



Jackspeak - "Over the Wall" = in Detention Quarters (prison)

Ships Office

Hello Shipmates and Friends,

Here is this month's offering of news, some banter and hopefully some light relief that will raise a smile.

I think it's safe to say that it has been a busy time for everyone in one way or another - and if you aren't already on one, you are about to take a well-earned break.

Over the past month, either the sun has tried its best to bake us or the rain has fallen in bucket loads in an attempt to wash us away. Either way, we've just got on with it. Though whilst doing so, having a good 'drip' about it. Which is pretty well the way Jack operates. As someone said, and I'm sure you've all heard the same, 'If Jack ain't dripping - beware. They're up to something - or worse, they're planning to get up to something.' And it's so true.

I've met a good many 'Jimmys' over the years, and they have all said the same. A time that they most worried about, wasn't Jack going ashore and getting into trouble. It wasn't Jack fighting, either between themselves or with others, and it wasn't if Jack was heard laughing about some mischief they were getting up to (even if you couldn't see what they were laughing about). It was when you couldn't hear anything - and we're talking total silence! (Even when asleep, Jack makes some noise!) "So, what did you do about it?", I would ask. "Oh, simple. I'd give them something to moan about - that got them thinking and moaning about something all at the same time that they could relate to - and then I'd make sure they felt they'd got one over you. Nothing that would cause a real problem - but if they all thought they, or one of them, had got away with something - they were generally happy and I could sleep more easily."

Which got me thinking - having lived in that world - am I still the same person? Then I remembered. I'm married - and damn right I'm still the same person!

Stay safe and enjoy the read!

The Editor



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**Stowmarket RNA
Newsletter**



August 2025

ISSUE No 109



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Stowmarket RNA Branch

Website

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

and we are also on Facebook

Ships Noticeboard

Shipmate Malcom Robertson

07.09.1933 - 15.07.2025



It is with great sadness that we report of Shipmate Malcolm Robertson having crossed the bar.

Malcolm was one of the best, becoming a crewmate shortly after the branch was commissioned in 2016 and took a great interest in 'his shipmates' exploits.

Having joined the Royal Navy as a boy seaman at HMS Ganges in 1949, he served in Korea between 1950 and 1952 on the aircraft carriers HMS TRIUMPH and HMS GLORY. A time he spoke of with great pride (and with some great dits!)

In 2017, Shipmates were delighted to join him at a social event at the RBL Club, where he was presented with the Korean Republic's Ambassador for Peace medal. In recognition of the award, Captain Seungeon Ji, defence attaché at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in London, wrote a personal letter to Malcolm.

"The Ambassador for Peace medal is bestowed upon those whom have served during the Korean War and is recognition of the enduring legacy you and your comrades made for the freedom of our people."

Malcolm's health wasn't always in his favour, but with his family and carers helping him, he got on with life - and generally with a smile. His sense of humour and wit most definitely came from his time in the navy, and those who were there won't forget the time he parked his wheelchair in a disability car space. As he said, "The sign is a wheelchair, and I'm in one!" Nobody could argue. He was right.

Malcolm's funeral is being held at **Seven Hills Crematorium** at **2.15pm** on **Tuesday 12th August**. All are welcome.

In November, a poppy will be laid in Pompey dockyard and at Westminster Abbey in remembrance of Malcolm.

Rest Easy Shipmate - Your Duty is Done

VJ Day 80 Services

Shipmates from the branch will be attending two services to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day, both of which will be on **Friday, 15th August**.

The first will be a Service of Remembrance at Stowmarket's **Memorial Gates at 1100**. This has been organised by the Town Council and Stowmarket Royal British Legion.

The second will be a Service at **St Mary's Bury St Edmunds at 1430**. With so many 'Suffolks' having been involved in the Far East, VJ Day is of particular poignancy to the County of Suffolk and therefore Clare, Countess of Euston, Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk is keen to ensure that this event truly Commemorates them.

We hope that as many Shipmates as possible will be able to attend one of the Services. Our Branch Standard will parade at the Service in Bury St Edmunds.

