

FLAG HOIST

The Chatham Naval Officers' Association Newsletter

Dear Members

I hope all are well and enjoying the sun. Many thanks to Mark Gambell for last month's educational talk on Seamanship, it's great to see the RN leading the field with ropes. A reminder the Trafalgar dinner is Friday 10th October. Please try and support this social function. July is the last meeting and a social before we have a break in August.

Many of you will remember John Fullagar as a keen and active member who sadly crossed the bar this year with his funeral being a small family event in Taunton. Pam his widow has informed us the a scattering of his ashes with take place in Medway on Saturday 23 August. Details to follow, all are invited.

Yours Aye, Jon



Lt Cdr Jon Vanns RNR

OUT-OF-SERVICE DATES

The Ministry of Defence has publicly announced the out-of-service dates for the existing Royal Navy surface fleet as it stands in 2025.

The previously announced departure of the Albion class amphibious assault ships was no surprise being this year, together with the Wave class tankers and the last remaining Sundown class minehunter.

The Daring class guided missile destroyers will leave service by 2038 once the new Type 83 destroyer has been delivered; similarly, the last of the legacy Type 23 frigates will have been replaced by Type 31 frigates by 2035.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliaries of the Bay Class landing ship docks will no longer feature on the Ship Register from 2034, and six years later, they will be joined by the relatively new Tide class tankers.

The last of the venerable Hunt class mine countermeasure vessels, the first of which joined the fleet as long ago as 1980, will be decommissioned by 2031.

RFA Fort Victoria will leave service in 2028, the same year as all three of the Batch 1 River class offshore vessels are retired. The Batch 2 Rivers will follow them after extensive careers in 2040.

The two aircraft carriers HMS **Queen Elizabeth** and HMS **Prince of Wales**, will remain a fixture of the future fleet out to at least 2069.



F-35 Stuck in India

The F-35 from HMS **Prince of Wales** that made an emergency landing on 14th June is still on the ground at Thiruvananthapuram Airport, a week later.

Local media reports say that the initial diversion was due to very bad weather around the carrier. However, the jet subsequently developed a hydraulic and/or engine issue that prevented takeoff. An engineering team was flown in from the ship, aboard a Merlin helicopter, but was unable to effect a repair, with three failed attempts to get airborne reported so far. It is possible that the highly complex aircraft is awaiting the delivery of new parts and specialist servicing equipment. It remains parked at the airport inside a protective cordon provided by India's Central Industrial Security Force.

Air India offered hangar space for the aircraft, but this was turned down by the British, despite the jet being left in the open and exposed to monsoon weather. For now, it is preferred to keep the aircraft on the hardstanding, where it can be more easily observed. Although India is considered a friendly nation and has a good working defence relationship with the UK, it also has links with Russia, and the level of trust is not the same as would be the case with a NATO nation. The F-35 carries a significant amount of sensitive technology, and the UK would be keen to avoid it being subjected to detailed inspection by unauthorised personnel.

Opening up the aircraft for deep repair will require a clean environment, and such work in a third country may also require permission from Lockheed Martin.

As the Carrier Strike Group heads away from India, it complicates the options for returning the jet to the ship. If the aircraft can be repaired in India, it would either need to make a series of hops, refuelling in different countries, with all the diplomatic complications that may involve, or require long-range air-to-air tanker support.

HMS **Prince of Wales** is currently heading for Singapore and then on to Australia for Exercise *Talisman Sabre*, beginning in mid-July. An alternative solution would be to keep the repaired jet securely stored in India and have it rejoin the ship on the homeward leg probably sometime in late September. Another, less attractive option would be to remove the wings and return the jet to Marham aboard an RAF Globemaster.

Although there has been minimal coverage in the UK, the situation has sparked lively debate in the Indian media. As the unscheduled and high-profile stay has become extended, it is not enhancing the reputation of either the UK or the Royal Navy. One wag has even listed the jet for sale on the Indian equivalent of eBay.

