



CNOA

Chatham Naval Officers' Association



The CNOA Newsletter for March 2021

Email: contact@cnoa.org.uk

Website: www.cnoa.org.uk

Contents

Chairman's Flag Hoist
Future Speakers & Events
Membership matters
Crossing the bar
HMS Echo investigates Second World War shipwrecks in the Baltic
Direct seafood sales bring increased profits, support jobs and keep boats at sea
Acquisition of additional facilities for revival of Harland & Wolff
Medway completes first year of Caribbean mission
Free webinars – The Battle of Britain Memorial Trust
Royal Marines put aviators through Arctic tests
Fifth RAF Poseidon arrives at Lossiemouth
HMS Queen Elizabeth assumes role as new fleet flagship
Why China's new "Coast Guard Law" raises risk in the South China Sea
Remarkable wartime album brings 150 sailors back to life
CNOA Standing Order Form
CNOA Member Application Form



A Royal Marine musician © Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2020

MARINES MUSICIANS BRING MUSIC TO HOSPITALS IN COVID RESPONSE

Musicians from the Royal Marines Band Service are caring for body and soul in hospitals in the South West.

Some 42 musicians from the service's Collingwood and Portsmouth bands have been mobilised to help the NHS at its most testing hour, supporting front-line NHS staff at hospitals in Bournemouth and Bath, as well as the NHS Nightingale Hospital Exeter.

They are supporting the government's response to Covid-19 in the South West, which is led by the Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade, freeing up NHS staff for clinical duties.

Chairman's Flag Hoist



Dear Fellow members,

I hope you are all keeping safe. Following the tragic loss of my dear friend and our Hon Secretary, Derek Ireland, we continue to keep his family in our thoughts and prayers.

This month we held the first ever virtual Annual General Meeting in our history. We had a successful AGM with a total of 29 attendees. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Martin Watts as he takes up the role of our Hon Secretary. Unfortunately, we had no volunteers for Social Secretary, so the committee will take on this task as a team, unless someone comes forward upon reading this message. I would like to thank Derek and Barbara Stoyles, who have served the committee over many years, as they now stand down. The committee has agreed to send donations to our chosen charities: Seafarers UK; Sir John Hawkins Hospital; Kent Branch Marine Society and Sea Cadets; and the Royal Engineers Association.

Some of our members have received the Covid-19 vaccination; I hope that this is our way of getting our freedom of movement back. Please continue to support our fellow members with regular phone calls and advise any of the committee if we have anyone has a need. Please also look out and invite others that may well benefit from membership.

HMS Queen Elizabeth has taken on the role as Fleet Flagship. The Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd was received on the carrier to mark the transfer from HMS Albion in January 2021. Meanwhile, HMS Medway, which some of us saw just over a year ago when she was being given the freedom of Chatham, has now been on deployment in the Caribbean as a guardship for over a year.

I was delighted by the response and ideas passed to our January speaker Tracy Bryant in support of her work. Thank you all those who contributed.

This year sees the 100th Anniversary of the Royal British Legion, who are sporting a new and expensive logo; they ask for stories to help celebrate the centenary. More details are at www.britishlegion.org.uk.

I have been researching our family trees to keep the mind busy during lockdown. Much to the delight of my wife Claire and her family, they are directly descended from AB Joseph Manuel, who served on board HMS Britannia during the battle of Trafalgar. Ironically, he descended from Spanish sailors from the Armada wrecked and landed ashore due to storms in 1588.

Finally it's 30 years since women were first deployed to sea with the Royal Navy on board HMS Brilliant.

Yours Aye,
Jon

Jon Vanns
Lt Cdr (SCC) RNR
CNOA Chairman



Future Speakers & Events

Subject to revision

12 March:	Martin Watts – Operation Market Garden
9 April:	Glen Jones – Third Afghan War
14 May:	Derek Goodwin – The development of marine propulsion systems; its effect and influence on the Ocean liner and Cruise ship
11 June:	TBC
9 July:	TBC
13 August:	No meeting – summer leave
10 September:	Tony Holding – CCF officer
8 October:	David Brown – Wrecks of the Kent coast
29 October:	Trafalgar Night Dinner (provisional)
12 November:	Reflections of a marine engineer sales manager
10 December:	Christmas Social with the President

Additional events will be included as details become available.

As always, we are most grateful to those who send items for this Newsletter. Please email contact@cnoa.org.uk with articles, news items and photographs.

Suzanne Wood (Newsletter Editor)

Membership matters

A polite reminder to Members and Associate Members: those who pay by cheque or cash, in order to continue your membership of CNOA, your subscriptions are now required for 2021 following last week's AGM.

The easiest method is to use the form towards the back of this newsletter to pay via your bank.

If this does not suit, please send your payments for 2021 and any back payments to:

Lt Jan Dean RNR
79a Cherry Ave
Swanley,
Kent
BR8 7OU

Crossing the Bar

Derek Ireland MBE, JP – a Maritime Tribute

It is with a heavy heart that I seek to pay a fitting maritime tribute to our departed colleague Derek, and I'm sure you'll join me in feeling a sense of shock that such a vibrant character could vanish from the scene in such short order. I have been proud to work with Derek for many years as Chairman of both the Chatham Naval Officers' Association and the Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadet Unit, TS BRILLIANT – indeed, it was his charm and persuasion that got me on board in the first place!

We will remember him for so many qualities. I recall his matchless enthusiasm for each and every venture with which he was involved, and he always seemed to have many balls in the air at any one time. He was firmly dedicated to the welfare and wellbeing of everyone in his community, from the youngest shy cadet to the more fearsome aged veteran, conscious of their strengths and weaknesses and always eager to encourage them to greater efforts. While pursuing his own highly successful business, long after the time when many would have put their feet up, Derek maintained a heavy and highly professional administrative workload to satisfy external demands, not least from the Sea Cadet hierarchy, but the constant pursuit and achievement of the highest standards were always his watchword.

He served his county, area and country quietly but with great pride, from his early experiences in Northern Ireland to his later dealings with elements of the security services about which we can only guess the finer details. He maintained his constant delight in technical innovation, and only a few short months ago I ran into him on the Embankment as he was off to investigate an anti-Covid coating for the guardrails of HQS WELLINGTON!

