



Unity - Loyalty
Patriotism & Comradeship

Up Spirits!

NORWICH BRANCH NEWS

Branch Hon. Secretary and Editor

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

This month we have an article from S/M Alf Wiggins on his recent Battlefield Tour as well as an article on the Branch's visit to HMS Queen Elizabeth.

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

Inside This Issue

| | |
|---|---|
| From the Quarterdeck – The President's Piece..... | 1 |
| Secretary's Report | 2 |
| In Memoriam | 2 |
| Welfare Report..... | 3 |
| From the Monthly Circular..... | 3 |
| Shipmate Submissions | 4 |
| New Members..... | 4 |
| Battlefield Tour 2018..... | 5 |
| Visit to HMS Queen Elizabeth | 6 |
| Calendar of Events – 2018 | 7 |
| Future Editions of Up Spirits | 7 |

From the Quarterdeck – The President's Piece

Shipmate Mike Mizen

During the course of this past year I have no doubt that many of you have experienced a variety of emotions, joy, heartbreak, frustration, the list goes on and on. But for those lucky enough to be invited to visit HMS Queen Elizabeth, what were your emotions when you first got up close? Pride, amazement, disbelief, again the list goes on. I did once go on a bigger warship, the USS Coral Sea when in Hong Kong, but the Queen Elizabeth is ours and my overwhelming emotion was one of pride. Not just in the sheer size of the ship, but also the personnel who escorted us around, they seemed to have even more pride in the ship than we did, and they work on it every day; they are used to it! Everything about the ship is mind boggling, the statistics alone leave you open mouthed with amazement. I know that reams of paper have been written by far better people than me about the ship but I'm just an ex-Bootneck who can still be gob smacked occasionally, and I was on this visit. Of all the things we saw and did that day, the one thing that sticks in my mind is of the group stepping further and further back as they tried to get the whole of the ship in the lens; it is surprising how far you have to go before the whole of the ship fits in to one picture!

Arranging this visit was a mammoth task, if you remember it was first muted last year, and I cannot finish this piece without paying tribute to Nev Townsend.

Nev has been the driving force behind this visit and I am sure that he has experienced a few sleepless nights and a certain amount of frustration (there, another emotion) so on behalf of all of you I would like to offer a big Thank You for everything he did, well done!

In my recent reports to the members at our Branch meetings I stressed that public events which we have been invited to are very important to publicise the RNA in general and our Branch in particular. I was therefore very pleased to see the turnout from the members at the recent Costessey Armed Forces Day event at the recreation ground. Once again, the RNA contingent was the largest on parade and it didn't go unnoticed. Whether we recruited any new members or not I do not know but I do know that there was interest from various visitors to what the RNA is all about, and that is the important bit.

In the next few months there are a number of events which we have been invited to take part in and I ask all of you to make a note in your diaries and put aside just a few hours to represent the RNA and in particular our Branch.

Sadly, we have recently lost two of our (retired) members, Bill Clodd and Geoff Little. Both were staunch members in their day, but ill health eventually prevented them from attending meetings and functions. The actions of both stick in my mind; Geoff, for ever organising coach visits and badgering people to take part in his next venture, arguing the toss about matters at Branch meetings and even at one stage standing as a candidate to be our Chairman.

Bill was a much quieter man, softly spoken he never seemed to get too excited about anything. I do know though that during the war his ship was torpedoed off Portland and he lost a very good mate. He asked me if I knew anyone living in the Portland area who could find his mate's grave and lay a cross on it on his behalf. At that time my sister and late mother lived in Weymouth and they found where the grave was, tidied it up, photographed it and sent the pictures to Bill. He was overcome with emotion and thanked my mum by sending her the biggest bouquet of flowers that I have ever seen.

May they both rest in peace.

Secretary's Report

Shipmate Gus Honeywood

The Branch has encountered a couple of busy months since the last edition of Up Spirits, undertaking a number of social events starting with the Army Navy Rugby match at The Woolpack at the beginning of May; which saw 15 Shipmates get together to watch the match. The game started well for the Navy and they held their own until a red card saw the team reduced to 14. Whilst the team held out for about 60 minutes, tiredness then showed with the Army running in 22-14 winners.

