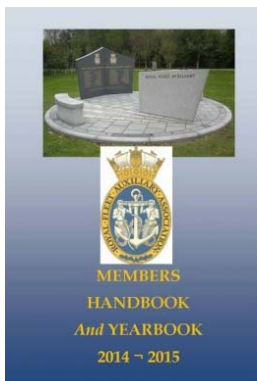




The RFA National Memorial.

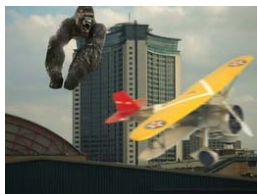
Funded by generous donations from RFA Association Members and various organisations this memorial stands at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire in testament to the men and women of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary from 1905 to the present day.

The Trustees hope to commemorate the 2nd Anniversary of the dedication of the RFA National Memorial at Alrewas on or around 11 Oct 2014. At the moment this is in a totally embryonic stage but we are looking perhaps at a short wreath laying ceremony followed by a buffet lunch. Do watch the website for further details in due course.



Members Handbook 2014~2015

The Members Handbook and Yearbook is now with the printers and we should receive the printed copies by the end of January. A copy will be sent to each member on our mailing list along with the calling notice, agenda and all associated documents for the AGM which will be held at the Ramside Hall Hotel on the afternoon of the 17th May 2014. We look forward to seeing as many members of the Association as possible for the AGM.



The Force 4 Colour Supplement

Download the Force 4 Colour Supplement [HERE](#)

You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader which you can download [HERE](#) for free to view it.

Crossed the Bar.

The following have crossed the bar since the last edition of Force 4, more details can be found on the website.

PO Stwd Thomas Jopson, 31st August aged 59

CH, Off Alec Bilney, 3rd Sept aged 70

CPO(Y) Brian "Jan" Bewsher, 24 Sept aged 66

DST(SF) Mike Holder, 26 Sept aged 78

First Officer (Supply) Barry Deller, 15 Oct aged 63

Captain(E) Charlie Collis, 16 Nov aged 82

On behalf of the RFA Association I extend our sincere condolences to their families.



The Semaphore Tower

The Semaphore Tower in Portsmouth Naval Dockyard has been the home of the RFA Association since 2012 following the move from Bellingham in Northumberland.



The RFA Reunion 2014

The Ramside Hall Hotel near Durham is the venue and the date is 17 May 2014. Don't miss it. Further details will be published quite soon as the arrangements are finalised, Watch the website for the latest updates.



Email Addresses

The last edition of Force 4 was emailed to 376 members who had given us their email address. This edition will go out to 427 members. Given that we have around 650 (ish) members means that 220 (ish) will not get a copy and the object of the exercise is to keep costs down by using email rather than snail mail. If you do not want to release your email address consider setting up a gmail or hotmail account OR use one of the extra email addresses that your email provider will allow you, if you get problems you can then delete them. If you don't have access to the web consider using the access points in your local library. You can always contact me at deputy.chairman@rfa-association.org.uk. Remaining on the topic of email addresses, as I have widely trailed the old email addresses are now DEFUNCT, they have ceased to be so don't forget to check your address book and add .uk to all RFAA email addresses.



Crisis in NHS

Retired RFA Personell are struck by an overwhelming desire to Stand By Their Beds

Following an article on the RFA Association website that members should "Stand By their Beds" in anticipation of the imminent publication of a new edition of Gunline, NHS Psychiatric Services have been overwhelmed by anxious calls from wives about their husband's nocturnal habit of, on hearing the arrival of the postman, leaping out of bed and standing to attention at the foot of their bed. Likewise and after a surge in doormat sales, manufacturers had noted a total slump in demand. (That's enough rubbish Ed) I frequently call my spies regarding the fate of Gunline, now nearly 18 months since the last edition, only to be told that it is "imminent". I can do no more but when I do get some news, good or bad, I will post in onto the website.

The Management of the RFA Association is always looking for people willing to give up even a small amount of their time to serve as Trustees. This is not an onerous task and expenses are paid so it shouldn't put you out of pocket. We are looking for volunteers who wish to be considered from right across the spectrum of membership. If you feel you have what it takes and would like to help please contact the Chairman at chairman@rfa-association.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you

The Chairman Writes:-

2013 has been another good year for the Association apart from local events around the country we enjoyed our annual reunion dinner in Liverpool where the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic was also celebrated. A number of us have laid wreaths to remember former RFAs who lost their lives serving their country in this battle and again on Remembrance Sunday in Plymouth, Solent and London.

