



Unity - Loyalty
Patriotism & Comradeship

Welcome to the latest edition of Up Spirits; the bi-monthly newsletter of the Royal Naval Association – Norwich Branch.

We have a couple of articles covering Christmas in the Royal Navy and Shipmate Jim Davis and HMS Dunedin.

Articles from The Monthly Circular and Up Spirits are also available on the Branch Website along with postings on Naval History and Traditions.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best of the season, and a wonderful 2017.

Up Spirits!

NORWICH BRANCH NEWS

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Inside This Issue

From The Quarterdeck – The Presidents Piece	1
Secretary's Report	2
In Memoriam	2
Welfare Report	2
From The Monthly Circular	3
Shipmate Submissions	4
Membership Fees	5
Calendar of Events – 2016 - 2017	6
Future Editions of Up Spirits	6

From The Quarterdeck – The Presidents Piece

Shipmate Mike Mizen

It is with sadness that I have to report that Eileen Wilkinson passed away earlier this month. Eileen attended, with Mike, many of our events, and she was often seen sitting with her friends while Mike got on with the business of helping to run the Branch through his role as Treasurer. In more recent times she spent her time in a nursing home in Dereham yet despite the obvious inconvenience, Mike continued to give the Branch every support. It behooves all of us to make every effort to attend her funeral in January, not just to show our respect to Eileen but also to show our support to Mike, a member whose commitment to the Branch has not wavered during difficult times.

I am sure that all of you are by now aware of the condition of our past President Jim Bowles and his wife Berice. It is a great shame that both of them are now in a home and, as far as I can tell, not able to understand too much of what is happening around them. We must not forget them, especially when you remember how much they did for this Branch over many years. My thanks to Bob Knights for keeping us informed.

I would like to offer my congratulations and thanks to all those who attended the Armistice Day and Remembrance Day parades in the City, the RNA was by far the largest group in attendance and we got our fair share of publicity. Well done, especially to our Standard Bearer John Kett who was on parade at both events.

As far as I am concerned, this past year has been a very successful one and my job has been made easier by the commitment and hard work of a large number of Branch members; thank you very much for all you have done. We must

however keep the momentum going, next year I am sure will be as busy as this year and providing we all pull together as we have done we can look forward to a successful 2017.

Our final meeting of 2016 is our annual Christmas party and I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend to enjoy the festivities.

My best wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year.

Secretary's Report

Shipmate Wendy Howard

Ivan Moscovich

Ivan, a Yugoslavian, was captured by the Germans along with his mother and grandparents and sent to Belsen. His grandparents, as was the norm with old folk, were immediately sent to the gas chamber. His mother survived. Ivan, towards the end of the war, was near the end of his life and decided to lie down on a huge pile of dead bodies and fade away but he then realised that the British were coming. He decided he would run and throw himself into the arms of the first British soldier who came into the camp. When the time came, he could not run but he did manage to fall into the arms of a British captain who ensured he was hospitalised. The same captain visited him in hospital where Ivan was getting ready to die. The captain took out his pistol, pointed it at a German doctor and said 'If he dies. You die!' Ivan survived! Doesn't it make you proud to be British.

HMS Royal Oak

Every year in October, the Royal Navy divers attach a White Ensign to the wreck of HMS Royal Oak, paying tribute to the 833 seamen who lost their lives in the icy waters of Scapa Flow. The original crew numbered 1,234.

In October 1939 HMS Royal Oak, originally built for action in WW1, came under attack from a German U-boat in Scapa Flow, the huge natural harbour in Orkney which served as the Navy's home through two world wars. As Scapa Flow was considered by the Royal Navy to be a perfectly safe harbour, the glass in the portholes had been removed and replaced with ventilators. This exacerbated the sinking of the ship as sea water rushed in when the ship listed.

The Royal Navy Clearance Divers, who place the flag, also work as maritime bomb disposal experts. Earlier this year they had to deal with a WW2 torpedo near the wreck, most likely to have been fired at HMS Royal Oak.

HMS Royal Oak's first combat was during the Battle of Jutland so she was a battle-hardened ship meeting an untimely death.