An exceptionally pleasant and memorable tour of HMS Queen Elizabeth took place on 19 May with 33 Branch Members making the journey to Portsmouth for the event, whilst I won't go into too many details, so as not to take anything away from an article later in this edition, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Nev for organising the event, and to all onboard who hosted our group. To say the ship is 'a bit of a beast' would be an enormous understatement; she is an extremely impressive lady.

Next on the calendar, was our attendance at Costessey Fete and Fayre, and I would like to thank all who manned our stall and attended the sunset ceremony. Unfortunately; foot-fall was extremely low, and I think if we are to attend such events in the future then we need to address producing some kind of presentation boards highlighting the history and activities of the Branch; so as to draw people in.

As I sit typing, I am recovering from a tremendous breakfast, enjoyed by 15 of our Shipmates at Hotel Nelson, again this gave the opportunity for dits to be spun and laughs enjoyed, if you are still yet to join us at the Brekkie Club or Run Ashore then I would highly recommend it; it provides an excellent opportunity to get together and reminisce on our bygone days.

Over the next couple of months, the social calendar remains busy, with the Royal Norfolk Show and Armed Forces Week just around the corner. Full details of all these events can be found on the website and under the Calendar of Events on the last page of Up Spirits. If you have any queries in regard to any of the social events, then please address them to Nev.

By the time this edition of Up Spirits hits the streets, we will have said goodbye to one current member, and one ex-member of the Branch. Both Shipmates had extremely full service records and I hope they will have received a good send off from the Branch.

In Memoriam

Shipmate William Clodd

Full Member

Crossed the Bar: 2 May 2018

Bill served in the Royal Navy and Royal Armoured Corp; serving in the RN between 1943 – 1944 on HMS Gosling, HMS Duke, HMS Drake, Boscawen and HMS Blackwood as a Stoker 1st Class; whilst serving on HMS Blackwood; Bill was sunk by U674 (captained by Peter von Bremman) on 15th June 1944.

Bill received a compulsory transfer to the Army on 17th June 1944, serving with Duke of Wellingtons in India, Dutch East Indies and Sumatra; and with the 25th Dragoons in Calcutta

Bill was Branch Chairman of Norwich Branch in 1988

Shipmate Geoff Little

Full Member

Crossed the Bar: 30 May 2018

Geoff served in the Royal Navy between 1958 – 1969 on HMS Protector, HMS Carron, HMS Lowestoft, HMS Whitby, HMS Sultan, HMS Victory, HMS Rooke and HMS Vernon

'May they have found a Safe Anchorage'

As we say goodbye to two of our members, we also welcome three new members to the Branch, their details can be found under the 'New Members' section. I hope you will enjoy the Branch and we look forward to seeing you at Branch events in the future.

Finally, before closing, it would be remiss of me not to mention GDPR. I apologise for my continued bombardment of the subject over the last couple of months and thank you all for your patience as various forms and emails have been sent out. The reason for this communication is so that you may provide your authority for the Branch to retain your personal details and contact you with news from the Branch. At present the majority of members have submitted the forms or responded to the emails.

Quite rightly, it is not enough anymore, that any organisation can use your data willy-nilly and whilst it may be a pain giving your consent; without it we are legally unable to keep you updated with news from the Branch; including the distribution of Up Spirits, Branch Minutes, parades, social events or news of those members that have crossed the bar.

Welfare Report

Shipmate Phil Coates

Having been in the role for just under two months, I've had to get up to speed quite quickly and I am certain that the learning process will continue for some time to come!

It has certainly been a busy time and sadly a time which has seen a number of shipmates cross the bar. In May, we lost two shipmates, S/M Bill Clodd and S/M Geoff Little. It goes without saying, that branch members will indeed be thinking of the families affected by their passing.

The funeral for S/M Bill Clodd took place at Earlham Crematorium on Thursday 7th June at 1145. The funeral for S/M Geoff Little also took place at Earlham Crematorium on Monday 11th June at 1015. Both families requested the Branch Standard and RN Ensign.

