – the China Fleet Country Club at Saltash, Cornwall, set in 180 acres of exquisite countryside overlooking the River Tamar and only 15 minutes from Plymouth City Centre.

The Club is well positioned to give access to the beaches, the sea, the moorlands and the beautiful countryside of Devon and Cornwall, considered by many as the premier holiday region of the UK. This is a family-centered club it boasts four-star accommodation, offering a choice of room/ kitchen configurations, also an on-site Brasserie, the Cabin Café and Bar, a health club, swimming pool, jacuzzi, golf course including a Toptracer driving range, and for family fun there is the Woodland Adventure Golf, and throughout the year there is a prolific calendar of seasonal events and shows which are promulgated on the Club’s website – [www.china-fleet.co.uk](http://www.china-fleet.co.uk)

Finally, any shipmate who may have forgotten to ask ‘the question’, the CFCC offers a comprehensive wedding service.

The membership of the Royal Naval Association and the Royal Marines Association and their immediate family are beneficiaries of the China Fleet Trust, (the CFCC Ltd operates on behalf of the Trust), the RNA and RMA each have a seat on the Beneficiaries Committee representing veterans, and with the support of our fellow committee members, have over recent years improved and defined the discounts appropriate to our category of beneficiary. For further information and details check out the CFCC on the website [www.china-fleet.co.uk](http://www.china-fleet.co.uk)

Should you wish to book services from the CFCC be sure to make them aware of your RNA membership and have your membership card available.

Regards aye

**Des McCarthy MBE**

**CFCC Beneficiary Committee – RNA Rep**

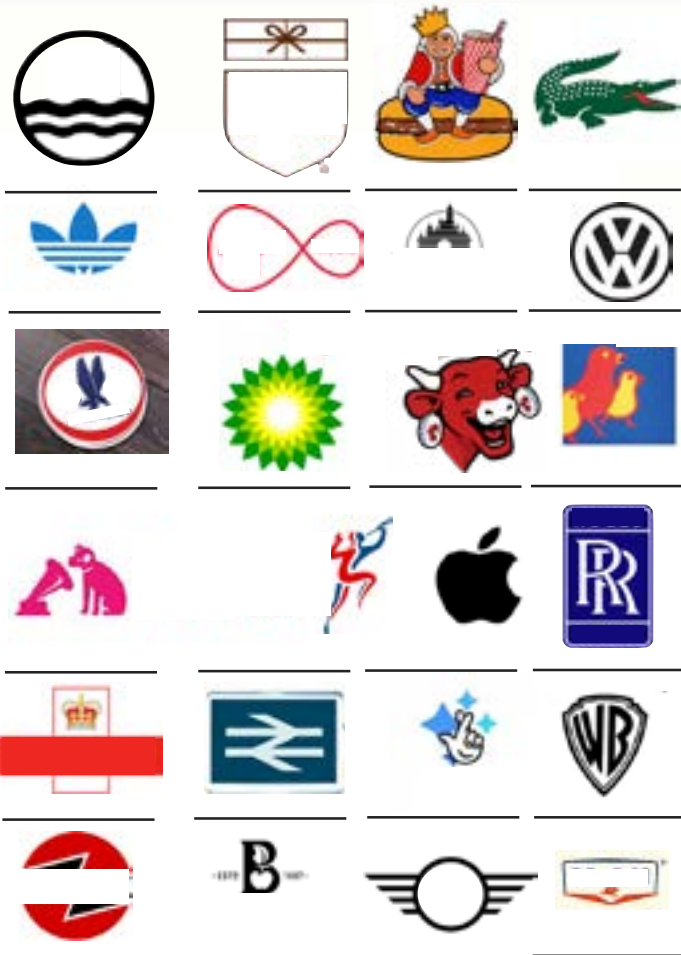




RESULTS



Comp No. **3**



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ENTRIES

**BERNARD PERKINS**

YOUR PRIZE IS  
ON ITS WAY,

LOOK OUT FOR THE  
NEXT COMPETITION  
IN SEPTEMBER'S CIRCULAR

# ➤ BRANCH NEWS

## Street Branch

At the No.4 Area reunion early in March newly-elected Chairman Shipmate Mike Jayes on behalf of the Branch asked retiring Chairman shipmate Bernie Page MBE, MSM if he would become the Branch President. To the delight of the members at their meeting later in March, Bernie said he would be honoured to accept the post as Branch President.

At the Glastonbury Sea Cadet training night on June 12th Vice Chairman S/M Mike Glendinning and Treasurer S/M Alec Lowe presented the Unit with a £300.00 cheque kindly donated by No.4 Area. The Branch also donated £50.00 cheque towards the Unit's summer BBQ. Previously in October 23

the Chairperson of the Glastonbury Unit Mrs Elaine Dearling had been the Guest of Honour at the Branch Trafalgar Dinner. It was agreed at the dinner for the two organisations to forge a closer relationship where they can share experiences to support the young cadets' development. Treasurer S/M Alec Lowe was one of the founding members of the Glastonbury Sea Cadet Unit Street Branch is also committed to support, where possible, other County activities.

On 8 June Branch Standard Bearer S/M Mike Morton once again did the Branch proud when he paraded the standard at the Bridgwater D-Day Celebrations **(pictured right)**.



**(Above) Chairman S/M Mike Jayes (right) presenting S/M Bernie Page (left) with his new President's Chain of Office at the April meeting (Left) Vice Chairman Mike Glendinning (left) and Treasurer S/M Alec Lowe (right) with the Glastonbury Cadets**



## Caerphilly Branch

Members of Caerphilly Branch attended the unveiling of the Llanbradach D-Day 80 memorial bench, created by blacksmith Glen Adams **(pictured)**. The bench links the events of June 1944 with the Welsh village, featuring a poppy, daffodils and symbols of the area's mining heritage.





### Torbay Branch

Like many Branches, May and early June proved busy periods for RNA TORBAY. An initiative from our Chairman, S/M Terry Mernery, proved a great success. Dainton Golf Club kindly allowed the Branch to stage a fundraising "Nearest the Pin" contest at the 8th Hole during a Club Medal Competition. Around £340 was raised through players making a donation of their choice to enter. The proceeds allowed the Branch to make donations to the RNRMC; the RNA and Marie Curie Charity (the Golf Club Chairman's nominated Charity). Terry is pictured manning our table.

Our Standard Bearer, S/M Shaun Runham, has proudly represented the Branch at HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales Remembrance Service at Torquay Cenotaph; Decorations Day in Ogwell, Newton Abbot; 80th D-Day Service at Torquay Harbour and D-Day Beacon lighting on Corbyn Head, Torquay. The D-Day service included a parade of Veterans and Cadets alongside the slipways used by American forces as they embarked on 6th June 1944. (Photo courtesy of Paignton RBL.) We are looking forward to our local Armed Forces Day on 22nd June at Paignton Green.



### Bracknell and Hinckley Branches

Pictured are S/Ms Ron Nicholas (Bracknell) and Ian Robinson (Hinckley) are pictured on duty as members of His Majesty's Body of Greencoats, the ceremonial guard for the King and Royal Family when at Royal Ascot. The uniform has been a feature at the Berkshire racecourse since the mid-18th century, and one explanation for the colour is that the clothing was originally made from material left over from the curtains in Windsor Castle.



### Uxbridge Branch

Shipmates at Uxbridge have been quick to acknowledge the fact that King Charles has agreed to be Patron of the RNA – that fact has been included in the branch's shiny new entrance sign (it's "nice and bright so that people can find us on a dark evening" said Branch Chairman S/M Slinger Wood).



**Cromer Branch**

Shipmates at Cromer branch marked the 80th anniversary of D-Day at the home of one of the Branch's members – and they also celebrated the 600th meeting of the Branch at the barbecue, which was attended by 40 people.



**Swansea Branch**

Five members of Swansea Branch attended the flag-raising ceremony at the Guildhall Rotunda in Swansea on Saturday 29 June – Armed Forces Day. Pictured left are S/Ms Ken Reid, Duncan Howells, Jill Johnson, Paul Truman and Colin Johnson. The event, hosted by the Lord Mayor of Swansea Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams, saw the Welsh Armed Forces Day flag raised in front of a group of dignitaries and representatives of the Armed Forces community. In the evening the Guildhall was lit up in red, white and blue to honour Service personnel, veterans and their families. Welsh Armed Forces Day is being marked this weekend (6-7 July) with a Veterans Village at the Wales Airshow in Swansea.



**Rayleigh Branch**

On Thursday 27 June Rayleigh Branch held their final RN/RNA Memorial Dedication Service at the Living Memorial in Rettendon. It was their late Chairman Jim Hammond's vision to add a building to the site which has now been completed.

