

## THE CITY ROYAL

The Newsletter of the City of London



Branch Royal Marines Association

Per Mare

Per Terram

### Branch Officers

President

Lt General Sir Robert Fulton KBE

Chairman: Graeme Golightly - Secretary: Tony Luckens BEM -

Treasurer and Membership Secretary: : Stephen Gilkes -

Welfare Representative: Norman Saints - City Royal Editor: David Harris



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II  
will achieve 94 years on the 26th April 2020

The City of London Branch of the Royal Marines Association wishes Her Majesty  
a Happy Birthday and assures her of its continued loyalty and affection.

**GOD SAVE THE QUEEN**





### A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends,

I am sure that this Ester is for you, like it is for all of us, not quite the event that you had hoped it would be and I know whilst the weather will hopefully be sunny in parts, it doesn't quite make up for the extra caution we are all taking right now.

By now some of you may have already experienced our branch committee members getting in touch with you. We decided the very least we could do in the current lockdown environment was to carry out welfare checks by phoning, emailing and using social media channels on all of our 134 members. This has turned out to be very positive indeed for both sides and as you read on in the City Royal, you will see how far and wide our members are. I just want to wish you and your families a relaxing, safe and restful Easter weekend.

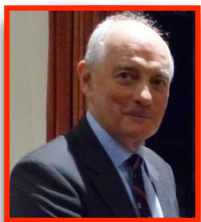
Finally, keep your powder dry and your arcs covered at all time 'Royal' for this unseen enemy.\

With Very Best Wishes,  
Graeme Golightly  
Chairman,  
RMA-TRMC City of London  
[www.rmacol.co.uk](http://www.rmacol.co.uk)



Once a Marine Always a Marine

### AN EASTER MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT - Lieutenant General Sir Robert Fulton KBE



*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven:*

I was amused this week to read about a former RM who made himself do 20 press-ups every time he used the words 'unprecedented' or 'extraordinary'. These times certainly are both – but I am inclined to agree that we should now move beyond that. What now?

We were all taught in training that, as we went on an operation, we should know our commander's intent and our part in his plan - what's the mission and how do we play our part? What I personally find most frustrating about this operation is that my contribution is to stay at home – to stay out of the fight – while our wonderful health service and other key workers go into battle. How many of us have watched an operation unfold and wanted to be there, wanted to be part of it? I know that I have, and this is no different.

*A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing*

When Ecclesiastes was written, they had not coined the phrases 'social distancing' and 'self-isolation', but I am sure that *refrain from embracing* covers both. I am full of admiration for all those working day and night to combat this threat, professionals and volunteers alike, and those ensuring that food and vital supplies are delivered and available; the Branch salutes and thanks every one of them. And so, I readily recognise that, except for those able to play an official role, the best contribution that we can make, is to stay at home. Even then, I know that many of our members are distinguishing themselves by volunteering locally to help neighbours, friends and community groups – and we salute them also. I would also like

to pay tribute to those, such as Peter Brown, whose Health and Wellbeing advice is so important to all of us, and also to our Committee who are doing, and will do, all they can to ensure that contacts with Branch Members are maintained to keep everyone on board.

*A time to break down and a time to build up*

Nevertheless, our time will come. This threat will be defeated and then the task of re-building begins – and we must be ready: ready to re-build our Branch, the RMA, our communities and our Country. At that time, we will all have the active part to play that comes naturally to us. The Branch will re-convene, the RMA will re-establish, communities will re-build, businesses will regenerate and the Country will rise up. In all those activities, we both individually and collectively have an important part to play – and, led by our Chairman and Committee, we will.

Stay well, stay strong and I look forward to joining everyone on the re-building task when this threat has been defeated.

Rob Fulton

5 April 2020



Mike Pinchen writes:

### SIRIUS BUSINESS

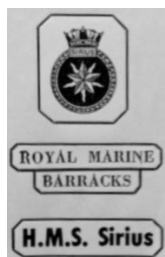
Following the article in last month's City Royal about HMS *Phoebe* and the mention of her sister ship HMS *Sirius*, I was inspired to write a piece about the latter ship mentioned, the Leander class frigate F40.