VJ Day 80 Celebration

Stowmarket RBL Club will also be hosting a VJ Day celebration on **Friday, 15th August from 1200 onwards**. It is a street party themed afternoon with live music. Tickets are on sale at the RBL at £5 for members.

RAFA - Battle of Britain Service - 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.

Following the Service, RAFA have kindly invited Shipmates to join them for Sunday Lunch (they'll be identifiable by the fact they will have napkins over their left arms as if they are ready to serve) at Stowmarket RBL Club. Timing is 1200 for a 1230 start. If you are interested in attending, lunch is £16 per person and your payment and menu choices will need to be with RAFA by Friday 29th August.

For those Shipmates who will not be in London on the day (the same day as the Navy Associations Biennial Parade), if you can, please do give thought to at least attending the Church Parade to remember 'The Few', which included members of the Fleet Air Arm.

In Other News

Welcome

A warm welcome to our newest Shipmate. Gerry Crease. We look forward to meeting Gerry in the near future.

Shipmates, if you know someone who may be interested in joining the branch, then give them a nudge. There are veterans of the Royal Navy living amongst us. It's true, they do! However, many don't know about the Association or that there's a branch right here in the heart of Suffolk. Having recently 'surfaced' in Bury St Edmunds at a veteran's get-together, Deeps found a small group of ex-matelots who didn't know. Needless to say, he's working on them.

The old saying remains the same - the best recruiters are those who are already serving. That's you Shipmates.

Bowls Competition

Unfortunately, this year's competition has had to be cancelled. With a good number of shipmates (and some of the competition) away on their holidays, and it proving difficult to find an alternative date, it was felt best that we cancel the event and look ahead to 2026. As soon as we have some suggested dates, you'll be the first to know.

August Branch Meeting

Shipmates, please note that the August branch meeting **will be** on **Tuesday, 19th August**, not the 17th as originally planned. See you at the RBL for a 7.30pm start on the 19th.

Biennial Parade - Whitehall

Final Shout. If you are interested in attending the Biennial Naval Associations Parade being held on **Sunday, 14th September** in Whitehall, London - please let us know. We already have a 'tidy' number of Shipmates who have confirmed they will be attending (and staying at the UJC the night before). If you are interested in joining in, then please email Katrine via: treasurer@rumoldboys-rna.org.uk



Shipmate Tom gets his wings (at last!)

We shit you not.

Being a proud member of the Fleet Air Arm, Shipmate Tom has [finally] gained his wings. He is now qualified to fly drones and the pic above is of Tom receiving his certificate of 'air worthiness'.

He's the short one on the right. And no, despite what you may think, WAFU pilots are not made that size so they can actually fit in the drone. Though we have noted that he's wearing the 'rig of the day' for a WAFU who is about to occupy a deckchair on the flightdeck!

HQ2 Ships Cat

This moggy has decided to make HQ2 a regular stopover. Therefore, it's official - we have our own ships cat and we've been thinking of a name for it. Any ideas?



VJ Day 1945 - Richard 'Dick' Martin's tale

Our thanks to Shipmate Paul for sending us the following dit and photographs about his father-in-law (and therefore our patron's grandfather), who was a pilot on HMS VICTORIOUS in the Pacific when Victory over Japan was declared in 1945.

As Paul writes, "Dick told me they only felt they had been welcomed home when there was a big VJ celebration in Portsmouth in 1995, 50 years after the event. When they arrived in Pompey in November '45 the country had finished celebrating and was facing the reality of being almost bankrupt and the arrival of a cold winter."

