



**ROYAL NAVAL
ASSOCIATION**



The Semaphore Circular

No 699

The Beating Heart of the RNA

May 2020



Please Donate to the RNA
NHS & Ventilator Appeal -
****See Details Inside****

HMS Queen Elizabeth slips out of Portsmouth Harbour without any fuss and unusually no adoring public. Sign of the times perhaps?

Shipmates Please Stay Safe

If you need assistance call the RNA Helpline on 07542 680082

This edition is the on-line version of the Semaphore Circular, unless you have registered with Central Office, it will only be available on the RNA website in the 'Members Area' under 'downloads' at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk and will be emailed to the branch contact, usually the Hon Sec

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Glossary of terms

NCM	National Council Member
NC	National Council
AMC	Association Management Committee
FAC	Finance Administration Committee
NCh	National Chairman
NVCh	National Vice Chairman
NP	National President
DNP	Deputy National President
GS	General Secretary
CONA	Conference of Naval Associations
NCBA	National Charter, Rules and Byelaws Advisor



indicates a new or substantially changed entry

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PLEASE NOTE DURING THE CURRENT RESTRICTIONS CENTRAL OFFICE IS CLOSED. PLEASE USE EMAIL OR, IF THE MATTER IS URGENT, THE HELPLINE ON 07542 680082. STAFF HIGHLIGHTED IN RED ABOVE ARE CURRENTLY FURLOUGHED.



Central Office Staff holding their daily meeting using 'Zoom'.

ind Semaphore Circular On-line
<http://bit.ly/RNADownloads>

or
 RNA Website / Members Area / Downloads /
 Circulars / Code (shipmate)

Snail Trail Mail - Postal Address

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From the General Secretary

Dear Shipmates,

Well we're into month two of lockdown and I'm glad to report there's been no talk of divorce in the Oliphant household yet.....murder yes, but divorce no! Presumably, in an effort to maintain morale, I have noticed an upturn in the number of clips/jokes which have been circulating on Whats App and other mediums. I think my favourite this month was the observation that Osama Bin Laden had been stuck in lockdown with three wives for five years and perhaps he called in those Navy Seals himself?!! Fortunately, I don't think my long-suffering wife reads the Semaphore Circular so I might just get away with that one.

On a much more sober note, I have had it confirmed that we have lost at least 2 Shipmates who have crossed the bar as a result of Covid-19 and I offer their families our deepest condolences. Indeed, it has been a sad month where we seem to have lost more shipmates this spring than we might normally do and not necessarily due to the virus. It has been particularly troubling as social distancing restrictions have meant that we have not been able to accord the usual marks of respect at funerals which has, of course, been disappointing and distressing for relatives and fellow shipmates.

It may be of some comfort to know that our honorary RNA chaplain and very great supporter, the Chaplain of the Fleet, The Venerable Martyn Gough, has been in touch and offered to conduct a memorial service to all our shipmates who crossed the bar during the crisis. The obvious place to do this is at the National Memorial Arboretum and we may look at some regional options too when things improve and we get our Station Cards back.

As well as a social impact, please be aware that there is also a financial consequence to the crisis. We are bracing ourselves for a hit on the Central Office budget this year, as we are anticipating the income from our investments will be virtually wiped out. In order to redress this, I have had to take the unprecedented action from 01 May of furloughing some of the team and reducing the hours of the remainder. **Please be aware therefore that this will mean that it will definitely *not* be business as usual in Central Office.** Although we will still maintain our basic functions, I would be very grateful if you could please remain patient with respect to communications and especially financial transactions throughout this challenging and unpredictable period. Regrettably, the Morale Messenger may be a casualty. To all the Central Office staff, I thank you all wholeheartedly for your support and understanding.

Notwithstanding, the **Helpline (07542 680082) is still in operation** and continues to play a key role in the support we are giving the membership from Central Office. In addition, we have been fabulously well supported by Geoff Apperley who is doing a fantastic job as our Deputy National Welfare Advisor providing advice notices which are being published on the website, our Facebook page, the RNA Community site and being passed to Branch/Area Welfare Officers and also across the Conference of Naval Associations. BZ Geoff!

Also, while I'm on the subject of BZs, I take my hat off to all Branch Committees and especially Branch Secretaries who we have loaded up with lots of additional tasks throughout this crisis. Not only have we been pushing out more missives and advice notes for Secretaries to cascade, but now we've started to task them with supporting us in improving the Central Office database which I am glad to report is coming on. The database currently only holds info on HQ Roll and Branch Officials and has proven extremely useful in allowing us to find shipmates close by to those who have called the Helpline for assistance. We have however also been frustrated by not understanding the whereabouts of 9/10^{ths} of our members who may well be living in the same

vicinity as a shipmate in need. Frankly, I feel that, in this day and age, we ought to be doing better for our shipmates.

We've had lots of good questions from Branch Secretaries regarding IT security which we have answered on an individual basis. Please know that IT security is absolutely at the top of our priority list and, for those who have elected to pay their subs by Standing Order, we do not hold any personal banking details in Central Office as a Standing Order is an instruction from you to your bank.

Branch Committees deserve a chuck up too in establishing some sort of system to ensure their shipmates have a support system in place. Some branches are using a cascade system, some have established a buddy-buddy system and others simply have a call round routine to reach their more vulnerable shipmates. Also, we are all learning new lessons about video teleconferences (VTCs) with some branches having successfully achieved theirs using online technology. Well done all!

Following that theme, and with social isolation a real concern, please take a few minutes to have a look at the excellent piece Julie Royston has put together for us about using Zoom. It's really not as complicated as you might think, indeed, once you know how, it's easier than picking up a phone and we are in the process of getting NCMs spammed up so that the next National Council meeting can be conducted on line. That should be fun!! Thanks Julie – you're a star! Details for the virtual RNA Conference/AGM will be promulgated next month.

You will also have seen that we have an appeal running at the moment to raise money for a ventilator. Much like the appeals that ran during WW2 whereby cities and towns raised money for ships and Spitfires, the idea is to contribute to the current war effort by raising money for a vital item of kit to fight this enemy. Please see the separate item on this and thank you to the branches and shipmates who have already made generous donations. As I write, we're already nearly half-way there ...!

Moving onto events, you may already have seen my call to arms last week for a Two Minute Silence on VE Day. On **8 May**, we plan to join with the RBL and people across all generations and communities to **join in a national moment of reflection and remembrance at 1100 as we pause for a Two Minute Silence to honour the service and sacrifice of the Second World War Generation** and reflect on the devastating impact Covid-19 has had on so many lives across the World. There is no right or wrong way to take part in the Silence, some may wish to stand at their windows, step outside their homes while remaining distanced from others, or simply sit in a quiet moment of reflection.

Finally, you will glad to know that our Navy is still busy. Training establishments are still hard at it and I watched HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH slip out during the 1st Dog this evening (29/4); a real contrast to the fanfare of previous departures and arrivals. This time her departure wasn't even announced in QHM's harbour shipping movements as they didn't want to attract a crowd to the Round Tower. The gallery was empty - strange times indeed.



Please stay safe and continue to follow UK Government advice. Drink rum and not antiseptic!!

Up spirits!

Bill

Chairman's chat

Shipmates, yet another edition of Semaphore Circular produced from S/M Andy Christie's Man Cave who is not a bad lad having to work under extreme conditions. Just wish he would change from his slippers and bath robe into decent rig!

Since mid-March, our lives have been turned upside down by COVID-19. Sadly, we learn daily of Shipmates or their love ones who have slipped away as victims of this terrible virus. Our thoughts are with them and we must not forget them. Back in December who could have imagined we would find ourselves in this situation.

On the rare occasions that my wife and I have ventured out to collect and deliver medicines or provisions to housebound Shipmates, it is pleasing to see that the majority of the public are adhering to the Government's advice to 'Lockdown' and the eeriness of the once bustling roads and local town. Click & Collect and home deliveries have now become the norm as opposed to the usual visit to town where in my case I would always bump into friends and a few Shipmates. Sadly, we see on the TV news or hear on the radio of those who choose to ignore the Government's advice to stay at home simply because they cannot see this invisible enemy and that is what it is. Our admiration goes to all frontline staff, be they NHS, Carers, Shop workers, Bin men and all those involved in logistics behind the scenes or delivering vital supplies around the country.



On the brighter side of life, it is heartening to learn through Facebook the good work and deeds being carried out by you, the members. We have Wrexham Branch who have created the virtual TOT Night using an App called Zoom which having started with a handful of members taking part, and has now grown in numbers to an almost unruly bunch with S/M's Kevin Hackett and Eric Holmwood exercising control. Well done lads in bonding together us future AA attendees. Interested? Checkout either S/M's on Royal Naval Association Community Site. My thanks to S/M Karl Webb of RNA Huntingdon for his super IT skills in quickly capturing and posting on Facebook posters of the WANTED! who took part. These events are held each Wednesday & Saturday evening @ 1900 (that is 7.00pm to those Crabfat Members who are reading this).

