



CNOA

Chatham Naval Officers' Association



The CNOA Newsletter for April 2019

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An Offshore Raiding Craft (ORC) of 539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines moves at speed along Gratangenfjord in Norway during recent training © Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2019

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The next meeting of the Association will be on **Friday the 12th of April** in the Warfare Room, RSME HQ Brompton Barracks 19.45 for 20.00 when David Doré will show another of his excellent documentaries, this time about a broken promise by a Government with consequences that continue to this day. The evening will then continue with refreshments and fellowship in the Officers Mess.

Chairman's Flag Hoist:



Dear Fellow Members,

I'm looking out of the window as I type watching 'Storm Freya' beating up my garden. A little over a week ago, we were enjoying very warm sunny weather. The English weather really is an enigma. But let's hope human activity is not irreversibly destroying what we cherish in this 'green and pleasant land' and indeed around the world. More and more people are thinking hard about how to reduce the use of plastics and the burning of fossil fuels. It's not easy to change human behaviour but it can be done. The more people that try the better. As Lao Tzu said, "Every journey begins with a single step".

At the AGM last month, we asked for 2 volunteers to come forward to join the committee. One of these will be a 'member without portfolio'. But one will take over from Graham as Newsletter Editor next February. This is terribly important so please give this some proper thought. We cannot run an association without a few volunteers to help. Why not spare a few hours now and again to help us?

We also asked you via the last newsletter to send in a few comments about our social functions that we hold in the RE Officers' Mess in Brompton. This will only take you a few minutes to do, so please help us to help you. We need more responses please.

A group of 8 of us met up in Westminster last week for the Gaslight Tour which we had bid for at the New Year Lunch, courtesy of Jon Vanns. This was an excellent tour. Our British Gas guide Iain, was hugely knowledgeable, not only about the gas lights, but also about other fascinating points of interest.

Finally, we have some great speakers lined up for our monthly meetings and I look forward to seeing you there. Personally, I'm already compiling my guest list for Ladies and Guest Night on June 28th. It's never too early to start! Keep your eyes open for the Application Forms.

Yours Aye,

Colin

Colin Tozer
Cdr RN (Rtd)
Chairman

2019 Future Speakers & Events:

Please note the date changes below to the second Friday of the month

12th April: David Doré – The broken promise "In the footsteps of Lawrence"

10th May: Rev. Keith McNicol – A village of peace in the midst of conflict

14th June: Lesley Heyhow – Sailors Society

28th June: Ladies & Guest Night

12th July: Martin Watts – The Royal Marines and the war at sea 1939-45

9th August: CNOA Summer leave – No meeting

13th September: Lt Cdr Iain Shephard – ASW in the Royal Navy

11th October: Brian Maplin – Hovercraft

25th October: Trafalgar Night

8th November: Glenn Jones – A war of two halves, the Second Afghan War

13th December: Cmdr Bryant – The President's Address

Additional events will be included as details become available. As always, we are most grateful to those who send items for this Newsletter. All such contributions by the 5th of each month please. Could other CNOA members also provide a short presentation for us? Yes, they could! Please let Jon Vanns know or email contact@cnoa.org.uk

Derek Ireland (Hon. Secretary) and Graham Storey (Newsletter Editor)

A promise made but later broken with bad consequences

From Lt Cdr Jon Vanns

Many members will remember seeing at CNOA meetings some of excellent documentaries made by David Doré, here is an opportunity to see another.

Titled, The Broken Promise, in the Footsteps of Lawrence, this 34 minute film, narrated by Bob Wellings, traces the people and locations that figured in the Arab Revolt of 1916. A young British officer, T.E. Lawrence, played a key role in the revolt and would forever be remembered as Lawrence of Arabia.

Lawrence made a promise to the Arabs on behalf of the British government, but it was a promise that was broken. We live with the consequences to the present day, while Lawrence changed his name and sought obscurity. Your seat is already booked for Friday 12Apr2019, see you there.

Greenock welcomes Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship to the Fleet

From MoD Navy

ROYAL Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) ship, RFA Tidesurge, was welcomed into the Fleet on Wednesday, February 20, during her dedication service at Greenock's Ocean Terminal.