Christmas

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year and thank you, once again, for supporting your committee so well during 2016.

Welfare Report

Shipmate Reg McGuire

Rays Bench

Am pleased to say we are now cooking with gas. Working with Rays sons the Council have now agreed for us to remove the bench for refurbishment. Derek, Rays eldest son has organised a van and the bench will be stored in his garage to dry out. Would suggest leaving it for a month. Might try to low pressure power wash on it first to clear away the mildew etc.

The bench will be removed at 0900 on the 14th December. NCC will be present and cut off the bolts securing the bench to the deck

News Release

Starting in March/April next year. A Project called Veterans Gateway will be put in operation. £2 million set up costs followed by £10 a year to run the project, has been put aside by the MOD. The Covenant Fund will work together with the RBL, SSAFA and several other leading Armed Forces Charities. The Lead will be held by the RBL with a 24/7 specific help line number, Hope it's not the Cardiff RBL Number. The aim is to provide a single point of contact for support. As they say, watch this space.

Merry Christmas to you all, where has the year gone !!

In Memoriam

Shipmate Eileen Wilkinson

Associate Member

Crossed the Bar: 26 June 2016

Aged: 89

Wife of Mike Wilkinson; Branch Treasurer

'May she have found a Safe Anchorage'

From The Monthly Circular

Londonderry Battle of the Atlantic Commemorations 6/7th May 2017

The Battle of The Atlantic Commemorations will be held over the weekend 6th and 7th May 2017 in Londonderry. The Programme is as follows:-

- Saturday 6th May - 1900 for 1930 Dinner in the City Hotel.
 Sunday 7th May - 1015. Parade musters at The RBL Club Waterside.
 - 1030. Parade marches off.
 - 1040. Parade arrives at All Saints Church.
 - 1100. Church Service Commences
 - 1210. Parade marches past en route to The RBL Club where light refreshments will be served.

Should any Shipmate wish to attend the Dinner the cost will be £30.00 per head the cut-off date for same will be 14 April 2017.

Please forward a cheque to cover the cost of relevant number of shipmates attending. The Dress for all Functions will be RNA Rig.

Should any changes to the above programme arise Branches will be informed soonest. For further details please contact Frank Brown Hon Sec Londonderry RNA. frankjf22brown@gmail.com

Type 42 Association Reunion 003

The Type 42 Association Reunion 003 will be held at HMS Excellent on 22 Jul 2017. Open to all who have served on a Type 42 Destroyer, Discounted tickets for all fully paid up association members, new members can sign up to the association via the website.

BGM Start 1230 hrs Finish 1345 hrs

Reunion Start 1400 hrs, Finish 2100 hrs

HMS Excellent, Sports Field

Tickets: Members £10 + 1 Guest £10 & Non-Members £30

For Info email: chairman@type42association.co.uk For tickets email: deanpullom@yahoo.co.uk Web site: www.type42association.co.uk click on forum or visit our Facebook page Type 42 Association

'JacksTaxi' Christmas Presents Prints



My name is Nick Barwis, an ex-Royal Navy Cook and I create digital art at <http://www.jackstaxi.net/>. I served from 1977 until disabled out in 1982. I started the website three years ago, when it became apparent that I might be on disability benefit for the rest of my years! Jacks Taxi is a website which has grown over the last 3 years and now has well over 1,500 of Pusser's finest ships from WW1 to the present day on site as limited edition art prints. It also stocks over 400 framed ship and FAA squadron crests.

I am hoping that you will be kind enough to pass my details onto your members as

my work has gone down extremely well with Jack so far.

I have attached a couple of samples of my work and if you would like to see the entire collection please go to the website.



Shipmate Submissions

Breakfast Club and Branch Run Ashore

Shipmate Gus Honeywood

The next Branch Run Ashore is organised for **Friday 6 January 2017** at The Nelson on Prince of Wales Road, Norwich NR1 1DX.

We will be meeting at 2000 and a link for the event can be found at [Link](#) for those that use Facebook.

