



**ROYAL NAVAL
ASSOCIATION**



The Semaphore Circular

No 700

The Beating Heart of the RNA

JUNE 2020

**Please Continue to Donate to the RNA
NHS & Ventilator Appeal - now reached
£12,747.33. we only need another £2,252.67
Every last shekel or ickie counts**



Lots of 'Gold Brass' was on display commemorating VE75 Day in Broad Street Old Portsmouth. National President Vice Admiral John McAnally is joined by Vice Admiral Jerry Kidd, the Fleet Commander, Honorary Capt Robin Knox Johnston and General Secretary, Bill Oliphant. Admiral John and Captain Bill later paid their respects at the Naval Memorial laying a wreath

Shipmates Please Stay Safe

If you need assistance call the RNA Helpline on 07542 680082

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

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From the General Secretary

Dear Shipmates,

Welcome to the June edition of the Semaphore Circular which I hope you will agree is full of interesting articles. On that vein, I take my hat off to my old chum, Captain Roger Readwin, Commanding Officer at BRNC, who definitely wins my “people person” of the month award by conducting a Passing Out Parade at Dartmouth for one S/Lt who was unable to pass out with his cohort as he was suffering Covid-19 symptoms. What a fabulous gesture – BZ to you Sir! And to S/Lt Matt Poxon; welcome to the best club in the world!

My second BZ award of the month also goes to a serving RN Captain and another good friend, Captain Chris Smith the Naval Regional Commander in Scotland who has been a great supporter of the RNA over recent years. Chris was involved along with the delightful Joanna Lumley in getting a WW2 War Medal to an ex-Wren, Edna, in Dumfries during lockdown. You may have seen it on the BBC’s excellent production they did to mark VE-75 and was broadcast just prior to the Queen’s speech on 8 May. I’ve just rewatched it this morning and it still dampens the eye - even without the benefit of a tot! For those reading this electronically, you can see it by clicking [here](#).



I have been really proud of the way the Association has reacted during the lockdown, especially with ensuring that our more vulnerable shipmates have been looked after during the Covid-19 crisis and yet again the way we celebrated and commemorated VE-Day was just outstanding. Well done to all who got out there with standards or in rig and, with dignity, made our mark. And well done too with the organisation of socially distanced events like street parties. One thing the Andrew has taught us all – we all know how to enjoy ourselves! As evidence of this and indeed resilience, I sight an example from Glennis Jones, Secretary at RNA North Manchester, in her words:

My partner Ken and myself, (who should have married on 75th anniv of VE Day, a big wartime wedding, cancelled due to Covid-19!) organised a VE Doorstep picnic party for our elderly neighbours, and also we had a "mock" wedding. As we are re-enactors, Ken had his jeep there, and we had wartime music, and sing song, dressed in 40s dress and uniform and lots of bunting. The neighbours loved it, so it was a brilliant day and lifted their spirits. Wedding re-arranged to August 15th, VJ 75.



The General Secretary, under the watchful eye of the National President, lays a wreath at the Southsea Naval War Memorial on behalf of the RNA on the anniversary of VE 75

In Portsmouth I was privileged to lay a wreath with the National President at the Naval War Memorial on Southsea Common and take our two-minute silence there. What we didn’t know was that the BBC had sent a film crew down and the RM had arranged a bugler to do the Last Post and sound the Carry On after the silence. So, there we were, front and centre on the lunchtime national BBC news!

The story has a post-script for me. In the days following 8 May I was out taking my morning trot and always went past the memorial to make sure

the wind hadn't blown our wreath out of position. One morning while I was adjusting the wreath, I looked up to see a "young" gentleman touching a name on the memorial. Somewhat curious, I was to meet the lovely Vincent Emery (85) who was to tell me his father had been killed by German naval gunfire off Norway whilst his ship was on the return leg of a Murmansk convoy. Vincent himself has served his time as a Shipwright in Portsmouth Dockyard and later was in charge of the carrier maintenance programme in the yard when he had no fewer than 8 carriers to keep serviceable. Those were the days indeed!



Vincent Emery (85) pointing to the name of PO Stoker Charlie Emery, his father. KIA on the return leg of a Murmansk Convoy in 1942

I note our National Chairman Keith having a pop at me in his *Chairman's Chat* below about my "fantasy" of being a sailor. He's not too far from the truth in fairness. Having joined as a Tiffy Apprentice, I was never to wear square rig apart from a dodgy run ashore in Ipswich after the *GRAFTON* had received the freedom of the city and I swapped my 2½'s rig with the Killick SA. I seem to remember it was a good night!

Meanwhile the **Helpline (07542 680082) is still in operation** and continues to play an important role in the support we are giving the membership from Central Office. Please also be aware of the nasty scammers out there and we published a useful Cyber Security advice note earlier in the week (thanks S/m Karl Webb) which I hope is of benefit to those online. Indeed, I must pass on the latest... **WARNING - Test and trace scams already started. Text and phone calls. Very believable, has NHS logo and is well written redirecting you to a site which they say is the official site.....but it is not. Do not click on the site, do not reply to text. This is where checking the address of the sender is imperative.**

Better news. The Ventilator appeal is doing very well, and you will see a push for that later in this edition. I plan to draw stumps on 15 June and get the donation made to the NHS to get the ventilator in action. Thank you all of you who have already donated, it is much appreciated. Thanks too to Felicity Inns who is an Associate Member in the Chichester Branch who has contributed an interesting article on her motivation to join the RNA. Also, welcome to Charlotte "Charlie" Darlington, our new Comms Officer who has hit the deck running and is already doing great things supporting our image and messaging. On Monday we host a national newspaper for a piece on the anniversary of Dunkirk 80 – see article below.

Finally, I'm pleased to announce that we are starting a series of online Fireside chats on Monday 1st June at 1800, the first of which will be led by our National President, VAdm John McAnally on the subject of the Battle of Jutland whose 104th anniversary falls that day. This will be on Zoom mtg ID: 288 830 5105, Password: Shipmate (case sensitive). Do join us.

Please stay safe and continue to follow UK Government advice.

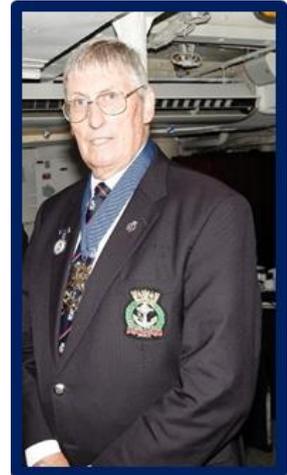
Up spirits!

Bill

Chairman's chat

I start by saying well done S/M Andy Christie in producing last month's Semaphore Circular from his Man Cave at home where he continues to operate from. BZ Andy

Communication is the essential part of any organisation and this Association is no exception. On behalf of us all I extend a warm welcome to Charlie Darlington who joins us in her new post as the Association's Communications Officer. Charlie is no newcomer to naval banter having previously experienced life in Portsmouth Naval Base. I will stop there as Bill Oliphant will have mentioned more about Charlie in his introduction.



Our lives continue to be turned upside down as a result of COVID 19 and our thoughts must be with our Shipmates and their families who have lost love one's since this terrible virus has struck. On behalf of the Association I offer Condolences. Whilst new cases of Covid 19 are on the decrease, please stay alert and continue to follow your government's advice, guidelines and regulations. We cannot be lulled into a false sense of security at this time. Our frontline staff be they NHS, Carers, Shop workers or Bin men continue to do a great job as do those involved in logistics behind the scenes delivering vital supplies around the country. It is heartening to learn through Facebook the ongoing good work and deeds being carried out by you, the members.

My congratulations to S/M Geoff Apperley (Royston Branch) our Deputy National Welfare Adviser who liaises closely with S/M Rita Lock the National Welfare Adviser, for the informative information sheets he has been producing. It is very pleasing to learn from local Ex-Service Organisations contacts that the RNA appear to be way out in front in keeping its membership well advised, informed and more so in contact with other Shipmates at a local level, even though some of the information from Geoff may have been circulated in the media. BZ Geoff. One of my own Branch Members who is Chairman of a local RAFA Branch, commented that he is amazed at the information circulated by the RNA be it Nationally or by the Branch, as he hears very little from the RAFA – and that comes from a Crabfat.

