

THE CITY ROYAL

The Newsletter of the City of London



Branch Royal Marines Association

Per Mare

Per Terram

Branch Officers

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Lt General Sir Robert Fulton KBE

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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR



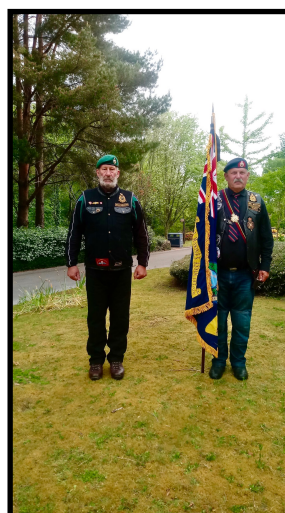
Dear Friends,

As I write once more, the current Government pandemic lockdown which started on Mon 23rd March has lasted a period of over 70 days. From Mon 1st June restrictions are to be eased gradually. We sadly remember all those who have loved lost ones.

Our branch standard bearer Chas Timms has been proudly parading our standard this month at the official VE Day75 celebrations in his road, at the request of his neighbours. We also celebrated VE Day75, and my better half went the whole hog and made me decorate the front our house. Naturally I had to ensure the RM flag flew alongside the Union Jack!



And then on Friday 22nd May Chas paraded our standard once again at the funeral of a former Royal Marine and retired firefighter, Michael Walpole, a vet of 45 Commando. Sadly on the same day, at the request of the family, I rode with the RMARiders to Poole to attend the funeral of another former Royal Marine Steven (Jan) Wheeler. It was estimated over 100 former RMs lined the route and then 25 motorbikes escorted his coffin procession to the crematorium. **RIP Royals.**



I have been informed that our very good supportive friend Lt Col Jason Durup, sadly leaves his position as CO of RMR London at the end of July. For those who may not be aware, Jason has made very strong connections with the local boxing clubs and our serving Corps.

On behalf of our branch we wish him every success for his future career and please do not be a stranger to our branch.

Please continue to stay alert and safe.

With Very Best Wishes,
Graeme Golightly
Branch Chairman,
www.rmacol.co.uk

UNITED WE CONQUER

Once a Marine Always a Marine

A REFLECTION - Rad Gorringer writes:

During a weekend at CTRM last year I spoke for a short while to four young people who had just completed their training, commando course and subsequent Kings Squad pass-out. They were awaiting their draft notification to various commando units. Really good blokes, it was a privilege to be in their company for a short while. Of the four, three had university degrees. I could not help but reflect how times change.

One asked me "What year did you leave the Corps?" I said: "I left the Corps in 1970." He thought for a moment and said: "My mum wasn't born then."

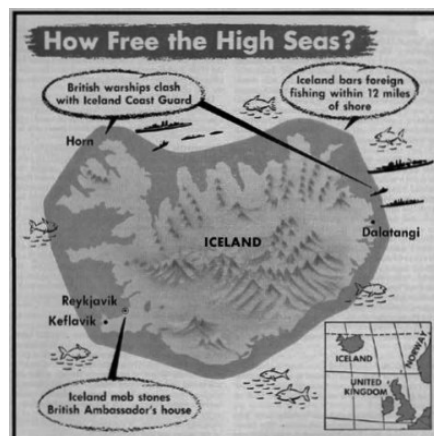
Oh well I thought, soldier on.

Groucho Marx, of all people, said: "Growing old is something you do if you are lucky."
Sounds very familiar Rad .Ed.

SIRIUS BUSINESS 3 - Mike Pinchen writes:

Following the return of HMS *Sirius* from the West Indies, a period of maintenance in Devonport and a Work-Up at Portland, she was ordered to join the Fishery Protection Squadron. At this time the so-called 'Cod War' was in progress. This was an on-going fisheries dispute between Iceland and the UK, as a result of the former making a unilateral declaration of the extension of her territorial waters.

This resulted in British trawlers being harassed by Icelandic gunboats in these fish-rich waters, and, if banned altogether, the impact would have a profound effect upon the fishing ports of Britain and the price of cod over the counter! There had been a few changes to the Detachment, the most prominent to join us being the OCRM, Lt Bob Fletcher, (the rugby leprechaun), the DSM, Sgt Bill Eades and Cpl Keith Murray our PTI. On the way north, we Royals started to imagine all sorts of schemes in which we may get involved. Would we be used as a boarding party against the Icelandic gunboats, or perhaps we would sneak in and land in one of the harbours and neutralise their capability? Surely we would be used for something?





