



**Unity - Loyalty  
Patriotism & Comradeship**

# Up Spirits!

## NORWICH BRANCH NEWS

**Branch Hon. Secretary  
and Editor**

Shipmate Gus Honeywood  
11 Lakeland Way  
Hethersett  
Norfolk  
NR9 3QA  
01603 947391  
E-mail: [rna.norwich@gmail.com](mailto:rna.norwich@gmail.com)

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

This month we have articles from S/M Peter Cook providing an article on his antics in the Royal Navy, and details of the newly announced Veterans Railcard.

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**

Welcome to 2020, the start of a new decade!

What pleasures await the Branch this year? If previous years are anything to go by, we should be in for a good time with various events organised by our very efficient committee, an increase in membership and the support of the members to whatever is thrown at them, be it social or more sombre moments.

Whatever comes your way in Norwich RNA, support it to the utmost, that way at this time next year we can say 2020 was a good year!

Reading through the last Up Spirits there were two items in Alf Wiggins’ article that brought back memories.

The first concerned the Branch visit to Blackpool and the terrible train journey that we experienced on the way home. The train was overcrowded, some of us had to stand all the way from Blackpool and when we got to Peterborough we were ordered, and I mean ordered, off the train. It was cold, wet and very windy and we were not amused. No explanation was given as to why we had to get off the train, so I asked a person who turned out to be the Station Master the reason. He said, and I quote “Do as you are told, or I will have you arrested”. As I was a serving Police Sergeant at the time I said, “Go ahead, I’m interested on what grounds.” My then wife, Anne, suggested that this might be a good time to leave but I

thought, no, I will stand my ground and just see what this pompous little git was going to do. He called over two Transport Police Officers and before he could say anything, I introduced myself to them whereupon one said, "Hello Mike, I recognise you from Thetford days".

Pompous git then explained that there were leaves on the line and a new train had been laid on to take us the rest of the way home as the train we were on couldn't cope. He could have saved himself a lot of bother if he said that in the first place!

The second item concerned Knokke-Heist. Ah, Knokke-Heist, what memories!

Members from the Branch were first invited to attend by Gt Yarmouth RNA who had been visiting the town for several years. Knokke-Heist is a coastal town about ten miles north of Zeebrugge and every year at the beginning of February time they would hold a service in the church (which was about the size of a small cathedral) and a wreath laying ceremony at the memorial on the promenade to those lost in the North Sea. Standards would be dipped, wreaths laid, the Last Post (or their equivalent) would be sounded and in the afternoon the Carnival would start, and the celebrations would go on for the next five days! And all this would take place in freezing conditions!

When we went, we would hire a self-drive minibus, go from Harwich to Zeebrugge on the Friday, book into our hotel, spend Saturday in Bruges or Ypres or wherever, Sunday would be the service and parade and then come home Monday somewhat the worst for wear. In other words a good time.

Gradually, the Gt Yarmouth RNA pulled out and the RMA became the biggest contingent. One year we even persuaded the Royal Marines to let us have a Bugler and the MOD sent four! They did the Last Post at the Menin Gate in Ypres on the Saturday, and on the Sunday the Military Attaché from both the UK and Belgium attended the ceremonies. That went down really well with the locals, but it was, unfortunately, a one-off.

Two Saturday visits stick in my mind for very different reasons. One year we went to Sluice on the Belgium/Dutch border. A pretty village with a canal, windmill and clog shops, but it is also the centre of the porn industry and just about every other shop is a sex shop or a cinema. One of our members told me that he had never seen a sex film so to save embarrassment I marched the whole lot into a cinema. They made themselves comfortable in the lovely armchairs and in no time, they were all asleep. After about twenty minutes I woke them all up, told them they had seen enough and we walked out into the cold day, mission accomplished.

On another occasion one of our members, Charlie Brown, took us to Walcheren where he had fought in 1944. He was part of the Support Squadron Eastern Flank and they suffered horrendous casualties during the assault by the RM Commandos. Charlie was a big man and hard as nails, but he cried his eyes out that day, standing on the beach at Westkapelle.