Derek would have been the first to admit that he could not have maintained such a punishing – but to him highly enjoyable – schedule without the constant encouragement of his understanding and hugely supportive wife Carol and their family, and we hope their grief and sense of great anguish will be tempered with the certain knowledge of how the whole community, both local and maritime, will feel a sense of massive loss.

We shall recall Derek with pride for his achievements, with gratitude for all he gave to his civic and naval duties, and for his everlasting cheerfulness whether in success or adversity. He was an inspirational character in every way. We all admired him greatly and I'm sure, most of all, we shall remember him as a great friend who enriched our own lives. Gone far too soon, but a life so very well lived. Farewell.

Commodore Barry Bryant CVO Royal Navy

Cdr Chris Lee RNR

Cdr Chris Lee RNR was a former Commanding Officer of HMS Wildfire. He passed away in early February. Whilst he was not a member of the association, certainly a number of the CNOA membership will have known him.

HMS Echo investigates Second World War shipwrecks in the Baltic

From MoD Navy



Survey ship HMS Echo has investigated shipwrecks at the heart of two of the greatest losses of life at sea in history.



HMS Echo in the Baltic. Picture: Lithuanian Navy

Devonport-based Echo has been on operations in the Baltic and recently studied the wrecks of Second World War vessels Wilhelm Gustloff and Goya.

More than 16,000 people perished when they were sunk in Germany's Operation Hannibal in 1945, the evacuation of German soldiers and civilians from East Prussia as the Red Army closed in.

Using her specialised multibeam echo sounder, a device used to map the sea floor, Echo was able to show the destruction caused by Russian submarine torpedoes that struck the German ships.

In the images captured by Echo, Nazi cruise ship Wilhelm Gustloff – which was repurposed as a hospital ship and barracks for U-boat trainees – can be seen split in three parts while the Norwegian merchant vessel Goya, commandeered by the Germans to support the Baltic U-boat flotilla in 1940, is broken towards the bow.

Lieutenant Phil Boak, on HMS Echo, said: "While the wrecks were fascinating to explore and image using the echo sounder, it was sobering to think that they were the final resting place for so many people caught up in the ravages of war."

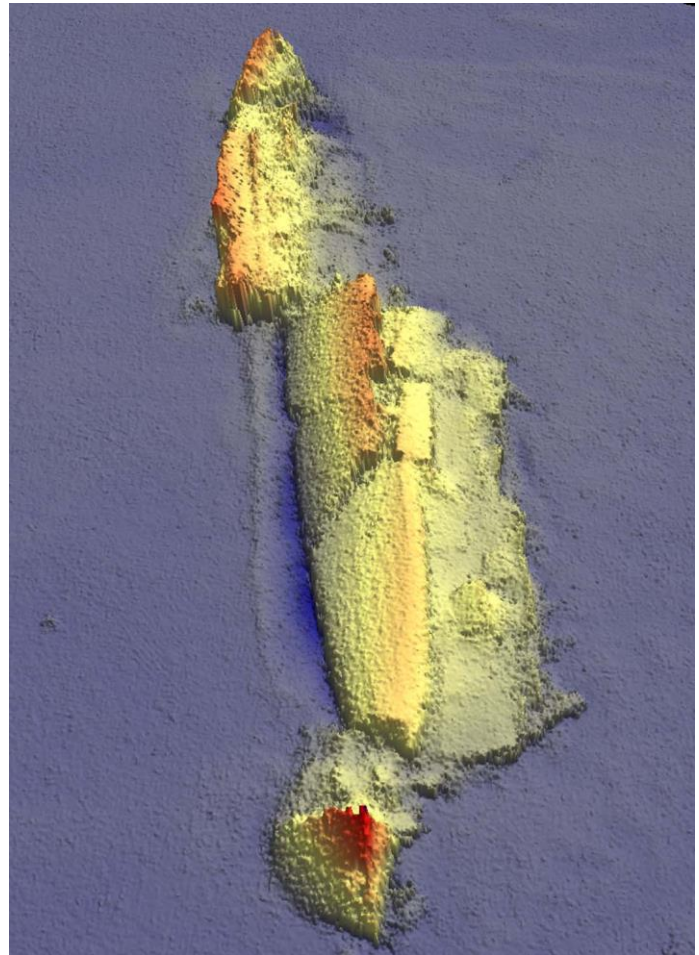
In 1945 the Germans were in full retreat across Eastern Europe pursued by the Red Army. In early January, the 3rd Belarussian Front launched the East Prussian Offensive, cutting off East Prussia from the rest of Germany.

Hundreds of thousands of German soldiers and civilians were trapped and Operation Hannibal was enforced to evacuate them. Over the next 15 weeks, around 900,000 German civilians and 350,000 soldiers were evacuated west across the Baltic to Germany and occupied Denmark (huge numbers compared to Dunkirk which saw 338,226 British and French troops evacuated across the English Channel).

Both Wilhelm Gustloff and Goya were pressed into service for this vast undertaking.

On January 30, Wilhelm Gustloff left Danzig (now Gdansk), packed with around 10,000 civilians and military personnel. She was soon spotted by the Russian submarine S-13 which successfully launched three torpedoes at the liner, sinking it within the hour. It is thought up to 9,500 people perished in the freezing cold waters of the Baltic, making the event the single greatest loss of life in a maritime incident.

On April 16, Goya left the port of Gotenhafen (now Gdynia), with around 6,700 passengers and crew. The ship, and the small armada she was sailing with, was spotted by the Soviet submarine L-3 and close to midnight, the submarine fired four torpedoes, two of which struck Goya.



