

Fleet Air Arm Association Newsletter
Spring 2026 Issue



Note from the editor

The sun is shining and the flowers are blooming, welcome to the spring edition of the Fleet Air Arm Association newsletter.

So have any of you been in touch with old shipmates and recommended the Fleet Air Arm Association as a great place to join, new members are always welcome. The number of branches we have is shrinking so lets try and reverse the trend and sign up some friends or even get a branch going in the area that you live.

I hope you enjoyed the last edition of the newsletter, and that this issue is also of interest to you.

Please let me know if there is anything that you would like to see featured in future copy, and I will see what I can find out and include. I thought maybe some reminiscences of your favourite postings might be a good place to start – so please do get in touch.

Any time you want to get in touch with me please email me direct on editor.faaa.newsletter@gmail.com or leave me a message on the Fleet Air Arm Association website at www.faaa.org.uk

Cutoff date for entries into the *Autumn 2026* edition is *31 October 2026*, if you can please email me any inclusions editor.faaa.newsletter@gmail.com

Regards

Jan Smith

FAAA newsletter editor

Association Officers

Patron:

**Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns KCB.
CBE. ADC**



President:

Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham CBE



Vice Presidents:

**Fred Wadley, Ben Worship, Peter
Murray**

Chairman:

Dave Smith

Vice Chairman:

Vacant Post

Treasurer:

Alan Key

Secretary:

Vacant Post

Standard Bearer:

Jeffery Edwards

Branches

Daedalus

This is the HQ branch , for those who do not have or don't want to join their local branch.

Membership Secretary: Mick Wyatt

Daedalus.sec@btinternet.com

Kent

Branch Secretary: Mike Foote

m.j.foote@btinternet.com

Solent

Branch Secretary: David Whymark

Whymark1@gmail.com

South Downs

Branch Secretary: Michael Maddox

m.maddox801@gmail.com

Weymouth / Portland

Branch Secretary: Ian Tate

faaa.wpsecretary@outlook.com

List of accoutrements on sale from the Treasurer

Alan.key899@gmail.com

Tel: 02392598000

Item	Cost inc P&P £
Silk Blazer Badge	19.00
Ties	12.25
Beret Badges – Gold Wire	16.50
Baseball Caps	12.50
Lapel Badges	2.50
Life Lapel Badges	1.75
Plastic Medal Holder – Standard Medal Size	5.00
Plastic Medal Holders – Miniatures	3.50
Car Stickers	1.00
Cummerbund	26.00



Branch updates

South Downs Branch

The branch meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month from January to September; we hold a Trafalgar luncheon in October, a Taranto luncheon in November, and a Christmas 'social' in December. The meetings take place from 11.00 to 13.00 at The Castle Inn Hotel, Bramber, West Sussex BN44 3WE.

The meetings generally start with coffee followed by a short 'business' meeting and then a speaker will hold the floor for about 45 minutes. Some members then stay on for a bite to eat.

The AGM etc take place at the January meeting – it is a great time and place for ideas etc to be discussed and to wish the new year in with a toast!

You can be assured of a friendly welcome at the South Downs Branch – their small membership includes former Wrens and civil aviators as well as FAA engineers and aircrew.

At their March meeting there was a talk on Global Warming which was most informative. The meeting concluded with a celebratory drink and thanks being offered to Carole Sharpe, who was retiring from her role as Secretary of the branch, for the enormous contribution she had made to the success of the Southdown Branch over the past decade. The role of secretary has now been taken on by Mike Maddox, and he is wished every success in it.

Up coming events are:

Wednesday 27 May	The Naval Attache – Mike Maddox
Wednesday 24 June	'The Great Escape' - Stuart Saunderson
Wednesday 22 July	Summer Outing - Brighton City Airport
Wednesday 26 August	Alan Bristow – Bill McNaught
Wednesday 23 September	TBA
Wednesday 21 October	Trafalgar Luncheon
Wednesday 18 November	Taranto Luncheon
Wednesday 16 December	Social Gathering

Weymouth and Portland Branch

The branch meet at Weymouth & Melcombe Regis Woking Men's Club, Mitchell Street, Weymouth on 1st Friday of every month at 19:30.

The branch continues to grow in numbers and the committee and Branch Members organise and participate in an active ceremonial and social programme throughout the year.

Association Interactions with The David Ellis Charity

The David Ellis Charity conducted a one day First Aid Course for a several members of the Branch hosted by Dorchester Rugby Club. This provided an opportunity for participants to socialise and gain a valuable transferable skill and achieve a recognised civilian qualification whilst fulfilling the charity's Armed Forces Covenant pledge to promote the welfare of veterans, reservists, and their families.



David Ellis Charity – 'PARAS'10' Virtual 10-mile Challenge

Several Members took part in this Airborne Forces related event to follow a circular 10-mile route toting a 35kg backpack and visiting local war memorials on the route followed by a carvery lunch in Weymouth.



