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# COMBINED SERVICES CULINARY CHALLENGE 2008

The eighth Combined Services Culinary Challenge took place at Sandown Park in October and was yet again an extremely successful event. Well attended by both supporters and competitors; HRH The Countess of Wessex (Patron of the Craft Guild of Chefs) attended and presented medals on the last day.

The Royal Naval team included competitors from RN, RM, RFA, Aramark and Sodexho and this year picked up an impressive total of 6 gold medals, 10 best in class awards, 16 silver medals, 14 bronze medals and 22 certificates of merit.

The organisation, training, preparation and co-ordination were demanding and required a huge amount of time and effort from all. Everything, from ordering the ingredients to arranging the transport and accommodation plans had to done by someone, and it is a testimony to all involved that it came together to enable the RN Team to compete. Whatever was going on in the background, the results for the individuals and the team as a whole speak for themselves. It would be unfair to single out individual or group performances for particular praise, but I can tell you that I spent three days at Sandown being constantly in awe of the capabilities, professionalism and sheer determination of everyone who contributed, which drew praise from the chairman of judges and the overall DFSIPT organising committee.

The awards are given according to creativity, workmanship, composition and presentation, including taste. A 90% + score is awarded a gold medal, 75% + a silver medal, 65% + a bronze medal and 55% + is awarded a certificate of merit. The best in class is awarded a further trophy. There were 15 Blue Riband events from which the inter-service Champions trophy is awarded. This year the RAF won the trophy.

There was a variety of events, a one course dish for chefs to prepare, flambé dishes for the stewards to master and combination events such as cook and serve with chef and steward working together. It can get very nerve racking with a camera crew filming your every move and the audience being very close; the junior and novice competitors did extremely well to hold their nerves.

This prestigious event is not just for the Catering Services Branch. There were more than sixty stalls in the grounds – many giving away free samples! The cake and sculpture display were a chance for chefs to show off yet more skills. There was also a demonstration arena where chefs taught the audience different and efficient ways of cooking. The Army also set up a very efficient field kitchen which provided competitors with a welcome breakfast after their early starts and tea and coffee throughout the day.

Most Stewards this year had attended HMS Raleigh to train prior to the competition where they were put through their paces by the experienced teaching staff to reach the very high standards expected. The chefs also had the opportunity to practice at HMS Raleigh and St Omer Barracks, however, the majority practiced at their place of work, mainly due to work commitments.

Stwd Lee Barnes, PO CK Matt Rowberry, 1/0 (LS) Pat Prunty, Ast/CK Paul Moon and Ast/CK Simon Dunne

Behind the scenes the RN working party worked extremely hard in providing the best possible service to competitors and also took up the opportunity to watch and support the many live skills events and managed to attend the food selection panel for more food.

We look forward to CSCC 09. It is important to build on our strengths and successful team challenge this year. This will be achieved with the full support of Senior Management, DLMS, Logistic Officers, Appointing Desk Managers and Team Captains in encouraging more individuals and teams to participate and take up the challenge. We have the talent out there to go one better and win the Inter-Service Champions Trophy.

This year we welcomed to the team the following RFA personnel:

PO Cook Matt Rowberry
L/H Cook Simon Dunne
ASST Cook Paul Moon
STWD Lee Barnes and STWDESS Lisa Ross and not forgetting 6 trainees stewards from HMS Raleigh.

Planning for CSCC 09 will start early 2009. If you require further information on competing, helping, organising, administration or supporting CSCC 09 contact the RN, RM & RFA Team Manager. First Officer Pat Prunty on 02392 62 5809.

Look forward to seeing you there.

1/O Pat Prunty

PO CK Matt Rowberry, Ast/CK Paul Moon, Lisa Ross, Stwd Lee Barnes and Ast/CK Simon Dunne

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## Commodore Bill Walworth

Faced with an empty page, five hundred words required yesterday and my first introduction to Gunline to draft, I asked about our circulation and readers to understand what you wanted to know about. You may be as surprised as me to discover 5000 copies of Gunline are sent to a wide audience of serving RFA people, RFA Association, Royal Navy, Ministry of Defence, maritime industrial partners, and a number of bodies and individuals with an interest in our Service. Our readership is diverse and wide ranging but united in their interest in the RFA and our activities. So I offer no corporate message, but a round up of our people ships and our activities from my perspective.

I have visited ten of our sixteen ships, with plans to visit another two before Christmas. I found a very professional team working hard, operationally focussed, committed to their various tasks and loyal to their ships and colleagues. The relationship between our seagoing team and HQ staff is an area which I feel we can improve on and I look forward to developing this in the future. At the core is exasperation at the much delayed pay round and in Portsmouth we are doing all we can to accelerate the process. By the time this is on the streets I hope we will have made substantial progress.

This year has been significant operationally. We are used to operating worldwide as supporting cast, closely involved but an enabler to missions; this year we have taken a much more active part in direct delivery of effect. That this has been successful is great credit to our professionalism and training, generated over many years. Defence must use each person and capital asset to the full and as we face a difficult few years we can expect to see RFAs used in ways we would not have done in the past. In Navy Command HQ we work hard to ensure our ships are manned, equipped and trained for whatever they are asked to do. Those of you who remember the RFA Operational Sea Training in the past would be very impressed by the focussed training delivered by Flag Officer Sea Training. The amphibious warfare package designed for Lyme Bay's inspection and the hurricane relief and counter drug training to Wave Ruler before she deployed to the Caribbean being recent examples. I am delighted our STON colleagues are moving closer and look forward to a fruitful relationship in 2009 and the years ahead.

I hope you will join me in thanking Commodore Bob Thornton for all he did for the RFA over his forty year career and wish him well in the future. He was formally dined out in September by Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, Commander in Chief Fleet and a number of RFA and RN officers, and retired on 30th September. He had a vision of the RFA in the 21st Century and his legacy is Project DARWIN which will take us towards that vision of the modern RFA as integrated members of the Royal Navy and Defence.

Finally, I hope you enjoy reading about the exploits of the RFA in this very colourful edition of GUNLINE. Those of us at home will be thinking about the friends and families who will be apart during the Festive season with loved ones away on operations supporting the RFA. May I take this opportunity to wish all our readers a Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2009.

## RFA CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPLAIN

Most of us will be seeking happiness this Christmas but I suspect that it may be difficult to find. For those at sea over the festive season there will be the feeling that fun is for other people. Some will be working in the dangerous waters of the Gulf and near the East African Coast. For those at home there are the threats of unemployment and many hard financial issues. You will all be in my thoughts and prayers at this time.

If we seek happiness we know it will be in short supply. Like the rainbow it always seems just over the horizon. Seeking it is like being in a darkened room and lighting a match. There is brightness for a few seconds and then the darkness returns. At Christmas it is better to seek joy. From the ancient scriptures we read:

*Do not be afraid for I bring good news of great joy for all people,*
*to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*

Joy is an attribute of God and his gift. God wants us to experience joy even when we face the worst that life can throw at us. The opposite of joy is not sadness. In every life there is sadness and disappointment and sometimes even pain can be put to creative use. The opposite of joy is fear. Fear stops us going out, it stops us seeking the new, and it stops us taking risks: fear stops us being fully human. Joy helps us to be generous to others and ourselves. Ultimately joy allows us mirror one of the attributes of God.

Joy is often found by listening to other people, by doing a generous act and giving some kindness.

*May the joy of the angels,*
*the perseverance of the wise men*
*and the peace of the Christ child*
*be our gift this Christmastide.*

## FROM COMMODORE BOB THORNTON RFA (RTD.)

May I take this opportunity to convey my sincere thanks for all of the kind words and gifts that I received on my retirement at the end of September. Many people told me that I would soon be asking myself how I found the time to go to work and it should come as no surprise to learn that it is true! (No, I'm not talking to myself...yet!)

After several farewell events, including a magnificent dining out in HMS EXCELLENT, I returned home to enjoy a party with family and friends here in Cornwall. Unpacking and sorting uniform was the prelude to repacking for a splendid holiday in northern Italy and the southern Tyrol. Juliet and I returned to tackle decorating, gardening and a host of jobs that have been pending for some time as you might imagine. I suspect these jobs will last for many years to come; especially if I keep walking out to Dodman Point to see what is going on in the FOST areas.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my 5 years as Commodore and the 39 years since I first joined the RFA, albeit with a brief spell "outside" just to reinforce my opinion that we really are good at what we do. I remain an enthusiastic supporter and advocate of the Service, which means all of you, whether afloat or ashore, and the pivotal tasks that you undertake.

I want to offer a heartfelt and sincere thank you to each and every one of you, for your support and friendship throughout my time in uniform. As always, stay happy and of course, above all else, stay safe.

Commodore Bob

## THE RICHARD JONES AWARD 2007-2008

Third Officer Richard Harding joined the Royal Fleet Auxiliary as an Officer Cadet in November 2004. Attending Warsash Maritime Academy. He sat and passed his MCA Orals in February 2008 after an exemplary Cadetship. Third Officer Harding was selected for this award following an exceptional performance at college combined with first-class sea going reports. Richard has applied himself with enthusiasm and became an integral part of the Bridge Team wherever he served.

His reports as Cadet were assessed as significantly above requirements and well fitted for promotion. His college reports were outstanding in particular his final report in which he achieved twelve distinctions and six merits, in conjunction with excellent conduct, appearance, responsibility and initiative. He was described by the principle lecturer as a "model student". He actively seeks responsibility quickly grasping the essence of a situation. He is without doubt a very worthy recipient of the Richard Jones Award.

During his training Richard served on RFA's Fort Rosalie, Fort Austin, Sir Galahad, Black Rover, Wave Ruler and Orangeleaf. Richard took up his first appointment as 3/O(X) on RFA Black Rover in February 2008 and he is now undergoing training on the PDO course.

Pictured left to right: Mrs Jane Jones, Third Officer (X) Richard Harding and Commodore Bill Walworth OBE.

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# ALL IN A (FEW) DAYS WORK FOR RFA WAVE RULER

By DLSO 3/O Nikki Lutman

RFA WAVE RULER was on station in the Caribbean supporting the UK government's commitment to her overseas territories conducting disaster relief planning, training and "First Response" relief in the event of a disaster. Also working with the US and Caribbean nations to conduct maritime patrols in counter drug interdiction.

WAVE RULER and embarked US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) recently enjoyed a port visit to Jamaica, with the emphasis on R&R after a busy programme. Some chose to in adventurous activities – bobsledding, zip-lining, climbing waterfalls and swimming with dolphins. Others preferred to relax with an Appleton's rum listening to reggae music from Bob Marley. Not all the visit was relaxation. Captain Nigel Budd and the Officers hosted a luncheon for local dignitaries and people from Jamaica's "Teen Challenge" drug rehabilitation project. A RFA and LEDET work party undertook major refurbishment work at a local school.

On completion of the visit monitoring of Hurricane GUSTAV saw it take a serious turn, forecast to hit the Cayman Islands as a category 3 strike (111-130 mph winds, causing minor structural damage). RFA WAVE RULER immediately deployed to follow the storm, remaining a safe distance close behind. Ready to make landfall as soon as was possible for boat operations after the storms eye wall had passed. GUSTAV had other ideas and in an uncharacteristic pattern it deviated from its expected path passing 40 miles north of Grand Cayman, causing less damage than predicted. We arrived on the scene twelve hours after the centre had passed to find the Islands had suffered considerable damage to property, but no loss of life. Our presence, so soon after the storm, provided reassurance to the locals. Commander Task Group decided that HMS IRON DUKE had the assets to deal with the clean up operation, so WAVE RULER RAS'd Emergency Relief Stores to IRON DUKE to head for an Assisted Maintenance Period (AMP) in Curacao.

Five days into the two-week AMP continually monitoring Hurricane IKE, the decision was taken to divert RFA WAVE RULER and HMS IRON DUKE to provide Hurricane/Disaster Relief Operations (HDRO) to the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI). The aim was to save life, reduce suffering, limit damage and restore essential services to a traumatised population after a natural disaster. IKE hit the islands on Sunday 7th September, a level 4 hurricane with winds of 135 mph, with reported damage to 85% of buildings on Grand Turk but thankfully with only minor injuries. WAVE RULER ship's company made preparations to offer "first aid" and technical assistance, including food, water and shelter, utilising the services of the embarked 229 Flt 815 NAS and its Lynx Mk 8 helicopter. WAVE RULER was very suitable to offer assistance, having undertaken disaster relief planning with the TCI Department of Disaster Management during a port visit in July 2008 and having recently embarked the Flight.

