



Welcome to the twentieth edition of the Journal. I hope you enjoy this edition. The journal is not only for the officers of Associations but also Association members so we ask you to give it as wide a distribution as possible to members and anyone else you think might be interested. I had some pleasant feedback at the Lunch I reported on in the last Journal. I was told that many members of the RBL at Ashburton were not aware of the poem I published in the February Journal.

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## DIARY OF EVENTS FOR 2014

The Diary for 2014 has now been sent out to Federation Delegates. Please bear in mind that we are only publishing the information as we have received it and you should check with the organisers of a particular event to make sure it is taking place on the date we have given. Here are the dates for the coming month.

### MAY

- May**                      **Plymouth History Festival Month See**  
[www.Plymouth.gov.uk/whatson](http://www.Plymouth.gov.uk/whatson)
- Sun 11**                  **1500 Plymouth District Scouts St George's Day Service at the**  
**Minster Church of St Andrew, Plymouth.**
- Sun 11**                  **1000-1700 Naval Base Heritage Centre Open Day. Entry by**  
**Granby Way, Devonport.**
- 15-23 May**              **JS Hosanna House Group Pilgrimage to Lourds incorporating**  
**International Military Pilgrimage.**
- Sun 18**                  **1030 HMS GLOUCESTER Memorial Service Naval War Memorial**  
**Plymouth Hoe.**

- Sun 25**      **1200 Plymouth and Southwest Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association. Commemoration at the Belvedere Memorial Garden, Plymouth Hoe.**
- Mon 26**      **1000-1700 Naval Base Heritage Centre Open Day. Entry by Granby Way, Devonport.**

## PAST EVENTS

I had hoped to report on the Ex Tiger commemoration at Slapton Sands on the 28<sup>th</sup> April but was unable to get there, but I am sure Kath Hill will tell us all about it at the next meeting. As you will see from the list above there will be plenty of events to report on next month.

## TS DEFIANCE SALTASH

David Newman, who is the RNA Saltash Federation Delegate, has sent me the report below.

About eighteen months ago a new cadet force formed over the water here in Saltash, they call themselves T.S DEFIANCE and are part of the Navy Training Corps which have units up and down the country. They joined this organisation as they found it difficult to join the Sea Cadet Corps; I believe it was because they could not find sponsorship from a local unit.

They are a very enthusiastic group with about thirty cadets and seven staff members in uniform, with a supportive committee in the background. They do all the activities that the Sea Cadets undertake i.e. Boating, Drill, Shooting and Sport. Unlike the Sea Cadets they get no help from the Navy with supply of uniform and the loan of equipment, so they have to fund themselves. The Saltash R.N.A have decided to help them where we can, and earlier this year we affiliated them to our branch and in February presented them with a Certificate of Affiliation but more importantly a cheque for the purchase of a complete number one uniform. At present they meet at our local fire station every Thursday evening while they look for permanent headquarters, and once a month some of our members lend their experience with training, our President and myself are training them with our Standard with a view to them parading it for us occasionally.

Our Chairman Basil has also sent me a short report.

I recently received an invitation to attend the Annual Parade of TS Defiance, a recently formed Royal Navy Cadet unit. I was very impressed by the level of discipline and commitment from both the Cadets and Staff. It was also good to see Federation Delegate Dave Newman of Saltash RNA and RBL who is giving advice

and training regarding Standard Bearing and ceremonial events.



*Basil Downing-Waite* Chairman

## FUNERAL OF HAROLD PERCY BIGGS

The funeral of “Barney” as he was known took place at Efford Crematorium on Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> April at 1100 by coincidence the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1939 was the date that he joined the Navy. He was an active member of the RNA and the Burma Star so the standards were lead by Graham Fulcher of RNA Plymouth and Fred Ford for the Burma Star Association with five other Standards present and several veterans who formed a guard of honour outside the crematorium. At the recent Federation meeting Fred Ford conveyed the thanks of the Family to all who had attended the funeral.

## JACK HUGHIESON (1919-2014)

It is with sadness that we announce that the last Military Far East Prisoner of War at the Plymouth Branch of the Association, Jack Hughieson has “crossed the bar.”

Born and educated in Edinburgh Jack was a member of the Royal Naval Wireless Auxiliary Reserve and joined the Navy in 1938. On the outbreak of war he served on convoy duties in the North Atlantic and was posted to Singapore in 1941 thence to Hong Kong to join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron.

Jack was the Telegraphist on board MTB08 based in Hong Kong. On the night of December 16<sup>th</sup> his ship was destroyed during a Japanese bombing raid. Many of the MTB's were damaged and those that remained were scuttled north of Hong Kong in a successful escape bid.