Additionally, May also saw the unexpected admission of a branch member to hospital, having visited Graham, I am pleased to say he is now at home recuperating, although it will be a while before we see him at meetings, I am sure you will join me in wishing him a speedy recovery.

I am still in the process of coordinating the back on board initiative I spoke about at the last meeting and hope to have aligned up individuals with callers very soon. My better half has agreed to visit our oldest member, Vera, and at the time of typing, she will be carrying out the visit week commencing 4th June.

Don't forget, car-sharing can provide some of our members with an opportunity to attend meetings and other events which they otherwise may not have been able to do so and is something which I would like to encourage; it can also help relieve some of the loneliness that members may be experiencing. So, if you are in a position to offer a lift, then please just let me know. My contact details are: mobile telephone 07584072666 or email welfare@rna-norwich.org.uk

Finally, there is a new group on Facebook which may be of interest to members: Leave no man behind; this group is aimed at veterans, those in the transition phase and those about to leave. The group is about offering those nearby the opportunity to meet, chat, go for a social etc. whilst offering support to those who may not know where to turn. It may even offer the opportunity to find old oppos.

From the Monthly Circular

Hospital and Medical Care Association – Health Plans

HMCA are delighted to offer Royal Naval Association members and their families our range of medical health cover and related products. HMCA are specialists in offering voluntary benefits exclusively to members of professional and trade associations and membership groups.

The plans are available exclusively to members of an association and not available to the general public ensuring and maintaining competitive rates for you and your family.

HMCA have over 35 years' experience and members can benefit from the following:-

- Transfer Facility available for members of an existing plan with no break in cover
- Free Medical Helpline available 24/7 to help and support your questions and queries
- Additional range of Benefits available once you subscribe to any of the plans
- Personal service provided by trained Helpline Team
- First class claims handling service providing efficient and prompt settlement of claims
- We offer annual medical cover with up to a 40% discount

You can visit our website on www.hmca.co.uk for further details or simply click www.hmca.co.uk/rna or call us in person on 01423 799949 whereby we will be happy to speak to you and answer your queries.

Royal Navy Project – 'Jules Verne' Catering Services Recruitment

The RN is currently involved with a project to try and engage with former RN Catering Service, Chefs and Stewards, with a view to asking them to consider joining the service again.

The Project is managed by Commander Peter Viney Royal Navy and he writes below to explain in detail what it is all about. He is hoping that Shipmates may be related to or have contact with recently retired Chefs and Stewards who may be interested.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Cdr Peter Viney and I am leading a small team over a 5-week period to try and engage on a personal 1 to 1 basis all ex RN Junior Rate Catering Service Personnel who have left the RN in the last 5 years (although this can be expanded upon for the right candidate) and see if we can entice them to return. You might be aware, they were all received letters at the end of last year from the Logs(Supply) Branch Manager and whilst this produced some level of interest it is felt that with a more personal touch and stronger engagement we can do a bit better.

My approach is simple. Along with my small team of 3, we will aim to engage on a personal basis with all those personnel identified by the Branch Manager and offer them an opportunity to return to the service. We have created and can offer a fast track approach which could see them back in within a few weeks of making contact with them and they will, if interested, be sponsored by the team until they reach RALEIGH and come back onto the trained strength. I do have some flex on re-entry standards and will be happy to discuss this any interested parties should they wish to re-enter but have doubts about their suitability.

What do I ask of you? Can you please make all your Catering Service Personnel aware of this initiative and ask them to pass the details below to any of their friends or colleagues who have left the RN who might be interested in coming in, or those that have attempted and be thwarted for whatever reason.

The details of the team are below:

Commander Pete Viney 07971 664904 / csreentrycdr@yahoo.com

WO1 John Boreham 07971664352 / csreentrywo1@yahoo.com

PO(CS) Mike Dewing 07971665270 / csreentrypo@yahoo.com

Any member of the team can assist – if they are interested or wish to find more, tell them to email or call and we can discuss the options and also answer any queries they may have. This team is complimentary to the Logs Team in CNR run by WO1 Taff Llewellyn.

