

# FLAG HOIST

## *The Chatham Naval Officers' Association Newsletter*

Dear Members,

I hope to see many of you at the Trafalgar dinner on the 10th October. The application date has passed and I am delighted we have 81 attending.



*Lt Cdr Jon Vanns RNR*

I want to thank your committee for their support in making this event happen.

Dr Martin Watts held a lecture at the RE Museum on Tuesday 23 September to educate us on the Mulberry Harbours.

As you would expect from Martin this was a fascinating talk that included learning how it came into being, why it was critical and how and where it was built. Martin, thank you.

### **Plans To Revive Sail Training**

According to Navy Lookout, the RN is planning to charter a traditional tall ship in 2026 to provide junior personnel with practical training under sail, reviving an approach not seen in decades.

The initiative follows a series of trials aboard the Pelican of London, a British-flagged square-rigged sail training vessel, which demonstrated the value of traditional seamanship in developing core naval skills.

Operating mainly in the Irish Sea and the Bristol Channel, the Pelican has taken trainee officers and sailors on coastal voyages, visiting ports including Liverpool, Dublin, Belfast and Dartmouth.

The experience has been used to supplement the training pipeline, particularly for those waiting to begin formal courses, where space on operational warships is often limited.

Training on a sailing vessel allows sailors to focus on fundamental skills such as navigation, watch-keeping, leadership and teamwork in a live environment.

The ship typically carries 32 trainees and four instructors at a time, offering a focused training setting, outside of the distractions of a modern warship.

The trials have also demonstrated strong secondary benefits, including improved morale, increased confidence, and early exposure to the realities of life at sea.

Participants have gained first-hand experience of shared responsibility, fatigue management, and small team dynamics, conditions often difficult to replicate ashore or in simulators.

Lastly we have a committee meeting in November if you have anything you'd like raised please let Martin know.

Yours Aye,  
Jon

# Naval News



The Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) aviation training ship RFA **Argus** arrived in Portsmouth Dockyard having been refitted at Falmouth, only to have her seaworthiness certificates removed by Lloyds Register.

Several hazardous items were discovered on board following an inspection that has left the ship alongside and unable to be moved, even to a nearby dry dock for work to be undertaken.

This led to speculation that the nearly 50-year-old ship will be the next vessel to be decommissioned from an already undermanned and overworked RFA.

If RFA **Argus** were to be retired from service it would be another blow to the British amphibious capability, following the withdrawal from service of the two assault ships HMS **Bulwark** and HMS **Albion**, as RFA **Argus**, together with the three Bay class landing ships also operated by the RFA, is what remains of Britain's ability to land troops and supplies ashore.

What is more, all three Bay class landing ships were - at the time of writing - in refit or held in reserve.

RFA **Argus** was one of the ships taken up from trade by the MOD for use in the 1982 Falklands War. During this period, she was used as an aircraft transport, ferrying aircraft on deck.

In 1991, RFA **Argus** saw action during the Gulf War, she was fitted with an extensive and fully functional hospital to assume the additional role of Primary Casualty Receiving Ship.

In 2009 principal role changes were made to that of a Primary Casualty Receiving Ship. During the subsequent refit, a ramp for casualty transport replaced one of the aircraft hangars.

## British Prestige Tarnished?

In another blow to British prestige and tradition, it appears, although not confirmed by Government, that following the signing of the US-Bahrain C-SIPA agreement in June the British will reduce their military presence in the Middle East, including the possible withdrawal of their only forward-deployed Type 23 frigate HMS **Lancaster**, from the region at the end of her current deployment without replacement.

This is perhaps not surprising, considering that the Royal Navy's frigate force is at its lowest level in history, with just nine nominally available hulls, and to have one away from the North Atlantic is perhaps misuse of precious resources when Bahraini and US forces are available in the region.

If HMS **Lancaster's** withdrawal is confirmed, it is another example of how far the Royal Navy has sunk below a credible force level.

# Burial At Sea



'Arguably the most powerful ceremony of the sea is that which consigns mortal remains to the deep.'

As far as anyone knows, the tradition of burial at sea has been in practice for as long as people have gone to sea. In earlier times, the body was sewn into a weighted shroud, usually sailcloth. The body was then sent over the side, usually with an appropriate religious ceremony. Many burials at sea took place as recently as World War II when naval forces operated at sea for weeks and months at a time.