Christmas Branch Meeting & Christmas Raffle & Members Draw

Over fifty members turned out for the branch meeting, raffle and members draw. Members had donated lots of raffle prizes and the members draw stood at £100 but unfortunately rolled over to January meeting. This was the first raffle using Paul's Digital Raffle Draw on the big screen tv system which helped speed things up and proved to be a great success.



Christmas Dinner & Social 13 December 2025

Ninety-one members, associates and guests attended the Crown Hotel for a three-course dinner followed by music and dancing till midnight. The disco was provided and run once again by Frank Parker ably assisted by Paul Fitzgerald, both members of the branch.



Guinness World Record Holders – 13th December 2025

Two intrepid Branch Members Karl and Lynda Lantree and a former Portland rating John Benning now living in Stavanger, became Guinness World Record Holders for the 'Polar Bear Dip' for the most amount of people to cold water dip, wearing only standard swimwear, in Norway in winter. 3132 dippers took part to beat the Czech Republic Record of 2461 set earlier in the year.

Karl and Lynda regularly compete in triathlon's and challenging running events both home and abroad. The next one being a 70.3 mile Ironman event in France at 'Le Sables d'Olonne' at the beginning of July. *"It seemed a good idea at the time...!"*

Karl is a volunteer with the Yeovil Freewheeler Blood Bikes working out of the local DCH hospital collecting and delivering blood, samples, medical items, and medicines and to hospitals and homes in the South and South West.



Lynda, John & Karl



At least it's sunny in Norway



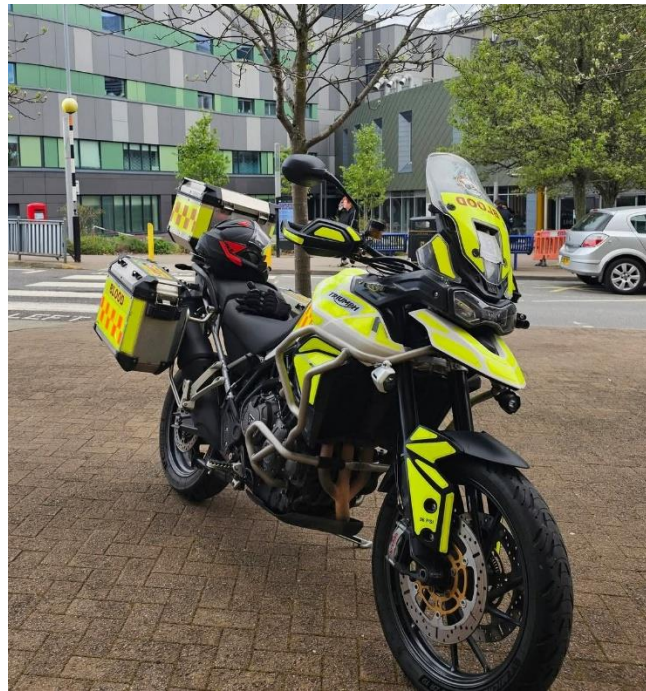
That's a lot of swimmers



Well worth the effort!!



Karl Drop off at Southampton



One of the Triumph 900 Blood Bikes

Veterans Hub Wyke Regis – Uckers Marathon – 16th January 26

At least two of our members Don Philpott & Steve Kershaw supported the recent Uckers 24-hour Marathon to help raise funds for a hydraulic therapy bed for the treatment room at the Veteran's Hub. The Uckers Marathon raised over a £1000 for the Veterans Hub.



(Photos from Vets Hub FB page)

Standard Bearer & Forthcoming Ceremonial Events

The Branch is honoured that our Standard Bearer, Ted Edwards, has volunteered and been accepted to take on the role of National FAA Association Standard Bearer on the retirement of Mick Wyatt after many years of service. Tammy Newton an Associate Member of the Branch has volunteered to carry our Standard if Ted is otherwise engaged at a National Event. Tammy is well versed in Standard Bearing having been one of the Standard Bearers for the local Merchant Navy Association.

Ted had his first outing with the National Standard on 12th February 2026 at Ramsgate attending the memorial service to commemorate Operation Fuller / Channel Dash 12th February 1942. Information on the role of the FAA's 825 NAS in this historical event is at the link below.

[80th Anniversary of The Channel Dash - Navy Wings](#)



Ted Leading the Standard Bearers



Ceremonial Events 2026

With support from Branch Members the Standard may be paraded at some or all these events this year:

- Channel Dash Memorial Service in February (National Standard)
- FAA Memorial Service in May (National Standard)
- ANZAC Memorial Day in April
- US Memorial Day, Weymouth in May
- Falklands Liberation Day in June
- Armed Forces Weekend, Weymouth in June
- Merchant Navy Day, Weymouth – September
- Battle of Britain Day Weymouth - September

- HMS Illustrious Disaster Memorial, Portland - October
- Remembrance Sunday, Weymouth - November

Skittles Evening V. Jungly Association – 19th February 2026

A skittles evening to support our collaboration with other organisations was held on 19th February, it was well supported by branch members but only two from the Jungly Association attended due to the inclement weather (I thought Junglies were well hardened to all conditions). However, a great night was had by all with hopefully a return match in the future.