I have very happy memories of Knokke-Heist, I don't know if they still have the service and parade etc, I expect they still do. I wonder if next year we could go again, just once, just to see if it's still the same.

## Chairman's Report

### *Shipmate Nev Townsend*

Welcome to another edition of Up Spirits. It's that time of year when we look to our branch to renew their membership; our numbers remain healthy at over 90 and I expect that trend to continue. At £14 for RNA HQ and £4 for the local branch, for me there is an imbalance with those figures. With the millions in the RNA HQ account, I feel the split should be around the other way.

On the social front, we held our Christmas branch meeting on the 10th Dec, with a good turnout from branch members who all enjoyed the evening. A particularly good night for our Secretary who won the 1st prize in our Christmas squares draw. Again many thanks to all the members who helped make the night a success.

It has been announced that service leavers will keep their ID card with the corner cut in the future and this will be the Veterans card after they leave the Armed Forces. Seems the best and cheapest way to do this.

Veterans from various local RNA Associations have been helping out over the past decade with training for new recruits going through the system at HMS Raleigh. The mentors help the young sailors with all aspects of Navy life ranging from getting kit ready for inspections, outdoor activities, assault course and the 2-day slog round Gutter Tor. Also, the local Veterans are there to provide general support and pastoral support when needed. This is certainly great use of the wealth of experience amongst the Veteran Community.

Our local Norfolk and Norwich Combined Ex-Services Association have sadly ceased operating as of last month. Main reasons being the lack of numbers to help run the organisation. This is unfortunately all too common these days. BZ to all those that have kept the Association going for this long.

Jack Speak for this edition is:

Dry as dust - Description of a Naval person who has not been to sea for a long time, like certain Whitehall warriors and other forms of barrack stanchion.

## New Members

Welcome to the following new members of the Branch

### Shipmate Harry Long

Full Member

Harry is still serving having joined in 2017, and has served on HMS Albion, HMS Monmouth, HMS Blazer, HMS Clyde and HMS Mersey

### Shipmate Peter Hardy

Full Member

Peter served between 1953 and 1970, serving on HMS Daedalus, HMS Gamecock, HMS Curlew, HMS Peregrine, HMS Illustrious, HMS Seahawk, HMS Albion, RAF Honiley, HMS Heron, HMS Ark Royal, HMS Aerial, RM Condor, HMS Centaur, HMS Victorious, HMS Fulmar, HMS Goldcrest, HMS Hermes and HMS Victory

### Shipmate Diana Keyzor

Full Member

Diana served between 1986 and 1991, serving on RNAS Culdrose, CINCFLEET, COMNAVSOUTH, HMS Heron and HMS Daedalus

### Shipmate Rosemary Pye

Associate Member

## Re-joined

### Shipmate Roy Patterson

Full Member

Roy has re-joined the Branch; and it is wonderful to be able to welcome him back to the Association.

## 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 VE-Day and I am sure the Branch will be asked to attend events marking the occasion; and I hope that as many members will be able to attend as possible.

Just around the corner we have the first of our annual memorial services with the church service at Happisburgh in remembrance of the sinking of HMS Invincible on 16 March 1801. This service takes place at 1200 on 14 March and 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.

Later on in the year, the Royal Navy Presentation Team have been invited to attend and present at one of our Branch Meetings, details will be promulgated in the near future and invites will also be sent out to other Veterans organisations closer to the event. This should be an extremely informative event and provide an insight into the current undertakings of the Royal Navy.

This year also sees the 50th Anniversary of Black Tot Day; and it is hoped that we will be able to organise an event in the City to mark this occasion.

The Branch will again be hosting the Area 5 Meeting in August, and it is always a great pleasure to have representatives from

Area and other Branches come and see us in Norwich.

As a closing note, just a reminder that arrangements for the Branch Breakfast Clubs and Runs Ashore were changed at the end of 2019, with the events now taking place on the weekend following the Branch Meeting. To this end the next Breakfast Club will take place on 16 February and the next Branch Run Ashore will take place on 16 May.

