



Unity - Loyalty  
Patriotism & Comradeship

# Up Spirits!

## NORWICH BRANCH NEWS

**Branch Hon. Secretary  
and Editor**

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**W**elcome 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 the Re-Commissioning Norwich Branch RNA and an article on the HMS Invincible Memorial.

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

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

*Shipmate Mike Mizen*

It’s cold, the heating has gone off (I cannot afford to keep it on all day – probably like most pensioners!), and Gus is telling me that he needs my ‘bit’ for Up Spirits. So here I am, freezing to death, and happy to oblige.

Write about what though? You don’t want to hear about my aches and pains, you have enough of your own. Or the fact that the oven needs a new fan, and the outside drain has ‘dropped’, and I need a new bathroom, etc. etc. So I started to look at all the positives and then I realised that I am not as badly off as I thought. I started to think about the things that I have done in my life and it brought a smile to my face. And then I thought about a group of people who I spent the morning with.

You see, they all have dementia, and most of them are ex-Services (that’s why I was asked to get involved). My role is to engage them in conversation, mostly about their Service time, and try and get them to respond and get their memory working. Sometimes it is difficult to get a response but at other times, like this morning, you hit gold, and all because one old boy mentioned Malta. I started to talk about going down The Gut to the Egyptian Queen and in no time, others chipped in with their experiences in Malta. Would you believe it, one of the staff had a pile of old photos and amongst them was a picture of The Gut, looking down the hill, and an even better picture of the Egyptian Queen as it used to be, up to the late 60s – early 70s. I’m surprised that we weren’t told to quieten down, the amount of laughter coming from our room, but it

was worth every minute of it. One of the old boys said at the end that it was the best session he had been to. Unfortunately, by the time we have the next session, most of them will have forgotten what we did today.

Sometimes one or two of them will remember something we spoke about a session or two ago. Just before Christmas I managed to obtain a modern 24hr Ration Pack and we ate some of the contents. One of the guys remembered that he had some of the chicken curry and he thought it was great. Not only did he want to talk about it, he wants to know when we will be having another one!

What have I learnt from all this? Well the first thing is to never start a conversation with the words "Do you remember..." and always look the person in the eye when you talk to them. And, of course, be patient.

Last session I took along an SLR and a .303 Lee Enfield and one of the guys gave a pretty good demonstration of 'Present Arms' with the .303. It made his day (and mine) and there is no doubt that he felt that he had achieved something.

That is what it is all about. All I can do is make the team feel good about themselves and hopefully leave them feeling happy.

The problem with dementia is that a lot of people don't recognise the symptoms and that makes it difficult for those who suffer from it. Please make the effort to find out more about it (don't ask me, I'm still at the early learning stage), an understanding will benefit both those who suffer and those who have to deal with it.

I am coming towards the end of my tenure as Chairman and although I will be delivering my annual report at the AGM, I thought I would finish this piece with a couple of comments.

I have held the post for three years, too long in my opinion, but circumstances at the time 'made it so'. What I can say however is that I have enjoyed the challenge, and the comradeship that I have experienced over that time has made it all feel worthwhile. It has not always been easy, being Chairman never is, but I have no regrets. I have been fortunate in having the support of a first-class committee, the likes of which I have not come across in other Branches, and for that I am very grateful. We have a very good Branch because a lot of members work hard and go 'the extra mile'. I ask that you not only support them but go that extra mile with them so that the activities of the Branch can be enjoyed by many and not just 'the few'. This is your Branch, take advantage of what it has to offer and give your maximum support to all the activities. New members will be taking over, we will have a new Chairman, Vice Chairman and some new Committee members; give them the support you gave me, and we will continue to be the best Branch in the Region.

## Secretary's Report

### *Shipmate Gus Honeywood*

So here we go again at the start of another New Year, albeit that we are a number of weeks in now, but it has all the promise of being another busy one. On top of our many activities, this year there will be events to mark the 75th Anniversary of D-Day and I am sure the Branch will be asked to attend events marking the occasions; and I hope that as many members will be able to attend as possible.

We have a couple of more formal events in the very near future, with the annual memorial service at Happisburgh in remembrance of HMS Invincible on 16 March, it would be fantastic if as many Shipmates as possible would be able to attend the event. As with all events that take place further afield, if you don't have your own transport and would like to attend any event, then please speak to any of the Shipmates who are attending to see if a lift can be arranged.