RFA WAVE RULER was on station off Grand Turk by Monday 8th September. XO David Eagles conducted a Helo recce on arrival. By mid morning on Tuesday 9th September, sea state allowed for boat operations. A work party led by 1/O(SE) Paul Burrows landed by helicopter to repair the roof of the police station on Grand Turk, freeing up local police to maintain law and order. A second work party led by 1/O(E) Paul Davis was dispatched to Ona Glinton school to begin a major clean-up after sustaining damaged storm shutters, ruined books and class work by the children floating in flooded classrooms. The school's administrator said "We have never seen anything like this before, we don't know how we will recover". The last major hurricane to hit TCI was Hurricane Donna in 1960, so the impact on its citizens was understandably overwhelming. The team pitched in and began to make headway, but were unfortunately withdrawn by HQ command. Shortages of food and water in other areas of the island had sparked civil disturbance and all hands were redeployed to issue food and water to the people.

CPO(SA) Martin Fleming led a third work party to land Emergency Relief Stores including tarpaulins, tools, food and water on Grand Turk. LH(SA) Liam O'Kane remained onboard to stream further supplies ashore throughout the tasking, no mean feat, given the sheer quantity of emergency relief stores held by WAVE RULER. At the busiest times 2 Lynx helicopters were involved as well as the workboat and RHIBs, loaded by crane from the main deck.

Wednesday 10th September, WAVE RULER was given responsibility for South Caicos. XO David Eagles led a 3-person Helo recce to South Caicos to conduct an assessment with His Excellency the Governor, the Prime Minister of Turks & Caicos and the Island's Ministers. South Caicos was found to have suffered less than Grand Turk, though still sustaining major damage to approximately 30% of buildings and one of its two fuel stations. Damage to its power sub-station had resulted in power black-outs to homes and government buildings and had stopped production at the desalination plant which provides drinking water for the island. Bottled water supplies had been received the day before IKE hit, but were now running low and had to be replenished that day. Approximately seven locations on the island had gas power, and these were being used to provide cooked food for everyone remaining on the island, with. Over 130 people had been moved to nearby Providenciales just after IKE hit, these included hospital patients, those with a medical priority need, and non TCI nationals. Flood alleviation works via salt flat inlets had begun, and the airport runway was open, allowing supplies to come through. Local people, around 200, were working on removal of debris, and overall the situation was controlled.

Thursday 11th September, the XO again led a 2 person Helicopter recce to South Caicos to conduct a needs assessment of a children's home. The building had been badly damaged, requiring the children to be evacuated to an alternative building which was not sufficiently well equipped for their needs. Unfortunately the works required to bring it to a suitable standard were of a medium-term nature and not within the "Blue Light – First Response" remit of our tasking. Having secured food and water supplies for the children and staff, we arranged helicopter transport back to the ship. Whilst waiting for the helicopter to arrive, the team helped to load food stores and tarpaulins for onward distribution by South Caicos's emergency stores handling centre.

Grand Turk was prioritised for supplies and 3 tonnes of drinking water was produced by WAVE RULER and shipped to Grand Turk over a 3 day period. In addition 600 tarpaulins were distributed to protect ravaged homes, clinics and other buildings from further damage, 200 to Grand Turk and 400 to South Caicos.

By Friday 12th September, a command decision was made - WAVE RULER had fulfilled her "Blue Light" brief. The ship returned to Curacao to resume her AMP and re-stock emergency relief supplies, ready to be called upon again if another hurricane hit UK territories in the Caribbean.

# THE RFA SIR GALAHAD BELL

RFA SIR GALAHAD was tragically bombed by Argentine aircraft at Fitzroy on 8th June 1982 during the Falklands Conflict. Five of her crew lost their lives that day along with forty eight Welsh Guardsmen.

Her ship's bell was retrieved from the foc'sle by the tug that towed her out to sea where she was sunk as a War Grave. The bell was recovered to the UK and passed to the South Shields Marine and Technical College where a stand was manufactured by engineering cadets and a plaque was inscribed with the names of Second Engineer Officer Paul Henry GM, Third Engineer Officer Chris Hailwood, Third Engineer Officer Andrew Morris, Butcher Sung Yuk Fai and Electrical Fitter Leung Chau. The bell resided in RFA Headquarters at Empress State Building in London and moved to Portsmouth with the RFA HQ moved, firstly to Lancelot Building in the Dockyard and latterly to Whale Island.

Following the annual commemorative service in the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne College, attended Her Majesty the Queen College to mark the 25th Anniversary of the conflict, it was suggested by old SIR GALAHADs that the bell should be offered to the chapel as more appropriate resting place. It was accepted by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Rear Admiral Jeremy Sanders CB OBE from Captain Philip Roberts DSO RFA Retd, Commanding Officer of RFA SIR GALAHAD in 1982, during a service conducted by the college chaplain the Reverend Brian Cunningham on 16th September 2008. The Commodore RFA was represented by Captain John Hood Chief Logistics & Supply Officer who was SIR GALAHAD's purser in 1982. The RFA Chaplain the Reverend Bernard Clarke also officiated and gave a poignant homily. The congregation included members of the RFA Association and Capt Robin Green DSC RFA Retd who was the Commanding Officer of RFA SIR TRISTRAM that was at Fitzroy with SIR GALAHAD and was herself bombed and abandoned with the loss of two Chinese Crew Members.

The service was followed by a Flypast by Captain Chris Gill RE Retd piloting a Gazelle helicopter that saw service in the Falklands. Chris Gill served onboard SIR GALAHAD with 3 Commando Brigade Air Squadron and the Flypast was a reminder that 2 Gazelles were lost from SIR GALAHAD on the morning of the landings at San Carlos with the loss of 3 aircrew.

The bell is a fitting and permanent memorial to the RFA seafarers who lost their lives during the Falklands Conflict of 1982.

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# RFA BLACK ROVER, APT(S), NOVEMBER 2008. REMEMBRANCE DAY 2008 - SG1A GEOFF THOMPSON RFA

During the Falkland Islands Conflict of 1982 I was part of 17 Port & Maritime Regiment R.C.T. mexe float detachment attached to the RFA Landing Ships Sir Galahad & Sir Tristram. I was at Bluff Cove the day both ships were heavily bombed.

This trip on RFA Black Rover has taken me down to the Falkland Islands and the Remembrance weekend of 8th / 9th November 2008. During this period I had the opportunity to visit the site of what is one of the biggest losses the R.F.A has sustained – namely the loss of the RFA Sir Galahad. The weekend started on Saturday 8th November when 3rd Officer Comms Denby and I drove a Land Rover to the cove. The weather was lovely just like it was 26 years ago. We took a look at all the memorials and paid our own silent tribute to the guys who never made it home. As I stood at the stones overlooking the water pictures & memories came flooding back. It is both a beautiful yet emotional place.

That evening a reception was held in the capital, Port Stanley for veterans of the 1982 conflict. The Captain, Captain S. Norris, SG1A Mick Crampton ( H.M.S.Antrim 1982) and I were invited. The event was attended by members of the local community and members of the South Atlantic Medal Association ( S.A.M.A. 82), who were made up mainly of former Welsh Guards from the Bluff Cove tragedy. For some of these Welsh Guards veterans it was their first time in the Islands since 1982. It was really nice to speak to these guys and to share accounts of that terrible day. Several of them had brought their partners with them. After speaking to some of the wives they said they will leave the Islands with a better understanding of what their partners went through. Lots of new friends were made during the course of the evening. Speaking to people involved with the tragedy is one of the best healing processes.

Sunday 9th November and seven of the ship's company attended the Remembrance Day service in Port Stanley. The cathedral was packed with islanders, veterans & serving military Personnel. After the church service the congregation moved down to the Cenotaph where the Captain laid a wreath on behalf of the RFA. The weather had changed dramatically from the previous day with very strong winds. After the wreath laying was completed four of the party, P.O.'s Steve Edney and Steve Hayward, Mick Crampton and myself drove back to the ship with stories being told and experiences being shared. Enroute we stopped at Bluff Cove to pay our own tributes. Whilst we were there several Islanders came down to lay their tributes at the memorials. The Islanders will never forget the sacrifices that were made by the men of the 1982 Task Force.

Tuesday 11th November and the ship had sailed over night from East Cove Military Port for the final resting place of RFA Sir Galahad. This was a place where I and most of the ship's company had never been to. Slowly and steadily over night we sailed to the wreck site. With a gentle swell & overcast skies the engines slowed down and stopped as the ship was positioned above the wreck .Thoughts and images filled my head. At 10.30 the ships company formed up on the flight deck for the wreath laying service. A remembrance service was conducted by Father Peter Norris after which Mick Crampton and I laid wreaths over the ship's side, one for RFA Sir Galahad and one for the Merchant Navy.

Visiting the resting place has helped me to put to bed memories from all those years ago. To the guys who never made it home the saying, "ALWAYS REMEMBERED NEVER FORGOTTEN. "will always stay with me.

# ROSS JONES

1949 - 2008

It is with deep sadness that we have learnt of the death of Steward Ross Jones. Ross was involved in a road traffic accident while riding his motorbike in Thailand. He was admitted to hospital and underwent surgery but sadly passed away after the operation.

Ross joined the RFA as a non-contract steward. He joined his first ship RFA Fort Rosalie in Gibraltar on 18 July 2000 as a non-contract Steward. After completing a successful appointment he was offered a company service contract in July 2001 and joined RFA Oakleaf. Ross was a very reliable, experienced and hard working Steward who consistently performed significantly above requirements always providing a high level of service to the RFA. Ross will be sadly missed.

# SIMON TUDOR-JONES

WITH GRATITUDE

Judith, Christopher, Francis, Elisabeth and all the family would like to thank everyone in the Service, serving and retired, for their support and messages of condolence at the time of Simon's death in April. Your words and actions meant more to us all than you will ever know.

# SUDUKO

Answers on page 16

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# P/O STEWARD M MADDERN RETIREMENT

October 2008 sees the retirement of RFA's greats P/O Steward Michael Maddern.

Michael started life at sea as a pantry boy in 1966 at the ripe old age of 18 on MV Iris, a cable laying ship, sailing from Woolwich. He spent the following 32 years working on a variety of ships for many different companies and travelling all around the world including many exotic and exciting locations and some not so exciting.

The next chapter of his life started in 1968 when he joined RFA SIR TRISTRAM under the command of Captain Richard Bliss. Michael's extensive hotel and catering knowledge helped Captain Bliss out of several situations by offering a professional catering service, such as the time he conjured up a magnificent meal of burger and chips for visiting dignitaries and VIP's at a moments notice. Captain Bliss recognised Michael's ability to adapt and overcome the seemingly impossible. Such was Captain Bliss's gratitude that he phoned Michael's appointer repeatedly to request his reappointment to the ship he was Commander of.

His expertise was called upon to attend to royalty for the visit of HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex in 2008. During Michael's appointment on RFA SIR BEDIVERE, he seized upon the opportunity to shake hands and "have the crack" with the Earl to the amazement of the gathered VIP's and ship's officers.

During his time with the RFA his quiet manner and professionalism earned him respect from many of the stewards and leading hands that have laboured under his leadership Likewise his efficient work ethics have earned praise from LSO's and Commanding Officers.

Michael has had a long and varied career with the Merchant Navy and enjoys regaling colleagues with his stories and experiences that will remain with him forever and a day.

His retirement marks the beginning of a new and exciting time for Michael and a great loss for the RFA and all who have had the pleasure of working with him.

I am sure everyone will join us in wishing Michael all the very best for a long and happy retirement.

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# RFA WAVE RULER VISIT TO CUBA

During the first week of October 2008, Wave Ruler followed in the illustrious footsteps of Oakleaf and became the first British unit to visit Havana for several years. Oakleaf visited in 2002 and Wave Ruler's visit was at the invitation of the Cuban Foreign Office as a courtesy visit linked to the battle against the illegal drugs trade in the Caribbean and also to improve mutual understanding of Disaster Relief operations in the wake of the numerous hurricanes which have swept through Cuba recently.

The Ship arrived to be met on the berth by HM Ambassador, HE Mrs Dianna Melrose a Cuban Navy Guard and Band playing a selection of Cuban music including the iconic Cuban "Guantanamera" which the ship's company proceeded to hum and sing for the next five days. The Ship berthed on the waterfront immediately adjacent to the "Malecon", Havana's principal sea-front boulevard. With the bow literally five metres from the waterfront buildings, Wave Ruler was an impressive and imposing presence. The RFA Jack fluttering above the main-street, many Cubans initially mistook us for the Australian Navy!