Many Branches are embracing modern IT technology by holding virtual meetings and what a great way of maintaining contact within a Branch or with other Branches mostly with that added ingredient of banter. Well done all concerned. Just to share my own Branch's initiative, we run a Buddy's scheme whereby each committee member (Lead Buddy) makes frequent contact with several designated members to ensure they are well and enquire if they need any shopping etc. Each Lead Buddy then reports back on a Friday to the Branch Welfare Officer, reporting earlier if assistance is required. No doubt many Branches have developed their own support system.

Unfortunately, in readiness for the Uckers Championship members are losing ground being able to practise for the event. So, now is the time to pit your wits against your family members and show them how Jack/Jill occupied some of his/her time at Sea. However, I do not recommend playing Uckers with your wife/partner unless you want to cook your own meals.

The current situation has thrown up numerous issues for the Association which Bill Oliphant will no doubt have covered in his introduction. Behind the scenes we have had to address how to organise national committee and the national council meetings along with this year's national conference. This will necessitate the national council to consider suspending various Bye-Laws

for a limited period. Details will be promulgated to Branch Secretary's shortly. As you will be aware all Association national events up to and including National Conference have had to be cancelled including the Standard Bearers Competition and the Welfare Seminar as well as several Open Days at Portsmouth Naval Base.

Returning to my earlier reference to Shipmates we have lost and may lose as a result of both the virus and natural causes. Following a suggestion from S/M Gordon Williams No 7 Area (South Wales & Glouc), Bill Oliphant has made an approach to the Chaplain of the Fleet, the Venerable Martyn Gough QHC with a view to holding a Service of Commemoration for all Shipmates we have lost. Consideration will be given as to the most appropriate venue and date.

My admiration goes to all serving and reserve members of the Navy who are supporting the frontline against the virus, and no doubt confined to Ship or Base. Our thoughts are with you and the fact that you are unable to be with your families. Please endeavour to spin your dits and experiences by continuing to send them to Andy Christie at andychristie@royalnavalassoc.com

To all Shipmates and your families here in the UK and throughout the world, keep safe and adhere to all the advice being given to you. Remember, let us all set our sights on coming out of this crisis together. Stay Safe.

Yours aye

Keith Ridley

nationalchairman@royalnavalassoc.com

1. ★ NHS and Ventilator Appeal

RNA NHS & Ventilator Appeal - Please see the details below of the launch of the 'RNA NHS & Ventilator Appeal'

Shipmates may be aware that during the Second World War an initiative known as 'Warship Week' enabled local communities to contribute towards the cost of building new warships through National Savings. These ships replaced ones that were lost in the early part of the war and were vital to the effort in winning the Battle of the Atlantic in defending convoys. In that spirit, I write to ask for your assistance in raising the sum of £15,000 to enable our Association to purchase a 'Ventilator' or allow the NHS to decide, where best it would benefit from funding - PPE for instance. If all 12,000 members were kind enough to contribute it would work out at just £1.25 per Shipmate.



With a large proportion of RNA shipmates falling into the Coronavirus 'At Risk' category, we are looking to raise the cost of a ventilator or NHS kit (for instance PPE) which would be extremely welcomed by the NHS at this time. Of course, in terms of funding, our providing a ventilator or other NHS kit, won't win this war alone, but it would be 'Our' contribution towards this major national crisis.

To donate simply go to the this link, which is the preferred option, so we can speed the whole process up - <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/TheRoyalNavalAssociation>

Or - <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1019133&pageId=1159896>

Or you can send a cheque marked 'NHS & Ventilator Appeal' to RNA, Central Office, Building 1/087, Scott Road, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth Hants PO1 3LU, please also annotate the envelope as well.

Stop Press.....

As we go to publication Shipmates have very kindly donated approximately £6,500 since the launch of the Appeal last Friday. Thank you so much.

However please please keep donating.....Remember to dig deep as you can as every 'Ickie and Sheckle' count!

2. ★ Useful Social Media Info – 'Zoom Stuff'

Shipmates may have heard of or indeed used Facetime and Skype however there is a new kid on the block! 'ZOOM' is now the preferred system for conducting meetings because of its ability to allowing several people to speak/be visual at the same time. So it provides endless opportunities and possesses the functionality to cope with impromptu larger family or Shipmate social chats and best of all its **FREE**.

Our thanks go to Shipmate Julie Royston for providing the excellent 'PJT' (Pre-Joining Training) below on how do it in easy steps.....

How Do I Join in with a RNA Zoom Meeting?

The following is a basic introduction to setting up Zoom and a lot of contributing factors can get in the way. Accessing Zoom is different depending on what device you are using – but the steps below will hopefully help to get you into a meeting.

- If you are using an iPad / tablet / mobile phone:-

You can download Zoom from the App Store (Apple users)

or Google Play Store (Android users)

Look for the Zoom icon  and 'install' the App to your device.



(select Zoom / install / enter your password (if required) and allow the App to load.

- If you are using a **Laptop or Desktop**:-

You can install Zoom by going to the website www.zoom.us and clicking on **Sign Up for Free** – enter your details and you will receive an email from Zoom with a link to **Activate Account** and to set up a **Password**.

To attend a Zoom Meeting

If you have been sent an email for the meeting by the organiser, then click on the link in the email and follow the online instructions. It will include selecting **Join with Video** and add your name – which other users will see.

If you have been given a meeting ID and a password, then launch the Zoom App or go to the Zoom website and login.

Join a Meeting

Tap **Join a meeting** then type in the **Meeting ID** and **Password** - enter the information you've been given. Then tap **Join**

1. To join the meeting, you'll be asked to enter **Your Name** and then tap **Continue**
2. Select **Join with Video**
3. If prompted for your audio preferences - use **Internet Audio**

Fingers crossed the notes have worked and you are now part of the Zoom meeting...

A little bit of Zoom Etiquette

1. Your microphone is always ON – unless you mute it
2. Be aware of background noises – in your room/home
3. Make sure your attire is suitable
4. **DO NOT SWEAR**

If you have problems with any of the above, or if you'd like to learn more about how to run a Zoom meeting - help is available via the Facebook Pages:–

Royal Naval Association Central Office

Royal Naval Association: Community Site

or via the **RNA helpline 07542 680082**

3. ★ Covid 19 HumourRespectfully



4. ★ Guess the Establishment – It's Back!

Shipmates its back and remember no hovering or wikki. The former RN Establishment has changed just a 'tad' since it closed but can you guess what its name was?

You don't have to wait until next month to find out the answer can found later in this edition.



5. ★ RNA Clothing/Slops Refreshed Website

Shipmates during isolation would be the perfect time to have a 'shufty' at the new sparkingly updated website of our official clothing supplier, RLP Embroidery, which is run by Shipmate Ray Pullen (Aldershot Branch).

So please follow the link at the short trail: www.rnaslops.clothing It is well worth a look (and no he didn't pay me to get you too look!)

6. ★ Remembrance Cenotaph Parade 2020

RBL have requested that we submit names for those wishing to attend the 2020 Cenotaph Parade (Sunday 08 Nov) this year in early August. As in the past two years Nigel will need to know your;

Full Name, Address and post code, Date and place of birth.

If you want to attend but will need to be helped round with a wheelchair pusher or other supporter I need their names and details too.

For those who come from afar to take part and need to think about accommodation arrangements, you can keep up to date with the RBL and the COVID 19 implications for the dispersal on the RBL website here [Remembrance Sunday| Cenotaph Dispersal](#)

Stop Press.....



RNA Poppy Badges for sale.

Nigel still has a stock of RNA branded poppy badges - still only £1 each or 50 pence each if you buy ten or more.

7. ★ HMS Phoebe – Greenies Photo

If you're putting photos in the Semaphore Circular, how about a silliest or most embarrassing one competition?

Here is a contribution from Shipmate Phil Mountain of Newport (Gwent). Sadly, Phil failed to let us know which one he was so fellow Shipmates may take the 'Michael'!

HMS Phoebe's Greenies' Mess on parade. (on departing STANAVFORLANT). Team Monty Python accompanied by Charlie Chaplin.



(Editors Note – Don't believe that this photo was actually taken and is false news. Greenies found standing upWhere are the MATRESSES that are normally strapped to their backs!)

8. ★ Fleet Transformation - The future is exciting

The National President, Vice Admiral John McAnally CB LVO, has forwarded an informative article below on Fleet Transformation.

The First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin, Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Nick Hine and Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd have exciting and far reaching plans to transform the Fleet to meet new threats around the world, including a return to a more permanent presence in the Far East. At our Spring meeting shortly before lock down CONA were honoured and delighted to hear all about them. I thought this might be of interest to Shipmates. I should add a word of caution. While I hope and believe I have not misquoted I have added quite a few interpretations of my own.

