

SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



D-DAY 80

➤ SALUTE TO HEROES OF NORMANDY LANDINGS

Veterans of the greatest military operation in history – and those comrades who fell at their sides – took centre stage at events commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day and the opening shots of the Battle of Normandy.

Ceremonies and gatherings on both sides of the English Channel allowed D-Day veterans – all of them in their late 90s or older – to come together to recall the events of June 1944, and for those who have enjoyed the freedoms they fought for to show their appreciation.

One of the first such gatherings took place at Southwick House on the slope of Portsdown Hill, the Supreme HQ Allied Expeditionary Force, from where Allied commanders directed the initial stages of Operation Neptune, the airborne and amphibious assault that struck the German defences in Normandy in the early hours of 6 June.

The Map Room still features the giant wall maps of the assault area, and it was here that a group of Normandy veterans met up at the start of a programme of events to mark 'D-Day

Continued on page 3

► CONTENTS

Contacts	9
Central Office welcomes Royal visitor	10
From the General Secretary	11
Procedures for Conference delegates	13
D-Day diary – the view from HMS Orion	14
Excellent competition for Standard Bearer honours	17
Special Interest Groups	20
Fireside Chats	20
RNA corporate sponsors enjoy tour of aircraft carrier	21
Competition – name the logos	22
Branch News	25
Obituaries	34
Focus on... D-Day	36
June Swinging the Lamp	38
Longcast	54
Offers	54

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 5 July.



Continued from page 1

80'.

A group of veterans heading for Normandy on 4 June received a spirited send-off to herald three days of D-Day 80th anniversary events.

Historic and serving Royal Navy warships escorted the Brittany Ferries ship Mont St Michel transporting some 40 men and women who had roles in the Normandy Landings as they headed to France.

The 80th anniversary of D-Day and subsequent Battle of Normandy is likely to be the last milestone marked on such a grand scale on both sides of the Channel in the presence of those who were part of Operation Neptune in 1944.

With the youngest survivor of the operation aged 98, many veterans chose not to make the pilgrimage to France in favour of attending commemorations in

the UK – notably the showpiece tribute on Southsea Common on 5 June.

But around 40 decided to head back to the beaches in conjunction with the Royal British Legion and Brittany Ferries.

They left Portsmouth with an escort that included World War 2-era Motor Gunboat 81, motor launch HMS Medusa and RAF rescue boat HSL 102 which led the flotilla escorting the ferry out of Portsmouth Harbour and into the Solent.

Behind those veteran craft came two Royal Navy fast patrol boats, HMS Trumpeter and Dasher, followed by the Sea Cadet sail training vessel TS Royalist, then minehunter HMS Cattistock ahead of the ferry.

Bringing up the rear were harbour tugs, shooting jets of water to provide a traditional maritime tribute to

Continued on page 4

Images © MOD 2024 unless stated





(Above) Former Wren Marie Scott signs a reproduction road sign at Southwick House for a charity auction. (Right) Normandy veterans on the ferry to France



the veterans.

The formation stayed with the ferry until they reached the Nab Tower, a dozen miles from Portsmouth Harbour, when they broke away from Mont St Michel. Cattistock, Trumpeter and Dasher also headed for Normandy to take part in commemorations marking the capture of Pegasus Bridge on the Caen Canal, sailing past the iconic metal bridge at midday on 5 June where the Commanding Officer of the Parachute Regiment and Royal Navy Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Andrew Burns, took the salute.

After berthing at Quai de Blainville, Cattistock's sailors also attended the paratroopers' midnight vigil at Pegasus Bridge.

Cattistock has a historic link with Operation Neptune, as her predecessor won the Normandy/D-Day battle honour, providing close air defence to minesweepers in the hours before the landings.

Also crossing the Channel on 4 June 4 were personnel from 47 Commando, whose landing craft delivered a piper to the beaches on 6 June, and offloaded a troop of Royal Marines to wade ashore and travel to Port-en-Bessin, the village and harbour liberated by the unit's forebears in 1944.

5 June saw the focus of attention turn to Portsmouth, and specifically Southsea Common, where a stage and arena had been set up to host the national D-Day 80 commemorative event, attended by some 8,000 people, including a host of VVIPs.

The event – compered by Dame Helen Mirren – featured music and dance as well as military pageantry.

At the heart of it were memories of both the living and the dead, from those who fought and survived the battle to gain a toehold on the French coast as well as those who fell on the beaches or who have since

Continued on page 5



Royal Navy Normandy veteran George Chandler is greeted at Southwick House



crossed the bar.

Of particular poignancy was a letter from one officer to his young wife and children, which left very few dry eyes in the audience.

Veterans Eric Bateman, who served in monitor HMS Erebus off Utah Beach, and former tank crewman Roy Haywood, who lost both legs below the knee just weeks into the Battle of Normandy, were united in their call for people to honour the legacy of their comrades and ensure their stories and deeds are never forgotten.

More than 50 serving Royal Navy personnel volunteered to form the Naval element of the Royal Guard for this event and other D-Day 80 commemorations this week.

From the opening DC-3 flypast to a wartime swing numbers, a rendition of We'll Meet Again which turned the makeshift auditorium into a sea of moving small Union Jack flags and heartbreaking last letters and diary entries of participants brought to life by actors, the event was as much carnival as commemoration.

The King, the Prince of Wales and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak all performed readings with His Majesty calling upon the nation to "always remember, cherish and honour those who served that day and live up to the freedoms which they died for. We are eternally in their debt."

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key, who crossed to France to take part in commemorative events in Normandy on D-Day 80 itself, praised the "skill,

Continued on page 6

World War 2 veteran Wren Jean Taylor is presented with a personal letter of congratulations from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key on her 100th birthday on 3 June and thanking her for her service. The letter – and the Leading Hand epaulettes she never had the chance to collect – were handed to her by Rear Admiral Jude Terry at the D-Day Story Museum in Southsea



Picture of HMS St Albans by S/M Nigel Huxtable





endeavour, bravery and ingenuity of hundreds of thousands of people” committed to a single goal: victory over tyranny.”

He continued: “The feats were phenomenal, humility and humour are an inspiration. They set an example to us all and we should not take for granted in our times what it took to achieve in their pasts.”

The RNA enabled three of its D-Day veterans to attend the UK celebrations in Portsmouth.

The veterans sat in the Royal Box and were able to have a conversation with His Majesty The King, Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness Prince William, along with many other military dignitaries from the UK and overseas.

Among those working towards victory in June 1944

was the Women’s Royal Naval Service’s Betty Withers, from Hertfordshire.

Betty said: “I was stationed to Hayling Island, just outside Portsmouth. There were hundreds of troops on the island, maybe thousands. They were practising landing on the beaches. I was a cook.

“One day we prepared all the boys their supper and then the next day we woke up to get breakfast ready and they were gone. I gave a lot of those men their last supper. It stays with you, that knowledge.”

Royal Navy veteran Frank Cooper, from Middlesbrough, made the pilgrimage to Portsmouth to mark this special anniversary. Frank was aboard frigate HMS Loch Fada, protecting the massive invasion fleet from U-boats.

Frank said: “I can’t see so good, and my hearing’s difficult, but you couldn’t have kept us away. I’m not a hero, them that didn’t come home are the heroes.” WRNS veteran Vera Brett, from Kent, also attended the event.

Continued on page 7





D-Day Wren veteran Vera Brett pictured at the Southsea Common event with RNA Communications lead Sarah Bewley

Vera said: "I did all sorts in the war. We didn't know it was going to be the start of the attack on that day, but one of my friends said it might be a busy shift, and my goodness, she was right."

The RNA members each met the Royal Family and talked with them about their service.

Betty said: "They were all lovely, and so friendly! King Charles had a laugh with me about the Jenny Wrens and how naughty we could be. Camilla looked beautiful in her pink outfit, and William, well, what a dish!"

The event also included a Red Arrows fly-past, a Typhoon jet and newly-refitted Royal Navy frigate HMS St Albans, which fired a six-gun salute as it sailed past the Royal Naval Memorial on Southsea Common.

The warship continued across the Channel to support events on D-Day 80 itself, anchoring off Ver-sur-Mer as guardship for events ashore at the British Normandy Memorial.

Later in the day she moved along the coast to anchor off Omaha Beach to support US-focused commemorations. The RNA thanks the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) for its funding, which enables Royal Navy veterans to experience events such as this, when they otherwise would not be able.

The departure of the VVIP guests and audience was not the end of the entertainment on Southsea Common, with one of the highlights of the evening being a spectacular drone display which drew gasps from onlookers as various iconic images from D-Day were traced out in light in the sky, including an impressive Spitfire.

Continued on page 8





That evening also saw a service of remembrance at Bayeux Cathedral, one of the first major events of the French programme of events as attention switched from Portsmouth to Normandy.

World leaders gathered in Northern France to pay tribute to those who fought to liberate Europe from the Nazis, with French President Emmanuel Macron was joined by King Charles, President Joe Biden, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who received a standing ovation from his fellow guests. President Biden, speaking at a war cemetery which is the final resting place for almost 10,000 American combatants in the Battle of Normandy, paid tribute to the "noble band of brothers" who landed on the beaches in 1944, saying they were all heroes. "They knew, beyond any doubt, there are things that are worth fighting and dying for. Freedom is worth it. Democracy is worth it. America is worth it. The world is worth it," he said.

He went on to emphasize the need for strong partnerships between the democracies of the world.

Those thoughts were echoed at other ceremonies around Normandy on D-Day 80. Justin Trudeau took part in a separate ceremony commemorating the 381 Canadians who died on D-Day as they landed on Juno Beach.

Mr Trudeau said: "We must all continue to stand for democracy day in day out, we owe it for future generation."

The Prince of Wales, Prince William, was also present at the Canadian commemorative ceremony at Juno Beach. He thanked Canadian veterans for their "extraordinary acts of bravery and sacrifice".

Meanwhile, King Charles laid a wreath at the British Normandy Memorial in Ver-sur-Mer with a note attached acknowledging the sacrifices made on D-Day itself.

The King told those attending that he hoped the sacrifice made by the D-Day veterans will "never be made again".

"Our gratitude is unending, and our admiration eternal," he concluded.

There was also a national service of commemoration on 6 June at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

■ D-Day veteran and RNA member S/M Peter Seaborn wrote a poem to commemorate those who were lost on D-Day. Peter forged his ration book so he could sign up a year early to follow his brothers to war. He initially wanted to join the Army, but their offices were closed on that day, so he went Navy instead. Hear him read the poem at <https://tinyurl.com/4xkajf8x>

For further stories recorded by D-Day veterans see the RNA YouTube channel at <https://youtube.com/royalnavalassoc?si=8R0wvYmB1UDDi4Ox>



➤ 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

Find Semaphore Circular online
<http://bit.ly/RNADownloads>
 or
 RNA Website / Members Area / Downloads /
 Circulars

Snail Mail – Postal Address
 RNA Central Office,
 Lanyard House,
 Scott Road,
 HM Naval Base,
 Portsmouth
 Hants PO1 3LT



► ROYAL VISITOR TO CENTRAL OFFICE

The Royal Naval Association was delighted to host HRH The Princess Royal at their Central Office in Portsmouth last month.

The occasion, part of a wider visit by Princess Anne to the Naval Base, was primarily to rename the building – formerly simply known as Building 1/087 – to Lanyard House.

Princess Anne talked to Central Office staff and RNA officials about the work the RNA undertakes on behalf of its members, and of the importance of military charities in general.

The Princess has a reputation as a hard-working and very approachable member of the Royal Family, and despite having many engagements on the same day, she took the time to engage with each individual, to crack a joke or two and help everyone to feel comfortable in her presence.

Bill Oliphant, General Secretary of the RNA, said: "It was a huge honour to host HRH The Princess Royal on behalf of all our members.

"She took great interest in our organisation, and I can confirm that she is as gracious and charming in person as she seems to be from afar.

"It is almost overwhelming to receive so much Royal attention in the last week; in every sense, we are the Royal Naval Association."

The name Lanyard House was chosen to reflect the former use of the building as a communications facility, as communication is regarded as an important

Continued on page 11

Pictures by S/M Nigel Huxtable





part of Central Office's function. Lanyards are important in connecting things, and that reflects the function of Lanyard House, which the RNA shares with the main office of the Association of Wrens. The visit by the Princess came within a week of the excellent news that the new Patron for the RNA is King Charles III, who of course spent time in the Royal Navy himself. The RNA is deeply honoured to announce that His Majesty has confirmed his Patronage of the Association. Although Her Late Majesty's RNA Royal Charter stated, "We

do reserve unto Ourselves, Our Heirs and successors to be the Patron of the Association", it would have been presumptuous to assume that this would be automatic. More than 1,000 organisations enjoyed the Patronage of either Her Late Majesty, the former Prince of Wales, or the former Duchess of Cornwall. However, the news from Buckingham Palace that the RNA will retain the Monarch's Patronage is a huge privilege of which the Association is very proud. This very welcome announcement coincided with the Association achieving its 20,000th member. Targeting younger members, the Association is flourishing, more than doubling its membership since the COVID lockdowns. The Association's purpose is to

foster comradeship within the membership and work closely with other charities in the Naval sector, signposting members in their times of need. The Thriving Together program brings the wider Naval family together for immersive activities to promote mental health and wellbeing through comradeship and support networks. The RNA also supports young recruits and their families through their first phase of training, ensuring that each young person has a mentor who they can trust and rely on when the going gets tough. Bill Oliphant, General Secretary of the RNA, said: "We are proud and humbled to receive confirmation from Buckingham Palace that the Royal Naval Association will retain the Patronage of our Monarch, King Charles III. As a former Naval officer himself, this reaffirms our motto, Once Navy, Always Navy".

➤ FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Ahoy Shipmates,

Well, what an amazing month it has been for the Association.

Still giddy with the news that His Majesty has taken on the Patronage of the Association (**see panel below**), on 9 May we were honoured to welcome HRH The Princess Royal to Central Office to name our building which we share with the Association of Wrens in Portsmouth Naval Base.

Formerly just known as Building 1/087, it is now known as Lanyard House.

This week though has seen the fantastic commemorations and celebrations around the 80th anniversary of D-Day which was not only the largest amphibious operation ever launched, but was a feat of such immense scale, endeavour and planning effort which, without the modern communications tools we are all use today, was simply remarkable.

The Association was represented at the events in Caen and Portsmouth on 5 June while the National President, S/M Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, along with our National Standard Bearer, S/M Steve Champion, attended the memorial service at the new British Normandy Memorial in Ver-sur-Mer in Normandy on 6 June.

In keeping with our 'Thriving Together'



Caen, 5 Jun 24: RNA National President, VAdm Duncan Potts, leads D-Day 80 tributes at naval memorial within the British Garden of Peace

programme of activities to attract younger members into the Association, I had planned a cycle tour of the Normandy beaches to coincide with D-Day 80 but a recce in January led me to the conclusion that this wouldn't work.

How right I was as the place was jam-packed with visitors commemorating the landings, and it would have been a health and safety nightmare for pushbikes.

Instead, we organised a self-funded Battlefield Tour which took in several of the key sites, and paid our respects at a ceremony organised by the Friends of Normandy Trust at the British Memorial Garden of Peace in Normandy.

My thanks go out to all our fabulous group of 24 who all contributed to make it a thoroughly memorable few days in France, and represented the very best of what our Association is all about. True comradeship.

Next stop Cardiff for our AGM/Annual Conference and there's just enough space to thank S/M Mike Smyth for a superb Standard Bearers' Competition and BZ to all competitors.

Dear Captain Oliphant,
 I am pleased to confirm that His Majesty would be delighted to accept the Patronage of the Royal Naval Association....
 Yours sincerely,
 Sir Clive Alderton
 Principal Private Secretary to The King and Queen



With a group of Dutch military in the background, S/m Mike Milne gives a presentation on the heroic deeds that kicked off D-Day with the capture of Pegasus Bridge.

Bill

➤ NEW AGGIE'S INITIATIVE SWINGS INTO ACTION

Naval charity Aggie's has launched a new national initiative to help support Naval families.

ACTioN – Aggie's Community Teams in other Neighbourhoods – aims to listen to what families have to say, offer them support, comfort and signpost them to areas of expert support, should it be needed.

Aggie's ACTioN co-ordinator Katie White said her work is confidential and that she works outside the Chain of Command (unless there is a safeguarding issue for the serving person, in which case she is duty bound to report this to their Divisional Officer).

To gain an understanding of exactly what dispersed Naval families need Katie would like to run an online focus group, where you are able to open, freely and without judgement, tell her how Aggie's can help you and your family.

In addition, she can help your serving person record a bedtime



story for your children to listen to whilst they are separated.

The Aggie's Storybook Waves project is not just for deployments – it is for any kind of separation that your child might experience. The serving parent might be weekending, on a training course, have long working days so are unable to be there at bedtime, or may live away from the family home. However the serving parent and child are separated Aggie's can connect them through Storybook Waves.

To find out more, drop Katie an email at Katie.White@aggies.org.uk or take a look at www.aggies.org.uk/storybook-waves.

➤ PLEA TO FEMALE VETERANS

The Female Veterans Transformation Programme (FVTP) is seeking help in co-producing a toolkit for use by service-providers in the commercial, statutory and charitable sectors, helping transform service provision for the 250,000-strong group whose specific needs are not always being addressed by current provision.

The three-year, UK-wide and tri-Service programme is funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and NHS England, in partnership with the Cobseo Female Veterans Cluster and the Women's Royal Army Corps Association.

If you are a female veteran, whether you served for one day or 22+ years, they would like to hear from you, even if you have never accessed support services

If you are a service provider, employer or charity that work with female veterans there is a survey for you too. See the FVTP website <https://www.fvtp.org.uk/get-involved> and complete the relevant questionnaire to help them find out 'what does 'good' look like for female veterans services?'

➤ OPEN DAYS

If you have ever wondered how the Royal Naval Association is supported by the Central Office team you could always take a look for yourselves – shipmates are advised that the dates of Central Office Open Days this year are 28 June, 9 August and 6 September.

For more details, or to register interest, contact Sara on 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).

➤ PROCEDURES EXPLAINED FOR CONFERENCE DELEGATES

It has been some time since we had motions for Conference, so RNA Head of Governance S/M Nick Purkis thought it would be good to provide an update for the procedure for Conference:

As you will have seen, we have five substantive motions for Conference and a number of motions for rule changes.

The motions for rule changes will only go forward if the relevant substantive motion is approved by conference.

For each motion, the proposer has five minutes. Thereafter the Seconder of the motion and any Shipmate Delegate who wants to speak for or against the motion will have three minutes each.

Time limits will be adhered to strictly and I will close off microphones if any Shipmate overruns!

Once all speakers who wish to have spoken for or against the motion, the Conference Chair will call a vote. Only delegates may vote.

For a motion to succeed, two thirds of the delegates present must vote in favour of the motion.

Delegates attending should make their mind up from the debate and, whilst they can take guidance from their Branches, should vote with their own conscious and not on instruction from their Branch. If delegates attend with their views already made up on motions, then there would be no point in having the debates.

Conference will be a long day this year, with the number of motions, so we will factor in regular comfort breaks as necessary, but delegates are asked to return promptly, to ensure that they are available to speak to and vote on the motions.

Delegates are also asked to keep to time limits when speaking, so that everyone who wants to speak is able to.

