



Unity - Loyalty  
Patriotism & Comradeship

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

This month we have a second article from S/M Alf Wiggins on the Re-Commissioning Norwich Branch RNA, as well as a number of articles from S/M Ken Baish.

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

# Up Spirits!

## NORWICH BRANCH NEWS

### Branch Hon. Secretary and Editor

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### From the Quarterdeck – The President’s Piece

#### *Shipmate Mike Mizen*

It only seems a year ago when I wrote my last December President’s Piece and here I am, a year later, doing the same thing!

Looking back over the last twelve months on the international stage, we have been dominated by Brexit; I wonder if next year’s Presidents Piece will be saying the same thing.

Enough of politics, Christmas is nearly upon us and I am sure that those of you with well organised lives have already got everything planned. Well done. Please spare a thought for those of us who are nowhere near ready for the big day. Yes, I have bought, and sent, a number of Christmas cards, and yes, I have got some presents in mind, but, with only three weeks to go the pressure is on! Stand back! And let a man with a few pennies left from his pension get to the front of the queue; there are things to be bought!

I enjoy Christmas. I don't like to hear moans and groans, they can wait until the New Year. I like to be relaxed, enjoy the company of others, have a drink or two, sit in front of a log fire. Is that asking too much? I hope that my plans come to fruition and that yours do as well. Remember, there is only one Christmas in 2018, if you mess this one up you have to wait a whole year before you can have another one.

The recent TV programme about HMS Duncan has made interesting viewing. What with that and the rerun of the programme about HMS Queen Elizabeth, the Royal Navy has been well represented on our screens in the past few weeks. Generally it has shown the RN in a good light and I believe that it has done a lot to keep the general public aware of what goes on aboard Her Majesty's ships. Mind you, the main topic of conversation from non-military friends of mine was how small the bed space was on Duncan; they were amazed at how little head room there is, quite claustrophobic as one put it.

It is a shame that all the good work put in by the men and women on board our ships can be spoiled by a few isolated incidents involving RN personnel. The media jump at the chance to show the down side of life in the Services, recently a fight involving a female officer in Faslane received a full page in The Mail and although it is no doubt serious it is being effectively dealt with by the MOD. On the same page there was a copy of their headline when some ratings from HMS Queen Elizabeth were "tazered" by Police Officers in New York several months ago. It's cheap headlines, and in my view not necessary. Incidentally, the actions by the Police in America did not surprise me at all. During my time as an exchange Police Officer, albeit in Chicago and not New York, I was surprised by their level of training and preparedness for working on the streets. In the unlikely event that you see one of our Police Officers on the streets, I can assure you that he is better trained.

Back to Christmas. Spare a thought during the period for those who are separated from their families whilst serving abroad, especially those with families. For a single man abroad you can have a whale of a time (well I did in the Seychelles) but, especially those with young children, it's not quite as much fun. I don't care what people say, you think of home and you miss them. On the Bulwark we had recorded messages from home, accompanied by a piece of music chosen by a family member. It was surprising how many of the crew went and sat in the chapel to hear their message; when I went in there was hardly a seat left!

I hope that you all have a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. I shall look forward to seeing you in January, overweight with too much good cheer, and piled high with unwanted Christmas presents for the raffle! Enjoy!!

## Membership Fees

It is requested that all  
Membership Subscriptions of  
£18 for 2019  
are paid at the  
January Branch Meeting.

For all those wishing to set-up a  
Standing Order, please  
use the following details  
Bank: NatWest  
Acc No. 44648715  
Sort Code: 52-41-29

**Please use your surname as the  
reference**

## Secretary's Report

*Shipmate Gus Honeywood*

As it is the Season to be jolly, I thought I would provide a report for you to enjoy with a few mince pies and a glass of port (although I won't be supplying those!)

As we come to an end of another year, I would like to take a moment to reflect on what I think has been another outstanding 12 months for the Branch.

Not meaning to blow smoke up our own derrieres, but not only have we managed to maintain a respectable number of members, we have continued to add to it and look close to breaking the 100-member barrier early in the new year.

The Branch has hosted some pretty fantastic events in this past twelve months. Pat and Barbara are to be congratulated on yet another fantastic Trafalgar Night, and as they step down as organisers, I would like to pass on my extreme thanks for all that they have done in regard to the organising of this event over their years in the post.