*"The sea is the largest cemetery, and its slumbers sleep without a monument.*

*"All other graveyards show symbols of distinction between great and small, rich and poor: but in the ocean cemetery, the king, the clown, the prince and the peasant are alike, undistinguishable."*

George Bruce, 1884, St Andrews

On a voyage to Angola, scurvy tore through a ship on which Carl Peter Thunberg, a botanist and physician, was aboard. He remembered later:

*Five men had been reported dead, all of them had been sewn up in their hammocks, and two had already been thrown overboard,*

*when the third, the instant he was put on the plank, called out, 'Master Boatswain, I am alive still!' to which the Boatswain with unreasonable jocularly replied, - 'You're alive indeed! What!? Do you pretend to know better than the surgeon?'*

Tradition had it that the corpse should be wrapped in a simple sheet or hammock and as the body is being stitched up then the final stitch should be through the poor souls' nose to ensure that he is truly dead.

18th and 19th century American and British sailors who died at sea were wrapped in a sailcloth shroud with a few cannonballs or leg irons as ballast and then sent overboard.

You may recall that Osama Bin Laden's body was dropped from the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson into the Arabian Sea. According to the Pentagon, the hours-old corpse had been washed and placed in a simple white sheet in accordance with Islamic practice. It was then sealed inside a weighted bag and laid on top of a board, which was tilted until "the body slid off into the sea."

Back on land, the controversy surrounding Bin Laden's last splash was just beginning. But beneath the waves, nature was taking its course, quietly and methodically turning the world's most-wanted terrorist into fish food. You could say Osama bin Laden had received the ultimate green burial, courtesy of the United States Navy.

Sir Francis Drake the English explorer, sea captain, privateer, slave trader, naval officer, politician and navigator died at sea in 1596 and his body, clad in a full suit of armour and in a lead coffin, is thought to have been committed to the deep off the coast of Panama.

# Naval Burial At Sea

There are both religious and military components of the Royal Navy disposition ceremony. The reading of Scripture and prayers, the committal, and the benediction constitutes the religious part and may be performed by the chaplain, commanding officer, or an officer designated by him/her. All other aspects of the ceremony are performed by other military personnel.

For at sea disposition, the casketed remains are covered with the Union Flag. It is to be placed over the coffin with the Head of the Flag [Upper Left Quadrant] over the left shoulder of the deceased, the cap and sword of the deceased are not displayed.

The selected place - usually aft or amidships, depending on the layout of the ship - for committal is cleared and rigged so that when the wrapped remains are brought on deck they may be placed securely on a stand, if necessary, with feet overboard at right angles to and extending over the side of the launching.

The Naval Prayer "O eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens and rulest the raging of the sea; who hast compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end: Be pleased to receive into thy almighty and most gracious protection the persons of us thy servants and the Fleet in which we serve"

The Navy conducts its own burials at sea, for those veterans who wish it. For more detailed information you should contact the chaplain at the base from which the dead person served.

There are only three designated burial sites in English coastal waters. They are at Newhaven in East Sussex, The Needles Spoil Ground near the Isle of Wight and Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear.

In some rare cases, bodies do drift. Because of this, the person buried must have an identification tag secured to them.

## The Needles Spoil Ground

The Marine Management Organisation has announced changes to the licensing conditions for human burials at sea for the sea burial site at The Needles off the Isle of Wight.

Those who wish a sea burial will have DNA extracted from the body prior to them being laid to rest in this designated site.

This follows a number of cases over many years where body parts have been washed ashore on the Island. In future, if body parts are found, they will be matched and identified, saving H.M. senior coroner and the police from having to obtain DNA from families of recent sea burials to identify the body and potentially mounting a suspicious death inquiry.

This was initiated by the Isle of Wight senior coroner Caroline Sumeray, led by the UK Missing Persons Unit, and working with various other partners, including Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, the Home Office Forensic Pathology Unit, the Home Office Missing Persons DNA Database, the Human Tissue Authority and the Ministry of Justice.



**Admiral Sir Trevor Alan Soar**, KCB, OBE, DL is a retired Royal Navy officer who served as Commander-in-Chief. Trevor Soar is married to Anne Matlock. They have two sons, Gareth and David

Admiral Trevor Soar commanded the submarines HMS **Ocelot** (which is now part of the Chatham Historic Dockyard) from 1987 to 1990 and HMS **Talent** from 1991 to 1994. He commanded the frigate HMS **Chatham** from 1997 to 1998.