VE 75 Day – 8th May 2020. Up and down the country plans had been made by communities and Ex-Service Organisations to commemorate this event. Whilst many were cancelled due to Covid 19, the communities and organisations rose to the occasion whilst maintaining social distancing. Many RNA Standard Bearers and Shipmates turned out to observe the National 2 minutes Silence be it in their garden or local War Memorial. Well done all concerned, you all looked very smart in your No 1's. You all looked splendid when viewed on the VE75 Day Virtual Gallery.

During this ongoing Covid 19 crisis Branches continue to embrace modern I.T. technology by holding an increasing number of virtual meetings to keep in touch within Shipmates of their Branch and indeed other Branches with that special added ingredient called Naval Banter. An example being S/M Maurice Weight of RNA Rushden Branch who recently organised a virtual quiz night. Well done Maurice. However, once this crisis is over there is nothing to beat a jolly old get together at a Branch meeting. A BZ to S/m Tom Watt of RNA Aberdeen Branch for the superb video he is putting out on Facebook. It is truly amazing what IT skills we have amongst the membership.

S/m's Eric Holmwood and Kevin Hackett of Wrexham Branch continue their great virtual TOT nights held every Wednesday and Saturday evenings @ 1900 with guest appearances on

various evenings by the National President John McAnally, Deputy National President Mark Slawson and General Secretary Bill Oliphant. Of interest is that those taking part had at some time in their naval careers served with these Shipmates. The other evening I was a tad adrift in joining the meeting and was amused to find a character dressed as Popeye – minus a Pipe, it turned out to be no other than our very own Sailor Boy Bill Oliphant living out his fantasy – keep eating your spinach Bill and ease off the rum! S/m Karl Webb of RNA Huntingdon Branch continues to capture static video evidence of those who take part which he posts on his rna-community website and Facebook. Many thanks Karl, keep up the good work.

Although the distribution of iPads under Project Semaphore has ceased, ongoing support to users by Julie Royston continues to those who require it. I learnt recently that our oldest user is a youngster of 101 years old which goes to prove you are never too young to learn.

UCKERS - Not wishing to cause domestic dis-harmony with Commander (E) during Lock down and looking ahead to the RNA World Uckers Competition, I down loaded LUDO from Play Store to use on my mobile phone, I did search for Uckers, honestly, but Google thought I had typed in a naughty word! Please do not rush to follow me as I found the game extremely easy and totally boring. If anyone has come across an Uckers App, please point me in the right direction.

My admiration goes to all serving and reserve members of the Navy who continue to support the frontline against Covid 19 and to those who are confined to Ship or Base. Our thoughts are with you and the fact that you are unable to be with your families.

To all readers please continue to spin and share your dits Branch & Ship's news by sending them to Andy Christie at andy@royalnavalassoc.com who sits in his Man Cave staring out into space awaiting contact with the outside world. 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 £12,747.33 since the launch of the Appeal. Thank you so much.

The Appeal will be closing on 15 June to make sure it is used by the NHS to its maximum potential.

However, we still need another £2,252.67 to reach our target of £15,000 so if you have not been able to donate so far please please keep donating.....Remember to dig as deep as you can as every 'Ickie and Sheckle' count!

Even the General secretary has opened his wallet and extracted a moth bitten Scottish Fiver..... Its true.....

2. ★ Covid 19 HumourRespectfully

Young Jim Hawkins was sat contemplating the current situation in the Admiral Benbow Inn nursing half a pint of pussers, as you do. Everyone was keeping social distance, even the ship's cat had legged it.

He understood that keeping apart stopped the virus but being just a mere cabin boy with a 9:9 NAMET score it was all a bit woolly. Suddenly the door burst open and in strode Long John Silver.

"Hello Long John," says Jim, can you explain to me the reasons for keeping apart all the time.....

Wait for it.....

"R" says Long John!!!

3. BRNC COVID 19 Passing Out Parade

The photo opposite shows the lengths some of us have to go to during the Coronavirus lockdown. It depicts Sub Lieutenant Matt Poxon at his solo passing out parade at the Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

This is the first time in its history that a passing out parade was held for one person and was made necessary when SLT Poxon had to self-isolate with coronavirus symptoms and missed the main ceremony. In a spirit of generosity, the Commanding Officer of BRNC offered Matt a passing out parade for just him! BZ



4. ★ Guess the Establishment



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. ★ Why I Joined the RNA?

General Secretary Bill Oliphant was contacted by Felicity Inns, who is a research student completing a PhD on the role of remembrance/poppy in the RN. Chichester Branch very kindly invited Felicity along to their monthly meeting to assist. To cut a long story short, she ended up joining the RNA as an Associate member. Please read her joining story below. If you have an unusual joining the RNA story we would love to hear it.

Back in the summer of 2018 I began my PhD field research on the role of the poppy/ remembrance in the RN and I stumbled across the RNA (Chichester Branch) as a place to research. In my naivety I was happy in the knowledge that I knew exactly what I was looking for and what questions I was asking of my 'participants' (to assign the formal academic term). I would go to meetings, ask my questions, and pop out the other end with a PhD.

I have since realised my 'separate' status of researcher has flown out the window as I found very quickly that I was enjoying myself more than I had ever expected to. I was no longer fulfilling the role of impartial researcher asking questions, but learning about lives, learning about myself and having a spectacular time in doing so. I was enjoying the camaraderie in this group, unparalleled by that of any other group I have known.

I have no connection with the Navy and am a little (actually quite a lot) younger than many of the members (two things that may be seen as rather a barrier to joining such a group). Certainly, early on in my attendance of meetings with the RNA I felt like a bit of a fraud and felt I needed some link, however tenuous, to feel like I had any right to join such a worthy group of people. The closest connections I have to anything military are that ; my great grandfather's brother drove horse-drawn ambulances in WWI; my grandfather served in North Africa in WWII, I had a great Uncle who served in the armed forces in East Africa and another great Uncle who took his boat across the Channel to Dunkirk in WWII and there is my tenuous link to the Navy – a boat was involved after all!

However, the friendship offered to me was not reliant on Naval background. In November 2019 I became an Associate Member of the RNA, just in time to wear my grandfather's medals with pride in the Remembrance Parade in Chichester. Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship are not just words, I see them lived every meeting (whether online Zoom meetings or in person). I am even slowly but surely learning more about life in the Royal Navy – I now know what Uckers is at least, although the taste for rum has not yet developed!

By the GS – Gin works too Felicity! Welcome and thank you.

6. ★ RNA Clothing/Slops Refreshed Website

Shipmates during isolation would be the perfect time to have a 'shuft' 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 to look!)

7. ★ Christmas Card Competition - Last Chance to enter

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.

8. ★ Quickie Joke to keep you going!

I told my suitcase that we won't be going away for a while.....

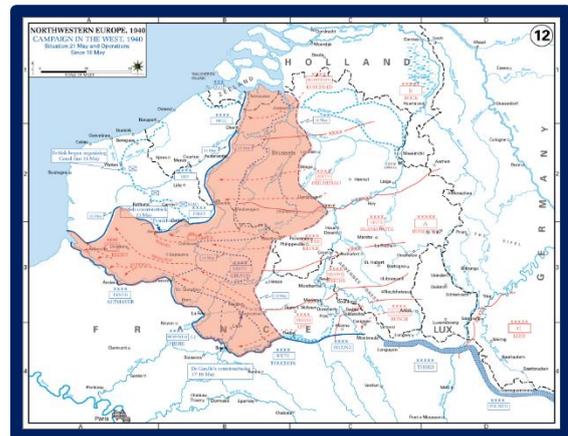
I have to deal with a load of emotional baggage..... Boom Boom !

9. ★ Dunkirk 80th Anniversary

80 years ago an Allied operation swung into action that would eventually see a third of a million fighting men spirited away from under the noses of the Germans.

Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of Allied troops from Dunkirk, was sparked by the fall of France in May and June 1940, which resulted in British, French and Belgian soldiers being trapped in the Pas de Calais and Dunkirk, close to the Belgian border in Northern France – a situation Churchill described as “a colossal military disaster” and which could have seen the “root, core and brain” of the Army killed or captured.

The British Expeditionary Force had crossed the Channel to help defend France when the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, but in mid-May 1940 a rapid enemy advance through the Ardennes split the Allied forces and British commander Gen John Vereker, the Viscount Gort, ordered a fighting retreat to the coast. His objective was the port town of Dunkirk, surrounded by marshland and blessed with a long sandy beach. As the Tommies and their comrades were massing in the little town, the Royal Navy was rapidly finalising plans to create a rescue force of ships, boats and whatever else could be gathered up and sent across the Channel.