Between April 1972 and April 1974 I was part of the Royal Marine Detachment of HMS *Sirius*,

(Commander Nolan RN). The

Detachment consisted of Lt Steve Roach, (OCRM); Sergeant Andy Baker, (DSM); 2 Corporals and 20 Marines. The majority of the turret and gun-bay crew was provided by the Detachment, as was a percentage of the Diving Team. We had our own 'Part of Ship', and responsibility for the ship's Boats. Several marines with SQs were attached to various departments such as communications and catering. I joined *Sirius*, from 42 Cdo while she was in dry dock at Devonport. She was in the latter

stages of major maintenance during which the ship's company were quartered on the upper floor of the





Senior Rates block of HMS *Drake*. Following a vigorous 'Work Up' at Portland, and a week away at Penhale Camp, nr Perrenporth. we also visited Guernsey; and what a great run ashore St Peter Port turned out to be! Then it was off to the West Indies, the reason for my being there. The itinerary included many of the WI islands, Bermuda, Florida and British Honduras, (now Belize). 'Flying the Flag' and cross training between local defence and police forces also took place, with plenty of 'social gatherings' in many of the ports of call. It was mainly a peaceful commission as I remember it, although one tends to forget the down side, chipping and painting!



During February 73 we arrived in Bermuda for a period of maintenance at HMS *Malabar*. It was during this time that the Governor of Bermuda, (Sir Richard Sharples), and his ADC, (Capt Hugh Sayers), were assassinated, as they strolled in the gardens of the Governor's residence one evening after dinner, (they even killed his dog, a Great Dane named Horsa). As a consequence it was feared that the Senior Naval Officer West Indies, (with the acronym of SNOWI), and his family could be at risk. So *Sirius* was 'requested' to provide a guard for the Commodore's residence on Ireland Island, (Bermuda is a series of islands linked by bridges and causeways). Unfortunately only three 'Royals' remained on board that particular evening, I being one of them. We were issued with our rifles, (SLR's), and twenty rounds a piece and told to muster on the jetty and await instructions. After a short while a navy blue Land Rover screeched to a halt beside us. The OCRM's head appeared from the driver's window and we were told to get aboard. As we drove at break-neck speed to the Commodore's residence, he informed us we were going to SNOWI's house. This was a bit confusing at first, as the only 'Snowy' I knew was Tin-Tin's dog, you know of the cartoon fame! On arrival at the entrance to the white colonial building, surrounded by a high wall, breached only by two large wooden gates, we were given our final instruction, "Defend it." And with that the OCRM drove off. We were a bit bemused at first, however I suppose he was somewhat busy that evening, and in hindsight it was a bit of a compliment to be trusted; so we got on with it. We reported to SNOWI, who seemed unperturbed, and were told by his charming wife, to help ourselves to 'makings' and whatever we needed from the larder. That was the first mistake. What was the risk? How much of a threat was there? How many 'enemy' were there? What weapons did they have etc. We did not know, no one could advise us. So the three of us decided to split into two groups, (if you can split three two ways). One of us would stay inside the building as a 'last ditch' so to speak. We would use one nominated door to enter and leave, all other doors and windows to be locked. Anyone entering via any other means would probably be an intruder and therefore liable to be shot! We agreed a password for use when entering the designated entrance and because we had no radios elected for 'the old string and can' as a means of alerting the person inside. This was fashioned out of two empty larger cans and a washing line, the latter of which was passed through a louver in one of the windows. The other two, which included myself, would form a wandering patrol in the grounds, 'laying up'