Weymouth Half Marathon – 15th March 2026

Challenged by family members, Andy Powell took on the Weymouth Half Marathon with his daughter and daughter-in-law. After training with his son at the Bespoke Training Club, he finished in a time of 2 Hours 27 minutes and raised £805 for Weldmar Hospice care, the Branch charity. through sponsorship from friends, family, and the Branch members. Andy would like to thank everyone who helped him and all the sponsors – friends, family, and Branch members for their generous donations.



Andy on route quayside



Andy with Jessica Petas and Caz Petas

Charity Horse Racing Night – 27th March 2026

Over fifty members, and guests had a great night at the races, organised by our Vice Chair and ably supported by the Committee and volunteer members a full six race card was run over about four hours. With suitably dressed MC, Jockeys, Tote Team, and Auctioneer the dice rolled on as the horses made their way up the racetrack with suitable obstacles to negotiate. Owners bought their horses at the pre-race auctions and on track tote betting kept the team busy. In all a total of £615 was raised for our nominated charity Weldmar Hospice care.



The Tote



The Jockeys



The Auctioneer



The MC



The Racing

Branch Annual General Meeting – 11th April 2026

Fifty plus members and guests: Dave and Jan Smith, attended the Branch AGM on Saturday 11th April 26. The Committee presented the annual report to members and Dave as Chair of the NEC gave a short update and asked for volunteers to support the NEC Committee which now had several vacancies. He also asked members to support the FAA Reunion to be held in Weymouth at the Crown Hotel in October details of which has already been sent to all our members, and to book early if intending to stay overnight and attend the dinner/dance on the Saturday evening.

On completion of the AGM, a buffet lunch was enjoyed by all, and the April Members Draw (£50) was won by Andy Wilkinson who elected to donate the win towards a special bottle of rum in support of the scheduled Black Tot Night in August, thanks Andy.





Social Events

Monthly Breakfast Club

Initiated by our Vice Chairman Paul D'Arcy this continues to attract members for a social breakfast at various venues around the local area, usually held the second week of the month but on different days to give working branch members a chance to attend. These remain well supported with 20 to 30 members regularly turning out to catch up and spin a few yarns. We can recommend the following venues in and around Weymouth:

Palm House Café, Weymouth, Pavillion Piano Bar, Weymouth

Thompsons Café, Lynch Lane Garden Centre, Weymouth

Veteran's Hub, Wyke Regis, Dorset Kitchen, Gould's Garden Centre, Littlemoor

Lookout Café, Bowleaze Cove, Weymouth.



2026/27 Planned Social Events: Check out the Long Cast

Dorchester RNA Charity Skittles Night – 5th June 2026

Annual Ramble - TBC

Black Tot Rum Night – 7th August 2026

National Memorial Arboretum Visit (TBC) – September 2026

Horse Racing Wincanton (TBC) – October 2026

Christmas Social – December 2026

Skittles V Jungly Association – February 2027 TBC

Horse Racing Night – March 2027 TBC

Solent Branch

The Solent Branch meets on the last Thursday of the month at 20:30 in the Lee-on-the-Solent Community Centre, where we enjoy a couple of beers and on numerous occasions, throughout the year, a tot time on completion.

No update from Solent branch for this newsletter.

Kent Branch

We hold our monthly meetings at Ramsgate RNA Club 9 Church Hill, Ramsgate CT11 8RA on the 4th Sunday each month, 1030hrs for 1100hrs starting with the Loyal Toast.

Remembrance Sunday 9th November.

Branch members attended the Ramsgate Parade for a Memorial Service at St George's Church, where Wreaths were laid. On completion moving to the RNA Club for food, drinks and entertainment.

Remembrance Day 11th November.

FAAA and RNA members gathered at the Channel Dash Memorial along with Standards and a bugler for a Service where Wreaths were laid.

Christmas Lunch. 6th December.

Members, family and friends turned out in Christmas rig one form or another for our usual seasonal feast helped paid for by the Association Subsidy. A good time had by all.

NEC Meeting 24th January.

The Vice Chairman and Secretary travelled to Lee-on-Solent for this meeting which was very productive.

Channel Dash Memorial 12th February.

This is an Annual event taken over by Ramsgate RNA when the Channel Dash Association dissolved. The support for this event has grown each year with more Association Standards being paraded along with the NFAAA Standard.

Future event in 2026

May.

Operation Dynamo 86th Anniversary Weekend at Ramsgate.

Tag's service of Remembrance at Lee-on-Solent.

October.

NFAAA Reunion in Weymouth.