Donald Trump made a verbal offer to sell F-35s to the Indian government in 2020, attempting to lure them away from their traditional reliance on (increasingly attractive) Russian military aircraft and other weaponry.

No formal discussions have begun, and an Indian purchase of the F-35 is still seen as a remote possibility. Although aircraft breakdowns are not unusual and carrier aircraft diversions do happen, having an unserviceable foreign F-35 stuck on the ground for over a week will not enhance its reputation.

CNOA Wordsearch

X M V A H R O O D E R O P E S N T V P F
 D B H J J D G E S Z J M R A U I L B S L
 P C P E I Z S U N D S K Y Y B A O A A I
 N P B P B T O V R G F L W V M T V M Z G
 O H Z U R H R Y V O I E J Y A P J Y V H
 O V N O T M W A P R L S E G R A B W M T
 G K Y H A S H B Q S R I N U I C H C O D
 S E G W Z E U W I T A P A E N E Q V O E
 R I P O R T H O L E D R L S E V D S R C
 L W H K M M G E Y R A G F L A L L I D K
 I E C B V L Z V N J R A H T C C C N R G
 H E N W V H A X D K P O N R Y L D O A H
 D D F A W N U S W N U M J C L E Q V W G
 H S A Z L T P S O S N C Q N H Z I M Z R
 F S Q A M O O R E N I G N E B O F S T M
 Z S Y B Z G Y B I F A D V M C R R A R O
 U O U B M M M J K X R R C T P H G N U G
 R M E R C H A N T N A V Y F Z N S G T M
 F E L I S S I M F Y O V Y N L N K R F L
 J H W P Z S G I D Q Q I R D W P B K X Z

Find the word in the puzzle.

Words can go in any direction.

Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

anchor
 deck
 ensign
 merchantnavy
 radar
 sailor
 wardroom

bunks
 destroyer
 flightdeck
 missile
 ropes
 sonar
 wheelhouse

captain
 engineroom
 lighthouse
 porthole
 royalnavy
 submarine

Answers on page 12

King Recognises Bravery

Two divers who safely dealt with a WW2 bomb which brought much of Plymouth to a standstill lead Royal Navy personnel honoured by The King.

Petty Officers Craig Maddock and Paul Cartwright showed both bravery and cool heads when a wartime bomb was unearthed in the Keyham district of Plymouth in February 2024.

They have been singled out for bravery awards in Operational Honours announced jointly with His Majesty's Birthday Honours.

In all, 32 sailors and Royal Marines have been decorated for deeds and commitment on the front line, to the safety and security of the UK, and to charity.

Petty Officers Maddock and Cartwright from Plymouth-based Bravo Diving Unit 1 were among hundreds of military personnel involved in the massive operation to neutralise a 500kg bomb found in a garden in Keyham.

Unearthing the bomb made national news – and caused widespread disruption due to its location in the middle of a densely-packed residential area.

PO Maddock first removed a large amount of earth and concrete by hand and limited tools to access the explosive device, accurately identified the fuses in very challenging conditions and, when the bomb was moved to safe area for transfer to a boat for disposal, he led the task to de-sensitise the two live fuses and with the device throughout to stabilise it and coordinate the extremely dangerous task.



His colleague PO Cartwright volunteered to load and drive the extremely dangerous bomb through the city, planning the route to the Torpoint ferry slipway and preparing the vehicle to take it there meticulously.

The bomb was later safely detonated in Plymouth Sound.

Both divers put the safety of the public before their own lives and demonstrated exemplary bravery throughout.

PO Cartwright, who is awarded the King's Commendation for Bravery, said:

“The entire operation to defuse and move the bomb from St Michael Avenue in Keyham was a team effort, which saw every member of Bravo Diving Unit 1 work around the clock for three days to achieve the best outcome possible for the local community.

“Whilst I am extremely honoured – and humbled – to receive this award, my contribution to the operation was no more valuable than that of all the military personnel and first responders that week.