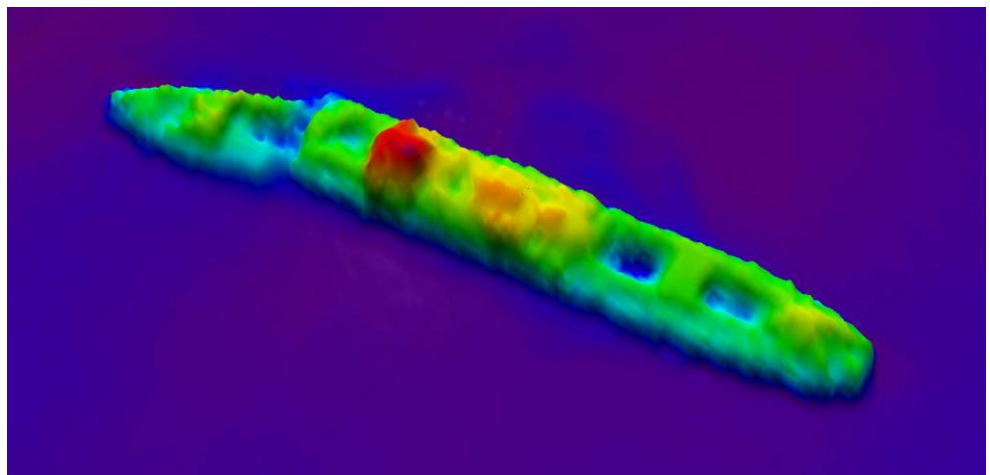
Imagery from HMS Echo's sensors show the shipwreck of Wilhelm Gustloff © Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2020

The damage was fatal and the ship sunk in less than four minutes. There were only 183 survivors.

For one member of HMS Echo's company, Operation Hannibal and the wrecks of Wilhelm Gustloff and Goya are of great significance. His grandmother, a 14-year-old orphan at the time, was evacuated from Danzig in the early months of 1945.

He said: "If the events of 1945 had panned out differently, I may well not be here serving in the Royal Navy today. It just goes to show how large-scale evacuations such as Operation Hannibal can send ripples through time affecting generations of families."

HMS Echo has now returned to the UK to continue with her survey tasking.



Imagery from HMS Echo's sensors show the shipwreck of Goya © Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2020

Direct seafood sales bring increased profits, support jobs and keep boats at sea

From Seafarers UK



Research has found that grant funding from the Fishmongers' Company's Fisheries Charitable Trust and Seafarers UK enabling fishing and seafood businesses to sell direct to the public throughout the first lockdown in 2020 created increased profits, job security, employment opportunities and business resilience.

The research into the impact of the Covid-19 Rapid Response Grant Programme, conducted by Risk & Policy Analysts, also identified key lessons for the future of the UK seafood industry and for future grants programmes designed to support it. Those who received the grants said that there was a clear current demand for UK seafood, with UK customers willing to pay a premium for locally caught produce. Promotional initiatives focused on maintaining demand for this seafood post-pandemic can therefore play a key role in future industry vitality. Operating a seafood business during the lockdown also revealed the precariousness of the existing distribution networks, suggesting that support for and improvements to the industry's inland transportation infrastructure will build long-term resilience.



For small businesses that utilised the funding provided under the £500,000 Rapid Response Grant Programme (RRGP), the analysis of impact highlighted the need for technical and marketing support, to manage both the grant application process, and more importantly, the challenges of rapidly shifting to socially distanced business models.

The simplicity of the application process, made even more accessible with the independent help and support provided by 'Fishing Animateurs', combined with the rapid approval and payment process were highly valued by recipients, who were often both time poor and inexperienced in navigating technical application forms. These elements of the RRG are in contrast to the bulk of other support funding on offer for the seafood sector, which can be lengthy and require specialist grant application skills.

The RRG enabled fishermen and seafood businesses to diversify in response to the first national lockdown in 2020, providing funds for processing equipment, establishment of cooperatives and delivery of seafood door-to-door. The independent survey of the 121 recipients reveals how the fund enabled seafood businesses to survive, and at times thrive, under the pressures of lockdown and Covid-19.

Increased resilience to external threats such as Covid-19 and Brexit proved one of the key outcomes, with 82% of recipients planning to continue their diversified business models and direct sales beyond the pandemic. Island Fish was one such recipient. Director, Amanda Pender, explained that the processing equipment purchased with the funding “was not intended to be a panacea to combat all financial difficulties, rather it was to form part of an arsenal of tools intended to assist in making the company more profitable and better able to easily offer a greater range of fish to the local populace, visitors and businesses – this it achieved, easily and without any difficulties.”

Selling direct to the public has not only brought increased sales but also improved links with the local community and increased demand for locally caught and prepared seafood.

Amanda explains: ‘Without doubt the grant helped increase sales of fresh fish – therefore having an effect on profitability as well as introducing a new type of affordable and delicious locally caught fish into the marketplace for people to enjoy’.

The business activity enabled by the grants also supported and created new jobs in the sector, with 65% of recipients saying their grant supported the employment of at least one individual and 57% saying the grant allowed their business to keep staff employed. Furthermore, the ability to adapt to the pressures of Covid-19 meant that numerous businesses could avoid closure, with 28% of recipients explaining that grant funding kept them running during the lockdown.

Acquisition of additional facilities for revival of Harland & Wolff By The Maritime Executive

The parent company of the historic Harland & Wolff shipyard group announced a further expansion of the company's capabilities with the purchase of additional fabrication facilities in Scotland as they work to revive Harland & Wolff and enter the offshore renewable energy sector. The latest acquisition, located on both of the Scottish coasts adds 25,000 m² of undercover fabrication capacity, a total of 580,000 m² of area, and 24,000 tons of quayside load-out capabilities to Harland & Wolff.



Harland & Wolff's historic facilities in Belfast, Northern Ireland (file photo)

InfraStrata, which acquired Harland & Wolff in December 2019, reported that it acquired assets of the former Burntisland Fabrication Limited from the administrators for a total payment of approximately \$1.18 million, of which two-thirds was upfront and one-third when substantial revenues are generated. Last summer they also acquired the Appledore shipbuilder's facilities in Devon.

According to the company, the latest acquisition represents the final fabrication piece of its UK footprint, positioning the company to fully deliver on its strategy quicker than it would have done with only its two existing sites. The newly acquired facilities in Fife and the Isle of Lewis are attractive as they have waterfront sites that are capable of loading and launching activities and are near an array of wind farm projects currently ongoing and planned in the Irish Sea and the North Sea.