Our source was the Fleet Commander's Warrant Officer, a newly created post and itself part of the Navy Command Transformation programme. WO Mick Turnbull works alongside the Warrant Officer of the Naval Service as well as First and Second Sea Lords WOs. This is a change from the former situation where each fighting arm (Surface Ships, Submarines, Royal Marines, Reserves and Fleet Air Arm) had its own WO. It is one part of a shift to a whole naval force focus.

But to begin with we were all fascinated to hear the details of WO Turnbull's astonishingly varied career to date. He initially joined at the age of 16 in 1986 as a Junior Seaman 2nd Class, volunteered for Submarines and after a period in Boats moved on to become an Aircraft Controller. After service in that role in BOXER, CUMBERLAND and two Fleet Air Arm Squadrons he was promoted to Petty Officer and completed the Joint Air Traffic Control Course. Three years as a FOST sea rider were followed by Plymouth Military radar and the RAF Flight Operations Managers Course. He then spent six months in Iraq as the Senior Non Commissioned Officer in charge of the Helicopter Control Cell. A Warrant Officer 1st class from the end of 2012 he earned a Master of Arts in Naval History in 2019. He has been a regular member of the RN/RM Martial Arts Team, competing at Inter-Service level in full and semi-contact. Those skills might have been useful as Executive Warrant Officer of ILLUSTRIOUS. In a competitive field he was selected at the start of this year to be the Fleet Command Warrant Officer. The alternative appointment was as Executive Warrant Officer in PRINCE OF WALES. What a difficult choice that must have been for him?



The First Sea Lord's number one of five objectives in Fleet Transformation is to regain and maintain tactical advantage in the North Atlantic. Russian submarine activity is running at levels not seen since the height of the Cold War. Our technological lead was eroded by the Walker spy case in the 70s but still remains. Some veteran submariners have expressed the thought to me that lack of recent operational experience has reduced some of our skills.

However our new ASTUTE submarines about which I wrote in the last Circular show every promise of enabling our submariners to get and stay on top. And the Fleet Commander has directed much more activity further north with these world-class hunter-killers. The number one objective will also be greatly aided by the acquisition of Boeing Poseidon P8 maritime patrol aircraft and in due time the new Type 26 Frigate will carry it further. The first three T26 are in build and the first, HMS GLASGOW, is coming together quickly. They will be operating in the Atlantic and escorting our two new aircraft carriers around the world.



Type 26 Frigate



HMS ASTUTE



Poseidon P8

The second priority is to bring the Carrier Strike Group to full fruition. This is very much allied to and an inspiration for, the move to a whole force Navy I mentioned earlier. When both QUEEN ELIZABETH and PRINCE OF WALES are operational, we might see not only an Atlantic Task Group but also one potentially earmarked for the Asia/Pacific Task region which could be based in Japan alongside the US and Japanese navies. Perhaps we are looking at a revival of the old Anglo/Japanese Alliance which came to an end in the 1920s as part of move to avoid a naval arms race with the USA. It could not be more appropriate now that the Corona Virus has shown the urgent need to reappraise our attitude to China. Here's a piccy of HMS PRINCE OF WALES taken from my Old Portsmouth roof on 19 February:



Third on the list is Forward Presence. This looks a bit like an updated version of the fun and adventure filled Naval deployments so many of us will remember from the '60s and '70s. It is already happening with our five new Batch 2 RIVER class patrol vessels like HMS TRENT whose prime area of deployment will be West Africa. They are very capable, 2000 tons, able to land a Merlin helicopter and accommodate 40 Royal Marines in a big mess deck aft. HMS TRENT will be based in Gibraltar from this summer. HMS TAMAR and SPEY are projected to deploy to the Far East full time perhaps

as early as the end of next year.

MEDWAY is already permanently based in the Caribbean. We'd all fancy that draft! She is using Martinique and Barbados as her main hubs. Working alongside the French Navy it is 'Vive l'entente cordiale!' And today she is accompanied by an RFA hospital ship. RFA ARGUS ready for any coronavirus responses in our overseas territories such as British Virgin Isles. How about that RFA Shipmates? And FORTH is now permanently based in the Falkland Islands. The crews of these Offshore Patrol Vessels will enjoy 3 watch manning with ships' companies being rotated to and from theatre every 4 months. This is proving extremely popular and I can see why!

Larger warships will also feature in this scheme. The Type 23 HMS MONTROSE is permanently stationed in the Gulf (like four SANDOWN Minehunters) with 2 watch manning. The first of 5 Type 31 Frigates being built at Rosyth and due in service in 2023

All five T31 frigates will be likely based abroad permanently with the White Ensign flying from the Mediterranean to Singapore. They will be double crewed to allow shipmates to take leave and train back in the UK.



Not forgotten and next on the list are our revered Royals. The future Commando Force will move away from Brigade level operations and the conventional infantry type operations which they performed so effectively and heroically in Iraq and Afghanistan toward more fuller utilisation of their unique Commando skills returning to their historic maritime expertise and agility. The Fleet Commander has asked them to equip and train as Commandos ready in ships to 'cause havoc and mayhem ashore'.



And finally the list of five completes with wholesale adoption of innovation. This will include novel unmanned systems. Trials are already in progress in HMS ALBION. Last summer she led an international deployment of nine nations and the largest UK force in the Baltic Sea for a century.

Unmanned systems are seen as having great potential for safer and more cost effective Survey and Mine Countermeasure operations.

In the Question and Answer period WO Turnbull also told us how HM Ships DEFENDER and MONTROSE had gone to Action Stations with all weapons loaded in the Gulf and successfully faced down what appeared to be an Iranian attempt to seize a British merchant ship. He also mentioned Project HECATE which is a review of all 14,500 personnel currently shore based. The objective is to move more to sea while also ensuring that at sea with the Fleet is the best place to serve.

These are indeed exciting times to be serving in any part of the Naval Service. As the National Chairman observed on reading this article: "Where do we sign up?"

9. ★ Nelson Distillery VE Day Charity Gin

Shipmates will know that Rum is not the only spirit with close historic ties to the Navy – Gin has always been popular with the Fleet, and the drink dates back to the 16th century in England. The Royal Navy helped carry British-style gin across the globe – and now a distillery with the name of a Naval hero is supporting RNA shipmates by giving half the profits from a special edition gin to the charity, including the RNA. Nelson's Distillery has produced the VE Day Charity Gin, a London dry gin with a secret blend of 27 botanicals, as their way of "giving to those who have given up so much for us."



For more details of this remembrance gin see <https://nelsonsdistillery.co.uk/celebrating-historical-victories-nelsons-launches-a-ve-charity-gin/>

10 ★ VE Day Commemorations

The Govt are about to announce a Two Minute Silence for 1100 on 8 May to commemorate VE Day 75 and a day of VE Day themed programmes including the repeat of Sir Winston Churchill's speech from May 1945 on BBC culminating with Her Majesty the Queen speaking to the nation at 2100.

Shipmates are encouraged to openly participate in this remembrance moment; be that by standing proudly in your garden, at your front door or at a window with or without medals, during the Two Minute Silence. It is very much hoped that Shipmates will join others by marking this important moment in whichever way they deem appropriate.

Please see below a letter from the RNA's very good friend Colonel Bob Gamble OBE, the RBL's Assistant Director of Commemorative events who was leading the event programme for the 8 May VE Day national event.

Dear Shipmates

In November last year I wrote to the relevant veteran associations and charities regarding the Legion's ambitious plans for events in 2020 which we hoped would build on the success of the D-Day 75 commemorations in June 2019. The advent of the Covid-19 crisis has forced the cancellation of a number of those events with VE75 perhaps being the most notable.

Over the last month, Legion staff have been busy following up on the cancellation with the 1100+ affected veterans with an individual phone call. Some of the veterans hoping to participate now live quite solitary lives and I believe that it is important that we do our best to help each of them to manage their disappointment as best as we can.

VE Day 75

The Legion is now working hard in collaboration with others to develop plans to appropriately mark this significant WW2 anniversary within the challenging constraints of social distancing.

In the virtual space, The Royal British Legion will be hosting a livestream via our online channels featuring stories and memories from those who served and sacrificed during the Second World War and VE related activities – www.britishlegion.org.uk/veday75.

*On 8 May, we are inviting people across all generations and communities to **join us in a national moment of reflection and remembrance at 1100hrs as we pause for a Two Minute Silence to honour the service and sacrifice of the Second World War Generation** and reflect on the devastating impact Covid-19 has had on so many lives across the World. There is no right or wrong way to take part in the Silence, some may wish to stand at their windows, step outside their homes while remaining distanced from others, or simply sit in a quiet moment of reflection.*

I therefore write in collaboration with others within the Service Charity sector to ask for your support in encouraging your membership to openly participate in the remembrance moment. We hope that this simple act will show the members of that generation and those with contemporary roles that live within all our communities that we honour and respect them even during this time of national crisis.