Captain Pat Thompson and I made our first annual check of the RFA memorial at Alrewas and were pleased to see that it has not lost any of its sparkle. We were able to check on our offices in Semaphore Tower as well as say "hello" to the new RFA Commodore Rob Dorey in Whale Island. A month later the Association trustees met in Semaphore Tower to discuss Association business and have made a number of plans for 2014.

The Association continues to be busy and we have a steady stream of people joining us which is great and I think it is important to stress that the Association is open to all RFA personnel without exception, serving or retired. The Board of Trustees has representatives from every specialisation and every corner of UK.

One of our main means of communication has been through Gunline and it is disappointing to note that the RFA Newsletter has not been produced for over a year. Because of this we have initiated an online Force 4 so we can at least email news to our members. I certainly hope you will find this an interesting read along with some useful information.

Let us hope 2014 is every bit as good as 2013 and both Pat and I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a successful new year.

The Plymouth Branch has sent me this picture of their Christmas Luncheon held at the Duke of Cornwall, Plymouth. 62 Members and guests attended.



RFAA Rough Guide to Families and Friends

Section 1 Welfare and Support Contact Groups

The Naval Families Federation, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Road, Portsmouth, Hants PO2 8RN. Contact-02392 654374. <http://www.nff.org.uk/>
 SSAFA, Welfare and Grants - Health and Welfare Services 19 Queen Elizabeth Street, London, SE1 2LP Contact -0800 731 4880. <http://www.ssafa.org.uk/>
 The Sailors Society, 350 Shirley Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO15 3HY. Contact-02380515950. <http://www.sailors-society.org/>
 SAIL- Seafarers Advice and Information Line - Contact- 08457 413318. www.sailine.org.uk
 Royal British Legion - 020 3207 2100 (Helpline 08547 725 725). <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/>

Charities

RN/RM Charity, Building 29, HMS Excellent, Whale Island, Portsmouth, Hants PO2 8ER. Contact-02392 548128. <https://mrnc.org.uk/>
 Civil Service Benevolent Fund, Fund House, 5 Anne Boleyn's walk, Cheam, Sutton SM3 8DY. Contact- 0800 056 2424. <http://www.foryoubyyou.org.uk/>

RFA/RFAA

Fleet RFA PRO R J Lavender MBE First Officer. Civ Tel 02392 625379, Mil Tel 93832 5379 Email: <mailto:navy%20mediacomms-ops%20RFA@mod.uk> or lavenderr100@mod.uk
 RFA Association Chairman: Frank Andrews 01772 685427
 Email: Chairman@rfa-association.org.uk
 Deputy Chairman and website material: DeputyChairman@rfa-association.org.uk
 Welfare Mrs Pamela Axworthy, Tel:01623 836374 Email: welfare@rfa-association.org.uk

Pensions Advice

Capita Hartshead PO BOX 215, Mowden Hall, Darlington, county Durham, DL3 9GT. Contact 0870 1699 700. <http://csp.hartlinkonline.co.uk/>
 Pensions Tracing Service:- The Pensions Service, Tyneview Park, Whitely Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE98 1BA. Contact-0845 6002 537. <http://www.pension-tracingservice.com/>

HM Revenue and Customs

HMRC, South Wales Area Office, Government Building, Ty Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5YA. Contact-0845 300 3949. <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/>

Nautilus and RMT Contacts

Nautilus, <https://www.nautilusint.org/default.aspx>
 RMT :- <http://www.rmt.org.uk/home/>

Care

St Thomas' Hospital: Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7EH. Tel: 020 7188 7188, <http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/our-services/wards/dreadnought.aspx>
 Care Ashore: Tel: 01403 752555. www.careashore.org
 Nautilus Mariners Park: Mariner's Park, Seabank Road, Wallasey, Wirral CH44 0HN Tel: 0151 346 8888. <https://www.nautilusint.org/welfare/pages/Mariners%27%20Park.aspx>

And Finally

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This has been a fun production. Yesterday (Sat 21 Dec) with this edition of Force 4 and the associated Colour Supplement on the cusp of being issued and whilst doing a few tweaks before pressing the button we had a major power outage and associated power surge which totally wiped out the entire production so I have just spent the last 36 hours chucking it all together again so if it looks a little rushed it is but I have been determined to get it out in time for Christmas.

My thanks go to all the contributors without whom this could never have happened and on that note have YOU got a salty tale to share with us...I will be delighted to receive it. I hope to get another edition out in June perhaps, sometime after the AGM Reunion in May...see you there,

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