His next appointment was ashore as Director of Naval Staff Duties at the Ministry of Defence from September 2000 to August 2002.

Next appointed as commanding officer of the aircraft carrier HMS **Invincible** from 2002 to 2004.

Trevor Soar was appointed Capability Manager [Precision Attack] in 2004 in the rank of rear admiral and was promoted to Chief of Material [Fleet], Defence Equipment and Support in the rank of vice admiral in 2007.

Soar was promoted to admiral and appointed as Commander-in-Chief Fleet and Allied Maritime Component Commander, Northwood, on 10 June 2009.

He also held the honorary position of Vice-Admiral of the United Kingdom from 2009 to 2012.

His role as Allied Maritime Component Commander, Northwood was redesigned as Commander Allied Maritime Command in 2010.

In an October 2012 article, the *Sunday Times* alleged that Soar was among several retired military leaders who had offered to lobby and influence MPs and government defence ministers on behalf of arms firms.

He resigned, after admitting he had to be slightly careful of lobbying ministers.

*"There's no reason I can't see them but there's again some criteria on that."*

However, he claimed that he had not broken Whitehall rules.



HMS Ocelot

HMS **Ocelot** was laid down by Chatham Dockyard on 17 November 1960, and launched on 5 May 1962.

The boat was commissioned into the Royal Navy on 31 January 1964. HMS **Ocelot** was the last submarine built for the Royal Navy at Chatham Dockyard.

After commissioning, HMS **Ocelot** was assigned to the 3rd Submarine Squadron, based at HMNB Clyde, in Faslane, serving there for three years.

# 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  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent, TN1 2PF

[www.linktr.ee/tsbrilliant](http://www.linktr.ee/tsbrilliant)

President:  
Commodore B Bryant CVO Royal Navy

01022 322000

Email:  
[admin@tsbrilliant.org.uk](mailto: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: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

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:**

Date: xx/xx/xxxx

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

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> July, and then will be renewed by Standing Order from the following 1<sup>st</sup> January.**

**New members who join after 1<sup>st</sup> July will be required to submit a Standing order from the following 1<sup>st</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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: \_\_\_\_\_

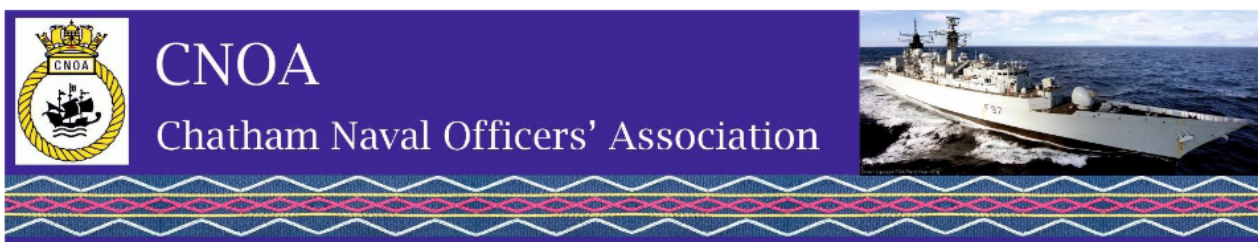
To my bank:

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](http://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><b>General Data Protection Regulation:</b> 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><b>SIGNED</b>.....</p>				
PRESENT OCCUPATION				
PROPOSER'S NAME	PROPOSER'S SIGNATURE	HOW LONG KNOWN		
SECONDER'S NAME	SECONDER'S SIGNATURE	HOW LONG KNOWN		

## Remembering The Sacrifice



Dr Martin Watts, Hon Sec, representing CNOA at Maidstone VJ Event

At 1900 on Thursday 14 August, Maidstone held an Act of Remembrance for VJ day at the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Memorial in Brenchley Gardens, Maidstone. It was led by our own Andrew Royal and attended by SCC, RNA, Gurkha and veteran representatives accompanied by Royal British Legion standard bearers. Your Hon Sec had the privilege of laying a wreath alongside the Mayor, High Sheriff and Gurkha C O and RSM.