I would also like to thank Nev for organising the trip to HMS Queen Elizabeth. At the time of writing I believe we are still the only Branch to have visited RO8 and all those that attended were extremely impressed

by the ship.

Other social events and lunches have, I believe, provided plenty to keep Shipmates entertained and it has also been extremely encouraging to see the numbers that have attended community events and Remembrance and Memorial parades, and it is occasions such as these that keep our Branch in the public eye.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your support over the past 12 months, without your support the Branch activities would be mundane and uninspiring, and I hope you will continue to support us in 2019; I am sure there will be plenty to keep us all entertained and occupied. Merry Christmas to you all and may 2019 be prosperous and healthy for you, your family and friends.

## Welfare Report

### Shipmate Phil Coates

Whilst Christmas is a time for families and celebration, not everyone is fortunate enough to spend time with family or friends. For some, loneliness can really hit home at this time of year. So if you know any shipmates who may be alone, do try and pick up the phone and give them a call for a chat. Furthermore, there are a range of charities available to provide support to veterans, all of which are linked on the branch website including: The Veterans' Gateway - which is made up of a consortium of organisations and Armed Forces charities, including The Royal British Legion, SSAFA – the Armed Forces charity, PoppyScotland, Combat Stress and Connect Assist. The Veterans Gateway team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to put you in touch with the help you need, or direct you to the information you are looking for. Visit [veteransgateway.org.uk](http://veteransgateway.org.uk) for more information or call 0808 802 1212 to speak to a member of the team.

Remember, support is only a phone call away, so please do get in touch. If I don't answer please leave a voicemail and I will call you back as soon as I can.

## From the Monthly Circular

### Royal Navy – Day by Day 2018 Edition

A new edition of the well-known work *The Royal Navy Day by Day* – considered by the Naval Review as 'probably one of the most well-thumbed and valued books Captains of Her Majesty's Ships possess' - will be published later this month. It will make a very special Christmas present.

The book is a triumph of organisation and of compression. Individual entries are supported with concise summaries of operations – Jutland and naval operations in the Great War are given emphasis in this centenary year, the Palestine Patrol, Indonesian Confrontation, the Icelandic Cod Wars, Afghanistan, the Navy and the defeat of the Atlantic slave trade and much more. The challenge has clearly been selection – what to include and what to leave out.

In his introduction the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones, writes 'I am indebted to Lawrie Phillips for his hard work, passion and keen eye for historical significance' which has gone into this new revised edition which contains much new material and many fresh images.

Profound issues form the core of this book but the whole is leavened with humour. One of the delights is the variety of issues covered and the unexpected and quirky gems such as:

- 11 May 2015 – Acting Sub-Lieutenant Penny Mordaunt RNR appointed Minister of State for the Armed Forces
- 29 March 1984 – a photograph of Captains Sam Salt (5 ft 4 ins) and David Hart Dyke (6 ft 2 ins) at the laying down of the Type 22 frigates Sheffield and Coventry – Hart Dyke standing in an open manhole on the jetty to even out their respective heights.

Admiral Lord West has elsewhere commented on the author's 'deep admiration for the Royal Navy and his profound understanding of its business'. This is evident, but the book is not a company history. The occasional dropped catches and own goals are mentioned where there is a lesson to be learned. But the tenor of this splendid new book is positive and heartening. The author hopes 'that this new edition of *The Royal Navy Day by Day*, recalling 'with their strange old ships and weapons what our fathers did and why', will be a source of inspiration and encouragement in the Fleet and that it will put a spring in the step of us all'.

*The Royal Navy Day by Day* - The History Press Price £60 ISBN 978 0 7509 8266 5

## Shipmate Submissions

### Breakfast Club and Branch Run Ashore

#### Shipmate Gus Honeywood

The next Branch Run Ashore is organised for **Saturday 5 January 2019** at The Murderers, 7A Timber Hill, Norwich, NR1 3LB.

Our next breakfast club get together is organised for 1000 on **Sunday 3 February 2019** at Nelson Table Table, Prince Of Wales Road, Norwich, NR1 1DX

## In Memoriam

### Shipmate John McKernan

Full Member

Crossed the Bar: 17 November 2018

John joined the Branch in 1998 having served in the Royal Navy Auxiliary Service between 1945 – 1946 serving onboard HMS Mersey and HMS Trumpeter.