"I am very pleased to have completed the acquisition of the assets of Bifab, which is in keeping with our stated strategy of capitalizing on complementary opportunities when they present themselves," said John Wood, CEO of InfraStrata. "With this acquisition, we now have a footprint in Scotland, which is the hotbed for major wind farm projects as well as for shipbuilding programs. We have now positioned ourselves strategically across the UK, with four sites capable of servicing our five core markets."

The acquisitions are part of the company's overall strategy to transition away from its heritage in the gas industry into offshore renewable energy. The portfolio of fabrication capabilities positions Harland & Wolff to fulfil the U.K.'s government's requirements of UK elements in bidding for offshore wind contracts including domestic construction and assembly. The shipyards are also bidding for repair work from the shipping industry as they seek to build their portfolio of work.

Medway completes first year of Caribbean mission From MoD Navy

20 January 2021 marked exactly one year to the day since HMS Medway left Portsmouth for a long-term mission to patrol the Caribbean.

And it will be several more years before you see the patrol ship in home waters, as she continues to patrol Britain's North Atlantic territories.



Medway is at the vanguard of the Royal Navy's Forward Presence programme, stationing warships overseas for several years at a time, using regional ports and British or allied nations' bases for resupply and maintenance and regular crew changes.

Since Medway sailed last January, HMS Trent has conducted patrols in the Mediterranean, HMS Tamar is now ready for operations and the last ship in the class, HMS Spey, is preparing for front-line duties, while the lead vessel, HMS Forth, is already in the Falklands.

Medway is currently in Mayport, Florida, undergoing winter maintenance before resuming her work providing support, assistance and reassurance for Britain's overseas territories in the region, from flag flying for the UK and participating in key local events, to delivering assistance in the event of a natural disaster.

The ship has sailed just short of 50,000 miles – the equivalent of twice around the globe – since leaving Portsmouth, spending 184 of her 366 days away at sea.

Much of her first year was spent getting to know the many islands and their civilian and emergency services, facilities and the lay of the land should Medway be called upon to provide assistance in the event of a hurricane or volcanic eruption.

And similarly, island communities have learned what Medway can offer in an emergency – communications, planning, skilled engineers and equipment, food, fresh water, trained medics, and the general ‘can-do’ attitude of sailors – culminating in two large-scale disaster relief exercises.

Chief Petty Officer Luke Travell is the longest serving member of the crew – he was the first person to join Medway while she was still being built on the Clyde back in 2017.

“When I first set eyes on Medway she was still having equipment fitted and set to work,” said Luke who’s the ship’s Deputy Weapon Engineer Officer, responsible for weapons systems and sensors.

“Assisting with the build process up to taking Medway on her first deployment has been a challenge and an honour. Now she is fully functioning and a key asset to Overseas Territories.”

Another key mission is to support the international fight against illegal drug running from South to North America – and from there to the wider world.

Medway has worked both independently and in tandem with support ship RFA Argus, which spent eight months in the Caribbean last year before returning home just before Christmas.

Throughout, the ship had a US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment boarding team embarked – the new generation River-class ships have a dedicated mess to accommodate up to 50 military personnel precisely for such constabulary duties.



Royal Marines practise boarding skills from a Merlin helicopter on to HMS Medway's flight deck © Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2020

A dozen vessels were stopped, four boarded and two seized and subsequently sunk, with Medway seizing 650kg of cocaine on one occasion and forcing drug runners to ditch an estimated half-tonne of the illegal narcotic on another.

The busts were, says Luke, the highlight of the ship’s deployment to date, earning Medway international media coverage – and delivering a blow to traffickers.

“During the interdiction I was manning the Electrical Optical Display (Infra-Red camera) so I watched the whole event unfold and ensured it was all recorded for future evidence.”

And the patrol ship has frequently worked side-by-side with other navies operating in the region from the US Navy and Coast Guard, French and Dutch, to those of Brazil and Jamaica and the maritime police in the Turks and Caicos and British Virgin Islands.



The ship's company on the flight deck with a drugs haul © Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2020

The global pandemic has denied the ship's company the full Caribbean experience and chance to explore as much of the islands as they'd like under normal circumstances, but Medway has still called in at: Gibraltar, Jacksonville and Fort Lauderdale in Florida, Guantanamo Bay, Curacao, Martinique, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Grand Cayman, Puerto Rico and Jamaica.

"The past year has provided amazing experiences to see and work in areas of the world I never expected to travel to, and meet and work with, people from many different nations," said gunnery officer Lieutenant Solomon Jacka.

Underwater warfare specialist Able Seaman Cavan Robinson has enjoyed the chance to spread his wings beyond normally staring at sonar displays in an operations room.

"Working onboard outside my core branch has been a great opportunity, getting involved in sea boat launches and gunnery which I wouldn't normally be as involved with has been very enjoyable," he said.

The ship's hard work and achievements were recognised with Medway being named the best/most effective patrol ship in the Fleet in 2020.

"This has been an extraordinary deployment for Medway, with the challenges of being a forward deployed unit further compounded by the ongoing pandemic," said Lieutenant Commander Jim Blythe, the ship's Commanding Officer.

"However, my ship's company has remained focused and delivered an excellent output, with many first of class successes being achieved this year, including the first deck landings by Merlin and Wildcat helicopters, and conducting exercises with our partners in the region.

"It was fitting recognition for my ship's company to be awarded the efficiency pennant, and every member of my crew should be proud of their achievement."

Free webinars – The Battle of Britain Memorial Trust From Andrew Simpson

As part of an exclusive series of webinars, The Battle of Britain Memorial Trust CIO is pleased to announce its next online talk!

Wednesday 24th February at 3.00pm

Top Battle of Britain author Dilip Sarkar MBE will be presenting another fascinating talk to our audience which reflects the stories of casualties in the Battle, as told in his book *Battle of Britain 1940: The Finest Hour's Human Cost*.

Battle of Britain 1940: The Finest Hour's Human Cost, takes a broad look at casualties amongst the Few and beyond. It includes tales of civilians and seamen, groundcrew and WAAFs, aircrew who were killed in action during the summer of 1940 without qualifying for the Battle of Britain Clasp to the 1939-45 Star, and even a German fighter pilot.