If there is no branch in your area, and you would like to set one up, please get in touch and we can give help and guidance on how to go about this. It would be really great if we had more members, but remember if you are not near a local branch you can still join the Daedalus Branch.

An Interview with Peter Murray Vice President FAAA



1. At what age did you join the Royal Navy.

I was born in Oldham in 1939 just before the outbreak of the War. I was an only child and lost my parents at an early age. I was brought up by Guardians under the direction of the local Children's Authority. I left school at the age of 15 and took up an Engineering Apprenticeship with A.V.Roe, the manufacturers of the Lancaster Vulcan Bombers at their factory in Oldham .

Without any consultation I was informed when I was 16 that it had been decided that I should join the Royal Navy, I was not given any choice of Army or RAF, just the Royal Navy. I did not know why this decision had been made but in retrospect I believe if I was in the Navy the Local Authorities would have no responsibility for me, I would become the responsibility of the Royal Navy.

So at the age of 16 I found myself in the Royal Navy and my Service Record showed that I was 7stone 2lbs.

2. Why did you choose the RN over one of the other armed forces?

As explained above I was not given any choice other than I would be joining the Royal Navy. I have no idea why the other services were not offered.

In August 1955 I found myself in HMS Collingwood for basic Induction Training, after 6 weeks again without any consultation or choice, I was informed that I was to become JREM (A). I was then drafted to HMS Ariel at Worthy Down to begin technical training. I then spent 9 months on 813 Squadron HMS Eagle in the Mediterranean. After 2 further training courses I was selected to do Mechanician training which was done at HMS Daedalus. I then was Mechanician 2 (PO). Then followed 2 years on 890 Squadron HMS Ark Royal/Yeovilton 1961 to 1963. Following this commission I was drafted to EandT Section at HMS Daedalus when I became a Mechanician 1 (CPO).

3. What is your favourite memory from your time in the Royal Navy?

I have two special memories, one my most interesting and the other the most exciting. My most interesting memory is that of being drafted to the Royal Radar Establishment in Malvern where I was responsible for drafting the Maintenance Air Publication for the Blue Orchid Dopplar Navigation System for the Sea King. I was involved on this project for almost three years working closely with Civilian manufacturers and Westlands at Yeovil, an invaluable experience.

My exciting memory was in 1963 when the Ark Royal put into Mombasa for self refit and the Squadron flew off to Nairobi Embakasi for 1 month. We were accommodated in the Spread Eagle Hotel just outside Nairobi. But the most exciting part of this was the journey from Mombasa to Nairobi which was by rail, and we caught a glimpse of how colonial life was then. The train was equipped with Pulman carriages and the journey took 12 hours departing Mombasa at 18.00 arriving in Nairobi at 06.00. The last hour of this journey was through the Tsavo game reserve just as the sun was rising and all the wild animals were visible. You can imagine how exciting this was for a young man. Something you would never expect while serving in the Navy.

4. Where was your favourite posting and why?

I do not have a favourite posting. What I have appreciated is living in different parts of the United Kingdom with good memories of happy times. I was introduced to different areas, example Lossiemouth, Pershore, Malvern, Winchester – Worthy Down, Culdrose and of course Lee on Solent. I spent my 21st birthday at Lossiemouth where I was stationed up on Covesea Hill looking after the transmitter and receiver stations. I have very fond memories of Scotland.

5. How long did you spend in the Royal Navy and did you find it helped you in your career when you left?

I was signed on for a 12 year contract which made me eligible to leave the Navy at the age of 30. I was at the time at HMS Daedalus having recently been married and there were excellent prospects outside the RN with people of my skills. The computer industry was in its infancy and were very keen to recruit electronic engineers and were paying double the

Naval salary and offering a company car. I had also at that time reached the highest rank that was available to me in the Navy. I did not therefore wish to spend another 10 years serving for a pension. I did therefore serve 14 years, leaving the Navy in May 1969 for a position in the computer industry.

During my time in the RN I spent approximately 7 years under instruction or training of various technical subjects. Also the Navy through HMS Collingwood provided me with a free correspondence course so that I was able to obtain my City & Guilds Full Technological Certificate. This helped me a great deal in my civilian career. My first position was with Xerox Data Systems involved with aircraft test flying real time telemetry. I spent almost two years in Los Angeles working with the Douglas DC 10 and then at BAC in Lancashire, MBB in Munich and Air Italia in Turin with the MRCA (Jaguar). I was then recruited by Data General as the UK Service Manager and in 1982 I was promoted to European Director based in Paris where we lived for 9 years. I was responsible for operations in 12 European subsidiaries, English speaking Africa and Israel managing a budget of \$400 million. I returned to the UK in 1990, took up a position as a Board Director for a Raytheon subsidiary called Data Logic. My last position before retiring was Managing Director of a structured cabling company based in London, a subsidiary of Cray Corporation.