A hectic programme of social engagements followed, including an official lunch for the Deputy Head of the Cuban Navy and a flight deck reception for 100 guests. The ship's company excelled at both events and enjoyed meeting many interesting personalities ranging from the Defence Attaches for Russia and Vietnam to Cuba's only Cosmonaut. Formal aspects of the visit included hosting a Counter-narcotics Forum onboard to bring the Cubans into the international fold in the war against illegal drugs smuggling. The meeting was attended by the Head of Counter-Narcotics at the Cuban Ministry of the Interior and also brought together the US Coast Guard, the Jamaican Defence Force and HMG. The meeting was hosted by the XO of Wave Ruler who also gave the ship's presentation and mentioned that they had been the most successful drug-busting unit deployed in the Caribbean.

Another excellent lunch from the Logistic Supply Department followed. A similar format the following day saw a Disaster Management Forum again hosted onboard to enable an exchange of ideas between the Cuban Ministry and Wave Ruler. A sumptuous lunch saw the Cubans away in fine style. Amongst all the meetings, the CO, Captain Nigel Budd and XO David Eagles gave interviews to the BBC's man in Havana which were later broadcast on BBC Radio 4.

A superb programme of visits for the ship's company was laid on by our Cuban hosts. This included a guided walking tour of Old Havana, a visit to the Hemingway Museum and Botanical gardens and also a highly enjoyable visit in torrential rain to Che Guevara's revolutionary HQ. The CO noticeably blanched when the guide pointed out this was where Che Guevara removed the rank and power from the Cuban leadership prior to appointing his own people to power – we all had visions of the Laundryman taking the ship to sea the following morning!! That evening, again in torrential rain, we enjoyed witnessing the ceremonial firing of the city's canon from the ramparts of the 16th century fortress overlooking Havana harbour and Wave Ruler in the distance. The female members of the ship's company managed to have their photos taken in amongst the Cuban guards.

Further formal events followed including the CO and HM Ambassador laying wreaths at the British and Commonwealth War Graves and a further reception hosted by the Deputy Head of the Cuban Navy at his residence in down-town Havana.

Having enjoyed a universally popular port visit, Wave Ruler departed in perfect sunshine to the music of the band of the Cuban Navy with her decks lined by the ship's company waving enthusiastically to those lining the water-front to witness our departure. A fitting finale to a simply fantastic five day visit with many saying it was their most enjoyable port for many years!

# AFLOAT WHO?

The Afloat Support Directorate is part of the DG Ships Cluster in Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) and is the product of the merger of RFA Support IPT and MARS IPT. A multi skilled team of about 140 people; we're the ones who manage and co-ordinate the in service support of our ships as well as buying the ships of the future. Based at Abbey Wood we also have teams working at Cammell Laird in Birkenhead and at A&P Group in Falmouth. The Director is Commodore Dave Preston RFA.

Dave Preston

**The present……**

Since the last edition of Gunline, the Cammell Laird Shipyard in Birkenhead has been host to RFA Fort George, RFA Fort Rosalie, RFA Gold Rover and RFA Bayleaf. Fort Victoria is currently docked across the Mersey awaiting her refit. More details on the major refit of Fort Rosalie in the next issue of Gunline.

Fort Rosalie, Gold Rover & Fort George in dock at Cammell Laird

The A&P Group in Falmouth are responsible for the LSD(A) cluster of our ships; Mounts Bay, Cardigan Bay, Largs Bay and Lyme Bay. In recent months their work has included the annual certification for Largs Bay in Curacao, Contractor Support Period (CSP) for Mounts Bay in Falmouth, Annual Certification Period (ACP) for Lyme Bay in Falmouth and ACP for Cardigan Bay in Dubai. A major piece of work to upgrade Cardigan Bay to enable operation in extreme hot weather conditions was successfully completed earlier this year. From a DE&S perspective, the work, which was completed in a short space of time, was rewarded by a commendation from the Chief of Defence Materiel, General Sir Kevin O'Donoghue.

Cardigan Bay alongside in Dubai

**The Future……**

Did you know?

A major Defence project is underway to replace the single hull Leaf and Rover class tankers.

Have you heard of MARS?

No, not the chocolate bar! In true MOD fashion – it's an acronym - short for Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability. In English, it's the name given to the MOD programme which will deliver new Fleet Tankers to replace the current single hulled Leaf and Rover class ships and also plans to deliver a further 2 classes of ship; Fleet Solid Support and Joint Sea Based Logistics. In the longer term we will also look at replacements for Diligence and Argus.

**Fleet Tanker……**

Fleet Tanker

A competition for the Fleet Tanker project is currently underway; 4 international bidders are competing for the design and build of up to 6 new double hulled tankers. The above picture is an indicative design which we gave the bidders to give them an idea of what is required.

The Fleet Tanker team are working hard to ensure that the bidders design a suitable solution and some are currently embarked on a whistle-stop tour of the bidders' yards in Spain, Italy and South Korea.

Fleet Tanker team at Fincantieri shipyard, Italy

Fleet Tanker team at Navantia shipyard, Spain

If you'd like to know more about the work of Afloat Support Directorate please contact Leona Spanswick DESShipsAfSup-Prog-BusPerf@mod.uk

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# RFA AND MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND (MSC): THE RELATIONSHIP GROWS

Over the last 18 months the exchange program between Military Sealift Command (MSC) and the RFA has become more robust. There have been five official visits between the two organisations. Commodore Thornton RFA (Retd), visited the US in Feb 2007; Commander, MSC RADM Reilly, USN visited in May 2007; RADM Wray, USN Deputy Commander MSC, has visited twice: in June 2008 and Sept 2008, Capt. Allan RFA, DACOS PERS OPS attended the MSC Commanders Conference in Oct 2008. MSC is looking forward to welcoming Commodore Bill Walworth, RFA in a future visit.

The intent behind these visits is to continue building the strong relationship that has increased value and benefits for both organisations. It is recognised that though the two organisations have some significant differences they have more commonalities between each other than between their respective navy or merchant shipping organisations. The potential to learn from each other, share resources, lessons learned and identifying best practices could save each organisation time, effort and of course, money.

There are two primary focuses: Ashore and Afloat.

The shore area is currently focusing on a Benchmarking Program. The respective Exchange Officers: C/O(X) Karl Woodfield, RFA and C/O(X) Susan Orsini, MSC are facilitating the development and growth of the program. The current areas identified for benchmarking are: Maintenance and Repair and Personnel Operations. It is expected that more specific areas within these will be developed further such as: training, schemes of complement(s), and maintenance periodicity. The reason behind these efforts is to identify best practice between these very similar but different organisations.

The Afloat Exchange Program has been more formalised between MSC and the RFA and is an enduring program. The program involves personnel being assigned to a ship in the partner organisation for up to four months. While assigned to the ship there is a task sheet and a reporting requirement. In addition to that baseline, it has been encouraged that shore side functions engage with the Afloat Exchange personnel, when it may be of benefit or provide relevant information. Areas that have been of interest have included galley and messing arrangements, manning of UNREP rigs and the flight deck, UNREP procedures/equipment, and safety procedures/equipment, just to mention a few. Currently the RFA is sponsoring three members to participate in the Afloat Exchange program:

| Member | Host Ship | Class |
|---|---|---|
| Kim Bailie 2/O(LS) | USNS Lewis and Clark | T-AKE1 |
| Chris Coultas CPO (D) | USNS Lewis and Clark | T-AKE1 |
| Mike Tarrant C/O(E) | USNS Shepard | T-AKE3 |

The information and feedback the three individuals have provided has given a fresh perspective on how both organisations conduct their business and has been very valuable. Anybody interested in participating in this program should contact their appointer to be included on the list for future consideration.

# COMMODORE R THORNTON DINING OUT 22 SEPTEMBER 2008

After 38 years service, the last 5 years of which were as Commodore Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Commodore R Thornton RFA was dined out in the Wardroom of HMS EXCELLENT on the evening 22 September 2008. With many old friends and colleagues present, Cdre Bob and his wife Juliet were welcomed and wished well for their future by guests including Commander in Chief Fleet, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope KCB OBE and Deputy Commander, Military Sealift Command, Rear Admiral Robert Wray USN. Also present were representatives from the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, the Worshipful Company of Fuellers and Worshipful Company of Carmen. The evening marked the end to a long and distinguished career in which Cdre Bob strived to ensure the RFA is recognised as a vital, loyal and professional service.

# RFA BLACK ROVER: CHARITY STARTS AT [SALVATION ARMY] HOME

By 3/O(C) Del McPhail, SCO RFA Black Rover

Whilst alongside for the ship's AMP in Santos, XO Rob, 'check-safety' Anders met two 'Brits' – Richard and Sarah Oliver, who run a social project for children in a slum area near Santos on behalf of the local Salvation Army or 'Assistência e Promoção Social Exército de Salvação Centro Comunitário Vila dos Pescadores'. After conducting a short service onboard, followed by a ship's tour, the conversation turned to how the ship could help in the local community. The building used by the Salvation Army for their social project was badly in need of a lick of paint and a spruce up, so it was arranged that the following weekend a band of 'willing' volunteers would show their expertise a paint brush and give the building the 'Changing Rooms' treatment. In the event fourteen of the ships' company volunteered, unaware of the challenge ahead.

The outside of the building was only about 20 foot across. Unbeknown to us, like the TARDIS, on entry it suddenly appeared bigger and we realised how large the job was going to be. The building ran a good 200 feet back and 100 feet wide with a myriad of corridors and rooms. In typical RFA tradition, we drank tea and discussed the job for half an hour. Already 'check-safety' was eyeing up the job; he deployed an army of decorators and we were off. Despite more paint going on people's faces and down their fronts, we soon had the job under control with everyone enjoying themselves despite having to listen to 3/O Richie Harding and XO Rob Anders singing!!!!!

Despite the good work, we also wanted to see how the other half lived. So the painting well under control, Sarah asked if we wanted a walk around the "FLAVIO" slum; the shanty area that the charity serves. Along with local help, Richard and Sarah teach, encourage, feed and clothe over 300 kids a day!!! Ages range between three and 16 so they split the children into two groups. They have 150 rowdy children in the morning and 150 in the afternoon keeping the volunteers busy. They do an amazing job and words are not enough to praise them for the effort and enthusiasm that they have for the job they do. The tour of the FLAVIO was a humbling and thought provoking experience.

Although being a Yeovilton supporter, LH(Cook) Shaun Todd was a natural with the kids; they flocked around him wherever he went – he was dispensing NAAFI biscuits!! One of the kids took a particular shine to my 'Rangers' top–which was the last I saw of it! The slum has 'grown' on a tidal mud flat with 'houses'(sheds) built on stilts made of old railway sleepers and other assorted rotten timber. An H&S nightmare, the suspended rickety footpath (alias 'Wizard-of-Oz') snakes its way through the labyrinth of shacks. Now a city of nearly 30,000, it has an unpleasant odour when the tide is out, but all is well when the tide comes in, unless they have had a particularly wet spell, when the water level goes above the path and up to their front doors.

We had one major drama. Whilst gathered around the main hall painting, or what the lasses called 'chewing the fat', unbeknown to us some of the locals threw furniture from the roof to the alley below. Rather than taking the more orthodox route, one of the boys decided to visit us vertically when the roof caved-in and down he came just missing STWDSS Clare Trill. Not a scratch on him. "Where's the roofer" I ask?" This task was beyond our means but not the Salvation Army. A visit to the local builders' merchant and it was put right. Not a major drama when you have to deal with what they do on a daily.

What's the point of visiting Brazil if you don't do what the Brazilians do best? The challenge was made and the gauntlet thrown down; footie it is! Bare foot versus RFA bare foot (well steaming bats for 'crazy legs Clarke' the CO). In anticipation we had brought the ships' sports kit (No.8s) - blue shirts and rolled up trousers. Despite appalling dives, a classic working of the off-side trap and dodgy refereeing decisions, we were closely beaten 6-4 in a hard fought game. But for the liberal interpretation of English rules and CR1 'Tommy Tommo Thompson' in goal, it might have been 16-4. It was a great game and it gave us a chance to interact with some of the young lads who attend the project. Cadet Hannah Vickers tried to emulate that other Brazilian trait, feigning injury with a broken toe. Despite the black toe and swollen ankle, she later declared herself as the best player on the pitch!