In this significant anniversary year, and at this very unsettled time, it would be a poignant symbol of hope and solidarity to all members of our community to see us visibly acknowledging the

contribution of a generation to whom we owe so much and will act as a timely reminder to those of our comrades who may need our collective support that they are not alone.

I leave it to individual associations to decide whether this information is of value to their respective members

11. ★ Christmas Card Competition

Although probably not in your thoughts as yet, as it still some 9 months away, Nigel is planning ahead and needs to choose the photograph for the front cover. So, this year it has been decided to invite Shipmates to submit a photo which will feature on the front of this year's RNA Christmas card. Although Area 10 are not allowed to substitute a lovely red breasted Christmas Robin with 'Liver birds' and a picture featuring HMS Liverpool, as they did a number of years ago!!

Please forward your photos/ideas to Nigel@royalnavalassoc.com or by snail mail to Central Office as soon as you can.

12. ★ VC Series - Able Seaman Stephen John Tuckwell GC



The George Cross (GC) is the awarded for acts of most conspicuous courage in circumstance of extreme danger", not in the presence of the enemy, to members of the British armed forces and to British civilians. The GC is normally presented at an investiture by the Monarch at Buckingham Palace in recognition of the level of its award, second only to the Victoria Cross.

AB Stephen John Tuckwell was born in Guildford in 1897 and joined the Royal Navy at 18 years old in April 1915 for an engagement of 12 years. He left his final draft HMS Vernon in 1927 before working as a Bus Driver between the Wars. He was called up as a member of the RN Reserves where he was drafted to a mine disposal team and on 23 September 1940 he was sent with S/Lt Jack Duppa-Miller to deal with a mine in Loughton Essex.

AB Tuckwell had worked closely with Sub-Lieutenant John Miller defusing and rendering safe numerous enemy bombs and mines but at Loughton their actions resulted in them both being awarded the George Cross for dealing with a parachute mine that had fallen into the soft mud bank of the Roding River, which runs into Barking Creek.

Miller commandeered a canoe and having put this on a fire-float with the UXB kit, he and Tuckwell ventured out into the river. They then left the River Fire Service fire-float and went on in the canoe, until they sighted the black rim of the mine which was stuck in the mud by the nose.

Tuckwell refused Miller's a suggestion that he should retire to a place of safety. He pointed out that as Miller would be working under at least a foot of water he would need someone to hand him the tools.

They managed to get out one fuse, but could not reach the other, so appealed to several crane-drivers who had come to see what was happening, and they at once volunteered to help. The two experts got back into the water, put ropes round the mine, and with the assistance of the crane-



drivers, the huge cylinder was dragged slowly out of the creek, over the muddy bank and up on to the wharf. The final stages of the operation were then completed.

His award was cited in the *London Gazette* of 14 January 1941, reading:

The King has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the GEORGE CROSS for great gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty, to: — Able Seaman Stephen John Tuckwell, P/J.166122.

Stephen was involved in many more courageous actions during the war particularly during the blitz phase country wide in; Manchester, Cardiff and a particularly difficult bomb in Coventry. After the war he sadly suffered many bouts of illness and spent his last years in Sompting West Sussex crossing the bar aged 69 on 02 October 1966.

(Picture and words courtesy of BBC, WWW.VOnline.org.uk and Wikipedia)

13. ★ RNA Veterans Photo Competition Entry Update

Shipmates should be aware that currently the RN Photograph Competition has been postponed till September with the possibility of its cancellation this year. This means that the closing date for the RNA Entries can now be moved right to Friday **31 July 2020**. Please continue to use the application form as previously sent out.

14. ★ The Reunion - S/M Paul Stephenson NVCh

Recently Shipmate Paul, who as well as being the National Vice Chairman is Chairman of Dublin Branch, was attending a social meeting at the Royal Irish Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire when he recognised Enda O'Coineen, a renowned Yachtsman and successful businessman, the last time they had met was on board RFA Stromness in 1977!

S/M Paul was the duty Communications Officer when she was preparing to sail for the US of A when a Navigation Warning Signal arrived onboard warning that 'an Irishman was attempting sail across the Atlantic in a Rubber Dinghy! From the US coast and ships should keep a lookout. Needless to say being Irish S/M Paul took a huge amount of flack!

After a couple of days information came in saying that 'distress signals' were being picked up by aircraft crossing the Atlantic but couldn't be identified. This resulted in a Nimrod being despatched to try and locate the source and guess what.....



Yes, it turned out to be Enda O'Coineen's Rubber Dinghy and Stromness happened to be the nearest vessel to the scene and cutting to the chase he was rescued and luckily after medical checks was given a clean bill of health.

S/M Paul was on watch during the time the papers were looking for the story and he has to collect Enda from the ships Sick Bay and led him to the Radio Phone to be interviewed by the press where he eventually with help managed to secure a good deal for his story.

As Stromness was heading West and Mr O'Coineen was trying to head back East and he was eventually transferred by Jackstay to HMS Ambuscade. That was the last time S/M Paul saw of him in 1977. After reading and watching TV about Enda's seafaring ventures for a number of years, I eventually got to meet him after 47 years, he now is a very successful businessman and has weathered many a storm during his lifetime a true example of his tenacity bravery and a true and dedicated sailor.

15. ★ Missing the RN life ? 25 steps to recapture living onboard once more

This 'dit' is comes courtesy of the late Shipmate Ronald 'Chalky' White, who very sadly crossed the bar of an asbestos related disease in 2009.

Chalky joined at the age of 15 in 1952. He never forgot and always lived up to the maxim instilled in him at HMS ST VINCENT: "There is nothing a British Boy cannot do". After 10 years in the RN he became a Sussex Policeman and served with distinction until 1992. While village policeman at Eridge, Chalky became interested in the eponymous WW2 Hunt class Destroyer and this led to a burgeoning interest in Naval History and Commemorations.

He personally organised 4 very major events and recruited VIP guests as eminent as HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, HRH Prince Michael of Kent, the President of Malta, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Winston Churchill's grandson. He became a firm friend of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Lewin and of his son the Honourable Tim Lewin to whom we are indebted for Chalky's Dit below. This will bring back a few memories.....

- 1. Build a shelf in the top of your wardrobe and sleep on it inside a smelly sleeping bag. Remove the wardrobe door and replace it with a curtain that's too small.*
- 2. Wash your underwear every night in a bucket, then hang it over the water pipes to dry.*
- 3. Four hours after you go to bed, have your wife whip open the curtain, shine a torch in your eyes, and say "Sorry mate, wrong pit".*
- 4. Renovate your bath room. Build a wall across the centre of the bath and move the showerhead down to chest level. Store beer cans in the shower enclosure.*
- 5. When you have a shower, remember to turn the water off while you soap.*
- 6. Every time there is a thunderstorm, sit in a wobbly rocking chair, and rock as hard as you can until your sick.*
- 7. Put oil instead of water into a humidifier, then set it to 'high'.*
- 8. Don't watch TV. except for movies in the middle of the night. For added realism have your family vote for which movie they want to see - then select a different one.*
- 9. (Mandatory for engineering types) Leave a lawnmower running in your living room 24 hours a day to re-create the proper noise levels.*

10. Have the paper boy give you a hair cut.

11. Once a week blow compressed air up through your chimney. Ensure that the wind carries the soot over into your neighbour's house. When he complains, laugh at him.

12. Buy a rubbish compactor, but only use it once a week. Store up your rubbish in the other side of your bath.

13. Wake up every night at midnight and make a sandwich out of anything you can, preferably using stale bread. Optional: Cold soup or canned ravioli, eaten out of the can.

14. Design your family menus a week in advance without looking in the fridge or larder.

15. Set your alarm clock to go off at random times through the night. When it goes off, leap out of bed, get dressed as fast as you can then run into the garden and break out the garden hose.

16. Once a month, take every major household appliance completely apart, then re-assemble.

17. Use 4 spoons of coffee per cup, allow it to sit for 3 hours before drinking.

18. Invite about 185 people you don't really like to come and stay for a couple of months.

19. Install a small fluorescent light tube under your coffee table, then lie under the table to read books.

20. Raise the thresholds and lower the top sills of all the doors in the house. Now you will always either hit your head or skin your shins when passing through them.

21. Put lock wires on the wheel nuts of the car.

22. When baking cakes, prop up one side of the cake tin while it is baking. When it has cooled, spread icing really thickly on one side to level it out again.

23. Every so often, throw your cat in the swimming pool or bath and shout "man overboard" then run into the kitchen and sweep all the dishes and pans onto the floor while yelling at your wife for not having secured for sea properly.