## Welfare Report

### Shipmate Steve Phillips

Have you told your story?

We all have a box of mementos stashed away somewhere in the loft or under the stairs that the rellies will find when the time comes. But will they understand the pride behind the photo - of that young sailor in his dress whites on the quarterdeck of some big ship, will they know the story of those smartly dressed fellas outside the pub in some foreign main street?

This month, I have been asked to help trace the history of two veterans of World War Two.



2 - HMS CEYLON at anchor

A gentleman and his daughter attended January's Branch meeting. They brought with them a box of medals, some service documents and a whole bunch of faded black and white photos. Fortunately, amongst the yellowed papers was the man's service documents – this showed his rate, official number and that he had spent the bulk of his time



1 - HMS Formidable underway in 1942

on the Crown Colony-class light cruiser HMS CEYLON, based mostly in the Far East.

Then a colleague at work asked if I could help fill in the gaps of his father's career when all he had to go on was his dad's marriage certificate. This gave us his profession – Engineer Assistant, (possible) Official Number and a ship – HMS FORMIDABLE (an Illustrious-class aircraft carrier).

Missing personal details can be filled in by contacting the Naval Pay & Pensions (Accounts) Section at HMS CENTURION. Their address is:

Centurion Building,  
Grange Road,  
Gosport,  
Hampshire PO13 9XA

Alternatively there is the RN Disclosure Cell at:

Mail Point 1.3  
Navy Command Headquarters  
Leach Building  
Whale Island  
Portsmouth  
PO2 8BY

Here they have access to more ship logs and official records.

These days, much can be gleaned from the internet. A quick search of Wikipedia shows that HMS CEYLON took part in many carrier raids, bombardments and patrols against Japanese-held territory and was involved in Operations Cockpit, Meridian and Diplomat.

HMS FORMIDABLE was involved in all areas of operations from the Mediterranean (Operation Torch) to the Pacific (Battle of Okinawa) and back to Norway for action against the Tirpitz.

Fortunately, both ships survived the war.

Links can be found to crew lists and a brief version of the ship's log. This will provide some answers to 'where has my ancestor been?' and lead on to tracing the geography of the photos. There are many Web Sites set up to provide you with personal records – one that I have used myself being Forces War Records. Co.UK.

Another avenue of research would be to hire a military historian to do the leg work for you, but this can be expensive.

However, the best way of making sure this history is not consigned to a dusty box in the corner is to get out the photos and tell your story! Tell your son, your grand-daughter, your mate in the pub – anyone! Bring those comrades back to life – they deserve it.

## From the Monthly Circular

### **Central Office Move 7 / 17 February 2020**

For those Shipmates who are not aware Central Office is on the move, after nearly 12 years in its current Semaphore Tower site. However, Central Office will be remaining in Portsmouth Naval Base and moving to Building 1/087, which is only 400m from its current location.

Sadly, we will no longer be overlooking the waterfront!

Stop Press.....

### **Operation ‘Around the other side of the Moon’**

Central Office will be closed from 1500 Friday 07 February and reopen again at 0830 Monday 17 February to facilitate the move to Building 1/087. Regrettably there will be no telephone lines and consequently no e-mail/social media. If you have an emergency, please contact your NCM who will decide what course of action should be taken. All email/phone details will remain the same.

### **Central Office Open Days 2020**

Central Office are holding a number of Open days in 2020, please see dates below. There are plenty of spaces should branches, HQ Roll members or individual shipmates wish to attend. Central Office staff will be delighted to see them and for those unaware the fun starts at 1100 in Semaphore Tower in the Naval Base at Portsmouth.

On arrival you will enjoy a sandwich lunch and update, by the General Secretary, on both RNA and Royal Navy matters. This followed by a harbour Boat trip round and an opportunity for Nigel to empty your wallets and purses of shekels so you can purchase ‘Jackets, buttons and Badges’

The Open Days are all held on a Friday and the 2020 dates are as follows:

22 May, 26 Jun, 24 Jul, 07 Aug and 02 Oct

If you are interested in attending, please forward your details to Central office Contact details are at the front of the Monthly Circular.