This wasn't getting the job done, so back we went to find the 'B' team had finished the job- so it was time for cold drinks, homemade cake and biscuits. The lemon pie was Dave Wood's favourite – the fastest we had seen him move all day. After the final touching-up, we wrapped up events with a team phot with Richard, Sarah and the local boys with the presentation, of a BLACK ROVER cheque for £655.06.

The Salvation Army project was most appreciative of the effort, good humour and kindness of the team. The donation, when converted into Brazilian 'Reals', goes a long way to help finance their work. We were all genuinely sad to go but justifiably proud of the small contribution that we had made. The cheque was a whole-ship contribution – engineered by Bosun Mike Martin and HC Mick McClean from a ships' BBQ –well done them too.

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# AFFILIATION OF HONOURABLE COMPANY OF MASTER MARINERS WITH RFA LARGS BAY AND RFA CARDIGAN BAY

Having previously established two very successful affiliations with The Honourable Company of Fuellers and the Honourable Company of Carmen with four RFA ships, earlier this year, Cdre Thornton proposed an affiliation between Honourable Company of Master Mariners (HCMM) and two LSDAs. Keen to enhance their already strong relationship with the RFA, the Master of the HCMM, Capt Davies, championed the proposal on behalf of both the Wardens and Court of the Company.

Capt Davies said " I believe the concept will be equally well received by the wider membership. In due course we look forward to visiting RFA ships and in return welcoming personnel from the ships to 'Wellington' with the appropriate exchange of gifts in recognition".

HQS Wellington, the home of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, a City of London Livery Company is the last surviving member of the Grimsby Class of sloops which served the nation with such distinction in World War Two. She has been moored on the Thames Since 1948 and is in part a floating museum and library which includes a model of RFA Olna.

The Affiliation document has already been signed by The Master of HCMM and Cdre Walworth and is awaiting the signature of Capt Jones and Capt Johnson. Once this has taken place the Affiliation of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners with RFA Largs Bay and RFA Cardigan Bay will be formalised.

# THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF MASTER MARINERS AND SHIPS OF THE ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY RFA *LARGS BAY* & RFA *CARDIGAN BAY*

1. It is agreed by the Court of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners (Honourable Company) and the Commodore Royal Fleet Auxiliary (Commodore RFA) that there be an adopted association between the Honourable Company and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries *LARGS BAY* and *CARDIGAN BAY*, in the following terms, to their mutual benefit.

2. The aims of such an association shall be:
   - i To promote and enhance the standing and interests of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners and of RFA *LARGS BAY* & RFA *CARDIGAN BAY* by all appropriate means.
   - ii To provide such mutual assistance and support for the Honourable Company and RFA *LARGS BAY* & RFA *CARDIGAN BAY* as shall be desirable and practical.

To those ends, but not exclusively:

3. i The incumbent Commodore RFA, shall be elected an Honorary Liveryman of the Honourable Company, if he/she is not already a member of the Honourable Company in his/her own right.
   ii The Commodore RFA shall be invited as the Company's Guest to the Installation Dinner and Court Luncheon each year in HQS *WELLINGTON*, the Honourable Company's Headquarters Ship and Livery Hall.

4. The Master, Senior Warden (or their designated representatives from the Warden's Committee) and the Clerk shall be invited to join appropriate functions as a guest of the Commodore RFA.

5. i The adoption of RFA *LARGS BAY* & *CARDIGAN BAY* by the Honourable Company shall continue so long as they remain in active service.
   ii The Honourable Company shall nominate Wardens, Members of the Court of Assistants, Liverymen, Freemen Associate Members, Apprentices and Junior Associate Members to visit RFA *LARGS BAY* and her sister vessel RFA *CARDIGAN BAY* annually, or other sister ships of the BAY Class if their deployment operationally does not permit such visits, and such Honourable Company members as may be invited to sail with them at the Commanding Officer's discretion as their operational programmes permit.
   iii The Commanding Officers (or designated representative senior officer) shall be invited to the Company's Installation Dinner or Member's Lunch as appropriate each year.
   iv The RFAs *LARGS BAY* & *CARDIGAN BAY* are authorised to wear the Honourable Company house flag during replenishments at sea and on other suitable occasions.

6. The Honourable Company will make a presentation to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary of an award for meritorious acts or performance by an officer or other rank in the field on common interest. Further, the Honourable Company will make an annual award for meritorious acts or performance to an officer or other rank of each adopted ship. Consultation shall take place between the two parties to establish and agree the form of the award, the type of candidate and the method of assessment and the presentation.

7. This association shall be reviewed from time to time by the Honourable Company and Commodore RFA to determine how best to confirm, amend and develop the arrangements.

Dated this 20th day of November, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Eight.

Commodore Royal Fleet Auxiliary

Master
The Honourable Company of Master Mariners

Clerk
To The Honourable Company of Master Mariners

Commanding Officer, RFA *LARGS BAY*

Commanding Officer RFA *CARDIGAN BAY*

# REMEMBRANCE SERVICE MARCHWOOD

Capt Dave Smith laid a wreath on behalf of the Commodore, officers, men and women of the Service. Capt John Hood (pictured receiving his wreath from Cdt Alistair Stamp), laid a wreath on behalf of the Sir Galahad Association. The Chairman of Marchwood Parish Council Cllr Alan Shotter, laid a wreath on behalf of Marchwood Parish and Capt Brian Waters laid a wreath on behalf of the RFA Association Solent Branch. There was a strong contingent from RFA Mounts Bay led by Capt Ross Ferris and CO Dave Gilzean, who also hosted a reception onboard for invited guests after the service. The Service was held in the presence of the Bishop of Southampton, The Rt Rev Paul Butler and the Reverend Bernard Clarke, Chaplain to the RFA. This was the last Remembrance Service for the Reverend John Curtis, Vicar of St John the Apostle, Marchwood, who retires after 20 years in the parish. The Service was also attended by 100 men and women from the Royal Logistics Corps based at Marchwood and local parishioners.

Commodore Bill Walworth laid a wreath on behalf of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary at the Merchant Navy Memorial, Tower Hill, London, and will be at the Marchwood Remembrance Service for 2009.

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# VIKINGS, COWGIRLS AND ROCKETTES RFA LARGS BAY VISITS LARGS

RFA LARGS BAY dropped anchor in the Hunterston Channel off Largs on Friday 29 August for affiliation with the Town that bares its name, and in support of the Largs Viking Festival, held each year to commemorate the Battle of Largs in 1263, when the Scots defeated a Viking force. An evening reception had been organised by the Naval Regional Office, and 41 local MP's, officials and organisers were hosted on the bridge, overlooking the town. The food and service set the scene for an excellent weekend. Captain Iles and Officers Mess President Richard Maddock were flown ashore in the ship's Lynx of 219 Flight, 815 Squadron for the official opening ceremony, which was followed by a review of the parade. Some of the parade followed the flight back to the ship.

The Rockettes cheer leader squad were a welcome sight for the ship's company. The Rockettes left with a vastly greater knowledge of the ship, and the ship's company with a vastly greater knowledge of the Rockettes!

A recruitment bus was set up on the town esplanade on Saturday and Sunday, and many enquiries were received, both along the line of "what's that ship out there, to how do I join up?" Some were instant standout candidates with obvious Sponsored Reserve qualifications, but all the curious went away with more knowledge of the RFA, LSDA's and RFA Largs Bay.

Vic the Viking is the Town's educational mascot, covering many local schools.

Vik's appeal was instantly recognised and has been adopted in caricature as unofficial mascot for RFA Largs Bay.

The ship's company were welcomed ashore, not only by the locals, but visitors to the festival, and transient cowgirls and boys for a Country and Western festival in Millport in the neighbouring island of Great Cumbrae. If you weren't wearing a Viking Helmet or pink furry Stetson, there was something wrong.

The maritime theme was not forgotten, and a group from the ship formed their affiliation with The Royal Oak pub, and are raising money in support of a local charity.

At a subsequent quiz and auction of Officers in the Crew Bar, £500 was raised and donated to a Cancer Charity.

Assistant Cooks Jimmy Murray, Neil Jolly, L/H Cook John Ross, PO Cook I Callicott, CPO Cook Franny Childs, PO(SA) Mick Lounds, L/H(SA) Terry Bottrill, Stewardess's Lisa Ross and Sally Stinchcombe, MM1 Jack Wickham.

The weekend was soon over, and with LARGS BAY's newest recruit, the ship claimed yet another first. The first LSDA to have an increased the scheme of complement of 70. After a quick medical to catch up on 745 years of vaccinations, Vic was soon in action, keeping a sharp lookout and embodying LARGS BAY's fighting spirit.

The Largs Viking Committee presented the ship and the ship's company with a small memento of the inaugural visit, including a presentation bottle of "Valhalla" Vodka, and a framed photo of the painting used for the label, both to be secured in a trophy cabinet in the Conference room.

Vic is settling in to his new home, and with the Viking Longboat on the crest is sure to be inspiring in battles new, and a reminder to the ship's company of a memorable weekend and a new affiliation.

# REGIONAL FORCES WEST EXERCISE 08 (RFWEX08) RNR TRAINING WEEKEND 18-20 JULY 2008

During a very busy schedule on the sunny South Coast of England, Fort Austin was privileged to host this year's major training weekend for the Regional Forces Wales and West of England Royal Naval Unit Reservists, and the RNR Air Branch. The exercise, encompassing two days of intensive professional and general Naval training along with a host of other pursuits, was going to be challenging both to the Reservists, many of whom had not yet been to sea and to Fort Austin hosting an event of this scale.

Whilst the ship was at anchor off Portland, 103 RNR personnel embarked by boat on the Friday evening, almost doubling the ship's complement, and proceeded to settle in for training, including CBRNDC, seamanship, specialist training and an opportunity to gain experience of life at sea. Let the Games begin!

Commodore S Thorne RD ADC RNR, Commander Maritime Reserves, was duly embarked for the weekend and flew his broad pennant for the first time at sea onboard RFA Fort Austin. Commodore AJG Miller CB RN, Naval Regional Commander Wales and West England, responsible for organising the training weekend, was also embarked, this being a poignant return to the ship that rescued him and his colleagues from HMS Sheffield during the Falkland's conflict.

Early next morning, the ship proceeded to the SCEXAs to embark a Lynx helicopter and her team from 702 Squadron, which was to provide a platform for RNR flight personnel to further their operational capability, and to provide familiarisation training for RNR personnel from other specialities.

Meanwhile, properly fortified by a hearty Fort Austin breakfast, other Reservists were already engaging in a series of training seminars relevant to their specialisations and being introduced to the facilities and operational capabilities of the ship.

A hectic afternoon of activities followed. This included an energetic outbreak of a sporting nature with medals and was wound up nicely with a whole ship's BBQ and the enactment of an RNR SODs opera on the flight deck. Thanks to the Bridge Team for providing a lee and some sunshine for the duration, and not least to the dubious and unusually attired 'thespians' entertaining us all with mirth and hilarity. Leotards gentlemen, whatever next?!

The festivities concluded and folks settled down for another night at sea as the ship steamed to her next rendezvous with HMS Cumberland and her Lynx the following morning.

On the Sunday, further specialist training was carried out on board, while Fort Austin was put through her paces during OOW manoeuvres with HMS Cumberland and the Lynx helicopter was busy whisking RNR personnel off the flight deck for some impressive flying. All go!

And where did that RHIB appear from all of a sudden, coming at us at full tilt? A threat to the safety of the ship? QUICKDRAW!! An excellent opportunity for the RNR Force Protection Team to get into some action, going through the procedures for arming the ship and warning off, or warding off, a potential threat from the sea. Thankfully they weren't terrorists, but with Fort Austin's own crash boat crew - they'll never go for the newspapers again!

Later that day it was all available hands to the ropes for a light jackstay personnel transfer, a brave volunteer required as a test weight. Well done Commodore Miller for going 'feet wet' first! A goodly number of RNR personnel followed suit and were transported safely between ships in fine sea and weather conditions with minimal dunking and a lot of good humour!

That evening found us once again at anchor off Portland for the RNR disembarkation. Tears and handkerchiefs all round - some mobile phone numbers were exchanged!

Subsequent signals and messages to the ship from Commodore Miller and Commander Webber RNR, CO HMS Flying Fox, indicated their satisfaction with the training weekend, especially with the hard work and professionalism of both the RNR personnel in responding successfully to training at sea, and the Fort Austin's capable crew for being undaunted, good humoured and excellent hosts, as shown on TV's "Points West" later in the week.