The Dedication Service was attended by RNA National President Vice Admiral Duncan Potts CB, Vice Patron Vice Admiral John McAnally CB LVO, RNA General Secretary Capt Bill Oliphant and Lt Cdr Rebecca Reavell RN, and more than 100 guests from other RNA Branches.

They also welcomed 20 Standard Bearers and the Maldon and District Sea Cadets. The service was conducted by Revd Glen Mansfield of Trinity Church in Rayleigh, who gave a great sermon and dedicated the memorial. On completion of the dedication service Capt Bill Oliphant presented Branch Chairman Terry Barker with a Certificate of Life Membership for his outstanding commitment to Rayleigh branch.

The event was organised and run by Branch Vice Chairman Mike Sandbrook, who opened and closed the service. On completion of the service attendees retired to the marquee for a ploughman's lunch and refreshments.

Bill Oliphant said: "It was fabulous to see current (Adm Duncan Potts) and former National President, now vice-Patron, Adm John McAnally joined together in commemoration at the dedication of the living memorial at Rettenden, Essex, where Rayleigh Branch have been instrumental in ensuring the Royal Naval personnel have received the appropriate recognition for their sacrifice through Operation Sweet Pea."



## Londonderry Branch

On Wednesday 19 June James Donovan CPO (Rtd) was awarded his long-awaited Arctic Star Medal from the Lord Lieutenant of County Tyrone, Mr Robert Scott.

A small gathering was organised by his daughter Trisha and son Sean.

In attendance was the Lord Lieutenant Mr Scott, Cdr Rob Milligan RN, Senior Naval Officer Northern Ireland (SNOI), No 12 Area Chairman S/M Robert Buchanan, No 12 Area Vice Chairman, S/M Jack Garfield and S/Ms Frank Brown and Nigel Stott from Londonderry Branch.

James had celebrated his 105th birthday with his eight children, their families and friends on Sunday 16 June – Fathers Day.

James, who originally comes from a small village in County Cork called Rosscarbery, joined the Royal Navy in 1938 and served until 1959.

He took part in the Arctic Convoys and the Atlantic Convoys and the branch hopes to continue their association with him to hear more about his Naval exploits.

After his Naval service, James went on to serve with HM Customs until 1984.

After the Arctic Star presentation, Cdr Milligan presented James with a framed letter from the First Sea Lord.

S/M Buchanan then presented James with his Veterans Lapel Badge and Certificate.

S/M Garfield presented a crystal glass engraved with a ship and a ship's bell which Londonderry Branch had commissioned to mark the completion



of the project to place three ship's bells at the World War 2 Convoy Escort Bases, Halifax (Nova Scotia), Londonderry and St John's (Newfoundland).

The assembled group then enjoyed afternoon tea.

It was a great honour to meet James and shipmates hope they will manage to get him along to the Londonderry Branch meeting to enjoy a tot and swing the lamp.

Now, just a heads up on plans for BoA 2025. Next year is the 80th anniversary of VE Day and the end of six long years of the Battle of the Atlantic.

The branch is planning a major event over four days, from Thursday 15 to Sunday 18 May. For more information

contact S/M Frank Brown on [frankjf22brown@gmail.com](mailto:frankjf22brown@gmail.com) or S/M Robert Buchanan on [castlecooley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:castlecooley@hotmail.co.uk) Members of Londonderry Branch recently visited the Royal Naval Reserve unit at HMS Hibernia.

On Saturday 11 May the shipmates travelled to Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn –the RNR unit is based at these historic barracks, and this 'stone frigate' is known as HMS Hibernia.

The RNR had previously been based on HMS Caroline before it was turned over to the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

On arrival they were treated to tea, coffee and buns in the mess.

By kind permission of the CO, Cdr Kurt Courtney VR, shipmates were given an extensive tour of the impressive



training facilities and were extremely well looked after by some of the permanent staff. Nothing was too much trouble for CPO Tab Hunter, CPO Richie McMullan and PO Lucie Townsley.

After the tour, it was time to relax in the mess with various refreshments; Tab and Lucie looked after them while Richie prepared a barbecue.

The barbecue went down a treat, the hospitality and the food were second to none. A very contented motley crew set off back to Londonderry after a fantastic day out with the Royal Naval Reserve at HMS Hibernia.



## Birchington Branch

These are pictures of Royal Marine Bandsman Donald Feather, who is now in a care home near the Royal Marine Barracks at Deal where he trained as a bandsman.

Members of Birchington Branch visited him on his 85th birthday with a cake covered with edible Royal Marines.

Donald saw service as a Royal Marines Bandsman in many parts of world, and has lived in Canada and Australia.

Donald had been living alone after his wife died, but was then found a place in a residential home by Social Services as he was suffering from dementia. He now resides in Sonia Lodge Walmer near Deal, Kent.







### Rosyth and West Fife Branch

A commemorative event for the 80th anniversary of D-Day on 6 June was decided upon by the branch after a communication from Bruno Peek regarding the Lantern of Peace.

Vice Chair S/M Jim Stewart and the remainder of the committee developed a plan to hold an event that would honour the memory of those who took part in Operation Overlord.

Participating organisations were assembled and included the Sea Cadets from TS Fife, the Army Cadets from the Black Watch unit in Rosyth, the Scouts, and primary schools in the area, along with their teachers.

Karen Hart, the Schools Liaison, organised the pupils to read poems for the occasion, while the SCC and ACF also read articles to recall the D-Day Landings.

Guest of honour was the Lord Lieutenant of Fife, Robert Balfour, and the Deputy, Claire Mitchell, was also in attendance.

The Branch piper played The Highland Laddie and Road to the Isles, which were played by piper William Millin on the beaches in 1944.

Branch president Alan Bayliss read a message from Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, RNA National President.

And Branch Padre Andrea Fraser delivered the blessing, while the Lord Lieutenant read The Legacy

of World War 2, after which he lit the Beacon of Light, followed by the Deputy lighting the Lamp of Peace. This lantern will be used in further ceremonials such as Armistice Sunday.

The Branch president then proposed a toast to the King, with a splice the mainbrace.

When the ceremonies were finished, shipmates marched past the Lord Lieutenant and retired to the Tavern. A huge BZ to Tesco stores for providing goody bags for all the young people attending – around 70 in total.



# Uckers Ya Uckers!

*We are proud to announce and re-confirm 'Uckers Ya Uckers as our official partner and supplier*



**The Royal Naval Association's  
World Uckers Championships**  
Saturday 12 October 2024

**Royal Maritime Hotel Portsmouth**

*More details*

**Sat 12 Oct 2024**

**Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth.**

More details coming soon: engagement @royalnavalassoc.com

# OBITUARIES

## Shipmate Ron Notley

On 15 May shipmates from Salisbury Branch attended the funeral of former Royal Marine Ronald Notley, parading the Branch Standard alongside that of Salisbury RBL Branch.

It was also an honour to have two Royal Marines Buglers from HMS Collingwood to play Sunset.

After World War 2 broke out Ron wanted to join the Royal Navy with brother George (now 101) but due to age restrictions he joined the Royal Marines as they took recruits at 16.

He signed up as Marine PO/X118063 and went to Eastney Barracks for five months training.

George requested that his brother Ron join him in HMS Nelson, and he joined the ship in 1943 at Dunfermline in Scotland.

On board the battleship Ron's job was

loading the shells in one of the three turrets. During the war Ron saw serious action during the Normandy Landings – 900 16in shells were fired bombarding the German defences.

Once when Ron was on deck, the ship struck two magnetic mines which damaged the hull, so the ship had to go back to Portsmouth. After Nelson was repaired, Ron sailed with the ship to Philadelphia in the United States for a refit in preparation for sailing to the Far East.

On his way to the Far East, Ron passed George in the Suez Canal, and they were able to signal one another in greeting.

In the Far East Ron went with minesweepers to clear the Malayan Strait, where one of the minesweepers was blown up and another ship was attacked by a Japanese kamikaze. Ron's ship took the survivors aboard. Two sailors died and Ron was tasked



to prepare both for a burial at sea by sewing the bodies into canvas bags. Soon after these events the atomic bomb was dropped, and Japan surrendered.

Ron returned home in an aircraft carrier, returned to barracks, and was demobbed in December 1946.

Ron was very proud to have served in the Royal Marines for King and Country. RIP Ron, Duty Done.

Ron's brother George can be seen in the group photo above (with the stick).



## Shipmate Arthur Webster

RNA Life Member Chaplain Arthur Webster, a Shipmate of Rugby Branch until its closure, and more recently of Warwick Branch, crossed the bar on 17 June aged 95.