24. Put on the headphones from your stereo, do not plug them in. Go and stand in front of your dishwasher. Say to nobody in particular, "Dishwasher manned and ready sir" Stand there for three or four hours. Say once again to nobody in particular, "Dishwasher secured". Remove the headphones. Roll up the headphone cord and put them away.

25. Nickname your favourite shoes 'steamies' then get your children to hide them around the house on a random basis.

16. ★ Answer to 'Guess the Establishment' ?

It was of course HMS Daedalus in Lee on the Solent which shut its gates for the last time in 1995. Here's another view which may be more recognisable with the Control Tower and big Hangars in the background. The runway is still there and is currently used by small aircraft, and in particular a company who run the Spitfire Experience using two, two Seater Spitfires for £3,000 an hour! There is a large industrial unit on the site along with a Technical College which specialises in Air engineering. However, there are also many original buildings that have been retained on site including the Wardroom and workshops. It is now known as Solent Airport.



17. ★ Joke Time – One for the Road

Fred was in the hospital and very sadly about to die.
His wife and two sons had gathered round his bedside and a nurse was in attendance.

To his eldest son, he told him that he was leaving all his houses on the north side of The Avenue.

To his youngest son, he told him that he was leaving all his houses on the south side of The Avenue and to his wife she could have all his houses in The Boulevard.

Shortly after that Fred died.

The nurse turned to the wife and said, "I did not know that Fred was so wealthy and owed all that property".

Wait for it

His wife said in reply, "Oh no he didn't, Fred was a window cleaner".

RNA Longcast

2020	
20 May	National Council Meeting - On line
05 Jun	FAC (1000) - On line
05 Jun	AMC (1400) - On line
27 Jun	Armed Forces Day – Scarborough CANCELLED
06 Jul	Area 2 Committee Mtg - Bromley
31 Jul	Black Tot Day – 50 th Anniversary
24 Jul	Central Office – Open Day
01 Aug	Area 5 Quarterly - Norwich
07 Aug	Central Office – Open Day
14 Aug	FAC (1000)
14 Aug	AMC (1400)
15 Aug	Area 2 Delegate Meeting - Chatham
21 Aug	Conf/AGM
31 Aug	August Bank Holiday
12 Sep	National Council Meeting
19 Sep	4 Area Quarterly – Portland
02 Oct	Central Office – Open Day
10 Oct	Area 2 Committee Mtg - Bromley
31 Oct	Area 5 Quarterly - Harwich
12 Nov	FAC
13 Nov	AMC
21 Nov	Area 2 Delegate Meeting – Ramsgate
04 Dec	National Council Meeting
25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	Boxing Day
2021	

D'ye hear there'.....

News from around the Areas and Branches.....

This Month Featuring.....

[RNA City of Edinburgh](#)

[RNA Riders Branch](#)

[RNA St Neots Branch](#)

RNA City of Edinburgh Branch

City of Edinburgh celebrated its 25th Anniversary over the weekend of 13-15 March 2020. We are grateful to Shipmate Bob Cumming, Branch Hon Secretary for providing an article letting us all know how it went!

History of the City of Edinburgh Branch

The Royal Naval Association had a Branch and Club at 20 Ainslie Place in Edinburgh in the 50's and 60's. The club closed and the Branch disbanded sometime in the late 60s. In 1994, whilst a loft was being cleared out in an Edinburgh house, the old Branch Standard of the City of Edinburgh Branch was discovered. The Standard was handed over to the Rosyth and West Fife Branch Royal Naval Association so that they could arrange to have the old Standard Laid Up in a cathedral or church.

The late Shipmate Donald Simpson, the then Secretary of the Rosyth & West Fife Branch, decided to see if it was possible to re-form the Branch prior to making the arrangements for laying up of the Standard. Adverts were placed in local papers calling for ex Royal Navy personnel interested in forming an RNA Branch in Edinburgh to attend an initial meeting in the Royal Scots Club in Abercrombie Place. Some 40 to 50 people attended this initial meeting. From this meeting it was decided that the City of Edinburgh Branch Royal Naval Association would be reformed. The re-commissioning meeting was held in the Royal Scots Club on 15th March 1995. The Branch Standard was then re-dedicated at a service in St Giles Cathedral followed by a civic reception in the City Chambers on the 9th March 1996.

The Branch celebrated its 25th Anniversary of reforming on Sunday 15th March 2020 and planned a weekend of celebrations.

Friday 13 Mar 20



We started the weekend off with a inter service quiz that was held in the RN&RM Club with a good selection of teams from the RNA, Wrens, Veterans Groups, RMA, Parachute Regiment, Gunners and the RN&RM Club. The quiz went well, although our quizmaster Chairman, Shipmate Elliot did receive several challenges to some of his dubious quiz answers from several of the teams. After a well fought out quiz the wrens won for the third time in a row with the combined RNA, RMA and Para team picking up the wooden spoons. The night also included a raffle, tossing coins to the bottle and a buffet.

To celebrate our 25th Anniversary, Dennis Miles, the Chairman of the Portsmouth Naval Base Historic Trust approved the long-term loan of a ships Bell held in storage at the Trust. Dennis selected for the Branch the ships bell from the closed down QHM Rosyth which has been in storage since the Queens Harbour Master at Rosyth closed. During the

evening, the ships bell was handed back to the Branch by Geoff Williams of the Royal British Legion Scotland, Livingston Branch.

Geoff is constructing a cradle for the bell and had the bell for measuring and test fitting it to the cradle. He decided however that whilst he had the bell, he would also give it a clean. It is amazing what three bottles of tomato sauce and 6 litres of Coca-Cola can achieve. Our thanks go to Geoff for all his hard work in restoring the bell to its former glory and for constructing the cradle to house the bell, which should be finished shortly. BZ to Geoff



Saturday 14 Mar 20

The Branch Hosted the Annual General Meeting and 1st Quarterly Meeting of the Scottish Area at the RN&RM Club. There was a good turnout from Branches in the Scottish Area and the City of Edinburgh Branch was well represented. We had the privilege of having Bill Oliphant, General Secretary, Nigel Huxtable, Assistant General Secretary and Keith Ridley, National Chairman, who were in Edinburgh to join with us for the weekend of celebrations, join with us for the meetings.

During the meeting Bill Oliphant briefed the members that he has been tasked by the National Council to refresh the RNA Strategy. Over the past 5yrs we had 'lost' 1k Shipmates per annum. How do we stop this curve? What does good look like? The RNA was formed in 1950 and granted Royal Charter in 1954. We had been later in 'demobbing' than the Army and RAF, largely because we were deployed in the Pacific and tasked with bringing troops home, etc.

The vision is being refreshed – Our values remain: Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship. Comradeship is really our "thing", our USP (unique selling point) – because of our history and connections. T

The General Secretary explained that his "elevator pitch" is: "the RNA is a rankless organisation who are proud of our Naval Service who seek to maintain the Naval ethos"

Considering a new strapline "Once Navy Always Navy" is great, but perhaps have also:

- "Born in xxxxx, made in the Royal Navy, belonging in the RNA"; and/or - "RNA – probably the second-best Club in the world" (gets people thinking!).

How do we achieve comradeship?

- Through effective and relevant communications; and - Events.

It is hoped that the 50th anniversary of Black Tot Day will go ahead on HMS BELFAST at the end-July, but this will be reviewed, and a decision made, as appropriate.

The RNA has been granted the authority to be the "World Governing Authority of Uckers". An annual championship is planned, and it is hoped that Branches will hold competitions, sending their best player to Area, who will send their best player to National, etc. It was hoped that the events to celebrate VE Day 75 could have been used as a backdrop for a "draw", but it's likely this will now be undertaken "behind closed doors". It is hoped that the first Championship Finals will be held over the first weekend in December, perhaps onboard HMS PRINCE OF WALES. The RNA is currently seeking sponsorship for this and hopes that at least some expenses can be covered to ensure maximum participation, etc. The Championships is not limited to the RNA, but rather to all CONA participants and serving RN also.

How do we make the RNA more attractive for the next generation? S/M Bernie McPhillips has led the concept, with the RNA Riders Branch, of "special interest" groups – could be Walking, Cycling, Model Makers, Fishing, etc. It was hoped to have "champions" speak at the Conference, but another route to communicate this will now be sought.

S/M Nigel Huxtable has managed to get a Veterans category into the Peregrine Photographic Competition – which is fantastic, we now just need Veterans to enter! Nigel is coordinating the entries and there's a prize of £200 up for grabs. The theme is "what's the RNA about?"

With the current situation, and several events being cancelled, the Peregrine Photography Competition will be our "public face" this year.