*'May he have found a Safe Anchorage'*

## New Members

Welcome to the following new members of the Branch

### Shipmate Rhian Coates

Full Member

Rhian served between 2002 and 2009, leaving as an LNN. She served on HMS Raleigh, DMSTG, MDHU Derriford, RFA Argus, RNH Gibraltar and MDHU Derriford

## Re-Commissioning Norwich Branch RNA

### *Shipmate Alf Wiggins*

In the last issue of the Newsletter were printed the Minutes from the first meeting of the Branch held in September 1979. The following month, 18th. October 1979, the official Commissioning Service was held in the British Legion Hall. No. 5 Area was represented by the Chairman, S/M CR Wilson from Chelmsford who was to chair the Ceremony; National Councillor S/M BA Hemmings who was to perform the Inauguration and the Treasurer S/M Chas. Claxton.

The meeting commenced with Commander Bowles welcoming all guests and members who were present. A special welcome for members from Branches at Ipswich, Braintree, Cromer, Dereham, Thetford and Dagenham, and the Norwich Royal Naval Careers Office.

S/M Wilson took the chair and welcomed Norwich to the Area and extended an invitation to attend the Area meeting at the Thetford RNA Club on 24th November. The meeting held a minute's silence in remembrance of Earl Mountbatten.

National Councillor Hemmings said that the aim of the Association was Unity, Loyalty, Love of Country, Patriotism and the renewal of old comradeships. After the dedication of the four founder members present, S/Ms Coffee, Bowles, Riches and Ketteridge, he wished the Branch a long happy Commission.

Area Treasurer, S/M Claxton, said that it was a pleasure to come to Norwich and welcomed the Branch to the Area where he held the purse strings. The RNA was like life and marriage, the more you put in, the more you got out. Money had been raised by the Area to buy an ambulance for Pembroke House, and it was possible to build up funds by many means once the Branch got under way.

S/M Coffee then took the chair, thanked all present for attending, was very glad to see many young faces and young blood and wished the Branch all the best.

S/M Riches then read a telegram from Harlow, letters of good wishes from Rear Admiral Briggs, Area Secretary Mr Helyer and Cromer and Cambridge Branches.

Commander Bowles closed the meeting with a vote of thanks to everyone present. He said the RN was the greatest club in the world, thousands of people throughout the world were grateful to the Navy in times of crisis. Naval men had special qualities being able to turn their hands to anything; something which made them such good husbands!

The meeting ended with National Councillor Hemmings cutting the magnificent Commissioning cake donated by S/M Curtis. He was assisted by one of the Sea Cadets who cheerfully gave their services during the evening, helping on the car park and selling raffle tickets etc.

After refreshments, which were beyond expectations, further enrolments took place. £31.52 was raised from the raffle, £13 from sale of rolls, a gift of £1.30 from the British Legion and £18.30 from enrolment monies.

In due course the Minutes were accepted as a true record; Proposed by S/M Bromfield; Seconded by S/M Highway and Signed by S/M Coffee.

## 63rd (Royal Naval) Division

### *Shipmate Gus Honeywood*

The 63rd (Royal Naval) Division was a United Kingdom infantry division of the First World War. It was originally formed as the Royal Naval Division at the outbreak of the war, from Royal Navy and Royal Marine reservists and volunteers, who were not needed for service at sea. The division fought at Antwerp in 1914 and at Gallipoli in 1915. In 1916, following many losses among the original naval volunteers, the division was transferred to the British Army as the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division, re-using the number from the disbanded second-line 63rd (2nd Northumbrian) Division Territorial Force. As an Army formation, it fought on the Western Front for the remainder of the war.

### *Origins*

When the war began, a Marine Brigade of four infantry battalions was formed from men of the Royal Marine Light Infantry and Royal Marine Artillery. The brigade was to be an Advanced Base Force, according to a pre-war plan to furnish the Admiralty with a means to take, fortify or defend temporary naval bases for fleet operations or the supply of army field forces. The recruits included regular marines and those mobilised from the Fleet Reserve; each battalion was drawn from one of the big naval depot ports—Chatham, Portsmouth, Plymouth and Deal—and named accordingly.