I thank you for your help and support. Peter Viney, Commander Royal Navy

(GS note we have had volunteers already with average age of 75! Recommend you revise the recipe for Cheese Ush and Cheesy Hammy Eggy Topsides before applying)

Shipmate Submissions

Breakfast Club and Branch Run Ashore **Shipmate Gus Honeywood**

The next Branch Run Ashore has been re-arranged to coincide with Armed Forces Day on **Saturday 30 June 2018** at The Eagle, 33 Newmarket Rd, Norwich, NR2 2HN

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 **Saturday 4 August 2018** at Brewers Fayre Oaks, Holt Road, Norwich Airport, Norwich, NR6 6JA

Normandy Memorial **Shipmate Gus Honeywood**

You may not be aware that The Royal British Legion is supporting the Normandy Memorial which will be inaugurated next year to mark the 75th anniversary of the D Day landings. The Normandy Memorial Trust has spent the last 12 months researching the names of those who lost their lives under British command between 5 June and 31 August 1944. This is a unique collection of names which have never before been recorded and will appear on the British Normandy Memorial soon to be built in Ver-sur-Mer, Normandy.

You can find the Roll of Honour by visiting www.normandymemorialtrust.org in case you wish to check that the name of an individual is accurately recorded, or to let the Trust have a name that is not on the Roll. All suggestions will need to be submitted to The Normandy Memorial Trust before the end of April, so please pass this communication on to your members, in order for them to have their say before the deadline.

New Members

Welcome to the following new members of the Branch

Shipmate Kevin Brett

Full Member

Kevin served between 1975-1980, leaving as an AB. He served on HMS Mermaid, Plymouth, Eskimo and Tartar.

Shipmate Greg Emmott

Full Member

Greg served between 1980-1988, leaving as an LWEM. He served on HMS Andromeda and Hermione.

Shipmate Ian Jones

Full Member

Ian served between 1983-1990, leaving as an AB. He served on HMS Raleigh, Osprey, Fife, Mentor and Atherstone.

This a fine trawl just in case a D/Day Veteran is not listed so please distribute as far and wide to the Naval Community as you can

Battlefield Tour 2018

Shipmate Alf Wiggins

The tour this year was to Amiens and the Western Somme. Friday morning took the usual format, early start from the Army Reserve Centre, coach to Folkestone and the Shuttle to Calais. Before boarding the train, HM Customs gave the coach a thorough check, both inside and out. We must have appeared to them a suspicion lot.

Once in France, the route took us first to the services at Bai de Somme for refreshments, and then to Noyelles- sur- Mer to view a Chinese cemetery. It was strange to see headstones with Chinese characters on them, although some had English as well. Some 96000 men were recruited to form a Labour Corps to work behind the lines but not to engage in combat. However, the front line was so fluid that some did get killed due to shellfire. Many more died of disease, particularly Spanish flu. Altogether over 2000 died and of which over 800 are interred here.

On our arrival at Pole Jules Verne Novotel Hotel in Amiens, we were puzzled as to why there were a large lot of people standing along a fence looking at the hotel. We found out that they were football fans hoping to get a sight of the players from Paris St. German who were in town to play Amiens that evening. The club was using the hotel as a stopover before going to the stadium. The match, which ended in a 2–2 draw, was put on TV so we saw some of it Saturday morning was spent exploring Amiens. A stem of the river Somme runs through the centre. France has a cafe culture and so down one pavement run the bars and restaurants. On the other side of the river is a market selling a wide range of local products. But the jewel of the city is the cathedral, the biggest Gothic structure in France, the largest medieval interior in Western Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The front has several rows of statues standing in niches and a huge rose window. The rest of the stonework is richly carved. The inside is equally impressive, some 126 pillars soaring upward to support an ornate roof. Down each side are the chapels and being Catholic these are also highly decorative. The building can house 10000 people.