If any Shipmate is uncertain on the procedure for Conference, please feel free to reach out to me or a member of the Standing Orders Committee.

■ Please note that important documents for the Conference - the agenda, statement of accounts, Trustees' report and minutes from the 2023 AGM - are all available to download from the Members/Downloads sections of the RNA website, in the May sub-folder in the 2024 Circulars folder (<https://royal-naval-association.co.uk/members/downloads/may-2024-and-conference-documents/>)

► D DAY DIARY – THE VIEW FROM HMS ORION

Just over 80 years ago Radar Mechanic Ian Michie, aged 19, was ashore in Glasgow with friends and family on 1 June 1944. He returned onboard the cruiser HMS Orion, anchored off Greenock, and got his head down expecting to go on leave again the next day.

But that's not quite how things turned out...

Thanks to Ian's children, and through his nephew Graham Saxby, of Reigate branch, we have been given permission to publish the following excerpts from the journal which Ian kept of daily life on board the cruiser in 1943-44.

As it turned out, there was no shore leave on Friday 2 June, and by the evening many of the ships that had been at anchor had sailed south.

We pick up Ian's account from **Saturday 3 June.**

A very misty, damp morning today and the weather is trying its very best to rain. At 10 o'clock Lower Deck was cleared and the Captain spoke to us on the Quarterdeck. (The last time this happened he announced our trip home). He said that he knew where the invasion was taking place but not when. The squadron was moving south to be ready, for the date would have to be fixed by the weather. He gave us all a talk on gas, first aid and then mentioned the question of refit and leave. All those who thought we were just going to do a week's bombardment and have a month's leave had another think coming. Our refit would naturally depend on how many ships were damaged and if we were lucky and not touched, we might have to carry on for months yet.

D DAY 80

We steamed down river at 11am in the usual line-ahead formation and were out at sea about 12.30, Belfast, Diadem, Orion, Emerald, Ajax, Argonaut, escorted by four destroyers including R99 Urchin. We were steaming south all day and the only thing we saw was the Stranraer packet boat about 3.30pm. The seas were choppy and the weather misty but conditions weren't too bad.

Sunday, June 4

Awoke this morning to find us steaming NNE with land on our starboard beam. This puzzled me for quite a time until I guessed it was the south coast of the Bristol Channel.

The current buzz is this – we were headed for Plymouth and actually rounded Land's End just before 8am. Radar silence was imposed but this was broken with the Bridge's permission to test the sets. It was this, we suppose, that caused the whole squadron to turn back and all morning (2pm now) we have been stooging around. We have sighted what we think is Lundy Island and Hartland Point on the mainland.

About 4pm R99 Urchin made contact with a submarine about four miles away. She dropped a pattern of depth charges but no definite results were obtained. Later in the day we passed a convoy of about 20 ships in charge of what looked like an old Dutch or

Yankee cruiser.

The sun came up in the evening but the heavy swell continued and we remained cruising at a speed of about 8kts.


Monday, 5 June

Still at sea today. It is sunny and clear but there is still a heavy swell. We are still cruising at about 10 knots and are somewhere near Land's End. Radar silence has been imposed again.

About 10 am we were supposed to have rounded Land's End and were steaming ENE.

At 12.10 pm today the Commander spoke and announced that, if the weather continued as it was, tomorrow morning would see the opening of the Second Front. He could not tell us where, for the operation might yet be postponed but if the weather held we would be off the enemy coast by morning. The ship would go to Battle State at 9pm tonight - all inflammable gear stowed away, everything loose secured, all damage control gear ready. Two notices from Gen Eisenhower and Admiral Ramsay were posted up, wishing us Godspeed.

On the whole, everyone is glad. We have known for the past three weeks now that once more Orion would have a front-line place, and knowing this, the feeling has been 'it's got to come, the sooner the better'. Many people will be killed, it certainly will be many, many times worse than Anzio. He's ready for us, knows it must be soon - let's hope that no one has told him where. This afternoon will be one of tension and nervousness – I feel it now, it's only natural. But when the dirt begins to fly tomorrow, I don't think we'll have time to



HMS Orion fires a broadside against a German battery on D-Day, 6 June 1944 (Imperial War Museum image (© IWM FLM 4021))

worry about things. If it's our turn, it'll come too quick for us to think about it.

About 2pm it was recognised we were off Plymouth and two cruisers, HMS Bellona of Black Prince class and heavy cruiser USS Augusta came out to join us. Soon afterwards we steamed past about 200 Yankee LCIs and Brit LCTs under American destroyer escort. About 5pm the Commander gave us the routine for the night. At 9pm the ship would go to Battle State, at 9.30pm the Commander would broadcast; at 2200 the ship would go to Action Stations 2nd Degree and the 1st Degree would follow at 0400.

I was told later (for I was asleep) that the Padre broadcast. He said that he had been with the ship all through the other landings and had never spoken. But he sensed this was going to be different and he read a few prayers.

Commander's Speech 9.30pm

A) Intentions of initial assault – a beachhead 50 miles wide and 10 miles deep between the Cherbourg and Le Havre peninsulas. There were no ports in this flat district and we would take our own with us – yesterday the convoy we passed was part of the 2nd Front. Dutch cruiser Sumatra and the old merchant ships were to be sunk to form breakwaters. Other old depot ships, including the Centurion, will complete ports, to be known as Mulberries or Gooseberries.

B) Forces to be landed - 1 American Army and 2nd Brit Army. (This consists of 4 corps each of about 3 Divisions. 1 Division averages 20,000 men so that Army will consist of about a quarter of a million men). Americans will take section of coast from North of Bayeux to Cherbourg Peninsula. British landing will take place in Caen area and actual Assault forces will consist of 50th Northumbrian Division and 2nd Canadian Division.

C) German forces in area. 30 Divisions at least known to be in France. Atlantic Wall held by 13 rather inferior Divisions. Nearest reserves are 21st Panzer at Caen and infantry division at St Lo. 3-4 Divisions known to be in Brest Peninsula.

D) Object of supporting forces is to prevent enemy rushing up reserves and allow us with our improvised ports to build up reserves quicker than he can. Tonight 5,000 Airborne troops will be landed in Caen area to hold back and harass

21st Panzers
Each cruiser has a battery as its initial target - will bombard as soon as daylight permits aircraft to spot. Our target is Mont Fleury Battery of 4 6in guns in concrete emplacements, approx halfway between Caen and Bayeux. Orion will bombard from swept channel and bombardment will therefore probably be stationary. Aircraft will attack targets beforehand.

Tuesday, June 6 – D-Day

At 4 o'clock this morning we went to Surface Action Stations. Those on the flag deck reported that targets inland were getting a very heavy battering from the RAF. We were then moving slowly down the swept channel towards our bombardment position. The Commander reported that the sweepers had made a much wider channel than was expected and we'd have room to manoeuvre (audible sighs of relief!). At 5.10am Orion was the first cruiser to open fire. Good old Orion – always first there! Our shooting was very good and direct hits were soon being recorded. We scored 13 direct hits on the battery before shifting target. The other cruisers were all ripping away – Belfast was firing tracer.

I went up on deck about 7am and all the landing fleet was visible. The Landing Ships (Infantry) were lowering their boats, the LCTs, LCIs etc, were going in. The destroyers were close in, pounding the beaches and engaging pillboxes and the LCGs were moving in, ready for a rocket attack. Breakfast intervened and whilst we were having ham and bread, it was piped that of the 177 rounds fired (8.15am) 36 had been direct hits. Very good shooting.

Since then (this is written at 9.30am) there have been several pipes and the last one was to the effect that the Mont Fleury battery had been captured. We are now bombarding another battery that is holding up the advance. There has been very little return fire so far and this has been inaccurate. During the day our 6in guns were, on and off, in action all the time. Our targets were spotted by a plane which sent back reports on our shooting. They varied from heavy shore batteries to heavy and light mortar batteries, concentrations of tanks, artillery and troops. We had no actual interference during the day, although there were several red warnings. However we were

none too keen about the night for everyone expected bombers, E-boats and subs.

The Commander broadcast about 10pm and said our shooting had been terrific. We had engaged and destroyed (or dispersed) 22 targets and had fired 1,121 6in shells. This was an all-time record for Orion for one day. It is also common talk that we had to take over both Emerald's and Belfast's initial targets to destroy them.

Wednesday, June 7

Last night did not turn out to be as bad as expected. There were no E-boat or U-boat attacks but we had an almost continual air-raid from midnight to 5am. The BBC stated that air cover was maintained throughout the night – it was, by the Luftwaffe! The Jerries were all fighter-bombers and I don't think they hit us or we hit them. Anyway, the guns' crews didn't get any sleep. Rumours went round that Emerald and a Fighter Direction ship had been hit but this proved untrue. Early in the morning we were ready to bombard again but there was a ground haze and our spotter could not find the targets. We were therefore silent until noon but since then (written at 3pm) we have been blasting away. In the morning they piped that through glasses German troops could be seen surrendering. Later on it was announced that General Eisenhower in HMS Manxman had passed down our port side, going into the beachhead. The BBC announced the names of several of the naval units taking part - US battlewagons, Texas and Arkansas, the British battlewagons Warspite, Ramillies and Nelson and the famous(?) British cruisers Glasgow, Belfast, Enterprise, Gloucester and Orion. I have seen through glasses today one of the British battlewagons operating on the American sector and I think all of them must be down there. Certainly covering the landing of the 50th, the 10th CS are the only big ships and we have about half a dozen Brit destroyers close in. In the afternoon it was piped that they had commenced sinking the Allenbank to form a breakwater or mole. This time I got quite a good view of events through the telescope attached to our port 20in Signal Projector. The ship was down with a heavy list but they managed to right affairs and when last seen, seemed to be submerged on an even keel with only her

upperworks awash.

After tea, the situation became less clear. We moved about half a mile south and joined with the forces supporting the Yankee landing. We bombarded positions inshore and it was later announced we were bombarding in support of the 47th RM Commando who were moving south to join up with the American bridgehead.

Obviously, we were opposite the gap and south of us there was the whole American beachhead. After we had bombarded for a short while we moved north. Our targets had been invisible behind a ridge but we had a good view of an attack on a radio mast and through a telescope I could see individual houses and windows of a village on the sea coast.

We steamed past our initial bombardment place and round a corner and then saw the whole British invasion fleet. I had thought that we had been supporting the whole Divisional landing but it was now clear to me that we had been on the right flank of the Brit 50th Division and as this moved down to join up with the American 1st Army we had moved also.

Here indeed was an invasion fleet. Literally hundreds of small craft, bigger river craft, coastal steamers, merchant vessels, Liberty ships and small liners. Ashore the beaches were dotted with assemble transport, tanks, guns, lorries etc. Ships were moving here and there and we got friendly waves from troops moving in. It was then announced that we were going to Spithead to ammunition overnight. We would leave the beaches at about 7.30pm and arrive about 11.30.

In the middle of all this concentration of shipping was to be found CS10 Belfast with her hook down. We moved close alongside, for we were (it transpired later) to take off wounded. The crew of the Belfast were togged up in their antifeash gear, in contrast to the obvious inactivity of the ship. As we came alongside, our guns' crews who had been up for about 36 hours were jeering and yelling, "Go to sea, you lazy b*****ds", "All dressed up and nowhere to go", "Going on 48hrs?"

and there was similar jeering coming back. The Army, in their LCIs, were enjoying this.

Up till now, it had been a picnic. I had left word that I was to be found on the flag deck and with many others had been rushing from side to side, looking through glasses at the men and trucks on the beaches (for we were not more than a mile off) waving to transports as we moved past, pointing out 'ducks' and 'seeps' and all the other assorted invasion craft.

Then the pinnacle came back with the wounded, four of them, and two dead. The dead were sewn in canvas and for a time were placed where they were easily visible. It only dawned seriously on me then that, but for a stroke of luck, Providence, God's will, it might have been me. This sobered me up and many others beside me. Up till then it had been a picnic, a game, or a war at long range with the only sensation of danger, the nightly air-raids. Now we were looking at the stark reality of the situation. But then it came upon me that we were constantly running this risk. Whenever we went to sea, we stood our chances of being mined, torpedoed, bombed. We just didn't think of such things – they are taboo in mess deck conversation. So I settled my qualms but I still wasn't as boyish as I'd been before.

About 7.15pm we steamed out and hared off across the Channel at full speed. We have been passing landing craft, on and off, all the time. At 9pm the two dead soldiers were buried at sea after a short service on the quarterdeck. They had apparently been blown up by a mine on the way in.

Ammunitioning is to take place all night from midnight onwards – no watchkeeper excused.

We arrived off Spithead earlier than expected – about 10.15pm and could make out Ryde as we moved in.

Thursday, June 8

Had all night in my hammock and had a clean, warm sleep. Was on the job at 7.30 this morning and just managed to get my daily routine done before we set off at 8am. We had only been in 9 hours during

which time we had embarked 1,500 6in shells and 1,500 cordite charges and had also re-oiled. The watchmen had had only 4 hours sleep and here we were off again. We passed the Warspite as we moved downstream and she was also re-ammunitioning.

Our trip across was uneventful. We passed many assorted types of landing craft and had a good view of four large sections of breakwater being towed across by tugs. We arrived off the beachhead about 11.30 and moved straight down to our old position, at the junction of the American and British forces. Apparently during the night, there had been E-boat attacks, which were repulsed with no loss, and air attacks.

Things aren't going so well ashore. The British and Canadian beachhead is 10-12 miles deep but the Yanks have only got 3,000 yards in.

We did nothing until about 7pm when we took part, with the Emerald, Argonaut and the Dutch gunboat Flores, in an area shoot. We heard later that this had proved successful and was of great value. The lads are wild at the way they slaved all night and have done nothing all day but they've managed to make up some lost sleep.

There was a breakdown last night on one of my sets and it took place at the only time when I was away for a long period - having a wash. However things were got going again within a quarter of an hour.

■ **Editor's note:** Orion continued to support Operation Overlord until the end of June, when she was switched to the Mediterranean and fulfilled the same role for Operation Dragoon – the Allied landings in the South of France. She then went on to serve in the Aegean – hosting Churchill and Roosevelt on board at one point – before providing further support for land forces in Italy.

At the end of the war she continued to serve in the Mediterranean until mid-1946 when she returned to the UK and was placed in reserve. Two years later she took part in underwater explosion trials, and was finally broken up in 1949.

Ships gather off the Isle of Wight at the start of the invasion of France (Imperial War Museum image: IWM (A 23720A))



➤ EXCELLENCE COMES AS STANDARD...

It was a case of Champion by name, champion by nature as S/M Steve Champion retained his title as National Standard Bearer for the RNA despite stiff competition at HMS Excellent last month.

Steve topped the scoreboard in three out of the four categories in the Chester Cup competition – Equipment, Movements and Marching – and was narrowly beaten into second place in the final category (Dress) by runner-up S/M Dave Corrigan.

Third place went to S/M Christine Walker, who went home with a brace of trophies – she was the first recipient of the Bob Coburn Memorial Trophy and also took the Association of Wrens Trophy.

Pushing them hard throughout the competition were (in no particular order) S/Ms Martyn Evans, Richard Shenton, Ron Dorey, Alf Snowdon and Adrian Cartwright.

The winner of the Novice Cup was S/M Gail Foster, who came out on top in all four scoring categories.

Runner-up was S/M Michael Mann, third place went to S/M Bryan Goldsmith, with S/Ms Jonathan Wood and Andrew Hamilton taking the final two places.

There was an additional presentation on the day at Whale Island, with S/M Steve Champion being handed his

Continued on page 18

S/M Steve Champion is presented with the Chester Cup by RNA National President Vice Admiral Duncan Potts (above right), while S/M Gail Foster won the Novice Trophy (right). Pictures by S/M Nigel Huxtable



King Charles III Coronation Medal by Vice Admiral Potts.

Steve had the privilege of taking an active part in the coronation in London on 6 May last year representing the Association, and here is his account of the day from his perspective:

There were 100 standards on parade for the Coronation stationed, in single file, around Parliament Square, led by the National Standards, that is the Colour, 3 RBL, Royal Naval Association, and Royal Marines and RAF Associations. This put the Nationals almost opposite the doorway to Westminster Abbey, which meant we were amongst the first to salute the emerging crowned King Charles III.

It absolutely tipped down with rain – think Singapore at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. It was torrential. Even the soles of my socks, specially ironed for the occasion, were soaking wet...

We had to remain at the dip until the whole procession had left Parliament Square. It took about 15 minutes for the carriage with the King and Queen inside, the mounted entourage and cavalry divisions to go past.

When we eventually came up to the Carry I couldn't get the Standard fully into the carrying bucket. I wasn't going to fiddle about with it, thinking something must have come adrift, but managed to get enough in to just be able to control the Standard. After the procession had left, the Parliament Square contingent formed up for the march-off. We had about a one-and-a-half mile march across Westminster Bridge to Waterloo Gardens where we were fallen out.

I then discovered why I had a bit of trouble getting the Standard back to the Carry – the bucket was full of rainwater!

It was a huge honour to parade the National Standard and salute the King on behalf of all RNA Shipmates, both past and present.



S/M Christine Walker is presented with the Bob Coburn Memorial Trophy (top) and the Association of Wrens Trophy (below), while S/M Steve Champion was presented with his Coronation Medal (above). Steve was carrying the RNA National Standard at the Coronation of King Charles II last year (left)



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

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

Who are we?

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

Vision:

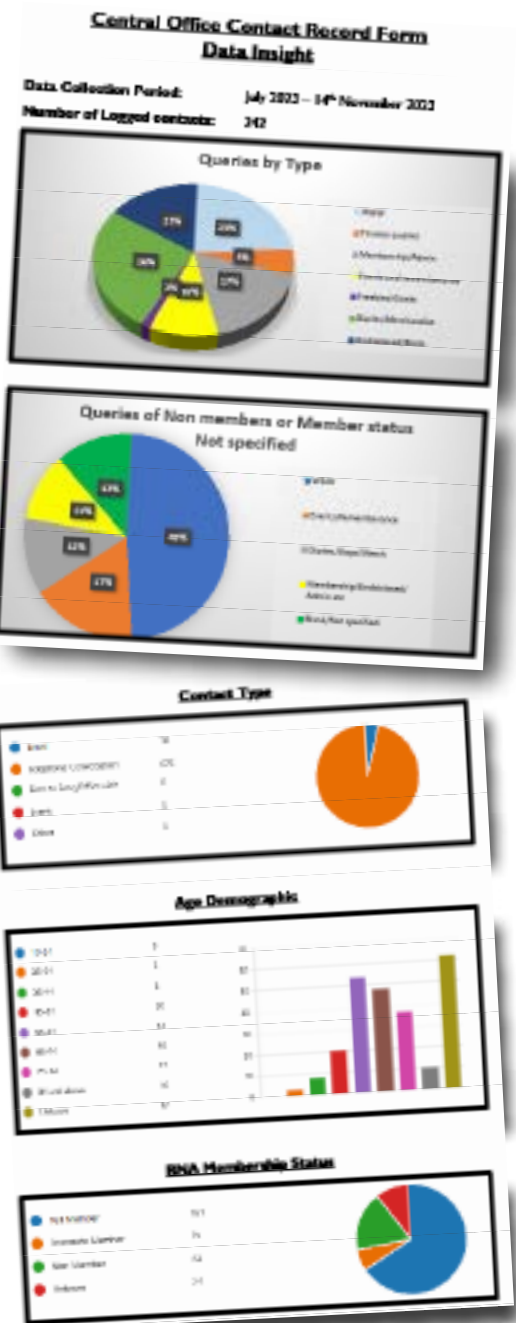
To be the most relevant Naval Association offering support to our members and smaller Naval Associations, whilst ensuring they maintain the independence and unique identity. Working with other charities, organisations and Governmental agencies to create an environment that improves the wellbeing of all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

Mission:

To successfully foster comradeship within our membership.