Planning for Operation Dynamo was led by Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay in the tunnels below Dover Castle, from the battlements of which staff could see vessels assemble in the port below. A final throw of the dice by Gort, striking south against the encircling Germans, was doomed almost from the start, so the British consolidated their position at Dunkirk, along with thousands of French and Belgian comrades, opening canal sluices and flooding the land behind them as a defensive measure.

The Germans delayed a final assault on the precarious Allied position, giving the defenders vital time to marshal their forces – for whatever reason (simple error or strategic miscalculation), the Luftwaffe and Panzers were not sent in straight away to finish off their foe. Early in the evening of

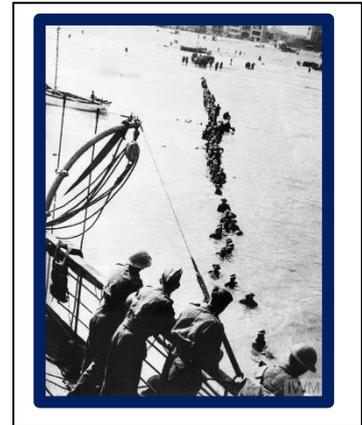
26 May Churchill formally launched Dynamo, although by that stage almost 30,000 men had already made their way to freedom in England. The initial expectation was not ambitious – Dynamo planners hoped to rescue some 45,000 troops in two days before the Germans broke through, and the evacuation proper got off to a slow start with only half that number getting away in the first two days.



By that stage the call had gone out to boatyards and ports along the English coast to join the Royal Navy, helping to shuttle men from the beach and harbour jetties to larger vessels offshore. Enter the Little Ships of Dunkirk, a motley collection of small commercial and private pleasure craft that answered that call from 28 May onwards – by 31 May they numbered almost 400.

Throughout Dynamo a battle raged overhead between the Luftwaffe and RAF along the coast, although the weather in the early stages was against German low-level and dive bombing tactics, giving the Allied troops some measure of respite.

As Dynamo got into full swing, the numbers of rescued men rose encouragingly. 28 May saw almost 18,000 spirited away, the next day more than 47,000, though all the while there were mounting losses – by then destroyer HMS Grenade had been sunk and a French warship put out of action, while other British ships – military and civilian – sustained serious damage. As German bombing took its toll, embarkation points in the harbour were rendered useless, so the focus switched to the beach and a rudimentary stone pier, but still the men patiently lined up on the sands got away – almost 54,000 on 30 May, nearly 70,000 the following day and 64,000 on 1 June. Numbers tailed off swiftly as the noose around the Allies was tightened.



The British rear-guard was recovered by morning on 3 June – daylight evacuation had become too dangerous by that point – and by 4 June another 75,000 French troops had joined them safely across the Channel. That left fewer than 40,000 French troops still in Dunkirk when the Germans finally broke through the defences, and that force surrendered on 4 June.

By the end of Op Dynamo it is estimated that more than 930 ships of all sizes had played their part.



The Little Ships attract much attention – everything from fishing smacks, yachts and lifeboats to Thames steamers, many of the smaller ones manned by civilian crews, was out on the waters of the Channel over the course of that nine days. And though their bravery and fortitude is not in doubt, the Royal Navy bore the brunt of the operation, warships crossing and recrossing the Channel until no more men could be picked up. The donkey work was done by the Navy's destroyers, 39 of which were thrown into the fray, although the best of the bunch were withdrawn by the end of May to preserve them for other

vital tasks.

Almost 240,000 men were evacuated from Dunkirk harbour, many of them stepping straight onto Royal Navy and requisitioned ships, while almost 99,000 were lifted from the beach. Naval crews

also manned many of the Little Ships as they too made the passage to and from England, a minimum of 40 miles and risking either shore batteries or a German minefield.



The toll was considerable. Just under 70,000 members of the BEF were killed, injured or captured by the fall of France including the Battle of Dunkirk, and hundreds of thousands of tons of stores were left behind on French soil, including more than 400 tanks and 75,000 tons of ammunition. Six Royal Navy destroyers (HM Ships Basilisk, Grafton, Grenade, Havant, Keith and Wakeful) and three French Navy destroyers were among the 240 or so vessels sunk on Dynamo, with 19 other destroyers damaged, while the RAF lost almost 150 aircraft (more than 40 of them Spitfires); the Luftwaffe lost slightly more.

Of the 338,226 troops landed back in the UK, 224,320 were British, and although most of their equipment and vehicles had been abandoned, this force lived to fight another day – their loss would have been catastrophic for the UK war effort. The Dunkirk evacuation was seen as success snatched from the jaws of defeat, though Churchill was clear that it should not be misread, stating on 4 June that “we must be very careful not to assign to this deliverance the attributes of a victory. Wars are not won by evacuations.”

It was, however, a remarkable result in the light of the original objective, and the whole operation took on an almost mystical air – the Miracle of Dunkirk, whether it was the army escaping total destruction or the long period of settled weather that allowed such an operation to be staged. The operation also helped galvanise Britain – the ‘phoney war’ was well and truly over, and the sense of unity as the country squared up to the considerable German threat came to be seen as part of the so-called Dunkirk spirit.

(Specific acknowledgement for Photographs from the Imperial War Museum at end of Branch News)

10. ★ This Month's Unusual Photos

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

Shipmate David Harris, Birchington on Sea Branch, forwarded this brilliant picture of 'Neptune's' Guard during the 'Crossing the Line' Ceremony in HMS Cavalier in 1967.



(Editors Note – Strange..... One Russian 'lookylikey' four ratings in the same pyjamas (Were you all issued pussers pyjamas? And one fella in baggy trousers!!!!)

Seriously, thank you David. Please send your photos / old 'dits' etc to andy@royalnavalassoc.com

Shipmate Roy Dean Hon Sec at Dorchester Branch forwarded this article for the unusual photo item, sadly no photo has it happened 54 years ago, however great 'dit' value.....

'Horse on parade at BRNC'.....

Further to the article in the January 2020 newsletter on unusual Naval Photographs in which you showed a photograph of the 1st Lt of HMS Falmouth riding a horse in a parade of the ship's company in New Zealand in 1979, I have a vague memory of seeing a photograph of the "Captain" of Britannia Royal Naval College taking the salute on horseback during a passing out parade.

I say "Captain" because it was either a RM or Army exchange officer – an experienced horseman - dressed in a Captain's uniform. The story was that the out-going Captain was trying to persuade his relief that once a year it was now the tradition to take the salute on horseback. The photograph had to be taken at a certain angle so that the "Captain's" face was obscured because he had a moustache.

I say "vague memory" because it was over 54 years ago. Perhaps a shipmate is able to verify the facts?

11.★ A 'Thousand God Deeds' x Three

Good Deed 1

The General Secretary received a lovely letter from Bill Evershed who was attending the Funeral of the late Eric Mustoe who had been Chairman of the Amethyst Association.

Dear Bill,

In mid-March, just as the Coronavirus was gathering pace, I attended near Walsall the Funeral of one of the AMETHYSTs, Eric Mustoe, who had been Chairman of the AMETHYST Association. Stewart Hett, who had been our President, had died last autumn and he had been diligent in attending the funerals of all the '49-ers' and I felt it was my duty to do so in his place. There are, I think, now only two '49-ers' left in UK and one in NZ, and funeral attendance is not now an option. Actually Eric's duties as Chairman were almost all dealt with by his daughter Trudy but both he and Trudy had attended our final well-attended AM RU in Guzz last autumn.

Anyway, at the Funeral there were three impeccably dressed RNA members and two Standards, one from 'Area 8' and the other from Tewkesbury (so quite some distance from Walsall). Trudy wasn't quite sure how they'd heard about the Funeral but they certainly lent great dignity and tribute to the occasion. The Chapel was packed. I did of course thank them afterwards but just thought you might like to know how much their attendance was appreciated.

Kindest regards and thanks,

Bill E

Good Deed 2

Shipmate Phil Mountain (Newport Gwent Branch) signed up with Team Rubicon UK (<https://www.teamrubiconuk.org/>) at the start of the lockdown and had a first deployment last week to the Dragon's Heart Hospital inside the Principality Stadium. Our group of forty veterans transported, assembled, plugged in and tested 176 new beds, very hard work but rewarding. As I mentioned to Andy in an earlier e-mail, there were only two of us ex-matelots in the group and I can't see any reasons why the Senior Service shouldn't be better represented overall, we certainly have the skills.



S/M Phil has checked with Team Rubicon's Communications Officer, Alex Whitty (alex.whitty@teamrubiconuk.org) who thinks it would be brilliant if the RNA could promote the organisation through RNA channels to drum up some more volunteers.

