

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

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Friends,

As I write this piece I am reminded that as a country, we have been in lockdown for over 4 weeks. We are all living very differently from what we have been used to and although isolation is absolutely necessary, we are seeing what truly matters in our lives - family, both as blood related and our very own Corps family.

It has been a real privilege of mine and the rest of our branch committee to be able to call branch members up and simply ask how they are doing. From the feedback I have received and in typical former military style, everyone is mega-positive and looking forward to when this lockdown is lifted. I myself find it quite strange that as a 57 year old, I am getting phone calls from some of our members who are in their 90's, asking if I am OK! One of our Corps spirit headings is 'humour in the face of adversity', thankyou gents, you know who you are.

Due to the ongoing lockdown, our very dear friends in the Feestcomite, in close collaboration with Jim Ellard, held their own remembrance service in Zeebrugge in April.

You will of course now seen and read about the fantastic fund raising achievement of Captain, now Colonel Tom Moore having raised over £32 million pounds for the NHS Charities!! As a branch we donated £137 which represents £1 for every paid-up member.

Please continue to stay safe and if there is anything we, the committee can do, however small, please do get in touch

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

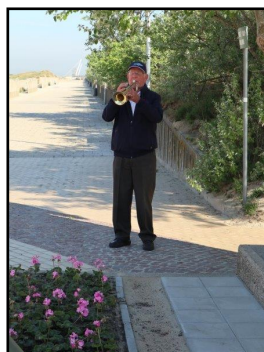


UNITED WE CONQUER
Once a Marine Always a Marine

ZEBRUGGE 2020 - This would have been the 36th visit to Zeebrugge by the branch but instead, a tremendous disappointment that we were not able to attend this year due to the pandemic. However, organiser Chairman Emeritus Jim Ellard MBE in close collaboration with our friends of the Feestcomite, arranged for the commemoration to proceed albeit with lesser representation.

SATURDAY 25TH APRIL 2020

A wreath laying ceremony was held at the Zeedijk followed by the sounding of the Last Post. The Feestcomite had provided a wreath bearing the legend 'RMA London Branch'.



THE MOLE and FISHERMAN'S CROSS



SUNDAY 26th APRIL - ST DONAASKERK CATHEDRAL and CEMETERY



LORD KEYES SQUARE



Our grateful thanks to the members of the Feestcomite for its dedication to this important commemoration and for sending the photographs within hours of its conclusion and also to the church community of St Donaaskerk for its continuing support.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

What we are depends on what we look for.

John Lubbock

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Care about what other people think and
you will always be their prisoner.

Lao Tzu

THE RMA WEEKLY QUIZ - Despite only two results sent in, a 100% winner has emerged and the bottle of Port is won - congratulations to Rad.

THE COMMITTEE AT WORK

The committee remains acutely aware of the life-changing impact the Covid-19 pandemic is having on its branch members, their families, friends, neighbours and loved ones, many of whom are elderly, isolated and vulnerable, and therefore most at risk.

We are pleased to report that following the creation of branch's Support/Buddy Service at the beginning of April, the committee has, via email, phone and social media channels, reached out and made contact with more than 75% of its branch members. The feedback we have received so far has been generally good and positive. Interestingly, we have received positive responses from our overseas members in countries including France, Italy, Jersey, Malta and Switzerland.

While we remain encouraged by the success of this local branch initiative, we will not become complacent. We will continue to reach out to those branch members with whom we have been unable to make contact so far, as well as placing follow-up calls to those members with whom we have already made contact.

Finally, please remember the Committee is here to support its members in any way it can, so if there is any way we can help, please do not hesitate to make contact and we will do our very best to assist you.

Keep well, stay safe and we look forward to sharing a wet or two with you at the earliest opportunity.

Mike Pinchen writes: SIRIUS BUSINESS 2

Part of the 'brief' of HMS *Sirius* was to visit ports on the east coast of the USA. Newport Rhode Island, Norfolk Virginia, Port Canaveral and Key West Florida come to mind. The visit to Port Canaveral, (which serves Cape Kennedy), was memorable; not because I visited the Kennedy Space Centre, but because of our arrival. In those days PC was not the huge cruise liner port it is today. It was a more modest affair, our berth of which was a jetty made of wood. Was, should be a clue to what is coming next. As we edged towards the jetty, we could see scores of welcoming Americans with both Stars & Stripes and Union Flags waving. There was even a band playing welcoming tunes. As we edged closer the cheering got louder, until suddenly the cheering and music stopped and several score people and instruments were seen making a rapid 'ENDEX' as 2,500 tons of best British steel collided with the jetty, the latter of which just seemed to buckle up! As the RM part of ship for entering harbour was on the 'for'ard spring', we were just below the Bridge and certain noises could be heard emanating from that lofty position! However the run ashore turned out to be a good one and no one seemed to mind, but then again I was just a small fish.