occasionally to 'listen in'. So that was our plan. SNOWI was informed and he seemed happy with the arrangement. "*Cracked it*" we thought. That was the second mistake! During the night the sentry inside the house was caught by the Commodore's wife eating her finest caviar straight from the pot. "*Well you did say help yourself*" he replied innocently to her exasperated enquiry. Outside things were not going quite as we had envisaged either. Alerted by the sound of a vehicle stopping, we heard the wicket, set in the main gate, opening. From the shadows of the bougainvillea we observed, silhouetted in the wicket, that the unannounced intruders were a woman and a man. After pulling the 'alarm' we crept forward, sweat dripping from our taut bodies, our fingers on the trigger guards of our rifles. I stepped out on them and told them to stand perfectly still! My oppo joined me, and two SLR muzzles pointed at them from just a few yards. To say they were surprised is putting it mildly, however after a stunned silence it soon became apparent who they were. The woman was the Commodore's daughter! The man turned out to be a naval officer, who insisted, innocently of course, that he was just '*escorting the lady home*'. Neither of them were aware of the current situation and they seemed more in the dark than we were. Then, as we were checking the officers ID, the woman decided she's had enough and walked briskly towards the main door. I flew after her and grabbed her arm to prevent her attempting to enter the wrong entrance! She went ballistic and told me a few things about myself that I had been unaware of up till then. However after explaining my actions and the fact that there was probably a loaded rifle covering the inside of the door she was about to try to open, she calmed down. With this I escorted her to the 'agreed entrance', and suggested that the naval officer 'thin out'. She agreed. When I told him he seemed a bit 'put out'. Anyway he left, cursing his luck no doubt. After that first night, the following days and nights were uneventful. The Detachment continued to provide a guard for the residence, which never numbered more than six at any one time, until we were relieved several days later, by a rifle company from the Parachute Regiment. A few weeks later *Sirius* played a major role at the State Funeral of the Governor, with the RM Detachment forming the Guard of Honour. Alongside at Hamilton the coffins of Sir Richard and Captain Sayers were born on board by members of the Bermuda Regiment and the Welsh Guards respectively. They were then conveyed by sea to the old colonial capital, St George's, where they were both buried in the old churchyard. The assassin was eventually caught, found guilty and hanged.

\*With thanks to Terrence 'Scouse' Judge BEM for some of the pictures.

**Footnote:** *Sirius* is a famous name amongst Royal Navy ships. In 1787 she was part of the 'First Fleet' to Australia. Indeed the first European to be born in Australia was a child to a Royal Marine from the detachment of that ship.

Another *Sirius* was a frigate that signalled the sighting of the French Fleet before Trafalgar. The Captain of the same, (William Prowse), was the uncle of the OCRM of HMS *Victory* Captain Charles Adair RM.

Another *Sirius*, an old light cruiser, was one of the ships sent to block Ostend Harbour on the night of the 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> April 1918. Unfortunately she went aground on sandbanks about 1,000 yards short of the harbour entrance.

Finally the AA Cruiser *Sirius* C82, (which saw extensive service in the Med during WW2), had at one time during her post war commission, one Lt Jeremy Moore RM, (later Maj Gen Sir Jeremy Moore KCB OBE MC\*) as OCRM.

**A NEW CONTRIBUTOR** - I'm very pleased to introduce a new contributor to The City Royal, Radley Gorrington writes:-

### THE SUMMER OF '69

One of the many positives that I gained from the Royal Marines and something I have always valued, is a group of very close friends, most of whom I have now known for nearly sixty years. (Oh dear.) One of these friends, John F, recently moved house (re-located I believe is the modern terminology) and is now a few miles away from us across the White cliffs of Dover from where we lived beside Walmer Castle for over five decades. John's new home is beside a riding stables, which started us reminiscing .....

In 1969 we were both Physical Training Instructors at the Depot Royal Marines, Deal. John was strutting his stuff in the gymnasium and I was splashing around the Depot swimming pool trying to ensure that all recruits passed their BST (Battle Swimming Test) and HDD (Helicopter Ditching Drills) before passing out and moving on to Lympstone. In 'those days' the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone did not have a swimming pool, unless you count the Tank, so these tests had to be completed before leaving Deal. (The Depot has long gone, of course and the swimming pool is now a doctors' surgery which I inevitably have to visit sometimes.) John and I differed on one major aspect - he had signed for life but I had other plans and at that time I could tell you, were you foolish enough to ask, exactly how many days I had to my 'nine'. But that made not the slightest difference to a friendship.