Without a ship Jack was captured at the surrender of Hong Kong and went into captivity in Sham Shipou [Kowloon]. He with many others was put aboard the LISBON MARU for transportation to Japan and en route she was sunk with great loss of life by the US Submarine GROUPER. The survivors found themselves in the water and he was picked up by Chinese Fishermen but handed over to the Japanese in Shanghai. Again he was put aboard one of the Hellships the SHINSEI MARU and landed in Moji [South Japan]. Transported from there by train to Osaka No.1 POW Camp he worked slave labour on the Docks loading and unloading ships. After many months in May 1943 he was moved to Itchioka [a so-called Hospital] where he worked until the end of 1944 when he was again moved to Kobe Hospital [The Hellhole]. Here he remained until bombed out by US Air Force B29's in 1945.

Jack was then to witness the Hiroshima bomb explosion, the mushroom cloud and saw the subsequent devastation.

After the Japanese surrender Jack and his fellow prisoners were enlisted by the US 8<sup>th</sup> Army to assist with the repatriation programme and he also spent time in various hospitals in Okinawa undergoing treatment and medical evaluation of his exposure to the Atom bomb.



In October 1945 he was flown to Manila [Philippines] for further tests and then on to Pearl Harbour [Hawaii] for yet more tests.

He was then transferred to Singapore where he underwent more medical evaluation and finally took passage to the UK on a Hospital Ship.

On arrival in Southampton he was transferred to the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth from where he was finally demobbed and returned to Edinburgh. Jack suffered for many years from his experiences but went on to have a very successful career worldwide with the Diplomatic Wireless Service [GCHQ] where he met and married his wife Pat and raised a family

in Scarborough. Later he moved to Exeter for retirement and was a key figure at the Exeter Golf Club.

Jack, a well loved and respected member of FEPOW family in Devon and Cornwall died on 11 March and we wish him a “safe harbour in peaceful waters.”

Jack’s in depth Video interviews at the Imperial War Museum can be seen on [www.HughiesonJack.IWM\(28639\)](http://www.HughiesonJack.IWM(28639))

## GANGES ASSOCIATION GUZZ WEEKEND

Every year in March the HMS Ganges Association Devonport Division hold a weekend in Torquay, it is for mainly HMS Ganges people but we welcome anyone who enjoys the company of ex service people. It is an informal weekend built on the understanding of, No marching, No fighting, No speeches, just wine dine and spin a yarn. Dress casual, all we ask from the men is Jackets & Ties for Saturdays Gala Dinner.

Three Nights Bed Breakfast, Evening Meal, Bucks Fizz Reception, Entertainment each evening and a Traditional ‘Up Spirits’ before the Gala Dinner. All at £102. If you are interested and wish to be reminded for 2015 just give your name to Bill Marsh the Ganges Delegate.



‘up spirits’



Elvis a scot?



**Our own people**

## BICKLEIGH RIDING STABLES

At the last meeting John Abey came and talked to us about the riding stables and he has sent me the following information for those who are interested.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Riding Stables, formerly Bickleigh Saddle Club, is located at Bickleigh Barracks (home to 42 Commando Royal Marines), Bickleigh, just outside Plymouth and on the edge of Dartmoor National Park. Whilst the stables have been in existence for over 25 years it is only since 2011 that it became a UK Registered Charity (No. 1141412).

The stables exist to provide affordable, accessible horse riding activities for service personnel, ex-service men and women, and their families. The stables has a range of horses and ponies to suit all ages, sizes and abilities from complete beginners to experienced riders. Riding is conducted in a fun and friendly way whilst ensuring that both horse and rider are safe and supported by our qualified staff and instructors. Riding activities include private and group lessons, hacking out on Dartmoor and the adjacent Forest Commission land, working toward recognised equine qualifications, to 'pub rides' to local hostelrys for a well earned drink and an energetic ride back to yard. As a charity and not-for-profit organisation the stables aims to ensure that riding is affordable for all with prices kept well below that of commercial riding stables.



The stables is an approved Pony Club Centre with a very popular Pony Club with session at the weekends giving younger riders the opportunity to learn together and work toward awards and competing in local competitions.

We are currently trying to raise the funds to build a roof over the

existing outdoor school to create a truly 'all weather' indoor facility and have submitted a grant application to the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

The stables and our ponies are used on a regular basis by the local Riding for the Disabled Association and Plymouth Riding for the Deaf. We have also provided riding opportunities for injured service men and women from Haslar Company, supported by Help for Heroes, who were keen to try a new challenge and were undaunted by their injuries - truly awe inspiring to see the determination and bravery of these individuals.

If you would like any more information about the stables please visit our website, [www.bickleighridingstables.com](http://www.bickleighridingstables.com) , telephone (01752 727038) or visit the yard. We are always looking for new members and riders and keen to expand this exciting and enjoyable activity among the service community.

## RBL DROP IN CENTRE IN PLYMOUTH

It was reported at the last meeting that this facility is now open in Mayflower Street. Our Chairman Basil reported that he had tried to visit to centre three times and it had not been open so better luck next time Basil. I do gather that they are looking for volunteers to man the Centre so if you are interested in helping them contact me and I can put you in touch with the Manager. I am hoping that the manger will come to the Federation meeting in June and tell us all about the centre so I expect to do a report in a future Journal.

That is all for this month, I hope you found it interesting.