Values:

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



► BUSY JUNE FOR FORCES EMPLOYMENT CHARITY

June is a busy month for the Forces Employment Charity, offering plenty of opportunities to boost your career prospects.

Examples include a British Airways Military Insights Day in London on 20 June (1000 to 1600), allowing veterans

and soon-to-be Service leavers interested in careers in the commercial aviation sector to explore British Airways and enjoy a behind-the-scenes look, as well as the chance to network with professionals in the field.

A Women in Financial Services Networking event will be held on the evening of 25 June in London, where you can connect with successful female veterans in the world of finance.

Lunchtime Learning webinars will run from 18 June through to July, with the first taking an up-to-date market overview of where to look for jobs.

Nominations for the 2024 Heropreneurs Awards are now open, and close at 1700 on 28 June – do you know a military-owned business that deserves recognition? Heropreneurs celebrates entrepreneurial excellence in the military community.

For more information on the above events, and many more opportunities to help you find a new career or develop your existing one, see <https://www.forcesemployment.org.uk>

► 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

➤ 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 to sign up.

➤ NEW WORKSHOP DATE

The Welfare/Wellbeing Workshop planned to take place at Cardiff prior to the Conference has been postponed. This event will now take place on Saturday 22 June in Manchester and invitees will receive a letter from the General Secretary shortly. Attendees will be drawn from those who meet the criteria of the Association Welfare/Wellbeing Officer. The total number of attendees will be circa 20.

➤ VOLUNTEERS CAN HELP CHARITY'S BIG DAY IN LONDON

Would you like a day out in London helping marshal SSAFA's biggest annual fundraising event? On 29 June, 30 teams of civilians take part in the 13 Bridges Challenge to walk ten miles over 13 London bridges, raising more than £80,000 for the

Armed Forces charity. SSAFA needs volunteers to run checkpoints, and to cheer and support more 600 walkers. All you need is your sense of fun, a foldable chair, and a packed lunch. Bring a friend/dog, and wear your beret and medals if you wish!

Volunteers will also be needed at other events – see <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/volunteer-for-ssafa/volunteer-at-an-event> for details. If you are interested, please contact Nick at: thirteen-bridges@outlook.com

➤ MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

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

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

* 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

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

Cricket – Mark Smith : Markmiff1962@gmail.com

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

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

Divers – Bill Lawless: billylawless40@yahoo.com

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

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

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

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

Date	Presenter	Subject
Mon 10 June	Chris Taylor	Nine Lives, Four Collisions and a Ditching – part II
Mon 17 June	David Griggs	HMS Beagle - the ship that changed the course of history
Mon 24 June	Darren Jackson	Combat Stress
Mon 1 July	TBC	TBC
Mon 8 July	Victoria Schofield	The Rescue Ships



➤ RNA CORPORATE SPONSORS ENJOY TOUR OF AIRCRAFT CARRIER AND HISTORIC DOCKYARD

The Royal Naval Association was delighted to welcome some of its corporate sponsors to visit their head office in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard last month.

RNA Chief Executive Bill Oliphant, said: "We are very grateful to our corporate sponsors. They enable the RNA to support all of its members, especially in their times of need."

The group met staff at Lanyard House, the RNA HQ close to HMS Victory before going on to see some of the main sights of the Historic Dockyard.

They were hosted on board aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales by Commanding Officer (and RNA member) Capt Will Blackett, and as the day was staged during half-term week it allowed families to join in for the first time.

Organisations represented on the day included international law firm Haynes and Boone LLP, law firm Blake Morgan, AW Shipping Management and United Services Portsmouth rugby club.

As well as a look round the carrier, visitors enjoyed a light lunch, a boat tour around the harbour and a chance to take in the attractions of the Historic Dockyard.

Pictures by S/M Nigel Huxtable





ENGAGEMENT

ONCE
NAVY
ALWAYS
NAVY

It's Competition time!

3



We are heading to Cardiff this month for the National Conference, so this prize will have a Welsh theme.

Name the logos below.



Send your answers by email to

engagement@rnassoc.org

by June 25th 2024

Winner will be announced in the July's Circular.

In event of a tie - a draw will take place to achieve ONE winner.

➤ NEW LIFE INSURANCE PARTNER FOR TRINITY

Trinity now has a new Life Insurance partner, LifeSearch: <https://www.lifesearch.com/life-insurance>

The search for a new life insurance partner was conducted personally by Trinity's CEO and involved extensive scrutiny and due diligence. LifeSearch emerged as the clear partner of choice and Trinity are very pleased to be entering into a partnership with them.

LifeSearch is an independent intermediary that has been protecting individuals and families since 1998. They have found the right cover for hundreds of thousands of families and over 1.8m individuals, and will source the best Life Insurance, Income Protection and Critical Illness Cover solutions for veterans.

As such, LifeSearch has a proven track record that has demonstrated to Trinity that they are a worthy partner that can be entrusted to serve the military community.

Clare Banfield will be assisting with the coordination of Trinity's growing affinity community. Clare has many years of experience working for Trinity and has a wealth of knowledge about the Armed Forces community.

As part of their commitment, LifeSearch will make a donation of £50 for each policy bought to the charity/association nominated by the customer.

This facility will run in the same way as Trinity's current Buildings & Contents insurance donation scheme.

The Royal Naval Association has teamed-up with Trinity Insurance Services Ltd to bring attractive benefits to RNA members.

Trinity is a veteran-run insurance brokerage and the only specialist military insurance business that meets the needs of Britain's serving military and veteran communities.

Trinity has provided exceptional service to serving personnel for the past 24 years. As a veteran-led company and the first UK specialist military broker to expand its offer to veterans, Trinity seeks to establish



a long-term relationship with its customers by protecting them, their property and loved ones whilst serving, through transition and second careers into full retirement.

Trinity sees how critical Service associations like Royal Naval Association are to the UK's veteran community.

Associations help build a strong sense of community and are a vital support

network.

This is not only good for physical and mental wellbeing, but also for financial wellbeing as associations are key platforms for sharing experiences and advice on financial matters. This is why Trinity supports associations like the RNA by offering tangible benefits in the form of discounts and exclusive access to products and services to help attract and retain members.

As a result of this relationship, RNA members benefit from preferential rates or discounts and exclusive access to products and services including Personal Accident, Life, Health, Travel and Household cover.

As an example, RNA members are eligible to join an exclusive 50Plus multi-trip annual travel insurance scheme that requires no medical screening at a very competitive price.

This and other offers are available via the Members' Offers tab in the Members' Area of the RNA website, or Talk to Trinity on 01243817777 or by email at hello@talktotrinity.com

For veterans' life insurance see https://talktotrinity.com/veterans-life-insurance?utm_source=RoyalNavalAssociation&utm_medium=Refferal

For Buildings and Content the link is https://talktotrinity.com/veterans-home-insurance/?utm_source=RoyalNavalAssociation&utm_medium=Refferal

Trinity also has a monthly newsletter, Sitrep' that can be subscribed to from the homepage (<https://talktotrinity.com/>), containing relevant and interesting material.

➤ DETAILS FOR EDEN CAMP ALL SERVICES PARADE

The Eden Camp All Services Parade and service of remembrance will be held on Sunday 8 September.

The format and timings will be the same as in previous years: the museum will be open free to veterans and serving members and their husbands/wives/partners/carers/chauffeurs and Cadet groups from 10.00am.

The parade will assemble at 1410 for the march to the Heritage Hall Display arena at 1430.

The Yorkshire Volunteers Band will lead the parade, followed by the Standards and those wishing to take part in the parade.

If attending as a group, organisers would be grateful if you could advise



them of approximate numbers of members. It would also help considerably if you can let them know if you will be coming by coach or minibus so that they can arrange parking for you on site. Eden Camp Modern History Museum, situated on the outskirts of Malton in North Yorkshire, is a family-owned

business that started more than 30 years ago.

Originally a prisoner of war camp for Italian then German POWs, it began as a tented community inside barbed wire fences in 1942, later replaced by a more permanent camp.

When Stan Johnson bought the huts in 1985 he discovered they were generally intact and as they were left when the POWs departed in 1948, since when the museum has been continuously developing, telling the story of the People's War – the social history of life in Britain from 1939-45.

See <https://edencamp.co.uk> for more details.

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



► BRANCH NEWS

Wrexham Branch

It was with a great sense of pride and pleasure that S/M Kevin Hackett, Chairman of Wrexham branch, received a telephone call from the Regional Engagement Warrant Officer for Wales and the West of England, Robert Govier, inviting him and Wrexham branch Standard Bearer S/M Jeff Hughes, to the handover of the affiliation of HMS Dragon to the city of Wrexham on 29 April.

Not since the early years of World War 2 had Wrexham been honoured in this way.

The county borough of Wrexham had three warships affiliated with the then town and surrounding villages.

Destroyer HMS Veteran was lost with all hands following a torpedo attack off Nova Scotia as she headed out on convoy duties, while corvettes HMS Begonia and HMS Anemone were both sold to Norway after the war.

The event held in Portsmouth Naval Base was attended by Wrexham MP

Sarah Atherton, who had campaigned in Parliament for this honour to be bestowed upon the city. Also there was the Leader of the Council Mark Pritchard, the Chief Executive Ian Bancroft and councillors Andy Williams, the mayor of the city of Wrexham, and Beverly Parry-Jones, the Armed Forces Champion, who has since her election been fighting for greater recognition of the Royal Navy within the county borough.

Kevin said he is sure that this honour has been achieved due to the activities of the shipmates of Wrexham Branch. They have promoted the RNA at every opportunity, inviting all the Wrexham and further afield veterans associations to their events over the past nine years, increasing their numbers, from four to 69, and their footprint throughout North Wales, to become one of the most active and widely recognised veterans associations in the area.

Jeff and Kevin travelled to Portsmouth on the Sunday and were very pleased

to meet with Dave MacAskill from Central Office, who kindly gifted two

continued on page 26 →





red dragons (Y Ddraig Goch) emblazoned with the RNA logo and Wrexham above, to be presented to the Commanding Officer of HMS Dragon, Cdr Iain Giffin.

They also took along with them a ship-style name board 'WreCSAM'. This had been made by their shipmate Eric Holmwood, who they unfortunately lost in January – happily, a part of him remains sailing with the Fleet.

Following a visit to Dragon, which remains in the hands of BAE, they were welcomed to Admiralty House for a reception with the heads of departments and some of the ship's company.

This also included a briefing by the Ops Officer and the MEO on the future plans, and a display by the Royal Navy Historical Branch on the history of Wrexham and affiliated ships.

As the event concluded, Jeff and Kevin were met by Dave MacAskill, and escorted to Central Office, where they had the opportunity to catch up with General Secretary Bill Oliphant and Membership Manager Sara Field, to chat about upcoming events.

Bill also took the opportunity to present Kevin with an iPad to assist in his Tot Time and livestream activities, which will come in very handy and was very gratefully received.





St Neots Branch

S/M Geoff Patterson of St Neots branch recently paid a visit to the D Day memorial in Normandy, and has given us a brief account of his experience there.

He was asked to take part in a cycle ride visiting various sites of the D-Day landings, providing support to five riders attached to the Royal British Legion cycle group.

They visited various sites of interest including the Mulberry Harbour, the American D-Day Museum/war memorial, and the British D-Day Memorial, which included the Standing With Giants display. Geoff had the honour of laying a Royal Navy wreath at the British Memorial.

"The Standing with Giants display was, for me, the highlight of the trip. A truly moving display and well worth a visit," said Geoff, who added that the display will be in place until August.





Falmouth Branch

Following a request from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, members of Falmouth Branch, representing veterans across Cornwall, met at Falmouth Cemetery for a short service of commemoration at the graveside of Edmund Ingebrikt Johnsen.

Branch Vice President S/M Mick Stevens conducted a short service, Branch Secretary S/M Ian Stobie laid the wreath, and also in attendance were S/Ms Peter Bellamy, George Grant and Nick Trefusis.

Edmund was born in 1921, joined the Royal Norwegian Navy two weeks after his 21st birthday and was killed in the Normandy Campaign in 1944 aged 23.

He had previously been decorated for gallantry in 1943 – an ordinary young man doing extraordinary things. We remember all these young people who gave their everything. **Photographs by Sam Stevens.**

■ Members of the veteran community, including three members of Falmouth Branch – Chairman Richard Hallowes, Vice President Mick Stevens and former Mayor S/M Steve Eva – were privileged to attend the Falmouth Mayor Making ceremony at the Princess Pavilion (pictured above).





Chatham Branch

Shipmates from Chatham Branch gathered at the Great Lines War Memorial Chatham with comrades from Area 2 for a ceremony which celebrated the centennial of the memorial obelisk and celebrated the freedom won through the sacrifices of those who fought in Normandy in 1944. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission organised the 'Lighting their Legacy' event, at which a special lantern was lit with the invitation for attendees to "follow the light of liberation from the UK to Normandy to mark D-Day's 80th anniversary." It also aimed to build connections between generations, ensuring the flame of commemoration is passed from the veterans to younger people. Those who attended included the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Lady Colgrain, the Leader of Medway Council, Cllr Vince Maple, and the Mayor of Medway Cllr Marian Nestorov.



Christchurch & District Branch

S/M Ron Checketts MBE celebrated his 103rd birthday with members of Christchurch Branch at his care home in the town. Ron is one of two centenarians in the Branch. The care home provided tea and stickies and a huge birthday cake. S/M Ron is one of the founder members of the Christchurch & District Branch and is known within the Branch as the 'Father of the Branch'. Ron also received a large 'birthday card' in the form of a bespoke caricature of Ron's Naval career, depicted by Andrew Wing of Stoke Gallery in Gosport (<https://stokegallery.co.uk/>). It spans his life from a 'Ganges Boy' to receiving his MBE. Andrew was asked to 'knock up' a card for a 103rd birthday and he came up with this effort – S/M Ron was taken aback with the size of the it. Ron's shipmates said that they look forward to celebrating his 104th birthday next year.

Folkestone Branch

Folkestone Branch members attended a service to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Samuel Plimsoll, who devised the Load Line, or Plimsoll Line, for the loading of merchant ships. Prior to this being introduced many unscrupulous ship owners would deliberately overload their ships so they might founder in rough weather to claim on the insurance, resulting in the loss of life of hundreds of merchant seamen. Along with the introduction of

the Load Line, laws were also introduced to ensure ships were registered and inspected regularly. A short service was held in St Martin's Church, Folkestone, before the congregation moved into the church graveyard where Samuel Plimsoll was buried in 1898. Prayers were said and wreaths laid before returning to the church for a talk about his work and the problems he faced bringing it into law. On completions light refreshments were available.



South Bristol Branch

HQ Roll Member S/M Stan Ford (a 99 years young World War 2 and Normandy veteran) was invited to attend the South Bristol Branch monthly meeting last month at HMS Flying Fox to be presented with his RNA Life Membership Certificate (and a complimentary bottle of Pusser's Rum) by Lt Col Mike Stafford RM, Commanding Office RMR Bristol and Head of Establishment, in the absence of the Naval Regional Commander Brig Fraser RM.

S/M Stan was transported from his home in Bath by Richard Palusinski, Chairman of The Spirit of Normandy Trust, formerly the Normandy Veterans Association, and his wife Jennifer.

RNA Deputy President Mark



Slawson also made a most welcome appearance to attend the Branch meeting and to witness the presentation.

S/M Stan was serving as a gunnery rating in HMS Fratton, a Barrage

Balloon Vessel, later to become a Ocean Boarding Vessel, during the D-Day invasion but the ship was later attacked by a German manned torpedo on 14 August and sank within four minutes, taking the lives of 32 of Stan's shipmates.

Stan survived but suffered a broken spine and injuries to both legs – he still wears callipers today.

As the Branch had recently received an email from Central Office with reference to the RNA Royal Patronage, a toast of Pusser's Rum was offered to King Charles and another to S/M Stan.

After enjoying his afternoon with the Branch and winning a few raffle prizes (mainly chocolate), S/M Stan was escorted home by Richard and Jennifer Palusinski.

Londonderry Branch

The annual Londonderry Branch Battle of the Atlantic commemoration events took place on 18 and 19 May. The weekend started with an informal Meet & Greet in the Royal British Legion Waterside Club, where one visitor was particularly welcomed – Margaret Morris RCN (rtd), Treasurer of the Crow's Nest Officers Club in St John's Newfoundland.

On Saturday morning a group and headed out of the city to a very scenic Fort Dunree in Co Donegal to hold a short service and wreath-laying at the memorial to the crew members who lost their lives when HMS Laurentic struck two mines and sank off the mouth of Lough Swilly during World War 1. Wreaths were laid on behalf of Canada, the RNA, The Crow's Nest Officers Club Newfoundland, The Ulster Canada Initiative and Fort Dunree.

The Annual BoA Commemoration Dinner was held on Saturday evening in the local Army Reserve Camp, where diners were joined by the Lord Lieutenant of the City of Londonderry, Ian Crowe. Other VIPs were Lord & Lady Hay of Ballyore, Cdr Rob Milligan RN, Senior Naval Officer, Northern Ireland, and Cdr Dale Turetski RCN representing the Canadian High Commission in London. Lt Andrew Skelly represented HMS Hibernia.

The Standards of No12 Area (Ireland), carried by S/M Jack Garfield, Londonderry Branch carried by S/M Arthur Lapsley and Belfast Branch carried by S/M Treavor Lockhart, were piped in by Maurice Devenney.

A hearty meal was enjoyed by all – their Army colleagues did them proud. The King was duly toasted and Cdr Dale Turetski RCN proposed a toast to "Those who served during the Battle of the Atlantic".



The Parade mustered at the RBL Club on Sunday morning, and were led off by the Churchill Band followed by the Standards, veterans and a large contingent of Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets for the short march to All Saints' Church for the BoA Commemoration service.

The Parade was commanded by No12 Area's Ceremonial Officer, S/M Phillip McMullen, Veteran Royal Marine DL. The Lord Lieutenant attended and was accompanied by his wife and an Army Cadet.

The service was led by Canon David McBeth, Hon RNA Chaplain, and readings were done by Cdr Rob Milligan RN, Cdr Dale Turetski RCN and S/M R J Buchanan, Chairman No12 Area (Ireland).

During the service an Act of Remembrance was observed. The Still was piped by S/M Frank Brown, Hon Sec Londonderry Branch, Standards were dipped and wreaths were laid on behalf of Canada, the Royal Navy, the RNA, Crow's Nest Officers Club and the Merchant Navy. Immediately after the service, the parade formed up to return to the RBL Club. The salute was taken by the Lord Lieutenant, who was joined on the dais by Cdr Milligan, Cdr Turetski and his Cadet. The dais was set up at what used to be the Main Gate of HMS Sea Eagle.

On arrival at the RBL Club, S/M Robert Buchanan addressed the parade, thanking everyone for the support for this years BoA parade and service.