By Shipmate Paul B -

Richard (Dick) Martin, Temporary Acting Sub Lieutenant (A)RNVR, was your patron's grandfather and a veteran of the naval war in the Pacific. He joined HMS Daedalus (Lee on the Solent) as a Naval Airman in 1942 and after passing his killick's board went to America on the old Queen Mary to start flying training the following year. Promoted to Midshipman on gaining his wings he completed operational flying training at Pensacola Florida before joining a Corsair squadron and embarking on the escort carrier HMS SLINGER. At the time the US Navy only operated Corsairs from ashore and thought the Brits were crazy flying them from carriers. After working up in the Clyde in December 1944, SLINGER departed for Sydney to join the British Pacific Fleet, the largest fleet of Royal Naval ships ever assembled. On arrival in Australia he was transferred to 1836 squadron embarked in HMS VICTORIOUS to replace a pilot lost during the attack on the Palembang oil refinery on Sumatra.

In late April the fleet sailed from Sydney to support the American assault on Okinawa and Dick flew his first combat operation over Formosa, now Taiwan, attacking Japanese airfields, on 8 May, as Europe was celebrating VE-Day. With one short period of respite in Guam, VICTORIOUS remained in continuous operations until 15 August (VJ Day). Altogether Dick flew 31 combat missions and was Mentioned in Dispatches. His final sortie was against the Hitachi factory near Tokyo on 10 August, the day after the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki but before Japan agreed to surrender. He was 21 years old.

VICTORIOUS sailed back to Sydney then home, arriving in Pompey on a cold, grey November day. There was no band to greet them, no waiting dignitaries, no ceremony whatsoever. The hostilities only men were given a rail warrant, their discharge numbers and sent on leave to await demobilisation. Dick was but one of many, but he never forgot those with whom he served on the far side of the world who never came back.

Paul, thank you for sharing not only your dit, but also the below photographs of Dick, VICTORIOUS and the planes he flew in. Truly a remarkable sailor - one of so many that we must never forget.



HMS BLUE BOTTLE

Last month, the crew of our affiliated ship swapped fire drills for charcoal grills and held its annual BBQ. Having successfully smuggled it through the dockyard gates in Writer 'Gracie' Fields underpants (where we can all agree, nobody in their right mind would want to venture), here is an account of that day.

The BBQ was held, as tradition dictated, on the quarterdeck, with the ship anchored off the Isle of Wight, in theory, out of sight of anyone in the Admiralty and the nearest reprimand.

The Captain, resplendent in tropical rig and suspiciously clean sandals, declared the festivities open by ceremonially lighting the grill using the First Lieutenant's Zippo and half a gallon of aviation fuel. The resulting fireball scorched Seaman Staines' eyebrows clean off and flash-cooked a tray of sausages so black they qualified for carbon dating.

The Gunnery Officer attempted to start a "water balloon broadside" contest with improvised ammo but unfortunately misjudged his aim and scored a direct hit on The Padre's cassock, revealing more holy relics than expected. The Navigator, already three cans of Export into his afternoon, tried to measure the wind direction with a cocktail umbrella and muttering something about deviation.

The Pusser, determined to control costs (and living up to the title of 'Father Famine'), supplied generic-brand ketchup and flat lemonade, which was promptly replaced by the Doc's "medicinal rum" – a concoction so strong it could clean engine parts and strip paint off the bulkheads.

Midshipman 'Jack' Horner, eager to impress, brought along his own homemade burgers, which were later identified as something between Spam and mystery meat. They were so tough that Chief Tiff decided that they could be used to repair broken decking or used as armour plating.

Chief 'Frosty' Snow manned the grill with military precision, flipping burgers with one hand and fending off Petty Officer 'Tugg' Wilson's wandering tongs with the other. All whilst wearing her hot pants, adorned with "Built Not Bought" across the rear and resulted in a traffic jam at the potato salad station.

Meanwhile, the Buffer and the Master-at-Arms took bets on which sailor would collapse first from overexposure to Pimms and poor decisions. Petty Officer 'Wayne' Kerr – true to form – passed out in a paddling pool shaped like a battleship, clutching a chicken drumstick and mumbling "God save the King... and the kebabs".

Leading Seaman 'Mini' Cooper challenged Leading Airman 'Bomber' Harris to a "who can eat the most hot wings" contest. Both ended up with tears streaming down their faces, and the Doc was called in to administer emergency yoghurt whilst the Fire Party assisted by hosing them down.