Returning to Bermuda for maintenance, I was given permission to fly back to UK to get married. The Captain was a bit concerned that I may not come back and so I had to produce evidence that I had enough money to pay for a return flight, which was £86, a lot of money in 1973. I actually flew home with an airline whose livery was a strange shade of blue. The RAF charged £8 for this privilege, which was known as an Indulgence Flight. The aircraft was a Britannia and took two days to reach Brize Norton, as it stopped overnight at a US Air Force base in the Azores. There were about two-dozen passengers on this flight, consisting of service personnel and NOK. Included in this group was the wife of a Royal Marines officer. After we landed in the Azores we were picked up from the runway by USAF bus. They, the Americans, did not know who we were, so made enquires. A portly sun-tanned, master sergeant, with more stripes than a zebra, mounted the bus. Looking down the aisle he enquired: "*Watsyastatus*"



No one answered, so I decided to take charge. Standing I replied, "*And watsyastatus to you as well senor?*" There was silence, the sort you can feel. I looked about me. What's the matter with this bloke I thought, can't he speak his own lingo? "*Sit down Royal, he's asking what our status is*" came a helpful hint! Many years later I met the RM officer's wife again. Her husband was the principal guest at a RM dinner. Speaking to him I mentioned that we had met in Bermuda and that I had, had the privilege in accompanying his wife on the said flight. He at once beckoned her over and introduced me. "*Do you remember him?*" he enquired. "*Of course*", she replied, "*It's the linguist isn't it*".

Mike Pinchen PO28051Q

HEALTH AND WELLBEING 'IN ISOLATION' - THE GREENHOUSE

Back in November I purchased a lean-to greenhouse with the intention of “getting it up” in good time to ‘sow the harvest’. I had decided to build it on a concrete base - easy to maintain and keep clean. Then I thought it would be a good idea to tile the base to make it even easier to keep clean. Then the weather determined the rate of progress which as nil. Then I considered the work involved and decided that fifty years ago I would have laid the base and tiled it with little effort, but today? No. So in January I had the base laid and on the 23rd March the tiler made short work of the laying of the tiles all that was left for me to do was assemble the greenhouse! All I can say is thank the Lord for the meccano of my youth.

I had received offers of help from two friends, one a retired engineer, but alas, isolation had befallen us so I had to ‘get on with it’. Following much soul searching I bolted the various sections together following which they had to be joined together and screwed to the wall of the house and the base - simple, you might think, not so, for me anyway. Everything had to be perfectly square or the panes of tempered glass wouldn’t fit. By now the weather was OK - no more excuses. Having finally fixed the structure, now came the fitting of the glass which was in my garage, secure in its very heavy wooden crate - heavy being the operative word! I managed to ease open the crate and extracted a very heavy ‘piece of glass’ and thought to myself “I’ll never be able to lift this onto the ladder to fix it on the roof” - at that point I put it down, too heavy to carry, but had no alternative and struggled to carry it some ten yards. I then removed the wrapping to find that there were three panes of glass not one and that two of them had shattered!!

What to do? I contacted the company from which I had purchased the greenhouse only to be told that there was no chance of obtaining replacement glass at this time. Desperately I got on line and found a plastics company that would cut polycarbonate sheets to size. I placed an order and three sheets arrived three days later!

I was then able to complete the glazing of the structure despite breaking a smaller pane. Really exasperating! Luckily I had ordered three long sheets so I was able to cut a piece out of the remaining sheet to complete the job. I was then able to set about planting seeds that I had purchased earlier. Luckily a friend had loaned me a propagator and some other bits and bobs to enable me to ‘get planting’. Looking back on what I consider to be a saga, I wouldn’t do it again despite the fact that it will, I hope, provide me with another hobby for the future, that is when I’m not putting the City Royal together.



I’d be very pleased to hear of any other ‘in isolation’ projects. Ed.