At the beginning of May, the Branch will be hosting the Area 5 Meeting. I understand that has been some considerable time since we have hosted this event and it will be honour to welcome Shipmates from our Area to the Branch and the fine City of Norwich. Additionally, as the Branch Run Ashore will be taking place on the same day, we have extended an invite to all Shipmates attending the Area 5 Meeting and changed the location of the event to the Hotel Nelson. It would be extremely encouraging to see as many Shipmates at the Branch Run Ashore, and welcome any 'oppos' from further afield who may join us.

2019 will be the 40th Anniversary of the Re-Commissioning of Norwich Branch, and it is intended to celebrate this anniversary during a number of already established events during the course of 2019; further details will be promulgated as they are confirmed.

Finally, before I close, a number of the current Committee will be stepping down at the AGM next month and I would like to thank to S/M's Mike Mizen and Pat and Barbara Whiley. Mike Steps away after three years as Chairman and has done an exceptional job in the role. Pat and Barbara step away after a number of years on the Committee and all three have filled have shown immense dedication and commitment to this Branch, and I hope you will agree that they leave it in extremely good stead. Thank you, Mike, Pat and Barbara for all that you have done, and to the rest of us, we have much to live up to!

## Welfare Report

### *Shipmate Phil Coates*

Whilst January was a particularly quiet month from a welfare perspective, it is perhaps pertinent to remind shipmates that there are a range of support services available, one in particular offering a whole range of services. Veterans Gateway can

provide support in areas such as Finance, Employment, Pensions, Housing, Living Independently, Mental Wellbeing, Physical Health and Family & Communities. Detailed information can be found online: [www.support.veteransgateway.org.uk](http://www.support.veteransgateway.org.uk) or by telephone 0808 1914 2 18

If you are interested in general veteran matters, take a look at the Veterans Today blog which includes a range of stories from Veterans UK, individual veterans and other associated parties.

## From the Monthly Circular

### ***National Ceremonial Advisor Vacancy***

Regrettably the National Ceremonial Advisor, Shipmate Mick Kieran, has decided to hang up his pace stick and step down or as he says 'times up' as you can see from the attached photograph!

However, unfortunately he will still be seen at Conference, out of the rig of the day, with his shorts on, awaiting the beginning of the knobbly knees competition!

On a serious note the National President has written to Mick thanking him for his many years of sterling service to the RNA during his many years in Office as the Ceremonial Advisor.

So.....

A vacancy now exists for the position of National Ceremonial Advisor. You will be required to;

- Attend the Association Management Committee in the capacity of Advisor concerning all Ceremonial matters ( 4 times a year (3 x Portsmouth and 1 x Conference)
- Act as parade Senior Marshall at Conference and Biennial Parades
- Act as Ceremonial organiser and Judge at the National Standard Bearer competition.
- To assist and advise AMC/Central Office on content and amendment of the Ceremonial Handbook.
- To advise the General Secretary on Ceremonial Matters.

Applications are now sought from suitably qualified Shipmates. Any interested Shipmate should apply for this prestigious position by providing a small CV listing your experience and a short statement explaining why you should be considered for selection by the National Council as the new National Ceremonial Advisor. **The closing date will be 01 March 2019.**

### ***National Branch Recruitment and Retention Advisor – Area Assistants Vacancy***

Shipmate Gareth Booth, the National Recruitment and Retention Advisor, has been in post for a few months now and has recognised that there is a need for a source of local knowledge and consequently a requirement to appoint an Area Branch Recruitment Assistant (ABRA)

The appointed Shipmate will operate under the following guidelines / Terms of Reference:

- Report to the National Branch Recruitment & Retention Advisor (NBRRA) as an advisor for their area
- To act as a point of contact for their area
- Work with the Area NCM / Committee to assist the NBRRA in the following activities:
- Identifying branches within their area at risk of closing
- Give help, where possible, to help branches at risk.
- Identifying possible locations for new branches and special interest groups within their area
- Branch Recruiting and Retention Activities
- Local marketing ideas

If you require any further details, then please do not hesitate in contacting Shipmate Garth by either by email or phone; [rna.brna@outlook.com](mailto:rna.brna@outlook.com) or 07713 876846

## Shipmate Submissions

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

The next Branch Run Ashore is organised for **Saturday 2 March 2019** at The Cherry Tree, Dereham Road, Norwich, NR5 8TD.

Our next breakfast club get together is organised for 1000 on **Saturday 6 April 2019** at Table Table, Prince Of Wales Road, Norwich NR1 1DX.

## Branch History

### *Shipmate Alf Wiggins*

In May the Branch will be hosting the No.5 Area meeting, the first for many years. This prompted me to look back in the minutes to a previous Area event which the Branch held.

The following is an extract from the monthly minutes of April 1984.