This webinar takes place online for FREE on Wednesday 24th February at 3.00pm.

Book your place today! Sign up to the webinar here: <http://ow.ly/QRuz50Duxv2>

Dilip, who was made an MBE for services to aviation history in 2003 and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 2006, has written around 40 books on the Battle of Britain and related subjects, with more in the pipeline.



***Battle of Britain 1940:
The Finest Hour's
Human Cost***
online presentation

Dilip Sarkar MBE FRHistS Author and Historian

**Wednesday 24th February
at 3pm on Zoom**

<http://ow.ly/QRuz50Duxv2>

Spaces can also be booked now via the longer link - https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/battle-of-britain-1940-the-finest-hours-human-cost-webinar-tickets-140311546613?utm_campaign=post_publish&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eventbrite&utm_content=shortLinkNewEmail

Further webinars are arranged as listed. For booking arrangements please watch the website (www.battleofbritainmemorial.org) or the Facebook page (Remembering the Few - at the National Memorial to the Few). Bookings open around 2 weeks prior to the webinar.

Wednesday 10 March 2021 at 3.00pm

Paul Beaver will talk on 'The Forgotten Few' in which he will describe the role of the Fleet Air Arm in the Battle of Britain. It wasn't until 1960 that 57 Naval Aviators were recognised for their contributions to the Battle of Britain.

Paul Beaver is very much a hands-on historian with a pilot's logbook which includes the Spitfire, Harvard and Mustang. He regularly flies the family Cessna and coordinates the flying at the Chalke Valley History Festival as an authorised civilian and military flying display director. He is an acknowledged expert on the Spitfire, the Battle of Britain, the Dambuster raid, Naval Aviation and Cold War operations. He is chairman of Aeronautical Heritage for the Royal Aeronautical Society, a Vice-President of the Spitfire Society and Vice-Chairman of the Billy Fiske Foundation.



Wednesday 24 March 2021 at 3.00pm

Christopher Joll will talk on 'Spoils of War'

Over the last 700 years the United Kingdom has acquired a staggering array of treasures as a result of military activities, from Joan of Arc's ring to Hitler's desk. Christopher will highlight a cross-section of these spoils and how they were acquired. Along the way he will debunk some myths and cast light on some very dark corners of Britain's military history.

Christopher Joll is a graduate of Oxford University and RMA Sandhurst. He was commissioned into The Life Guards in 1968 and served four tours of duty in Northern Ireland before leaving the Army in 1975 to go into business. Between then and 2000 he worked in the City and industry.

During this time, he also turned his long-term hobby of writing and directing events for charities – including Jose Carreras & Friends (1991) at the Theatre Royal – into a business. Through this enterprise – MJ2 Events – he has managed many events for charities. For more information about these events.

When not advising corporates and working on charitable events, He also finds time to write.

In 2017, he was appointed the regimental historian of the Household Cavalry

He is also a lecturer for Noble Caledonia and Viking cruises.



Wednesday 14 April 2021 at 3.00pm

Melody Foreman will be talking on **'The Wreck Hunter'**.

As long ago as 1961 a young Terry Parsons, then still in his twenties, began his long search for lost aircraft and memories of the Battle of Britain and the Blitz. What he discovered over the decades that followed went far beyond the tangled wreckage of military aircraft, both fighters and bombers. For with each of the thousands of RAF and Luftwaffe artefacts he unearthed, came the intricate weave of life stories linking the valiant and the brave, the living and the dead.

Melody Foreman, a local, qualified, award-winning journalist, editor and graduate with news, production and features experience in newspapers, magazines, television documentaries, research and theatre. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Journalists and regularly writes for the leading monthly glossy history magazine 'Britain at War'. She also works as an author, ghost-writer, book sommelier and public speaker

For those unable to join the live webinars, recordings are made available on the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust YouTube page (Battle of Britain Memorial - YouTube)

Royal Marines put aviators through Arctic tests From MoD Navy

Royal Marines Mountain Leaders are putting helicopter pilots and aircrew through their paces on demanding training in the Arctic wilderness.

Before taking to the skies over the Arctic Circle, the aviators of the UK's Joint Helicopter Command must complete the cold weather survival course, which gives them vital insight into surviving and fighting in one of the planet's most inhospitable environments, where the sun barely rises and temperatures can plummet to around -30C.

Specialist Royal Marines instructors of the Mountain Leader Cadre lead the fliers through this challenging training, which includes jumping into icy water to cope with cold shock and living out of survival shelters, plus moving on skis and snowshoes on long distance marches.



Troops from Joint Helicopter Command are put through their paces by Royal Marines Mountain Leaders during their deployment to the Arctic. @ Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2020



Once completed, the fliers are ready to take to the skies and carry out their own specialist training in Arctic flying, engineering and refuelling and providing aerial support to Royal Marines on the ground and hunting and destroying enemy targets over the mountainous terrain.

Naval Airman Matt Vickers, an aircraft handler from 845 Naval Air Squadron of the Commando Helicopter Force, is living out of a brushwood shelter in the Arctic wilderness during the cold weather survival course.

“We’ve just completed a shelter build using brushwood and larger chunks of wood for the structure. We’ve also built a fire pit to cook our food in and another to keep us warm,” he said.

“It’s taken us four to five hours. It’s important for that safety and warmth and the benefit of having something to cover you in conditions like this. It’s been an experience. There are more highs than lows. This will be our fifth night out surviving.

“We’re learning how to survive and fight out here and the basic combat skills the Royal Marines have shown us.”

Once he’s finished the course, Matt will be refuelling helicopters on the flight line at the base in Bardufoss, Norway.

Helicopters from Joint Helicopter Command fly to Norway every year to carry out Exercise Clockwork, which is now in its 52nd year and is run by the Commando Helicopter Force.

This time, Army Apaches from 656 Squadron have headed for the frozen high north to carry out exercises.

Training and flying in such extreme conditions is vital in ensuring that Joint Helicopter Command aircraft and people are ready to operate anywhere in the world at any time.

All deployed personnel have been through a rigorous quarantine period, with UK troops to conduct training in a bubble and in line with the Covid-19 guidelines of host nation, Norway.