Our next breakfast club get together is organised for 1000 on **Sunday 5 February 2017** at The Townhouse, 18-22 Yarmouth Road, Norwich NR7 0EF, UK

Medal Sold

Shipmate Ken Baish

Recently sold at a medal auction (24th November, 2015) for £60000.00 a Naval General Service Medal awarded to Yeoman of the Powder Room Richard Levertime whose medal is just one of five issued with six clasps and represents an outstanding naval career, including the great victories of the Glorious First of June, Camperdown, Copenhagen and Trafalgar beside the lesser known actions of the frigate Anson

HMS Dunedin

Shipmate Keith Smith

Jim Davis one of our members was serving on HMS Dunedin (D Class Light Cruiser) when she was torpedoed by U124 on the 24th November 1941.

About 250 men managed to leave the ship but when the survivors were picked up after 4 days in the shark infested waters there were only 4 Officers and 63 men alive.

Jim, now 97 years old and one of only two survivors left, had up to this year always attended the annual HMS Dunedin Society commemoration service at Portsmouth.

This year it was the 75th anniversary of the sinking and was to be the last Service. Jim now in a residential home and not in the best of health was unable to make the journey



So, as to not leaving Jim disappointed; I in conjunction with his daughter arranged a small service at the home where we had a moving service conducted by S/M Clifford Self our branch padre.

Also in attendance was S/M Pat Whiley who piped the still and carry on for the minute's silence, our Standard Bearer S/M John Kett, S/Ms Reg McGuire, Mike Wilkinson and S/M Janet Self and several other friends of S/M Jim.

Jim was very appreciative of the efforts of the branch and gave his thanks to all that attended.

It is said that what goes around comes around and so it seems as later in the war Jim was serving on HMS Stonecrop which whilst alongside HMS Black Swan sank U124 West of Oporto, Portugal on 2nd April 1943. She sank with all hands.

WW2 Warship wrecks vanish from Seabed

Shipmate Ken Baish

Recently a diving expedition to survey wrecks of Allied warships ahead of next year's Battle of the Java Seas 75h Anniversary commemoration events has discovered that they have been plundered for profit. In some cases, all the scavengers have left behind are pitiful remnants and an impression in the sea bed of where the fighting vessels lay at rest with the remains of many of their men. The Imperial Japanese Navy sank the Allied warships and the diving team were mapping and videoing what remained. a Unites States submarine USS PERCH was scuttled by its crew rather than surrender and become Japanese POW's. This submarine had disappeared completely despite being a grave site.

All the wrecks are victims of illegal scrapping being targeted for their valuable metal content such as copper, brass, phosphorous bronze and aluminium.

A common practice is for scavenging teams to disguise themselves as fishermen. They set off explosives within the vessels breaking up the structure. A grab is then used to sweep up the pieces.

Warships that have been affected and in some cases totally lost include the British heavy cruiser HMS EXETER also veteran of the River Plate (note KB. I spent a short time on HMS CRISPIN when serving with the 3rd Training Squadron in Londonderry, NI - the Captain was Lt. Cdr Peter Lachlan wo served on HMS EXETER as a Midshipman at the Battle of the River Plate). HMS ENCOUNTER a Destroyer sunk with HMS EXETER had both almost entirely disappeared. HMS

ELECTRA had been attacked in a similar way with only half of the ship now remaining. None of the British warships are official war graves with the 386 sailors and marines commemorated on Naval memorials in the UK. Survivors were "rescued" by the Japanese and ended up in some of the worse Japanese POW camps. HMS EXETER for example lost about 50 souls but some 650 others are reported to have been taken prisoner. Of these 152 are reported not to have survived their internment.

Australian naval ships suffered similar fates, as did US Navy and Dutch navy ships. Many of the Allied sailors ending up in Japanese POW camps. It must be said that the Allied forces encountered a vastly superior Japanese naval force who were unused to operating together with the resultant disastrous communication problems that they suffered.

Today empty spaces are all that can be found on the seabed. Overall some 2000 died, including 900 Dutch service men, and 250 of Dutch/Indonesian origin. Three Dutch warships are missing from their known resting sites also.

Comment MoD "spokesperson":

Many lives were lost during this battle and we would expect that these sites are respected and left undisturbed without the express wish of the United Kingdom"

Don't hold your breath!!