### **RN Veterans Photographic Competition**

#### **ROYAL NAVY PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2020 AMATEUR CATEGORY-**

Class 18 Veterans.

New for 2020 a chance to share your best images which best sum up the ethos of the RNA.

The Amateur category is open to Regular & Reserve serving Naval Service personnel including RFA and Civil Servants serving in RN/RM establishments, and who are not Professional Photographers iaw Annex A para 1. Class 18 is for Veterans only. All photographs must have been taken between 21 Apr 2019 - 20 Apr 2020 and not entered in the RN Photographic Competition 2019.

Amateur photographers may submit up to three images in Class 18.

**ENTRIES ARE TO BE SUBMITTED ON CD/DVD**, this is to contain the images, an electronic copy of the entry form for each image, bio picture and CV. It is to be packaged in a protective envelope to prevent damage in transit. A signed hard copy of the entry forms are to be provided with the disc.

Entries should be sent to:

nigel@royalnavalassoc.com or

Royal Naval Association Central Office. (Photo Competition)

Room 209 Semaphore Tower PP70,

H M Naval base Portsmouth

PO1 3LT

Judging will take place in May 2020 and prize winners will be informed of their success by signal and invited to attend the prize giving.

Entries need to be forwarded to Central Office by 20 April 2020

\*\*\*\*\* Full competition details are contained at the rear of the February Circular \*\*\*\*\*

## Veterans Railcard To Launch on Armistice Day

### *Forces.net*

A new railcard for British military veterans is to be launched on Armistice Day.

Due to be made available from 11 November, it will extend cheaper train travel to more than 830,000 veterans who do not qualify for existing discounts.

However, at least initially, it will only be for use in England.

The railcard will cost £21 for an introductory period, before the price is increased to £30.

Holders will be able to save a third off most train tickets, although certain restrictions will apply.

It follows railcards launched last year for members of the public aged between 16 and 17 years old, and 26 and 30 years old.

Joined by veterans at St Pancras railway station, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said the veteran's card "will help open up opportunities" in employment, retraining and personal relationships for veterans.

The move honours a manifesto commitment set out by UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson - part of the Government's veterans' strategy.

How will veterans be able to use the new railcard?

The railcard can be used at any time - peak or off-peak - although during peak times a minimum fare of £12 applies.

At the moment, it can only be used in England, but the Government hopes to eventually extend it to Scotland and Wales.

If a cardholder is travelling with their spouse or children, they are all able to claim discounted tickets.

The launch of the veteran's railcard is part of a wider action plan, also launched today and coordinated by the Office for Veterans Affairs, setting out to achieve a more holistic approach to veterans' wellbeing.

Cabinet Office minister Oliver Dowden, who represents the Office for Veterans' Affairs in Cabinet, said: "Our new action plan will help to make the UK the best place in the world for veterans.

"The Office for Veterans' Affairs will drive the plan from the heart of Government, working to help veterans on jobs, housing and health through better data and a more joined up approach."

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said the railcard "is only the start" and that more can still be done to protect those who served.

### **All the Gen**

Veterans Railcard: What is the cost, who is eligible, what date is it released?

#### **When Will the New Veterans Card Be Available?**

The veteran's railcard will be released on Armistice Day, November 11, and more details are to follow in the coming ten months that will give a full rundown of all terms and conditions.

#### **How Much Will the Veterans Railcard Cost?**

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has announced that the card will cost £21 for an initial introductory period but the price will then increase to £30 and he has announced that the railcard will be on sale from Armistice Day.

#### **What Discounts Will the Veterans Railcard Offer?**

Again, full details are yet to be revealed, including on what restrictions there might be to discounted travel.

However, the card is expected to offer a third off most train travel to former members of the British Armed Forces.

Like other railcards, it is expected to come with restrictions on certain times such as weekday mornings, where a minimum fare is applied. With existing rail cards, this can apply from 4.30am to 10am, Monday to Friday.

It is expected that the holders of the new veteran's railcard will be able to use it at any time, peak or off-peak.