THE OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION

Tony Luckens BEM writes - The Old comrades Association (OCA) was formed in 1934 to promote an annual parade, to consolidate the spirit of comradeship and uphold the Regimental tradition and to discuss all problems confronting OCA’s. It brought together a real mix of old cap badges including The Sharpshooters and 1st Surrey Rifles. Our branch has supported this organisation for a number of years by providing a Standard and members to attend the annual parade. Sadly, at its AGM this year, because of dwindling numbers, it was decided to ‘stand down’ the Organisation. The parade on the 7th June was going to be the last....they were going to go out ‘with a bang’ but Covid-19 has changed all that. I am awaiting details to see if they will put together some form of gathering when the present crisis is over: if they do, I’ll let you know. In the meantime, please amend your Events and Meetings Programme 2020 accordingly. The picture shows the inspection at the HAC which followed our march from a wreath laying ceremony at the Royal Exchange, by The Bank, in the City of London.



ANZAC DAY is commemorated annually in Australia and New Zealand on the 25th April
The following poem was received from our 'oppos' down-under.

The Anzac on the Wall



I wandered thru a country town 'cos I had time to spare,
And went into an antique shop to see what was in there.
Old Bikes and pumps and kero lamps, but hidden by it all,
A photo of a soldier boy - an Anzac on the Wall.

"The Anzac have a name?" I asked. The old man answered "No,
The ones who could have told me mate, have passed on long ago".
The old man kept on talking and, according to his tale,
The photo was unwanted junk bought from a clearance sale.

"I asked around," the old man said, "but no one knows his face,
He's been on that wall twenty years, deserves a better place.
For someone must have loved him so, it seems a shame somehow."
I nodded in agreement and then said, "I'll take him now."



My nameless digger's photo, well it was a sorry sight
A cracked glass pane and a broken frame - I had to make it right
To prise the photo from its frame I took care just in case,
"Cause only sticky paper held the cardboard back in place.

I peeled away the faded screed and much to my surprise,
Two letters and a telegram appeared before my eyes
The first reveals my Anzac's name, and regiment of course
John Mathew Francis Stuart - of Australia's own Light Horse.



This letter written from the front, my interest now was keen
This note was dated August seventh 1917
"Dear Mum, I'm at Khalasa Springs not far from the Red Sea
They say it's in the Bible - looks like Billabong to me.

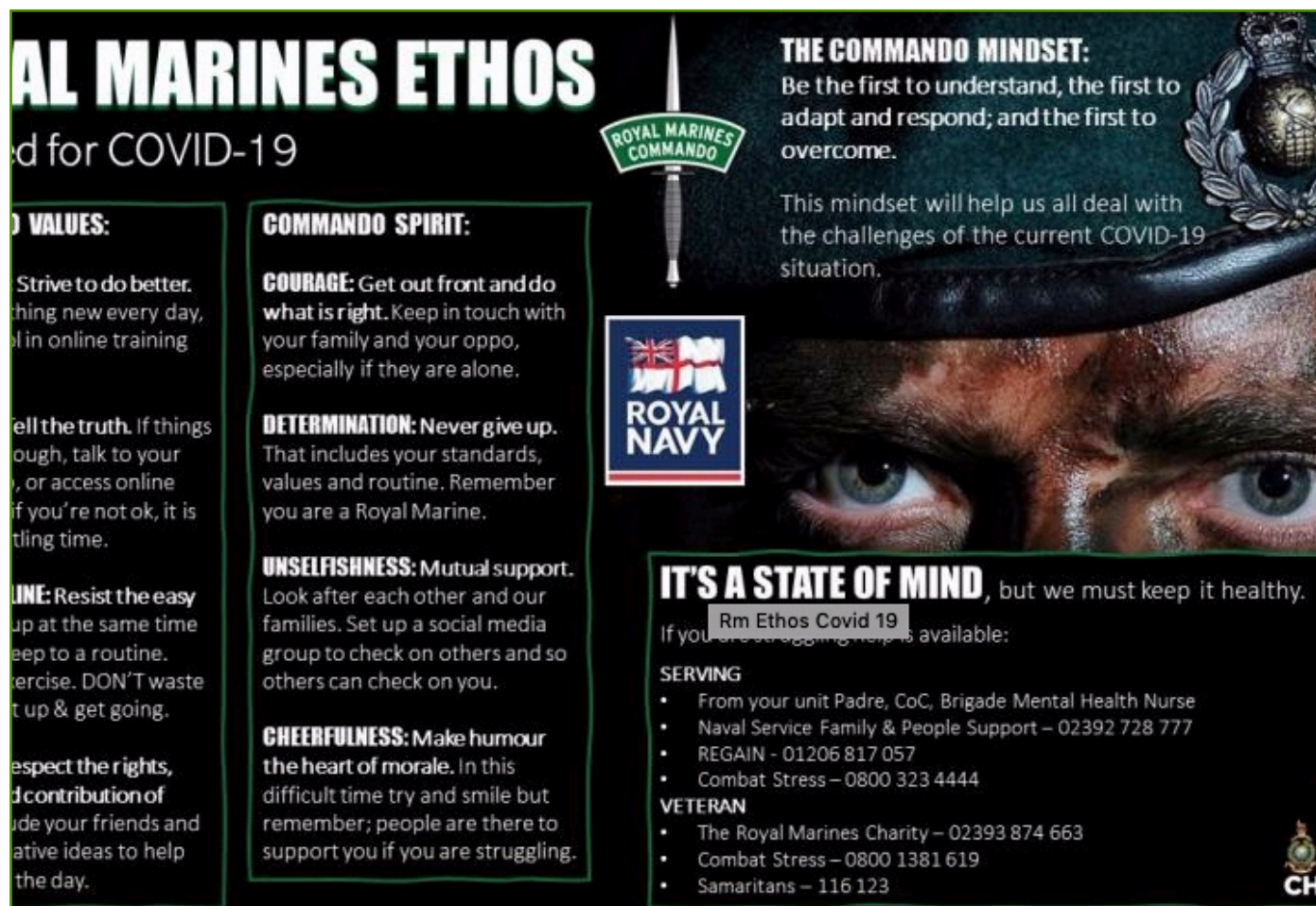
"My Kathy wrote I'm in her prayers she's still my bride to be
I just can't wait to see you both you're all the world to me
And Mum you'll soon meet Bluey, last month they shipped him out
I told him to call on you when he's up and about."