Illegal salvaging on a commercial level to strip down wartime wrecks is wide spread. Not far away from these sites lie the remains of HMS REPULSE and HMS PRINCE OF WALES. They lie in shallow water off the Malaysian Coast and like many other wreck sites from both world war remains vulnerable to plundering from unscrupulous scrap metal merchants who care little for the remains of sailors and marines who went down with them.

Christmas in the Royal Navy

Shipmate Gus Honeywood

Weeks before Christmas, the first tradition in Royal Navy Ships and Establishments to always take place was the stirring of the Christmas pudding.

At sea, this event would be undertaken by the Captain, Supply Officer and youngest serving matelot. The huge Christmas pudding mix, which features plenty of rum, is stirred and placed into smaller containers for each mess.

Food, of course (not to mention drink) is a huge part of any Christmas and in my experience, Christmas at sea had a very unique and special feel about it. Before the main course though there was always one very special tradition that everybody (with the exception of the Captain maybe) looked forward to.



The youngest serving member of the ships company would be Captain for the day and would undergo a complete role reversal with the C.O. This caused much envy and resulted in some strange decisions and pipes being made, but all taken in the right spirit.

Christmas day would start with 'gimpy gifts' in the mess whereby everybody received a 'present' from their oppo. The gift would normally be an insult and would highlight any faults and inadequacies of the recipient!

On hearing the pipe 'standby for Captain's rounds' the mess would muster and await the youngest sailor in his newly empowered guise. Lagging behind him would be the real skipper, in the role of Bosun's mate, trying his best to blow the bosun's call! After a beer and best wishes they would proceed to conduct rounds in the rest of the messdecks, no doubt a bit bleary eyed by the end.

Next up Christmas dinner and another tradition equally looked forward to was where the officers served, waited upon and washed up after the Junior Rates.

Christmas dinner was always a banquet and would consist of all the trimmings including the usual roast turkey/gammon/beef, plenty of vegetables, pigs in blankets etc. and all washed down by a glass (or 3) of wine, followed by that well stirred Christmas pud!

Membership Fees

The Membership Secretary
requests that
Membership Subscriptions
of £18 for 2017
are paid at the
January Branch Meeting.

Very Many Thanks!

Calendar of Events – 2016 - 2017

2017

January

3rd	Committee Meeting
6th	Branch Run Ashore — The Nelson
10th	Branch Meeting
21st	Burns Night – Army Reserve Centre

February

5th	Breakfast Club — The Townhouse
7th	Committee Meeting
12th	FEPOW Service 75th - Anniversary of the fall of Singapore
14th	Branch Meeting

March

4th	Branch Run Ashore — Venue (TBC)
7th	Committee Meeting
14th	Branch Meeting

April

1st	Breakfast Club — Venue (TBC)
4th	Committee Meeting
11th	Branch Meeting
29th	Service of Remembrance for Baedeker raids on Norwich

May

2nd	Committee Meeting
6th	Branch Run Ashore — Venue (TBC)
9th	Branch Meeting

June

4th	Breakfast Club — Venue (TBC)
6th	D-Day Service in City Centre
6th	Committee Meeting
13th	Branch Meeting
17th	Armed Force Day - The Forum 1000 - 1600

July

1st	Branch Run Ashore — Venue (TBC)
4th	Committee Meeting
11th	Branch Meeting

August

1st	Committee Meeting
5th	Breakfast Club — Venue (TBC)
8th	Branch Meeting

September

2nd	Branch Run Ashore — Venue (TBC)
5th	Committee Meeting
12th	Branch Meeting

October

1st	Breakfast Club — Venue (TBC)
3rd	Committee Meeting
10th	Branch Meeting
21st	Trafalgar Night
22nd	Desert Rat Service - Honingham Church

Future Editions of Up Spirits

Shipmate Gus Honeywood

The next edition of Up Spirits will be published for the February Branch Meeting, and I would request that all submissions for that edition are forwarded to me by 30 January 2017.

If you have any submissions for Up Spirits, then you can email them to me at rna.norwich@gmail.com.

All submissions will be gratefully received.