### *Royal Naval Division*

On 16 August, Winston Churchill the First Lord of the Admiralty, decided to embody two more naval brigades with surplus men of the Naval Reserve, to join with the Marine Brigade to produce a composite Royal Naval Division. A few petty officers and ratings were transferred from the navy to provide a cadre and some officers were provided by the army but most of the recruits were reservists or men who had volunteered on the outbreak of war. The eight battalions were named after naval commanders, Drake, Benbow, Hawke, Collingwood, Nelson, Howe, Hood and Anson, later being numbered from 1st to 8th. The division was not provided with medical, artillery or engineer units, consisting solely of lightly-equipped infantry. Many of the trained men were then reclaimed for fleet service and recruits were taken over at the request of the War Office, from

oversubscribed north country regiments. Training was slow, except for the Marine Brigade which had its own infrastructure, because resources were needed for the rapid expansion of the army and naval ratings were not issued with field equipment or khaki uniforms before being embarked for overseas service. On 26 August, the Marine Brigade was sent to Ostend to reinforce the Belgian garrison, after German cavalry had appeared in the area. The brigade returned on 1 September after the scare subsided and on 3 September the Admiralty decided to train the two Naval Reserve brigades as infantry, to form an infantry division with the Marine Brigade. Rifles were drawn from Royal Navy stocks and only arrived at the end of September; these were older Charger-Loading Lee–Enfields rather than the modern Short Magazine Lee–Enfields issued to the army.

### **Belgium Ostend**

Following early Belgian and Entente defeats in the German invasion of Belgium and cut off from the rest of the Allies by the German advance, the majority of the Belgian army fell back towards the fortified port of Antwerp, in late August 1914. Belgian troops were also withdrawn from ports along the Belgian coast. The Admiralty wanted to deny the Germans submarine bases in Belgian ports for operations in the English Channel. On 24 August, German cavalry patrols were reported near Ostend and it was decided to land a small naval detachment to secure the town. Further south, the French armies and the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) conducted the Retreat from Mons, with the German armies driving south-west after them, leaving very few units to guard lines of communication. The Admiralty planned to use the Channel ports as a base to attack German land supply routes, with the Royal Marine Brigade forming the basis of a landing force.

The Deal Battalion was still assembling, so only the Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth battalions were sent to Flanders; two landing at Ostend in the early morning of 27 August and the other the next day. They were ordered to hold the town until Belgian troops who had retreated into France could be transferred and 4,000 Belgian troops arrived on 30 August. The rapid Allied retreat led the War Office to decide that supplies would have to be brought through ports in western France, as the existing arrangements in the Pas de Calais ports were too exposed. This would be more demanding on naval escort ships, leaving too few to support the force at Ostend. The Marines were re-embarked on 31 September and returned to their ports.

### **Antwerp**

The "Race to the Sea" in September–October 1914; the final position of the front-line is west of Ostend. Antwerp is marked by a circle on the right.

The division participated in the Siege of Antwerp. The Royal Marine Brigade arrived opposite Lier in requisitioned London buses on 4 October and occupied a position around the northern fringe of Lier, which turned out to be sections of a shallow trench between hedgerows, with one strand of wire in front. The two naval brigades arrived early on 6 October to reinforce the Marine Brigade but were diverted to forts 1 to 8 of the inner ring, where the trenches were again found to be shallow and the ground cleared for 500 yards (460 m) in front, which made them easily visible to German artillery observers. On the night of 6/7 October, intervening trenches between forts 2 and 7 were occupied by the two naval brigades and the 4th and 7th Fortress regiments, with the Belgian 2nd Division and the Marine Brigade in reserve. The British forces under the command of Major-General Archibald Paris were ordered by Winston Churchill to continue the defence for as long as possible and to be ready to cross to the west bank (near The Netherlands frontier) rather than surrender.