"That bluey is a larrikin, and we all thought it funny
He lobbed a Turkish hand grenade into the CO's dunny.
I told you how he dragged me wounded in from no man's land
He stopped the bleeding closed the wound with only his bare hand."

"Then he copped it at the front from some stray shrapnel blast
It was my turn to drag him in and I thought he wouldn't last
He woke up in hospital, and nearly lost his mind
Cause out there on the battlefield he'd left one leg behind."



"He's been in a bad way mum, he knows he'll ride no more
Like me he loves a horse's back he was a champ before.
So Please Mum can you take him in, he's been like my brother
Raised in a Queensland orphanage he's never known a mother."



ROYAL MARINES ETHOS

Adapted for COVID-19

VALUES:

Strive to do better. Do something new every day, or access online training.

Tell the truth. If things are tough, talk to your superiors, or access online support. If you're not ok, it is a troubling time.

LINE: Resist the easy way out. Stay up at the same time, stick to a routine. Exercise. DON'T waste time & get going.

Respect the rights, and contribution of others. Include your friends and creative ideas to help out the day.

COMMANDO SPIRIT:

COURAGE: Get out front and do what is right. Keep in touch with your family and your oppo, especially if they are alone.

DETERMINATION: Never give up. That includes your standards, values and routine. Remember you are a Royal Marine.

UNSELFISHNESS: Mutual support. Look after each other and our families. Set up a social media group to check on others and so others can check on you.

CHEERFULNESS: Make humour the heart of morale. In this difficult time try and smile but remember; people are there to support you if you are struggling.

THE COMMANDO MINDSET:
Be the first to understand, the first to adapt and respond; and the first to overcome.

This mindset will help us all deal with the challenges of the current COVID-19 situation.

IT'S A STATE OF MIND, but we must keep it healthy.

If you are struggling help is available:

SERVING

- From your unit Padre, CoC, Brigade Mental Health Nurse
- Naval Service Family & People Support – 02392 728 777
- REGAIN - 01206 817 057
- Combat Stress – 0800 323 4444

VETERAN

- The Royal Marines Charity – 02393 874 663
- Combat Stress – 0800 1381 619
- Samaritans – 116 123

DID YOU KNOW

Those of us who spent time as a Cub will remember the weekly ritual

DYB DYB DYB - DOB DOB DOB

I recently found out that it actually meant

Akela - Dyb Dyb Dyb

“Do Your Best”

Cub response - Dob Dob Dob We'll

“Do Our Best”

Only took me 78 years!

BRANCH INFORMATION

Due to the present situation all branch events are 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:

<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**VE COMMEMORATIONS - FRIDAY 8th MAY**

The Royal British Legion is inviting people of all generations to participate in the following

1100 - 1102 : 2 minutes Silence

in whatever way they feel appropriate, be that standing at their window, stepping outside their home whilst remaining distanced from others, or taking the opportunity for a quiet moment of reflection, not only in recognition of the service and sacrifice of the Second World War generation, but also to reflect on the devastating impact Covid-19 has had on so many lives across the world.

BBC ONE- 2000 - 2110**VE Day - The People's Celebration**

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



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BRANCH ROYAL MARINES ASSOCIATION