



**Jackspeak - "Top Gum" = Head of the RN Dental Service**

# Gen Dit

## Stowmarket RNA Newsletter



# September 2025

ISSUE No 110

### **Ships Office**

Hello Shipmates and Friends,

Apologies, but this month's edition is a little shorter than usual. I blame the fact it's been summer and a good few of the shipmates having been on holiday or up to other things that have been keeping them otherwise busy.

Despite this, we still turned out for three important events. Firstly, Shipmate Malcolm Robertson's funeral. Our thanks to Ipswich RNA's Branch Standard Bearer, Patrick, for also attending alongside our own. Then there were two ceremonies to mark VJ Day. One held in Stowmarket at the town's Memorial Gates, followed by another at St Mary's Church in Bury St Edmunds - which also saw Beccles RNA's Standard Bearer in attendance alongside our own.

It is always pleasing to see shipmates take the trouble to attend such events, particularly when some have taken time off from their day jobs or travelled some distance to be there.

I'd like to take this opportunity to send our best wishes to shipmates who are currently receiving treatment for one thing or another, and also those who are waiting for it. To each one of them, if you want a chat - you know we are here to lend an ear, share some banter and to give your chuckle muscles a work out.

At our August branch meeting, this was just the case and though it had been anticipated that the turnout would be small - in fact we enjoyed a better than expected number turn up. This included our newest shipmate, Gerry - who gave a very entertaining insight into his time in the Grey Funnel Line and certainly seemed to enjoy the company.

Don't forget, we meet every third Tuesday of the month (details of when and the time of the next two are on the last page of the newsletter). So, if you haven't been for a while - we're still here. We'd love to see you.

Stay safe and I hope you enjoy this month's [short] read.

*The Editor*



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**Stowmarket RNA Branch**

**Website**

<https://rumoldboys.wixsite.com/mysite>

and we are also on Facebook

# Ships Noticeboard

## Battle of Britain - 85th Anniversary

The 85th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Church Service will be held on **Sunday, 14th September at 1000** in Stowmarket's St Peter's and St Mary's parish church. RAFA will then be hosting a Sunday Lunch at the Stowmarket RBL Club. Timing for the lunch is 1200 for a 1230 start.

The Battle of Britain, which took place between the **10<sup>th</sup> July and 31<sup>st</sup> October 1940**, has been described as the first major military campaign fought entirely by air forces - which saw Naval aviators take part.



23 Naval pilots served with twelve RAF Fighter Command Squadrons, flying Spitfires and Hurricanes, and a further 33 served with two Fleet Air Arm Squadrons, NAS 804 and 808, who operated under Fighter Command, providing Dockyard defence.

The two Fleet Air Arm squadrons flew Gloster Sea Gladiators, Grumman Martlets and Fairey Fulmars, normally only seen flying from aircraft carriers. 804 Naval Air Squadron, based at Hatston in Orkney, Scotland consisted of 22 pilots flying Sea Gladiators and Martlets whilst the 11 pilots of 808 Squadron based at Wick, Caithness were equipped with Fulmars.

It was not just officers who became Battle of Britain pilots, five Petty Officers also flew within Naval Air Squadrons, as did Royal Marine pilots, thereby being awarded the Battle of Britain clasp. By the end of the battle, seven Naval pilots had been killed and two wounded.

***Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few***

## Biennial Naval Associations Parade

Shipmates will be at the Biennial Naval Associations Parade in Whitehall, London on **Sunday, 14th September**, joining many other shipmates from around the country. Our crew will be coming alongside in London the day before and we will have news for you in next month's edition as to how things went.

## Merchant Navy Day



**Wednesday, 3rd September** is a day when we will remember the men and women of the Merchant Navy.

Never was the Merchant Navy more needed than during both World Wars, keeping our island nation afloat.

To our brothers and sisters who sail under the 'Red Duster', we salute you.