RFA Tidesurge at her dedication service at Greenock © Copyright MoD Navy 2019

The RFA is a civilian-crewed fleet owned by the Ministry of Defence, which provides world-class, cost-effective, maritime operational support to the Royal Navy. The RFA enables ships of the Royal Navy to maintain operations 24/7, 365 days a year around the world and is the largest UK employer of British merchant seamen.

RFA Tidesurge, a 39,000-tonne fleet replenishment tanker is the latest of four new RFA ships. Previously, Greenock was the affiliated town of RFA Gold Rover, which provided sterling service in support of the Royal Navy, NATO, and coalition allies for over 40 years. RFA Tidesurge will now take on the honour, continuing its close ties with the area.

Members of the RFA, military personnel, dignitaries, and civil leaders from Greenock gathered at the waterside for the dedication ceremony. Guest of honour at the event was Lady Sponsor, Lady Joanna Woodcock, accompanied by her husband, former Second Sea Lord, Sir Jonathan Woodcock, KCB, OBE. Also attending the event were local Sea Cadets, with their unit changing its name to “TS Tidesurge” to mark the special link between the vessel and town.

“Royal Fleet Auxiliary Tidesurge is the third of our four new fleet replenishment tankers,” explained Commodore Duncan Lamb, Head of the RFA Service. “With her flight deck capable of operating Chinook helicopters, double probe Replenishment At Sea (RAS) rigs, self-defence capability, and versatile fuel cargo system, she represents a crucial element of the Royal Navy Task Group of the future and a key enabler of our Navy’s global reach.”

RFA Tidesurge is the third of class of the Military Afloat Reach & Sustainability (MARS) Tankers, which includes in-service sister ships RFA Tidespring and Tiderace, and RFA Tideforce which will become operational later this year.

The Tide class tankers are flexible, state-of-the-art, double-hulled, fleet replenishment vessels which will also provide a key replenishment at sea capability and support to the Queen Elizabeth Class Aircraft Carriers. Once in service, Tidesurge will also provide fuel and water for Royal Navy warships all around the world.

The delivery of these new ships is part of the UK Government’s £179Bn plan to provide the Armed Forces with the equipment they need to deliver effective operational support across the globe. In addition to their supply duties in support of the Royal Navy, the vessels will also be able to undertake a wide range of maritime operations, such as constabulary patrols policing shipping lanes and humanitarian relief, as well as providing support to NATO and coalition allies.

David Farmer, Head of Commercially Supported Shipping (CSS) at Defence Equipment and Support (DES), said “Today’s service of dedication for RFA Tidesurge, the third Tide class tanker, is a culmination of a significant period of expert and steadfast delivery by the CSS team which is proud to be bringing her and her sister ships into the Royal Fleet Auxiliary service in defence of the UK. The Tide class is a truly world-leading fleet of new supply vessels which has already been proven in operational deployments, including those alongside HMS Queen Elizabeth. I look forward to continuing to work closely with our Armed Forces customer and industry partners as Tidesurge completes final trials and formally enters service over the next few months.”

The MARS Tanker programme has an extensive domestic supply chain involving around 27 UK companies. Prior to entry into operational service, RFA Tidesurge has undergone a detailed customisation programme at the A&P ship repair yard in Falmouth.

Now is the time to write to your MP to express your concerns From Cdr Colin Tozer

Two articles in this Newsletter have indicated that our potential future carrier capability may be under a serious threat. Firstly, the article last month reporting that the RAF Staff is campaigning to significantly reduce the number of F35s capable of flying from the carriers. Now, a second threat comes from the Treasury (as ever) indicating the possibility of operating or even retaining only one of the two new carriers.

Once again, the Royal Navy is being threatened by the two organisations that have persistently worked over many decades to undermine its size and capability. NOW is the time to write to your MP and express your concerns on this matter if you care about our Navy.

Aux armes mes amis!



March 1, 2019

MPs debate Carrier Strike strategy amidst rumours HMS Prince of Wales could be mothballed

On 28 February, Robert Courts MP led a Parliamentary debate held in Westminster Hall to "consider carrier strike strategy and its contribution to UK defence". Here we look at the highlights of this constructive two and a half hour discussion held by a small cross-party group of MPs.