This was a particularly poignant venue as the West Kents and the Gurkhas fought a Japanese army to a standstill, at terrible cost, at Kohima, thereby denying the enemy entry to India and contributing to the end of the war in the Far East. Indeed, Kohima is forever associated with this famous epitaph, originally written at the end of the First World War :

'When you go home, tell them of us and say, For your tomorrow we gave our today.'



# 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		

## The Association of Royal Navy Officers








Do you want to....

Support your Charity?

Make significant savings with High Street brands?

Take advantage of competitive RAC breakdown cover?

Be able to spend four nights per year at a London Club?

Attend events and network with like minded people?

JOIN HERE



www.arno.org.uk

If not, why not? This really makes sense...








### Port Sponsorship

Ladies and Gentlemen,

ARNO have been asked to provide the Port for our event today. ARNO are very happy to sponsor Port for such events and do so with the aim of rewarding those that are already members and hopefully encouraging those who have yet to take the plunge to do so.

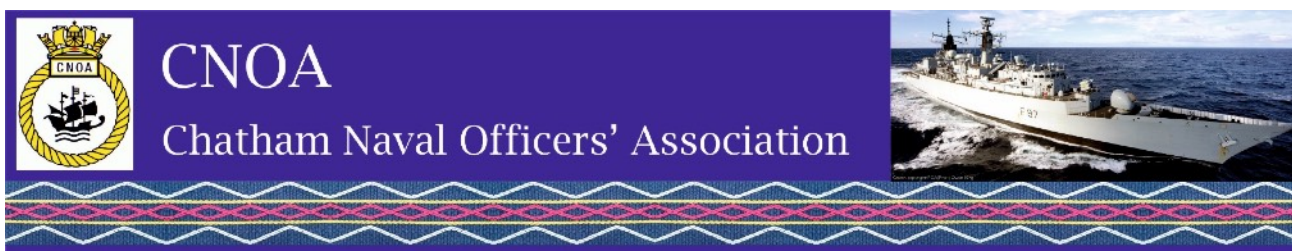
As a member, ARNO offers:

- Highly competitive RAC cover starting at £60 **per year**
- Access to ARNO Rewards, a discount app – savings on your weekly shop will cover your subscription in the first few months of use easily.
- 3 hard copy publications per year
- Twice weekly emails updating members on latest association news and offers.
- Branded merchandise including ARNO Gin, Gin Pennants and various Cards.
- Exclusive ARNO events. Trafalgar night in 2023 was celebrated on board HMV Britannia and Carols at St James Palace. Last years' Church Service was held at The Chapel Royal of All Saints in Windsor, followed by a Sunday lunch at The York Club in Great Windsor Park. We also had lunches at The Royal Scots Club and Salcombe Yacht Club, a Golf Day on the Downs Course at Goodwood and Carol Service in HMS Excellent. We have also arranged Ship's visits to HMS Queen Elizabeth and XV Patrick Blackett and hope to do so again in 2025. The Church service this year will be held at the Savoy Chapel followed by lunch in HMS Wellington.
- Numerous networking opportunities
- Large range of pre-loved *quality* uniform including the elusive Senior Officer Mess Kit and swords at **very** reasonable prices.

### Royal Navy Officers' Charity

In addition, through our sister organisation the RNOC, last year we awarded grants in excess of £560,000K and over the last four years, over £2million. The RNOC receives **no public funding or financial support from the RNRMC (who fund projects and facilities, but do not directly provide individual benevolence)**, yet each year provides grants covering a wide range of circumstances from debts, counselling, general support, education, mobility aids, respite, through to end-of-life expenses. Last year, minus annuitants, 42% of grants have been awarded to Serving personnel and those under 50.

**Membership of ARNO is not a pre-requisite for assistance from the RNOC, but membership helps benevolence to be delivered at very little cost meaning almost all income can be spent on the key output.** You can join here: <https://www.arno.org.uk/join/>



# CNOA Bursaries - A Thank You

Dear Chatham Naval Officer's Association,

I just wanted to give my heartfelt thanks for the opportunity you afforded me to attend the Cadet Drill Instructors Course. I am delighted to say that I passed the course, and I am now a drill instructor for my unit.

My week at HMS Raleigh was so exciting – being able to see the giant parade square and the infamous drill sheds was an amazing experience. While most of the base was on summer leave, the Royal Marine band wasn't, being able to hear them practicing in the West Drill Shed or on the parade square for their upcoming trip to Japan was unforgettable.