Fifth RAF Poseidon arrives at Lossiemouth From MOD RAF

The Royal Air Force’s fifth Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft has been safely delivered to RAF Lossiemouth.

The aircraft, named Fulmar, flew directly from Boeing Field near Seattle. It’s the first time that an RAF Poseidon has been delivered to Scotland straight from the factory and the crossing took just over eight hours.



The new RAF Poseidon aircraft landing. © Crown Copyright MoD RAF 2021

The Poseidon MRA1 (P-8A) is a multi-role maritime patrol aircraft, equipped with sensors and weapons systems for anti-submarine warfare, as well as surveillance and search and rescue missions.

Its arrival represents another milestone in the development of Lossiemouth's Maritime Patrol capability and it comes at a time of unprecedented submarine activity, close to UK waters. Poseidon MPA can react quickly to track potential threats over large areas of sea or ocean and defend our own submarine fleet.

The name Fulmar is a nod to RAF Lossiemouth's Naval past. The Station was called HMS Fulmar, itself named after a hardy sea bird, between 1946 and 1972.

A Poseidon commander said: "Monitoring and tracking all activity in seas around the United Kingdom is paramount to our security. The arrival of this latest aircraft helps to ensure that we have the continued capability to defend our waters and support our NATO partners."



Fulmar is the RAF's fifth Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft. © Crown Copyright MoD RAF 2021

Boeing's Poseidon MRA1 (P-8A) is a multi-role maritime patrol aircraft, equipped with sensors and weapons systems for anti-submarine warfare, as well as surveillance and search and rescue missions. It features an APY-10 radar for high-resolution mapping, an acoustic sensor system, an electro-optical / IR turret and electronic support measures (ESM).

The aircraft can also be armed with a weapons system that includes torpedoes for engaging sub-surface targets.

Nine Poseidon MRA Mk.1 aircraft have been ordered for the Royal Air Force and the addition of ZP805 takes the number on fleet past the halfway mark. The UK Government has invested £470m overall in RAF Lossiemouth, which will future-proof Quick Reaction Alert and Maritime Patrol operations for many years to come.

HMS Queen Elizabeth assumes role as new fleet flagship From MOD Navy

HMS Queen Elizabeth assumed the role of Fleet Flagship on 27 January as the Royal Navy moves closer to deploying the world's most technologically advanced carrier strike group.



Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd, was received on HMS Queen Elizabeth to mark the transfer of the role from HMS Albion, while Royal Navy ships and shore establishments were informed by a signal at 1330.



The Commanding Officer of HMS Queen Elizabeth Captain Angus Essenhigh and Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd during the ship's handover to become the Fleet Flagship. © Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2020

The First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin, said: “The position of Fleet Flagship is a symbol of HMS Queen Elizabeth’s importance to the nation, not just in restoring our carrier strike capability, but as a rolling statement of British commitment to global security, prosperity and trade.

“It’s right that we bestow such a historic title now. In the coming months HMS Queen Elizabeth will lead the most ambitious Royal Navy deployment in decades. She will be a focal point as we look forward to an extraordinary year.”

It was announced last week that the UK’s new Flagship and Lightning Force of F-35B stealth strike fighters will also be complemented by a detachment of the fifth-generation aircraft from the US Marine Corps, and a US Navy destroyer during her first operational strike group deployment.

HMS Queen Elizabeth and her strike group will spend time developing collective war-fighting skills when NATO navies gather for exercise Strike Warrior off Scotland during the spring, before departing for the Mediterranean.

Commanding Officer, Captain Angus Essenhigh, said: “It is a fantastic privilege for Queen Elizabeth to be made the Fleet Flagship as we prepare to sail at the heart of UK’s very high readiness Carrier Strike Group. We look forward to doing the nation proud as we deploy on operations for the first time.”

Last year, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, confirmed that HMS Queen Elizabeth will be at the centre of a Carrier Strike Group deployment to the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and East Asia. She will embark F-35B from 617 Squadron (the “Dambusters”), Royal Navy Merlin helicopters, and be escorted and supported by Royal Navy Type 45 destroyers, Type 23 frigates and support ships of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Assault ship HMS Albion had been flagship since March 2018, deploying to the Indo-Pacific for 10 months; to the Baltic for major multi-national exercises; and latterly to the Mediterranean leading NATO security patrols and experimental warfare trials. Her sister, HMS Bulwark, previously led the Fleet for four years.

Commanding Officer of HMS Albion, Captain Simon Kelly, said: “While it is with some sadness that we hand over the responsibility to HMS Queen Elizabeth, we are proud to be part of the transfer which marks a new era for the Royal Navy and the nation.”

Why China's new "Coast Guard Law" raises risk in the South China Sea

By The Strategist

Xi Jinping’s control over the China Coast Guard, together with a new law that authorizes the coast guard to use force against foreign ships in places China defines as in its own, is a big change that has so far attracted far less attention than it deserves.



China coast guard

Maybe that’s because Xi has acted on several fronts to assert Chinese power and take risks in the dying weeks of Donald Trump’s term as US president and in the early days of Joe Biden’s tenure. Some moves – like the one to put sanctions on senior Trump officials, their families and companies that employ them – have rightly attracted attention as vindictive measures. Others, like the People’s Liberation Army’s incursions into Taiwanese airspace, are about furthering Beijing’s campaign to isolate and intimidate Taiwan and test US and international resolve.

Taken together with these moves, Xi’s boldness with the coast guard shows that he’s ratcheting up the risk he’s willing to take in confronting other nations and using the levers he has to project Chinese power. And the coast guard move is one that gives him very practical new tools to cause damage and insecurity and act in ways that others – particularly militaries – can’t and probably shouldn’t match.

Chinese state media has downplayed the law, saying it's similar to other nations' practices – but it's not, because it signals that the Chinese state will ignore international law of the sea and international tribunal rulings when using force and define the coast guard's jurisdiction to use force through China's unilateral characterization of its maritime boundaries. And the way the Chinese coast guard is likely to operate in practice will be quite different too.

We've got used to stories of Chinese fishing fleets and Chinese militia vessels intimidating other nations' vessels and even bumping into them to get their way, particularly in the South China Sea in waters claimed by Vietnam and the Philippines, but also down into the Natuna Islands in Indonesia's exclusive economic zone.