During the speeches, Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, a dedicated advocate for the Navy, asked the Minister for reassurance that recent "*rumours emanating from Treasury sources about plans to mothball or sell HMS Prince of Wales*" were unfounded. Speaking at the end of the debate, the Armed Forces Minister, Mark Lancaster did not reply directly to the question, although continued to describe the ongoing delivery of the QEC carrier project on track as expected. Anne-Marie Trevelyan is well connected to Treasury officials as a member of the Commons Public Accounts Committee but there is no way to verify this story further at this stage.

It was government policy between 2010-14 that the second carrier would be sold or mothballed on completion (The Aircraft Carrier Alliance had sensibly locked the government into a contract that made it impossibly expensive to cancel the project). In 2014 David Cameron saw sense and [reversed the decision](#) but HMS Prince of Wales has always seemed slightly vulnerable to cuts. This latest rumour is unconfirmed but with a big hole in MoD finances, axing HMS Prince of Wales would suit the Treasury nicely, however strategically illiterate. Apart from the inherent folly in throwing away an enormous investment, with only a single ship, we would be left in the same position as the French, with a carrier only available for operations about 30-40% of the time.

There would also be some embarrassing difficulty squaring the circle of planned UK amphibious capability. Since HMS Ocean was sold without replacement, the carriers are additionally supposed to perform as helicopter assault ships in the 'Littoral Manoeuvre' role. Robert Courts MP recognised the

limitations of this concept during his excellent opening speech, but the [CVF/LPH compromise](#) would be a far greater stretch with just one ship. The newly announced [Future Littoral Strike Ships](#) would be a very poor substitute to mitigate the loss of LPH capability.

The Defence Secretary has been credited with fighting and winning battles in Whitehall for more defence funding, notably saving HMS Albion and Bulwark from the axe. These 'triumphs' would mean little and instead, he would be remembered as the Minister who oversaw the loss of HMS Prince of Wales.



HMS Prince of Wales currently fitting out in Rosyth ahead of sea trials planned for September. Her future once again under threat?

Putting aside the sudden shadow cast over the whole carrier project, the contributions made to the debate were amongst the best speeches on naval issues made in Parliament for some time. Although small in number, the speakers from all parties not only understood the context of the aircraft carriers construction but were genuinely passionate about what they can offer the UK.

Robert Courts demonstrated a good grasp of Royal Navy history and opened with a long introduction outlining the story of RN carrier operations and the decline in the fleet, adding "*This is not a lament for lost naval power, although I make no secret of the fact that, as far as I am concerned, we do not spend enough on defence. Our armed forces are constantly being asked to do too much with too little*". Robert Courts went on to argue the navy needs more mass and resilience and expressed tacit concern about lack of carrier escorts. Robert Courts also mentioned the recently retired Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, UK General Richard Shirreff whose recent novel "[War With Russia](#)" describes a British Prime Minister desperate to make a strong political gesture, sending HMS Queen Elizabeth to sea without an adequate escort only to be sunk by the Russians.

Ruth Smeeth MP, lead on the Royal Navy for the all-party Parliamentary Group for the Armed Forces replied first. She made a plea for long-range governmental planning for the Navy and a steady drumbeat of orders for new vessels. She noted that in the 50-year lifetime of the QEC carriers, we will have to replace the Astute class submarines, the Type 45 destroyers and even the Type 26 frigates.

Amongst many good points made by Anne-Marie Trevelyan, she pointed out how the carriers epitomise the new 'fusion doctrine' created by national security adviser, Sir Mark Sedwill. This is an attempt to properly join up all the strands of defensive, offensive and humanitarian activity, ordered and put into effect by Government. Part of forming and executing an effective strategy to maximise the potential of the carriers must be better inter-departmental cooperation.

Paul Sweeney spoke as the only Member of Parliament with experience of working on the carrier project. He pointed out that compared with an average RAF airfield, an aircraft carrier has to condense a similar number of aircraft movements into 0.3% of the space. He noted the RN says it really needs at least 24 surface escorts and more could be done to make them cheaper. The steel hull of a typical complex warship makes up only about 8% of the cost and he suggested we use a standardised, basic hull for all types of warship needed for the Royal Navy... "*we can drive efficiency into the programmes, get more hulls into the water, and build a rigorous, carrier strike battle group*".