We were to be disappointed, as in the event none of these things happened. Instead we, as part of the ship's company, would be employed in ship's duties. We relieved a Rothesay class frigate at sea and proceeded to patrol our designated area. The weather was variable; one minute flat calm with clear skies, the next high winds and huge waves. We worked a routine known as Defence-Watches, 6 hours on 5 hours off; 5 hours on, 6 hours off. It became

monotonous and mundane. The '*Jimmy*' utilised the under-employed by forming cleaning parties, until eventually the whole ship had a pungent smell of brasso and cleaning paste. My Action-Station was on the starboard oerlikon, a 20mm machine gun of WW2 vintage, aimed over iron sights and fed by a 60 round drum magazine. This was a rather exposed position, being abaft the bridge wing, and so, when not required to be closed up, shelter was sought in the GDP, (gunnery direction platform). This consisted of four lookout positions. Each of these were a set of binoculars mounted in revolving barrel like structures, which enabled radar contacts to be confirmed by the look-out with a visual sighting of surface or airborne targets. This position was commanded by a Snotty, (Midshipman). Life on the GDP was cold but much more fun that being below and being part of the *Jimmy*'s cleaning parties. In fact when the sun was out one could even get in some bronzy time in the lee of the foremast.



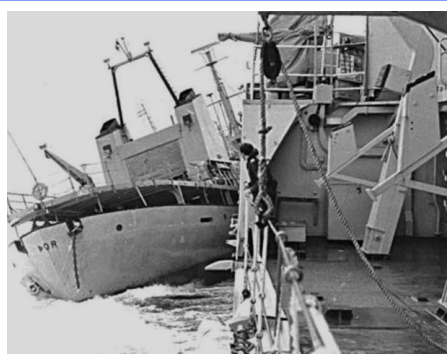
Most of the time was spent patrolling our zone; back and forth, back and forth. It must have been like this on the Atlantic convoys during WW2, endless hours of boredom, except we didn't have the submarines to worry about! During the middle watch I clambered over the bridge wing and grabbed some 'warmers' in the bridge itself. There was a radio receiver in there and we would listen to the conversations between the trawler skippers, trying to identify the hometown of the various accents. Taking a glance at the radar screen one could see dozens, possibly hundreds of specks, most, if not all were British trawlers, going about their 'lawful' business. Looking out on the bridge wing the black sea was dotted with lights as the fishermen worked their catch aboard, toiling under arc lights in all weathers throughout the long cold nights. These men were hardy fellows, the salt of the earth, tough uncompromising men, men who formed the backbone of a proud fishing industry and tradition; but for how long? That's what we were there for, to protect them, wasn't it?

Occasionally the boredom would be broken by the report of a gunboat coming out, and we would dash at full speed to intercept. A Leander class frigate, on paper, could do 28 knots, but I doubt if we achieved more than 26. At those revs the whole ship shook and rattled, and anyone who was asleep very soon



was not so. Sometimes gunfire was heard in the distance, followed by a report of a trawler being hit. Again we raced to the scene, the ship's stem ploughed into the swell cutting a passage

through the uncompromising foam. But we were too late; the assailant had done his dastardly deed and retired to the safety of a fjord.



I would be closed up, strapped in at my oerlikon, the wind chill cutting through my many layers of clothing, the frozen salt spray stinging my face like dozens of needles. But I was up for it! I had been advised by the POGI, (Petty Officer Gunnery Instructor), to lay my fire onto the target like a wand, using the tracer as a guide. So if and when I was ordered to, the bridge of the gunboat was going to get it! The Icelandic gunboats we encountered regularly were the *Odin* and the *Thor*. These were short in length, rapid in

acceleration, with a tight turning circle. The Leander frigate by contrast was slower to accelerate and was long and sleek by comparison, with a wider turning circle. Designed for anti-submarine warfare the Leander's had thin skins, which made them particularly vulnerable to the Icelandic's reinforced icebreaker bows. During cat and mouse antics with the *Thor*, as she tried to impede some trawlers, we were almost down to



the gunwales as the skipper put 30 degrees of starboard wheel on at full speed, and we came very close to collision on several occasions. Not being allowed to fire unilaterally, the DSM lined us up on the boat deck and organised 'volley fire' at the opposing vessel as she passed down our starboard side, all but a few feet away! However the only rounds 'fired' were mouldy potatoes from the veg locker!

After a couple of months we did our final RAS and were relieved, and I must say we were glad to be going home. In hindsight Iceland was only looking after its own interests. Maybe they could see the writing on the wall? It's a shame the UK didn't do the same. Instead the UK Government have given our fishing rights away to the EU under the guise of the Common Fisheries Policy. Our once proud fishing industry is now but a shadow of its former self. Iceland still retains hers! However a lasting memory for me will be of our fishermen as they toiled in those northern waters to bring their catch safely home to port. I now had a great respect for the people of that industry and when tucking into cod and chips, I always give a thought to 'those in peril on the sea'.