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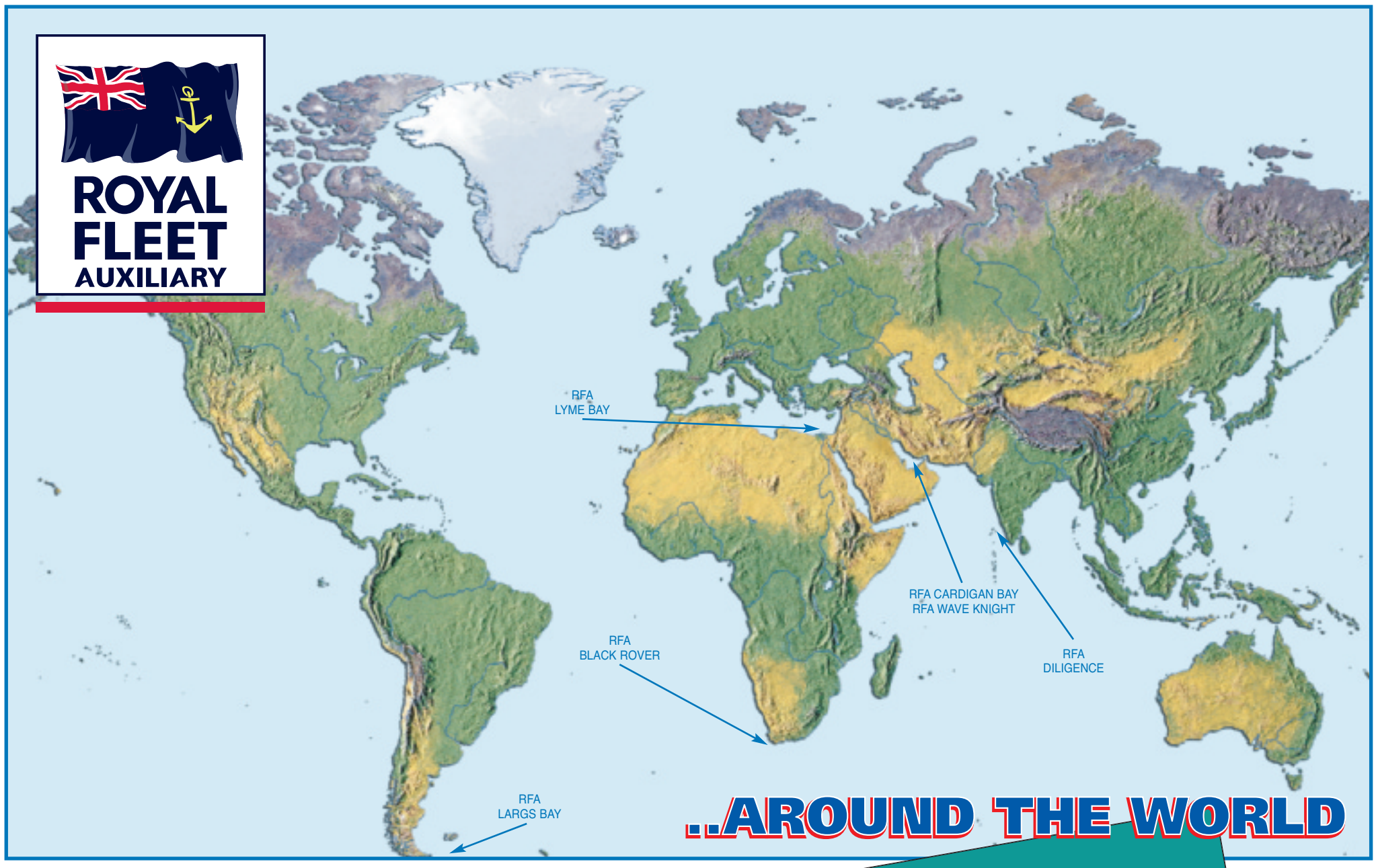


RFA ARGUS:
Currently in the south western approaches off Devonport.

RFA BAYLEAF:
In Birkenhead undergoing re-fit.

RFA BLACK ROVER:
Currently heading north released from APT(S) to South Africa for an AMP.

RFA CARDIGAN BAY:
Conducting OP TELIC tasking.

RFA DILIGENCE:
Stationed off the west coast of India.

RFA FORT AUSTIN:
Currently in south west approaches.

RFA FORT GEORGE:
Off west coast Scotland.

RFA FORT ROSALIE:
Undergoing re-fit in Birkenhead.

RFA FORT VICTORIA:
In Birkenhead awaiting refit.

RFA GOLD ROVER:
In Devonport currently restoring.

RFA LARGS BAY:
Alongside in Falkland Islands on APT(S).

RFA LYME BAY:
Sailing back to Marchwood in the Atlantic.

RFA MOUNTS BAY:
Conducting training exercises at FOST.

RFA ORANGELEAF:
On task as FOST tanker.

RFA WAVE KNIGHT:
Currently Gulf Tanker off Oman.

RFA WAVE RULER:
In Portland having returned from APT(N).

**Provided courtesy of The U.K Hydrographic Office**

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# RFA BAYLEAF IN GIBRALTAR

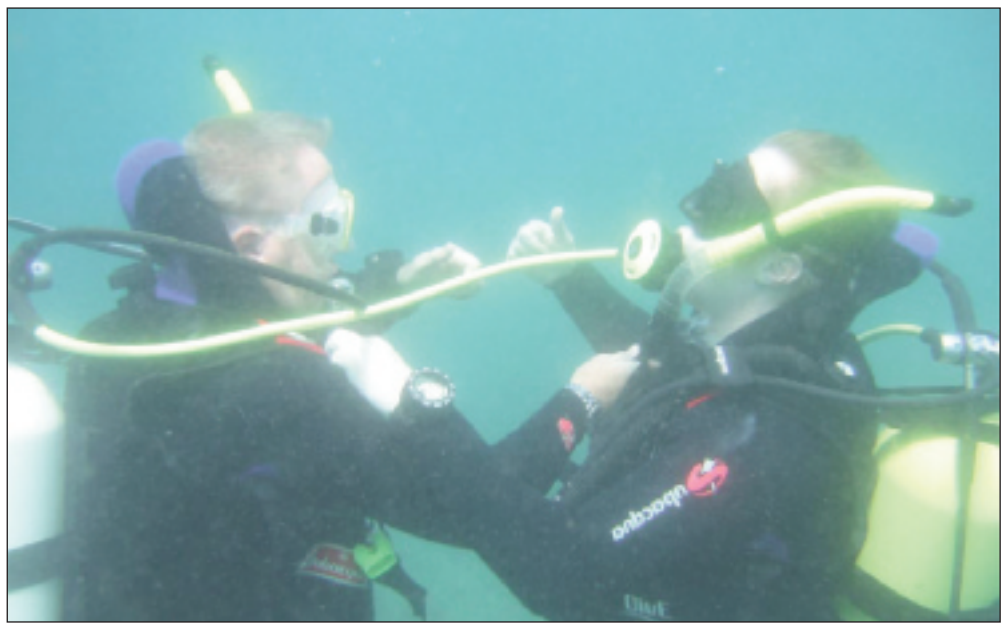
By 3/O(X) P Galbraith

RFA Bayleaf arrived in Gibraltar on the morning of Friday 5th September with visions of two weeks of seemingly endless de-store preps and an ammunition offload to look forward to, mixed with a bit of sun. Little did we know that by the end of our visit, the ship would be returning home with eight newly qualified PADI Open Water Divers, two Advanced Open Water Divers and a Wreck Diver! It's amazing what the offer of some time off, good weather and the incentive of substantially reduced dive course rates can do.

The story started on passage to Gibraltar, when Vaughan Whiteley, the ship's Medical Technician, an avid diver, ever-keen to spread the word of PADI ascertained that there was a positive level of interest in diving onboard, and made some enquiries to local dive centres offering the chance of some business onboard the Bayleaf. Shortly after arriving in Gibraltar, local PADI Dive Instructor and friend of Vaughan's, Ged Dalton, was onboard and briefing Bayleaf's wannabe divers.

After the mandatory swimming pool sessions, which were spent getting used to the equipment, learning the all-important basic Scuba techniques and generally enjoying the novelty of being able to breathe underwater. This was much to the amusement of a group of mothers-to-be who happened to be using the pool at the same time, it was off to the depths of nearby Rosea Bay to complete the necessary Open Water dives. For the non-divers among you, the words 'Rosea Bay' may conjure up images of clear blue water teeming with sea life, the reality however was a little different. Whilst the water was generally warm, calm and ideal for inexperienced divers, certain members of the local population, much to our disgust, had over the years decided to use the bay as a rubbish tip and dumping ground. Needless to say, our confidence underwater increased with each dive, and new skills were practiced, including the use of compasses for underwater navigation. However, due to the aforementioned state of the seabed, it wasn't so much a case of 'swim 50m on a bearing of 130 degrees' as 'head that way and turn left at the submerged car'! It was testament however, to the dedication and support of Ged and Vaughan that an interesting and enjoyable time was had by all who took part, allowing the novices among us to enter the wide world of diving and for the experienced divers onboard, a chance to explore new waters and gain new qualifications. The time in Gibraltar will certainly be something to remember for a long time. Let's hope diving will continue to be enjoyed by all involved.

Whilst certain members of the ship's company were spending their time blowing bubbles underwater, others were on the surface enjoying the more sedate pastime of fishing in the waters around the harbour. A boat, together with fishing equipment at a very reasonable rate, was made available by nearby HMS Rooke. It hasn't been ascertained how successful the team were at catching fish; however the boat certainly got a good run out around the harbour.



# A NEW HISTORICAL WEBSITE

There is not a lot written about the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, just a few books and maybe the odd article here and there in professional and trade journals. As for anyone outside the service knowing what we do, or have done, you can pretty much forget it, the Royal Navy nearly always get the credit. So to be able to make amends we have created a new website and are inviting all the readers of GUNLINE to visit the site and make contributions.

The new website was launched on the 15th October 2008 to make available to a wider public audience the rich history of the RFA, its ships and people. Let's be honest after one hundred and four years, we do have a very rich history which the Editors of this site are determined to record and publish, both in words and pictures. For the site to expand and grow we do however need your help.

If you get a spare minute have a look at www.historicalrfa.org and read some of the stories which have already been placed there. You can find out who has won a particular award and when. Also take the time to visit the Roll of Honour to see those who has given their lives in the service of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. Above all, when you visit please leave a message in the Guest Book. Your comments are most welcome and this will help us to continue to build the site. Please also advise people who might not have access to GUUNLINE about the site and encourage them to visit and make their thoughts known.

We are looking for more stories so if you have a story to tell, whether from those who are serving, or those who have retired from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, we would like to hear about it and hopefully record it. That way we perpetuate the history of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and create a living archive showing what has been achieved, when and most importantly by whom so that future generations will have a rich and accurate source of material to be able to refer to.

For those who are interested in researching the history of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, there is the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Historical Society. This is a completely free Society, entry is by invitation and available to anyone who has an interest in researching and recording facts and then helping us publish the story of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. To fine out more details of how you can become involved in raising the profile of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary please visit the website.

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RFACOM is going from strength to strength with 655 members now registered. If you haven't logged on recently check it out, these are some of the topics which have recently been discussed:

**- Chat this evening.**
**- Do you like cheese?????**
**- November Cascade Brief...**
**- Any tips for new members?**
**- Where are we all?**
**- Ski / Snowboard Xmas 08**
**- Duty watch**
**- promotion**
**- Best and worst.**
**- Travel**
**- Chat Room**
**- CREW LIST**
**- RFA Clay Pigeon Shooting Society...**
**- What happened to Fort Victoria...?**
**- RFA 2009 Calendar**
**- Pirate Attacks**
**- Cheap Fuel Prices**
**- Interesting article**
**- What happened**
**- Not Much Happening**
**- Children In Need**
**- free postage!!**
**- Sweet Things**
**- Titanic lesson**
**- Pay Offer**
**- crew lists**
**- Top Tip**

**Chat Room**

You may have logged on and wanted to have a chat but no one was available in the Chat Room.

From 1st January 2009 on Tuesdays at 2100 – 2200 and Thursdays 1400 – 1500 there will be at least one representative from RFA Pers Ops available to chat and don't forget no one knows who you are unless your screen name gives it away! So it is totally anonymous.