Good Deed 3

Shipmate Dennis Morgan, Chairman Llanelli Branch, very kindly had the honour of attending the service of Shipmate Lawrence Mosley, 93. In attendance was the Carmarthenshire Armed Forces Champion for Llanelli Cllr. Jenkins who Laid a Naval Wreath, I played Last Post, and Acted as the RNA Rep.

It was sad to see. His sister who travelled from Birmingham, they were going to stop her attending but good sense prevailed. It was a sad service it was so quick and over and done with in ten minutes,

After the lock down is over, I will return with the standard and pay the proper Respect.

(From the General Secretary; On behalf of the National Council and myself BZ to Shipmate Dennis and all other Shipmates who are attending such sad occasions representing the RNA in such a magnificent manner honouring our Shipmates who served in the Royal Navy. Thank you.)

12. ★ VC Series - Lieutenant Commander Eugene Esmonde VC DSO MiD Roayl Navy

Eugene Esmonde was born on 1 March 1909 in Thurgoland, Yorkshire, near Barnsley, where his father, Dr John Joseph Esmonde (1862–1915), was in temporary general practice. Though by birth English, his parents were from Ireland, and he returned to his family's ancestral home of the Esmonde baronets in Drominagh, County Tipperary as a boy and was educated by the Jesuits, first at Wimbledon College in London and then at Clongowes Wood College in County Kildare, Ireland.

Esmonde was commissioned into the Royal Air Force (RAF) as a pilot officer on probation on 28 December 1928. During the early 1930s, Esmonde served first in the RAF, and then saw the light and transferred to the Fleet Air Arm where he served in the Mediterranean when responsibility for naval aviation was returned to the Royal Navy. Upon leaving the navy in 1934, he flew for Imperial Airways.



At the start of the Second World War, he returned to the Fleet Air Arm with the rank of lieutenant commander. His first sea posting was to HMS Courageous, which was sunk in September 1939. He returned to sea duty on board HMS Victorious after a series of postings to shore-based stations.

On the night of 24 May 1941, Esmonde led 825 Naval Air Squadron's nine Fairey Swordfish torpedo bombers in an attack against the German battleship Bismarck. This attack took place after the Battle of the Denmark Strait, in which HMS Hood was sunk by the Bismarck. The biplanes flying from Victorious made a 120-mile flight in foul North Atlantic weather and one torpedo hit the Bismarck amidships without effect. (The attack that disabled the ship's rudder and doomed the German battleship was caused by a Swordfish torpedo strike from HMS Ark Royal some days later.) Esmonde was decorated with the Distinguished Service Order on 11 February 1942 for his leadership and actions (the award was announced



on 16 September 1941).

His squadron was serving on HMS Ark Royal when she was torpedoed in November 1941. Attempts to tow her to Gibraltar were abandoned, and on 14 November 1941 she sank. The Swordfish of the squadron ferried some of the crew off the ship before she sank; Lt Cdr Esmonde was Mentioned in Despatches for his actions on this occasion.

Esmonde won his VC for his actions during the 'Channel Dash' on 12 February 1942 when he led an attack by six swordfish on the German Battle Cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and Heavy Cruiser Prinz Eugen plus their attendant escorts. The odds were stacked against the Swordfish resulting in the loss of all aircraft and only 5 out of the 18 aircrew surviving.

The London Gazette published his VC citation on 03 March 1942;

ADMIRALTY. Whitehall. 3rd March, 1942.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the grant of the VICTORIA CROSS, for valour and resolution in action against the Enemy, to:

The late Lieutenant-Commander (A) Eugene Esmonde, D.S.O., Royal Navy.

On the morning of Thursday, 12th February, 1942, Lieutenant-Commander Esmonde, in command of a Squadron of the Fleet Air Arm, was told that the German Battle-Cruisers SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU and the Cruiser PRINZ EUGEN, strongly escorted by some thirty surface craft, were entering the Straits of Dover, and that his Squadron must attack before they reached the sand-banks North East of Calais.



Lieutenant-Commander Esmonde knew well that his enterprise was desperate. Soon after noon he and his squadron of six Swordfish set course for the Enemy, and after ten minutes flight were attacked by a strong force of Enemy fighters. Touch was lost with his fighter escort; and in the

action which followed all his aircraft were damaged. He flew on, cool and resolute, serenely challenging hopeless odds, to encounter the deadly fire of the Battle-Cruisers and their Escort, which shattered the port wing of his aircraft. Undismayed, he led his Squadron on, straight through this inferno of fire, in steady flight towards their target. Almost at once he was shot down; but his Squadron went on to launch a gallant attack, in which at least one torpedo is believed to have struck the German Battle-Cruisers, and from which not one of the six aircraft returned.



His high courage and splendid resolution will live in the traditions of the Royal Navy, and remain for many generations a fine and stirring memory.

Very sadly seven weeks later Lieutenant-Commander Esmonde's body, still in his lifejacket, was washed ashore in the Thames Estuary near the River Medway and he was buried in the Woodlands Cemetery, Gillingham, Kent on the 30th April 1942.

Finally he was honoured and remembered in Winston Churchill's famous broadcast speech on 13 May 1945, "Five years of War", as having defended Ireland's honour.

13. ★ 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.

14. ★ 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.

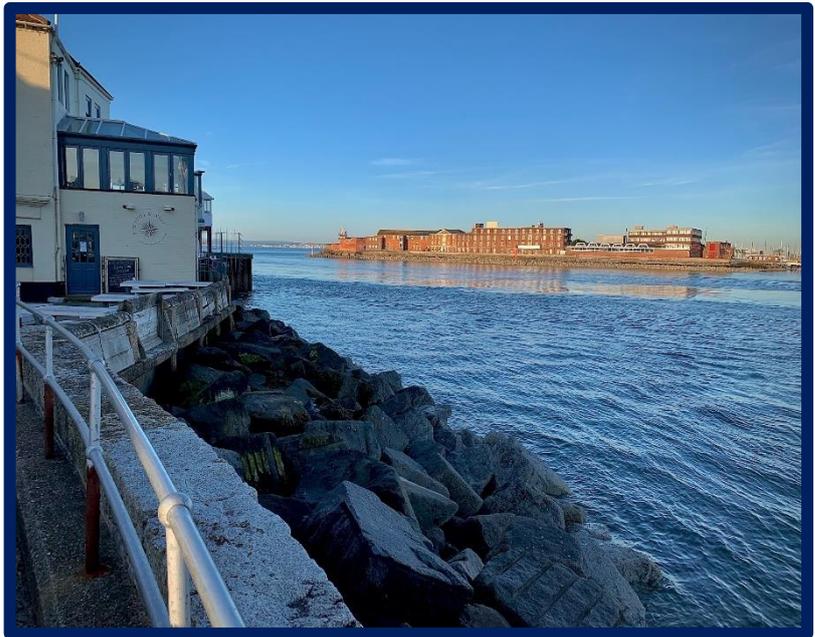
15. ★ Answer to 'Guess the Establishment' ?

It was of course.....

HMS Dolphin in Gosport which shut its gates as a Naval establishment for the last time in 1998, it is now a MOD establishment. The first boat arrived in 1904 and the last HMS Ursula sailed out 1994

The only resident unit based in Dolphin now after the Army Field Hospital moved out is the Sea Cadet Offshore organisation with TS Royalist and TS John Jerwood berthing on petrol pier.

This photo was taken at 0634 on 27 May 2020 – Who needs the Costa's!



16. ★ Joke Time – IT History Lesson

In ancient Israel it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a healthy young wife by the name of Dorothy. And Dot Com was a comely woman, large of breast, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed, she was often called Amazon Dot Com. And she said unto Abraham her husband, "why dost thou travel so far from town to town with thy goods when thou canst trade without ever leaving thy tent?" And Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load but simply said, "How dear?"

And Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages saying what you have for sale, and they will reply telling you who hath the best price. The sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)". Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums. And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had at the top price, without ever having to move from his tent. To prevent neighbouring countries from overhearing what the drums were saying, Dot devised a system that only she and the drummers knew. It was known as Must Send Drum Over Sound (MSDOS), and she also developed a language to transmit ideas and pictures - Hebrew to the People (HTTP).

And the young men did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly take to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Sybarites, or (NERDS). And lo, the land was so feverish with joy at the new riches and deafening sound of drums that no one noticed that the real riches were going to that enterprising drum dealer, Brother William of Gates, who bought off every drum maker in the land. Indeed, he did insist on drums to be made that would work only with Brother Gates' drum- heads and drumsticks.