Everyone was then invited to a light lunch, hosted by Londonderry Branch, which concluded the Battle of the Atlantic weekend.

These events don't just happen – a lot of hard work goes on in the background, and many thanks are due to the BoA committee, S/Ms Frank Brown, Jack Garfield, Arthur Lapsley and Nigel Stott.



Torrevieja Branch

The 51 participants at the recent monthly Torrevieja Branch meeting in May, which included two new joiners and two guests, all congratulated four new members while they had their photo taken with the Chairman and received their Membership Card and Badge; and can now proudly call themselves Shipmates.

The four new Shipmates were John Donaldson, Ex Royal Marine (**pictured below**), his partner Cherylle Murry, and Polly and Graham Humphrey, who were both civilians and were part of the National Theatre which demonstrates the diversity and inclusiveness for like-minded people who share the ethos of the RNA of Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship and seek to maintain the Naval ethos and enjoy sharing experiences and having fun at both



formal and social events with like-minded people while supporting each other in times of need. The shipmates also gave a round of applause when S/M Joan Ward received her Independent Auditors

Badge from the Chairman (**pictured above**).

The meeting also included an update on all the upcoming social events and another amusing and educational recital from S/M Graham Shelton, who has the affectionate title of 'Schoolie', and endeavours to unravel the complexity and almost nonsensical unique language of the Royal Navy Sailors that has built up over centuries and is known as Jackspeak. The meeting included the usual Tot Time, where the Branch funds the traditional measure of Rum (some choose a less potent form of alcohol) to toast important occasions or historic events that are to occur for the month ahead, and importantly of course that of 'happy birthday' to all the shipmates for the month. The meeting ended on the usual high note of the raffle.



Sleaford Branch

Shipmate Alan Harris sadly crossed the bar a few months ago at the age of 98, missing D-Day 80 by a whisker.

He was the last known survivor of U-boat killer HMS Woodpecker, a Black Swan-class sloop which was torpedoed on 20 February 1944 and sank a week later while under tow.

Alan went on to serve as a beach marshal during the D-Day Landings and was awarded the Legion d'Honneur by the French for his service.

Once demobbed, Alan went on to travel, and at one point even worked as a jockey, racing horses at Newmarket.

Alan was a huge influence within the Sleaford Branch and regularly attended veterans' parades, memorials and services both in the UK and abroad.

RNA member Robert Wells said: "It was a privilege to have known someone who served his country and continued to support veteran

and serving members of the Royal Navy throughout his lifetime.

"The RNA is grateful to Alan for his service."

Alan left the RNA his blazer and medals in his will, and these were delivered to the Central Office of the RNA in Portsmouth Naval Base by S/M Kevin Woods (**see right**).

RNA General Secretary Bill Oliphant said: "It is an honour to receive the medals of a D-Day veteran. We are saddened that he was unable to celebrate D-Day 80 with us, but he is with us in spirit. Once Navy Always Navy." Sleaford is the closest branch to RAF Digby and meets regularly on the last Thursday of the month in the Legionnaires Club.

They also hold a Saturday Breakfast club every 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month. Any Royal Naval personnel, or veterans, wishing to join the RNA should visit <https://buff.ly/3X6aTVi> or contact Sleaford branch secretary Mr Robert McGrann: r.mcgrann@btinternet.com



Portland Branch

Portland Masonic Hall hosted the 68th Annual Dinner to celebrate the commissioning of Portland Branch, formed in April 1956, with 53 shipmates and guests sitting down to enjoy a four-course dinner and entertainment with Mike Walker. Guests of Honour on the night were the Commanding Officer of TS Penn, Portland Sea Cadets, Lt (SCC) Rachael Harris, and CPO (SCC) Nicky Lee.

Following the dinner and speeches, both Guests of Honour were presented with spirit tumblers of a nautical theme, presented by Branch Chairman Dusty Miller – truly an item to cherish (pictured below)!



In addition, a cheque for £850 for TS Penn was presented to Lt Harris. The money was raised by Branch members at monthly meeting raffles and donations over the past year. To round off the evening, the giving continued with S/M Karen Miller receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from Branch Treasurer Pete Shoemith in recognition of all Karen's hard work as Branch Membership Secretary and Fundraiser. Final thanks for the superb organisation must go to S/M Dave Prowse, Branch Social Secretary for a great evening, enjoyed by all.

Top table, top to bottom, Vice Chairman Nige Rimell, Lynne Rimell, Branch President Ben Cartwright, Branch Treasurer Pete Shoemith and Josie Cartwright, CPO (SCC) Nicky Lee and Lt (SCC) Rachael Harris from Portland Sea Cadet Unit TS PENN, Karen Miller, Membership Secretary and Branch Chairman Dusty Miller. (Below right) S/M Karen Miller receives her Certificate of Appreciation from Branch Treasurer S/M Pete Shoemith



Rushden & District Branch

Rushden & District RNA members, alongside representatives from the Rushden branches of the Royal Air Force Association, Royal British Legion and Northants Veterans Breakfast Club, hosted a Veterans Big Band concert in May. Classical music was played by former musicians from the Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force bands who entertained more than 250 supporters. RNA branch chairman S/M Michael Thompson advised that since the formation of the Rushden & District Veterans Group, all associations have worked more closely together for the benefit of our veterans.

Local businesses have provided some sponsorship for the event and monies raised from the concert will be split between the local veterans associations. S/M Thompson said it was great to see a number of

shipmates from across RNA Area 6 in attendance supporting the event. Following this successful event, planning for 2025 is already under way.



Street Branch

At the April meeting of Street Branch the recently-elected Chairman S/M Mike Jayes (right) presented retiring Chairman S/M Bernie Page with his Chain of Office.



Chairs from the three Associations plus Veterans Breakfast Club (left to right) Jake Baker (RBL Chairman), S/M Terry Perkins (Rushden Branch Secretary & Breakfast Club), S/M Michael Thompson (Rushden RNA Branch Chairman) and Denis Murphy (RAFA Branch Chairman)

Portsea & Portsmouth Branch

Portsea & Portsmouth Branch was well-represented at the Royal Marines Falkland Islands Memorial Service held at the former Eastney Barracks.

The service was in two parts. The first was led by Rev R G Hilliard RN, who was the Chaplain to 40 Cdo RM during the Falklands Conflict and was held by the Yomper Statue, where a wreath was laid by the Royal Marines Association, who organised the service.



They then made their way to the Falkland Stones in the Royal Marines Memorial Garden where S/M Richie Farman laid a wreath on behalf of the RNA

The names of all 27 Marines who made the ultimate sacrifice were read out and Marine Cadets laid a wooden cross for each of them.

They were honoured to have Peter Robinson with them, who was in the iconic Yomper photo and on whom the Yomper Statue is modelled.

On completion they took a stroll through the former barracks to the Sirloin of Beef pub where much lamp swinging took place.



Peter Robinson (right) with S/M Richie Farman at the Yomper Statue



Bude Branch

Holsworthy in Devon is putting on an ambitious weekend programme to tie in with the 80th anniversary of D-Day – and members of Bude Branch are heavily involved in planning the event.

The event – Holsworthy '44 (or H44) takes place at Stanhope park on 26-28 July, and features an impressive range of attractions, including living history and re-enactment groups, demonstrations, music, boxing and a 1940s-style dance.

Holsworthy '44 is a not-for-profit community group, set up to fulfil the group's vision of commemorating the life and times of Holsworthy during World War 2. They are a group of volunteer enthusiasts from all walks of life, taking part in charitable and voluntary roles and both local and county-wide groups, as well as national organisations.

You can see the programme at the end of this Circular – here – or go online at <https://h44.uk> for more details.

Jaqi and the H44 Event Team Members have extended an invitation to the wider RNA family to go along, take part and enjoy the weekend.

OBITUARIES

Shipmate Bob Woodward

It is with great sadness that Newport Branch announces that S/M Bob Woodward crossed the bar on 20 April 2024.

Bob was a long-serving and popular member of the Branch and will be sadly missed by all his shipmates.

The photo (right) is of Bob after the dedication of the Branch's new standard on 29 March this year.

He is holding a photo from the old standard's dedication ceremony in February 1998 – Bob is standing on the right of the photo.

Bob achieved Leading Steward status during his service with the Royal Navy, and served in numerous ships including HMS Illustrious, HMS Cochrane and HMS Eagle.



On leaving the Navy he joined the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service in 1984, where he qualified as a Leading Seaman. He always wore his RNXS Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with pride.

The deepest sympathy of all his shipmates at Newport Branch goes out to Bob's wife Nancy and her daughter Carol.

Shipmate Richard Garnons-Williams

South Bristol Branch Secretary Norman Low and Chairman Andy Andrews (with Branch Standard) attended the funeral of the late Capt Richard Garnons-Williams RN (Retd), who died on 17 April at the age of 99. Born 10 June 1925 in Brecon, South Wales, Richard enrolled at Britannia Royal Naval College in January 1939 and served on HM Ships Belfast, Matchless and Musketeer during World War 2. After the war, he pursued his Naval career as a Gunnery Officer and after running the Portsmouth Field Gun Crew in 1952, went on to serve on HM Ships Finisterre, Cambridge (AA Gunnery Range), Daring and Eagle. He was promoted to Commander in 1960 and appointed Captain of HMS Brighton 1962-64 (from building on the Clyde then to include a tour of duty in the Far East based in Singapore and later Hong Kong). 1964-66 he was in Malta as Chief Operations Officer for CINCNATO, then to ASWE Portsmouth 1966-69. When he was promoted to Captain, he took up the position of Captain of Singapore Dockyard 1969-71. After the closure of Singapore Dockyard, Richard was appointed Captain of HMS Apollo 1971-73. His last active service appointment was as Captain in Charge HMS Tamar, Hong Kong (and as such Senior Naval Officer East of Gibraltar) 1975-78. He was also made ADC to Queen

Shipmate Anthony Cash

It is with great regret that Ferndown & District Branch announce that Shipmate and Life Member Anthony 'Tony' Cash MNM crossed the bar at the Weymouth Manor Care Home on Tuesday 30 April – a gentle end for one of Nature's true gentlemen. Tony was just 16 days short of his 101st birthday when he died.

Tony joined the Merchant Navy before World War 2 and served in the RN under T124 regulations from 1940-42. He said that they wore Royal Navy uniform and served under Royal Navy regulations and discipline but continued to receive Merchant Navy pay and conditions. Presented with his Life Membership of the Association on 8 April this year he said that it would be a great honour and privilege to accept the RNA's kind offer not just for himself but for all the other members of the Merchant Navy who have crossed the bar and who served under the T124 regulations, as often this service is not recognised. Tony served on Atlantic Convoys and in the Far East, and continued to serve in the Merchant Navy until he retired with the rating of Coxswain. Tony was twice honoured with a role in the RBL Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. His funeral, at St Joseph's Church, Weymouth, was well-attended by family, friends and shipmates with association standards.



Shipmate Frank Hawkes

Known to his shipmates at Christchurch Branch as 'Stoker Frank' (and 'Hero' to his daughter S/M Deborah Marshall). Branch members provided a Guard of Honour at S/M Frank's funeral – he had a good RNA send-off. Plans are in hand, with the help of Ramsgate Branch, to scatter Frank's ashes off Ramsgate, where Frank grew up. S/M Franks was involved in the Korean crisis serving in HMS Ceylon, and joined Christchurch Branch last year at the age of 93.



Elizabeth II.

He retired from active service in 1978 aged 53, but later went on to become North East Naval Regional Officer based in Hull and Newcastle 1980 - 85.

Richard's funeral was held at All Saints Church, Long Ashton, near Bristol.

Shipmate Lewis Curl

A D-Day veteran who recently joined the Bognor Regis Branch has crossed the bar just days before the commemorations for the Normandy Landings.

S/M Lewis Curl was visited in St Richard's Hospital, Chichester, on 17 May by shipmates from Bognor as he was too ill to attend any commemorative events.

Branch President S/M John Haste, Chairman S/M Ron Hargest and RBL Poppy Appeal Representative John Haines visited Lewis to honour and to thank him for his part in the D-Day operation.

Lewis was pleased to see them, and although unable to speak or hear very well the visitors could see that he was pleased with their presence. They all shook his hand and gave him their best wishes.

Lewis's daughter Ann took the photograph (right) and told them that Lewis's eyes lit up when he saw them walk into his ward.

Lewis is new to the Branch but in the short time with them his shipmates came to respect the man for his wartime experiences and his devotion to the Branch by his attendance at all the meetings, social events, and by proudly wearing his RNA blazer, tie and beret. A truly respected and well-liked person.

Sadly, Lewis crossed the bar just five days after the visit, and two weeks before the D-Day 80 commemorations took place.

Lewis, who was born on 7 December 1925, served in the Royal Navy from 1 March 1943 to 1 December 1946; his rating on discharge was an Able Coder. During that brief career he was awarded the 1939-1945 Medal, Victory Medal, Atlantic Star and Bar, Burma Star, France and Germany Star and Civic Medal.

During the week of the D-Day Landings Lewis was a coder in HMS Belfast. Having been granted leave on its return to Portsmouth, a telegram awaited him when he got home, recalling him to join HMS Dacre off Le Havre, so he returned to Portsmouth.

The only available transport leaving for France was a freighter packed with Army lorries, transports, and fuel. Arriving off the French coast the freighter was bombed by the Luftwaffe, turning the ship into an inferno. As the ship went down, he went over the side and was ordered to jump into an amphibious vehicle alongside. The vehicle, overloaded, also sank!

Lewis swam away. A launch came around the bow of the nearest ship, the coxswain calling his name. Because of the congested area, the coxswain said he would land him at Sword or Gold Beach. After wading ashore and drying out, he made his way along the coast in the dark, walking and obtaining lifts on Army vehicles for the rest of the day. On arrival at the Naval HQ was taken by launch to HMS Dacre at anchor. Able Seamen do not get piped aboard ship,



but 19-year-old AB Lewis Curl did – an officer took him to one side and told him the ship's company had bets on if he was going to make it. The odds were against...

HMS Dacre then left for the Bay of Biscay for U-boat surveillance and patrols.

On returning to Portsmouth, Lewis was posted to Rosyth to join HMS Loch Glendhu and promptly returned to the Bay of Biscay. In 1945 he arrived at Glasgow for the VE celebrations, then immediately was sent to the Far East.

That involved a passage through the Mediterranean and Suez Canal, then on via India (Madras and Calcutta) to the Malacca Straits, "pushing mines away from the ship with long poles!"

Part of their task was to rescue the injured on shore Lewis volunteered for night searches for the presence of Japanese and he managed to get infected by tropical disease. The hospital he was in was evacuated when the Japanese came too close, but Lewis was left in his ward as he was too ill to be moved.

Hospital staff returned a week later to find that out of the four who had been left behind, only Lewis survived.

After convalescing, he was repatriated in HMS Barfleure.

Cruiser HMS Belfast. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection © IWM (HU 10258)



➤ FOCUS ON... D-DAY

D-Day was one of the pivotal moments in World War 2 success would see the Allies pushing German forces back towards their homeland; failure would have set the Allied war effort back by months if not years.

Staging the greatest amphibious assault in history required years of meticulous planning and logistics, not just involving the military of numerous countries, but also the industrial muscle on both sides of the Atlantic in order to produce the vast amount of machinery, supplies, weaponry and ammunition needed for the venture.

It involved the training of hundreds of thousands of men and women, both for combat and support functions.

It required surveillance on a massive scale in order to find the right place to launch the assault and obtain a toehold on mainland Europe.

It involved ingenuity – imaginative solutions to massive problems, the kind of grand-scale thinking that produced not one but two artificial or 'synthetic' harbours to be towed across the Channel, assembled and operate at a greater capacity than well-established ports such as Dover while under enemy attack.

There were nowhere near enough available docks to build the massive 6,000-ton Phoenix caissons required for the Mulberries (many docks were needed to build and repairs ships) so once again ingenuity was required; in the case of Arthur Monk and Co of Barking, a temporary basin was dug out at Barking Creek, an earth-bank coffer dam was created and the base for each Phoenix was pumped in from early morning until late at night, with each lower section being broken out and floated upstream to the East India Docks for completion while the next one

was started.

And it involved subterfuge on an unheard of scale – the kind of subterfuge that would hide vast armies, fleets of ships and squadrons of aircraft from enemy view while creating dummy forces that would wrong-foot the Germans when the time was right to strike.

It also involved a careful weather eye, and the courage of one RAF officer to halt the massive invasion machine once it had cranked into action, and to restart it 24 hours later; had Group Capt James Stagg RAF not trusted his instincts, the invasion fleet would have sailed in heavy seas and low cloud would have prevented air forces from striking vital targets and spotting naval bombardment. And had Stagg not predicted a window of opportunity on 6 June 1944, the next date possible would have been two weeks later, when a sudden and unexpected storm battered the Channel, badly damaging one of the Mulberries. Sending an invasion force sailing into that would have been disastrous.

D-Day was planned many months in advance, with lessons learned from operations around Europe, some (such as the Dieppe raid of August 1942) being far from successful, but still contributing knowledge and experience to the overall plan (though many men, mainly Canadians, died in that raid). As 1943 turned into 1944 numerous factors were falling into place. The Battle of the Atlantic had been turned in the favour of the Allies by mid-1943, which meant troopships and merchant shipping had a far greater chance of successfully crossing from North America to the UK, though the danger of U-boats remained ever-present.

Industrial production in the UK became focused on the needs for the assault – steel and concrete production was almost entirely dedicated to the needs of the artificial harbours for a period (the Mulberries alone consumed more than one million tons of reinforced concrete), while every factory capable of rapidly producing simple but effective landing craft, wooden gliders and the like were brought into the overall effort.

As armies gathered in the South of England and South Wales security was increased, until the point was reached when very few were allowed to leave these encampments for fear of revealing vital secrets.

Inflatable tanks, dummy boats and wooden aircraft were placed in carefully-chosen locations in the South-East of England, suggesting the thrust of the attack would be in the Dover Strait.

In fact, the long, sloping beaches of Normandy had been chosen long before, after experts had pored over maps, images and even postcards and holiday snaps sent in by patriotic Britons, allowing them to assess the beaches from the Netherlands to the Atlantic coast of France.

Once Normandy had been chosen, clandestine operations were mounted so that soil and beach samples could be obtained and surveillance flights made – but such operations were also carried out along the rest of Hitler's so-called Atlantic Wall so as to keep the Germans guessing.

And as spring 1944 turned to summer D-Day was identified – 5 June 1944, when tides and moonlight would be optimal.

As already noted, with Gp Capt Stagg's intervention, D-Day slipped right to

Continued on page 37

HMS Belfast provides gunfire support off an Allied beachhead of Normandy during Operation Neptune in June 1944. From the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM FLM 4017)



June 6. Incidentally, the 'D' in D-Day doesn't actually stand for anything – it is simply a military shorthand for a particular day on which an operation is put into effect.

So for planning purposes, the invasion of Normandy would have been worked out in details using D-Day as the day when troops went ashore, then D+1 for the following day and so on. Similarly, H-Hour would be the precise time an event would happen, and when the actual day and time has been worked out, these are simply slotted onto the framework already worked out.

Thus if the implementation of a plan has to be changed at the last minute – as with D-Day – the grand scheme will still hold together, as such-and-such an event will happen on D+3 for example, the third day after the invasion, whether D-Day was 5 or 6 of June.