The Belgian commanders decided to continue the defence of Antwerp with the garrison troops and move the 2nd Division and the British troops across the Scheldt; it was decided that if forts 1 and 2 were lost, the Royal Naval Division would withdraw at dusk. News arrived that the forts had fallen at 5:00 p.m. and orders were sent to the 2nd Division and the British for a retirement, which began at 7:00 p.m. but the orders failed to reach all of the 1st Naval Brigade, only one battalion of which withdrew. At 9:30 p.m. the mistake was realised as the rest of the division began to cross the river from 10:00–11:30 p.m. and moved west, parallel to the Netherlands frontier. The 1st Naval Brigade reached the Scheldt at midnight, only to find that the bridges were being demolished and under a German shrapnel bombardment. The troops crossed using barges and boats and set out for a rendezvous at Zwiendrecht, which was reached at 4:00 a.m. on 9 October. The British moved on to Sint-Gillis-Waas, where information arrived that the Germans had cut the railway at Moerbeke. The commander, Commodore Henderson, decided to head for the Dutch border to the north and at 10:00 p.m. about 1,500 men, half the original complement, were interned and about forty stragglers managed to sneak along the border and escape. The men were to spend the rest of the war at Groningen, where they were held in a camp they dubbed HMS Timbertown, a name inspired by the wooden huts where they were quartered.

### **Gallipoli Landings**

The division was shipped to Egypt and fought at the Battle of Gallipoli at Anzac Cove and Cape Helles. Casualties before the campaign began included Rupert Brooke, who died at sea from an infected mosquito bite on 23 April 1915. The RND was one of two British divisions (the other being the regular 29th Division) at the Gallipoli landings. Eleven troopships and Canopus, Dartmouth and Doris, two destroyers and trawlers rendezvoused off Bulair before dawn and the warships began a day-long bombardment, just after daybreak. A destroyer made a close pass off the beach and later on, ships' boats were swung out from the troopships and lines of eight cutters pulled by a trawler made as if to land. In the late afternoon men began to embark on the boats, which headed for the shore just before dark and returned after night fell. During the night

Lieutenant-Commander Bernard Freyberg swam ashore and lit flares along the beach, crept inland and observed the Ottoman defences. Freyberg found that the defences were dummies and returned safely to report. Just after dawn, the decoy force sailed south to join the main landings, coming ashore on 30 April.

### ***Western Front Battle of the Ancre***

After the evacuation of Gallipoli, the RND moved to France where it participated in the final phase of the Battle of the Somme, advancing along the River Ancre to capture Beaucourt. The division had four objectives during the Battle of Ancre, the Dotted Green Line, the German front trench, then the Green Line, the road to Beaucourt station. The road ran along a fortified ridge. The Yellow Line was a trench which lay beyond the road, around the remains of Beaucourt on its south-west edge and the final objective, the Red Line, was beyond Beaucourt, where the division was to consolidate.

The plan was for the battalions to leap-frog towards the final objective. The 1st RMLI, Howe, Hawke and Hood battalions were assigned the Dotted Green Line and the Yellow Line, the 2nd RMLI, Anson, Nelson and Drake battalions were to take the Green and Red lines. When the battle began in the early hours of 13 November, platoons from the 1st RMLI crawled across no-man's land towards the German line. A creeping barrage was fired by the British artillery, but many casualties were suffered in no-man's land, about 50 percent of the total casualties occurring before the first German trench had been captured. German artillery-fire and machine-gun fire was so effective that all company commanding officers of the 1st RMLI were killed before reaching the first objective.

The German trenches had been severely damaged by the British bombardment, the attackers lost direction and leap-frogging broke down. The commander and second-in-command of the Drake Battalion were killed, and the Hawke battalion lost its commander and several company commanders. Freyberg, having been promoted to temporary lieutenant-colonel and command of the Hood Battalion, led it to the Green Line and pressed forward with the remaining men of the Drake Battalion. The station road served as a landmark and allowed the attackers to orientate themselves and re-organise the attack. The next creeping barrage began on time at 7:30 a.m. and led the British towards the Yellow Line at Beaucourt Station. The Nelson, Hawke and Howe battalions had suffered many casualties; Lieutenant-Colonel Burge of the Nelson Battalion was killed whilst attacking a fortified section of the Dotted Green Line and Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson was severely wounded attacking the same objective. Lieutenant-Colonel Saunders was killed early in the battle, but the Anson Battalion still managed to capture the Green Line and advance to the Yellow Line, after making contact with the 51st Highland Division to its left. By 10:30 p.m. Beaucourt had been captured.