And Dot did say "O Abraham what we have started is being taken over by others". And Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or eBay as it came to be known. He said "We need a name that reflects what we are". And Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators". "YAHOO" said Abraham. And because it was Dot's idea, they named it YAHOO Dot Com. Abraham's cousin Joshua, being the young Gregarious Energetic Educated Kid (GEEK) that he was, soon started to use Dot's drums to locate things around the countryside.

It soon became known as God's Own Official Guide to Locating Everything (GOOGLE).

And that is how it all began. There endeth the lesson.

17. ★ 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**

18. And Finally - Better Days will Return

Please see below an extract from Her Majesty the Queens address to the Nation on 5 April 2020 which is very appropriate at this difficult time.

"I hope in the years to come, everyone will be able to take pride in how they responded to the challenge. And those who come after us will say the Britons of this generation were as strong as any. That the attributes of self-discipline, of quiet good-humoured resolve and of fellow-feeling still characterise this country.

The pride in who we are is not part of our past, it defines our present and our future. The moments when the United Kingdom has come together to applaud its care and essential workers will be remembered as an expression of our national spirit; and its symbol will be the rainbows drawn by children....

We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will be with our families again; we will meet again"

RNA Longcast

2020	
05 Jun	FAC (1000) - Online
05 Jun	AMC (1400) - Online
27 Jun	Armed Forces Day – Scarborough CANCELLED
06 Jul	Area 2 Committee Mtg - Bromley
31 Jul	Black Tot Day – 50 th Anniversary CANCELLED
24 Jul	Central Office – Open Day - CANCELLED
01 Aug	Area 5 Quarterly – Norwich
07 Aug	Central Office – Open Day
14 Aug	FAC (1000) - Online
14 Aug	AMC (1400) - Online
15 Aug	Area 2 Delegate Meeting - Chatham
21 Aug	Conf/AGM – Online
31 Aug	August Bank Holiday
05 Sep (was 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 - Portsmouth
25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	Boxing Day
2021	

Acknowledgement to IWM for the photographs used in Paragraph 9 – 80th Anniversary of Dunkirk.

Dunkirk waders (line of British troops wading out from Dunkirk beach to a waiting British destroyer) - ©IWM HU41240

Dunkirk hospital ship (Hospital ship carrying wounded troops away from Dunkirk) - ©IWM HU73187

Dunkirk smoke (burning oil tanks at Dunkirk) - ©IWM C1721

Dunkirk queues (Troops line up on the beach at Dunkirk waiting for evacuation) - ©IWM NYP 68075

D'ye hear there'.....

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

This Month Featuring.....

[RNA Ferndown](#)

[RNA Christchurch](#)

[RNA Spennymoor and Ferryhill](#)

[RNA Aylesbury](#)

[RNA Bude](#)

[RNA Bromley](#)

[Area 4, Dorchester, Portland and Weymouth Branches](#)

[RNA St Neots](#)

[RNA Wrexham](#)

RNA Ferndown Branch

The Branch 'mess night' meeting in March featured a Legion d 'Honneur medal presentation which was presented to a new member Shipmate Alfred Guenigault.



Shipmate Alfred was presented with the Legion D 'Honneur Medal by the Mayor of Ferndown, Mrs Julie Robinson, at the 40th annual birthday celebration of the Ferndown & District Royal Naval Association at St Ives & St Leonards ex Services Club.

On D Day Alfred served with the 6th Ulster Rifles Regiment who were part of the Airborne Division, he landed 60 metres from Pegasus Bridge. He was sent with his regiment to the small villages to protect the villagers. He was wounded whilst helping others later in the day.

(The photo shows L to R - RNA Ferndown and District Chairman Mick Arnold MBE with Alfred Guenigault and Mayor of Ferndown Mrs Julie Robinson)

(From Central Office - BZ S/M Alfred, welcome and thank you for your service.)

RNA Christchurch Branch



Shipmate Rick Squibb Chairman of Christchurch and District Branch forwarded a photo and a few words to Christchurch branch members concerning VE Day

Shipmates,

Done our bit to represent our Branch on 75th VE Day. The pictures in the window are of Lynn & My Dad. Hope everyone is well. Thanks to Christine and Simon for doing their 'Welfare' telephone calls.

Let's hope it won't be too long before we meet again....cue for a song!

RNA Spennymoor and Ferryhill and Newton Aycliffe Branches

RNA Spennymoor and Ferryhill and Newton Aycliffe Branches were in action during the 75th VE Day Celebrations holding Isolation Street Parties preceded by a wreath laying.



Shipmates Chris Lewarne, Spennymoor and Ferryhill Chairman and his good lady wife Shipmate Liz Lewarne, in action partying and a mystery missing member of Newton Aycliffe presumably at the bar in the kitchen in search of a tot!

(BZ to everyone and particularly Chris who will be missed at this year's non-Conference this year)

RNA Aylesbury Branch

Shipmate Ken Satterthwaite parading the Aylesbury No.1 Branch Standard for a 'Virtual Parade' on VE75 Day. There were some 50 spectators and a Tot of Rum was supplied by S/M Ken.

(BZ Shipmate Ken what an inspiration to Shipmates you are on how to represent the RNA)



RNA Bude Branch

Hon Sec Bude, Shipmate Bob the Elder Gelder has reported on how exciting life has been during coronavirus in deepest darkest Kernow, which sounds like an episode of BBC Spring Watch!

Despite the constant chattering of sparrows, wittering of "our" family robin, the FAA swallows hoovering up the flies/midges/insects, neighbour's non-stop boasting of their chickens when they've managed to download an egg, constant bleating of two orphaned lambs, three pygmy goats trying to out-do each other on the picnic table, incessant tunes from the blackbirds every

morning and evening, second family of blue tits feeding like crazy depriving the local oaks of a multitude of caterpillars, you may not believe this!

I think I heard the distant sound of a Bus passing through Pyworthy today. Can't be sure, because of the failing memory cell. Any further exciting news I'll pass on asap.

RNA Bromley Branch

Bromley Branch and Area 2 Hon Sec, Fran Halifax as you've never seen her before in the privacy of her garden taking part in her own best dressed Shipmate competition during the VE75 lockdown celebrations.

She then put on her 'civvies for the next photo.....



(Editors Note - I am now in big trouble!)

Area 4, RNA Dorchester, Portland and Weymouth Branches

Area 4, and Dorchester, Portland and Weymouth branches are Supporting Wyke Regis Veterans Hub

The Veterans Hub in Wyke Regis started as a project to support veterans in the Weymouth and Portland area. It has since developed to provide support veterans and their families across Dorset.



In 2019 the Dorchester branch chose The Veterans Hub as its charity of the year. Following its annual flag day in June 2019, the branch organised a Shep Wooley concert and in January 2020 the branch chairman, Shipmate Dennis Matthews, presented Lisa Rushby from the Veterans Hub with a cheque for £1,000. The presentation is shown in the photograph that also includes the branch secretary, Shipmate Roy Dean.

The Weymouth Branch provides support with regular donations and during Coronavirus continues to support with "ad hoc" donations

helping to maintain provision for meals during lockdown.

At Area 4's January meeting, Portland branch proposed that The Veterans Hub be a recipient of the Area 4 'Reunion 2020' charitable fund. The amount has yet to be confirmed.

RNA St Neots Branch

The St Neots Branch celebrated VE75 in a variety of ways report Shipmate Ian Cameron.

Two minutes' silence at the St Neots war memorial were S/Ms Keith Ridley and Tony Webley. Also in Picture are the local Vicar & John Hammond (RAFA standard bearer), all appropriately distanced!

S/M Keith Ridley also laid a wreath commemorating both the Military and Civilian dead. The newly elected mayor of St Neots was also present.



The photos below show (L to R) S/M Keith and Maureen Ridley's House sending a strong message to the Neighbourhood. S/M Peter Plant Celebrating and raising a glass to those who paid the supreme sacrifice in Europe and North Africa. S/M John Gibbs holding the two minutes silence outside his house



RNA Wrexham Branch

Wrexham Branch held a virtual VE75 Day Parade at the Gwersyllt Memorial, Wrexham 8th May 2020.

Standard Bearers Shipmate Jeff Hughes (Wrexham Branch RNA) and Shipmate Kevin Hackett (Type 42 Association) were on Divisions to pay their respects on behalf of Shipmates at home who were in lockdown.