Leading Steward 'Squid' Calamari got creative with the seafood skewers, but his "octopus surprise" nearly caused a mutiny after it tried to escape off the plate. Steward 'Brigham' Young insisted it was a delicacy in Norfolk. No one was convinced and rumour has it the octopus is now living in the Chief's mess.

Cook 'Swampy' Marsh tried to introduce a vegan corner, which was promptly overrun by wasps and a confused seagull. The seagull later left with a full stomach and WEM 'Yorkie' Barr's sunglasses.

The Club Swinger attempted to organise a cabaret act using only glow sticks and deck chairs, while Writer 'Gracie' Fields led a bawdy singalong featuring heavily edited versions of sea shanties not suitable for mixed company (and most definitely not for inclusion in the *Fisherman's Friends* repertoire at the RNA's upcoming concert in October).

Radio Operator 'Bunny' Warren tried to hook up a sound system using parts from the comms rig. The resulting bass drop caused a minor power outage and stunned Stoker 'Bill' Sykes into a rare moment of silence.

Stoker 'Fanny' Cummins, wearing a sailor hat two sizes too small and a Hawaiian lei, danced with AB 'Pony' Moore until both fell into the punch bowl and were declared "officially marinated."

AB 'Fred' Perry, in vintage tennis whites, organised a limbo contest under the gun barrel. It ended abruptly when Marine 'Forty' Watt forgot to duck and concussed himself on the barrel, causing the Gunnery Officer to declare it "a direct hit".

As the sun set, the Captain rose – now barefoot and slightly singed – to deliver a stirring speech about naval camaraderie, duty, and how someone had definitely nicked his 'snorkers'. The night ended as expected – with the Padre leading a slightly off-key rendition of Jerusalem, 'Tugg' Wilson kissing the ship's bell, and 'Wayne' Kerr asleep in the paint locker with a traffic cone on his head and "Port or Starboard?" written on his chest in mustard.

As always, the crew had lived up to its well-earned reputation of knowing how to hold a BBQ and the following morning sailed into harbour (flying 'Frosty's' hot pants from the main mast) for an emergency replenishment of beer.

Around the Fleet

One of the ships alongside in Guzz had a delivery to the ship the other day, and as the LSA headed down the gangway, the Chief said, "Don't forget to sign." The Bosun's Mate turned to the QM and asked, "Is that because the delivery driver is deaf?"

Having just won on the lottery, whilst our Shipmate was musing about his winning with his wife, she asked, "Will you still love me now that you've won all that money?" "Of course I will" said our Shipmate. "I'll miss you, but I'll still love you."

There's an element of truth with this one. The Supply Officer held a meeting with the PO Writer to discuss his annual 264 report and told him that he needed to focus more and leave his problems at the door. Since that meeting the Supply Officer has found himself locked out of the ships office.

Having joined HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH, a sailor found that the PTI insists that everyone takes turns on the flight deck to do a workout. The Chief Stoker sent a note to the PTI asking if they could drop their body off and pick it up later when it was ready.

Onboard one of the destoryers the other morning, one of the greenies woke up the whole mess laughing. It was agreed that he must have slept funny.

And lastly, during a NAMET class in barracks, the schoolie pointed a ruler at a three badge AB and said, "At the end of this ruler is an idiot." The AB took a look at the ruler and asked, "Which end?"

Breaking News

A sailor has trained his dog to play the trumpet on the London Underground. He said that it went from Barking to Tooting in just over an hour.

And finally ... It's worth remembering that you weren't crazy when you joined the navy. The navy has had years of experience in making sure all its sailors reach the grade during their time in the mob.

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

And we'll see what we can do.



We've all been there

Me on my way to ask my wife
what's wrong with her



Spotted in the Ship Anson, Pompey

You are only allowed in the Ship Anson if you promise not to exterminate anyone, as this visitor discovered in July.



Future RNA Branch Meeting Dates

Tuesday 19th August @ RBL Club for a 7.30pm start

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

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

Once Navy, Always Navy