On 17 October, just before the Battle of the Ancre, Paris was wounded and replaced by Major-General Cameron Shute. Shute was appalled by the un-military "nautical" traditions of the division and made numerous unpopular attempts to stamp out negligent hygiene practices and failures to ensure that weapons were kept clean.

### ***Actions of Miraumont***

On the north bank of the Ancre, the 63rd Division attacked on 17 February, with the 188th Brigade and two battalions of the 189th Brigade, to capture 700 yards (640 m) of the road north from Baillescourt Farm towards Puisieux, to gain observation over Miraumont and form a defensive flank on the left, back to the existing front line. Two battalions attacked with a third battalion ready on the right flank, to reinforce them or to co-operate with the 18th Division between the Ancre and the Miraumont road. On the northern flank two infantry companies, engineers and pioneers were placed to establish the defensive flank on the left. The divisional artillery and an army field brigade with 54 × 18-pounder field guns and 18 × 4.5-inch howitzers provided covering fire, with three field batteries from the 62nd Division further north, to place a protective barrage along the northern flank. The darkness, fog and mud were as bad as on the south bank but the German defence was far less effective. The creeping barrage moved at 100 yards (91 m) in four minutes, slower than the rate on the south bank and the Germans in a small number of strong-points were quickly overcome. The objective was reached by 6:40 a.m. and the defensive flank established, the last German strong-point being captured at 10:50 a.m. A German counter-attack the next day was stopped by artillery-fire. The 63rd Division lost 549 casualties and the three attacking divisions took 599 prisoners.

### ***Second Battle of Passchendaele***

#### ***Allied advances, 22 October – 6 November***

The Division arrived at Ypres just before the Second Battle of Passchendaele (26 October – 10 November). On 26 October, immediately to the north of the Canadian Corps, the supporting attack by XVIII Corps involved one brigade each from the 63rd and 58th divisions. The 188th Brigade, of the 63rd Division quickly captured Varlet Farm and Banff House. The centre of the attack was held up on the road between Bray Farm and the village of Wallemolen and the troops dug-in near Source Trench. As dark fell, Banff House was abandoned and the line reformed at Berks House, leaving Banff House and Source Trench the only part of the first objective not occupied. On 30 October, the 63rd Division infantry were caught by German artillery fire at their jumping-off line and made only slight progress in deep mud against German machine-gun fire. The infantry were unable to reach their rendezvous with the Canadians, leaving their troops at Source Farm and Vapour Farm in precarious positions. Two companies later advanced through the Canadian sector to capture Source Trench but were only able to reinforce the Canadian outpost at Source Farm, then form a defensive flank to Vapour Farm. The 63rd Division

had 3,126 casualties from 26–31 October. The division was able to close up to the Paddebeek by attacking at night from 1/2–4/5 November, a method which took more ground than its attacks in October, for a loss of 14 killed and 148 wounded.

## HMS Cheviot

### *Shipmate Ken Baish*

I served on CHEVIOT in 1954 when in the Med. Fleet, First Destroyer Squadron. HRH Prince Philip was on CHEQUERS at the time serving as the First Lieutenant. Our squadron consisted of all old CH class destroyers. The squadron ships all took turn positioning themselves for 4/6-month spells down the Suez Canal supporting a British Army garrison, Moascar Garrison sited half way down. The garrison butted on to the Suez Canal and our job was to cover the shore/water side of the garrison. Interestingly the garrison sported green grass sprinkled daily (we played soccer against the different regimental units that weren't based at the garrison.) No shore leave allowed. A threat had been received that ex German frogmen from the now defunct German Navy had signed up as Mercenaries to stick bombs on our bottom, blow up the ship and move inland to the garrison ammunition dump and blow it up. It didn't happen but quite exciting times. Anyway we have a thriving Ships Association and try to meet once a year. Also scarily the locals had to walk miles to collect water and the pongos sprayed it everywhere without a care and they wondered why they were unpopular. While we were there was a story of two soldiers who went out in the evening searching for "recreation" and were never seen again.

After my 1954 trip the ship was due home to undergo a major refit and because I had not finished by commission in the Med. I was transferred HMS GLASGOW, the med fleet flag ship to serve on the staff of the C in C who at that time was Admiral Lord Mountbatten. I was a shorthand writer.