CROSSED THE BAR – Celebrating a life well lived

RNA Shipmates

[Derek Parkin](#)
[John McDermott](#)
[Tom Dickinson](#)
[Charles H. Thompson](#)
[Fred Croxon](#)

RN Shipmates

[Sammy Johns](#)
[Jim Speed](#)

Derek Parkin– City of Sheffield Branch

It is with the deepest regret that I have to inform you that our President S/M Derek Parkin has Crossed the Bar on Saturday 14th March 2020.

Derek was just 18 when he joined the Royal Navy in October 1950 serving on various shore bases and ships and he left in October 1957 where he had reached the rank of LME.

He joined the Sheffield branch of the RNA in May 1982 and during that time he has served his branch as; Social Secretary, Welfare Officer, Sea Cadet Liaison Officer, Standard Bearer, Chairman and finally as President. For all his hard work and dedication for our branch, Derek was awarded a Life Membership in 2016. Derek was also a member of the Royal British Legion for whom he did exceptionally good work for the Poppy Appeal delivering and collecting poppies and collection tins in the Sheffield area. He was also a member of the Sheffield Joint Council and, for a period of time Vice Chairman, and also a member of Sheffield 218 Branch of the Fellowship of the Services.

Nothing was too much trouble for Derek, and he was always willing to help people whenever and wherever he could. He leaves a wife Jackie, son Craig, daughter Tracey, son-in-law Paul, daughter-in-law Beverley, grandsons Joseph (Joe) and Arun and granddaughter Ruby.

We've lost a true friend in Shipmate Derek.

REST IN PEACE, GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, WE WILL REMEMBER YOU

John McDermott – Ashford Branch



It is with sadness we learn of the death of Shipmate John McDermott who crossed the bar on Thursday 30 April 2020.

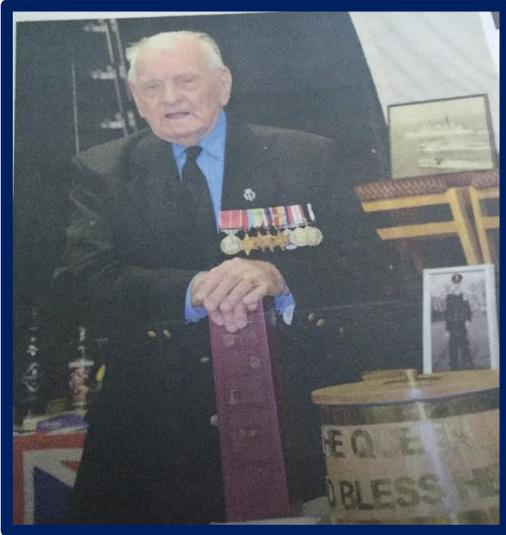
John was a former National Council member and active member of RNA Ashford, and former member of RNA Sittingbourne.

Shipmate John was a member of the original RNA Ashford branch and was instrumental in the recommissioning of new RNA Ashford in May 2003, and the laying up of the old branch standard, and dedication of the new.

He will be much missed. May he rest in Peace.

Thomas Alfred Dickinson - Stocksbridge and Deepcar Branch

It is with considerable sadness that Stocksbridge and Deepcar branch must report that our President Shipmate Thomas Alfred Dickinson crossed the bar on 18th May at the age of 102.



Shipmate Tom joined the Royal Navy as a cook in 1936, during his time in the navy he saw service on a number of ships, Sheffield (1937-39), Dunoon, Phoebe, Calliope, Anson, Dundonald, Ceres, Kestrel and Hornbill to name a few.

Shipmate Tom was a survivor of the sinking of the Dunoon (by a mine) in 1940. Due to the injuries he sustained he could no longer work in the galley and changed branches to writer, it was while in this capacity that he was asked to join the Regulating Branch and in 1941 he became an Admiralty appointed Regulating Petty Officer. In 1944 Shipmate Tom was rated to Master at Arms and served with distinction and subsequently promoted to Lieutenant in 1965.

In 2019 Tom was included in the Regulating Branch and Royal Naval Police Museum in Portsmouth as the longest living ex Master at Arms. On leaving the service Shipmate Tom joined the Naval Careers service and was responsible for sitting a great number of Sheffield boys on the road to a Naval career.

Shipmate Tom was a committed member of the branch and was always available for advice and counselling when needed. His attendances at meetings was limited in the last few years due to his ill health. Shipmate Tom will be sadly missed by all shipmates at Stocksbridge and Deepcar

Our sincere condolences are with his family and friends at this distressing time. Shipmate Tom you were an Officer and a Gentleman.

Stand Easy Shipmate, Your Watch is Done. R.I.P

Charles H Thompson BEM – Portland Branch

A feeling of sadness and shock enveloped RNA Area 4 when news from the Area Secretary informed that RNA Life Member and Area Life Vice President, Shipmate Charles H. Thompson BEM MSM 'Crossed the Bar' on Tuesday May 5th 2020, aged 87.

Charles 'H' will be remembered for his forthright manner, his good humour and dedication to the RNA both with Portland Branch and Number 4 Area. A Shipmate who created a vibrant and sincere impact ever present throughout the enjoyable moments in his presence.

Called up for National Service in 1949, joining the Royal Navy as a Photographer training at RNAS Ford (HMS Peregrine) in Sussex. One of only seven National Service RN to serve as a photographer. Joining the Carrier HMS Theseus in 1951 and operations in Korea, followed by a period in the Mediterranean on the Staff of Admiral, The Earl Mountbatten of Burma.

Drafted to RNAS Culdrose (HMS Seahawk) in 1954 then to Singapore with 848 Squadron for the Malayan Emergency, later joining Staff of C in C Far East. During this period Charles achieved 1st Class Referee Certificate with Joint Services and Officiated at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. During the period 1959 to 1966 he instructed at the RN School of Photography HMS Fulmar (RNAS Lossiemouth), joined Staff of Flag Officer Naval Command at Yeovilton, returned to Lossiemouth as Chief Phot Instructor for two years, a period in Aden during the Emergency as Joint Services Public Relations Chief Photographer working closely with C in C Middle East, Admiral Sir Michael Le Fanu, then a return to HMS Osprey on the Staff of FOST.



H joined the Weymouth Branch of the RNA 1966 and was subsequently elected Branch Delegate for Area 4 Meetings and National Conference. His responsibility as Manager and Community Officer of Portland Married Quarters created the opportunity to set up the local RN Community Centre incorporating the Kimberlin Club. HRH Prince Charles was stationed at Yeovilton 1974 and took part in a Games Night organised between the Wardroom and CPO's Mess. His Royal Highness was drawn against Shipmate Charles in the Darts Match, due to confusion between the names of the two players, Prince Charles honourably renamed our illustrious Shipmate as 'Charles H'. A name which he cherished and adopted as his own personal identity. Awarded British Empire Medal and subsequently the coveted Meritorious Service Medal 1980, he transferred to RNA Portland Branch in 1982.

Finally, he 'stepped off' the Royal Navy Gangway in 1992 on his 65th birthday, having served an unprecedented 48 years and 7 months; at the time the longest ever serving CPO Airman. To further enhance his dedication and commitment Charles reached another milestone in 2016 – 50 years as a proud member of the RNA. Manager Kimberlin Club 1974 -1997, Chairman RNA Area 4 Reunion 1975 -1996, Chairman Area 4, 1979 – 1996 Area Life Vice President 1996. RNA National Ceremonial Officer 1995-1996.

RNA 4 President, Shipmate David White MBE conveyed the following message to Area 4 Shipmates, "What better tribute can we pay Charles than, as an Area, to continue along the lines that he led us while he was Chairman, and follow the guidance he gave us as an Area Life President."

On Behalf of RNA Portland.
NCM 4

Fred Croxon – Dublin Branch

Dublin Branch are sad to report that Captain Fred Croxon has crossed the bar.

Fred joined the RN during the time of National Service and then joined the Merchant Navy employed in the Deck Department and worked his way up to Captain working on Shell Tankers for a long number of years. He was Secretary of Dublin Branch for a number of years and was made a life member.

Much missed, he is survived by his wife Therese, three daughters, sons in law and Grand Children. RIP Shipmate.

Sammy Johns – Royal Navy

Central Office received an Obituary from Cardiff Branch Hon Sec, Ransford Rogers concerning from Shipmate Sammy Johns who had crossed the bar after a Covid-19 infection.