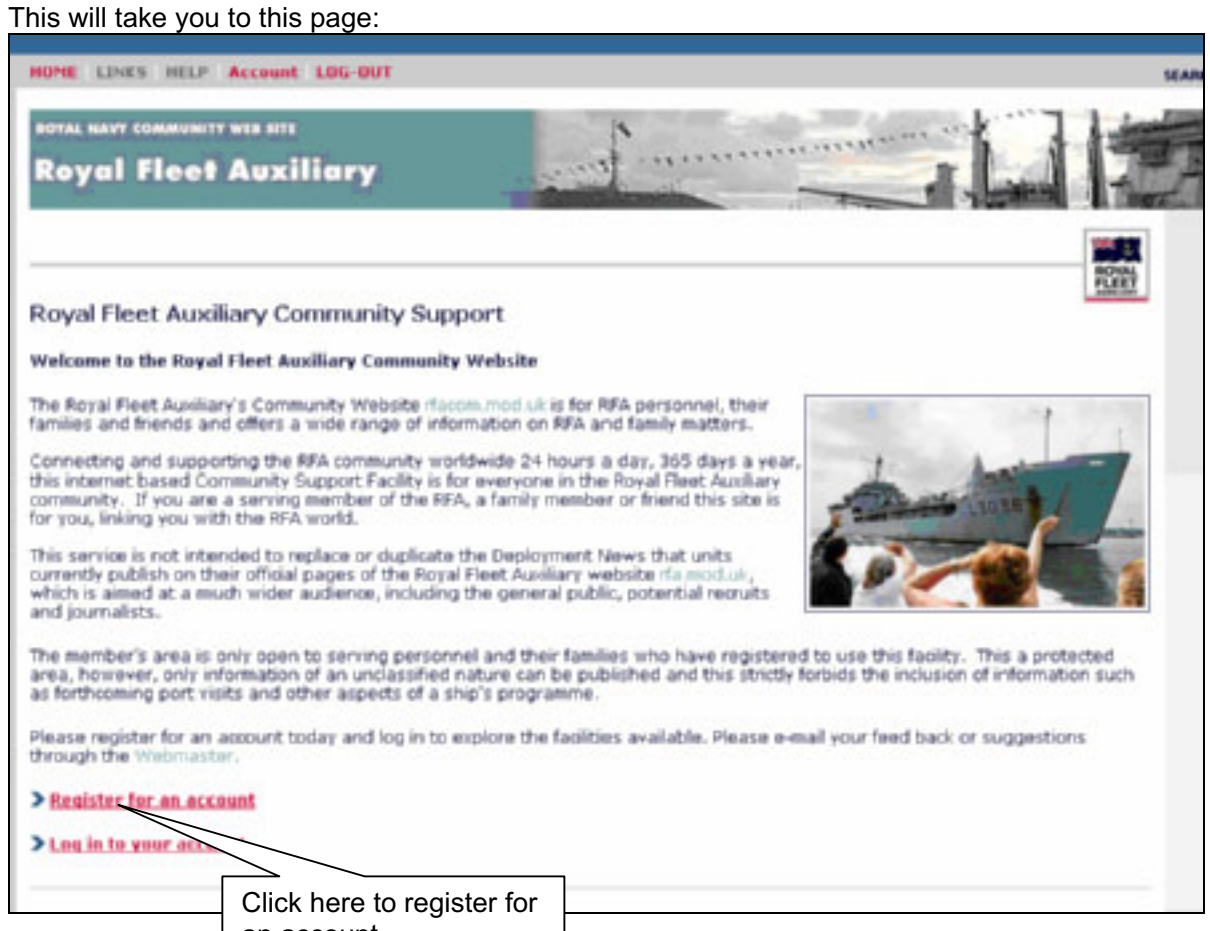
**Retired Members**

If you have retired from the RFA and still want to be able to keep up to date with what is happening, RFA Association members can now register by contacting the Chairman Captain Pat Thompson Rtd.

## RFA COMMUNITY WEBSITE

Visit: www.rfacom.mod.uk

This will take you to this page:

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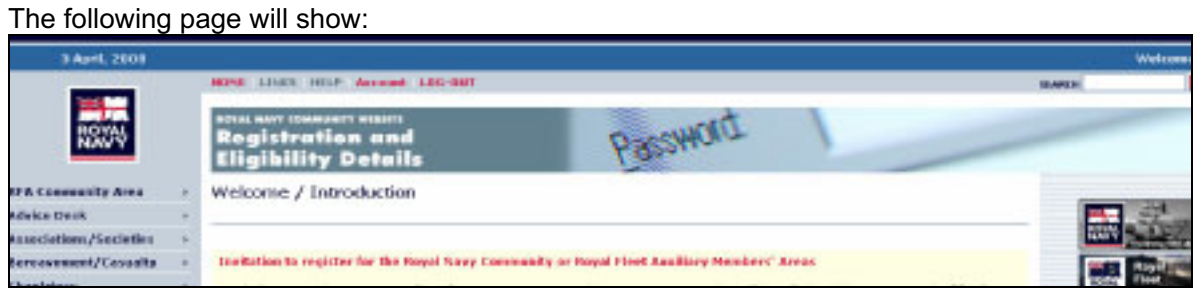

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# RFA ASSOCIATION

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www.
freewebs.com/rfaasolentbranch/

## Chairman's Dit.

Not a lot to write for this issue of Gunline, Dawn, my ever efficient assistant has beaten me to it, however there are a couple of photographs of the RFA Association presence at Marchwood and another at the Cenotaph in Whitehall which I attended. I have also represented the RFA Association at a number of events in London and at the National Arboretum. I must seriously thank Mike Day, David Bolton and George Mortimore for all the support given to the production of these pages in both photographs and supporting articles.

Hopefully you should receive a copy of "Force 4" which is to become the RFA Association's very own "House Mag" very soon. I would hope to have the second edition printed for distribution in July (ish) so all contributions will be gratefully received.

Production of the new Year Book continues to be problematic. After taking advice it appears that unless permission is given, your name and address etc. cannot be printed in it. In considering your decision please remember that the Year Book is only distributed to the membership. When Force 4 is distributed it will be accompanied by a letter and a form to complete giving, or refusing permission to print this information in the Year Book. Even if you refuse permission please check your details and inform HQ of any changes.

*Pat Thompson*

## HQ NEWS

Well, 2008 has been a very eventful year. It has seen many changes through out the Association. As you all know we have most notably had a change of Chairman, and Pat Thompson has taken over from Rex Cooper in a most professional and pretty much seamless manner, I am sure you will agree. 2008 has also seen the sad loss of some of our much loved members, this is always a difficult time of year for the bereaved and I hope their families know that we are always here to offer help and support in any way we can.

Our head office now sits in a newly refurbished and very smart court yard, sharing it with Bellingham Community Trust, the Heritage Centre and also the Tourist Information Centre. The reburbishment was quite an upheaval at the time but it looks far better for it now and it has introduced some extra life and character into the old Station Yard.

We are delighted to announce that we have found a new Treasurer to fill David Cameron's shoes when he retires in December. Ray Oxby is a retired Bank Manager and is keen to join the team. We thank David Cameron for all his hard work over the years and look forward to welcoming our new recruit in the New Year.

In this past year, we have become a registered charity in Scotland and have our first Scottish Trustee; we have a new National Standard Bearer and also a long awaited Midlands branch Chairman. There have been changes in Branch Chairman for the London and Plymouth branches, and our thanks go out to Peter Robinson and Richard Walker for their part in making the branches the success that they are today.

Add to all this a new web-site in the making and our long awaited Force 4 newsletter - it can truly be said that we have had a very busy time and the Association as a whole is going from strength to strength.

We hope that all the enthusiasm and progress that is felt here at HQ is reflected directly towards you, our members and that you enjoy watching and being part of the progressively changing face of the RFAA.

On this note I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have sent your good wishes and messages of support over the past year, to both myself and Pat Thompson in our new roles it is really encouraging to get such positive feedback from so many of you.

All that remains for me to say is that I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and a very happy and healthy 2009.

Dawn Reay
*Administrator*

***Above left & right:***
*Remembrance Day at Marchwood, photo's kindly supplied by members of the Solent Branch*

*and -*

***Below:*** *At Whitehall Cenotaph*

*Photo courtesy Pat Thompson*

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FOR SERVICE, SEAFARERS AND FAMILIES

REG CHARITY NO. 1093950. PATRON: HRH THE EARL OF WESSEX, KG KCVO ADC REGISTERED IN SCOTLAND No. SC039054

# RFA ATTENDANT

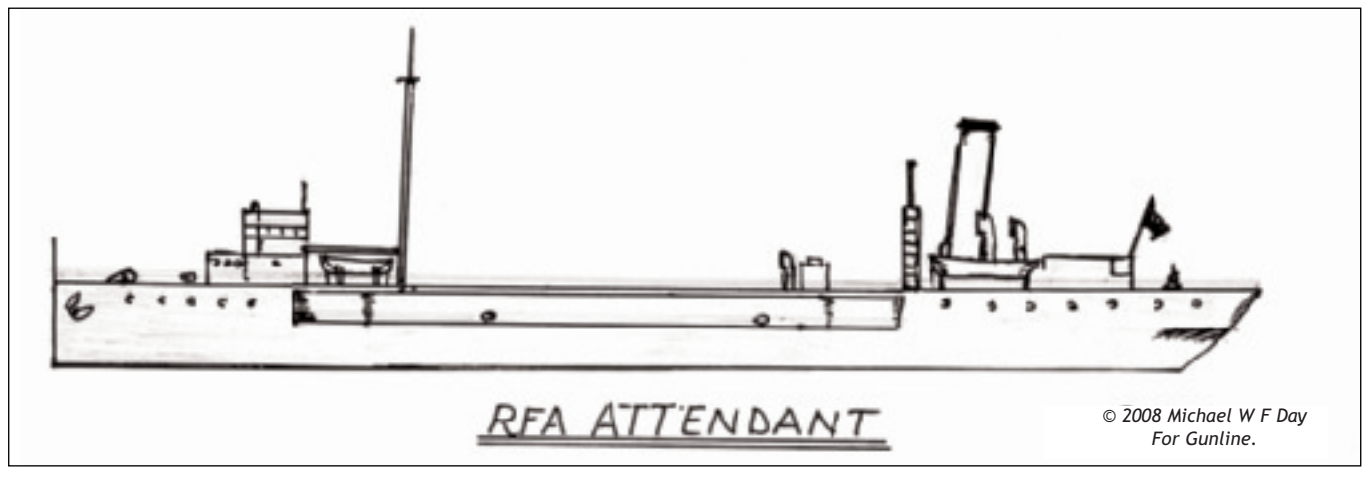
At 8.40 pm on 9th July 1914, less than a month before the outbreak of the war to end all wars, RFA Attendant dropped anchor having been rammed by the Fleet Coaling Service (FCS) collier Francis Duncan on the starboard bow.

Attendant had slipped from her berth in Chatham at 08.30 to start 3 days of official steaming trials under the observation of Lt Cdr A W Watson.

Nearly four years before, on the 8th December 1910, Sir Phillip Watts, the Director of Naval Construction had signed the Memorandum and Minute CN47726/10 dated 26th November. It was referred to the Fourth Sea Lord on the subject of the provision of oil fuel craft to supply the fleet. The memo included the proposal "to make provision in next year's estimates" for "1 steam driven oil tank barge of 1,000 tons capacity" for an estimated cost of £12,500.

This steam driven oil tank barge, the RFA Attendant, became the product of 3 years and 8 months of discussions, proposals and counter-proposals by many eminent people. The original designs had been re-designed and modified until eventually the ship became the first Admiralty-designed and Admiralty-constructed powered refuelling oil barge.

At one twentieth the tonnage and one thousandth of the cost, Attendant had taken longer to design and build than Sir Phillip Watts' other ground-breaking ship, HMS Dreadnought 0f 1906. For the Admiralty, RFA Attendant was in many ways a more revolutionary, experimental, and challenging project for their designers.




© 2008 Michael W F Day
For Gunline.

Originally conceived as a dumb barge before 1910, Attendant incorporated a new concept, being self-propelled by steam reciprocating engines. After discussion, the boilers would be coal- fired, as there would be plenty available in the dockyard environment in which she would work. Some sister ships were powered by diesel engines, to no great success. The capability of refuelling at warships at sea was considered, but her hull was too small for the additional equipment required.

She was to have been commercially built, as had the very first Admiralty designed ocean-going oiler, RFA Burma. By the time the shipyards were invited to tender, in late 1911, there was a huge tanker-building boom for commercial companies. Most acceptable shipyards did not want to be involved with the Admiralty tanker, which was consequently built in Chatham.