The codename for the D-Day Landings was Operation Neptune, which covered the actual landings (by air as well as from the sea) and the subsequent fighting to establish a secure beachhead. Operation Neptune is generally regarded as lasting from 6 June until the end of the month.

But Operation Neptune was just the starting phase of a much bigger operation – Overlord – which was the codename for Allied invasion of North-West Europe and the push on towards Germany. Thus Overlord started at the same time as Neptune – June 6 – but ran until the Allies crossed the Seine on 19 August 1944.

Running concurrently with Overlord was the Battle of Normandy, which could be said to have ended with the liberation of Paris on 25 August 1944.

But returning to D-Day and Operation Neptune, the initial phase of which was run from Southwick House on

Portsmouth Hill, the statistics are quite staggering. According to The D-Day Story museum in Portsmouth, 6,939 vessels were involved – 1,213 warships, 4,126 landing ships and landing craft, 736 ancillary craft and 864 merchant vessels. All maritime life was there, from mighty battleships pounding enemy shore batteries to floating bakeries churning out bread for the troops and sailors along the Normandy coast. Airborne landings were a crucial part of the Neptune plan, with paratroopers being amongst the first to join battle; one of their primary objectives was to secure the flanks of the landing area from German counter-attack.

Again, according to The D-Day Story, 11,590 aircraft were available to support the landings and 14,674 sorties were flown, from bombing missions to high-speed reconnaissance patrols. 127 aircraft were lost. The landings to secure the flanks involved 2,395 aircraft and 867 gliders of the RAF and US Army Air Forces.

As for the troops, some 156,000 Allied warriors landed in Normandy on D-Day. The largest number were the Americans, who contributed 73,000 men (34,250 on Omaha Beach, 23,250 on Utah Beach and 15,500 airborne troops), while the UK and Canada contributed 83,115 between them (61,715 British) – 28,845 landed on Sword Beach, 24,970 on Gold Beach, 21,400 on Juno Beach and 7,900 airborne troops descended from the skies.

By the end of D+5 (11 June) the Allies had landed 326,547 troops, 54,186 vehicles and 104,428 tons of supplies. While the UK, USA and Canada provided the vast majority of fighting men, according to The D-Day Story there were many other nations represented on the beaches and in the Battle of Normandy, including Australia, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Poland.

The number of casualties will never be known for certain as accurate records were difficult to maintain in the heat and confusion of battle, but The D-Day Story refers to research by the US National D-Day Memorial Foundation which states that 4,415 Allied personnel died on D-Day itself (2,501 Americans, 1,449 British, 391 Canadians and 73 from other Allied nations). Total German casualties (killed, wounded or captured) on D-Day were between 4,000 to 9,000. It is estimated up to 100,000 combatants from both sides died during the Battle of Normandy, as well as 20,000 French civilians.

For more on The D-Day Story and its collection, including Landing Craft Tank 7074, see <https://thedaystory.com> And for a more detailed treatment of D-day and Operation Neptune see two special navy News supplements from 2014, currently available at https://issuu.com/navynews/docs/201405_d-day_70 and https://issuu.com/navynews/docs/201406_d-day_70

One of the many unsung heroes of the Normandy Landings – a Landing Barge Kitchen, converted from a Thames barge, which arrived off the beaches on 11 June (D+5) to provide hot meals to the crews of the small craft buzzing around the landing areas carrying out hundreds of vital tasks, from ferry men and supplies to creating the smokescreens to counter air attacks. From the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM (A 24017))





HMS Yarnton of the Hong Kong Squadron in Singapore in 1974. See 1 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Crown Copyright (HU 130054))

➤ JUNE 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). 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 June 1973

The Sixth Patrol Craft Squadron based at HMS Tamar was renamed the Hong Kong Squadron on 1 June 1973, with funnel badges of the Hong Kong lion. The squadron was made up of a clutch of Ton-class minesweepers – HMS Yarnton (Leader), Beachampton, Wasperton, Wolverton and Monkton – also was also referred to as the Dragon Squadron. Yarnton was completed in 1957 and fully converted for Hong Kong work in 1973, though she had been serving with the Sixth Patrol Boat Squadron since 1971. She paid off at the end of 1984 and was sold to Pounds of Portsmouth, though she was scrapped locally in Hong Kong. Beachampton was completed in 1954 and served in the Gulf from 1965-71, when she sailed to Hong Kong with Yarnton. She was relieved on station by HMS Starling in early 1985. Wasperton was completed in 1957 and spent several years operating out of Port Edgar on the Firth of Forth as part of the Fishery Protection Squadron. She sailed for Hong Kong in 1972 and was converted for patrol work on arrival in the Far East. Wolverton was completed in 1958 and served in home waters and the Mediterranean before

undergoing conversion at Rosyth and making the long journey to Hong Kong round the coast of Africa, arriving in April 1972. She was paid off in September 1985 for local sale and conversion. HMS Monkton was completed in 1957 and converted at Devonport in 1971 for her duties in Hong Kong. She sailed south with Wolverton and served in Hong Kong until April 1985; she was sold to a local company the following month for breaking up.

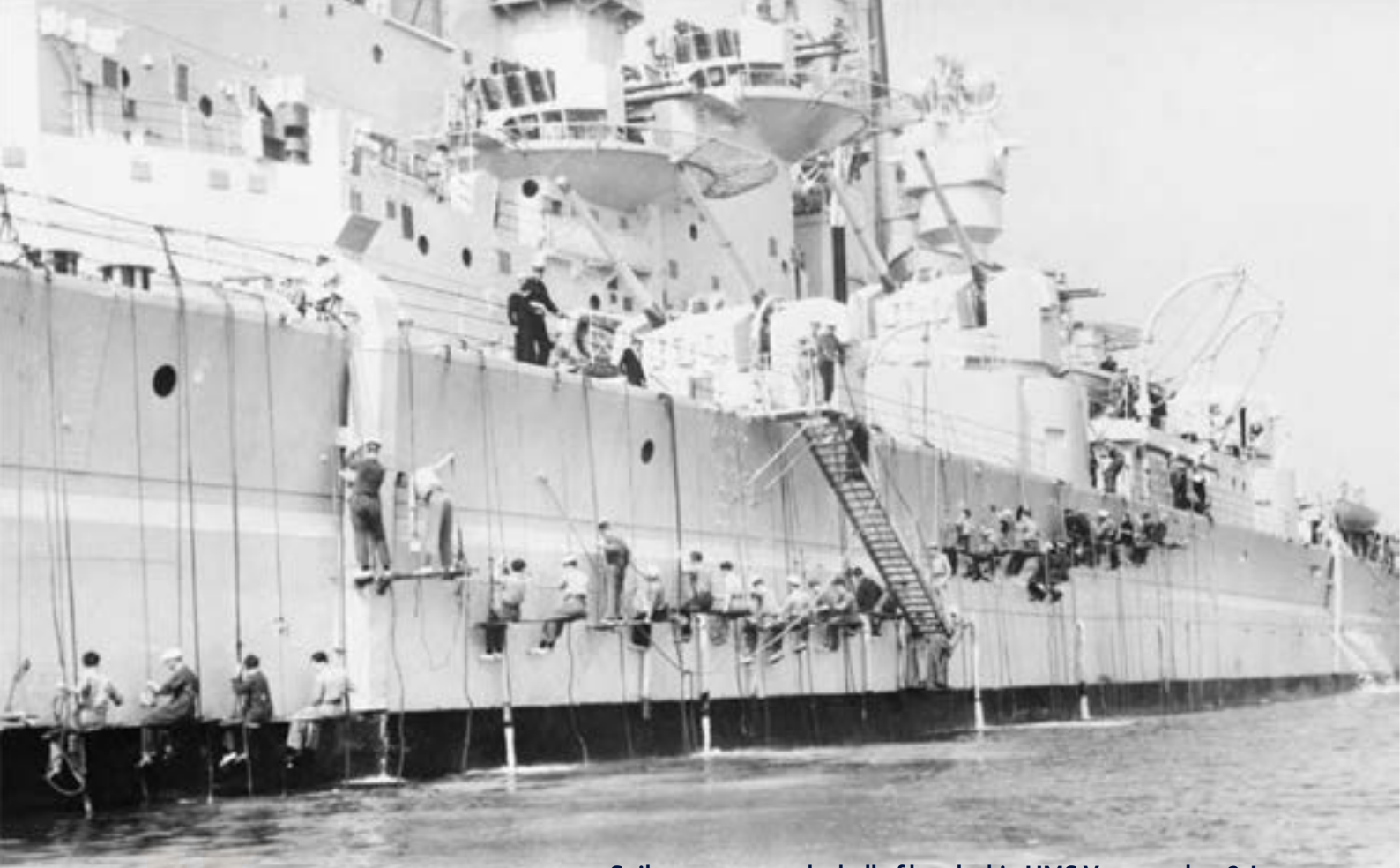
2 June 1953

Battleship HMS Vanguard was one of the highlights of the Coronation Fleet Review at Spithead, which took place on 15 June. Pictured on 2 June are members of the ship's company sprucing up the battleship's side at Weymouth. The review attracted almost 200 Royal Navy warships as well as 13 Commonwealth vessels and 16 from other navies. The British Merchant Fleet and fishing fleet were also well-represented.

3 June 1932

Implacable arrived at Portsmouth on 3 June 1932 and exchanged salutes with HMS Victory, her former adversary at the Battle of Trafalgar. Implacable was launched at Rochefort in 1800 as the French Temeraire-class Duguay-Trouin. She was part of the vanguard of the French fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1805 and was one of four French ships that evaded capture that day, but her freedom did not last long – she and the remnants of the Franco-Spanish fleet were engaged by a Royal Navy squadron on 3 November and Duguay-Trouin was dismasted and captured. She served with the Royal Navy as the 74-gun third rate Implacable throughout the Napoleonic Wars and also took part in the Anglo-Russian

continued on page 39



Sailors spruce up the hull of battleship HMS Vanguard on 2 June 1953 ahead of the Coronation Fleet Review. See 2 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM (A 32568))

War. She continued to serve with distinction until she was declared unfit for sea in 1842, at which point she was converted to a training ship and returned to service on the Hamoaze in 1855. Condemned in 1908, King Edward VII stepped in to save her and she underwent several phases of restoration to continue as a training ship for boys. She was joined in the summer of 1932 by frigate HMS Trincomalee, and continued as a training ship, an accommodation hulk, a holiday ship and even a coal hulk. The two ships were collectively renamed HMS Foudroyant in 1943. Having survived numerous wars, including both World Wars, she was deemed too expensive to preserve and in the late 1940s she was slated for sinking off the Isle of Wight. Despite strong protests – she was by that stage the second-oldest ship in the Royal Navy after HMS Victory – and an offer to transfer her back to the French (which was declined), she was towed out of Portsmouth Harbour on 1 December 1949 and sunk by explosive charges in St Catherine's Deep five miles south of Ventnor the following day. A surprisingly strong backlash of public opinion went some way towards persuading the government to preserve the Cutty Sark.

4 June 1943

Submarine HMS Truculent sank U-308 off the Faroes on 4 June 1943. The T-class submarine was commissioned in December 1942 and served briefly in the Norwegian Sea before transferring to the Far East. Truculent was on her first war patrol and hunting north-east of the Faroe Islands when she came across U-308, which had commissioned just a week before Truculent and was also on her maiden patrol. The British submarine sank U-308 with torpedoes, and the U-boat sank with the loss of all 44 men on board. Truculent went on to sink eight more enemy vessels while in the Far East. Having survived the war, Truculent sank in the Thames Estuary on 12 January 1950 after having collided with Swedish oil tanker Divina in the dark, having misread the lights on merchantman. Most of the British crew (which had been augmented by dockyard workers as the boat was just out of refit) survived the collision but were swept away by the current and died in the freezing water or on muddy islands – a total of 64 lives were lost in the accident. The sunken boat was salvaged in March 1950 and sold for scrap two months later. As a result of the incident, in which 75 per cent of the blame was laid at the door of the submarine

continues on page 40

Implacable passing aircraft carrier HMS Implacable in Portsmouth Harbour as the old wooden ship is towed out of harbour on 1 December 1949 to be sunk at sea the following day. See 3 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A31612)



and 25 per cent at that of the steamer, the Port of London Authority developed a formal port control system and submarines were fitted with a bright white 'Truculent light' on the bow to make them more visible to other vessels.

5 June 1962

Tribal-class frigate HMS Ashanti entered the Pool of London on 5 June 1962 following the custom of the first of class paying an official visit to the capital. She was the first warship to come up the Thames on gas turbine engines and passed beneath Tower Bridge stern first to avoid having to turn with just her single screw on her departure from the Pool. The ship was launched in March 1959 at Yarrow's in Scotstoun and was the first Royal Navy vessel equipped with combined steam and gas turbine (COSAG) engines, although the machinery was not an immediate success, requiring remedial work when fractures were found in the gas turbine blades. She spent some time on Beira Patrols, and also served in the Atlantic – in February 1974, on passage from Bermuda to the UK, she was struck by a freak wave, resulting in the deaths of two sailors (AB Rogers was lost at sea, PO John Taws was fatally injured) as well as damage to her superstructure. She was sunk as a practice

target for Sub-Harpoon missiles, fired by HMS Swiftsure, though the coup de grace was provided by torpedoes from HMS Spartan, which broke the frigate's back.

6 June 1964

The first full production Hawker Siddeley (formerly Blackburn) Buccaneer S2 XN974 made its maiden flight on 6 June 1964 at Holme-on-Spalding-Moor airfield, the former RAF station in Yorkshire used by Blackburn, then Hawker Siddeley and finally British Aerospace as the companies merged. Built initially as an S1 variant, XN974 was converted mid-production to the first production S2, which had vastly superior Rolls-Royce Spey engines, producing around 40 per cent more power than the S1's de Havilland Gyron Juniors. Buccaneer XN974 flew on trials work her entire career, operating from Bedford, Driffield and Warton with the Royal Aircraft Establishment and Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment. She carried out sea trials aboard HMS Eagle and hot weather trials in the United States. On her return flight from the US she became the first Royal Navy aircraft to fly transatlantic non-stop without refuelling. After retirement she was flown to the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington, York, in 1991. In late

Continued on page 41



Composite torpedo boat destroyer HMS Zubian. See 7 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Q611)

2016 until early 2017 significant engineering and restoration work was undertaken on XN974 including repainting into her original Royal Navy colour scheme which she still has today. She is maintained in ground running condition at the museum.

7 June 1917

The unique composite torpedo boat destroyer HMS Zubian was commissioned at Chatham Dockyard on 7 June 1917. Zubian was actually, in motor trade terms, a cut-and-shut job, created from the usable sections of two Tribal-class destroyers that had been badly damaged in 1916. HMS Nubian's bow had been wrecked by a torpedo on 27 October in the Battle of Dover Strait, while less than a fortnight later HMS Zulu had her stern blown off by a mine. Both wrecks were towed to Chatham Dockyard where it was decided that the front third or so of Zulu could be joined to the mid and stern sections of Nubian to create a workable warship; the name was a similar mash-up of the two ships, taking the first part of Zulu and the rest of Nubian (presumably had Zulu lost her bow and Nubian her stern the new ship would have been HMS Nulu?) The finished ship proved remarkably effective, despite a difference in beam of more than three inches between the two components. Zubian – slightly longer than her Tribal sisters – rejoined the 6th Destroyer Flotilla in the Dover Strait and went on to sink minelaying U-boat UC-50 as well as take part in the First Ostend Raid in April 1918. She also caused much confusion in German naval circles as they had no intelligence on the construction of a ship named Zubian. The destroyer was sold shortly after the end of the war and scrapped at the end of 1919.

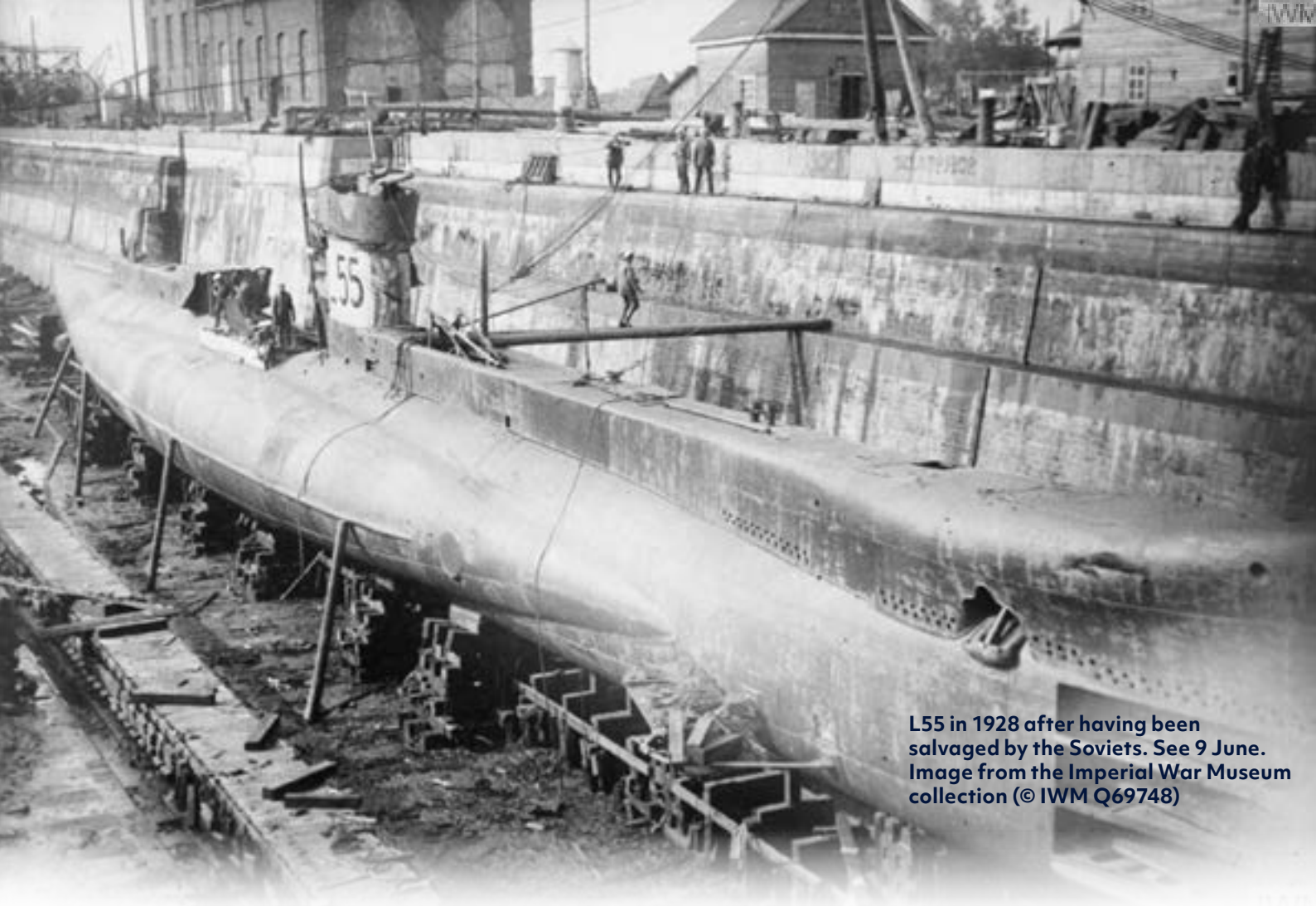
8 June 1944

Captain-class frigate HMS Lawford was sunk by German air attack in the area off Juno beach in Seine Bay on 8 June 1944 during Operation Neptune – the D-Day Landings. Lawford was an American-built ship which had been converted for use as an HQ ship during the landings and establishment of an Allied foothold in Europe. On 8 June the frigate was hit by what was reported to be an 'aerial torpedo' which, at the time, was taken to be a torpedo launched by an aircraft. Subsequent investigations suggest she may actually have been struck by a bomb or bombs, setting off an internal explosion, or possibly an early guided missile device such as the Henschel Hs-293 radio-controlled glider bomb. Whatever the weapon involved, 24 Royal Navy sailors out of her ship's company of 156 died in the attack.