The course itself was so insightful into how drill and parades work at a larger scale within the Corps, and the role that as a drill instructor I get to fill and participate in.

I am so excited to be able to grow Gravesend Unit's capabilities and drill standards, and the individual confidence of each cadet in our unit, giving them the opportunities and personal growth has given me. Being a cadet drill instructor was my goal as a senior cadet for two reasons: A personal mark of achievement – showing myself the dedication I have put into cadets and, hopefully, as a demonstration to new cadets what cadets can give you.

I am very grateful for your support, and I want to assure you that it will be forwarded on from myself to others. With my limited time as a cadet and as I begin my time as a CFAV, I endeavour to be able to give support to cadets to help them progress and, most importantly, enjoy their time at cadets.

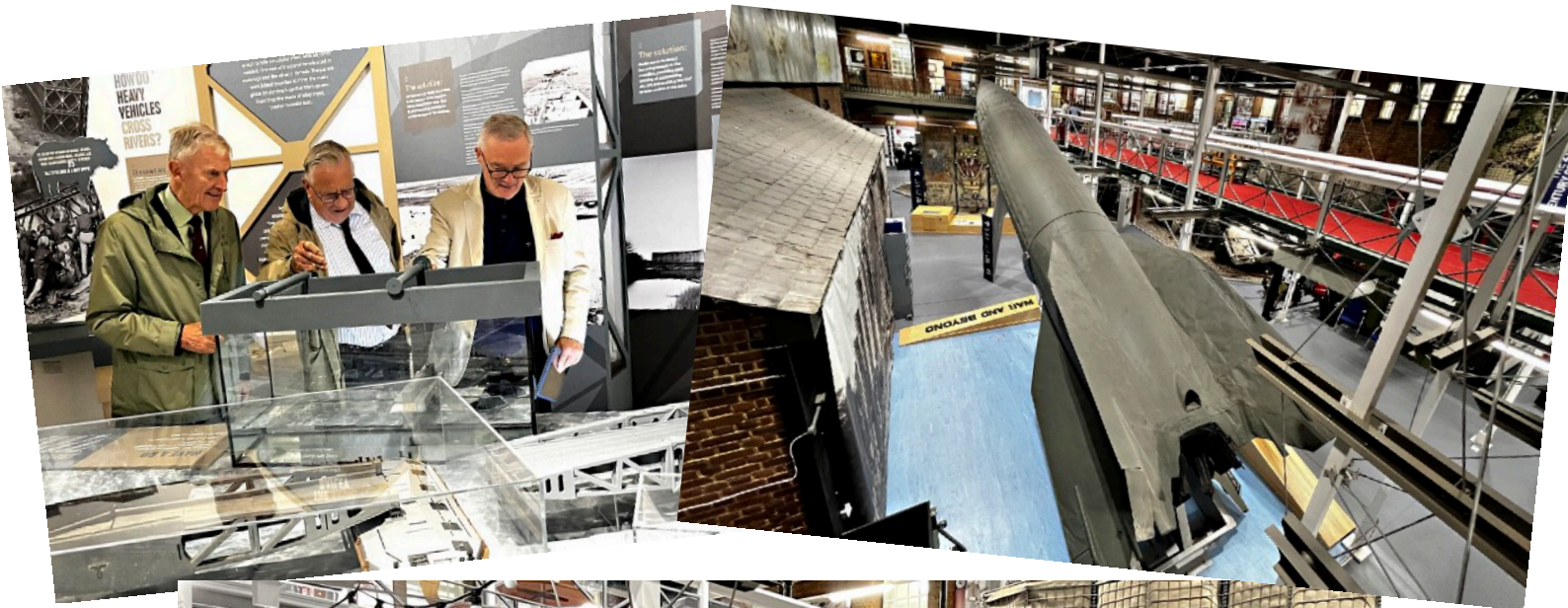
Thank you all, so much for this experience,


Warm Regards,  
LC Hannon



# CNOA Visit To RE Museum, Gillingham

Some members of the CNOA were able to visit the Royal Engineers Museum on the 23rd September. Barry Duffield supplied the following images of what was clearly an interesting, and well attended, event.



 **CNOA**  
Chatham Naval Officers' Association