Arthur William Webster served in the Royal Navy from 1947-1950 for his National Service as a Sick Berth Attendant, initially as an SBA probationer on HMS Royal Arthur, HMS Gosling and HMS Drake, and then as an SBA at Royal Naval Hospital Portsmouth.

For part of his time in the Royal Navy he was seconded as a Medic to 42 Commando RM based at Blarrick in Cornwall.

Following his release from the Royal Navy Arthur served in the Reserve from 1950 to 1960. He was a Royal British Legion Chaplain from 1972 – 2010, and an RNA Chaplain from 1976 until his death, supporting branches in Rugby, Royal Leamington Spa and Warwick.

He was also an Hon preacher to the Mission to Seafarers from 1980-2020.

As a Lt RNR he served as Commanding Officer to TS Fury from 1979-1989 and he was the Chaplain to Rugby SCC from 1978-2020.

From 1970-2000 he was Chair of King George's Fund for Sailors. He was also the Chaplain to a number of Ship's Associations.

He was a licensed lay minister in the Church of England (Reader) and much of his ministry involved managing the funerals of his shipmates and conducting many services for RNA branches and Ship's Associations.

Arthur leaves behind his wife Jane, his daughter Heather, son-in-law Kevin and his granddaughter Abigail. The photograph shows Arthur officiating at the commemoration for the sinking of HMS Warwick in February of this year.

A de Havilland Sea Vixen FAW2 from HMS Hermes launches a 2in rocket during a demonstration in the Channel in June 1961. See 2 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A34467)



## ➤ JULY SWINGING THE LAMP

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

### 1 July 1981

First-of-class nuclear attack submarine HMS Trafalgar was launched at Vickers, Barrow-in-Furness, on 1 July 1981. The seven 5,200-ton boats were updated versions of the Swiftsure class, entering service with HMS Trafalgar in May 1983, and one of the seven (HMS Triumph) remains in service today. Trafalgar was decommissioned in December 2009 in Devonport after 26 years of service. Each boat was powered by a Rolls-Royce

pressurised water reactor (PWR1) which turned water to steam, driving GEC steam turbines which gave the class a top speed of more than 30 knots submerged. Their range was only limited by the needs of the 130 or so souls on board, and they were equipped with five 21in forward-facing torpedo tubes, which could be used to launch torpedoes including the latest Royal Navy weapon, the Spearfish heavy torpedo, which replaced the Tigerfish) and/or Tomahawk cruise missiles, with storage space on board for 30 weapons.

### 2 July 1959

The first Sea Vixen all-weather fighter squadron, 892 NAS, commissioned at RNAS Yeovilton on 2 July 1959 and went on to embark in HMS Ark Royal in March the following year. The de Havilland Sea Vixen swept-wing two-seater was the only practical result of the speculative DH 110 design, intended to serve the needs of both the Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Air Force, but the junior Service opted for the Gloster Javelin

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**HMS Trollope. See 6 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM (A 25644))**

instead. The Royal Navy had also knocked back the project in 1949 when it chose the de Havilland Sea Venom (a simple development of the existing RAF Venom jet) to meet its immediate needs, but de Havilland kept the faith with its DH 110 concept and, despite a disastrous crash by a prototype at the Farnborough Air Show in 1952, which killed 29 spectators and the aircraft's crew of two, a modified version was chosen to replace the Sea Venom. An order for (appropriately) 110 aircraft was placed in February 1955 and the first true Sea Vixen FAW 20 (later FAW 1) – Fighter All Weather – first flew on 20 March 1957. An improved FAW 2 version was introduced to the front line in 1964, with 29 of this variant built new and 67 FAW 1s being converted, making a total build of 145 aircraft, of which 55 (almost 40 per cent) were lost in accidents. This aircraft was operational until 1972, serving with 766, 890, 892, 893 and 899 NAS. It was the first British naval aircraft with guided weapons instead of guns. Four Sea Vixens were converted late in their service life to act as drones (designated the D 3), while a handful were used as air target tugs, designated the TT 2. Powered by two Rolls-Royce Avon 208 turbojets, the distinctive twin-boom FAW 2 could reach speeds of 690mph. The pilot's cockpit was offset to the left of the fuselage, while the radar operator sat completely within the fuselage further back – the position allowing

for a darkened workspace in which to better scan radar screens. Although never tested in actual warfare, the aircraft served in numerous operations, including the withdrawal from Aden, the Borneo Confrontation and the Beira Patrol Image: IWM (A 34467) A Sea Vixen FAW2 from HMS Hermes releases 2in rocket during a demonstration in the Channel in June 1961

### **3 July 1959**

The name of the Tay Division RNR drill ship changed from Cressy to Unicorn, 'a name it held formerly' (AFO 1598/59). The Leda-class 46-gun frigate was launched at Chatham in March 1824 and benefited from the latest design principles as well as the fruits of the evolving Industrial Revolution. Iron was used to strengthen her hull, and her strong elliptical stern, giving a greater arc of fire, was an innovation of designer Sir Robert Seppings. Despite all this she was immediately laid up in ordinary – essentially mothballed on the Medway, left without masts and rigging with a roof built over her upper deck to protect her until she might be needed. Between 1857 and 1862 she was moved to the Thames at Woolwich where she acted as a powder hulk for the Royal Arsenal, storing huge quantities of gunpowder on board (an interesting arrangement for the ship's keeper James Middleton, who lived on the hulk with his

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wife and children). By this time iron ships and steam engines were the Naval way, and Unicorn had no prospect of fighting for her country. In November 1873 she was towed from Sheerness to the Earl Grey Dock in Dundee by HM Paddle Sloop Salamander – her only voyage at sea – to become a training ship for the Royal Naval Reserves. There she stayed for almost 90 years, with her only subsequent move being in 1962 to allow for the construction of the new Tay Road Bridge. In that time thousands of members of the RNR and RNVR trained on board (the Division was the largest reserves unit in Scotland at the time), as well as more than 1,500 wartime Wrens, who learned the skills to become radio operators, bomb range makers, small boat crew, coders and meteorologists. Unicorn also had an important role in both World Wars as a recruiting station and Naval HQ for the Tay region. She was renamed Unicorn II in February 1939, then Cressy in November 1941 (thus avoiding a clash of names with the aircraft maintenance carrier built by Harland and Wolff). She reverted to Unicorn in July 1959 with the scrapping of the carrier, and a campaign to save her from being scrapped led to the formation of the Unicorn Preservation Society (UPS), which took possession of the ship on 26 September 1968. She is now a museum ship, part of the National Historic Fleet and the third oldest ship in the world still afloat (after USS Constitution and HMS Trincomalee in Hartlepool). She is also believed to be the most original preserved ship of her era, retaining around 90 of her original build materials. It is thought Unicorn only ever caused injury to one individual enemy – a German officer from U-2326 which surrendered in Dundee in June 1945, who hit his head on a doorway as he left the ship.

#### **4 July 1941**

Freighter Robert L Holt, commodore's ship of Cape-bound 45-ship convoy OB 337 which had been dispersed on 27 June, was sunk by gunfire from U-69 north-west of the Canary Islands. The 2,900-ton steamship went down with all 56 hands after a two-hour early-morning gun duel with the submarine. U-69 was returning to its base after a successful patrol but had expended all its torpedoes, so the submarine surfaced and attacked the merchantman with its deck gun, firing more than 100 high explosive and 34 incendiary rounds; the freighter replied with her small mounted stern gun but was no match for the German. Robert L Holt had sailed from Liverpool in ballast, heading for the port of Warri in Nigeria. The convoy commodore, who was lost with the ship, was retired Vice Admiral Norman Wodehouse, aged 54, the former Royal Navy rugby captain who also gained 14 caps for England as a forward, including six as captain from 1910-13. In his final season he became the first England captain to lead his side to what is now known as the Grand Slam. Wodehouse was Gunnery Officer of battleship HMS Revenge at Jutland and captain of BRNC Dartmouth 1931-34.

#### **5 July 1942**

Convoy escort HMS Niger accidentally led the first six ships of her column of Convoy QP 13 into the British Northern Barrage minefield, which had been laid between Orkney, the Faroes and Iceland just one month before. In thick fog Halcyon-class minesweeper Niger had mistaken an iceberg for an Icelandic headland, of North Cape and paid the price as she struck a mine and sank with the loss of 119 of her crew of 127. Five of the six cargo ships sank, with only Exterminator and forepart of SS John Randolph being salvaged. Hybert and Rodina went down with no casualties; Massmar sank with the loss of 48 men (26 of them survivors from Alamar, which sank on Convoy PQ 16), five sailors drowned when Liberty Ship John Randolph broke in two, and one man died when Heffron was abandoned. The remaining ships of the convoy, which sailed from Archangel and Murmansk on June 26 and 27 and had split into two groups the day before (one bound for the UK, the other initially for Iceland and the United States) made it safely to their ultimate destinations.