9 June 1919

Submarine L55 was attempting to torpedo Bolshevik torpedo boat destroyers Azard and Gavriil in the Gulf of Finland on 9 June 1919 during the Russian Civil War but missed, broke the surface and was reportedly shelled by Azard, sinking the boat with all 42 souls on board, though it is possible she was destroyed by a mine. The boat was discovered in 1927 where she sank off Kronstadt, near St Petersburg, and salvaged on 11 August the following year. The UK requested the return of the remains, but with the Soviets refusing to allow a warship into their territorial waters the coffins were taken from Kronstadt by lighter on 30 August and transferred to the Ellerman-Wilson liner SS Truro, attended by a Russian naval guard and with all ships flying flags at half-mast and saluting the liner as it sailed. The bodies were buried in a single grave at Haslar on 7 September the same

Continues on page 42



L55 in 1928 after having been salvaged by the Soviets. See 9 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM Q69748)

year. L55 was rebuilt by the Soviets and put back into service with the same name in August 1931. She served mostly as a training vessel, but was also the model for the successful Soviet L-class of minelayer submarines which served throughout World War 2.

10 June 1960
HMS Devonshire, the first of eight County-

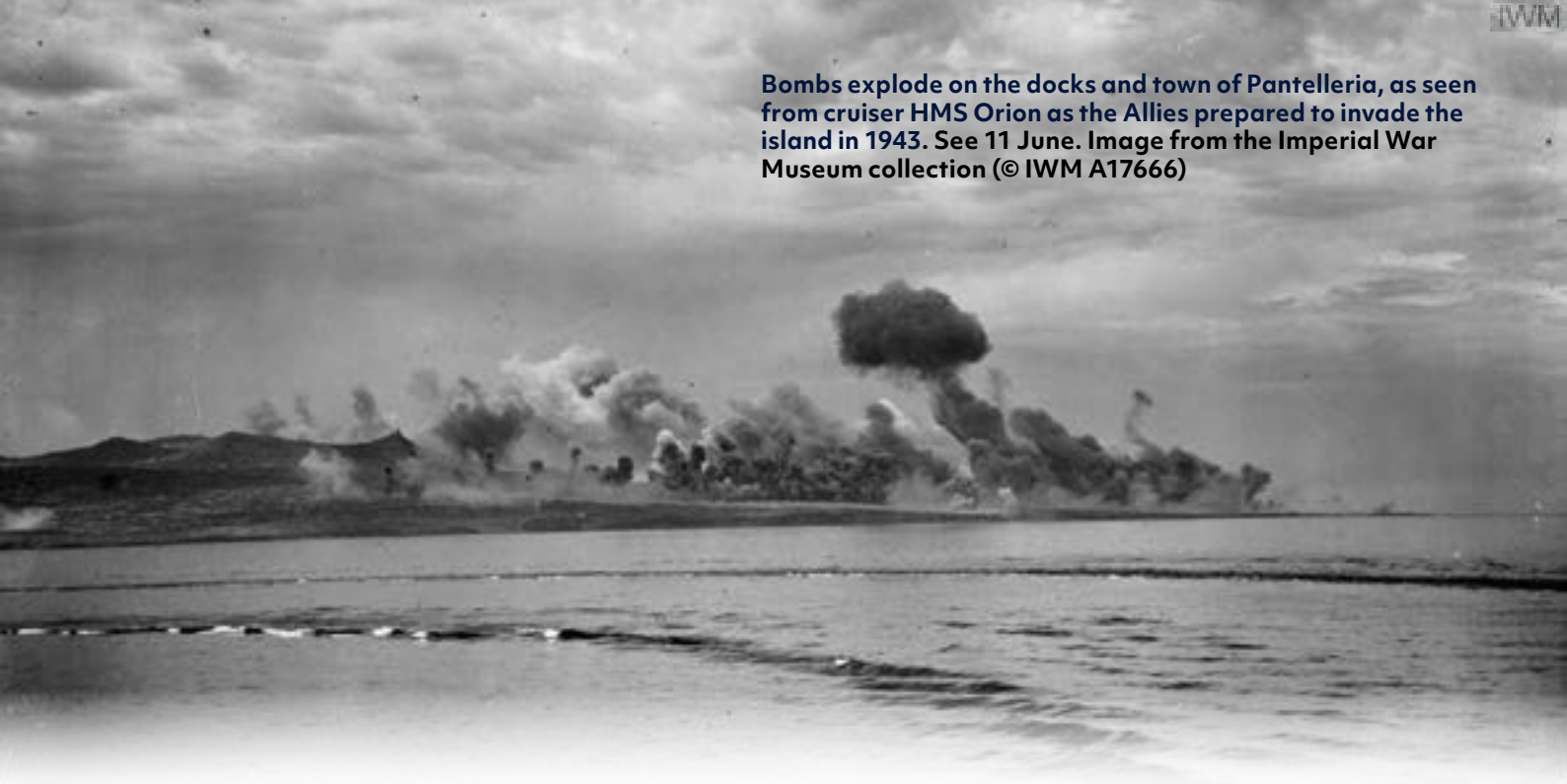
class guided missile destroyers, was launched by Princess Alexandra at Cammell Laird in Birkenhead on 10 June 1960. The 6,200-ton ship was commissioned just over two years later, and became the first front-line ship to fire the Seaslug surface-to-air missile, around which the County-class ships were designed. Devonshire saw service in the Gulf and around the Caribbean but was never deployed in a war zone. The ship was a

Continues on page 43

HMS Devonshire pictured in May 1962 during Seaslug trials. See 10 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 34638)



Bombs explode on the docks and town of Pantelleria, as seen from cruiser HMS Orion as the Allies prepared to invade the island in 1943. See 11 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A17666)



victim of the 1978 defence cuts, and although she was offered to the Egyptians the sale was never completed and she lay in the upper reaches of Portsmouth Harbour for six years until she was deployed as a target ship for Tigerfish torpedoes launched by HMS Splendid in the North Atlantic, sinking on 17 July 1984.

11 June 1943

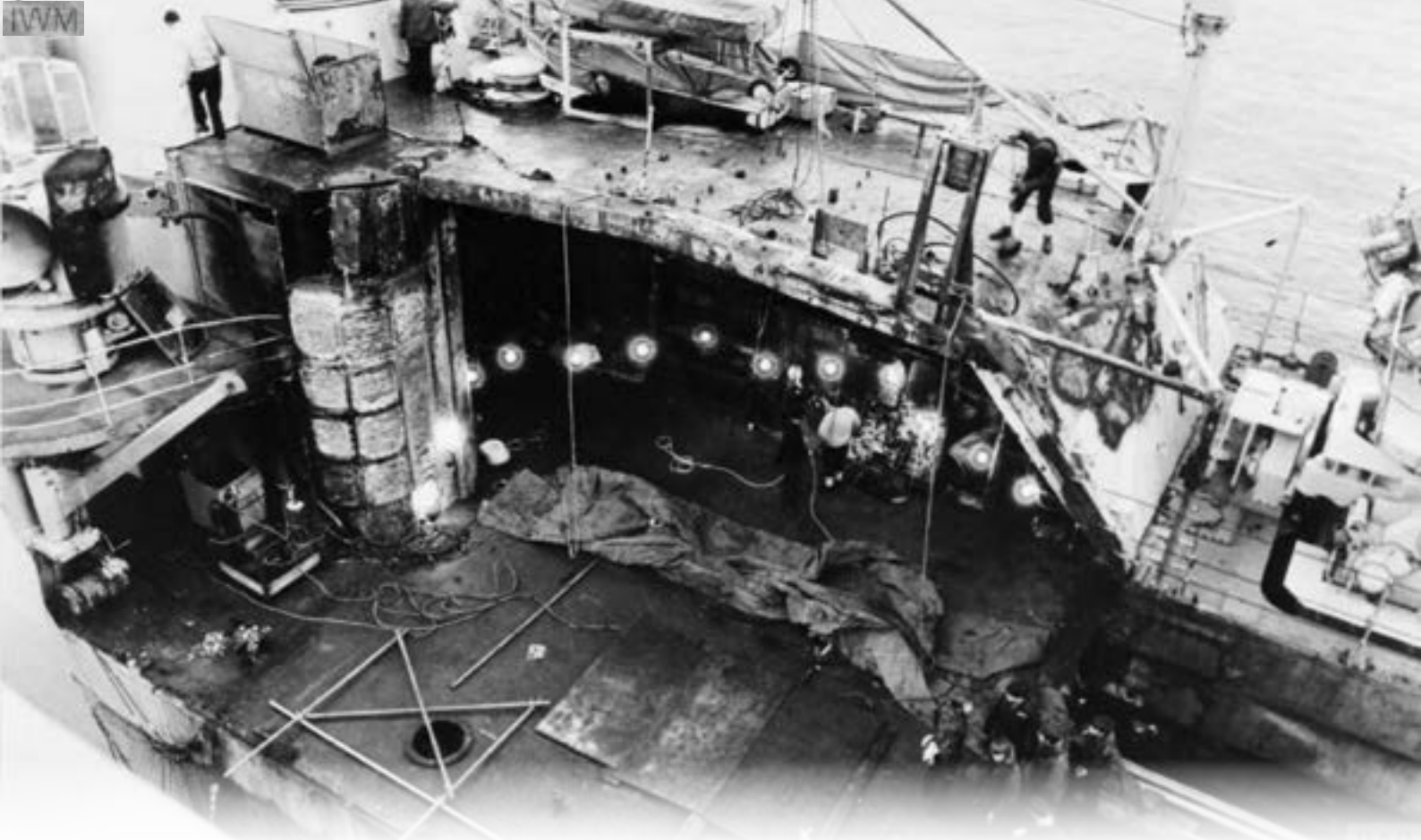
The Italian island of Pantelleria officially surrendered on 11 June 1943 as a 25-minute Allied naval bombardment and amphibious landing – Operation Corkscrew – swung into action. Pantelleria lies just over 50 miles south-west of Sicily, and its capture was a vital precursor to Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily, which took place the following month. Allied invasion plans for Pantelleria had been in place since late 1940 (Operation Workshop), but the arrival of the Luftwaffe in the Mediterranean prevented the operation going ahead at that time. By 1943 the island – which had strategically-important radar facilities as well as an airfield – had a garrison of around 12,000 Italians (tripling the island's population) and was seen as a potential threat to the Allied invasion plan, so bombing raids were started in May 1943 that came to a head the following month with heavy attacks on military targets – more than 5,000 sorties were recorded between 8 May and 5 June, dropping more than 6,200 tons of bombs, which halved the strength of the Italian shore batteries. On 8 June the Royal Navy joined the assault with a task force of five cruisers (HM Ships Aurora, Euryalus, Newfoundland, Orion and Penelope), seven destroyers and three motor torpedo boats that bombarded the island's main town and port. Despite the incessant bombardment the Italian garrison twice refused to surrender, so the Allies launched an amphibious assault on 11 June with a naval bombardment to cover the first wave of landing craft. Unknown to the Allies, the

Italians had been in contact with their military superiors in Rome on the evening of 10 June to seek permission to surrender in the face of such superior forces, and that permission had been granted. When British commandos went ashore on 11 June their foe had already laid down their weapons and the landing was unopposed.

12 June 1982

Overnight on 11-12 June three British formations were slowly forcing back Argentine troops in the Falklands as they fought to take strategic areas of high ground that formed a defensive arc to the west of the capital, Stanley. Covered by the gun of frigate HMS Avenger, 3 Para were inching their way up Mount Longdon in the north, hoping to push on towards Wireless Ridge, but progress was slow against stiff Argentinian defence, with both artillery duels and hand-to-hand combat. Having taken Longdon by dawn the decision was made to dig in and prepare for the next advance. Sgt Ian McKay's assault on a dangerous machine gun post with just three other men – one of whom also died – resulted in him being posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. Just to the south-west the Royal Marines of 45 Cdo were attacking Two Sisters Mountain, facing similarly dogged defenders to that of the Paras. Their advance was covered by the guns of County-class destroyer HMS Glamorgan and frigate HMS Yarmouth, the latter also covering Mount Harriet to the south. Through use of heavy weapons and sheer tenacity and courage, 45 Cdo battered their way to their objective on the morning of 12 June for the loss of eight men dead. Like the Paras, the bootnecks hoped to push on, this time to Tumbledown Mountain, but the decision was made to dig in and regroup in the face of Argentine shelling. The third formation, 42 Cdo, found the going more straightforward on Mount Harriet, getting to within 100 metres or so of the enemy before they were spotted.

Continues on page 44



HMS Glamorgan's damaged hangar following the Exocet missile strike. See 12 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© Crown copyright IWM (FKD 153))

Heavy artillery support from sea and land suppressed Argentine defences on the peak to the extent that casualties were remarkably low – one Marine died in the attack, and a second was later killed by artillery fire – though there was still much fierce close-quarters combat and numerous injuries amongst the British from machine-gun fire and artillery before the objective was achieved at daybreak. Further casualties were suffered at sea on board Glamorgan as she withdrew from the gunline and prepared to head back to the carrier battle group out to sea. Aware of the threat of land-based Exocet missiles, taken from Argentine warships and mounted on lorries, British commanders had defined danger zones around the coast which warships avoided when moving around East Falkland. But it would appear that the Argentinians had moved a makeshift launcher further east towards the shore, so while Glamorgan transited around 20 miles out to sea, just outside the assumed danger zone, an Exocet was launched. Avenger, in company with Glamorgan, spotted the missile and raised the alarm, but all Glamorgan could do was turn sharply to present her stern – the strongest part of the ship – to the threat. The missile glanced off the edge of the upper deck, slid along and exploded near the hangar, killing eight sailors and destroying her armed and fully-fuelled Wessex helicopter, while blowing a hole in the deck through which burning fuel poured, starting fires which killed a further five men. A 14th man died of his injuries two months later. Though the gas turbines were temporarily put out of action, the fierce fires had been contained within hours

and the ship's steam turbines were used to move her out of the danger area and back to the carrier group. Glamorgan has the dubious honour of being the first ship to survive being struck by an Exocet.

13 June 1943

HMS *Ultror* bombarded the D/F station on Salina, Lipari Islands on 13 June 1943, one of the earliest successes in an effective wartime career. The submarine was launched at the Vickers-Armstrong yard in Barrow in October 1942 and commissioned on New Year's Eve the same year. She served mainly in the Mediterranean, sinking a range of shipping from supply vessels to sailing ships, and by October 1943 *Ultror* had fired 68 torpedoes of which 32 found their targets – a strike rate of almost 50 per cent, the best of any Royal Navy submarine at that point. She later served in the Atlantic without notable success, but survived the war and went on to serve as an ASDIC training target at Rothesay before being broken up at Briton Ferry in early 1946.

14 June 1957

S-class submarine HMS *Sidon*, which sank after an explosion in an experimental torpedo at Portland on 16 June 1955, was towed out to sea on 14 June 1957 and scuttled in 20 fathoms for use as a seabed target. The Cammell Laird-built boat had been commissioned in November 1944 and managed just two wartime patrols, one of Norway and the second in the Far East, before the end of the war. At around 0825 on 16 June 1955, while *Sidon* was alongside depot ship HMS

Continues on page 45

Maidstone in Portland Harbour, an experimental high test peroxide (HTP) torpedo motor started to run while the weapon was in a torpedo tube. The pressure and heat caused a fuel line to burst setting off an explosion, although the torpedo is believed to have been a dummy with no warhead. The explosion killed 12 sailors and submarine quickly filled with smoke and toxic gases, but a rescue party went forward to help those sailors who had been injured. In doing so a further man lost his life – Temp Surg Lt Charles Rhodes, who assisted a number of survivors but who suffocated as he was not familiar with the breathing apparatus he had been given. Surg Lt Rhodes was posthumously awarded the Albert Medal (a bravery award later replaced by the George Cross). Sidon's forward bulkheads had been damaged by the explosion and the boat sank just before 0900. Sidon was later raised and towed to Chesil Beach where the bodies of the 13 victims were recovered. After being refloated, Sidon was towed out into the Channel and sunk as an ASDIC target on 14 June 1957. A memorial to those

who died in the 990-ton submarine was unveiled in June 2005 at Portland by the Submariners Association to mark the 50th anniversary of the incident.

15 June 1881

Torpedo ram HMS Polyphemus was launched at Chatham Dockyard on 15 June 1881, the only Royal Navy ship designed and built as such – two sister ships were planned at various times but never started. The 2,640-ton ship had a shallow draft, a low profile and was built for speed (up to 17kt), with the intention of racing into an enemy harbour, torpedoing ships and escaping. He ram was only a secondary form of weapon, as she was equipped with five torpedo tubes, but it also proved useful in smashing through defensive booms and the like. She also had a detachable 250-ton iron keel, kept in place by two iron spindles, which could be jettisoned in an emergency to increase the ship's buoyancy. Polyphemus's ram was actually a specially-designed steel bow cap for the central torpedo

Continues on page 46

HMS Ultor pictured on her return to Greenock on 29 August 1944 after 18 months of successful patrols in the Mediterranean. Her crew are displaying the boat's Jolly Roger. See 13 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 25428)





tube, and also had a similar effect on the ship's performance as a modern-day bulbous bow. Another novel design was that of the 'flying deck' which housed the bridge and machine gun-platform, which was designed to float free as a pair of emergency rafts in the event of the ship sinking. She served with the Mediterranean Fleet from 1882 but paid off at Chatham at the beginning of 1900 as the reasons behind her design had been superseded by improved torpedoes and quick-firing guns. She never saw action.