The doughty Julian Lewis, Chairman of the Defence Select Committee, argued with his usual eloquence that the carriers were an important pillar of UK defence. The UK needs a comprehensive range of military capabilities to respond to events. There was little love for the Treasury throughout the debate. Mr Lewis said: *"I think the Treasury has probably sunk more ships in the Royal Navy than any other enemy we have faced"* In reference to Gavin Williamson confirming the planned deployment of a carrier to the South China Sea, he mischievously added *"It was gratifying to see a bit of advance retaliation in that HMS Queen Elizabeth appears to have sunk the Chancellor's visit to the Communist Chinese without even having embarked on its first operational voyage"*.

Vernon Coaker MP then made several profound points highlighting the lack of strategy across government and asked that in future *"defence, foreign policy, and international development objectives should be married together"* Mr Coker also accepted that politicians and government have failed to properly explain the value and purpose of armed forces to the general public. Constituents may understand why we spend money on countering terrorism but how the Navy can be a force for good in the world has not been communicated properly. Besides the obvious 'warfighting' roles, our forces are engaged in upholding international law, protecting the environment, humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations, an understanding of which would resonate with most ordinary people.

Mark Lancaster spoke on behalf of the government at the conclusion of the debate. He did not say anything very new and failed to answer some of the specific questions raised. He stated that the MoD did not intend to make a decision for some time on whether to split the F-35 purchase into A and B variants, awaiting more operational experience with the aircraft. He also pointed out that the normal warship cycle of deployment / maintenance / force generation would apply to the two carriers and provide for at least one ship at "high availability" at all times. If plans exist to axe HMS Prince of Wales, no one had told Mr Lancaster.

In refreshing contrast to so much of what goes on in Westminster, this debate was conducted by participants who knew their subject and was held in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation across party lines. The MPs involved should be commended and let us hope their influence on policy can outweigh their small numbers.

New ID cards being rolled out to armed forces veterans From MoD via Lt Cdr Bob Pritchard

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, all armed forces veterans can receive a new ID card to mark their time in the armed forces and help them access a wide range of specialist support and services. The new ID cards will ensure the process of validating service is as straightforward as possible, so that ex-forces personnel can access support for issues related to their service more quickly.

From today (18 February 2019), any personnel who have left the military since December 2018 will automatically be given one of the new ID cards, which will allow them to maintain a tangible link to their career in the forces. All other veterans will be able to apply for a new ID card by the end of this year, to mark their time in the armed forces.



Minister for Defence (People and Veterans) Tobias Ellwood said "We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the ex-forces community and we are working hard to ensure they receive the support they deserve. These new cards celebrate the great commitment and dedication of those who have served this country and I hope they can provide a further link to ex-personnel and the incredible community around them."

The cards allow veterans to easily verify their service to the NHS, their local authority, and charities, helping them to access support and services where needed. Veterans UK, which manages pensions and compensation payments for the armed forces, local authorities, service charities, NHS and GPs will also benefit from the change, as they will not have to conduct time-consuming checks to identify individual veterans.

The new ID card is one of three that are available to service veterans. Personnel leaving the armed forces are also able to keep their military IDs, known as the MOD Form 90, allowing them to maintain their emotional connection with their service. Additionally, veterans can access a range of commercial discounts through the Defence Discount Service, the official MOD-endorsed service for the armed forces.

Any veteran in need of support can contact the Veterans' Gateway, the 24 hour service which helps signpost ex-forces personnel to the wide range of support available for them. The support includes housing and financial advice, career guidance, getting medical care from the NHS and support to help with deal with service related challenges. The website is <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/> Since being set up in 2017, the Veterans' Gateway has already received over 20,000 contacts, advising ex-forces personnel and their families.

Seafarers UK – Helping fishermen access essential safety and vessel modernisation funding

From Seafarers UK



The European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) is a significant source of funding for fishermen as it can provide up to 80% of the cost of modernising fishing vessels and purchasing safety equipment.