The occasion was a Dinner Dance organised by Norwich on behalf of the Area.

A few people were not happy!

Considerable concern was expressed over criticism which had been received regarding arrangements for the dinner dance. Both S/Ms Hemmings and Wilson had found fault with the manner in which the raffle was drawn, the lack of a top table and the shortage of speeches. S/M Folkard (Norwich) confirmed that at the Area meeting it was S/M Wilson who had requested 'no speeches'. He felt that the limiting of speech making contributed to the success of the evening; he also said that he would bring this to the notice of delegates at the next Area meeting.

He continued, it was at the Area meeting that he had been advised not to expect more than 250 at the dinner, but due to the favourable response the decision was made to dispense with a top table to provide sufficient seating space for all who had applied for tickets, this had resulted in being able to keep the tickets reasonable priced at £5:50p.

(In chairman Gordon Heighway's annual report he said that as many as 350 could have been there).

Rear Admiral and Mrs. Wilcox had written to thank the Branch for an enjoyable evening, and Dagenham Branch sent a card of congratulations on the success of the event.

A vote of Thanks was passed to S/M's Gwen Pye and Rhoda Self for their indefatigable support with table arrangements and tickets sales.

In summarising, Chairman Gordon Heighway commented that it was disheartening that the Area Chairman (Wilson) should find cause to complain when Norwich Branch had been requested to organise, and contributed a lot of hard work to, the first No.5 Area dinner for many years.

It's ironic that Norwich was asked to organise a Buffet Dance for 1986!! Sadly the event made a loss so, at a later Area meeting, Mike Mizen sought to get reimbursement for the shortfall. The vote for the full amount was lost by only two votes, but it was agreed that 50% would be refunded. Apparently, this came to £168.20. So, well done Mike!

Incidentally, in 1985 the Branch had only been in commission for about six years but had built up a membership of 121 shipmates. A great deal of hard work must have been needed to achieve this result. I seem to recall that when I became Membership Secretary in 2001 the figure stood at 112. Even today, with a general dwindling of members in the Association, the figure still stands at around 100.

## Pussers Blue Liners

### *Shipmate Gus Honeywood*

On 27 January 1989 the Royal Navy announced the end of the issue of Blue Liner duty free cigarettes, which were eventually phased out by 1991.

Blue Liners came in silver foil packs of 100, one for each stamp (coupon). 300 being the monthly maximum whilst ashore. These were made for Pusser by Sobrane or British Associated Tobaccos. They carried the blue line down the length of the cigarette with the words H.M. Ships only. On crossing the 12-mile excise barrier when at sea, your allowance changed to

## New Members

Welcome to the following new members of the Branch

### **Shipmate Mat Phillips**

Full Member

Mat served between 1989 and 2012, leaving as an CPOMA. He served on HMS Raleigh, RNH Haslar, RNH Plymouth, HMS Gannet, HMS Montrose, MCTC, Diego Garcia, 845 NAS, HMS Culdrose, RCDM Birmingham, HMS Heron, Gibraltar, Northwood and Fleet HQ

### **Shipmate Steve Duffy**

Associate Member

Steve served between 1984 and 2000 in the RAF, leaving as an SGT. He served at RAF(H) Halton, RNH Haslar, RAF(H) Ely, BMH Aldershot, RAF(H) Wroughton, RAF(H) Wegberg, RMCS Shrivenham, OPS Kosovo and TPMH Akrotiri

### **Shipmate Caerwyn Ellis**

Associate Member

### **Shipmate Deryck Self**

Associate Member

### **Shipmate Klazina Wilson-Contze**

Associate Member

### **Shipmate Betty Griggs**

Associate Member

600 per month with a different stamp (coupon) of any chosen brand purchased through the NAAFI Canteen onboard. Blue Liner stamps (coupon) were maroon but changed colours at the end of the enforceable month and DF always Light Blue.

Night leave was 25 cigarettes enforceable by the Reg Staff on leaving the ship or the MOD Police on passing through the dockyard gate. Many regulators turned a blind eye but the ModPlod did not.

Long Leave of 7 days or more was 200 cigarettes, no matter what the length of leave.

In UK waters and shore-bases; Sailors were entitled to 3 Red stamps = 300 plain / Filter ciggies

or

3/4 lb Pipe tobacco

or

3/4 lb Cigarette tobacco

## HMS Invincible Memorial

### *Shipmate Gus Honeywood*

On Monday 16th March 1801, HMS Invincible, a third rate 74-gun ship of the line, sailed out of Great Yarmouth, with recently appointed Captain, John Rennie at the helm. Also, on board, with his flag flying, was Rear Admiral Thomas Totty. The ship had stopped off in Yarmouth to pick up orders and now sailed heavily laden with ordnance, ammunition and stores, along with her crew of 590 men. She was on her way to join the Baltic Fleet, where Admiral Nelson was second in command to Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, for the Battle of Copenhagen.