“The most important thing is that the people of Keyham were able to go back to their homes once we had completed the operation.”



His colleague PO Maddock earns the King's Gallantry Medal for his actions – although like his colleague he ascribes the successful operation to a collective effort.

The “Shetland Bus” Operation

To commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day, six of the historic ships that formed part of the Shetland Bus convoys set sail in late April from Bergen, in Norway, replicating the voyage to Lerwick that was undertaken during World War II before sailing on to Aberdeen and Edinburgh.

The ‘Shetland Bus’ was a clandestine operation to help the resistance in Nazi-occupied Norway during the war. In winter, and under cover of darkness, convoys of small fishing boats left the safety of Scotland’s most northerly islands to deliver weapons, and special agents, to coves and fishing ports 200 miles away along the coast of Norway.

On the return journeys, refugees fleeing the occupation were hidden in the holds of the fishing boats, as they sought sanctuary in the British Isles.

The historic vessels, including the steamer **Hestmanden**, the fishing boats **Erkna**, **Heland** and **Arndholmen**, and the transport boat **Arnefjord**, arrived in Lerwick on 6th May, being greeted by a Viking longboat, lifeboats, and a floating salute. The convoy was organised by Norwegian and British maritime museums and volunteers, with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Defence and Navy.

In July 1940 Winston Churchill set up the Special Operations Executive with the aim of carrying out espionage and sabotage missions across Nazi German-occupied Europe. The ‘Shetland Bus’ convoys were part of this, supporting the resistance in Norway, between 1940 and 1945 they made 200 North Sea crossings, transporting resistance agents, weapons and supplies, and rescuing more than 300 Norwegian refugees fleeing the occupation.



The 1911-built Norwegian steamer Hestmanden passing Bressay lighthouse at the entrance to Lerwick harbour. Since 2017 she has served as Norsk krigsseilermuseum [the Norwegian War Sailor Museum] and a national memorial for the War Sailors. She is the only preserved cargo ship to have sailed in convoys

RN “Rescues” Swedish Submarine

HMS **Dasher** responded to the plea for help and conducted what is believed to be the first ever re-supply by the class of fast patrol boats and a submarine in their near-40-year careers, sending ground coffee across to their allies in the mid-ocean.



The special delivery was a light-hearted moment in the middle of an otherwise very serious NATO exercise to bolster safety and security in the region which has been taking place for the past ten days or so. Baltops has been running since the early 1970s with the 54th run-out involving around 50 ships, submarines and support vessels, more than two-dozen aircraft, and around 9,000 personnel from 17 nations, spread across an area from Jutland and the Great Belt in the West to the Bay of Gdańsk – about 40,000 square miles.

Six Royal Navy P2000 patrol boats from the Coastal Forces Squadron have been committed to Baltops, and end participation by attending the world's largest sailing/yachting festival, Kiel Week, which begins on Saturday in the namesake German port.



The fast boats – HMS **Archer**, **Biter**, **Dasher**, **Example**, **Pursuer** and **Smiter** – are committed to the exercise; two are conducting extensive work with the Royal Navy's Mine Threat and Exploitation Group, who've been using the craft as launchpads for the latest robot tech monitoring the underwater battlespace through uncrewed underwater vehicles (UUVs).

It was during a break in one of these ‘attacks’ that **Dasher's** crew received orders to help out the submarine – or u-båt (pronounced ‘ew-boht’) in Swedish – in the mid-Baltic after the 24 crew reported they'd nothing left aboard their boat to wash down their morning cereal.

Due to their size and regular role, patrol boats like **Dasher** do not have the full panoply of weapons, sensors and systems you'd expect to find in a major warship and need special NATO communications kit on board to deal with top-secret submarine communications (the name of the boat and the location of the rendezvous are classified).

Rather than simply handing over the emergency rations, Seamanship Specialist Able Seaman Cody Prince threw a heaving line to the submarine.

A waterproof bag, stashed with coffee and Italian biscuits, was passed over safely and the coffee crisis averted. After the transfer was complete, **Dasher** sped away at 20 knots back to her base for the evening.