One morning we were both summoned to the Second-in-Command's office. I was late of course. It is a lifelong affliction I have long since stopped worrying about. John, for obvious reasons, took things a lot more seriously than I did and was already there. And clearly a little agitated. "What have you done this time?!" he demanded. This time?! "Me, nothing." Standard response. Thankfully we were called into the office before John could pursue his enquires. "OK" said the 2 I/C. "Straight to the point. I understand you two are fully qualified in all things equestrian?" Silence whilst we both thought: 'Pardon?'. Horses, horse riding, equestrian!!" "O sorry sir, yes we are." "Good. Now the groom has been to see myself and the Commanding Officer." (I should at this point explain that the Depot maintained three horses in the stable block, hidden in a quiet corner of North Barracks which were maintained for parade and ceremonial duties. They were beautiful animals, huge, expertly schooled and groomed to the point of being pampered. "It is clear" continued the 2 I/C "that, with all his other duties, the groom does not have enough the available time to exercise the horses as much as they should be exercised. The C.O. has cleared this with the Officer Commanding Physical Training. You two will report to the stables at 1400 each Wednesday and Friday and take the horses out for exercise. OK?" "Yes sir". (Try not to smirk.) "Good - take this chit to the clothing store and draw what you need - jodhpurs, boots and stuff." "Yes sir." (Completely failing in the 'try not to smirk' department.)

So that was the summer of '69 for John and for me - two afternoons a week walking, trotting, cantering and galloping along numerous bridle paths between Deal and St. Margaret's Bay. Nobody ever mentioned hard hats, I suspect because, as we all know, Green Berets are considered protection against anything. As we grew more proficient and got to know the animals, we would on occasions ride with one another on a leading rein. At that time I lived in a bungalow on an unmade road in Kingsdown between Deal and the Bay. So we would ride there, tie the horses up and go indoors for tea and cakes. Later we identified a pub in the village where they were quite content for us to secure the animals outside whilst we went inside to ensure we did not suffer from dehydration.

I recall an idyllic summer, although on reflection there may very well be an element of 'rose coloured spectacles' in that. The weather can change on top of those cliffs and the rain comes at you sideways and I can also distinctly remember, on more than one occasion, feeling wet, cold and bedraggled, sitting on top of a horse that was also wet, cold and bedraggled. this would prompt another of my skills - dripping, moaning and complaining. John would tolerate this for a short while before forcefully reminding me that many people paid a great amount of money to do what we were paid to do. So: SHUT UP RAD!

*Thanks Rad for a glimpse of how tough life was in the Corps in the summer of '69!*

**BEST WISHES RECEIVED** - The Branch has received best wishes from:-

**Frank Bellizzi - Malta**  
**John Brissett - Jersey**  
**Paul Finnigan - Italy**  
**Michael Goddard - Italy**  
**SE Region RMA**

And we in turn return those sentiments, which are much appreciated.

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING** - In the last issue of the CR it was stated that the April Supplement would advise on prostate cancer; this however had been previously circulated and the April supplement will deal with 'Understanding Blood Pressure' and will accompany this issue. The May issue will deal with 'Understanding Cholesterol Levels'. Our best thanks to Peter Brown for providing this information.

**A CHALLENGE IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES** - an idea suggested by Robin Hollomby

No doubt there are some among us who will remember the Battle of Britain (I do, I was "shot up" twice by Messerschmitts) and those that were not around at the time will certainly know of it. It is 80 years since that battle took place in the sky over our country and will be remembered in many ways, one of which is a keep fit challenge! 'Royal' likes a challenge - how about keeping fit to remember the 80th anniversary of that great battle - 1km each day for 80 days; how? check out the following link to find out all about it -

<https://www.nice-work.org.uk/races/Hurricane%2080>

If you can - give it a go, I shall, if only to thank the Canadian Hurricane pilot who shot down one of the 109s that had a pop at me!  
(Ed).

### ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER



**It's all about communication!**

**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

Do not let the behaviour of others  
destroy your inner peace.

Dalai Lama

**QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

Go ahead!  
Tell me that I'm not good enough,  
Tell me that I can't do it, because I will  
show you that I can,  
OVER AND OVER AGAIN  
*Anon*

**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](http://www.rmacol.co.uk)

For any queries contact Branch Secretary Tony Luckens BEM  
Mobile 0756 836 8977  
Email [tony.luckens@gmail.com](mailto:tony.luckens@gmail.com)

**Latest Government advice:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

**NHS Information**

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

**KEEP SAFE - STAY INDOORS**



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



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