6. How did you feel when you were made Vice President of the FAAAA

When I was told I had been elected as a Vice President, my first reaction was one of surprise. Then of course a feeling of pleasure and it goes without saying I am proud to hold this position. It means that I am able to attend meetings and offer my suggestions or comments even though I am not necessarily a member of the committee. Although as a VP I am not entitled to vote.

7. What benefit do you think that associations like this one have in modern society?

Following my retirement in 2009, I joined the Fleet Air Arm Association in order to keep alive some connection with the Royal Navy and through a sense of nostalgia of my time in the Fleet Air Arm. I discovered by chance when reading the Navy News that there was such a thing. During my time in the Association I have met many shipmates and attended some incredible functions and events. Many Associations in today's society are in decline as society seems to lean more and more on social media for communications. For example, many large companies used to have very active Sports and Social Associations and Clubs, these today do not exist. However, associations can be very valuable to society and many of them do good work with regard to charity support. In fact I am a Trustee of the Lancastrians in London Association and we regularly give donations to help children and young people in Lancashire.

8. Anything else you would like to say to the readers of this newsletter?

My time in the Royal Navy equipped me well and I have enjoyed an interesting and happy life. The Navy gave me a very good technical education and taught me what duty, responsibility and authority really meant. I cannot speak highly enough of my service in the RN.

Crossed the bar

We celebrate the lives of those who have Crossed the bar in the last 6 months

Lt Cdr Maurice FitzGerald RN (X) (P) (GL)
12th February 1941 (Dublin) – 28th December 2025



Entered BRNC 1959 - Seaman Officer

November 1962 - September 1963 RAF LINTON_ON_OUSE - Fixed Wing Pilot
Training 759 NAS

September 1963 - November 1964 RNAS Brawdy (Buccaneer) - 738 NAS and 809
NAS, RNAS Lossiemouth 801 NAS

November 1964 - December 1966 HMS Victorious - 819 NAS

December 1969 - January 1971 RAF Ballykelly (Wessex) - 771 NAS

March 1971 - October 1971 HMS Osprey - (Trials Officer) 819 NAS (Trial KUDU)

December 1971 - March 1972 HMS Blake - Senior Pilot 820 NAS

December 1971 - July 1973 HMS Seahawk - Senior Pilot 820 NAS

December 1975 - December 1977 HMS Osprey - Commanding Officer 737 NAS

August 1985 - February 1988 HMS Cormorant - Senior Officer Gibraltar Squadron

August 1989 - February 1991 - Assistant Queens Harbour Master Gibraltar Naval
Base

February 1991- Retired to live in Spain

John Derek Haworth CPO Radio Electrician (Air)

29th August 1930 – 22 January 2026



John joined the Royal Navy in 1948 aged 18 at HMS Royal Arthur and served until 1960.

He served on the following shore establishments and Royal Naval Air Stations

HMS Ariel (Culcheth, Worthy Down, Lee-on-Solent)

HMS Nuthatch

HMS Simbang (Singapore)

HMS Peregrine

HMS Sanderling

HMS Condor

Served aboard the aircraft carriers HMS Triumph and HMS Perseus in 1952

John left the Royal Navy as Chief Radio Electricians Mate (Air) in charge of Sea Venom and Sea Vixen Radio/Radar Maintenance

Roy Thomas Colbeck CA SE1(A/C) LF927463

3rd August 1936 - "Crossed the Bar" 26th October 2025

Roy served from 1953 - 1976 at the following Shore establishments, Ships or Squadrons



1953/54 - Daedalus, Gamecock, Illustrious

1954/55 - Siskin, Goldcrest

1955 - Ark Royal

1956 - Daedalus 705, Seahawk

1957 - Eagle

1957/58 - Daedalus 701

1958 - Victorious

1958/59 - Heron

1959 - Falcon

1960/61 Heron

1961/62 - Seahawk

1962/64 - Ariel

1962/63 - Protector

1964 - Ariel

1965 - Fulmar

1968 - Bulwark

1971/73 - Fulmar, Daedalus

1973/74 - Royal Arthur

1974/76 - Daedalus

Brian Binghaedm CPO(ACMN) LSFx FAA Association Life Member

23rd July 1935 - 20th August 2025



Brian served from 1951 through to 1972 on the following Air Stations and Squadrons

HMS Vulture/RNAS St Merryn 1952/53

HMS Illustrious 1953/55

HMS Peregrine/RNAS Ford 1955/56

HMS Albion 1956/57

HMS Gannet/RNAS Eglinton 1957/59

HMS Seahawk/RNAS Culdrose 1959/61 & 1962

HMS Ark Royal/815 Squadron 1961/62

HMS Albion/845 & 846 Squadrons 1962/64

HMS Fulmar/RNAS Lossiemouth SAR 1964/65

HMS Ark Royal/SAR 1965/66

HMS Daedalus/RNAS Lee-on-Solent 781 Squadron 1966/67 & 1969

HMS Osprey/RNAS Portland 771 Squadron 1967/68

HMS Albion/848 Squadron 1968/69

HMS Simbang/RNAS Sembawang 1969/71

HMS Daedalus/RNAS Lee-on-Solent 1971/72

If you want to notify us of any members who have crossed the bar please inform Mick Wyatt the Membership Secretary – memsecfaaa@btinternet.com or 01582 608828

Obituaries for all former FAA personnel will be accepted to be placed in this newsletter and on the website. Please email the editor or leave a message on the website.