As for the rest of Baltops, it's proved to be extremely useful: HMS **Example** and **Smiter** have been working with UK and Lithuanian dive teams experimenting – successfully – with underwater autonomous devices to locate contacts on the seabed.

The tactics being developed by the remaining four P2000s for surface attacks, has shown them that working in groups of two or more is far more effective than individually, not merely when it comes to charging at major warships, but in building up a comprehensive picture of targets to determine the best place and time to strike.



CNOA Bursaries

The President, Chairman and Committee of CNOA are pleased to announce the establishment of a fund to provide CNOA Memorial Bursaries, in memory of Officers and Members of The Chatham Naval Officers Association who have crossed the bar.

The Bursaries have been co-founded and sponsored by Kent County Councillors Mr Alan Ridgers (CNOA Committee member) and Mr Jordan Meade, who have successfully recommended this scheme for a Kent County Council Community Grant and Dr Martin Watts (Hon Sec).

Cadets should apply on a single page A4 document, and include name, age, unit, unit contact details, course applied for, cost and amount applied for (up to £100). The application should also include reason(s) as to why CNOA should sponsor them, where possible written by the cadet, and always endorsed and signed by the unit CO. Example templates for these can be seen opposite.

For further information please visit the CNOA website

<https://cnoa.org.uk/CNOA-Bursaries/>



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE
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Kent, TN1 2PF

www.linktr.ee/tsbrilliant

President:
Commodore B Bryant CVO Royal Navy

01022 322000

Email:
admin@tsbrilliant.org.uk

Commanding Officer:
LT (SCC) M Vanns RNR

Date: xx xxx xxxx

CHATHAM NAVAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION BURSARY APPLICATION

Cadet Surname: xxxxx **Cadet First Name:** xxxxx
Cadet Rate: xxxxx **Age:** xx
Unit location: xxxxx **Course:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Dear Chatham Naval Officers Association,

My name is xxxxxx and I am a member of *insert name organisation/unit here*. I am writing to request consideration for a bursary towards the cost of the above course. The total cost of the course is £xxx, excluding transport costs.

Attending this course will give me an opportunity to *expand my knowledge and understanding of how power vessels operate and how they navigate. I will also gain knowledge on practical maritime engineering, catering and what to do in an emergency situation. (Adapt opportunity description as required)*

During my specialisation training within Sea Cadets Marine Engineering is an area that I really enjoy and I am keen to progress in. So being on a working power vessel for a week will be an incredible experience. *(Adapt this as required to reflect what the applicant sees as the most important benefit to be gained from the course)*

I would greatly appreciate any assistance CNOA could provide and would be willing on my return to provide a written account of my experience or to give a short presentation to your members.

Yours aye,

Applicant name, rate and signature

CO Name, rank and signature

**Matthew Vanns, GCGI
Lieutenant (SCC) Royal Naval Reserve**

To Be Put On The Organisation/Unit Letterheaded Paper:

Cadet Surname: Cadet Forename: Cadet Rate/Rank:
Age: Unit Location: Course:

Date: xx/xx/xxxx

Dear Chatham Naval Officers Association,

Commanding Officer/Officer in Charge Endorsement:

Commanding Officer/OIC to write 2 or 3 sentences supporting the application and confirming the benefits of attending the course....

I fully support this application for a CNOA bursary and have no hesitation in recommending (name the applicant) for (name the course), in pursuit of personal and unit development.

Yours aye,

CO/OIC Signature, Name & Rank

CHATHAM NAVAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS



Joining Fee and Annual Subscription

With effect from 20th March 2023, new members will be required to pay a joining fee of £30 by cheque or transfer to CNOA at the following bank:

Metro Bank Sort code 23 05 80 Account 50484076

Cost £20 PA payable to Chatham Naval Officers Association

Address if required 2 Calverly Road, Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 2TB

On receipt of the joining fee new members will receive an Association tie or scarf and lapel badge. The Annual Subscription of £20 applies from the date of joining if this occurs before 1st July, and then will be renewed by Standing Order from the following 1st January.