The Australians campaigned here and our first visit in the afternoon was to Villers- Bretonneux. This town had been left in ruins. As a demonstration of friendship, both the French and the Aussies cooperated in the reconstruction of the Victoria School. Located on the first floor is the museum. Uniforms, letters, photos and other pieces of personal gear have been donated and are on display. The Victoria Hall on the ground floor is panelled with carvings of Australian wildlife.

The Australian National Memorial is not far away, situated on high ground so there is a panoramic view in every direction for miles. The memorial lists over 10000 soldiers who have no known grave.

Corbier is another town with a great twin tower church in the centre. We were there to visit the military cemetery where 19 men of the Norfolk Regiment are buried, of whom 14 actually came from the county. We held our first parade here. Standards were raised, wreath laid, silence observed, and salutation read.

We found the resting place of Major Congreive, Rifle Brigade, who was awarded the VC. The grave of a John Carey who was shot at dawn proved elusive.

The first stop on Sunday was a brief look at a French cemetery on the outskirts of Albert. Looking across to the city centre in the distance, the most prominent feature was the tower with the golden cupola and the MADONA on top.

During WW1 there was a saying that if she fell the Allies would lose the war. A shell did hit the figure, but it did not fall. Therefore, we did not lose the war.

The next place to visit was the German cemetery at Fricourt. There are over 17000 here, 12000 of whom are in a communal grave. The cemetery was created by the French in 1920. In 1929 the maintenance was taken on by the German War Graves Agency. This stopped in 1939 and not reinstated until 1966. Ironically several of the burials are Jewish. By tradition, it is customary to place a small stone on top of the headstone.

It beggars' belief that after these men gave their lives for Germany, twenty years later their descendants and millions more were being murdered by their own countrymen. Ovillers - la- Boisselle is the site of the Lochnagar Crater. The mine exploded here was the biggest of the 17 set off at the start of the Somme offensive. The crater is 300 feet wide and 70 feet deep. Debris was thrown 4000 feet into the air. A pilot flying in the area said that the blast threw his plane sideways. The ground still holds the remains of soldiers and really is a war grave. The remains of one Tyneside soldier were found only in 1998.



The cross is made from the wood of a church in Durham. There is a boardwalk around the rim of the crater and at the outbound end of each slat is a brass plate with the name of a veteran. The site is now in the hands of an English man and so will be saved for posterity.

One difficulty faced was how to transport the mass of supplies around the battlefield. A solution was narrow gauge railways. One such railway has been preserved by a group of enthusiasts at Froisy. It runs for about 14k and is a tourist attraction. However, to reach the plateau above, the line has to climb the side of a hill.

This feat is achieved by zig-zagging back and forth up to the top. There is a 200-yard tunnel to go through; not very pleasant with smoke coming into the carriages. A museum displays original engines and rolling stock. We had our lunch in the cafeteria there.

The final call of the day was to Auchonvilles to pay homage to one of our own. Twenty-one-year-old Pte WJ Nunn, Norfolk Regiment, who came from Fleggburgh.

Monday and time to make for home. As a change we went off the motorway onto the rural roads to view the countryside, and what attractive countryside it is. Narrow roads through wooded hills; clean well-kept towns and villages, and all in glorious sunshine. We stopped at a winery which produced fruity wines. A tasting was had and, would you believe, rabbit pate was supplied. Many of our company came away laden with bottles of wine and preserves. We next spent an hour drinking coffee in a cafe in Montreuil -sur-Mer. Looking at the towns fortifications, this must have been a strong point at some stage in its history.

The final visit of the weekend was to Etables. This was the site of the infamous training camps of WW1 which were notorious for the tough and even brutal regimes. It was portrayed in the TV programme 'The Monocled Mutineer'. There were also hospitals based here, dealing with the wounded from the front. That meant there were 2500 women serving here; they came from all over the Empire as well as France and the USA. The cemetery is a huge amphitheatre, gravestone stretching way into the distance. Our last parade was held here, and I was asked to lay the wreath.

So, to Calais and the Shuttle home. Another successful trip made even better by glorious weather. Where to next year? Several places were mentioned. 2019 is the 75th anniversary of the Normandy landings so perhaps there.