Recent Events

May 2026

2nd May 2026

Interservice Rugby Match Twickenham London.

Army vs Navy – who would come out on top?

This year over 50000 rugby fans from both the Army and Navy gathered at Twickenham for the annual event. It was tense as the Navy had won last year – and hoped to succeed again – but they hadn't been able to win 2 on the trot for over 50 years.

I was lucky to be in attendance along with the Chairman of the association, also known as my husband – and the game fell nicely on his birthday! He wore his Fleet Air Arm association top – so everyone new who we were supporting.



They made a spirited start scoring the first try in minutes! This was followed by another – but the army were not going to stand for this and fought back hard. With only minutes to go in the second half of the game – the navy once again pushed through and it was too late for the army to come back so the score was Navy 41 Army 36 – and a well-deserved victory!



Upcoming Events

May 2026

Sunday 17th May 2026

Fleet Air Arm TAGA Memorial Service Lee on Solent

The telegraphist Air Gunners Association has held a Memorial Service on the third Sunday in May since 1953 when the Duchess of Kent unveiled the Fleet Air Arm Memorial at Lee on Solent. Since 2013 when the TAGs Association dissolved, the service has been organised by the Fleet Air Arm Association.

The Memorial Service at St Faith's Church, Lee on Solent, is followed by an informal wreath laying ceremony at the Fleet Air Arm Memorial. A small contingent from HMS Sultan also attends.

Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns, our patron, fully supports this service and we are keen to boost attendance.

On the 17th May 2026 at St Faith's Church, Victoria Square, Lee on Solent PO13 9PB the Memorial Service is held at 15:00.

The association would like to thank Val Sayer for her unstinting service for many years in organising this event. Thank you Val.

It would be great to see you all there – so please come along if you are free.

October 2026

Friday 16th and Saturday 17th October.

The association Reunion 2026 will be held on the 16th & 17th October 2026 at the Crown Hotel, St Thomas Street, Weymouth DT4 8EQ



The weekend will get underway with an informal get together on Friday evening consisting of a buffet dinner and a quiz, then on Saturday evening a Gala Dinner and Disco.

There are a number of packages available:

Weekend Package – 2 nights' accommodation plus Friday night Buffet and quiz, Saturday Gala dinner with wine and port for the Loyal Toast and entertainment £138pp

Saturday only – 1 nights' accommodation, Gala Dinner with wine and port for the Loyal Toast plus entertainment £72pp

Saturday Gala dinner and entertainment only £22pp

Non-refundable deposits are required at £100 per room (for attendees staying at the hotel) and if attending the Gala Dinner only then the full amount of £22 pp is payable at time of booking.

Extra nights are available to book on an individual basis directly with the hotel.

Rooms are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Booking forms should be sent to Alan Key a 152 Hazelton Road, Horndean, Waterlooville, PO8 9DX or by email to alan.key899@gmail.com

I have put a form at the end of this newsletter for your convenience.

Other items you may be interested in

Fleet Air Arm Lunch RAF Shawbury

Thanks to Lt Cdr Mark Rose BSc (Hons) RN, Sixty Squadron, No 1 Flying Training School, RAF Shawbury for this article.



In February this year, serving and retired members of the Fleet Air Arm (FAA) employed at RAF Shawbury gathered for a top table lunch in the Officers' Mess. The event was hosted by the Senior Naval Officer for No 1 Flying Training School (1 FTS) and Defence College of Air and Space Operations (DCASO), Cdr AJ Thompson.

The 35 guests were from a variety of FAA backgrounds (and eras) and had served all over the world, both ashore and at sea.





The majority of the guests were aircrew instructors from 1 FTS, responsible for delivering tri-Service phase 2 rotary wing flying training to pilots, Observers and Rear crew.

Those retired from serving FAA are now employed at 1 FTS by Ascent, a commercial enterprise delivering the UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS) alongside serving military personnel. A small group of serving FAA Air Traffic Control (ATC) personnel also attended the event; they are employed at the DCASO, a unit responsible for phase 2 battlespace management training and education.

The principal reason for organising the lunch was to celebrate the recent joiners and leavers to RAF Shawbury, but in particular for Cdr Thompson to present valedictory certificates to 2 FAA Officers who are leaving the Service.