New members who join after 1st July will be required to submit a Standing order from the following 1st January.

Annual Subscription – Current members

The annual subscription remains at £20 and, with effect from 1 January 2024, the subscription will be payable annually on that date. In the first instance, and to allow members time to alter their current standing order dates, a transition period of 3 months, to 31st March 2024 will be in place, after which an audit and follow up process will be undertaken.

CHATHAM NAVAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL STANDING ORDER FORM

Please complete this form and return it to the Hon Treasurer: Lieutenant Jan Dean RNR, 79A Cherry Avenue, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7OU, or, if you prefer, you can scan a copy and email it to cnoauk@gmail.com. You can arrange a standing order electronically via your bank and, for those using traditional banking methods this form can be used to inform your bank of your instructions as below.

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

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Name of your Bank: _____

Address of your Bank: _____

Your Bank Sort Code: ____/____/____

Your Account Number: _____

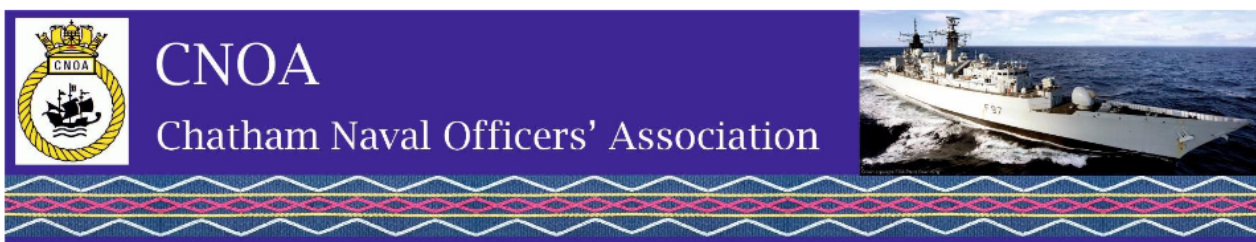
To my bank:

I request you to pay the regular sum of: £20 PA

Metro Bank sort code 23 05 80 account 50484076

Payable to Chatham Naval Officers Association

Address if required 2 Calverly Road, Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 2TB



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



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				
<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		

HMS Glasgow

The Princess of Wales officially named the Type 26 frigate HMS **Glasgow** when she smashed a bottle of Scottish whisky across her bows at the BAE shipyard in Glasgow where she is being built. She is expected to enter operational service with the Royal Navy in 2028.



The undersea world is a murky, dark and alien environment, and one best suited not for humans but for autonomous unmanned vehicles.

The Royal Navy has purchased a new 12-metre-long submersible, named **XV Excalibur**, after the legendary sword of King Arthur, and its acquisition marks a milestone in the history of the Royal Navy's Silent Service. The **Extra Large Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle [XLUUV] XV Excalibur** is the climax of the Royal Navy's three-year **Project Cetus** programme that sought to acquire the most advanced unmanned underwater systems on the worldwide market. At 19 tons and twelve meters in length, **XV Excalibur** is the largest such vehicle to serve in the Royal Navy to date and was designed and built by Plymouth-based MSubs. For the submersible, its purchase by the Royal Navy is but the start of at least two years of intensive trials and testing with the Royal Navy's Disruptive

Capabilities and Technologies Office with the ultimate aim being to field flotillas of such vessels into the North Atlantic for reconnaissance, surveillance and other classified missions.

It was formally unveiled and named **Excalibur** at HMNB Devonport in front of 200 esteemed guests and VIPs including Rear Admiral James Parkin, Navy Director Develop, representatives from AUKUS nations, trainees from across the navy and cadets.

Lessons Learned

Commodore Marcus Rose, deputy director Underwater Battlespace Capability, said: "The naming of **Excalibur** is a significant milestone for the Royal Navy and the upcoming sea trials will allow us to rapidly develop our understanding of operating uncrewed vessels of this size underwater.