To access the funding, the EMFF requires fishermen to pay the upfront cost of expenditure prior to submitting a claim for reimbursement costs, a requirement which not all fishermen are able to meet. This can be also problematic for fishermen operating on tight budgets and slim profit margins as there can be a period of 12 or more weeks prior to the expense claim being processed by the EMFF.

Seafarers UK, in partnership with Trinity House and The Fishmongers' Company, has funded a team of animateurs to support UK fishermen access funding and business support and Seafarers UK has been able to award a grant of £20,000 to provide a Fishers Loan Fund at the Credit Union. Fishermen who are in receipt of a grant offer letter from the EMFF are able to access a loan from Kernow Credit Union to cover the upfront cost of expenditure. Once the EMFF has reimbursed the fisherman, the Credit Union loan is repaid, and the money is then returned to the Loan Fund and is available to help another fisherman access EMFF funding.

The EMFF's requirement for upfront expenditure has been described by Chris Ranford, one of the team of animateurs, as 'a big barrier for fishermen who wish to access grant funding'. Many small scale coastal fishermen experience financial insecurity caused by their vulnerability to the weather, tides, fluctuating fuel prices, and of course the size and price of the catch. This can make it difficult for fishermen to demonstrate a regular pattern of income sufficient to meet the lending requirements of many mainstream lenders such as banks.

To date the animateurs have received over 500 enquiries from fishermen, submitted 82 grant applications to the EMFF and successfully obtained £1.75m of grant support for projects with a total value of £2m.

Plus a message from Seafarers UK. We are gearing up for our annual campaigning events!

Seafarers Awareness Week will be 8-14 July and you can find out about this year's theme below, or on our [website](#). We are also calling on local councils, government offices and business headquarters to celebrate [Merchant Navy Day on 3 September](#) by hoisting a Red Ensign on buildings and flagpoles. For more details on how to get involved, email mnfund@seafarers.uk.

Seafarers UK is pleased to be one of Jordan Wylie's chosen charities for his 'Rowing Dangerously' challenge, which will see him rowing unsupported across the dangerous Bab-el-Mandeb Strait. [Find out more](#) about this incredible challenge, follow Jordan's training preparations and help him reach his fundraising target!

Would you like to support us through a challenging activity of your own? We are recruiting teams for our tough and rewarding [24 Peaks Challenge](#) and have places for the [Prudential](#)

Developments in Naval drone vessels by the US and UK

From Fg Off Graham Storey

The UK's Daily Telegraph recently reported the following. The US Navy is planning a fleet of autonomous drone escort vessels that will form part of a transformed seaborne force to challenge the naval power of rivals including China.

Research is underway to prepare two new classes of unmanned ships. While one ship could be unmanned and serve as a scout or sensor ship, the second could include a Mark 41 Vertical Launching System (VLS) rocket silo. "When you look at bigger unmanned [vessels], well then maybe you need to think about things that require a bit more space to do: a larger sensor or even an offensive payload," surface warfare director Rear Admiral Ronald Boxall said. "Should we put VLS on there? Maybe, or maybe there are different kinds of things we could do with payloads that are big," he told Defence News.

The plans form part of a US Navy strategy to extend its surface fleet, using unmanned sensor ships to stretch the intelligence resources of rival nations. The US Navy launched its first autonomous drone ship in 2016. The Sea Hunter is an unmanned test ship as part of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), designed as a submarine tracking vessel. Built at a cost of \$20m (£16m), it was intended to test the potential of autonomous ships. The Sea Hunter was created using a trimaran design with three hulls and is capable of travelling at up to 27 knots. At 132ft in length it is the world's largest autonomous ship.

The US Navy is now planning to expand from its current 104 large surface vessels and 52 smaller ships to more than 350 ships, which could ultimately include a mix of manned and unmanned vessels. The new fleet of robot warships are designed to play a part in countering the technical gains being made by China at sea. China has designated a 225 square nautical miles area of sea as an autonomous ship test bed, although has yet to reveal any of its own ships.

