

SEMAPHORE SHORT

AHOY SHIPMATES! We are only half-way through May but we have already had some very important Royal business – mentioned below but full details to follow in the June Semaphore Circular. The agenda for the AGM in Cardiff next month has been published, and there is plenty to discuss – but you can only influence those proposals if your branch has a delegate. It's not too late to sign up to attend as a branch delegate – the application form is at the back of May Semaphore Circular, which can be found on our website at <https://royal-naval-association.co.uk/members/downloads/may-2024-and-conference-documents/>, and this is also where you will find the agenda and other Conference documents.

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ICING ON THE CAKE There was a flurry of VIP-induced excitement earlier this month for members of the Association with the announcement that King Charles III has agreed to become the RNA's patron, and the official naming ceremony for Lanyard House, the building in Portsmouth Naval Base that the RNA's Central Office team shares with the Association of Wrens. King Charles assumes the role of Patron in succession to his late mother, Queen Elizabeth II. See the June edition of the Semaphore Circular for further images from the official opening pictures and the full stories.

TRIBUTE TO DEREK It is with great sadness that the RNA announces that D-Day veteran and long-time supporter of the Association, Derek Jones, has crossed the bar. His funeral will be held later this month in Monmouth.

YOU KNOW THE DRILL The best of luck to shipmates taking part in competitions tomorrow – the RNA National Standard Bearers event at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth and the RNA's English Open Uckers Singles Championships hosted by Wallasey branch at Riverside Road on Merseyside.

DOUBLE SHANTY The Sheringham Shantymen will be staging two performances in Kent in July in aid of the RNLI. They will appear at the Woodville Theatre in Gravesend on 27 July in aid of local RNLI stations, and at Chatham Historic Dockyard on July 28 to support the RNLI Historical Collection Centre.

LOOKING OUT FOR YOU This week is Mental Health Awareness Week, and the RNA is all about ensuring its members are on top form. From supporting new recruits, to checking in on our D-Day veterans, we promote your health and wellbeing, in all forms. If you are in or around Portsmouth, you might consider going to the Public Consultation for the Veterans' Places, Pathways & People Programme SE on Wednesday 22 May. Ignore the lengthy name - these people just want to know what they can do in the South East to help support veterans. Get your tickets (free) here: <https://buff.ly/3wkLigp> If you are not based in the South East, look out for VPPP consultation events in your area - we will post details of them here and on our social media channels when we hear of them.

WE GO AGAIN! We are at the business end of the football season, with some clubs facing big matches. That includes RNA FC, who have another outing next week – and you could play your part in the fixture. The undefeated RNA FC will take on the Aldershot Vets at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth at 1930 on Friday 24 May, and the RNA's Sports and Comradeship Coordinator, Scouse Reeves, would like to hear from anyone who would like to play. Spectators are also welcome – as Scouse puts it, "the bar will be open, the match will be gripping and the company will be entertaining." Any potential players should contact Scouse as soon as possible on scc@rnassoc.org

FIRESIDE CHATS Our next Fireside Chat, on Monday 20 May, will feature Geoffrey Salvetti on the subject of the Hilsea Lines Story 1600-1945. Fireside Chats start at 1830 every Monday, and to access the chats, log into Zoom here. The meeting ID is 288 830 5105 and the access password is Shipmate. Please note there are no Fireside Chats the following two weeks (Monday 27 May and Monday 3 June).



BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE The Royal Navy is embracing virtual reality to train sailors guiding warships on operations worldwide. Nine hi-tech bridge simulators, which accurately recreate both the bridge of present-day warships and the key waters and harbours in which they operate, have been installed at sites in England and Scotland, led by the Navy's warfare school at HMS Collingwood in Fareham. The £27m investment in partnership with Team Fisher, (a consortium of partners which delivers shore-based training for the Royal Navy) and Metaverse VR, is intended to make learning navigation and running a bridge more realistic, better and potentially faster. Five simulator suites have been installed at HMS Collingwood: two large 'full mission' simulators with wraparound digital display screens and virtual reality headsets (see above), a smaller version with an LCD display, and two small trainers – more akin to a video gaming set-up, but with the same features/accuracy as their full-size counterparts. *Image ©UK MOD CROWN COPYRIGHT, 2024*

BRIDGE TO THE PAST HMS Wellington, a rare surviving example of a World War 2 convoy escort vessel, will mark the 90th anniversary of her launch on 29 May. In recognition of this milestone, the Wellington Trust are looking to hold a small ceremony to mark the occasion on board the vessel, which is berthed at Victoria Embankment in Central London. Organisers would like to invite a small number of Atlantic Convoy veterans to a brief ceremony followed by refreshments, in the hope that they could share their story with those attending – a national newspaper is due to cover the event. Travel expenses incurred by the veteran and a carer travelling to the ship could be covered. The event is planned to start at 1100 so it would probably need to be a veteran travelling from somewhere in the Home Counties. Unfortunately, there is no wheelchair/disabled access, and so the veteran(s) would also need to be capable of negotiating two flights of steps to get on board. If you are interested, please contact Richard Hussey, a Friend of HMS Wellington, via cml@rnassoc.org

TAG ALERT The Telegraphist Air Gunners Association has held a memorial service on the third Sunday in May since 1953. The Fleet Air Arm Association stepped in to take over organisation of the event in 2013. The last few remaining TAGs (who were involved in the sinking of the Bismarck, the attack on Taranto, and the Battle of the Atlantic, amongst other heroic actions) attend a lunch at Lee-on-Solent Golf Club prior to the service. The 2024 lunch, service, and socials are next Sunday, 19 May, and it would be fantastic to have other RN associations attend, in order to keep this event going. The service takes place in St Faith's Church at 1500. For more details, contact Peter Murray of the FAA Association on 07981 878325 or peter.murray1@btinternet.com

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