### *Naval General Service Medal - Canal Zone*

Having done my stint in the Canal Zone we were all awarded a Naval General Service Medal (the red and white striped one) with the clasp "Canal Zone" awarded for what was described as "Minor Actions". I am rather proud of my medal and was rather saddened that in 1962 this medal was replaced by a General Service Medal which was issued to all the services, RN, Army, and RAF. I can't imagine what M o D individual decided on this one but clearly most Shipmates would have preferred that the red and white ribboned medal which I believe goes back to Nelson's time and probably still do.

Anyway to promote further my acts of bravery in the Suez Canal another short story that would I hope be appreciated by Chairman Mike. I spoke of the presence of ex German navy divers who would have liked to remove us from the scene and accordingly preparations were in place to deter these activities. Around the ship at intervals large lamps on long poles were extended from the side of the ship sticking out from all sides to illuminate the ocean beneath us. You all may recall that the Suez Canal is not tidal, and no litter of any kind could be thrown overboard without causing great offence to the locals. At all times a large barge was secured alongside us, and the gash slides positioned to allow every piece of rubbish to be tipped into this barge. The barge was manned by an old man and a boy who sorted every single piece of rubbish and food waste into neat little piles until the barge was full and it was towed away returning shortly afterwards to continue the procedure. Tea leaves were spread out on the floor of the barge and dried. Tin cans (there were many) were cleaned and flattened out, rumour had it they were sent off to be made into bullets!!! Both the old man and the boy lived on the barge until it was full. The old man would not put a foot onto the ship, but the boy would generally find his way to one or other of the messes at dinner time to share our grub. We were canteen messing. We also found him a sailor's hat that fitted which he wore all day and every day.

As well as the lamps (on all night) chains were fitted underneath the ship from side to side and periodically dragged back and forth "to dislodge any mines that had been stuck underneath". I kid you not!!!

The water beneath us was clear as a bell and you could count the particles of sand that lay beneath. Then came the moment of truth. It was decided to test our efficiency and prepare us for what could have been a disaster. A team of Royal Marine Frogman/divers etc., were to pretend to attack us and test our efficiency by us detecting them before they were successful. The entire ship's company were on deck peering into the water waiting for the Royal Marines to pounce. The first we knew that the Royal Marines had been was when we saw them walking up the gangway and coming on board having stuck mines by the dozen on our bottom. A Life on the Ocean Wave!!! We just had to play it and share our tots.

We were not allowed ashore at all apart from visiting the Army Garrison to play football. We generally managed to play a game twice a week. We were given permission to tie up in a rather smart yacht club on the banks of the Suez Canal at a place called Ismailia where we were picked up in a large Army truck. We had to lay down on the floor in the back below the tail and side boards. The passenger next to the driver stuck his head through a hole in the roof sporting a Bren gun the nearest I think we got to the enemy was the coxswain of the motor boat, we normally went off to the Garrison after tot time to play and our Leading Seaman Coxswain liked a tot or two, or three etc., you get my drift. He also sported a revolver which in true John Wayne style he carried in a belt around his waist and he would demonstrate his cowboy style "draw" while we all ducked. The unfortunate Stoker at the throttle end heard whistles coming in all directions while Coxswain stood at the stern dancing about with his gun whilst pointing the the motor boat in the general direction of the shore

I earned that medal!!!!

## Sailor Shortage Leaves Frigates Stuck In Port

### Shipmate Ken Baish

Shipmates, there is a chance for you yet! Sadly the tot has gone but I suspect the odd Coke or Lemonade will still be about, and quite likely you will still get your nightly cup of hot chocolate.

Four of the Royal Navy's frigates have not spent a single day at sea this year because of a lack of manpower, Ministry of Defence figures, released in response to a parliamentary question lay bare the effect of under-manning on the Type 25 fleet.

On average each of the 13 frigates has spent around 28.5 per cent of its time at sea annually since 2010.

Admiral Lord West of Spithead, the former First Sea Lord, criticised the "hollowing out" of the military.

I worked for two first sea lords but the rest of the time I was at sea!!!

Before you fish out your bag and hammock and little round hat and rush to the recruiter, I'll send you instructions on how to get to Portsmouth and Devonport, sadly Chatham is out of bounds. The best "oggies" on the planet still available at the dockyard gate Devonport, but "Pompey Lil" has sadly moved on.