While autonomous cars have taken to the road in the US and autonomous drones are increasingly being considered for commercial uses and warfare, development of driverless ships has entered a renewed phase. In October, Rolls-Royce and Intel confirmed they were planning to collaborate on designs for intelligent ships that will have similar systems to those found in self-driving cars. The ships will use artificial intelligence to independently navigate and avoid other ships and dangers.

The Royal Navy has also been testing autonomous ships to reduce the need for crews on more dangerous missions. Last year, the Royal Navy began testing a £13m unmanned mine-sweeping ship. The ship has a main sensor vessel, which is guided remotely, and a series of auxiliary boats that send out signals that can detonate mines safely.



The Royal Navy has been testing an unmanned minesweeper © Copyright MoD Navy 2019

Defence giant BAE systems, told the Telegraph in November it was working on a concept for a future Navy control room that would not be on-board any ship.

"We think this will work because we know that you can have pilots in a Texas desert controlling drones that fly over Afghanistan," said Frank Cotton, BAE chief technology officer for naval systems. "So why not have

the officers somewhere safe, instead of on-board?" For the US Navy, its new fleet of autonomous

vessels would be a shift away from a current handful of large capital ships to a larger fleet of drone-like smaller vessels that can overwhelm the enemy.

"It's a shift in mindset," Admiral Boxall told Defence News. "You make it smaller and more distributable... 'Where can we use unmanned so that I can push it to a smaller platform?'"

Royal Naval Association tackles digital isolation for shipmates From RNA via Lt Col Barry Duffield

PROJECT SEMAPHORE - enabling communication for isolated veterans.

Over the last year, the RBLI Aged Veterans Project has worked with the RNA to engage 33 Royal Navy, Royal Marine or Merchant Navy veterans across Kent.

Project Semaphore is a Royal Naval Association (RNA) initiative funded by the Aged Veterans Fund, to address the issue of digital isolation in older Veterans, which exacerbates loneliness and poverty. Whilst they provide iPads, it is not an IT Project: it is a project to provide friendship, support and practical help, with the outcome of better spiritual and mental health. A recent study equated loneliness in the elderly to the effect of smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Shipmates who qualify for an iPad can make new friends, learn new skills and connect with their family and friends. Project Semaphore has been a huge success to date, they have issued over 500 devices and the project is ongoing. Mindful that many veterans have a fear of technology, some feel overwhelmed at the idea of learning new skills, worry about their personal security and need help and support to realise the benefits of the financial savings offered online. The project supports Shipmates in their homes if they are unable to join a group or attend a workshop, and also cover the country from Inverness, Douglas IoM, Limavady and Holyhead, Liverpool to York, Kent, Plymouth and Cornwall.

Applications: Please get in touch for more information, to clarify the eligibility criteria, request an Application Form or to Volunteer: julie@royalnavalassoc.com

And finally, From MoD Navy



HMS Dragon has been busy dealing another blow to the drugs trade © Copyright MoD Navy 2019

The Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon has dealt another blow to the funding of terrorism after seizing more than 2,000kg of hash with her sixth drugs bust in three months. The Portsmouth-based warship struck again almost immediately after her fifth bust, this time seizing 101 bags of hashish while on patrol in the Indian Ocean.

A final note from the CNOA Hon. Secretary

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

**CHATHAM NAVAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION***President: Commodore Barry Bryant CVO RN**Chairman: Cdr Colin Tozer RN (Rtd)***APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP**

SURNAME		FORENAMES	DATE
HOME ADDRESS		BUSINESS ADDRESS	
Tel. No:- E Mail Address:-		Tel. No:- E Mail Address:-	
RANK	TYPE OF COMMISSION	SPECIALISATION / AWARDS & QUALIFICATIONS	

BRIEF CAREER DETAILS

General Data Protection Regulation: - I agree that all the above details may be maintained and kept by the CNOA and RSME for the purposes of membership records and security. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to my details being published in a membership booklet.

SIGNED.....

PRESENT OCCUPATION			
PROPOSERS NAME		PROPOSERS SIGNATURE	HOW LONG KNOWN
SECONDER'S NAME		SECONDER'S SIGNATURE	HOW LONG KNOWN