Visit to HMS Queen Elizabeth

Shipmate Gus Honeywood

On Saturday 19 May 2018, 33 members of the Norwich Branch visited HMS Queen Elizabeth alongside in Portsmouth. We were met at the gate by our host for the visit, CPO 'Nev' Southall and LS 'Bungy' Williams to ensure we were all in possession of security and car passes; before being chaperoned to the Princess Royal Jetty.

It was the first visit to the dockyard for a good number of years for many of our members, and a vast amount of changes were noticeable, especially the facility that has been built to accommodate HMS Queen Elizabeth. Once through the security cordon we made our way up the gangway and were escorted to the hangar. To say that everyone's mouth was wide open, and chins were dragging along the deck wouldn't be too much of an exaggeration.

Once in the hangar the Officer of the Day, Lt Matthew Williams, gave us a brief welcome to the ship before we were given a short talk on the hangar itself, explaining the layout and the facilities that have been included in the design of the area.

The group was then split into two with one group, escorted by CPO 'Nev' Southall and AB Elizabeth "Beth" Ray, heading forward to the foc'sle and bridge, and the other group heading aft, being escorted by Lt Mathew "Artie" Shaw, LS Joe "Bungy" Williams and AB Rachel Quanbrough. The tours lasted approximately an hour and a half and took in the Bridge, the FLYCO (Flight Control), some of the FRPP's (Fire Repair Party Post), and numerous other locations around the ship.

Meeting back up on the flight deck, the size of which is the same as 4 football pitches, and before leaving the ship a photo opportunity was taken with members of the Branch and our hosts. It is believed that Norwich are the first RNA Branch to visit the ship; and everyone present was extremely impressed with one of the latest additions to the Royal Navy.



Calendar of Events – 2018

June

- 24th Armed Forces and Dunkirk Service – Honingham, NR9 5BT – 1030
 25th Flag Raising for Armed Forces week – 1030
 27th-28th Royal Norfolk Show
 30th Armed Forces Day – The Forum, City Centre
 Branch Run Ashore — The Eagle, NR2 2HN – 2000

July

- 1st Sunday Lunch – Bawburgh Golf Club, NR9 3LU
 3rd Committee Meeting – 1930
 10th Branch Meeting – 1930
 26th RAF Marham – Families Day
 27th Norfolk Day

August

- 4th Area 5 Quarterly – Harwich
 Breakfast Club — Brewers Fayre Oaks, NR6 6JA – 1000
 7th Committee Meeting – 1930
 14th Branch Meeting – 1930

September

- 1st Branch Run Ashore — The Plough, NR2 4AR – 2000
 4th Committee Meeting – 1930
 8th-9th Great Yarmouth Maritime Festival
 11th Branch Meeting – 1930

Future Editions of Up Spirits

Shipmate Gus Honeywood

The next edition of Up Spirits will be published for the August Branch Meeting, and I would request that all submissions for that edition are forwarded to me by 30 July 2018.

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

All submissions will be gratefully received.

- 30th Royal Hospital School Holbrook Visit

October

- 2nd Committee Meeting – 1930
 7th Breakfast Club — Broadland View, NR7 0WG – 1000
 9th Branch Meeting – 1930
 13th Edith Cavell Service – 1030
 20th Trafalgar Night Dinner – Wensum Valley Golf Club – 1930
 21st El Alamein Service (Desert Rats) – Honingham, NR9 5BT – 1030

November

- 3rd Area 5 Quarterly – Rayleigh
 Branch Run Ashore — The York Tavern, NR2 2AS – 2000
 4th Dunkirk Veterans Remembrance Service – Honingham, NR9 5BT – 0930
 6th Committee Meeting – 1930
 10th Remembrance Service - Hethel 1030
 11th Armistice Day and Remembrance Day Parade - City Memorial – 1015
 13th Branch Meeting – 1930

December

- 1st Breakfast Club — Table Table, NR5 0TP – 1000
 4th Committee Meeting – 1930
 9th Christmas Sunday Lunch – Bawburgh Golf Club, NR9 3LU
 11th Branch Meeting – 1930