Just a few more figures if you are interested.

### SHIPS AHOY (OR NOT)

The number of days at sea spent by Royal Navy Type 23 Frigates in 2018 up to Oct. 1st.

Iron Duke	0
Lancaster	0
Portland	0
Richmond	0
Kent	36
Somerset	61
Northumberland	65
Monmouth	82
St Albans	91
Montrose	95
Westminster	116
Argyll	117
Sutherland	154

Just to remind you also this little ditty will have to be skipped to and sung daily so down zimmers and here we go, no big band to lead you, they've all transferred to the Navy and. wait for it, are all at sea!!

This song is called "Heart of Oak" and has a rousing chorus. (The old ones will remember it)

Come cheer up my Lads, 'tis to Glory we steer,  
To add something more to this wonderful year,  
To honour we call you, as freeman, not slaves,  
For who are so free as the sons of the waves/

The Chorus, let it rip Shipmates

Heart of oak are our ships, jolly tars are our men,  
We always are ready, Steady boys, Steady,  
We'll fight and we'll conquer again and again!

Splice the mainbrace. For you youngsters that used to mean a bonus tot!!

Regards to all and I wish you well.



## Calendar of Events – 2019

### January

2nd	Committee Meeting – 1930
5th	Branch Run Ashore – The Murderers, NR1 3LA - 2000
8th	Branch Meeting – 1930
19th	Burns Night – Army Reserve Centre

### February

2nd	Area 5 Meeting - Harwich
3rd	Breakfast Club – Nelson Table Table, NR1 1DX – 1000
5th	Committee Meeting – 1930
12th	Branch Meeting – 1930

### March

2nd	Branch Run Ashore — The Cherry Tree, NR5 8TD - 2000
5th	Committee Meeting – 1930
12th	Branch Meeting – 1930
DTBC	HMS Invincible Memorial Service - Happisburgh

### April

2nd	Committee Meeting – 1930
6th	Breakfast Club – Nelson Table Table, NR1 1DX – 1000
16th	Branch Meeting – 1930

### May

4th	Area 5 Meeting – Norwich Branch Run Ashore — Ribs of Beef, NR3 1HY - 2000
7th	Committee Meeting – 1930
14th	Branch Meeting – 1930

### June

2nd	Breakfast Club – Nelson Table Table, NR1 1DX – 1000
4th	Committee Meeting – 1930
6th	D-Day Service and Parade
11th	Branch Meeting – 1930
26th-27th	Royal Norfolk Show
29th	Branch Run Ashore — Unthank Arms, NR2 2DR - 2000 – Celebrating AFD
30th	Armed Forces and Dunkirk Service

### July

2nd	Committee Meeting – 1930
7th	Armed Forces Day
9th	Branch Meeting – 1930

### August

3rd	Area 5 Meeting - Rayleigh Bucket Collection – Roys at Hoveton
4th	Breakfast Club – Nelson Table Table, NR1 1DX – 1000
6th	Committee Meeting – 1930
13th	Branch Meeting – 1930

### September

3rd	Committee Meeting – 1930
7th	Branch Run Ashore – Plasterers Arms - NR3 1SZ - 2000
10th	Branch Meeting – 1930

### October

1st	Committee Meeting – 1930
6th	Breakfast Club – Nelson Table Table, NR1 1DX – 1000
8th	Branch Meeting – 1930
12th	Edith Cavell Service
19th	Trafalgar Night Dinner – Wensum Valley Golf Club – 1930

### November

2nd	Area 5 Meeting - Harwich Branch Run Ashore – The Fat Cat, NR2 4NA – 2000 - Celebrating Pickle Night
3rd	Dunkirk Remembrance Service
5th	Committee Meeting – 1930
10th	Remembrance Day Parade - City Memorial – 1015
11th	Armistice Day Parade - City Memorial – 1045
12th	Branch Meeting – 1930

### December

3rd	Committee Meeting – 1930
7th	Breakfast Club – Nelson Table Table, NR1 1DX – 1000
10th	Branch Meeting – 1930

## 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 28 January 2019.

If you have any submissions for Up Spirits, then you can email them to me at [na.norwich@gmail.com](mailto:na.norwich@gmail.com).

All submissions will be gratefully received.