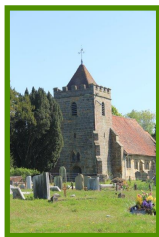
Mike Pinchen
PO28051Q

'Hurricane 80' - Robin Hollamby writes:

In her spare time my wife runs two or three times a week. Sundays are often taken up when she is competing in an organised race and distance from 5 to 50km and normally a road event. I never saw the attraction of running when I



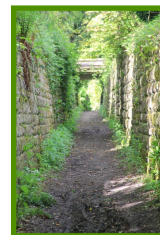
could walk and even more so after surgeons fitted me up with a total knee replacement a couple of years ago. Some of the events from half marathon upwards have in recent years been open to those who like a long walk, and I have done a few of these in the last 5 years.



To commemorate the events of the Summer 1940 which most historians agree took place between the 10th July and 31st October. The Battle of Britain was fought in the skies over the village in Kent where I live. This epic air battle was watched by those who lived and worked on the land in and the South East of England.

Fought between the Luftwaffe and their ally Corpo Aereo Italiano with over 2,500 aircraft and The Royal Air Force together with The Royal Canadian Air Force with just under 2,000 serviceable aircraft. By the end of October RAF losses would amount to 1,744 aircraft with German and Italian losses standing at just under 2,000.

Two of the most iconic WW2 fighter planes built for the RAF and their brave pilots won the day, the Supermarine Spitfire and the Hawker Hurricane. Which was the better aircraft will always be open to debate, the Spitfire may have been sleeker and faster, but the Hurricane was easier to maintain, and service typically less than half the time required to refuel and re-arm than the Spitfire. The number of Hurricanes that took part was far greater than the number of Spitfires used. The Germans used their infamous Messerschmitt Bf109, the Heinkel HE111 and the Dornier Do17.



The RAF Museum came up with just the event for both of us. The Hurricane 80k Virtual Challenge. Obviously the Covid-19 made it impossible to hold a normal race with hundreds of runners and spectators. So, the virtual race was on, starting any time from 21st April to be completed no later than 10th July.

Log sheets were issued to all competitors who simply had to record their activity listing the dates and times, distance covered and how. You could, run, Jog, swim or walk, just complete the distance in the 80days given and submit the log sheet.

The lock down giving us the opportunity for exercise, living in rural Kent and the fine weather allowed me to finish my 80km by 6th May, my wife finished her challenge a few days before me having run more that half and walking the remainder. Using the network of public footpaths seldom seeing another person. Most of our village had been out walking rather than driving everywhere and were posting on social media pictures of their walks. I did the same visiting parts of the parish that many did not know existed, leaving them to try and work out where I had been, only once straying over the parish boundary.



Fresh air, exercise and helping the RAF Museum into the bargain.

Robin Hollamby

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Our prime purpose on life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them.

Dalai Lama

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

A politician needs the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month and next year. And have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn't happen.

Winston Churchill

DID YOU KNOW?

Despite lockdown and isolation the traditional sounding of the Last Post at The Menin Gate an Ypres continues with a single bugler although the public are not admitted. Also, The Ceremony of The Keys at The Tower of London is being maintained subject to social distancing. It is interesting to note that this ceremony has never been cancelled although it was delayed on one occasion during WW2

2020 Family Weekend at Lympstone - This year's family weekend has, with much reluctance, been cancelled.

BRANCH INFORMATION

Due to the present situation all branch events are cancelled or suspended for the foreseeable future, members will be informed as and when the situation changes.

Check the weekly RMA Reporting Network

Branch website www.rmacol.co.uk

For any queries contact Branch Secretary Tony Luckens BEM

Mobile 0756 836 8977

Email tony.luckens@gmail.com

Latest Government advice: - what you can and cannot do

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

NHS Information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

KEEP SAFE - BE ALERT

HEALTH and WELLBEING

It has been customary to provide a one page advice sheet as a supplement to the City Royal, however, from this edition onwards the supplement will provide the complete version of the subject which this month is 'Healthy Eating'.

Following months will introduce "How to lose Weight" - 'Exercising for Health - 'Managing Stress' - 'Learning to Relax' - 'Boosting your Energy Levels' and 'Achieving Happiness and Wellbeing' all by courtesy of Peter Brown - thank you Peter.

Under 'separate cover' I will send the full versions of the single page sheets previously published i.e. 'Do you know your Health Age' - 'Prostate Cancer Awareness' - 'Understanding Blood Pressure' - 'Understanding Cholesterol Levels' and 'Reducing your Waist size'

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Hang loose - be alert - keep your distance - stay safe -
remember to keep washing those hands and enjoy the summer weather.



Should you have any items suitable for publication in the City Royal
(including cherished/memorable photographs)
please contact me at davidharris73@sky.com



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BRANCH ROYAL MARINES ASSOCIATION