16 June 1871

Iron screw frigate HMS *Megaera* reached St Paul's Island in the Indian Ocean on 16 June 1871 to investigate a serious leak in her hull. The 2,050-ton vessel would never leave the tiny (2.3 sq mile) uninhabited island. Launched in May 1849, *Megaera* and her four sisters were not a great success. She was one of the first Royal Navy warships to be built of iron, but having been completed it was discovered that the metal of her hull splintered dangerously when struck, so the class were converted to transports and stores carriers. Even then they were not particularly suited to the task as they were somewhat underpowered and could not accommodate large numbers of people. She broke down on her first voyage as a troopship in June 1851 and had to be towed back to her starting point, so instead she was sailed to the Crimea where she acted as a storeship before resuming her former logistics voyages. Her final voyage began in February 1871 bound for Australia with replacement crew for two sloop based *Down Under*. She suffered storm damage almost immediately and put into Queenstown in Ireland, where her officers complained that she was overloaded; after the issue was raised in Parliament some 130 tons of cargo was offloaded. She continued her passage south, reaching South Africa in May and sailing again on the 28th of the month. Just over a week later a leak was reported in her hold which was managed using hand-pumps and bailing out, but a week later it had become serious enough to employ steam pumps, which just managed

to keep the water level down. By this stage her Commanding Officer, Capt Arthur Thrupp, diverted her to St Paul's Island in order to allow a diver to examine the hull and see what was causing the leak. *Megaera* anchored off the island on 17 June and, after delays because of rough weather, a diver finally went down and found an iron plate had rusted through completely, the hull was very thin in other places and there was extensive corrosion in her iron beams, which were starting to separate from the hull. The ship's engineer advised Capt Thrupp that continuing the voyage would be dangerous, and his opinion was supported by two other RN engineers on board who were joining their ships in Australia. With further storms in the offing, Capt Thrupp decided to beach the ship and evacuate her, running her full-speed onto a sand bar. Over the next 11 days around two-thirds of her stores were recovered before Capt Thrupp declared her too unsafe to board. It was three more weeks before a passing Dutch ship spotted the flagpole *Megaera's* crew had erected, and they took one of the warship's officers with them to Java. Telegrams were sent, initiating a full-scale rescue, and all men were taken off by the end of August. Capt Thrupp managed to hitch a lift back to the UK on a mail steamer where he and his command team faced a court martial in November at Plymouth. The CO was honourably acquitted when the court deemed the beaching entirely justified, and Capt Thrupp went on to enjoy a successful career, including three years as Naval Aide-de-Camp to Queen Victoria, making the rank of vice admiral in 1888, a year before his death at the age of 60.

17 June 1958

A Naval Supermarine Scimitar jet piloted by Lt Cdr Derek Robbins RN of the RN Test Squadron at Boscombe Down, set a new flight time record from London to Valletta, Malta, of 2h 12m 27.2s on 17 June 1958 – 1,298 miles at an average speed of 588mph. The Scimitar was not exactly a roaring success in the Fleet Air Arm. Fighter prototypes were designed without undercarriage, to land on proposed rubber decks (thus saving on weight), and the aircraft featured a V-form

Continues on page 47

HMS Adventure pictured in April 1943, before her conversion to landing craft repair and support ship. See 18 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 15848)



design for the tailplane, but over the course of the next few months and years the aircraft was repurposed as a low-level nuclear-capable strike aircraft with full undercarriage and conventional tail. When it entered service in 1957 it was the largest, heaviest and most powerful aircraft to be operated by the Fleet Air Arm at that point, which probably contributed to its poor record – more than half the aircraft built by Supermarine (39 of 76) were lost in accidents, many down to the combination of large aircraft and relatively small flight decks on the aircraft carriers then in service. Later in their service career the Scimitars acted as air tankers, topping up the relatively-underpowered (but much more successful) strike replacement, the Blackburn Buccaneer S1, after they took off with reduced fuel load. The jet was removed from front-line service in October 1966 and completely phased out by 1970.

18 June 1924

The first purpose-designed and built minelayer, HMS Adventure, was launched at Devonport on 18 June 1924. Officially a cruiser-minelayer, the 8,500-ton ship was something of a pioneer, and fulfilled a number of vital roles in World War 2. She was built as a replacement for the Great War veteran Princess Margaret, with her design led by the need to carry a large cargo of mines and to have a good range. Originally built with a square stern, the effect was to suck mines back under the ship as they were launched, which required an urgent redesign to a traditional rounded cruiser stern. Because of her height to accommodate the mine rails she was relatively poorly armed, with just four 4.7in guns in order to increase her mine load capacity, which was 280 large mines or 340 smaller devices. She also had an innovative combination of steam and diesel propulsion, becoming the first RN warship to be fitted with diesels for economic cruising. She served on the China Station and in the Atlantic in the 1930s, and on the outbreak of war she was part of a task group that laid more than 3,100 mines in the Strait of Dover, blocking German U-boat access to the Channel. She went on to lay further minefields in the North Sea. On 13 November 1939 she was badly damaged by a German magnetic mine,

which killed 23 of her ship's company, and it was nearly a year before she returned to service. She was mined again in January 1941, requiring five months in dock. In April 1943, after several fast resupply runs to Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, Adventure was part of the operation to catch blockade runner Irene, which was intercepted and sunk off Spain. In November that year she was converted to a tender and repair ship for landing craft, allowing her to stand off Mulberry B in June 1944 during the Normandy landings to repair and support landing craft in theatre. She was never a great success as a minelayer, as she was somewhat ungainly, tall (offering an enticing target to the enemy) and slow to operate in enemy waters, but she managed to carry out 20 minelaying operations to the south-west, south and east of the UK before her conversion. She was reduced to reserve at the end of the war and scrapped in 1947.

19 June 1950

The first deck landing by a turboprop-powered aircraft was carried out on 19 June 1950 by Lt Cdr Callingham in a Fairey Gannet prototype on board carrier HMS Illustrious. The Gannet, designed to combine the two elements of anti-submarine warfare – search and attack – was developed from a World War 2 requirement, and made its maiden flight on 19 September 1949. The plane featured a double turboprop engine (the Armstrong Siddeley Double Mamba) with two contra-rotating propellers, and had a service life of 25 years, adapting to new roles as helicopters took over its main ASW function. The prototype Gannet was not trouble-free, and at one point made a crash-landing, requiring months of repairs, but with most of the wrinkles ironed out the repaired prototype made its first deck landing after flying from Boscombe Down. A second prototype, built for a crew of three and with changes to bomb bay and other features, took to the air shortly after. With further modifications and remedial work completed, the first four production aircraft were presented to the Fleet Air Arm at RNAS Ford on 5 April 1954. Trainer versions and an improved ASW Gannet were developed by the end of the 1950s, as was an

Continues on page 48

Airborne Early Warning (AEW) version. Electronic Countermeasures (ECM) and Carrier On-board Delivery (COD) versions were also produced. The Gannet was also used by the Germans and Australians, amongst other nations, and more than 300 of the aircraft were built. It was retired from service in the Royal Navy at the end of 1978.

20 June 1944

Lt John Bridge GC, GM and bar RNVR, lately physics master at Firth Park Grammar School Sheffield and wartime bomb disposal officer, was gazetted for the George Cross on 20 June 1944. The bespectacled Lt Bridge looked very much the science teacher when he volunteered for service in 1940 at the age of 25, but he proved to be very much a war hero as he dealt with numerous unexploded bombs, becoming one of the leading lights of the RN Clearance Divers branch. He received the George Medal when he led a team which defused a bomb with a delayed action fuse in September 1940, while in March 1941 he defused 15 bombs, including one in Devonport Dockyard which earned him a King's Commendation for Brave Conduct. The bar to his George Medal came in October 1941 when he dealt with a bomb in Falmouth Docks. But Lt Bridge was only just getting going by this point. In 1943 he made 28 dives in Messina Harbour, Sicily,

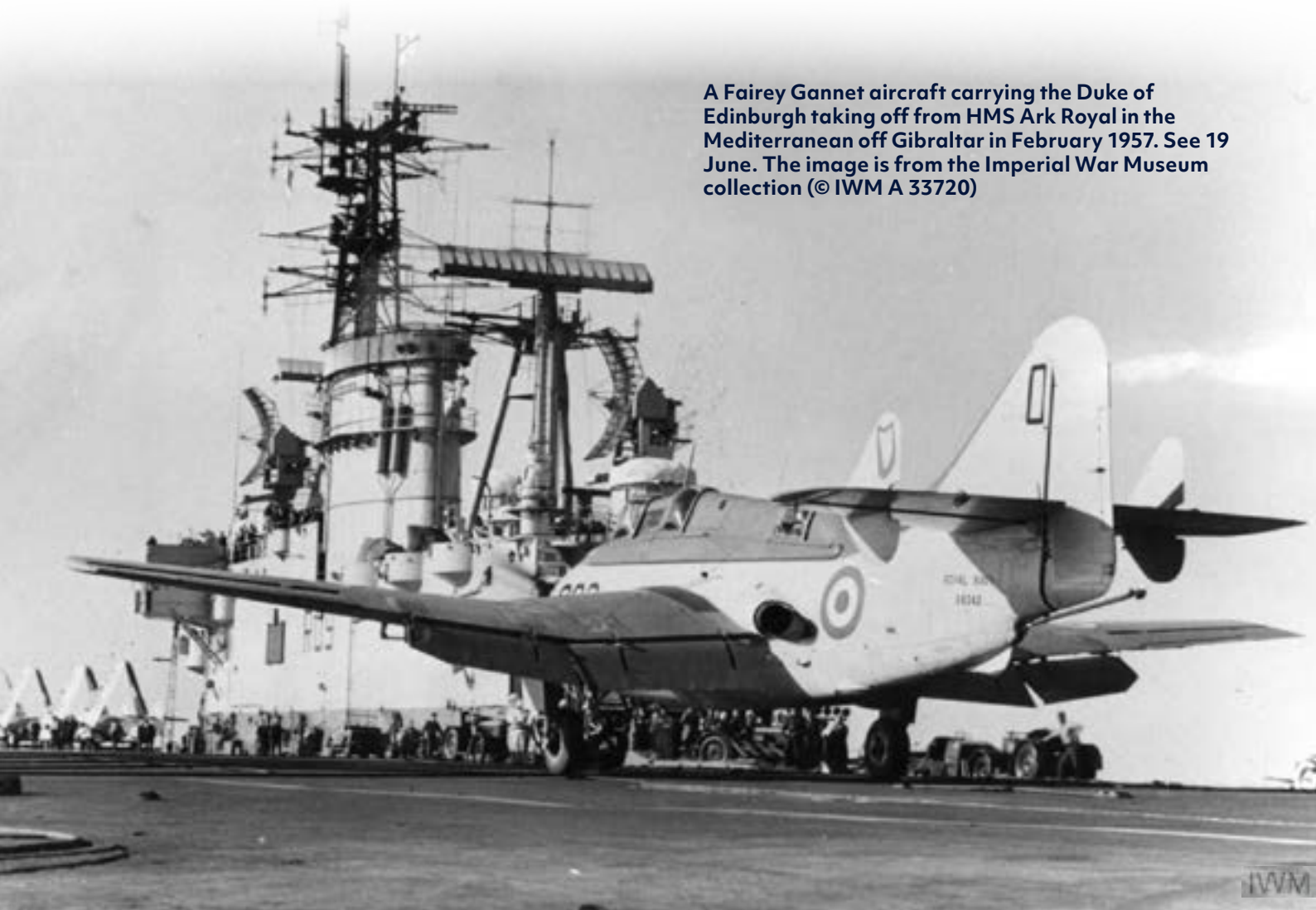
in a ten-day operation to defuse hundreds of booby-trapped depth charges, mines and other explosive devices, allowing the invasion of Italy on 3 September to go ahead. For that operation he was awarded the George Cross; the citation read: "For the most conspicuous and prolonged bravery and contempt of death in clearing Messina Harbour of depth charges. The recommending officer stated that he had never before had the fortune to be associated with such cool and sustained bravery as Lieutenant Bridge displayed during the 10 days of the operation." In June 1944 Lt Bridge took on the role of Naval bomb safety officer during the Normandy Landings, defusing numerous mines, bombs and unexploded shells, then went on to do the same on the River Scheldt in September. Promoted to Lieutenant Commander, John Bridge left the Royal Navy in 1946 and returned to his school, later becoming Director of Education for Sunderland Borough Council. Lt Cdr Bridge died on 14 December 2006 aged 91, shortly before an official ceremony at which the HQ of the RN's Fleet Diving Squadron was renamed Bridge Building in his honour.

21 June 1919

German High Seas Fleet scuttled at Scapa Flow, in the Orkney Islands north of Scotland. The warships had been interned there under the

Continues on page 49

A Fairey Gannet aircraft carrying the Duke of Edinburgh taking off from HMS Ark Royal in the Mediterranean off Gibraltar in February 1957. See 19 June. The image is from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 33720)



terms of the Armistice of 11 November 1918 while detailed negotiations took place over the fate of the fleet – the U-boats were to be surrendered without conditions, but the future of the surface fleet was a matter for negotiation. Proposals to intern the fleets in a neutral country – Norway and Spain were approached – came to nothing, so Scapa Flow was chosen, and 70 German ships were sailed to the Firth of Forth on 21 November 1918 where they rendezvoused with an Allied fleet of more than 350 vessels. The German ships were then moved on to Scapa Flow between 25 and 27 November, while a handful of stragglers joined them to bring the total to 74. Conditions on the German ships was poor – sailors were not allowed ashore, there was no entertainment, food was of low quality and no dental service was provided, though there were some doctors on board. More than 20,000 sailors had brought the ships to Scapa Flow, but that reduced over the months to just under 5,000 by the end of 1918, many of whom were suffering low morale and verging on mutinous. At the Paris Peace Conference, the fate of the ships was under discussion – the Italians and French wanted 25 per cent each, but the British were keen to have them scrapped as they did not want their naval supremacy threatened by handing powerful ships to other nations. When the proposed terms of the Treaty of Versailles became known, German commanders were determined to scuttle the fleet, and on 21 June, fearing the ships could be used against Germany in the event of the resumption of war, or that the British would simply seize them, their commander, Admiral Ludwig von Reuter, ordered the ships be scuttled by their crews, which by now

had been reduced to reliable men as the hot-heads had been repatriated. The guarding RN Battle Squadron was preparing to put to sea for exercises on the morning of 21 June, but at that point the Germans were opening seacocks and valves, breaking water pipes, opening scuttles and even creating holes in watertight bulkheads. At first there was no noticeable effect, but around noon one ship began to list heavily and all the vessels hoisted the Imperial German ensign at the masthead, after which the crews began to scramble off their sinking ships. Signals to the Battle Squadron caused them to reverse course and head back to Scapa, but by the time they arrived mid-afternoon only the largest ships were still floating. Efforts to intervene were for the most part ineffective – only a handful of destroyers, drifters and trawlers were in the harbour at the time, and they stood very little chance of halting the scuttling. The last German ship – battlecruiser SMS Hindenburg – sank at around 1700, by which time 15 capital ships had been scuttled, along with five light cruisers and 32 destroyers. Several German sailors were shot and killed as they made for the shore, with the survivors – more than 1,770 of them – being rounded up and treated as prisoners of war, having breached the terms of the Armistice. Although the British formally protested, there was a sense of quiet satisfaction that their original preference for the destruction of the fleet had come to fruition, while the Germans had managed to engineer a situation that they believed restored some honour after the initial surrender. Of the original 74 ships, the 22 still afloat or only partially submerged were either recovered or beached. Many of these

Continues on page 50

The half-submerged battlecruiser SMS Hindenburg at Scapa Flow in June 1919 – she was the last ship to go down in the scuttling of the German fleet. See 21 June. The image is from the Imperial War Museum collection (© David Masters (Q 70580))



were allocated to Allied navies, but the cost of raising the sunken ships, some of which lay in water as much as 47 metres deep, was deemed prohibitive and they were left in situ, though the entrepreneur Ernest Cox bought and salvaged 35 of the German ships – mainly destroyers – over the following years.

22 June 1923

The amalgamation of the Royal Marines Artillery (the 'Blue Marines') and the Royal Marine Light Infantry (the 'Red Marines') to reform the Royal Marines was achieved by Admiralty Fleet Order on 22 June 1923, confirmed by Order in Council on 11 October the same year. The RMA had been formed as a separate unit of the Royal Marines in 1804 with the main task of manning the artillery in bomb vessels – ships whose main armament was mortars and which were used to bombard shore targets. These Blue Marines replaced the Army's Royal Regiment of Artillery following legal action which determined that Army personnel could not be subject to Naval orders, and gained their name from the colour of the Army unit's uniform. The infantry element of the RMA wore the traditional British infantry uniform colour red, thus becoming known as the Red marines (or 'lobsters' to sailors). The Red Marines were renamed the Royal Marines Light Infantry (RMLI) in 1855, officially dropping the 's' in 'Marines' in 1862. Amalgamation was the lesser of two evils in 1923 as the Corps shrank in numbers and was even threatened with disbandment; with a force of fewer than 10,000 men there was no requirement for two branches so the entire Corps became Royal Marines, the ranks of private and gunner were replaced by 'Marine' and only a few specialists received gunnery training – artillery support would henceforth be provided by dedicated Royal Artillery units. There are still echoes of the former RM units in the modern uniform – the dark blue and red uniform was taken up by the Corps, while officers and NCOs wear scarlet mess dress.

23 June 1986

Cdr David Tall took command of nuclear hunter-killer submarine HMS Turbulent on 23 June 1986. His brother Jeff had been in command of Fleet boat HMS Churchill since November 1984, and thus they became the first brothers to command nuclear-powered submarines concurrently. Both went on to command Polaris ballistic missile boats – Jeff in HMS Repulse, David in HMS Resolution. David's crew set the record for the longest continuously-dived submarine patrol in RN history – 108 days. Jeff went on to become Director of the RN Submarine Museum.

24 June 1944

S-class destroyer HMS Swift was sunk by mine off Sword Beach, five miles north of Ouistreham, Seine Bay, on 24 June 1944 during Operation Neptune. She was lost barely six months after entering service with the Royal Navy. Built by Samuel Whites at Cowes on the Isle of Wight, she joined the war effort in February 1944 escorting

Arctic convoys to and from the Kola Inlet before being allocated to Force S (gunfire support and patrols) in May in preparation for the Normandy Landings. On 6 June she bombarded German positions along Sword Beach and continued to provide gunfire support along the beachheads for the Eastern Task Force. The destroyer returned to Portsmouth on June 23 to restore and pick up ammunition, but on her return to Normandy on 24 June she struck a mine which broke the ship in two and she rapidly sank, taking 17 sailors with her.

25 June 1964

Assault ship HMS Intrepid was launched on 25 June 1964 at the John Brown shipyard on the Clyde – the last warship built for the Royal Navy at that yard. One of two Fearless-class Landing Platform Dock (LPD) ships, the 17,000-ton ship was designed to support an amphibious assault force of Royal Marines, acting as an afloat HQ once the force was ashore. She could carry up to 700 troops for short periods, or 400 for extended operations, and was able to carry 15 main battle tanks and numerous other smaller vehicles, including Land Rovers, six three-ton lorries and various specialist vehicles. She was commissioned in March 1967 and served for more than 30 years, with one of her earliest tasks being the British withdrawal from Aden. She also took part in humanitarian operations after the Bhola cyclone of 1970 which killed at least half a million people in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and India. Defence cuts put Intrepid in reserve for three years in 1976, and plans were announced in 1981 to decommission Intrepid and her sister Fearless, though the plans were rapidly scrapped when Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in 1982. Carrying elements of 3 Cdo Brigade, Intrepid was right at the heart of the Conflict, coming under attack at the San Carlos Water landings of 21–22 May and again on 25 May. At the end of the Conflict she accommodated Argentine prisoners of war, and the formal surrender document was signed aboard the assault ship. Back in the UK Intrepid was refitted and spent five years supporting initial officer training as part of the Dartmouth Training Squadron. She returned to the Reserve list towards the end of 1990, but was not in good enough condition to undergo the kind of extensive refit that Fearless underwent at the end of the 1980s. She was laid up at the top of Portsmouth Harbour, providing spares for Fearless, and she was decommissioned in 1999. Intrepid was towed from Portsmouth Harbour for the final time on 13 September 2008 en route for recycling on the Mersey. By August the following year she had been completely dismantled, with more than 98 per cent of material being reused or recycled.