However, during peak times, as with existing railcards, a minimum fare of £12 would apply.

At the moment, there are only plans for discounted rail travel across England, but the Government hopes to roll out a similar discount across Scotland and Wales.

Similarly, it is not yet known if discounted travel will be extended to some city transport networks such as London.

Other limited discount schemes already exist in some parts of the country such as the Manchester Metrolink, which gives free travel on Armistice Day, Remembrance Sunday and Armed Forces Day, to former members of the Armed Forces who carry a veterans badge, and free travel to serving Members of the Armed Forces who carry a MoD Card 90.

Final details for London travel discounts with the new veteran's railcard are still being negotiated with Transport for London.

The veterans railcard is not the same as the Veterans Concessionary Travel Scheme (VCTS) Pass which offers discounted or free travel on some services in and around London to anyone in receipt of an ongoing payment under the War Pensions Scheme or the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, including war widows/widowers and eligible dependents.

The VCTS pass offers concessionary fares in London Fare Zones 1–6, plus outlying stations including Rickmansworth to Amersham, inclusive, and stations Carpenders Park to Watford Junction, inclusive, on participating Train Company services, London Underground, DLR, London Trams and most bus services in the Greater London area.

A HM Forces Railcard is already available which can be bought by serving personnel for £21 per year.

### ***Could Family Members Also Use the Veterans Railcard?***

The new railcard is likely to include similar standard terms and conditions as existing railcards, but the veteran's railcard is expected to also offer discounts to any spouse of family member so long as they are travelling with the card holder.

### ***Why Was the Veterans Railcard Created?***

The new card offering discounted rail fare is the first step in the Government's plans to do more to support those who have served their country and comes after the Government created a new Office of Veterans' Affairs (OVA).

The Government pledged to provide lifelong support for veterans.

It is hoped the new railcard will help boost veterans' job prospects and strengthen family bonds through cheaper travel.

The discount forms part of the Government's new veterans' strategy to support all former servicemen and women.

The strategy sets out support available for those who have served their country in areas including employment and job skills, health and wellbeing, housing and finance.

## **RN Shipmates**

### ***Mike Crowe***

First, I must make an apology. I regret that the RN Shipmates system has been very quiet. The website [www.rnshipmates.co.uk](http://www.rnshipmates.co.uk) looked as if it, or even me, had crossed the Bar!!

No, firstly there were health issues for myself and my wife however, the real fly in the ointment was computer problems of which I will say no more, fellow computer users will understand. Thanks to my son we are up and running again!

I AM BACK ON DUTY.

Please go to [www.rnshipmates.co.uk](http://www.rnshipmates.co.uk) and go to 'reunions' on a regular basis, this is because nearly 400 local newspapers across the country are now printing a 'Letter to the Editor' mentioning the rediscovered camaraderie at Royal Navy Reunions. Their readers are posting their reunions. You might like to copy this to your branch shipmates so that they can be sure their ship's Associations reunion is listed.

Many thanks for your co-operation in bringing shipmates together again, let me know when a tot is raised, and I will raise one to you from this end!

## Shipmate Submissions

### **Branch Breakfast Club & Run Ashore**

#### **Shipmate Gus Honeywood**

From effect, from the beginning of 2020 we will be moving the Breakfast Clubs and Branch Runs Ashore to the weekend after the Branch Meeting. Therefore, the next Branch Breakfast Club will take place on [Sunday 16 February 2020](#) at The Hotel Nelson

The next Branch Run Ashore is organised for [Saturday 16 May 2020](#) at The Fat Cat, NORWICH, NR1 1DX.

### **Join the Navy, See the World**

#### **S/M Peter Cook**

They say join the Navy and see the world, and when I joined Ganges to train as a sparker in 1949 as a 15-year-old it's fair to say this was true.

My first draft was to the Med on a Loch boat (H.M.S. Loch Lomond) arriving in Malta at Christmas 1950.

One of our deployments was Aqaba patrol which was six or eight weeks at a time; threatening all and sundry with our 4-inch gun.