In 1914, the First Lord, Sir Winston Churchill, minuted the DNC, about the "grave objections" he had heard about the position of the bridge being so far forward. He was told that the design kept "the midship portion quite clear to facilitate the handling of hoses". Of the two positions for the bridge, the forward was considered the best suitable for harbour navigation. Included in the reply was the sentence which naval authors subsequently misunderstood. The design was not based on those of Great Lake Steamers of Canada and America but "was the same as in use on the great lakes".

How ironic it was that, 10 minutes into her trials, RFA Attendant should have been temporarily disabled by a collier from the FCS. Within 4 years Attendant's successors and the RFA would entirely replace them both.

21 other RFA tankers were built based on Attendant's design. Many survived two world wars and lasted in commercial service until the 1960's. They were tough ships.

*Précised from "British Fleet Auxiliaries".*
*© 2008 Michael W F Day For Gunline.*

# RFA SIR LANCELOT - VISITS TO SOUTH GEORGIA 1987

Sir Lancelot made two visits to South Georgia in February and March 1987. On the first she took the 2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Rangers for Exercise Icepick and recovered them in March. On each visit she berthed at the "new" jetty at King Edward Point for which she had taken the equipment and the Royal Engineers to build it in 1986.

On the first visit the Rangers were landed by LCVP in Cumberland Bay and had to march over the mountain back to the ship at King Edward Point. They made the march in quite good time and although the weather was kind with little snow the first one to stagger up the brow was heard to say "I've never been so **** glad to see a **** boat in all me **** life!" We left them there for a couple of weeks to continue Exercise Icepick and returned in March to recover them. This visit coincided with March 17th and the first the ship knew of this was at 0700 in the morning being woken by a bagpiper marching round the alleyways playing Irish tunes.

After breakfast the Battalion assembled on the jetty where they were each presented with a shamrock by the Colonel's Lady. In the afternoon they played a football match against the crew of the Russian survey ship Professor Zubov and took part in a form of Highland Games which included tossing the caber and welly throwing.

In the evening a gala dinner was enjoyed in Shackleton House and the menu included venison which the Rangers had culled from the local herd.

Sir Lancelot sailed the next morning and called at the old whaling stations at Leith and Prince Olaf Harbour before returning to the Falklands.

*Images courtesy George Mortimore*

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# The Marine Society & Sea Cadets

## LIFE AT SEA IS NO BARRIER TO LEARNING

*As both a beneficiary of The Marine Societyís services and head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, I consider The Marine Society College of the Sea to be a first rate organisation which has helped generations of RFA personnel.*

*It's committed to the well being of our people both ashore and afloat and I've no hesitation in recommending its many services.*

Commodore W.M Walworth OBE RFA

The Marine Society College of the Sea (MSCoS) has been around for the RFA so long as there has been an RFA. As COMRFA has observed, the College of the Sea has been an inspiration for generations of seafarers to continue their education, personal and professional development.

**How does it work?**
The College of the Sea achieves its objectives through an effective combination of direct learner-centred provision; by working with carefully selected partner providers; by working with others to ensure their provision is seafarer-friendly; and by vigorously promoting learning, personal and professional development, thereby enhancing individual performance, growth and employability.

The College was for years an operation of The Marine Society, which merged with the Sea Cadets in 2004 to form The Marine Society & Sea Cadets ñ Britain's biggest maritime charity.

Director of Education at The Marine Society College of the Sea is Brian Thomas, who told Gunline: "Today the College continues its good work to enhance the well being of those who go to sea professionally. It does not seek to make money – it exists to provide a service. So please use us!"

**Courses**
The college's offer of courses is constantly evolving and includes learning programmes and skills to suit every taste, age, background and ability.

**GCSE / A level**
The College offers an extensive range of subjects at GCSE and A Level. All subjects are tutor-supported, and come with professionally prepared learning materials. As you would expect, the provision is seafarer-friendly, meaning it's ideally suited whether you're at sea or ashore.

And because the College of the Sea is an examination centre, it can also enter you for examinations and make arrangements for you to sit them either ashore or at sea in your RFA ship.

**Personal Development**
There are courses in nutritional awareness and sports management; with up-skilling programmes in useful areas that cover report writing, editing skills, creative writing, through to web design. Whilst all the courses are accredited and offer a qualification, some may wish to simply dip into them for the skills they impart and not bother about any examination. The choice is yours.

**Business**
The College's suite of business skills is always kept up to date. The current offering includes essential skills for those who may be thinking of running their own business: marketing, bookkeeping, business start-ups, and accountancy. There's even a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) through The Open University with a specially negotiated discount on fees.

**Professional Development**
Under continuing professional development the College works with partner providers to offer a range of up-skilling programmes covering all aspects of the maritime sector.

These partners include the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers, Nautical Institute, The Open University, the Institute of Work Based Learning, the International Institute of Marine Surveying, and Lloyds Maritime Academy. For an independent evaluation of what's on offer from the many players in the field of CPD, and how the College of the Sea can help, visit www.mscos.ac.uk

**Work Based Learning degrees**
By means of a partnership with the Institute for Work Based Learning at Middlesex University, RFA personnel are offered a route through which they may top up their HND or FD (Foundation Degree) into a bachelor's degree.

And senior officers can make their Class 1 CoC really count with an academic equivalency: it will be recognised as being at least a third of a way to getting an academic master's degree!

These ground-breaking and seafarer-friendly programmes are entirely distance taught, can be completed in a minimum of 8 months, are tailored to individual need, fully tutor-supported, and aren't dependent on access to the internet.

**The Open University**
The biggest university in Europe is the only one in the UK dedicated to delivering all its provision by means of distance learning, making it an ideal vehicle by which seafarers may continue their education.

No previous qualifications are necessary and as well as degree programmes at all levels, the OU offers supported distance learning in over 600 courses.

The Marine Society College of the Sea has worked with the OU since it was formed in 1969 to make its provision accessible to those who make their living at sea. This work includes acting as honest broker between the seafarer and the OU, providing underpinning support and serving as a logistical 'postbox', and as an exam agent by which means arrangements may be made for RFA seafarers to sit OU exams wherever they find themselves in the world, whether ashore or afloat.

**Leadership & Management - degree**
As Gunline went to press an announcement was due about a brand new honours degree in Leadership & Management ñ a result of collaboration between the College of the Sea and The Open University Business School.

What promises to be especially exciting about this offering is that the College and the OU have been working together to map seafarers' professional qualifications, the goal being that seafarers will get automatic credit for their CoC when embarking upon the programme. The effect would be to make the degree cheaper and reduce the time needed to complete it.

**Financial support**
The College administers a suite of financial schemes to help British seafarers (officers and ratings domiciled in the UK) to advance their academic and professional qualifications.

These include the John William Slater scholarships for serving ratings (administered on behalf of NautilusUK); Marine Society Worcester scholarships for qualified mariners undertaking higher level education programmes; and arrangements to offer interest-free loans to help offset the costs of attending vocational courses or studying at colleges for professional advancement - the principal beneficiaries of the latter are those studying for certificates of competency.

The Marine Society also considers the award of loans which may subsequently be converted into grants. For example, should a seafarer wish to study for a vocationally orientated diploma by distance learning he/she may be offered a loan, but when the course has been successfully completed the loan may be converted into a grant. The aim is to provide additional motivation for a form of study that is often very difficult to follow through.

**Defence Learning Portal (DLP)**
The DLP is a web-based e-Learning facility for the defence community provided through a partnership between BT and the MoD. It's the biggest facility of its kind in Europe.

RFA personnel can access this resource completely free of charge. There are hundreds of learning and development opportunities available through the DLP covering a range of skills. They include navigation, computer literacy, data protection, health and safety, sea survival, training delivery, first aid, equality and diversity through to leadership and management. And the number and range of courses is growing all the time. More information at www.mscos.ac.uk

**Books and exchange library service**
The Marine Society offers a direct book-selling service that covers any and every book in print, from block-busting bestsellers to vocational heavyweights.

What's more, it can provide all your reading needs with an exclusive discount off the published price - and that includes publications from those organizations for which it is an authorised distributor, such as IMO; Nautical Institute; Lloyds Register-Fairplay; Informa; Witherby Seamanship.

Any surplus funds generated by its book-selling operation to seafarers are ploughed back into its charitable operations which go to support seafarers.

This is also the source of the ever-popular exchange libraries you may be familiar with onboard every RFA ship. If you've any special requests for titles to be included in these libraries please let the team at Seafarers Libraries know!

**Advice and practical guidance**
The Marine Society College of the Sea is a source of unbiased, confidential, free, and expert advice on all aspects of learning, personal and professional development ... and all matters beyond!

Whatever the issue it promises to provide a swift, positive and personal response: if they don't know the answer themselves they'll consult others who do and feed back to you a range of possible solutions.

Find out what's available from The Marine Society College of the Sea:
education@ms-sc.org
telephone 020 7654 7050
or logon at www.mscos.ac.uk

Nelson sent us a fiver before Trafalgar ...and his legacy lives on today!

For 250 years The Marine Society has supported seafarers and championed Britain's maritime heritage. And with 400 "training ships" nationwide, the Sea Cadets offer young people a start in life – Navy style.

Now we need your help to stay afloat in a fast changing world.

By leaving us a legacy you will be our next naval hero!

**For more information:** www.ms-sc.org
**email:** legacies@ms-sc.org **phone:** 020 7654 7013
**The Marine Society & Sea Cadets**
**202 Lambeth Road**
**LONDON SE1 7JW**
A charity registered in England & Wales 313013 and in Scotland SC037808

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# RFA CARDIGAN BAY

RFA CARDIGAN BAY affectionately known as The NAG Hilton has been fulfilling her role out here in the Northern Persian Gulf, sometimes it can feel like terminal 5 with a much better record for getting luggage to its final destination, sometimes even before the person gets there themselves! The keenest SG1A can't wait to transfer luggage to the first Desert Hawk that touches down!

The Ship is acting Del Boy for all the other ships out here, be they American, Australian or British. We can have up to three different aircraft land on each day to transfer personnel, cargo and mail to other ships. The operation is pretty impressive, we dock down, boats come into the dock from other ships, passengers get off, their luggage is immediately segregated in the ammo lift into piles for the 1st Desert Hawk, 2nd Desert Hawk or those that are staying at the hotel. The only difference is that live ammo has to be taken off the military types before they proceed – we don't want to spoil the decor! The passengers are then transferred to the airport lounge to await their transfer by desert hawk, or boat, while their luggage makes its way up to the flight deck, if they are going by helicopter of course. At the same time a Desert Hawk could be landing up top and discharging passengers with luggage, stores and mail and everything is reversed. The first day I witnessed this we were hosting a meeting on board for 20 people. My head was spinning by the end of the day! Luckily my Department knew what to expect and the whole thing went off without a hitch, like a well oiled machine!!

Our primary role here is with the NaTT (Naval Training Team), to help with the important job of training Iraqi Marines. The Iraqis come onboard on a Sunday and leave on Friday. They are put through their paces in boarding and search techniques and have two FABS of their own. With the support of the US Navy Coastguard they are being trained to secure the security of their waters and oil rigs which will ensure the future prosperity of Iraq. They are friendly and polite, a bunch who have never complained about the food served to them, RFA ships companies take note! They seem to have a special penchant for ice cream and chocolate pudding or so I am reliably informed by the PO(Stwd) Mike Maddern who maintains a 5 star service for them and is always willing to go that extra mile which is much appreciated by all.

These new LSDAs are definitely proving their versatility, from building a new quayside (my last ship LYME BAY – Operation Zest) to being a central hub of a busy and productive operation as in this case IRAQI NATIONAL TASKING. It is always pleasing when you hear a comment, "You have one hell of a shiny ship!", as was the case of the last Admiral that was passing through. And the Americans all seem to have a really positive "can do" attitude which motivates us all. Today the ship's company have been taking advantage of the onboard US Navy's offer to go for a "jolly" in their fast MESF craft.

# THE ROYAL NAVAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY COVER RNSC 7(24)

## THE CENTENARY YEAR OF THE ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY SERVICE 1905-2005

The Royal Naval Philatelic Society located at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard under the Presidency of Admiral Sir Desmond Cassidi GCB will issue a limited edition of 855 Commemorative Covers only to mark this occasion. There will be five categories of this Limited Edition Cover, three of which will be individually signed by signatories listed.