Chinese vessels have sunk Philippine and Vietnamese fishing vessels in the last year, and not seemed too bothered about meeting obligations to provide assistance to sailors needing help afterwards. We've also got used to the Chinese coast guard shadowing Chinese fishing fleets, ready to intervene if they come into contact with other nations' vessels.

What's different now, though, is that with this new law Xi has told his coast guard to be wolf warriors at sea – and to use force, including lethal force, to assert Chinese interests.

The Chinese coast guard has been building some novel ships that let it apply force not just with the weapons on board, but with the ships themselves. Coast guard vessels like the 10,000-ton Haixun aren't just bigger than many naval ships operating in the South and East China Seas, but they also have strengthened hulls that are designed for deliberately hitting other vessels 'shouldering' is the naval term of art.

Imagine a specially designed large vessel like the Haixun 'shouldering' a Vietnamese, Philippine, Indonesian or even U.S. naval vessel, enabled by Xi's law and his command to Chinese agencies and officials to engage in a difficult 'struggle' against the world.

Ships operated by those navies (and the Royal Australian Navy) don't have such strengthened hulls. They're designed to withstand some damage, mainly from weapons – and the primary approach is to prevent missile hits.

To see the kind of damage a collision with a large vessel causes to such ships, we've got the example of the Norwegian frigate Helge Ingstad, which collided with an oil tanker in 2018 before being deliberately grounded and sinking. The images tell the story. It ended with the frigate being scrapped because the damage (from the collision and from being underwater for four months) was too extensive to be repaired.

So, we may need to be thinking less about the Chinese coast guard firing on other nations' vessels and more about how to handle coast guard commanders who are full to the brim with wolf warrior spirit and licensed by Xi to get into trouble, and how to deal with ships designed to hurt others without using their weapons.

The ability to inflict damage without weapons gives the Chinese coast guard the easy ground in an encounter. A naval vessel that can't bump back without damaging itself is left with the choice of backing off and handing the encounter to the Chinese or using its weapons and being the first to fire. Neither is a great place to be.

The Chinese coast guard's use of this new law and its ships in this way might get cheers in Beijing and make strident nationalists there happy. But if any Chinese leader thinks this 'nonlethal' use of force is a low-cost, politically free good, that would be a mistake.

Coast guard ships bumping into, damaging and perhaps sinking not just fishing vessels but other countries' naval vessels would be a hugely escalatory and aggressive set of behaviours, especially in contested waters, no matter how Beijing characterizes them. Maybe Xi needs to hear this from the leaders of other countries before we start seeing such antics on the water.

More crystal-clear Biden phone calls to Xi, and maybe calls from leaders like German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who could mention it while celebrating investment agreements, are paths here. In his first conversation with Biden, Xi said the US needed to show caution – well, that's a message he might take up himself.

At a basic tactical level, capturing video of the Chinese coast guard in action on smartphones and developing a communication plan that gets that footage out before Beijing spins disinformation tales of 'It wasn't us. It didn't happen. They did it first' also make sense.

Michael Shoebridge is director of the defense, strategy and national security program at ASPI.

Remarkable wartime album brings 150 sailors back to life From MOD Navy

Historians need help reuniting relatives with a unique piece of wartime Royal Navy history spanning the Atlantic. They hope to trace the descendants and relatives of every sailor hosted by a New York family during World War 2.

The Casey family from Douglaston in Queens welcomed around 150 British personnel into their home, offering the men food, pastimes and a friendly family environment away from the horrors of war.



Four sailors with Mrs Casey and one of her daughters in a New York park.

Seventy-five years later, the scrapbook the family kept, chronicling their wartime visitors, has been unearthed – prompting a global search for the men within.

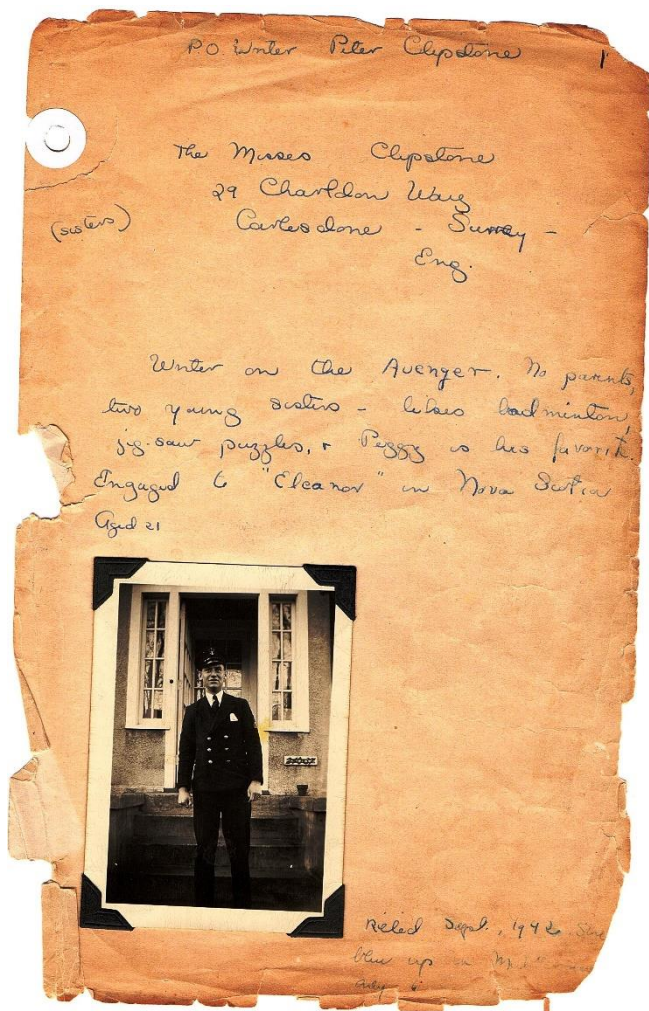
Over seven or eight years, around 150 Britons – mostly Royal Navy, but also merchant sailors and RAF personnel – enjoyed the hospitality of sailor Fraser Casey, his wife Eleanor, and their three young children Pat, Peggy and Fraser.