#### **6 July 1944**

Frigate HMS Trollope was torpedoed by an E-boat in the Channel off Cap d'Antifer early in the morning of 6 July 1944 during patrols in support of the Battle of Normandy, killing 64 of her ship's company. The ship reportedly split in two, with the front section drifting off, so after all sailors were removed from it the section was sunk by Allied gunfire to prevent it becoming a hazard to shipping. The stern section was towed to Arronanches and beached, allowing the remaining ship's company to be rescued. The stern section of the American-built Captain-class frigate was later towed back to Portsmouth but with no chance of repair it was declared a total constructive loss and scrapped. Image: IWM (A 25644) HMS Trollope

#### **7 July 1988**

Leander-class frigate HMS Phoebe and River-class inshore minesweeper HMS Blackwater were involved in the search and rescue operation at the site of the Piper Alpha oil rig explosion, 120 miles north-east of Aberdeen. The fixed rig, in 145 metres of water, was a hub for pipelines in the extensive Piper oil and gas field, which had been producing oil since the end of 1976. On the evening of 6 July a failure in communication between shifts meant a crucial pump was restarted despite having been partly dismantled, releasing gas at very high pressure which ignited, destroying the rig's control centre and causing extensive damage. This explosion set off a domino effect, with pipes rupturing and safety systems failing, causing further gas explosions and oil fires that ripped the 35,000-ton platform apart and resulted in most of the rig's accommodation and production modules collapsing into the sea. 165 rig workers died with 61 surviving, and the disaster was the most

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deadly accident in the offshore oil and gas industry – it was also, at the time, one of the costliest man-made accidents in history, with insurance losses put at £1.7bn, and had a huge economic impact as Piper Alpha was central to around ten per cent of North Sea oil and gas production. Phoebe was detached from her duties with the NATO Standing Naval Force Atlantic to help with the rescue and recovery operation.

#### **8 July 1950**

The first British casualties of the Korean War were reported on 8 July 1950. Light cruiser HMS Jamaica was part of a United Nations naval task group bombarding Communist targets on the east coast of the Korean peninsula near Imwon-jin when the ship took a direct hit from a shore battery. The 75mm shell struck the foot of the mainmast close to a gun mounting, killing five soldiers and one sailor. The Korean War began on 25 June 1950 when North Korean forces attacked across the 38th Parallel – essentially the border – into South Korea, rapidly degrading the South's ability to fight as it rolled south through the peninsula. The United States quickly committed forces in a bid to prevent the North's assault spiralling out of control and potentially sparking a wider conflict involving Europe. The UK decided to commit forces on 28 June, and the first Royal Navy units – HMS Jamaica and Black Swan-class sloop HMS Black Swan – arrived in Pusan at the start of July and were soon in action, deploying with American cruiser USS Juneau to destroy five enemy motor torpedo boats off Imwon-jin on 2 July. British forces were second only to the Americans in number, though other nations contributed to the defence of South Korea, including Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and India. An armistice came into effect on 27 July 1953 following a vicious, bloody war which saw both sides take the initiative until a two-year stalemate when Chinese-backed North and American/UN-

backed South troops became involved in a war of attrition. It is thought more than three million died in the conflict but peace has never been formally declared – both North and South Korea still claim to be the legitimate government of the entire Korean peninsula. Almost 1,100 of the victims of the Korean War were British soldiers, Royal Marines and sailors. The following RN units lost at least one man during the war – HM Ships Belfast, Cockade, Comus, Concord, Glory, Jamaica, Mount's Bay, Ocean and Theseus, 41 Commando RM, and the following Fleet Air Arm squadrons: 800, 801, 802804, 805, 807, 810, and 812.

#### **9 July 1964**

Guided missile destroyer HMS Fife was launched at Fairfields on Clydeside, while sister ship HMS Glamorgan was launched at Vickers Armstrong on the Tyne on the same day. Fife was the first of the Batch 2 County-class destroyers, and the only ship to bear the name of the Scottish county. Designed around the Seaslug beam-riding anti-aircraft missile, the perceived main task of the class was to target high-flying Soviet nuclear bombers and reconnaissance aircraft, although early versions of the two-ton Seaslug demonstrated poor performance. A later version promised a better chance of hitting these challenging targets. Despite the missile system's weakness, and the fact it took up large amounts of space in the 6,200-ton ships, the class were relatively successful in their own right, being technologically advanced, seaworthy and fast, managing 30 knots on their combined steam turbine gas turbine propulsion system. During her service career she was part of a global group deployment, visiting Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, the United States, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, France, Malta and Gibraltar en route. While in Hawaii the Royal Navy rum ration was abolished, and it is thought that Fife was the last ship in the Fleet to issue rum as she was the

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**HMS Jamaica. See 8 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (Image: IWM (FL 22384))**



furthest west in the Pacific. She also took part in rescue operations in Dominica after the island was struck by Hurricane David in 1979, for which she won the Wilkinson Sword of Peace. Fife could not take part in the Falklands Conflict as she was undergoing maintenance between October 1980 and December 1982. In 1986 she underwent a further refit to prepare her for the role of afloat training ship, and later that year undertook a

deployment to Florida and the Caribbean in the role of Dartmouth Training Ship. Her final voyage with the Royal Navy was again as Dartmouth Training Ship, this time in company with Leander-class frigate HMS Juno, when the two vessels deployed to the United States and sailed onto the Great Lakes. When she returned to Portsmouth in the summer of 1987 she decommissioned and shortly after was sold to the Chilean Navy as

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**HMS Fife during Exocet missile test firings at the Aberporth range in Cardigan Bay, South Wales in 1983. See 9 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © Crown copyright reproduced under delegated authority from The Keeper of Public Records. Image: IWM (SFPU-CN-1983-5560-20)**



**IWM (FL 693) HMS Erebus pictured in 1944. See 11 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM FL 693)**



Blanco Encalada. She served under the Chilean ensign until the end of 2003, and was scrapped in Turkey in 2013.

#### **10 July 1996**

HMS Rooke, the former Royal Navy base in Gibraltar, paid off on 10 July 1996. Named after Admiral Sir George Rooke, who led the Anglo-Dutch naval force that captured Gibraltar in 1704, HMS Rooke was established near the King's Bastion immediately after World War 2 in 1946 and served both the Royal Navy and wider UK Armed Forces until 1990 when it formally became a Joint Service Base. It later served as the HQ for the Gibraltar Defence Police, but nothing of the original complex survives, the area having been extensively redeveloped.

#### **11 July 1916**

Three Naval trawlers based at Peterhead and escorting a British fishing fleet in the North Sea were sunk by a group of four German submarines around 100 miles east of Aberdeen. HMT Onward first spotted one of the U-boats and warned the other two patrol vessels, HMT Era (170 tons) and HMT Nellie Nutten (185 tons). Nellie Nutten, which was equipped with just a 3pdr gun, steamed towards Onward, which could bring a 12pdr deck gun to bear and had engaged in a duel with one of the enemy submarines. Two further U-boats appeared and the three submarines – U-24, U-52 and U-69 – took up positions from where they could pound the trawlers without risk of being hit themselves. The trawlers continued to reply but were heavily outgunned, and the Nellie Nutten was soon disabled by shells from U-24. By that stage Era was on fire and Onward was to suffer the same fate shortly after. There are conflicting accounts of the skirmish, but it would seem that one or two men from Nellie Nutten died and the remaining ten or 11 were able to make it to a Dutch fishing boat before their trawler sank and

were later landed at Aberdeen. Era was hit by shells from submarine U-69 though her crew of 12 survived and were taken prisoner by another boat, U-52. It is reported that the trawler's skipper, George Noel, died two days later while a POW. And it was this submarine that was responsible for the loss of HMT Onward; once again the crew of 14 survived and were taken as prisoners of war. Two of the commanding officers were awarded the DSC for their response to the attack, and a crewman from HMT Era was later awarded the DSM.