Every night the Israelis would have convoys coming into Eilat with lights on and driving away with lights out; so you wouldn't know if they were bringing in reinforcements.

With the extreme heat, dabbers worked tropical routine but as sparker it was the 24/7.

To give us a break we were offered a trip up through the Valley of the Moon to Petra which came courtesy of the Army.

At that time a trip to visit Petra was only available to extremely wealthy people, who went by caravan through the desert.

We started off in desert vehicles and finished of the trip on horseback, we stayed in a mud fort manned by three Arab policemen, a Sargent and two privates. They had a number of convicted prisoners in the fort who were serving various sentences who were allowed out during the day, but shut up in a mud tower at night, and the rickety ladder was taken away. When I said to the senior policeman how easy it was to escape his answer "no problem in three days we collect the body from the desert."

The day after we arrived, we went to see King Solomon's treasure house which was once again on horseback. It's appearance is not as pristine as it appears to be today, with one of the main columns at the front missing, and the urn carved above the main entrance was marked with bullet holes, apparently by troops over the years just in case it held gold.

There was nothing else apart from the carvings on the cliff faces and broken pots everywhere.

It was an amazing trip but taken for granted at the time. Only now with the benefit of hindsight I realise how fortunate I was.

## Calendar of Events – 2020

### 2020

#### February

16th Breakfast Club – TBA – 1000

#### March

3rd Committee Meeting – 1930  
10th Branch Meeting – 1930  
14th HMS Invincible Memorial Service - Happisburgh

#### April

7th Committee Meeting – 1930  
14th Branch Meeting – 1930  
18th Breakfast Club – TBA – 1000

#### May

2nd Area Meeting – Stowmarket  
5th Committee Meeting – 1930  
8th 75th Anniversary of Victor in Europe (VE Day)  
10th Service to Commemorate 75th Anniversary of VE-Day  
12th Branch Meeting – 1930  
16th Branch Run Ashore – 2000 – The Fat Cat, NR2 4NA  
25th American Memorial Day - US Cemetery Cambridge – 1100  
27th Le Paradis Massacre Parade – Honningham Church – 1030

#### June

2nd Committee Meeting – 1930  
6th D-Day Service and Parade - City Centre Memorial Muster - 1015  
9th Branch Meeting – 1930 – RNPT  
21st City Armed Forces Day – The Forum – 1000 to 1600  
27th National Armed Forces Day  
28th Armed Forces and Dunkirk Service - St Andrew's Church NR9 5BT – 1030  
DTBC Armed Forces Week Flag Raising – City Hall – 1030

#### July

1st-2nd Royal Norfolk Show

## 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 March 2020.

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.

7th Committee Meeting – 1930  
14th Branch Meeting – 1930  
18th Branch Run Ashore – 2000 – The Champion, NR2 1SE

#### August

1st Area Meeting – Norwich  
4th Committee Meeting – 1930  
11th Branch Meeting – 1930  
21st Broads Boat Trip – 1300  
22nd Bucket Collection – Hoveton

#### September

1st Committee Meeting – 1930  
8th Branch Meeting – 1930  
12th Branch Run Ashore – 2000 – The Lawyer, NR3 1HY

#### October

6th Committee Meeting – 1930  
10th Edith Cavell Service  
13th Branch Meeting – 1930  
17th Trafalgar Night Dinner – Wensum Valley Golf Club – 1930  
25th El Alamein Service - St Andrew's Church NR9 5BT - 1030  
31st Area Meeting – Harwich

#### November

3rd Committee Meeting – 1930  
8th Remembrance Day Parade – City Memorial – 1000  
10th Branch Meeting & Re-Dedication – 1930  
11th Armistice Day Parade – City Memorial – 1045  
14th Branch Run Ashore – Celebrating Pickle Night - The Coachmakers Arms, NR1 3SP  
DTBC Dunkirk Remembrance Service - St Paul's Chapel and War Memorial, NR9 5AP - 0930

#### December

1st Committee Meeting – 1930  
8th Branch Meeting – 1930  
12th Breakfast Club – TBA – 1000