Some men returned to New York – perhaps after completing an Atlantic convoy run or while waiting for the ship to be repaired in Brooklyn's shipyards following battle damage. Mrs Casey kept a memento of each one – a sheet of paper with a short biography of each man, plus a photograph.

Men such as Petty Officer Writer Peter Clipstone, assigned to the escort carrier HMS Avenger, being built in Pennsylvania. Aged 21 and engaged to Eleanor from Nova Scotia, the young senior rating from Surrey was a keen badminton player and loved completing jigsaw puzzles. He died – along with most of his shipmates – when Avenger was torpedoed off North Africa in November 1942.

Able Seaman John Howard who sailed across the Atlantic on liner-turned-troopship Aquitania in November 1944 survived the war. Aged "about nineteen and a half" and from Crosby, Liverpool, John had worked in a bank before being called up and enjoyed swimming and ping-pong.

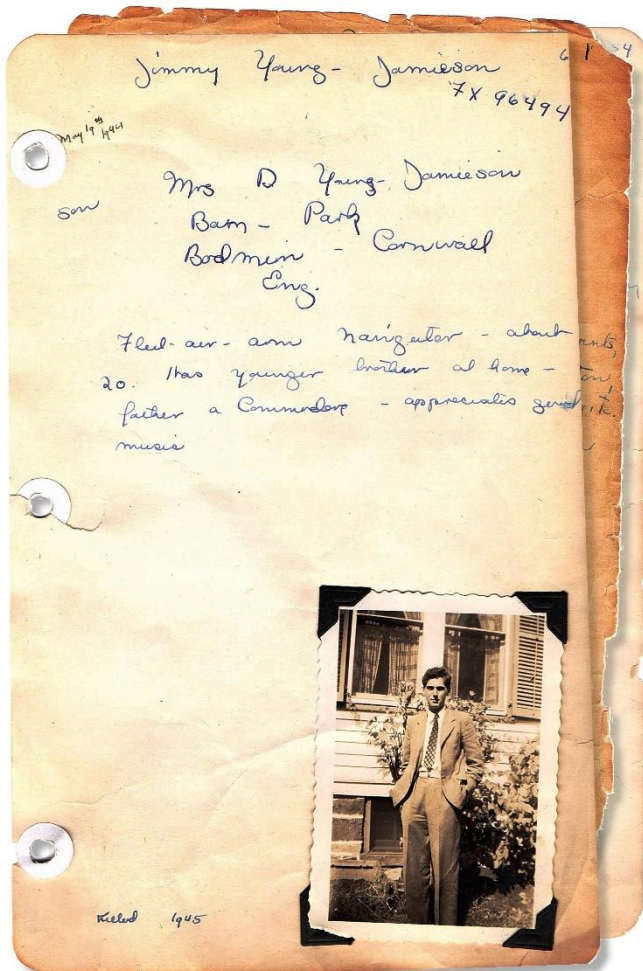
Such short pen portraits pepper the loose-leaf folder: "enjoys hot coffee and rolls", "very quiet", "plays ping pong – would like to beat me", "cannot swim", "one of the best", "likes gardening and children" and "very pleasant".



A page of the album about PO(Wtr) Peter Clipstone.



A page of the album for Tom Hibberd.



Aviator Lieutenant James Young Jamieson, killed in an accident early 1945.



PO(Wtr) Peter Clipstone who died when HMS Avenger was sunk.

Mrs Casey kept in touch with some of the families after the war – and continued to host British personnel until around 1947.

“She was an amazing woman who not only wrote to families telling them of their loved ones but sent food and clothing parcels to those families with young children,” says military researcher Gloria Winfield, who has taken on the challenge of tracking down the sailors’ families.

“In the few months we have been carrying out this work we have located some 20 or so men or families: widows, brothers, nephews, daughters, sons and so on,” she explained.

“Since this book was first started in 1940 no one has ever seen these photographs in the UK in 80 years.”

The search has extended to New Zealand, Bermuda, Canada, Isle of Man, Australia, Norway and South Africa, but it’s hindered by lack of details of many men, plus the cost of ancestry and family history checks.

You can find the names of around 125 sailors the team would like to trace and contact [Gloria](#) or her colleague [Nicola Girling](#) at [Finder Guru](#) via email to help them fill in the gaps.



**CHATHAM NAVAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
STANDING ORDER FORM
FOR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS**

I wish to make my annual subscription payments by standing order to the Chatham Naval Officers' Association.

Please complete this form and return it to the Hon Treasurer:
Lieutenant Jan Dean RNR, 79A Cherry Avenue, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7OU.

Do NOT send this form to the bank.

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Name of your Bank: _____

Address of your Bank: _____

Your Bank Sort Code: ____/____/____

Your Account Number: _____

To my bank: I request you to pay Barclays Bank, 24 Lowfield Street, Dartford, DA1 1HD, Sort Code 20.25.42, for the credit of The Chatham Naval Officers Association, Account Number 93932702, the regular sum of:

£ _____ Annually

Amount in words: _____

Starting on: ____/____/____

And continuing until* ____/____/____

Or until I give notice in writing*

Signature: _____

Date: _____

A note from the CNOA Hon. Secretary

If you enjoy the CNOA activities, why not extend an invitation to a like-minded serving or retired officer? or ask them to look at cnoa.org.uk



CHATHAM NAVAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

SURNAME		FORENAMES		DATE
HOME ADDRESS Tel. No: E Mail Address:			BUSINESS ADDRESS Tel. No: E Mail Address:	
RANK	TYPE OF COMMISSION		SPECIALISATION / AWARDS & QUALIFICATIONS	
BRIEF CAREER DETAILS				
<hr/> <p>General Data Protection Regulation: I agree that all the above details may be maintained and kept by the CNOA and RSME for the purposes of membership records and security. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to my details being published in a membership booklet.</p> <p>SIGNED.....</p>				
PRESENT OCCUPATION				
PROPOSER'S NAME	PROPOSER'S SIGNATURE		HOW LONG KNOWN	
SECONDER'S NAME	SECONDER'S SIGNATURE		HOW LONG KNOWN	