#### **12 July 1943**

Monitor HMS Erebus and the 15th Cruiser Squadron – HM Ships Mauritius, Orion and Uganda – bombarded Augusta in Sicily as part of Operation Husky, the invasion of the Italian island. After a period of intensive attacks by air and sea, the Axis defences on the island had been degraded, allowing the invasion proper to begin on 9 July 1943, and the initial stages went well despite poor weather hampering some of the amphibious and airborne assaults. Erebus's bombardment on the night of 11-12 July was an element of an attempt to take the port by Allied forces which at first was repelled by strong defence, but with Allied land forces converging on the town it was only a matter of time, and Augusta was firmly in Allied hands by 14 July. Operation Husky was completed on 17 August, meaning the sea lanes of the Mediterranean were a much safer place for Allied shipping for the first time in two years, while the invasion formed the springboard for the wider invasion of Italy, which began on 3 September, and was also a crucial factor in the fall of Mussolini. Erebus was a World War 1-vintage vessel, one of two 7,300-ton ships (the other being HMS Terror) built as shallow-draft big gun platforms for shore bombardment. Her two 15in guns in a single raised turret could send a shell of almost a ton some 22 miles or

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more inland. Commissioned in September 1916, Erebus pounded German naval forces at Ostend and Zeebrugge during World War 1 and in 1919 saw service in Allied operations in the Russian Civil War. World War 2 saw her bombarding targets in North Africa and during the Normandy Landings in 1944, targeting German batteries at La Pernelle and Barfleur; one of her two main guns was destroyed when a high explosive shell detonated in the barrel. But she was back in action again off Le Havre in August 1944 (where she was damaged) and in November the same year she supported the assault on Walcheren in the Netherlands. She was decommissioned at the end of the war and scrapped in the summer of 1946.

### 13 July 1772

Cdr James Cook's second voyage of discovery got under way with the departure of HM ships Resolution and Adventure from Plymouth on 13 July 1772. The main aims of the voyage were to circumnavigate the planet and to determine the existence or otherwise of the great southern land of Terra Australis. On his first voyage (1768-71) Cook had proved that New Zealand was not attached to the fabled Terra Australis, and had in fact mapped out the eastern coast of Australia, but there was still a belief that the main landmass lay further south. The two ships were converted North Sea colliers of 462 and 340 tons respectively, and were about the size of current Sea Cadet sail training vessel TS Royalist. They were fitted out with the latest technology,

including marine chronometers for testing, water purification equipment and an azimuth compass. The ships were stuffed full of provisions, including 27 tons of biscuit, 13 tons of salt beef, 12 tons of salt pork, 1,400 gallons of spirits, 4,000 gallons of beer, 200 gallons of olive oil, and to ward off scurvy, nine tons of sauerkraut (pickled cabbage) and 30 gallons of 'carrot marmalade'. Resolution had a ship's company of 90 seamen and 18 Marines and Adventure 81 sailors and 12 Marines. The subsequent voyage was successful, exploring and mapping new regions of Australia and New Zealand, sailing south of the Antarctic Circle and cruising the South Pacific. They became separated in thick Antarctic fog in early 1773 and achieved a pre-arranged rendezvous in New Zealand three months later, but another parting of the ways in a storm that October led to a missed rendezvous, and Cdr Tobias Furneaux decided to take his ship back to the UK, bringing with him the first South Sea Islander to visit the UK (Omai, who later returned to Tahiti with Cook in 1776). Adventure arrived in England on 14 July 1774, two years and a day after leaving. Cook, in Resolution, continued to explore the Antarctic and crossed the Pacific, visiting Easter Island and Vanuatu amongst others. The ship spent Christmas 1774 in Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South America before scouring the South Atlantic, discovering South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. After refitting the ship's rigging in Table Bay, South Africa, Resolution sailed north and reached Spithead on 30 July 1775. Among the many benefits of the voyage was the proving

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of the Larcum Kendall K1 chronometer which Cook praised for its accuracy – it enabled Cook to produce charts of the South Pacific that were accurate and detailed enough to still be in use almost 200 years later.

#### **14 July 1984**

HMS Peacock, the first of five new Hong Kong patrol craft, was commissioned in Rosyth. Sister ship HMS Plover was commissioned six days later. The 712-ton ships, essentially corvettes, were built by Hall, Russell and Co of Aberdeen and fitted out from the start for work in tropical climes; they were also designed to be able to operate in all weathers, even in a typhoon. Two of the class – Swallow and Swift – were sold to the Irish Navy in 1988 while Peacock, Plover and Starling remained on station as the Hong Kong-based 6th Patrol Boat Squadron, and were sold to the Philippines Navy on 1 August 1997, the day after Hong Kong was handed back to China.

#### **15 July 1960**

Boom defence vessels HMS Barbican and HMS Barrington delivered essential food supplies to the Scottish islands of Coll, Tiree and Eigg during a seamen's strike. The strike began on Merseyside early in July when dock workers protested against increasing hours and stagnating pay; and the action was joined by seafarers on board ships along the Mersey and others from ports around the UK joined in. The initial strike lasted two

weeks, but flared up later in the summer, forcing employers to negotiate with maritime unions on better conditions. Coll, Tiree and Eigg are islands in the Inner Hebrides archipelago of the west coast of Scotland.

#### **16 July 1918**

Sloop HMS Anchusa was torpedoed to the north-west of Ireland on 16 July 1918 and sank in two minutes. She was the first of a class of 28 ships, of which six were lost. Built to operate as Special Service ('Q') ships and convoy escorts, and thus resembling merchant vessels (to attract the attention of U-boats on the surface), the class was a sub-set of the Flower-class of single-screw ship. One of the class became a minor landmark in the heart of London – the former HMS Saxifrage became RNVR drill ship HMS President, and was sold into private hands as an events venue in 1988; she is currently in Chatham awaiting funding for restoration. HMS Anchusa (1,300 tons), built on the Tyne by Armstrong Whitworth, was operating with the Second Sloop Flotilla out of Bunrana in Ireland when she was sunk by U-54 with the loss of 78 out of her crew of 93. She had left Lough Swilly two days earlier to cover an inbound convoy off the north coast of Ireland, and on her way home was diverted to help search for an enemy submarine in the area. At just after 0200 on 16 July she was struck on the starboard side by two torpedoes, and with her boilers exploding shortly after she broke apart and sank rapidly. A dozen

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**HMS Barbican under way in coastal waters. See 15 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM FL 1391)**



**HMS Black Prince pictured in 1944 shortly after D-Day. See 17 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 24476)**



survivors were picked up later that morning. U-54 was successful German submarine, sinking 27 ships (including two Royal Navy vessels) between February 1917 and the end of the war, when she surrendered to the Italians. She also damaged four ships.

#### **17 July. 1945**

Royal Navy and American warships bombarded the city of Hitachi on the Japanese main island of Honshu in a late-night shoot that began at 2310 on 17 July 1945 – the first direct attack on the Japanese mainland by British forces. The bombardment was part of the process of destroying Japanese industry in the Mito-Hitachi area, testing defences and undermining morale in the build-up to a possible invasion – Operation Olympic. Battleship HMS King George V (leading British Task Force 37 of the British Pacific Fleet) contributed 267 14in shells; carrier HMS Formidable provided air cover for the bombardment (no enemy counterattack was detected during the mission); anti-aircraft cruiser HMS Black Prince was also defending the force while light cruiser HMS Newfoundland directly attacked a Hitachi factory complex. Destroyers HMS Quiberon and Quality were deployed to screen the bombardment force as well as providing their own firepower to the assault. Earlier the same day a ‘ramrod’ of Fireflies and Corsairs was launched by carriers HMS Implacable and Victorious to attack airfields in Miyagi Prefecture. A ramrod was the RAF term for a bomber force escorted by (quite possibly a large formation of) fighters.

#### **18 July 1944**

Submarine U-672 was depth charged by Captain-class frigate HMS Balfour off Start Point in the Channel in the afternoon of 18 July 1944. The U-boat, part of the 6th U-boat Flotilla and on her fourth war patrol (though she never claimed a single victim), managed to escape Balfour’s attack but had been badly damaged, and was forced to surface early on 19 July, when she was scuttled by her Commanding Officer. Her entire crew of just over 50 was picked up and spent the next year or so as prisoners of war. Balfour, which was prominent in the Channel and Western Approaches during D-Day and the Battle of Normandy, continued hunting U-boats in the Channel until the end of the war, was returned to the US Navy in the autumn on 1945, and sold on in October 1946.

#### **19 July 1941**

New submarine HMS Umpire was accidentally rammed and sunk by HM Trawler Peter Hendriks off the Wash with the loss of 22 of her crew of 38. Built at Chatham Dockyard and launched on 30 December 1940, the 730-ton submarine commissioned on 10 July 1941. Just over a week later she was en route from Chatham to join the 3rd Submarine Flotilla at Dunoon on the Firth of Clyde to prepare for her first working-up patrol in the North Sea, after which she was scheduled to deploy in the Mediterranean. Umpire called in at Sheerness in order to join a northbound North Sea convoy, but engine problems caused her to fall a little behind the convoy during the night, just

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as *Umpire's* group passed a southbound convoy. One of the southbound escorts, armed anti-submarine trawler *Peter Hendriks* struck *Umpire*, sinking the submarine in 18 metres of water. The Commanding Officer was on the fin at the time and was thrown into the water, but the three men with him were lost, as were 19 sailors inside the hull, though another 15 managed to escape, many using breathing apparatus. The wreck, although officially a war grave, attracts divers to view the scene; she lies on her starboard side and is still recognisable as a submarine, though she is broken and has had much hull plating removed when material was salvaged from her.