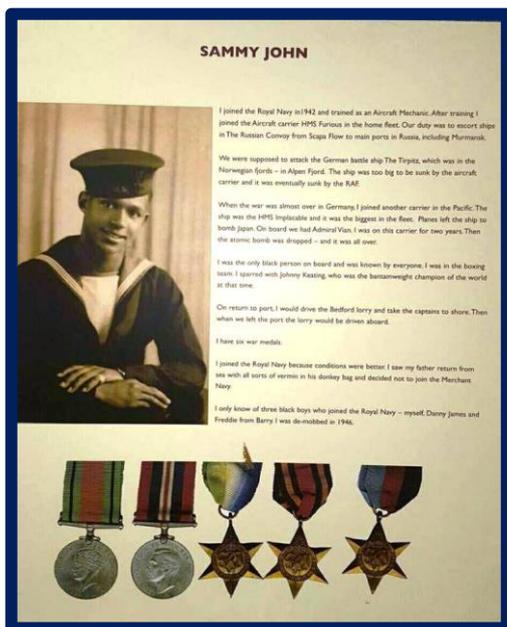
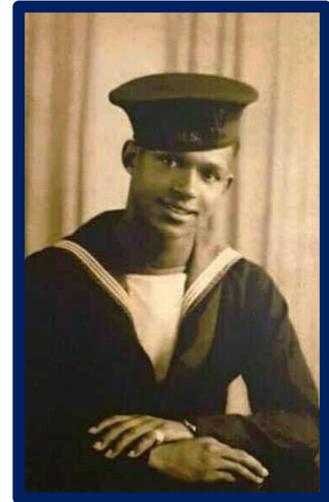
Last Friday I received a phone call from a Mr Alan Robertson requesting some form of Naval attendance at a funeral of a friend of his, ex-matelot Sammy John, who died after a Covid-19 infection.

Although sad and grievous for friends and family, there appeared to be nothing unusual about this tragedy. However, Mr Robertson then emailed me a CV written by Sammy of his life in the RN and in particular the Fleet Air Arm during WWII and I believe his story is worthy of note. Please See Below.

To add to the CV details, on leaving the Andrew, Sammy became a welder at a Cardiff Engineering Company. But he also got together with a bunch of mixed ethnicity civvies and ex-Servicemen and formed the KAYAKS rugby club in the Cardiff Docks (Bute Street) area. - Which is how Alan Robertson and Sammy met.

I believe this is an extraordinary story in many ways. Not just because he was an Air Mechanic of Black ethnicity but because he served in HMS Furious as part of one of the most dangerous convoys of WWII - to Murmansk. Then on return the UK on VE day he had a pierhead jump to join the "Forgotten" Pacific Fleet.

It is a great pity because of today's restrictions, Sammy did not have the send-off he deserved. However, along with Graham Warner of Area 7 we were able to muster two standards either side of the entry into the church and graveyard. Thank you Sammy John - fellow WAFU- RIP



The Words on Sammy's CV.....

I joined the Royal Navy in 1942 and trained as an Air Mechanic. After training I joined the Aircraft Carriers HMS Furious in the Home Fleet. Our duty was to escort ships in the Russian Convoy from Scapa Flow to main ports in Russia, including Murmansk.

We were supposed to attack the German Battle Ship 'Trippitz' which was in the Norwegian Fjords – in Alpen Fjord. The ship was too big to be sunk by the Aircraft Carrier and it was eventually sunk by the RAF.

When the war was almost over with Germany, I joined another Carrier in the Pacific. The ship was HMS Implacable and it was the biggest in the fleet. Planes left the ship to bomb Japan. On board we had Admiral Vian. I was on this Carrier for two years. Then the Atomic bomb was dropped – and it was all over.

I was the only black person onboard and was known by everyone. I was in the Boxing team. I sparred with Johnny Keating, who was the Bantamweight Champion of the world at that time. On return to port, I would drive the Bedford lorry and take the captains to shore. Then when we left the port the lorry would be driven back aboard. I have six war medals.

I joined the Royal Navy because conditions were better. I saw my Father return from sea with all sorts of vermin in his donkey bag and decided not to join the Merchant Navy. I only know of three black boys who joined the Royal Navy – myself, Danny James and Freddie from Barry. I was de-mobbed in 1946.

James Speed - Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy

Cdr James Speed RNA (Rtd), a war veteran who served in two Navies, has died at the age of 95 in Australia.

Born in 1924, James Henry (Jim) Speed joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman in 1942 and was selected for training as a Combined Operations commando in the period leading up to D-Day. At the age of 19, he found himself on Sword Beach in the van of the D-Day Landings on 6 June 1944, leading a team using signs to mark safe passage around submerged obstacles for assault craft.

These safe corridors, cleared by divers, were indicated by signs large enough to be seen by the landing craft coxswains – but a sign large enough to be seen from the sea was also large enough to be seen by the German defenders, putting the beach parties in great danger. Despite losing colleagues around him, Jim Speed helped guide the first British troops ashore and off the beach – a task he performed not only for the rest of the day at the heart of the battle to gain a foothold in France, but also for a further month, during which time German artillery still posed a threat. For his courage under fire on Sword Beach he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC).

Jim was demobilised from the Royal Navy in 1946, rejoining as an Able Seaman in 1954 – but a junior sailor with a DSC, at that time an officer's decoration, was considered anomalous, so he was swiftly commissioned. Sub Lt Speed was sent on an exchange posting to HMAS Cootamundra in 1957, where he got married, so the officer sought a transfer to the Royal Australian Navy. However, this was not permitted by the RN for a further three years after his return to the UK in 1960.

Accordingly, he left the RN in 1963 and joined the RAN, serving in a number of postings including HMS Tarangau on Manus Island and in HMAS Melbourne (II). In 1982, on promotion to Acting Commander, his last assignment was as Commanding Officer of HMAS Lonsdale, the Navy's depot in Melbourne. He left the RAN in 1984 and remained an active member of the Naval Officers Club, and was a guest speaker on his time on Sword Beach.

The Royal Australian Navy has extended condolences to Cdr Speed's widow Natalie and his family. A memorial service for Cdr Speed will be held in Melbourne at a time and place to be announced.

RNA National President Vice Admiral John McAnally added: "I had the honour of serving as N2 on exchange in HMAS Melbourne in 1971 when (unless my memory is failing) Jim was the much-respected and well-liked Bosun. "He was a good shipmate, and what a wonderful career he had. "I offer my own personal condolences as well as those of the Royal Naval Association."

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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	
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	<p>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.</p> <p>Friday venture into Pompey (Under own Steam) Saturday 1030 AGM & 1830 Reunion Dinner (Black Tot day being Mourned by the Issue of Real Pussers 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>	Royal Beach Hotel Southsea
31 Oct 2020	BRNC Entry September 1980 40 th Anniversary reunion dinner, BRNC Dartmouth, Saturday 31 October 2020. Details available from Cdr N J 'Nobby' Hall neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk	BRNC Dartmouth

Swinging the Lamp – June 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
1 st	1998	Lt Katherine Babbington, first woman to win the Queen's Sword at Dartmouth, presented with the sword by Her Majesty at Buckingham Palace as Lt Babbington was serving in <i>Sandown</i> in the Gulf when Divisions were held.
2 nd	1854	Parliament passed an Act 'to empower the Commissioners of the Admiralty to construct a tunnel between H.M. Dockyard at Devonport and H.M. Steam Yard at Keyham'.
3 rd	1747	Captains who were not to be employed again were automatically promoted to flag rank and became 'Superannuated Rear-Admirals'. Nicknamed the Yellow Squadron.
4 th	2007	Universal right to elect trial by court martial. Any officer or rating whose offence was capable of being tried summarily could henceforth elect for court martial instead. RN Regulating Branch re-mustered as RN Police. Regulating ranks and rates unchanged. New slides and boards for officers and ratings with RN Police added to standard designs first shipped on 17 December 2008.
5 th	1939	Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham arrived at Alexandria in cruiser <i>Penelope</i> and took over next day from Admiral Sir Dudley Pound as C-in-C Mediterranean.
6 th	1944	D-Day Ships taking part in the Operation - of which 78 per cent were British (including Canadian), 17 per cent were American, and 5 per cent were French, Norwegian, Dutch, Polish and Greek. Over 10,000 Royal Marines took part, including 5 RM CDOs, an Armoured Support Group, an RM Engineering CDO, Landing Craft Obstruction Units, signallers, drivers etc. Marines manned two-thirds of the assault landing craft. Warships 1,212 Landing Ships and Craft 4,026 Ancillaries 731 Merchant Vessels 864 Total 6,833
7 th	1973	Second Cod War. First collision between frigate <i>Scylla</i> and the Icelandic Coastguard vessel <i>Aegir</i> . Eleven further collisions were to follow.
8 th	1915	King George V opened Rosyth Dockyard.