The current database is not fit-for-purpose. It's not good enough for issuing group communications with the membership. Plan to clear the decks, and then get cracking with a project to replace the current database and continue work on the Strategy for the RNA. There will likely be a flyer setting out the Strategy.

Prior to the meetings commencing, Bill Oliphant and Shipmate Bob Cumming cut the cake celebrating the branches 25th Anniversary in company with Shipmate Brian Mackenzie, Scottish Area Chairman and Shipmate Keith Ridley, National Chairman.



Sunday 15 March 2020

The main event for our celebration weekend was our church service of celebration at the Canongate kirk, the parish church of Canongate in Edinburgh's Old Town and a congregation of the Church of Scotland. The parish includes the Palace of Holyrood house, the Scottish

Parliament, and Edinburgh Castle so it has strong military connections. During the Service the Reverend Neil Garner would perform the blessing of our ships bell.

We were joined in our Church service by Frank Ross, the Right Honourable Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Graeme Dey MSP, Minister for Veterans. Charlie Wallace, Scottish Veterans Commissioner, Bill Oliphant, Nigel Huxtable, Keith Ridley, Dennis Miles, Chairman of Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historic Trust (who gave us the Bell on loan). As well as these dignitaries we had the National Standard, Scottish Area Standard, No11 Area

Standard and Branch Standards from City of Glasgow, Rosyth & West Fife, Forth Valley, Leighton & Linslade, RNA Riders and Inverness Branches plus British Legion Scottish Branch Standards join with our own Branch Standard for the service.

During the service one of the reading was given by Bill Oliphant and Reverend Neil Gardner Blessed and dedicated the bell. Reverend Gardner and the Canongate Kirk will be the custodians of the ships bell on behalf of the Branch and it will be housed within the Naval section of the Kirk. The Canongate Kirk does not have a church bell so will therefore make good use of the bell during services throughout the year. It is wonderful to see the bell back home in Scotland and having been brought back from hidden in a storeroom to full use once more.



Following the church service, the congregation retired to Whitefoord House, the Scottish Veterans Residence where a fantastic buffet and reception were laid on. The lord provost in his capacity of 'Admiral of the Forth' welcomed everyone and congratulated the Branch in achieving its 25th Anniversary. During the reception presentations were made on behalf of the Branch by



the Branches two life members. Shipmate Kath Taylor presented Susie Hamilton of Whitefoord House a print of HMS Edinburgh passing under the Forth Bridge on behalf of the Branch for all the work she carries out during the year acting as the liaison with the branch in regard to the Naval Veterans living in Whitefoord House and for all the hard work ensuring that the buffet and reception was a great success. Shipmate Bob Cumming presented Reverend Neil Gardner of the Canongate Kirk a copy of the same print on behalf of the Branch in thanks for the Service of Celebration and the

blessing and agreement to house the ships bell on behalf of the Branch in the Canongate Kirk

Our thanks go to Nigel Huxtable, Assistant General Secretary who acted as our Branch photographer and is responsible for most of the wonderful photographs which will make up our historic archives of the weekend.

In the words of Shipmate Stephen Elliot, Branch Chairman "The past weekend was an outstanding success, with everyone stepping up and being counted, before, during and after. Our branch has received many plaudits over the weekend, and we thought of you, our members who were unable to attend due to the current health situation sweeping our country. We told your story / our collective story and we raised a glass in respect of your efforts over many years".

RNA Bikers Branch



Another excellent weekend at the MCN Scottish Bike show over the 8th/9th March meeting potential new members and catching up with the Royal Marine Riders (North), with donations from Bo'ness Bakery and The Bikers Cove (South Queensferry). Raising the profile of the RNA with the other Veterans groups RBL Scotland,

The usual suspects popping in to have a Tot of Rum and reminiscing over old times, With a quick photo op with the RNA Riders, S/m Fiona Llaing and S/m George Cochrane. With my new helmet being sent down to be airbrushed, the finished item is clear for all to see.



RNA St Neots Branch

Shipmate Ian Cameron the PRO at St Neots Branch has sent on article advising 'Lockdown Initiatives' in operation

S/M Maureen Ridley the Branch Welfare Officer and Social Secretary set up two initiatives to help ease the issue of social isolation among shipmates.

- A Buddy System whereby committee shipmates Keith Ridley, Mike Milne, Tony Webley, Geoff Patterson, Roy Lodge, Jim Lawson and Don Barltrop were each assigned S/M's to contact on a regular basis to ensure that there were no problems, especially but not solely with those living on their own. This has proved very popular and has helped at least one elderly S/M who had a perceived food shortage.
- **“STANDFAST” Newsletter** - This is a Newsletter sent out by Maureen every Sunday which contains items such as easy to follow recipes, S/M's anecdotes, health tips, tributes, and in the case of S/M Tom Mumford a lockdown Diamond Anniversary celebration which included, you guessed it, Pussers Rum!

CROSSED THE BAR – Celebrating a life well lived

[Ivor Fogg](#)
[Gordon Roberts](#)
[John Forshaw](#)
[Graham 'Bert' Weeden](#)
[John Dobel](#)
[Mike Ball](#)

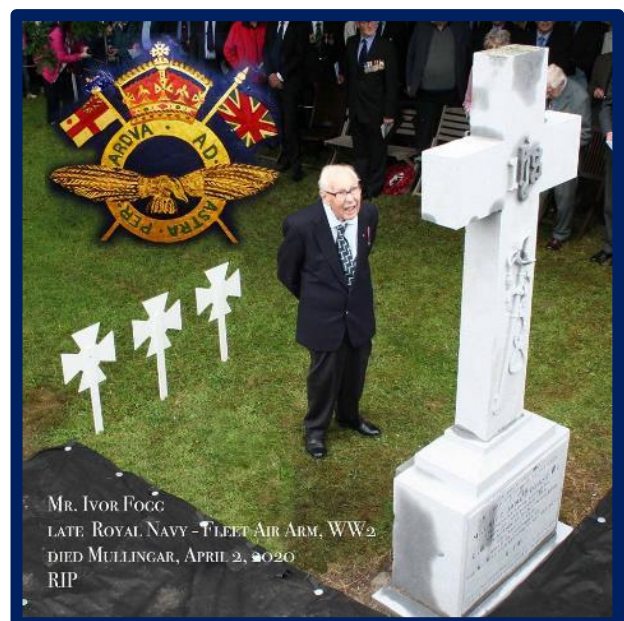
Ivor Fogg – Area 12

It is with deep regret that Area 12 were informed that WW2 veteran Ivor Fogg crossed the bar on Thursday 02 April 2020.

Ivor served in the Fleet Air Arm during WW2 and was a founding member of Midland Counties and Kildare Branch RBL. He was a great person to talk with on Legion matters and his time in the Royal Navy. He just celebrated his 95th Birthday on April 1st. He had a long life and well lived.

Beloved husband of the late Marjorie and dear father of Janet and Gerry; he will be sadly missed by his loving family, his adored grandchildren Matthew, Billy, Harry and Hannah, great-grandchildren David, Ellen, Maddie, Robin and Harriet, son-in-law John, daughter-in-law Anne, sisters-in-law Jean and Olive, extended family and many friends.

Our condolences and prayers are with them all at this difficult time.



Gordon Roberts – Peterborough Branch

To all those that had the good fortune to know him, I wish to inform you that our late Standard Bearer, and Branch Treasurer, as well as for a number of years, the Branch President of the Peterborough Branch, S/M Gordon Roberts, has Crossed the Bar.

Gordon had been with the Branch initially, just as a member, since its foundation in the late seventies, and had only recently stepped down as a result of failing health. He remained as a Branch Life Member. A perfect gentleman, and avid supporter of the RNA, Gordon will be sadly missed by all his Branch Shipmates, and many from the wider RNA community, having earned their greatest respect over very many years.

Unfortunately, owing to the restrictions put in place by the government during the Corona Virus Outbreak, his funeral which will take place on April 17th, can only be marked by his family.

RIP Shipmate, your duty is done. May you have fair winds and calm seas, to your final resting place.

Graham 'Bert' Weeden - Maidstone Branch



Maidstone Branch are extremely sad to announce that their very popular shipmate, Graham (Bert) Weeden, crossed the bar on 11th April 2020 aged 70.

Graham joined the Navy in 1965 at H.M.S. Ganges and he served as an MEM. During his 'time' he served on several ships including Minerva, Manxman, Puma and Triumph. He had a very interesting naval career and on leaving the Navy took up various jobs, eventually joining the police including a period with the Bermudian Police Force.

Graham will be very sadly missed by all his family and friends and by all his shipmates

John Dobel - St Austell Branch

St Austell Branch Hon Sec sadly informs Shipmates that S/M John Dobel crossed the bar on 27th March 2020 aged 76. John joined the Royal Navy in August 1960 and retired as Chief Petty Officer Cook in August 1984. He passed away on 27 March 2020 aged 76.