26 June 1958

Light cruiser HMS Birmingham arrived in Quebec on 26 June 1958 for the 350th anniversary of the founding of the city. The Devonport-built ship was commissioned in November 1937 and served on the China Station before the war, returning to the

Continues on page 51

Home Fleet in March 1940 and carrying out her early war patrols in the North Sea off Norway. The first part of 1941 saw her on troop convoys on the long route to the Middle East via the Cape of Good Hope, and she was involved in the hunt for the Bismarck in May. After one convoy escort voyage to South Africa and a refit in Simon's Town, she joined the 4th Cruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean on convoy duty, sustaining bomb damage from a near miss in March 1942. After a stint in the Indian Ocean, Birmingham returned to the UK for a refit, returning to the Mediterranean in October 1943. Within weeks she had been torpedoed by U-407 off Libya, smashing her keel and killing around 70 sailors. With her bow almost severed, she limped into Alexandria where she was patched up before sailing to the United States for permanent repairs. The cruiser returned to home waters at the end of 1944, and her last act in the war was to join a squadron to the Baltic to occupy ports and take the surrender of German warships. Post-war service included the East Indies and South Atlantic and a minor upgrade/refit – she was deemed too old for a full modernisation. She took part in the Korean War while on duty in the Far East then served once

more in the Mediterranean. Birmingham paid off in December 1959, the last of her class to leave service, and was scrapped in September the following year at Inverkeithing. Quebec was no stranger to the Royal Navy – the city was the prize in several battles and sieges between French and British (and occasionally American and British) forces, and was controlled by the British for well over a century.

27 June 1939

Capt Lord Louis Mountbatten appointed to command the destroyer HMS Kelly on 27 June 1939. Mountbatten was a student at the Royal Naval College, Osborne, on the Isle of Wight before joining the Royal Navy in 1916. He saw service in the final stages of World War 1 on board battlecruiser HMS Lion and battleship HMS Queen Elizabeth, then continued his Naval career after the Armistice, becoming a communications and electronics specialist and taking part in tours to Australia (in battlecruiser HMS Renown) and India and Japan (in HMS Repulse). Lord Louis (as he was known after 1917) took up his first command in 1934, sailing the new destroyer HMS Daring out to Singapore

Continues on page 52



HMS Intrepid pictured shortly before the Falklands Conflict. See 25 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© Crown copyright reproduced under delegated authority from The Keeper of Public Records. Image: IWM (FKD 585))

and returning to Malta in the ship she replaced, HMS Wishart. Promoted to the rank of Captain in June 1937, he took command of HMS Kelly in June 1939 and also led the 5th Destroyer Flotilla. Mountbatten was heavily involved in the Norwegian Campaign, in May 1940 leading a British convoy through fog to evacuate Allied forces during the Namsos Campaign. Kelly was torpedoed off the Dutch coast on the night of 9-10 May 1940 by German E-boat S-31, at which point Mountbatten transferred to J-class destroyer HMS Javelin – until that ship was torpedoed in late November off the Lizard; fortunately HMS Kelly was ready to return to service shortly after. Kelly's war was to end the following year, when she was sunk by dive bombers on 23 May 1941 during the battle of Crete. Mountbatten went on to command aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious before being promoted Commodore as Chief of Combined Operations HQ, and it was during his tenure that crucial innovations including PLUTO (the Pipe Line Under The Ocean, a fuel supply system), the Mulberry harbours and tank landing ships were developed in advance of Allied amphibious assaults including D-Day, although he was also one of the team behind the disastrous Dieppe raid of 19 August 1942 where hundreds of Allied troops – predominantly Canadian – died in a botched operation, though crucial lessons were learned which were put to good use on 6 June 1944. In mid-1943 Mountbatten, now an acting full admiral, was appointed Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia Command, overseeing the recapture of Burma and receiving the formal surrender of Japanese forces at Singapore in September 1945. Two years later, as Viceroy of India, Mountbatten oversaw the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan. Resuming his Naval career, Mountbatten took command of the 1st Cruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean, and in June 1949 became second-in-command of the Mediterranean Fleet as a Vice Admiral. Over the next three years he became Fourth Sea Lord, CINCPAC and NATO Commander Allied Forces Mediterranean, after which he achieved the rank of full Admiral in February 1953. From April 1955 until July 1959 Mountbatten served as First Sea Lord – the first time in Royal Naval history that a father

and son had reached the top of the pile – and was promoted to Admiral of the Fleet. He also spent six years as Chief of the Defence Staff. Mountbatten was assassinated by the IRA at Mullaghmore in County Sligo, Ireland, on 27 August 1979 when his fishing boat was destroyed by a 50lb radio-controlled bomb.

28 June 1965

Submarine HMS Totem was bought by the Israeli Navy at Portsmouth on 28 June 1965 and subsequently renamed Dakar. The T-boat had been commissioned in the final months of World War 2 but came into her own during the Cold War as one of eight 'Super T-conversions' which involved an extensive refit and rebuild at Chatham in the early 1950s, adding a new hull section and streamlining the hull to make her and her sisters faster and quieter. In early 1955, while gathering signals intelligence on Russian naval vessels in the Barents Sea, Totem came under depth-charge attack and had to dive deep and negotiate a minefield in order to escape. Totem and her sisters HMS Truncheon and Turpin were bought by the Israelis in 1965, and Totem was commissioned as INS Dakar on 10 November 1967. She sailed from Portsmouth Harbour on 9 January 1968 bound for Haifa with 69 souls on board, briefly calling in at Gibraltar six days later. Making her way across the Mediterranean submerged using her snorkel, Dakar's last reported position was east of Crete on the morning of 24 January, but following three more routine signals, the last in the first minutes of 25 January, no more was heard from her. An extensive search failed to find her, though an emergency buoy was found on the beach in Gaza a year later. Her wreck was finally discovered in May 1999, more than 30 years after she disappeared, and an inspection of the wreck – 3,000 metres deep – suggested she had suddenly dived past her design limit and imploded, instantly killing all on board.

29 June 1942

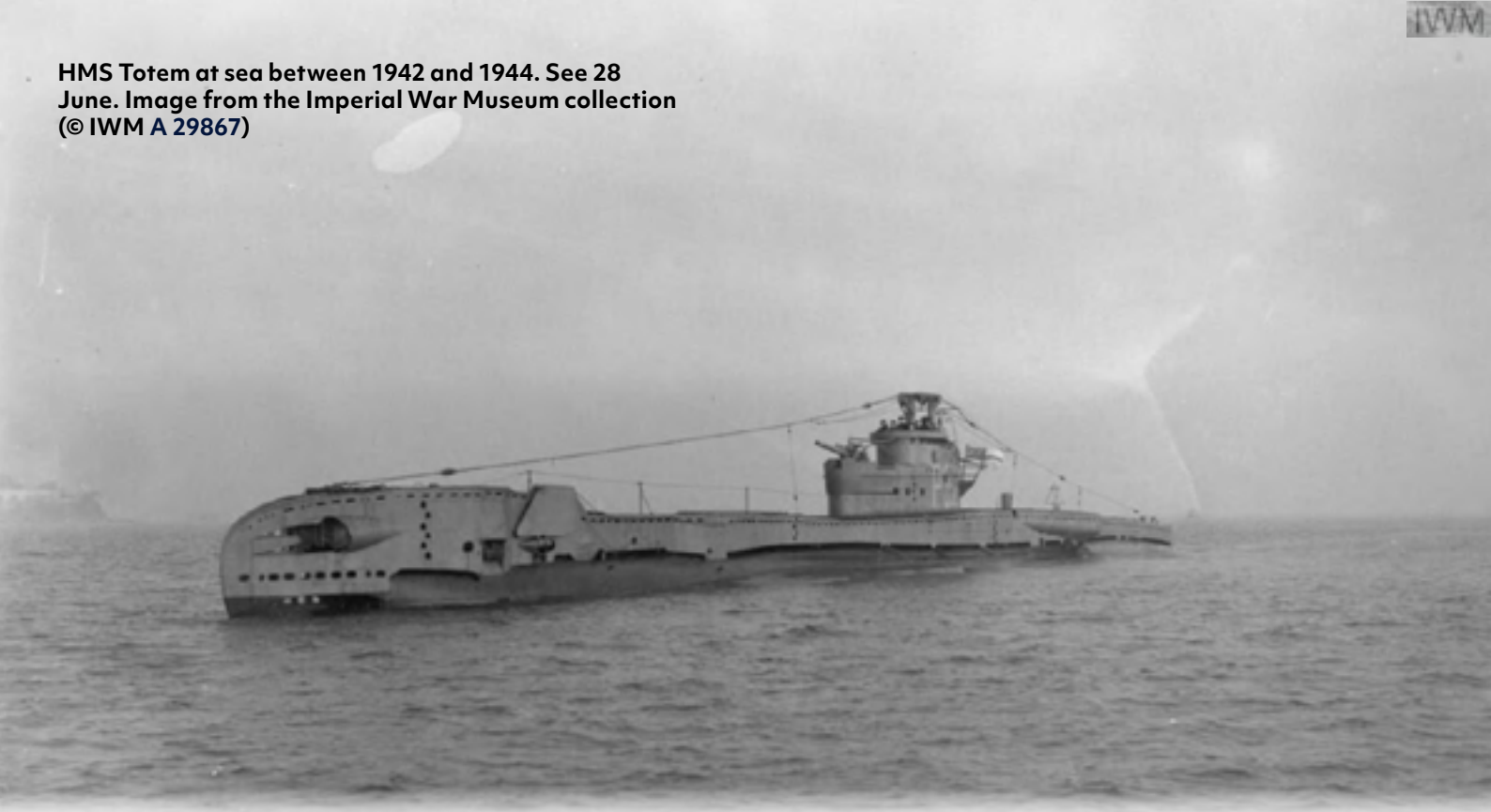
HMS Thrasher sank Italian fast sloop Diana which was en route to North Africa carrying technical experts and staff. The T-boat, commissioned in May 1941, started her first war patrol on 22

Continues on page 53

Destroyer HMS Kelly. See 27 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM (A 2787))



HMS Totem at sea between 1942 and 1944. See 28 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 29867)



June 1941, carrying stores to Malta en route, and was an active boat in the Mediterranean in her first year, sinking 20,000 tons of shipping, though she so nearly became a victim herself. On 17 February, following a successful attack on a supply ship, Thrasher surfaced to find two unexploded bombs wedged under her casing. Lt Peter Roberts and PO Thomas Gould disposed of the first without too much difficulty, but the second was in a very confined space. The only way to remove it was for Gould to lie on his back with the bomb resting on his chest while Roberts dragged him back out by his shoulders. To add to the danger, the submarine would have crash dived if an enemy ship or aircraft appeared, trapping the two men under the flooded casing or washing them overboard. With each movement the men could hear a 'twanging sound' from the bomb, suggesting there was a broken wire somewhere inside. Nevertheless, over the course of 50 minutes the pair managed to remove the bomb from the gun casing and drop it gently over the side, almost certainly saving the submarine. Both men were awarded the Victoria Cross. The attack on 29 June saw four of her torpedoes hit the 1,600-ton sloop Diana north of Tobruk in Libya, killing 336 on board (almost 150 were rescued). Thrasher went on to serve in the Far East towards the end of the war, sinking more than 20 minor vessels, and was scrapped in Wales in March 1947.

30 June 1958

The Royal Marines Gunnery School at Eastney in Portsmouth closed and training of Royal Marines gunnery ratings transferred to HMS Excellent at Whale Island in Portsmouth Harbour. The battery and school at Eastney had been used by the Corps and its various constituent parts since 1883.



Lt Hugh Stirling Mackenzie RN, CO of HMS Thrasher, at Alexandria in March 1942, shortly before his boat sank Italian sloop Diana. See 29 June. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 10254)

▶ LONGCAST

2024

14-16 June	RNA National Conference, Cardiff
29 June	National Armed Forces Day
3 Aug	Cheshire Maritime Ball, Tatton Park
12 Oct	World Uckers Championships, Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth
Autumn (tbc)	D-Day Memorials Cycle Event in Normandy
15-18 May 2025	Londonderry Battle of the Atlantic 80th Anniversary Commemoration

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



www.royal-naval-association.co.uk



A SPECIAL OFFER

A 10% discount on food, selected drinks and hotel rooms for members of the Royal Naval Association

The Royal Maritime Hotel is a stone's throw from Gunwharf Quays, the Spinnaker Tower and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, HMS Victory, The Mary Rose Museum and HMS Warrior. Facilities include Horatio's restaurant, the Victory bar, a small swimming pool, sauna, spa pool and skittles!

Run by a charity to benefit veterans and serving military personnel




Visit royalmaritimehotel.co.uk for more information and to book

info@royalmaritimehotel.co.uk 02392 982 182 Queen Street, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 3HS

MORE OFFERS

Ship Anson pub, 10 The Hard, Portsea	10% off food and drink
Portsmouth Historic Dockyard	£20 for a day ticket 30% off annual Ultimate Explorer tickets
Royal Maritime Hotel 182 Queen Street	A 10% discount on food, selected drinks and hotel rooms
Sea Urchin's Gin Navy Strength Gin Arctic Convoy Vodka	10% to RNA from the sale of each bottle Don't forget to tick the box for RNA. P&P is free for orders over £40, otherwise it is £4.50.
China Fleet Country Club	Click on the link for offers for Serving and ex-Serving RN and RM
Trinity Insurance	For links to offers see our story on page 23



THE ROYAL MARITIME
HOTEL

SPECIAL OFFERS FOR ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

ENJOY TRIPLE DISCOUNTS

Members of the Royal Naval Association can enjoy triple discounts when you stay at the Royal Maritime Hotel and book a ferry trip with Wightlink Ferries FastCat



Get 10% off accommodation at the Royal Maritime Hotel when you travel with Wightlink (You must present your ferry ticket)

All Wightlink customers
Get 15% off dinner in
Horatio's



Scan QR code for more discounts
with Wightlink & details

Contact us to book at: info@royalmaritimehotel.co.uk
Queen Street, Portsmouth, Hampshire,
PO1 3HS | 023 9298 2182



ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION



WRITE YOUR WILL FOR FREE

www.linktr.ee/rnassociation

The RNA has partnered with Will writers Guardian Angel Network to offer you the chance to write your Will for free either online, over the phone or in person.

It's certainly worth getting your affairs in order. If you cross the bar without a Will, it can make things more difficult legally than they need to be for the loved ones you leave behind.

In return, we ask that you might consider leaving the RNA a gift in your Will so that, through your legacy, we might continue the work of the Association across our Naval community.

**ONCE
NAVY
ALWAYS
NAVY**

THREE SIMPLE STEPS:

1. Answer a few easy questions.
This takes 10 minutes, on average.
2. Will experts review your documents.
To make sure everything is as it should be. This only takes up to 7 working days.
3. Make it official.

Follow this link to get started:

www.linktr.ee/rnassociation

STANHOPE PARK, HOLSWORTHY

FRIDAY 26th - SUNDAY 28th JULY 2024



ATTRACTIONS TO DATE INCLUDE:

- ✪ Living History Groups
- ✪ Vintage Fair Games
- ✪ Re-enactment Groups
- ✪ Remote Control Tanks
- ✪ Extensive WW2 Encampment
- ✪ History Exhibition
- ✪ Military Vehicles
- ✪ Airsoft Range
- ✪ Firepower Demo's
- ✪ Poster Competition
- ✪ Danger LIXB Demo's
- ✪ Prize Draw
- ✪ Field Hospital
- ✪ Convoy
- ✪ Evacuation Centre
- ✪ Pipe and Drum Parade
- ✪ Radar Room
- ✪ Live Skirmishes/Re-enactments
- ✪ Air Raid Shelter/Blitz Experience
- ✪ Evening of Boxing
- ✪ ENSA Stage Acts
- ✪ Walkabouts in Costume
- ✪ Vintage Market
- ✪ 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: 1144 uk
 12, 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 on 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




Aggies

Katie White
ACTION CO-ORDINATOR

Call
078 1599 3551

OR EMAIL
KATIE.WHITE@AGGIES.ORG.UK

FRIENDLY AND CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT

Here to listen and support
you and your family

Encouraging networking between families

Record a bedtime story for your child
during deployment with Storybook
Waves

Confidential guidance to support your
specific needs

Deployment support for you and your
family; before, during and after
deployment



@AGGIEWESTONS

Deploying or far from home? You can still be close to your loved ones



“When my mummy or daddy are away they still read me a story every day”

- Record a story and personal message on a Storybook Waves CD or digital recording

It only takes 20 minutes. Your story will be edited, sound effects added and a personalised Storybook CD or digital recording sent to your child so they can listen to your voice whenever they want no matter how far apart you are.

- Get a free picture book and scrapbook from Reading Force

With their own book your child can read along with your story recording. Then share and talk about the story, even when apart, and fill the scrapbook with all the family's thoughts – doodles, drawings, notes – for a special family keepsake.



FREE for all Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel separated from their families.

Ask at your Chaplaincy or visit

www.aggies.org.uk

www.readingforce.org.uk

How to take part

This initiative is **FREE** for all Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel separated from their families. Ask at your Chaplaincy. The main recording centres are below but if your unit is not listed you can still take part, email storybookwaves@aggies.org.uk or visit www.aggies.org.uk or www.readingforce.org.uk.

HMNB Portsmouth

The Chaplaincy
Cochrane Building
Tel: 023 9272 3000 Mil: 9380 23000

RM Poole

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 01202 202179

HMS Sultan

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 023 9354 2015 Mil: 9384 32015

HNMB Clyde

The Chaplaincy, HMS Neptune
Tel: 079 7764 2005

HMNB Clyde

Chaplaincy Hub
Tel: 079 7764 2003

HMS Caledonia

Aggie's Rosyth
Tel: 07801 465286

40 Commando

Norton Manor, Taunton
Tel: 079 7764 1903 Mil: 9378 04471

RNAS Yeovilton

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 01935 455257 Mil: 9351 05257

CTCRM Lympstone

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 01392 41462 Mil: 9378 54262

RNAS Culdrose

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 079 7765 1888 Mil: 9378 12790

BRNC

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 01803 677055 Mil: 9374 97055

HMNB Devonport

The Chaplaincy, HMS Drake
Tel: 01752 557649 Mil: 9375 67649

RM Stonehouse

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 079 7764 1906 Mil: 9375 36308

RM Condor

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 01241 822226 Mil: 9338 72226

HMS Collingwood

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 01329 335277 Mil: 9382 52483

RM Bickleigh

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 01752 727027 Mil: 9378 87027

Northwood HQ

Chaplaincy
Tel: 01923 957872 Mil: 9360 57872

RMB Chivenor

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 079 7764 1960

DSL, Worthy Down

The Chaplaincy
Tel: 079 7764 1910

Would you like to be a volunteer editor?

Storybook Waves relies on volunteers who generously give time to the project – if you think you'd enjoy being a volunteer editor, please email storybookwaves@aggies.org.uk. It's fun and rewarding!



Storybook Waves

Supported By



READING FORCE



Storybook Waves is managed by Aggie's, a naval charity serving Sailors and Royal Marines and their families. www.aggies.org.uk

Reading Force is a registered charity and provides free books and scrapbooks to all Armed Forces children of all ages. Find out more at www.readingforce.org.uk