### **20 July 1944**

Destroyer HMS *Isis* was lost when she struck a mine near O Buoy in Channel T, part of the Allied Normandy Landing sea routes through Seine Bay, though the fact of her loss was not determined until minesweeper HMS *Hound* discovered 21 survivors in the water the following day, one of whom later died. Launched in November 1936, the 1,900-ton ship had helped sink U-562 in the Mediterranean in February 1943 and had earlier been badly damaged by German bombers as she chased two Vichy French destroyers after the Battle of Crete. She was taken in tow but the line snapped; fortunately her crew managed to restart her engines and she limped into Haifa under her own steam. She was earmarked for repair at her home station in Singapore but was towed away before the Japanese invasion, and after hopping from one port to another she completed her repairs in Bombay, India, over the last nine months of 1942. *Isis* took part in the Allied landings in Sicily in July 1943, screening the main invasion force, and carried out patrols and convoy escort duties in the Mediterranean. She rejoined the Home Fleet in May 1944 and on D-Day she bombarded German shore batteries before patrolling the assault area to counter the threat of E-boats and submarines. She continued to provide support and screening, returning to Portsmouth periodically for resupply, until her sinking on 20 July 1944, which was thought to have been caused by a mine rather than a torpedo. It caused the death of 155 officers and ratings, and she is thought to have been the last interwar 'standard' destroyer lost during World War 2.

### **21 July 1812**

Schooner HMS *Sealark* defeated and captured the French privateer *Ville de Caen* 40 miles off Start Point in a fierce 90-minute encounter. *Sealark* was built as the American schooner *Fly*, and was captured by brig-sloop HMS *Scylla* in December 1811. Pressed into service by the Royal Navy, the ten-gun 180-ton schooner, with a ship's company of 50, was sent to the Lisbon Station. On 21 July 1812 while in the western Channel she was warned as to the presence of an enemy ship by a signal from shore, and on investigating she discovered a large lugger under English colours, but it was chasing a couple of West Indiamen. Catching up with the lugger, *Sealark* engaged with the enemy ship for around 90 minutes before

she put a boarding party across and captured her foe, losing seven men in the battle while 16 were injured, including her commanding officer. The enemy vessel was the *Ville de Caen*, bearing 16 guns and a crew of 75, and they had suffered rather more heavily in the encounter, with 15 dead (one of them being her captain) and 16 wounded. *Sealark* took her prize into Plymouth, and her CO was presented with a sword of honour worth 50 guineas; 35 years later a clasp was added to the General Service Medal acknowledging '*Sealark 21 July 1812*', benefiting the four remaining crew members from the skirmish. *Sealark* continued to enjoy an active service life, capturing several more vessels in company with other Royal Navy warships until she was paid off in January 1819 and sold a year later.

### **22 July 1854**

Pioneering paddle steamer HMS *Lightning* led an Anglo-French fleet under Rear-Admiral Chads through the Anglo Channel on 22 July 1854 prior to the reduction of Bomarsund in the Crimean War. *Lightning*, launched in 1823, was one of the first steam-powered warships in the Royal Navy, originally designed as a packet (or support) ship but she was later converted to a survey vessel. It was in this role that she was on duty in the Crimean War, carrying out survey work and reconnaissance missions in the Baltic. The tricky waters around the Aland Islands, between Sweden and Finland, had never been surveyed in detail, so *Lightning* was given the job, after which she led the invasion squadron to the landing site, from where they launched the successful attack on the Russian fortress of Bomarsund. Following Crimea *Lightning* was involved in coastal surveys around the UK and deep-sea scientific surveys of the Atlantic, revealing useful information about life and temperatures in the ocean depths. By now an old ship, *Lightning* finished her career surveying the west coast of Great Britain until she was broken up in 1872.

### **23 July 1938**

Heavy cruiser HMS *Shropshire* rescued survivors of the Danish steamship *Bodil* which had been bombed and sunk the day before by aircraft – possibly German – off Minorca on 23 July 1938 during the Spanish Civil War. The 9,800-ton County-class cruiser was commissioned at the end of the 1920s and spent the first decade of her service life based in the Mediterranean, becoming involved in the Abyssinia Crisis in 1935-6. She served as a refugee control ship at Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War. The survivors she rescued from SS *Bodil* in July 1938 were landed ashore at Marseilles. On the outbreak of World War 2 *Shropshire* was assigned to trade protection patrols in the South Atlantic, followed by convoy protection duties in the Indian Ocean during which time she bombarded Mogadishu and Kismayu during the campaign against Italian Somaliland. Apart from refits, she then spent almost two years patrolling the South Atlantic before returning to Chatham to prepare for a transfer to the Royal Australian Navy to replace Australian heavy cruiser HMAS *Canberra*. She

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left the UK after refit in August 1943, joining a convoy as far as Gibraltar then ploughing on alone, reaching Sydney on 2 October. She worked in the South Pacific as part of Allied Task Forces 74 and 77, and was present in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945 for the signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender. During her time with the RAN she gained five Battle Honours and only five of her sailors died during the period, none to enemy action – one drowned and four died in accidents. Apart from a brief trip back to the UK in 1946 Shropshire remained in Australia and the Far East until she was finally paid off in late 1949. She was towed back to Scotland where she was scrapped in 1955.

#### **24 July 1956**

The Royal Navy's first guided weapons trial ship HMS Girdle Ness was commissioned at Devonport. The 8,700-ton Beachy Head-class repair ship was one of 21 vessels built in Canada to help replace British naval base facilities in the Pacific theatre that had been lost to the enemy. The ships could undertake various roles, particularly acting as depot, repair and maintenance ships for smaller vessels – in the case of Girdle Ness, it would have been landing craft. Girdle Ness – originally ordered as HMS Penlee Point – was built at the Burrard Dry Dock Co in

Vancouver and commissioned on 5 September 1945 – just days after the end of World War 2. With no immediate requirement for a landing craft maintenance ship, the Royal Navy placed Girdle Ness at Rosyth Dockyard in 1946 as an accommodation ship, where she remained until 1952. With the Seaslug surface-to-air missile programme under way there was a need for a trials ship to test the new missile and its launch system under realistic conditions at sea, and Girdle Ness was chosen for the task. She was taken to Devonport for conversion in early 1953, and the three-year programme was completed when she was commissioned on 24 July 1956, looking very different to the original ship. Her superstructure was removed and the forward part of her hull emptied to make room for a bulky triple Seaslug launcher. A large radar installation was also undertaken, both to acquire the target and to track the missile. Initial trials were carried out at Aberporth in Cardigan Bay, where the shore-based launches had been carried out, and the trials programme later moved to Malta to fire missiles in the Mediterranean. While carrying out missile trials the firing process was carried out by the ship's Naval crew, while on-board analysis was done by civil servants from the Royal Navy's Scientific Service. Girdle Ness fired a total of 209 Seaslug missiles during the trials, and her part in

**Continues on page 47**

**A Seaslug test vehicle is fired from HMS Girdle Ness in the Mediterranean. See 24 July. The image is from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 34097)**



the programme ended when she was paid off on 5 December 1961. She returned to Rosyth where she was reclassified as an accommodation ship a year later as part of HMS Cochrane. She was decommissioned early in 1970 and scrapped in Faslane later that year.

### 25 July 1945

Submarine HMS Stubborn torpedoed and sank a Japanese destroyer in the Java Sea 175 miles east of Surabaya on 25 July 1945 – the last British submarine to sink a Japanese warship in World War 2. Stubborn was one of the S-boats built by Cammell Laird at Birkenhead, and was launched on 11 November 1942. Her initial war patrols were frustrating – she fired numerous torpedoes at German convoys and enemy submarines but most failed to find their targets, although a couple of freighters were either sunk or badly damaged by her. During an unsuccessful attack on a convoy off Norway in early 1944 she was badly damaged by escort ships, jamming her aft hydroplanes at hard a dive, causing her to drift down to 400ft, 100ft below her design maximum. Her Commanding Officer Lt Arthur Duff, later head of MI5 after a distinguished career as a diplomat, blew Stubborn's main ballast tank and the submarine bobbed to the surface, only to immediately dive even further down – she reached a depth of 500ft. The Germans eventually broke off the attack and Stubborn headed for home, greatly hampered by her jammed hydroplanes and the fact that the rudder became inoperative. Using her crew

keep the boat on a relatively even keel, Stubborn limped along until she was met by destroyers HMS Meteor and HMS Swift, and was finally towed back to Lerwick. Sent to Devonport for repairs, the evidence of her narrow escape became clear when she was put in dry dock, with her metal plates having been forced in between her ribs because of the pressure of her uncontrolled dives. After repairs Stubborn sailed for the Pacific, arriving in mid-1945. It was while she was on passage from the Clyde to Fremantle to join the Anglo-Dutch 4th Submarine Flotilla that Stubborn chanced upon Japanese Patrol Boat No 2, formerly destroyer Nadakaze, and sank her. She was immediately forced to dive as an enemy aircraft came into view. Stubborn survived the remainder of the war, and on 30 April 1946 was sunk in almost 60 metres of water off St Paul's Bay in Malta as an ASDIC target.