"The lessons learnt from this exciting programme will build on our experience from existing programmes, such as the Mine Hunting capability programme, to inform more extensive use of these technologies in a mixed force of crewed and uncrewed systems.

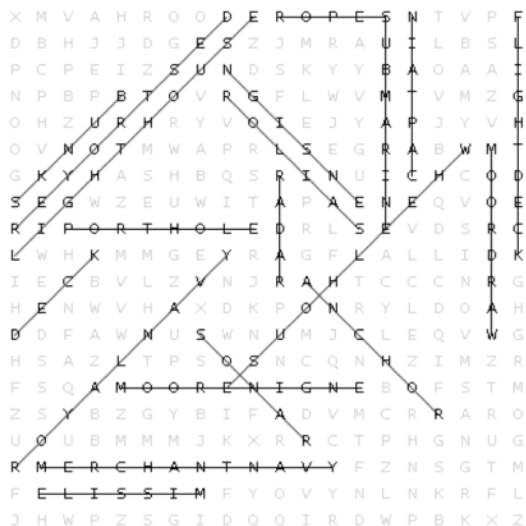
"Successful delivery of this programme is testament to what can be achieved in collaboration with our industrial partners."



CNOA Events Programme

Date	Speaker / Activity	Subject	Comment
10 January	Martin Watts	Gallipoli 1915	Virtual Meeting
14 February	AGM		
14 March	Derek Goodwin	LNG Bunkers, Cold Ironing and Scrubbers	
11 April	Social Evening		
26 April	Easter Lunch	Maidstone Masonic Centre	
9 May	Guy Bartlett	"Eat Your Carrots!" The Story of Radar	
13 June	Mark Gambell	Seamanship	
11 July	Summer Social Evening		
August	No Meeting Summer Leave		
12 September	Mark Bathurst	The History of Paddle Steamer Medway Queen	
10 October	Trafalgar Dinner		
14 November	Peter Gilbert & Barry Bryant	Santa Fe & South Georgia - Hunter and Hunted	
12 December	President's Christmas Social		

Wordsearch Answers



Submissions For Flag Hoist

Any member who wishes to submit an article to be considered for publication in Flag Hoist is actively encouraged to do so.

We have a number of members who regularly contribute and this is most welcome.

Please be aware that any submission received after the 21st of the month will be considered for publication the following month.



The War Game

Sky News has recently produced a series of five, 1 hour podcasts entitled The War Game.

A top team of former government ministers and military and security chiefs have taken part in a war-game that simulates a Russian attack on the UK. Among the line-up, Sir Ben Wallace, a former Conservative defence secretary, plays the prime minister; Jack Straw, senior Labour politician, resumes his old job as foreign secretary; Amber Rudd steps back into her former role as home secretary. Russia knows our weaknesses... Do you? Well worth a listen, click the link below.

https://open.spotify.com/episode/24V3CrPvYVI9vHK5F7pwUJ?si=zzEZb_DoTdWxROPyAGD4yA



CNOA
Chatham Naval Officers' Association



Royal Engineers Museum - CNOA Mulberry Event

The Royal Engineers Museum, located next to RSME, is holding a Mulberry Harbour Exhibition later this year, and we have arranged a special event for CNOA members in recognition of its special interest to the naval community.

The Royal Engineers drew up the first plans and models for the Mulberry Harbour project and this is a rare opportunity to see exhibits from the Museum's archives.

Details:

Date : Tuesday 23 September 2025

Place and Time: Meet in the Car Park of the Museum at 1100

1115 Tour with talk by Martin Watts

1230 Buffet Lunch in main building

Cost: £15 per person

Free access to the main museum after lunch

Due to space limitations, there is a cap of 20 persons for this event. If you wish to attend please email Hon Sec at cnoauk@gmail.com and places will be awarded on a first come first served basis. Menu and payment details will be provided in due course.