Lt George Gillingam RN (left) receiving his valedictory certificate from Cdr Thompson:

Lt George Gillingam leaves the RN after 23 years as an Observer, flying Merlin Mk1/2 in the ASW role, Sea King Mk5 in the SAR role and more recently the Juno HT1 as a Qualified Helicopter Crewman Instructor (QHCI).



Lt Luke Wraith RN (right) receiving his valedictory certificate from Cdr Thompson:

Lt Luke Wraith leaves the RN after 16 years, having flown Merlin Mk1/2 as a pilot in the ASW role and more recently the Juno HT1 as a Qualified Helicopter instructor (QHI).

In his post dinner speech, Cdr Thompson also thanked the Officers' Mess for providing an excellent venue for the event and for serving a fantastic three-course meal. He was also extremely grateful for contributions from the RNRMC towards the meal and from the ARNO towards the wine and port.

He thanked guests for being part of the event and making it such a success.

He said "The Fleet Air Arm is a special place, and this was just another demonstration of that".

A bygone flight

Information by John Powell a journalist in the West Country.

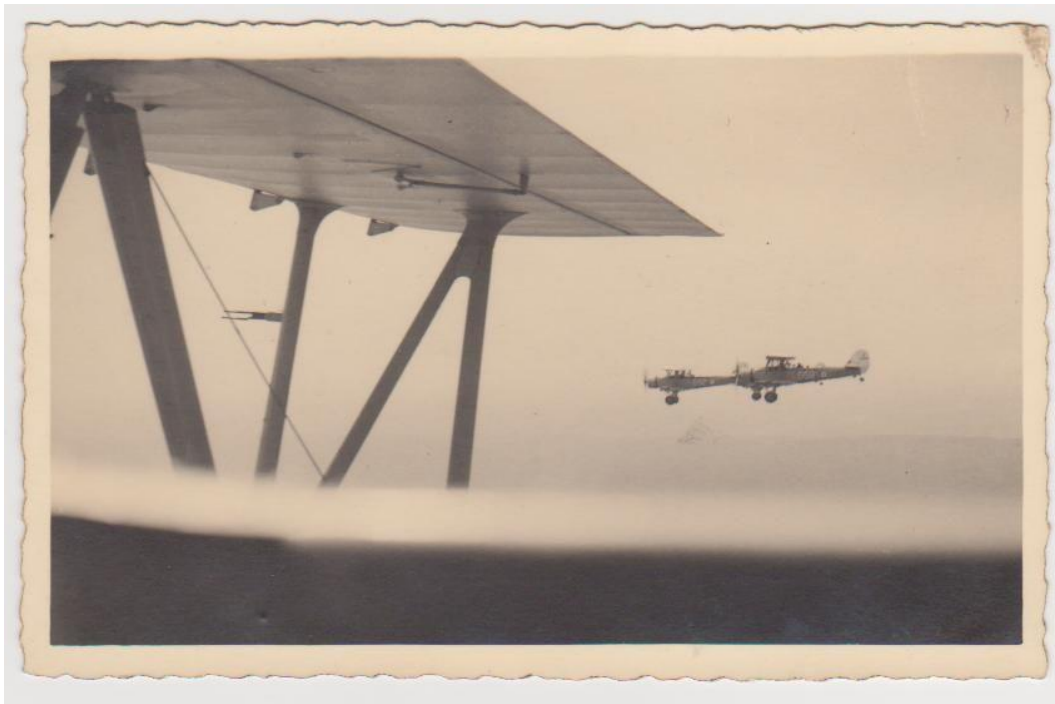
Eric Tallack born in August 1914, is a distant relative of his and he wanted to share some photos that Eric had taken while on a mission with 820 squadron. Eric's two daughters are also delighted to share their fathers pictures.



In 1935 Eric Tallack , just 21 years old, was preparing to fly with a flight of 12 Blackburn Shark aircraft from Aboukir in Egypt to Heliopolis near Cairo, a flight of around 120 miles, with 820 Naval Air Squadron.



In those days the Shark were designated torpedo spotter reconnaissance aircraft by the navy and was the Blackburn Company's last bi plane type produced.



It is thought that the Shark's were on their way to join the aircraft carrier HMS Furious or, just possibly HMS Courageous.

Mr Tallack, who died in 1987, was an aircraft fitter and, using a camera gun, he took photographs of the Shark's before and during the flight. Also in Mr Tallack's collection is a photograph of a shark in the workshop at Aboukir.



HM Armed Forces Veterans Card

The card is a recognition of your service, and having one can help you maintain a link with your service identity.

It will help you access the many services, concessions and offers that organisations make available to veterans.

From 2025 it will also act as proof of identity for voting in UK elections.

If you have left the service since 2019, you should have received one when leaving. For everyone that left before that date you can apply online at [Apply for an HM Armed Forces Veteran Card - GOV.UK](#) or if you are unable to apply online you can contact the Veterans UK Helpline details shown below. They'll send you a form that you can return by post. The form is available in English or Welsh.