With pilots embarked, who were thought to be well acquainted with the passage through Haisbro (Happisburgh) Gat, a strong tide and fresh wind forced Invincible off course. At 2.30pm she struck Hammond's Knoll, a sandbank just east of Haisbro (Happisburgh) Sand. Some provisions were jettisoned to lighten the ship and in the late afternoon, when she was labouring against a rising swell, her masts were cut away. It was hoped that she would float off at high water, which she did manage to do but, having lost her rudder and with a heavy swell and freshening wind, she struck sand again. The crew laboured on the pumps throughout the night to try and keep her above water and her guns were sounded at frequent intervals as a signal of distress.

The only help came from The Nancy, a smack fishing for cod, who came to the aid of the stricken ship. Her skipper, Daniel Grigson, anchored nearby and at midnight, when all hope of saving the Invincible was gone, took aboard Admiral Totty and those of the crew who were little more than boys. Invincible's own boats were lowered safely but were swept out to sea, with these men being picked up later by a passing collier.

The Nancy stood by all night, hoping to rescue the remainder of the crew at daybreak, but to the horror of all on board, as the sky lightened, the Invincible went down. All who could jumped onto the launch. Captain Rennie, the last to leave his ship, attempted to swim to the launch, but overcome with cold and exhaustion and when almost in reach of the oars, lifted his hands to the sky, placed them over his face, and then sank calmly beneath the waves. He was a brave and competent officer, much respected by all under his command.

Out of 590 men, some 400 perished. During the next few days, bodies were washed up along the coast, and at Happisburgh, cart loads were gathered up and taken to a mass grave on the north side of St. Mary's church.

Soon after the Battle of Copenhagen (at which 256 men were lost, compared with about 400 from the Invincible), Nelson visited 'his' men lying injured in Yarmouth hospital.

For many years no memorial marked the spot where 119 men were buried. This was a cause of concern to Mrs Mary Cator who resided in the parish of Happisburgh during the first part of the 20th century. In 1913 she started a county-wide collection to raise funds for a suitable stone. Unfortunately, objections were raised as there was no written record of the burials having taken place. Mrs Cator had no way of proving the authenticity of the burials, and all donations were sadly returned.

It was not until 1988 when a drainage trench was dug to take rain water from the Church roof that many skeletons were found, laid out in rows, some as shallow as 3 foot below the ground, evidently buried in haste. There was now little room for doubt that this was indeed the burial site for the lost 119 sailors who drowned on that terrible morning.

The aircraft carrier HMS Invincible was contacted and told of the story about her predecessor, and the lack of a memorial. Her Captain and ships company responded with much interest. On Tuesday 24th July 1998, St. Mary's church was filled to overflowing. Many had come from far afield, including a direct descendant of Captain John Rennie, the Second in Command of the aircraft carrier HMS Invincible along with eight members of her crew and members of the Nelson Society.

In bright sunshine and with a fresh wind, the congregation gathered on the burial mound, within sight of Hammond's Knoll, where prayers of dedication were said. A bugler from HMS Invincible sounded the Last Post and Reveille. The men of HM's Late Ship Invincible had at last received a fitting tribute to their memory.



## Calendar of Events – 2019

### 2019

#### March

- 2nd Branch Run Ashore — The Cherry Tree, NR5  
8TD - 2000
- 5th Committee Meeting – 1930
- 12th Branch Meeting – 1930
- 16th HMS Invincible Memorial Service –  
Happisburgh - 1200

#### 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 — Hotel Nelson, NR1  
1DX – 2000
- 7th Committee Meeting – 1930
- 14th Branch Meeting – 1930
- 26th-27th Costessey Fete

#### 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 National Armed Forces Day
- 30th Armed Forces and Dunkirk Service

#### July

- 2nd Committee Meeting – 1930
- 6th Branch Run Ashore — Unthank Arms, NR2  
2DR - 2000
- 7th Armed Forces Day – The Forum
- 9th Branch Meeting – 1930

## Future Editions of Up Spirits

### Shipmate Gus Honeywood

The next edition of Up Spirits will be published for the April Branch Meeting, and I would request that all submissions for that edition are forwarded to me by 25 March 2019.

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

All submissions will be gratefully received.

#### 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
- 28th Stanford Battle Area Trip

#### 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