After his initial training at Chatham (HMS Pembroke) he served on the following Ships and Shore Establishments: Drake; Vigilant; Victorious; Heron (Yeovilton); Tiger; Seahawk (Culdrose); Ark Royal; Scarborough; Berry Head; Royal Arthur; Salisbury and Brighton.

John was a member of the St Austell Branch for many years and will be sadly missed by us all.

John Forshaw – Torrevieja Branch

Torrevieja Branch regrettably have to inform you that our Shipmate John Forshaw passed away yesterday and due to these unprecedented times, his widow Margaret Forshaw has to attend his cremation at 1600hrs today on the 14th April 2020 unaccompanied by other Shipmates.

Our Shipmate John was valued and respected by all Branch Shipmates not only as an individual but also in his role as RNA Torrevieja Branch Treasurer and his vibrant and sparkling personality made him a popular person with everyone.

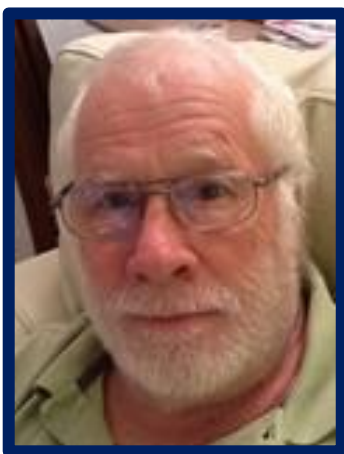
He made up half of the 'Formidable Team' with his wife Margaret, who is the Branch Secretary, not only for their many years of management and contribution to the running of the RNA Torrevieja Branch but significantly for their socialising and friendliness towards other people. 'As a team they made a significant difference to making the world a more friendly and enjoyable place' and he will be sadly missed by all.

As these unparalleled times prevent the RNA Torrevieja Branch Shipmates, family and friends from being able to attend the service in person at 1600hrs today, they are going to demonstrate their unanimous respect for him by, while all in self isolation, collectively raise a glass 'from all Shipmates friends & families of the RNA Torrevieja Branch' and say

"To Shipmate John Forshaw, who has set sail before us". "We toast your memory as you Cross the Bar" **"CHEERS"**

Mike Ball – TS Mercury Old Boys Association

Shipmate Gordon Williams, NCM Area 7 very kindly forwarded the obituary below;



Mike Ball has, sadly, "crossed the bar" following a long period of ill health. Coming from Warrington, Lancashire, he was at *Mercury* for two years, between January 1958 and December 1959, as a member of Rodney Division.

On leaving *Mercury* he joined the Stewards' Branch (later joining the Catering Branch) of the Royal Navy, first going to sea in the carrier *HMS Centaur*. He went on to serve on the cruiser *Belfast* and with 800 Squadron aboard the carrier *Eagle*, before volunteering as a submariner, undertaking his specialist training at *HMS Dolphin* in Gosport. He went on to serve in a number of submarines, mostly with the 7th Squadron based in Singapore. After another spell at *Dolphin*, he joined the nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine *Repulse*, one of the 10th Submarine Squadron based at Faslane. Mike later

returned to General Service and found himself back in Singapore, appointed to the frigate *Mermaid*. During his time on *Mermaid*, the vessel was sent to Saigon to evacuate any remaining UK citizens as the North Vietnamese approached. Although all expatriates were ultimately evacuated by air, *Mermaid* remained in port, sailing only a short time before the city fell. On returning from Singapore, he taught catering ashore for a time before joining the frigate *HMS Diomedé*. He retired from the RN in 1983.

In civilian life, Mike joined Kings College Wimbledon as Head of Catering. In 1994 he had a spell at Malvern College before setting up catering services for Hereford Cathedral to coincide with the opening of the Mappa Mundi exhibition. In 1996 he was approached by the Ministry of Defence to take over as OC Catering at *RAF Rudloe Manor* and, from there, he moved to *RAF St Mawgan*. In 2000 Mike joined Catering Support at *RAF Innsworth*, before transferring to *Southwick Park* (formerly *HMS Dryad*) in 2004 when it became the *Defence School of Policing and Guarding*. Barbara and he finally settled in Hayling Island the next year.

Mike joined the *MOBA Committee* in 1986 and took over the challenging role of *Social Secretary* in the following year, where his knowledge and contacts in the catering business served him (and us) well. In 1995, due to work pressures, he temporarily stood down, but was able to return to the role in 1999. From then on, he continued to organise our social events, ably supported by his wife Barbara, until the Association disbanded in 2019. Even then he remained part of the Advisory Group.

A personal note. *As can be seen from his obituary, Mike's contribution to all he was involved with, whether it was the submarine service, or the catering business, ashore and afloat, was enormous. This was no less so than with his commitment to the Mercury Old Boys' Association over more than 30 years. As soon as one annual reunion was over, with the assistance of Barbara, he began to plan the next. His attention to the smallest detail ensured that each "bash" was as good as, or even better than, the last. Woe betide any hotel that got things wrong, whilst he also kept the rest of the committee very much on our toes and involved.*

Beneath his gruff persona was a kindly caring man who cared hugely about the Association, the legacy of our old school and above all, our members. He often regaled us with interesting and usually amusing stories of life in the submarine service and of his challenges within the bureaucracy of the MoD. Even when he was living as far afield as Cornwall or Gloucestershire, he would invariably attend our meetings in Hampshire. Throughout his long period of deteriorating health, he remained stoic and retained his sense of humour (often at the expense of those of us from the Merchant Navy!). Even during his illnesses, he remained fully committed and ensured that our final reunion, in 2018, was an outstanding event to be remembered.

I would also, especially, like to pay tribute to his wife, Barbara, who supported him and the Association in so many ways. I regard them both as close personal friends and shall remember him with huge affection. I know I speak for all other ex-committee members in saying we will miss him greatly. We will remember him properly at a memorial service, to be arranged by his family, once the Covid 19 crisis has abated. In the meantime, our thoughts and condolences are with Barbara at this time.

David Parsons, 4709, Former Chairman, MOBA

Barbara Ball can be contacted on: barbaraball308@gmail.com

or at: Dolphins, 24 North Shore Road, Hayling Island, Hants PO11 0HL

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The 'Shortcast' Editors Note

Due to the current Coronavirus situation Shipmates should contact the individual Association to ensure that the reunion is still going ahead.

Note from the CONA (Conference of Naval Associations) Secretary -

I would be very grateful if organisers of reunions would oblige me by obtaining a quote from the CONA Travel Service, who will not be beaten on like for like price. CONA Travel Service donate 1% of their CONA business back into the Conference totalling to date £2,700 which provides funds to assist members Associations. Oh, and by the way, their service is first class as well.

	Please check go to link for RN Shipmates.co.uk for a comprehensive list of further reunions. www.rnshipmates.co.uk	
8 May 2020	VE Bank Holiday	
8 May 2020	HMS Cadiz, Saintes and Wizard. A shared reunion takes place over weekend 8/11 May at the Novotel Hotel in Nottingham. All three ships associations will hold their own annual meetings and share all other activities. Details IOW Tours 01252405116 enquiries@iowtours.com	Novotel Hotel Nottingham
23 May 2020	HMS Broadsword Association Biennial reunion takes place in the Royal Beach Hotel Southsea on Saturday 23 May 2020. The reunion is open to anyone who served in Broadsword. For details visit hmsbroadswordassociation.co.uk or contact Bill Skilliter at wistheplumber@yahoo.co.uk	Royal Beach Hotel Southsea
05 Jun 2020	1710 NAS – 10 th Anniversary Dinner for all serving /ex serving will take place in the WO and S/Rates Mess HMS Sultan. Details from Elaine.Rogers683@mod.gov.uk or 02392722758	HMS Sultan
5/9 Oct 2020	The HMS LOCH FADA ASSOCIATION F390 will hold their 23rd Annual Reunion & AGM @ the Royal Beach Hotel Southsea from 5th to 9th October 2020. This will be our 4th 4 Day Reunion after the great successes of our 1st Three. Friday venture into Pompey (Under own Steam) Saturday 1030 AGM & 1830 Reunion Dinner (Black Tot day being Mourned by the Issue of Real Pussers	Royal Beach Hotel Southsea

	<p>Rum) in the Company of our Special Guests The Lord Mayor & Escort of Eastleigh (our Warship week Town).</p> <p>Sunday Mystery coach tour (towards Southampton).</p> <p>All Bookings & Arrangements are being made by Isle of Wight Tours email iowtours.com or telecom 01983 405116, or F390.sec@virginmedia.com or Snailmail F390 Sec, 91 Ayling Lane, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 3ND. Telecom 01252 310767</p>	
31 Oct 2020	<p>BRNC Entry September 1980 40th Anniversary reunion dinner, BRNC Dartmouth, Saturday 31 October 2020. Details available from Cdr N J 'Nobby' Hall neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk</p>	BRNC Dartmouth