Veterans UK Helpline

veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk

Telephone: 0808 1914 218

Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm

Welfare

Fleet Air Arm Association Welfare Fund

The welfare fund is administered by four officers serving on the National Committee. Branch secretaries have the full welfare policy guidelines and claims procedure. Any qualifying member requiring assistance from the fund should contact their Branch 'Almoner' or Branch Secretary. Contact will be in full confidence.

Help for Heroes

Offer a wide range of support, whether you're having money troubles, or need support with housing or applying for benefits. You might just need a listening ear, and they can provide that too.

Look at their website at www.helpforheroes.org.uk

The Veterans Charity

They can provide support to veterans who find themselves battling hardship and the distress it causes. Despite being a small charity, they operate nationally throughout the UK including Northern Ireland. They are able to assist with essentials such as food shopping, utilities support, clothing and footwear, household items and single appliances, smartphones/tablets and calling credit/data. They are available to anyone who has served within UK Armed Forces and can verify their service. They have formed a partnership with The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust to deliver immediate needs support where it is needed.

Contact them at www.veteranscharity.org.uk/sprtreq

SSAFA

SSAFA support forces through the transition process to joining civvy street. They also provide welfare services to the family members of the Armed Forces community, and give physical and emotional support to older veterans. They can give advice, social care and housing for the Armed Forces. They also support serving personnel, their families and veterans with anything relating to disability and also help with mental wellbeing on coping with bereavement, injury and other forms of stress.

Call them on 08002606767

Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion is there to help members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families. They support serving and ex-serving personnel all year round, every day of the week.

Call on 0808 8028080 or email info@britishlegion.org.uk

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust

They assist thousands of people who are serving or have served as warrant officers and below in The Royal Navy & Royal Marines, and their dependants, who find themselves in need or distress. Their aim is to help them enjoy a reasonable quality of life mainly by providing wide ranging financial assistance. They also care for older people in their own care homes and almshouses.

Email them on help@rmbt.org.uk or call on 02392 690112

Royal Naval Association

The Royal Naval Association is the biggest collective group of Royal naval veterans and serving personnel, with over 270 branches in the UK and overseas. The association provides those with a link to the Royal Navy access to a life-long community of like-minded and supportive individuals. The community provides companionship, resilience, comradeship and unity to anyone and everyone with a Naval story, supporting them through life's highs and lows.

Check out their website to join www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust

This exists to provide worldwide advice and financial relief in cases of necessity or distress among its members and their dependants. They can also make grants for the education of members.

Email them on gransadmin@wrnsbt.org.uk

And Finally

Answers to the wordsearch from the last edition.

Can you find these words in the grid below.

CHRISTMAS	SULTAN	NAVAL	VESSEL
CULDROSE	SHIP	OSPREY	SEAHAWK
HERON	HOLLY	LANTERN	TURKEY
YEOVILTON	IVY	RUM	LOYAL

S	H	I	P		H	O	L	L	Y	C
U		V					A		E	H
L	O	Y	A	L	H		N		O	R
T				C	E		T		V	I
A			T	U	R	K	E	Y	I	S
N	A	V	A	L	O		R		L	T
		E		D	N		N		T	M
	O	S	P	R	E	Y			O	A
R		S		O					N	S
U		E		S	E	A	H	A	W	K
M		L		E						

Did you know.....

Fleet Air Arm Observers, Lieutenant Commanders Phil Clark and Dave Emery, began their musical exploits in 2009 and together with their band Little Red Ambulance they released their latest hit in December 2025 called 'Christmas Eve'.

Raising money for charity, the song is their third collaboration with Culdrose Military Wives Choir. It explores the emotional toll of operational deployments during the festive period – a theme particularly poignant as Dave was on duty protecting UK waters over the Christmas period.

'Christmas Eve' tells the story of a Royal Navy sailor making it home just in time for Christmas, a feeling many in the naval community know all too well and a sentiment that resonates with anyone who has experienced separation from loved ones.

All proceeds help support Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC), which provides lifelong support to Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel.

The recording was facilitated by BFBS.

To purchase Christmas Eve and support RNRMC, visit <https://ffm.bio/lra>

2026 Reunion Booking Form

Full Name	
Contact Number	
Email Address	
Number of Attendees	
Dietary Requirements	
Friday and Saturday Nights £138pp	Yes / No*
Saturday Night £72pp	Yes / No*
Gala Dinner Dance only £22pp	Yes / No*
Room Type	Single / Double / Twin*
Wine Choice(s)	Red / White / Rose*
Seating requirements (if any)	

* Please delete / select as appropriate.

Deposits required:

If staying £100 per room

If attending Dinner only £22 per person

Bacs Transfer to : National FAA Association

Acc No. 30660319 Sort code: 52-30-04

Payment Reference: 2026 Deposit

Please complete all sections and return this form to the organiser Alan Key as soon as possible.