### 26 July 1945

Minesweeper HMS Vestal was severely damaged by Japanese kamikaze aircraft off Phuket Island, Thailand, on 26 July 1945 and sunk by gunfire by destroyer HMS Racehorse. The 1,125-ton turbine-powered Algerine-class minesweeper was launched at the Harland and Wolff yard in Belfast on 19 June 1943 and commissioned on 11 February the following year. After working up with others of her class in the North Sea Vestal was deployed to the Far East in 1945. On 24 July sister ship HMS Squirrel struck a mine, killing seven of her crew. Survivors were taken on board Vestal

**HMS Stubborn alongside HNoMS Narvik on 25 February 1944 after returning from an eventful patrol when she attacked two convoys and was damaged under heavy depth charge attack. She is coming alongside depot ship HMS Forth, which has cleared the lower decks to cheer Stubborn in. See 25 July. The image is from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM (A 21951))**

**Continues on page 48**





and delivered to battleship HMS Nelson, while the stricken minesweeper was scuttled by destroyer HMS Rotherham. Two days later Vestal met her fate during Operation Livery, a minesweeping operation off occupied Malaya. In the early evening the alarm was raised as several aircraft were spotted flying in over Phuket Island, and shortly after Vestal was hit by a kamikaze plane – the only British warship in the war to succumb to the so-called ‘divine wind’. The attack killed 20 of her ship’s company, and with Vestal beyond saving the remaining crew were taken off and the ship was scuttled by destroyer HMS Racehorse, thus becoming the last Royal Navy ship to be sunk in the war. Operation Livery was the final action by the Eastern Fleet before the Japanese surrender.

### **27 July 1808**

Schooner HMS Pickle, perhaps one of the most famous ships in the Royal Navy despite her diminutive size, was wrecked off Cadiz on 27 July 1808. The 127-ton topsail schooner (also known as a Bermuda sloop) was a six-gun civilian vessel named Sting when she was bought for £2,500 by Vice Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour for use as a tender on the Jamaica Station, where the officer was Commander-in-Chief. Now renamed Pickle, she actively participated in the capture of a number of small vessels in spring of 1800, though another task was to carry the body of Vice Admiral Seymour, who had died of yellow fever, back to England in the autumn of 1801. Shortly before that Pickle had been involved in a single-ship action with a Spanish privateer off Cow Island, Hispaniola, which resulted in the death of her commanding officer. The Spanish, with a crew numbering twice that of Pickle, attempted to board the schooner but were repelled, and eventually fled the scene making use of her superior speed. Back in European waters, Pickle made an urgent 14-day voyage from Malta with vital documents, and her CO, Lt John Lapenotiere,

dashed from Devon to London by road – a trip he was to repeat three years later. Over those three years Pickle undertook patrols in the Channel, at one point helping rescue the ship’s company of 74-gun third rate HMS Magnificent which ran aground on a shoal off Brest. In the weeks before the Battle of Trafalgar Pickle carried out reconnaissance missions off Cadiz, managing to provide the exact size of the fleet in port, but she took no part in the battle itself as she was too small. As the action tailed off, Pickle joined other small ships and boats in rescuing sailors from French ship Achille, between them plucking up to 200 men and two women from the sea. With the Battle of Trafalgar won, the schooner was sent with despatches by Vice Admiral Collingwood to relay the news of victory and Nelson’s death to the Admiralty in London. Lapenotiere made landfall in Falmouth and continued to London in a chaise – a small two-wheeled carriage – to deliver his message. For his pains, Lapenotiere was promoted to commander, given a sword worth more than 100 guineas and a bounty of £500. Pickle continued to make herself a nuisance to French ships in the Channel over the following years, but her career came to a juddering halt on 27 July 1808. Having set out from England bound for Cadiz with despatches for Collingwood, Pickle was skirting the coast of Spain when a lookout spied what he thought was Cape Santa Maria. Shortly after midnight the lookouts saw a patch of turbulent water, and despite efforts to turn rapidly the ship ran aground on the Chipiona shoal near Cadiz. The crew made it to shore in the ship’s boats, but when they returned to the schooner the following day they found her beyond repair with her hull caved in. A diver spent three days recovering the despatches and other valuables. Pickle’s name lives on in the Pickle Nights in which (generally) rating celebrate the voyage of the schooner in 1805 – the occasion was created in the 1970s as a lower deck equivalent to

**Continues on page 49**



the wardroom's Trafalgar Night dinner, though on a more informal basis and usually held a week or so later.

### **28 July 1914**

The first successful (and official) launch of an aerial torpedo was carried out on 28 July 1914 by Naval aviation pioneer Sqd Cdr Arthur Longmore in a Short Folder seaplane out of Calshot, near Southampton. A similar exercise had been carried out the day before by Charles Gordon Bell, but that Whitehead torpedo launch from a Short S64 seaplane was not officially sanctioned. The Americans had also been experimenting with such a means of attacking enemy ships since around 1912, but the US Congress showed no interest in backing such research until the nation entered the war in 1917. Longmore – who joined the Senior Service in 1904 – was one of the Royal Navy's first four officers selected for pilot training, and his interest in the development of aircraft led to him devising a method of fixing floatation devices to undercarriages, allowing him to become the first Briton to take off from a runway and land on water. His groundbreaking flight with a torpedo aboard his aircraft took place while Longmore was commander of the experimental seaplane base at Calshot, on the Solent. The intention was to use a purpose-built Sopwith Special floatplane to drop the weapon, but it proved unable to take off with the torpedo in place. Longmore suggested modifying one of the Short Folder Tractor biplanes on the base, and with designs sent by Shorts the aircraft was prepared. On 28

July Longmore successfully took off, and the 14in Whitehead torpedo, weighing more than a third of a ton, was successfully launched. Longmore's war service saw him split his time between commanding RN Air Service units and as a ship's officer, seeing action at the Battle of Jutland on board HMS Tiger. Longmore transferred to the RAF on its formation, and went on to achieve high office in the junior Service.

### **29 July 1917**

Elderly former torpedo gunboat HMS Halcyon sank German submarine UB-27 almost 30 miles off Great Yarmouth on 29 July 1917. The 1,070-ton ship, which had a ship's company of around 120, was built at Devonport Dockyard and launched in April 1894. She carried five torpedo tubes as well as two QF 4.7in guns, four 6pdrs and a five-barrelled machine gun, but never got the chance to show these weapons off in wartime. In 1898 she was allocated to the Mediterranean Station and sailed to Souda Bay. After a stint as coast defence ship at Port Said she returned to Devonport and was placed in reserve for refit. Despite being offered for sale, she remained on the Navy's books and in July 1913 she recommissioned as the Senior Naval Office's ship, North Sea Fisheries. Converted to a minesweeper in 1914, Halcyon was involved in an early skirmish at the Raid on Yarmouth on 3 November 1914 when she chanced upon a group of enemy battlecruisers, which she challenged. Although met with heavy gunfire, Halcyon stood up to the German ships as they withdrew, losing one sailor to a shell fragment.

**A Short Folder seaplane (S82), the aircraft type from which the first successful aerial torpedo launch was carried out. See 28 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM (MH 2894))**

**Continues on page 50**



**HMS Halcyon. See 29 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© The rights holder (Q 75441)**



On 29 July 1917 a lookout in Halcyon spotted a periscope east of Yarmouth and Halcyon steamed over to ram the submarine, dropping two depth charges for good measure. She was later credited with the sinking of UB-27, a relatively successful 270-ton Type UB II boat which had sunk 11 ships on 17 war patrols including the armed boarding steamer HMS Duke of Albany, which was sunk in August 1916 with the loss of 25 men. Halcyon was sold for breaking in November 1919.