## Ask a question ...

*The following dit comes from the days of the daily tot and has been printed elsewhere.*

Bagsy, the baby of the mess, was with his messmates listening to the banter, when he turned to one of the older 'salts' assembled and asked, "What's a knee trembler?"

Jack, looks around the messdeck for inspiration - and an explanation. Spud, sipping on his tot of rum, looked at Bagsy straight in the eye. "A knee trembler, young Bagsy, is the performance of a horizontal act in a vertical position." "What?" replied Bagsy. "In Queen's English - sh—ging while standing up" explained Spud.

Bagsy shrugged his shoulders, nodded a thank you and scuttled up the mess ladder and away.

"Couldn't have put it more succinctly myself", said someone else. "You've probably confused the lad for life."

"What's succinctly mean then?" came a voice from the dark recesses of the mess.

Spud shook his head. "It's squidgy, purple and popular with certain ladies, I believe."

# HMS BLUE BOTTLE

*With the women's rugby world cup in mind, we're reminded of the following.*

## THE DAY CHIEF 'FROSTY' SNOW BEAT THE SPRINGBOKS

"She didn't play rugby — rugby played her."

It started, as all sporting disasters do, with a harmless bit of banter.

The Captain, feeling uncharacteristically confident after three sherries, agreed to a "friendly" match between the ship's rugby XV and a South African rugby side looking for some friendly opposition... and feeling rather cocky as their team included four former Springboks, two ex-professional flankers, and a prop who once tackled a rhino in self-defence.

Needless to say, news of this led to many of the crew, including three Tiffs who claimed mysterious hamstringing injuries and hid in the cable locker, excuse themselves from the team.

On the day, despite his best efforts to drum up a team, the Club Swinger's team sheet consisted of the Buffer who thought a scrum was a type of sandwich, Leading Seaman 'Mini' Cooper, who ran fast but only in the wrong direction, and PO 'Wayne' Kerr, who once tackled a goalpost because he thought it "looked shifty."

The ship's team was still down a player as they got changed, and the Club Swinger was sweating more than anyone hearing that the rum barrel has sprung a leak.

Enter our saviour - Chief 'Frosty' Snow.

Clad in PT kit, clipboard in hand, and a look on her face that could split timber, she marched into the changing room and said just four words, "Give me a jersey."

As she ran out onto the pitch, the reactions were mixed. The Doc fainted. The Padre crossed himself in four directions, and the Captain tried to gently explain this was "a full-contact, international-level rugby match". Frosty simply replied, "Good. They'll feel it more."

From the very first whistle, it was clear this was not rugby as the world knew it. This was a military-grade, rules-optional, boots-first display of naval dominance, and Frosty was leading the charge. What followed defied logic and gravity.

Frosty tackled the opposition flanker so hard he woke up speaking Welsh. She scrummed down solo and drove the entire Springbok front row back into last Tuesday. She caught a line-out without jumping — just stared the ball into her hands. She yelled "ON ME!" and the entire backline followed her like hypnotised ducks. PO 'Tugg' Wilson later said, "I didn't even mean to score. I just ran because she shouted, and I feared for my life."

At halftime, the Springboks were leading 21-5 and our crew, except for Frosty, were wheezing like asthmatic bagpipes. Then Frosty stood up. Said nothing. Just cracked her knuckles. This is just what our team needed, and they returned to the pitch possessed by the spirit of Dunkirk, and scored four tries in twelve minutes, three of which were Frosty bulldozing over the line with five men clinging to her like toddlers on a bouncy castle. The second half saw 3 Springboks pull hamstrings trying to dodge her, one winger dislocated his confidence, the South African captain claim he "lost sight in one eye from sheer intimidation", all whilst Marine 'Forty' Watt tackled himself just to avoid being on her bad side.