Swinging the Lamp – May 2020

The RNA is grateful to the Author, Lt Cdr Lawrie Phillips TD, RD, RNR for allowing us to publish a selection from the RN Day by Day. If you would like to read more it can be purchased from - The History Press and is priced £60 ISBN 978 0 7509 8266 5



Date	Year	Entry
1st	1797	First Spithead Mutiny ended with issue of Admiralty orders against abuses.
2 nd	1932	Publication of BR.224. <i>The Gunnery Pocket Book</i> . 'Having been approved by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty is hereby promulgated ... By Command of Their Lordships ...'
3rd	2008	The RN Hospital Gibraltar paid off. The gates were closed by the youngest member of staff, MA Kirsty Taylor, watched by the last CO, Surg-Cdr Martin Randle RN. Task transferred to the Princess Royal Medical Centre at Devil's Tower Camp.
4 th	1945	<i>Formidable</i> , fifth of the name, operating off Sakishima, hit by kamikaze aircraft and demonstrated the superiority of the armoured flight deck over the wooden flight deck in USN fleet carriers.
5 th	1918	Sloop <i>Rhododendron</i> torpedoed and sunk by U-70 in North Sea.
6 th	1957	'Off caps' at payment replaced by hand salute. Hitherto cash was placed in sailor's inverted cap.
7th	1945	Last British merchantman and last U-boat to be sunk in Second World War: <i>Avondale Park</i> , torpedoed by U-2336, 7 miles S.E. of May Island, and U-320 by Catalina X/210 off Shetland (61.32N, 01.53E).
8th	1895	<i>Renown</i> launched at Pembroke Dockyard. The first British battleship with all-steel armour plating.

9th	2006	Lt-Cdr John Walter George Wellham DSC, the last surviving pilot of the Fleet Air Arm attack on Taranto in 1940, died aged 87. Born on the Isle of Bute 2 January 1919, the son of a retired Petty Officer.
10th	1966	Fleet carrier <i>Eagle</i> , Capt J.C.Y. Roxburgh RN, returned to Singapore after seventy-one days at sea, a peacetime record for a British carrier. She had been engaged on the Beira Patrol maintaining the UN embargo on oil supplies reaching Southern Rhodesia. Her Buccaneer, Sea Vixen, Scimitar and Gannet aircraft had carried out over 1,000 sorties, flown 600,000 miles in 2,000 flying hours searching for oil tankers. RFA <i>Tidepool</i> arrived at Singapore after eighty days at sea, and having conducted seventy-eight fuel replenishments off Beira. 'This operation, which is under the overall direction of C-in-C Middle East, Admiral Sir Michael Le Fanu, once again illustrates the Royal Navy's ability to maintain a military presence in an area a long way from its base in support of the policy of HM government'
11 th	1944	Destroyer <i>Bicester</i> bombarded targets in the Ardea area, south of Rome.
12th	1982	<i>Brilliant</i> , Type 22 frigate, destroyed three Argentine Skyhawk aircraft in the first operational use of Sea Wolf. Her Lynx helicopter was the first to fire Sea Skua in action. <i>Glasgow</i> , Type 42 destroyer, damaged by bomb which failed to explode. Operation Corporate. (Editors Note – Thank goodness she was there as I probably wouldn't be writing this....)
13 th	1787	First convict convoy eventually sailed from Spithead for Botany Bay, arriving 19 January 1788. <i>Sirius</i> (Capt Arthur Phillip, who experienced some difficulty over a commodore's pennant, and who shifted to <i>Supply</i>), six transport and three store ships.
14 th	1918	Destroyer <i>Phoenix</i> torpedoed and sunk in Adriatic by Austrian submarine U-XXVII.
15 th	1954	HM Yacht <i>Britannia</i> , with HM The Queen embarked, entered Pool of London for first time at end of Commonwealth Tour. First FORY, Vice-Admiral Conolly Abel Smith invested KCVO on board with own sword.
16 th	1940	Warships of the Royal Netherlands Navy arrived in British waters to cooperate with the Royal Navy.
17th	1917	Second experimental use of Sea Lions for detecting submarines.
18th	1941	VC: PO Alfred Edward Sephton (<i>Coventry</i>) for gallantry in an air attack on cruiser <i>Coventry</i> south of Crete by German aircraft which had been attacking the hospital ship <i>Aba</i> . The medal was stolen on 25 September 1990 while on display in Coventry Cathedral; never recovered.
19th	1765	Gosport victualling yard established
20th	1917	Flying-boat 8663 sank UC-36 in North Sea – first submarine sunk by RNAS.
21st	1982	The Battle of Falkland Sound. 3 Cdo Bde began the landings at San Carlos Bay. Men of 40 and 45 Cdos RM and 2 and 3 Para were put ashore by landing craft from <i>Fearless</i> and <i>Intrepid</i> . The logistic and transport shipping within San Carlos Water was protected by the thin grey line of escort vessels in adjoining Falkland Sound: destroyer <i>Antrim</i> ; frigates <i>Argonaut</i> , <i>Broadsword</i> , <i>Brilliant</i> , <i>Plymouth</i> , <i>Yarmouth</i> and <i>Ardent</i> , supported by FAA Sea Harriers of

		800 NAS and 801 NAS. Sustained fighter-bomber attacks by over forty enemy aircraft brought a day of intense naval warfare. Ten aircraft destroyed by Sea Harriers and by Sea Wolf and Seacat SAMs and many more damaged. <i>Ardent</i> hit by several bombs and fought to a standstill. Her blazing wreck was finally abandoned and she sank early on 22 May. <i>Argonaut</i> , seriously damaged, remained at anchor for the next eight days as a static AA platform. An UXB in flooded magazine was defused and removed by an officer of exceptional gallantry, Lt-Cdr Brian Dutton DSO, QGM, RN. First DSC to a fleet chief petty officer, FCPO M.G. Fellowes, for defusing UXB in <i>Antrim</i> . Most other warships damaged and all their captains decorated. By nightfall, 42 Cdo and supporting artillery and logistics were ashore without loss to themselves and a secure bridgehead established. This was the aim of the operation; a splendid achievement.
22 nd	1809	Rear-Admiral Eliab Harvey, who had commanded <i>Temeraire</i> at Trafalgar, court martialled for imputing disrespect to Admiral Lord Gambier, his C-in-C; dismissed the Service but reinstated next year, promoted and knighted.
23 rd	1941	Destroyers <i>Kashmir</i> and <i>Kelly</i> sunk by German aircraft 13 miles S. of Gavdo (34.41N, 24.15E), during the Battle of Crete
24 th	1941	<i>Hood</i> sunk and <i>Prince of Wales</i> damaged by the German battleship <i>Bismarck</i> in Denmark Strait. Swordfish aircraft (<i>Victorious</i>) Torpedoed <i>Bismarck</i> . FAA Sqn: 825.
25 th	1982	Destroyer <i>Coventry</i> sunk and frigate <i>Broadsword</i> damaged N. of Falkland Sound by air attacks. <i>Atlantic Conveyor</i> , carrying important helicopter reinforcements, damaged by two air-launched Exocets while in company with carrier battle group 85 miles N.E. of Cape Pembroke, and sank later. Capt Ian North DSC one of twelve men lost. This was Argentina's national day but there was no sign of the eponymous carrier (<i>25 De Mayo</i> , originally HMS <i>Venerable</i> and then the Dutch <i>Karel Doorman</i>). Operation Corporate.
26 th	1703	Death of Samuel Pepys, first Secretary of the Admiralty.
27 th	1847	The first Naval General Service medal belatedly approved for all surviving personnel who served in the Royal Navy 'in the battles of the great war', 1793–1815, later extended to 1840. Mrs McKenzie gave birth to a son in HMS <i>Tremendous</i> (74) at the Glorious First of June in 1794 and fifty-four years later Daniel Tremendous McKenzie successfully applied for his medal and clasp '1 June 1794'.
28 th	1915	Admiral Sir Henry Jackson succeeded Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher as First Sea Lord, following Fisher's resignation over the Dardanelles debacle.
29 th	1942	Submarine <i>Turbulent</i> sank the Italian destroyer <i>Emanuele Pessagno</i> 78 miles N.W. of Benghazi, in less than a minute.
30 th	1997	Hydrographic (H) and Meteorology and Oceanography (METOC) specialisations amalgamated to form a new X (HM) specialisation
31 st	2006	The destroyer <i>Edinburgh</i> , Cdr Scott Verney RN, and the German frigate <i>Hessen</i> held a combined service of commemoration at sea off the Jutland Bank for the men of both nations who were lost on 31 May and 1 June 1916, the 90 th anniversary of the battle.