### **30 July 1943**

Cunard ocean liner RMS Queen Mary, in her wartime role as a troopship, arrived on the Clyde from New York on 30 July 1943 with 16,683 souls on board – a record for the greatest number of people ever embarked in one ship that stands to this day. She sailed from New York on 25 July and covered the 3,353 miles in four days, 20 hours and 42 minutes at an average speed of just over 18 knots. The liner, launched on the Clyde

in September 1934, made her maiden voyage on the North Atlantic crossing in May 1936 and took the Blue Riband for the fastest scheduled crossing three months later; she lost the honour in 1937 to SS Normandie but took it again in 1938 averaging more than 30 knots, retaining it until 1952. War was declared while Queen Mary was on a westbound voyage and she remained in New York with Normandie (and in March 1940 by RMS Queen Elizabeth) until it was decided they should be converted to troopships. Normandie was destroyed by fire during conversion, but Queen Mary sailed for Sydney where she was converted alongside other liners. Sporting a new grey colour scheme (earning her the nickname of the Grey Ghost), her staterooms replaced by dormitories, Queen Mary sailed back north with Australian and New Zealand troops. She and her sister Queen Elizabeth tended to make trooping runs without escorts as few ships could keep up with them as they zigzagged to avoid U-boat attack; it

**Continues on page 51**

**Queen Mary pictured at Greenock in September 1944, preparing for a transatlantic passage carrying wounded American troops. See 30 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM (A 25910)**



is thought only one submarine was in a position to attack during the war but was outrun by the liner. One tragic incident in October 1942 saw Queen Mary collide with an escort vessel, light cruiser HMS Curacoa, north of Ireland with the loss of almost 340 lives. The liner carried Churchill across the Atlantic on three occasions for vital meetings; on one trip in 1943 Churchill and his staff drafted out the plans for the Normandy Landings and he signed the D-Day Declaration on board. Although she continued her pre-war trade after 1945 Queen Mary was eventually rendered obsolete by air travel, and she is now a museum ship/tourist attraction in Long Beach, California.

**31 July 1944**

Frigate HMS Loch Killin and sloop HMS Starling sank U-333 in the South West Approaches –

the first successful attack using Squid mortar. Squid was an anti-submarine weapon that fired a pattern of three depth charges designed to straddle a submarine's hull and crush it – and very successful it proved, with a wartime kill rate of one submarine ever three attacks; post-war analysis determined it was ten times as effective as dropping depth charges in the traditional fashion. Squid entered service with destroyer HMS Ambuscade in May 1943 and by the end of the war had been fitted to 70 frigates and corvettes. On 31 July 1944 HM Ships Loch Killin and Starling were to the south west of the Isles of Scilly when they picked up the contact which turned out to be U-333, and a Squid attack sank the submarine with all 45 hands.

**HMS Barrosa in a post-war exercise, steaming through the pattern which the exploding charges from her Squid Anti Submarine weapon firing its missiles ahead of the ship had made a few seconds earlier. See 31 July. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM (A 33111))**



# ▶ LONGCAST

2024

<b>3 Aug</b>	Cheshire Maritime Ball, Tatton Park
<b>21 Sept</b>	4 Area meeting, Redruth and Camborne
<b>12 Oct</b>	World Uckers Championships, Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth
<b>Autumn (tbc)</b>	D-Day Memorials Cycle Event in Normandy
<b>10 Nov</b>	Remembrance Ceremony at the Cenotaph, London
<b>18 Jan 2025</b>	4 Area AGM, Dorchester
<b>15-18 May 2025</b>	Londonderry Battle of the Atlantic 80th Anniversary Commemoration
<b>17 May 2025</b>	4 Area meeting, St Austell

Please check the RN Shipmates.co.uk website for a list of further reunions: [www.rnshipmates.co.uk](http://www.rnshipmates.co.uk)



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



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<b>Portsmouth Historic Dockyard</b>	£20 for a day ticket 30% off annual Ultimate Explorer tickets
<b>Royal Maritime Hotel 182 Queen Street</b>	A 10% discount on food, selected drinks and hotel rooms
<b>Sea Urchin's Gin</b>	10% to RNA from the sale of each bottle
<b>Navy Strength Gin</b>	Don't forget to tick the box for RNA.
<b>Arctic Convoy Vodka</b>	P&P is free for orders over £40, otherwise it is £4.50.
<b>China Fleet Country Club</b>	Click on the link for offers for Serving and ex-Serving RN and RM
<b>Trinity Insurance</b>	For offers see <a href="https://tinyurl.com/ssy8vt5s">https://tinyurl.com/ssy8vt5s</a>

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# ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION



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# STANHOPE PARK, HOLSWORTHY

FRIDAY 26th - SUNDAY 28th JULY 2024



## ATTRACTIONS TO DATE INCLUDE:

- ★ Living History Groups
- ★ Re-enactment Groups
- ★ Extensive WW2 Encampment
- ★ Military Vehicles
- ★ Firepower Demo's
- ★ Danger LIXB Demo's
- ★ Field Hospital
- ★ Evacuation Centre
- ★ Radar Room
- ★ Air Raid Shelter/Blitz Experience
- ★ ENSA Stage Acts
- ★ Vintage Market
- ★ Vintage Fair Games
- ★ Remote Control Tanks
- ★ History Exhibition
- ★ Airsoft Range
- ★ Poster Competition
- ★ Prize Draw
- ★ Convoy
- ★ Pipe and Drum Parade
- ★ Live Skirmishes/Re-enactments
- ★ Evening of Boxing
- ★ Walkabouts in Costume
- ★ 1940's Dance

Friday 26th – Boxing evening – Leisure Centre  
 Saturday 27th Park events – 10 am to 4pm  
 Saturday evening – 1940's Dance – Memorial Hall  
 Sunday 28th Park events – 10am to 3pm

\*Tickets for boxing and dance evening will be on sale from April onwards with details of how to book.



For more info  
 Call Ria on:  
 07818 680851

★ Boxing

★ 40's Dance

or email:  
 holsworthy44@gmail.com

## HOLSWORTHY '44

"Our Town at War" 26th - 28th July 2024

A commemoration of Holsworthy during WW2 to be held in Stanhope Park and Football Club

### THE MILITARY ENCAMPMENT

There will be a military camp set up in the park consisting of several living history groups and re-enactors. From field hospital to SoE units. From the Free French to British and American troops. Plus, much more.

They will be accompanied by their vehicles and will be living exactly as if they were in action. You will be able to talk to them all and find out about the history of their units and the war time operations they represent. Such as 'Bulbasker' and 'Market Garden' etc. Tracked and halftracks and larger vehicles will be stationed in the football car park.

### BLITZ SHELTER, RADAR ROOM & EVACUATION CENTRE

Sited in the football club will be the fascinating Radar Room, set up as it would have been during the war. A hands-on experience. The Blitz Shelter will be filled with sounds and smells of an air raid. Children can pretend to be evacuees in our evacee centre, which is designed to be fun, but educational too. A minefield will provide the setting for LIXB demonstrations.

#### CONTACT US

Phone: 07818 680851 / 07806 529789  
 Email: holsworthy44@gmail.com Web: 3144 uk  
 32, Old Market Place, Holsworthy EX22 6FS

*Holsworthy has a rich war history filled with tales of courage, humour and intrigue*



Camp 42 POW camp sited in Stanhope Park (courtesy of Holsworthy Museum)

### BOXING MATCH AND 1940s DANCE

Friday 26th will see a boxing match between Devon and Cornwall to commemorate the Joe Louis fight that took place here. On Saturday evening there will be a 1940's dance in the Memorial Hall. The site of our event was in fact a Prisoner of War camp during WW2. Our history exhibition will cover this and other fascinating local facts.

### OTHER KEY ATTRACTIONS

Military skirmish re-enactments (on Sunday); ENSA stage acts; vintage market and militaria market; NAAFI Donut Dollies; vintage fairground games; firepower demonstrations; hand-to-hand combat demonstrations from the Marines; a pipe and drum parade; a poster competition for the schools, etc ...

### WHO WE ARE

We are a not-for-profit community group who all believe in creating a tableau of living history and education surrounding Holsworthy at war. Sharing the experiences and recollections of its people, via a weekend of military might, social history and a bit of fun too!

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER

Please contact us if you would like to take part in this exciting event. Perhaps as a marshal, re-enactor/living history, educational or admin support.

#### FUNDING ENQUIRIES

Phone: 07866 402318  
 For vendor and participant forms, please request via email / messenger or through the website. Thankyou.



The Holsworthy Home Guard. Photo courtesy of Holsworthy Museum





  
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## HMS Sultan

The Chaplaincy  
Tel: 023 9354 2015 Mil: 9384 32015

## HNMB Clyde

The Chaplaincy, HMS Neptune  
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## HMNB Clyde

Chaplaincy Hub  
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## RM Condor

The Chaplaincy  
Tel: 01241 822226 Mil: 9338 72226

## HMS Collingwood

The Chaplaincy  
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## RM Bickleigh

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Tel: 01752 727027 Mil: 9378 87027

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