9 th	2005	The bow section of <i>Daring</i> , the first Type 45 destroyer, built by Vosper Thornycroft in Portsmouth Dockyard, left Portsmouth on a barge for the Clyde where it was united with the ship's main hull at BAE Systems yard at Scotstoun.
10 th	1960	'A case has occurred in which items of officers' clothing have been damaged whilst stored in their cabin wardrobes. The damage was attributed to intermittent rubbing of the clothes against fittings which projected inside the wardrobes, resulting in excessive wear of clothes in direct contact with such items . . . Commanding Officers of HM Ships are to arrange for all officers' wardrobes to be examined . . .' – AFO 1549/60.
11 th	1847	Sir John Franklin, naval officer and Arctic explorer, died on his ill-fated expedition in <i>Erebus</i> and <i>Terror</i> to find the North–West Passage. While his fate was still uncertain, he was promoted to rear-admiral of the blue 26 October 1852. When it was ascertained that he had died earlier, the Admiralty annulled the promotion and removed his name.
12 th	1652	Capt Sir George Ayscue (<i>Rainbow</i>) with a squadron of four men-of-war and seven hired merchantmen, captured six ships of the Dutch outward-bound Portuguese trade off Lizard Head.
13 th	1514	Henry VIII launched <i>Henry Grace à Dieu</i> at Woolwich and paid the Chaplain who blessed her 6s 8d.
14 th	1853	Chief Petty Officers. Admiralty Circular No. 121: 'My Lords consider that it would improve the discipline of her Majesty's ships, and be in other respects advantageous to the Service, to establish a class of Chief Petty Officers, and they therefore direct that the following be established accordingly: Chief Petty Officers – Masters-at-Arms, Chief Gunner's Mate, Chief Boatswain's Mate, Admiral's Coxswain, Chief Captain of Forecastle, Chief Quarter-Master, Chief Carpenter's Mate, Seamen's Schoolmaster, Ship's Steward, Ship's Cook. As an inducement to render themselves proficient in all branches of their duty . . . My Lords are pleased to direct that a higher class of able seamen be established under the denomination "leading seamen" . . . to be exempted from corporal punishment, except by sentence of a court martial, or for mutiny.'
15 th	1944	<i>Sickle</i> sunk by mine in Aegean. The forty-fifth and last submarine lost in the Mediterranean.
16 th	1987	<i>Warrior</i> (1860) arrived at Portsmouth. Ex-Hulk C77, removed from the <i>Navy List</i> as <i>Vernon III</i> in 1904, ex- <i>Warrior</i> , second of the name.
17 th	1918	<i>Lychnis</i> , the only First World War Q-ship to serve in Second World War, sank U-64 off southern Sardinia (38.07N, 10.27E).
18 th	1940	RNAS Yeovilton (HMS <i>Heron</i>) commissioned. 'The new fighter training station . . . was nothing but three runways in an ocean of mud.' – Capt Eric Brown, <i>Wings on my Sleeve</i> , p.12.
19 th	2003	<i>Albion</i> , Capt Peter Hudson RN, commissioned at Devonport in the presence of her sponsor, HRH The Princess Royal and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach, Captain of the previous <i>Albion</i> .
20 th	1982	<i>Illustrious</i> commissioned. The first RN warship to be commissioned at sea.
21 st	1997	Cdr Charles Eckersley-Maslin, naval aviator, died aged 96 in Tasmania. In 1918, lying about his age, he enlisted in the Argyll and

		Sutherland Highlanders and was wounded in France. Found to be still only 16, he was returned to Bedford School 'where he was treated with some awe'. Served five years in RAF; resigned his reserve commission in February 1939 and joined the Royal Navy as a lieutenant-commander. Wartime service in carriers in Far East and Mediterranean and commanded HMS <i>Simbang</i> , the RNAS in Singapore, during Korean War. Father of Rear-Admiral David Eckersley-Maslin.
22 nd	1841	<i>Trafalgar</i> , first rate, launched at Woolwich in the presence of HM Queen Victoria and HRH Prince Albert by Nelson's niece, Lady Bridport, using a bottle of wine which had been in <i>Victory</i> at Trafalgar. The figurehead is in the RN Museum, Portsmouth.
23 rd	1915	First successful action of a RN decoy ship in anti-submarine operations. Disguised trawler <i>Taranaki</i> , Lt H.D. Edwards, towing submerged submarine C 24, Lt F.H. Taylor, intercepted by U-40, Kapitänleutnant Gerhardt Furbringer, off Aberdeen. U-boat put a shell across her bows and the trawler's crew simulated panic. Telephone link to C 24 failed and she could not slip her end of the tow. <i>Taranaki</i> therefore cast off her end and with 100 fathoms of 3.5-in wire hawser, 100 fathoms of coir hawser and 200 fathoms of telephone cable trailing from her bows C 24 torpedoed U-40 (57.00N, 01.50W). C 24 surfaced but had twenty turns of the telephone cable wrapped around her propeller shaft.
24 th	1340	Battle of Sluys, Edward III (<i>Thomas</i>) captured or destroyed the whole of the French fleet of about 200 vessels in the Zwyn, thus pre-empting a French descent on England, and recaptured the <i>Christopher</i> . His letter of 28 June to the Black Prince may count as the first naval dispatch.
25 th	1908	<i>Indomitable</i> commissioned. First battlecruiser and first of the name.
26 th	1857	Queen Victoria held the first VC investiture in Hyde Park, decorating sixty-two of the eighty-five men gazetted. Thirteen of the twenty-seven RN and RM recipients had been attached to Naval Brigades.
27 th	1734	First official recognition of the title Commodore as a temporary rank made by King George II. 'Our Will and Pleasure therefore is . . . That Commodores with Broad Pendants have the same Respects as Brigadiers General, which is, to have one Ruffle.'
28 th	2005	2005 HM The Queen reviewed an international fleet at Spithead from the Antarctic patrol ship <i>Endurance</i> led by the THV <i>Patricia</i> . HM Ships present: <i>Albion, Archer, Bangor, Blazer, Bulwark, Cattistock, Cardiff, Chatham, Cumberland, Endurance, Enterprise, Example, Exeter, Explorer, Gloucester, Gleaner, Grafton, Grimsby, Invincible, Illustrious, Iron Duke, Lancaster, Ledbury, Marlborough, Middleton, Montrose, Nottingham, Ocean, Pembroke, Puncher, Raider, Ramsey, Ranger, Roebuck, Scott, Shoreham, Sovereign, Southampton, St Albans, Tracker, Trafalgar, Trumpeter, Turbulent, Tyne, Walney, Westminster.</i> RFAs <i>Argus, Fort George, Fort Victoria, Hurst Point, Orangeleaf, Sir Bedivere, Sir Galahad, Sir Tristram, Wave Ruler, HMAS Anzac, HMCS Montreal.</i>

29 th	1950	<p>The Communist North Korean Army attacked the South Korea across the 38th parallel. Within a week the Royal Navy was operating in Korean waters, sinking coastal shipping and attacking communications ashore. The Chinese reinforced the North Koreans and advanced into North Korea during the winter, driving the United Nations forces back. Allied sea power was used to the full, both in launching seaborne air attacks against North Korean forces, and in evacuating and landing troops as required. Russian-built MiG jet fighters were deployed against the Fleet Air Arm in Korea. Lt P. Carmichael shot down the first Russian MiG to be destroyed by the Royal Navy and, remarkably, by a piston engined aircraft.</p>
30 th	1997	<p>Hong Kong returned to China at midnight. Prince of Wales and former Governor, Mr Chris Patten, embarked in HM Yacht <i>Britannia</i> at 0022 1 July, completing British withdrawal. Ship sailed at 0045 and, with Royal Marine band playing 'Rule Britannia' and 'Jerusalem', amplified by ship's broadcast, she led <i>Chatham</i>, <i>Peacock</i>, <i>Starling</i>, <i>Plover</i> and RFA <i>Sir Percivale</i> out of harbour. Group rendezvoused with seventeen ships of Ocean Wave Task Group commanded by Rear-Admiral Alan West, which had been standing by over the horizon. All ships steamed past <i>Britannia</i> on 1 July.</p>