The Final Score. HMS BLUE BOTTLE 34 – SPRINGBOKS 28

With everyone on the side-lines cheering this famous victory, The Springboks walked off in stunned silence. One of them saluted Frosty, whilst another ran away when she offered a handshake. The Captain, in tears, tried to give Frosty a medal, but she waved him off and muttered, "All in a day's work, Sir. Now someone get the mud out of my socks before I eat someone." Step forward the South African front row.

Everyone agreed that Frosty not only displayed exceptional athleticism, but also, and in true Jenny fashion, wisdom in tactical violence and motivational terror. The Gunnery Officer was quoted as saying, "She didn't just win the game. She annexed the pitch." Mini Cooper said, "Rugby will never be the same. Nor will the Springboks." The Chief Stoker said, "I'll never forget how she tackled the entire back row, with a wink." And the local paper simply spoke for everyone else about the opposition. "They were her body count."

Subsequently, the South African captain retired with PTSD, the MoD suggested that the Navy ban contact sports if Frosty was involved, and the ship's rugby team came to be known as "Frosty's Grey Funnel Line Fifteen".

*Moral of the story - never, ever think Jenny is a soft touch - you will regret it*

## Success for a sailor means ...

- At age 4, not pissing their pants.
- At age 12, having friends.
- As age 17, having a driving licence.
- At age 35, having money.
- As age 50, still having money.
- At age 70, still having a driving licence.
- At age 75, still having friends.
- At age 80, still not pissing their pants.

## Sailors growing old

- Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- Forget health food. As you get older you need all the preservatives you can get.
- When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- You know you're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from the ship rolling in a gentle swell.
- It's frustrating when you know all the answers but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.
- Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.
- And, no one expects you to run into a burning compartment.

## In other news

Some may have recently read that the defibrillator outside HQ2 went 'missing'. This was quite a shock. No more so than for Paul, landlord of HQ2, and news of the 'loss' made the local newspapers and was widely shared on social media. We're pleased to report that a couple of weeks after its disappearance, the defibrillator was quietly returned and is now back in place. You may remember that we played a part in raising funds to have this vital piece of equipment available to the local community. It's now fitted with a tracker!

**And finally ...** Shipmates. We are looking for any help you can provide for Pickle Night, which we will be holding on **Saturday, 15th November**. If you are available, please give Deeps or Chivs a shout.

*We are always pleased to receive a dit, news or an item that will be of interest to our readers.*

Just send the Editor an email to  
[pcpro@rumoldboys-rna.org.uk](mailto:pcpro@rumoldboys-rna.org.uk)

*And we'll see what we can do.*



## The long-haired Chief

The other day, having returned from a run ashore, one of our shipmates arrived home to find the long-haired Chief was looking after one of the grandchildren.

With the little rug rat having fallen asleep, she was put in a travel cot, where she lay quiet as a mouse. Later, our shipmate decided to check in on the little one, and as he looked down on the infant, he didn't notice that the long-haired Chief had also entered the bedroom.

Reading his emotions as ones of pride, love and indeed enchantment, and touched by this unusual display of sensitivity by our shipmate, she slipped her arm around his waist and, and with glistening eyes, the long-haired Chief said to him, "Penny for your thoughts?"

It's amazing, our shipmate said, "I just can't see how they can make these cots as cheaply as they do."

## Junior Rates

5 ways to have a good day as a junior rate.

1. Start the day with a drink of coffee.
2. Avoid anyone in authority.
3. Successfully look to busy to interrupt.
4. Carry on drinking more coffee.
5. Keep avoiding anyone in authority.

As a junior rate, you have two missions in life.

1. To always look innocent when either senior rates or officers get mad about something.
2. And to make them mad when they're calm.

## Future RNA Branch Meeting Dates

Tuesday 16th Sep @ RBL Club for a 7.30pm start

Tuesday 21st Oct @ RBL Club for a 7.30pm start

**Stowmarket RNA, c/o Royal British Legion,  
8 Tavern Street, Stowmarket IP14 1PH**