All covers will contain a text sheet, with a set of four double-sided photocards in colour and black and white. Stamps from Tristan Du Cunha set "Royal Navy Connections Part 2" will be used throughout. This cover has been cancelled by the Tristan Du Cunha postal authorities.

**Plain covers £9:75 each**

There will be 3 different value plain covers. These covers bear the following stamps 20p value **RFA TIDESPRING** 001 – 040, 35p value **RFA DILIGENCE** 001 – 045, and 60p value **HMY BRITANNIA**. These covers are limited editions numbered as stated above. They have no signatures.

**Special Covers £12:75 each.**

There will be 100 Special Covers each will bear both the 60p value stamps **RFA WAVE CHIEF** and **HMY BRITANNIA.**. This cover will bear no signatures and will be limited and numbered from 001 to 100.

**Triple Signed Covers price £15:75 each**

There are 125 Triple Signed covers. Each cover will bear the 35p value stamp **RFA GOLD ROVER**; they are limited and numbered from 001 to 125.

**Double signed £12:75 each**

There will be 420 covers with 7 signature variations, 4 stamp variations with 3 stamp value variations. Stamps used are both the 20p value stamps **RFA TIDEFLOW** and **RFA TIDESPRING,** the 35p value stamp **RFA DILIGENCE** and 60p value stamp **RFA WAVE CHIEF**. These Double signed covers will be limited and numbered from 001 to 060.

**Multi Signed £25.00** each

There will be 3 stamp variations of 20 covers each of Multi signed cover.

Stamp variation – 1 the 20p value stamp illustrating **RFA TIDESPRING**

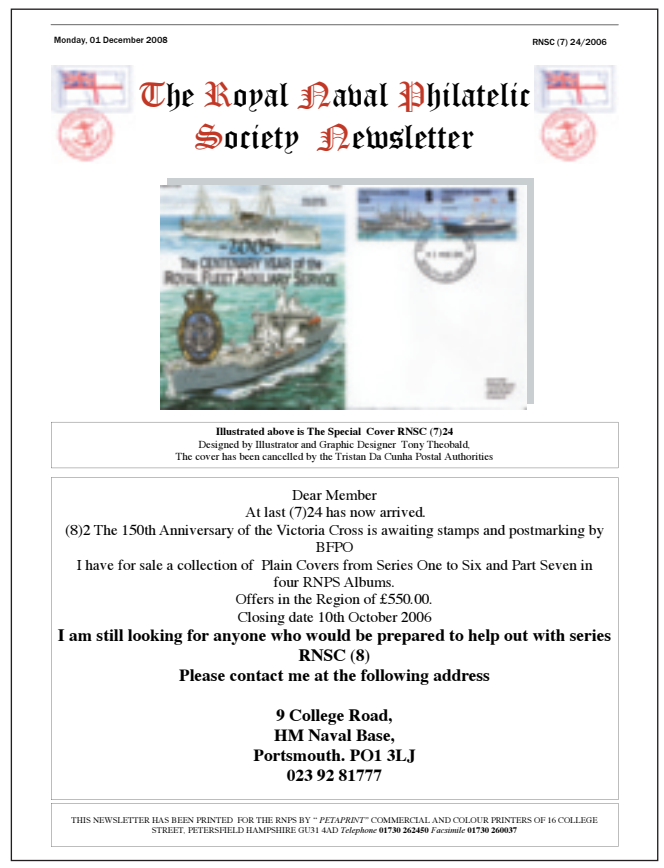
Stamp variation – 2 the 35p value stamp illustrating **RFA DILIGENCE**

Stamp variation – 3 the 60p value stamp illustrating **HMY BRITANNIA**

These covers will be limited and numbered from 001 to 020.

**Quad Signed £20.00** each

There will be 25 Quad signed covers. This cover will bear four signatures and the two 60p value stamp illustrating **HMY BRITANNIA and RFA WAVE CHIEF** these covers will be limited and numbered from 001 to 025.



Monday, 01 December 2008 RNSC (7) 24/2006

The Royal Naval Philatelic Society Newsletter



**Illustrated above is The Special Cover RNSC (7)24**
Designed by Illustrator and Graphic Designer Tony Theobald.
The cover has been cancelled by the Tristan Da Cunha Postal Authorities

Dear Member
At last (7)24 has now arrived.
(8)2 The 150th Anniversary of the Victoria Cross is awaiting stamps and postmarking by BFPO
I have for sale a collection of Plain Covers from Series One to Six and Part Seven in four RNPS Albums.
Offers in the Region of £550.00.
Closing date 10th October 2006
**I am still looking for anyone who would be prepared to help out with series RNSC (8)**
**Please contact me at the following address**

**9 College Road,**
**HM Naval Base,**
**Portsmouth. PO1 3LJ**
**023 92 81777**

THIS NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN PRINTED FOR THE RNPS BY " *PETAPRINT*" COMMERCIAL AND COLOUR PRINTERS OF 16 COLLEGE STREET, PETERSFIELD HAMPSHIRE GU31 4AD *Telephone* **01730 262480** *Facsimile* **01730 260037**

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MAIL ORDER FORM RNSC (7)24
THE CENTENARY YEAR OF THE ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY SERVICE

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____
TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

| | | | Signature Variation | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TYPE OF COVER | COST | | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | TOTAL |
| DOUBLE SIGNED | £6.70 | | | | | | | | | |
| TYPE OF COVER | COST | | Stamp Variation | | | | | | | TOTAL |
| MULTI SIGNED | £25.00 | | | | | | | | | |
| QUAD SIGNED | £20.00 | | | | | | | | | |
| EXTRA SPECIAL | £9.75 | | | | | | | | | |
| SPECIAL | £7.75 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | Postage | | NIL |
| | | | | | | | | TOTAL | | |

Please make cheques payable to The Royal Naval Philatelic Society
Debit/Credit Card Payments please include 16 digit card number expiary date and the last 3 digits of your security code on the reverse of your credit/debit

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# RFA LYME BAY - SERVICE OF DEDICATION THIRD TIME LUCKY

After two previous attempts last year, RFA Lyme Bay's service of Dedication eventually came to fruition and was held at Portland on Wednesday 12th September 2008, almost a year after she entered service. The service was well attended with over 350 guests, made up of Ships Company, families, friends and special guests.

The day started bright and sunny, which is hoped, will reflect as a good omen for her future. With the ship dressed overall and her crew looking first class everyone busied themselves in preparation for the Service.

As the guests arrived they were met at the gangway by a welcoming party before being escorted down to the vehicle deck, through a Sea Cadet guard of honour provided by the Bridport and Yeovil units to a champagne reception.

The Band of the Royal Marines from HMS Raleigh provided a spectacular display of music as they struck up their instruments and entertained the delighted visitors.

The arrival of the Guest of Honour and Ships Sponsor, Lady Elizabeth Fry, and accompanied by General Rob Fry signalled the start of the service.

The Reverend Bernard Clarke QHC, as the new RFA Chaplain warmly welcomed everybody and invited the Commodore Bob Thornton, to open the speeches as one of his last engagements before leaving his post with the RFA.

This was followed by Captain Rimell who gave an account of the ships achievements and tasking to date remarking on the invaluable contributions made by the men and women who have had a part in her activities and adventures to date. Lady Fry continued the speeches by extolling her pleasure in being asked to become the ships sponsor and how much she hoped to be a part of Lyme Bay's future. Lady Fry went on to present the ship with a map of Dorset, inscribed with a dedication and Captain Rimell duly returned the gesture by presenting her with a mounted, polished and inscribed ammonite.

Father Bernard then asked Captain Rimell to lead the ships company in asking for Gods blessing on the ship using the ancient Gaelic blessing of 1589 before joining the guests in singing a heartfelt rendition of Lead Us Heavenly Father Lead Us.

A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew was given by 2/O(X) James Larkins and the service continued with further hymns and blessings. The ceremony was concluded by the cutting of the dedication cake and this was carried out by Lady Fry and the youngest member of the ships company, CR2 Roxanne Challinor.



The formalities were followed by fantastic buffet, prepared and served by the ships catering department

which was a credit to them. Backed up by more scintillating music from the Band of the Royal Marines, many a guest was heard to extol what an enjoyable and delightful day they had had.

As the afternoon drew to a close and guests were waved off something became very apparent.

If ever there was a day that proved beyond doubt that members of the RFA were proud to be part of a dedicated and professional team, this was it. It was a day for all who attended, whether as Ships Company, family, friend or special guest to remember for a very long time.

# RFA WAVE RULER RESTORES AIR COMMUNICATIONS WITH HURRICANE ISLAND

Technical experts from the 31,500-tonne Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship Wave Ruler have restored air communications with the Cayman Islands as a vital step in providing aid to the community in the wake of Hurricane Paloma. Ninety per cent of the buildings and half the population have been left homeless on Little Cayman and Cayman Brac.

The auxiliary oiler, equipped with a Royal Navy Lynx helicopter, arrived in the islands' waters at the weekend.

An eight-man technical team from the ship went ashore to restore the main air-traffic control communications at the airport, allowing a Boeing 737 jetliner to land with much-needed stores and personnel, including the Governor of the Islands. Another team of four have been restoring the fuel system at the airport to enable the refuelling of the increasing number of aircraft now flying in with relief stores.

A second, eight-man team from the ship has been unloading and distributing stores from the vessel, including 660 tarpaulins for those islanders left homeless by the devastation, 2,000 litres of clean drinking water, and two tonnes of stores which a Red Cross vessel had been unable to get ashore due to berthing difficulties.

RFA Wave Ruler's Commanding Officer, Captain Nigel Budd, of Romsey, Hampshire, has met the Governor and the Chairman of the Islands' Emergency Committee to review the damage and reassess the situation.

He said: "Damage is widespread, with an estimated 90 per cent of all buildings damaged and 50 per cent of the population assessed as homeless. The airport is a key enabler to bringing in much-needed stores, so the work we have done there in restoring communications has been vital.

"We are well trained and equipped for our disaster relief role, and able to provide first-aid, humanitarian and technical assistance by using an extensive range of disaster relief stores to provide food, water and shelter.

"RFA Wave Ruler is particularly well placed to assist, having undertaken disaster relief planning work with the Cayman Islanders in July."

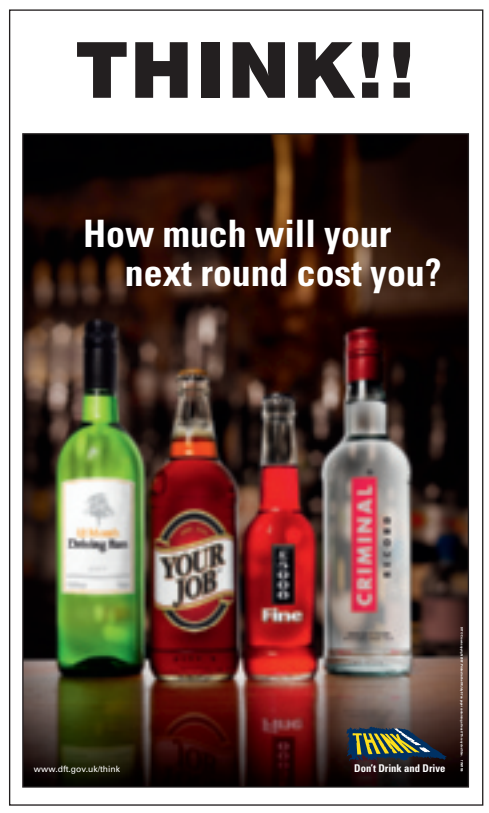
Wave Ruler has been deployed in the North Atlantic and Caribbean region since February. Her main task is to provide support for the UK Overseas Territories to reinforce the UK Government's commitment to the region. The role includes provision of help in the event of natural disaster and counter-narcotics operations.

**NOTE TO EDITORS:**
RFA Wave Ruler was built in Govan, Glasgow and entered service in 2002. She is 196.5m long with a beam of 30.4m. She is capable of 18 knots. She can issue 16,000 cubic metres of diesel and aviation fuel and has a flight deck and hangar to support helicopter operations.

The ship has a crew of 80 Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel with accommodation for an additional 22 Royal Navy flight personnel.

In recent years, Wave Ruler has seized a total of 11 tonnes of drugs during counter narcotics boarding operations in the Caribbean.

The RFA is a civilian-manned flotilla of logistics ships with a total of 2,000 personnel and operates worldwide in support of the British Armed Forces, primarily the Royal Navy.



## ANSWERS

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 9 |
| 6 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 8 |
| 9 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| 8 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| 1 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 3 |
| 7 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| 4 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 6 |

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