



# RFA ASSOCIATION

## Chairman's Dit



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www.rfaaplymouth.org.uk

#### Solent Branch:

www.freewebs.com/rfaasolentbranch/

#### London Branch:

http://www.rfaa-london.org.uk/

### RFA Memorial

The RFA memorial was officially dedicated on 11th October in the presence of our patron HRH The Earl of Wessex KG GCVO ADC Commodore in Chief Royal Fleet Auxiliary. An otherwise dull day was brightened by the 140 guests who travelled to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas from all ends of the country and by the colourful presence of the Royal Marine Band.

In February 2008 Captain Tony Pitt and I visited the National Memorial Arboretum and thought we should have our own RFA memorial and that we might be able to raise a couple of thousand pounds to cover the cost. Approximately two years later Commodore Bill Wallworth asked if I would continue this earlier survey and produce a memorial befitting the RFA of the 21st century.

We formed a team of 4, 2 RFAA one RFA and one artist. Each of us produced a plan but the best idea came from artist Rob Langford who produced the design of a bow sitting on a compass base. We added the seats and Keith Rackham, a director of H. L. Perfitt Ltd., the memorial maker, added the back panel to give added stature and presence. Tom Adams kindly volunteered to research RFA history which was checked and double checked before the engraving went ahead. I am happy to say that we achieved much more than we originally set out to do. Wonderful RFA support and the generosity of a number of benefactors helped raise some £40K which we hope will not only cover the build costs but the ongoing maintenance and cleaning charges for the next few years.

HRH has said the Memorial is a fitting tribute to the RFA and RFAA, and that he felt honoured to be there and have the chance to meet so many past & present members of the Service.

### 2013 Annual Dinner and AGM

The 2013 AGM and the reunion dinner will now be held at the Liner Hotel in Liverpool on Friday 24th May. The reunion dinner was last held here in 2009 and the hotel was a popular venue then and hopefully will be again. The hotel have promised to give us the same excellent deal. The AGM calling notice and more details about the reunion dinner will be posted on our website. www.rfa-association.org.uk The date coincides with the Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary – see details below.

### Merchant Navy Medal Awards - 2012

Congratulations to this year's recipients, which include Commodore David Squire CBE, RFA Retd. Chairman, Merchant Navy Training Board for services to the Nautical Institute and Trinity House Merchant Navy Cadet Scholarship Scheme.

### Remembrance Sunday.

The Association was represented in London by Captain Pat Thompson who laid a wreath at the Cenotaph.



Captain Pat Thompson represented the Association at the Cenotaph along with Captain Alan Roach & David Bolton



The wreaths are laid by Commodore Bill Wallworth OBE RFA representing the RFA Service and by myself on behalf of the RFA Association. Other wreaths were laid by our patron the Earl of Wessex KG KCVO ADC, Mrs Jane Wallworth on behalf of the widows and by Vice Admiral Richards Chief of Defence Intelligence on behalf of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Photograph: Martin Greatbatch



Earl of Wessex's talks to the Memorial team. Captain Robin Lock OBE, Robert Langford, Keith Rackham, (Perfitts memorial maker), myself and Captain John Sail MNM MNI.



The 4 RFA standard bearers, Cadet David Rowe - RFA National Standard, Brian Taylor - National Association Standard, Gordon Monks - London Standard, Ray Jago - Plymouth Standard are between the twin ensigns of the RFA Service and RFA Association with the Royal Marine band behind.



In the Marquee after the Dedication Service.

Photographs: David Gerrard.

In Plymouth the RFA Contingent with the Branch Standard assembled at the Citadel and marched to the Naval War Memorial on the Hoe, lead by The Royal Marine Band, in time for the ceremony at 1100. A wreath was laid at the Memorial by Commodore Peter Lannin after which all the 100 or so veterans marched back to the Citadel.



Remembrance service in Plymouth. Richard Walker, John Redhead, Peter Lannin and Ray Jago

At Marchwood Captain Brian Waters laid a wreath on behalf of the RFAA at the Marchwood Falklands Memorial together with reps from COMRFA, the Sir Galahad Association, Marchwood Parish Council and the Army, following the service in St John's Church. Retired WO2 Jim Wright (SWO, RFA SIR GERAIN, 1982 and a Friend of the Solent Branch) played the pipes.

The Solent Branch of the RFAA much values it's connections with Marchwood and is grateful for the generosity of the community there in erecting and maintaining the memorial. It is believed the Marchwood Memorial is the only one raised specifically for the RFA by a local community."

### Battle of the Atlantic 70th Anniversary

The First Sea Lord and Liverpool City Council have given their full support to a series of events commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic (BOA 70). This will be the major National event in 2013 with Liverpool at its focus.

The event is timed to coincide with the late May Bank Holiday 24-27 May 2013 and includes: visiting ships being open to the Public, a charity Royal Marine Band Concert at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on Saturday 25 May, a Service of Remembrance at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral followed by a March/Fly Past on Sunday 26 May and a themed period event at St George's Hall, Liverpool on Monday 27 May, again with music from the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines. In addition to Royal Navy warships, vessels from the USA, Canada, Germany and Russia are anticipated and the First Sea Lord will be the senior host for Heads of Foreign Navies, Maritime Associations and relevant Trade Associations.

The National event will highlight the crucial importance of UK maritime trade and the leading part that Liverpool has played, and continues to play, in worldwide commerce as well as commemorating the heroism and sacrifice of the veterans of the convoy campaign in the Second World War.

Should anyone be interested in attending this event or the service in the Anglican Cathedral please could they contact me.

Frank Andrews

# FOR SERVICE, SEAFARERS AND FAMILIES

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

## Gordon Butterworth - Memorial Service



The memorial service for Captain Gordon Butterworth was held at St Andrews Church Plymouth on 19th October.

There was never a prospect that we would fill a Church as large as St Andrew's, but the many family members, friends & colleagues who gathered there today made a good attempt.

Following a ceremonial entry led by local RFAA & MNA Standards the Service, admirably conducted by the Reverend James Tabor, proceeded with moving prayers and the traditional rousing hymns.

Eulogies by Cdre William Walworth, Cdre Peter Lannin & Captain Tony Pitt recounted the different aspects of his distinguished career and later life in retirement.

These were followed by an amusing & touching family tribute from Gavin Butterworth with his memories of Grandpa Gordon.

Afterwards the Congregation, many of whom had travelled from afar, gathered over refreshments for personal recollections and the renewal of auld acquaintance.

*Captain David Gerrard*

### Father of the Fleet

Gordon was one of our most senior captains and was selected to succeed Captain Alec MacWilliam as Chief Marine Superintendent in 1981. A difficult time for the RFA - redundancies, the study into full-scale navalisation, funding difficulties and no cohesive training strategy.

The management of the RFA at the time was horizontal with all the levers and money in the hands of civil service management so that the professionals at times felt powerless to influence or implement the many necessary reforms to create a modern service. Gordon worked with the system in play with a mixture of pragmatism and Yorkshire determination, without doubt setting in motion the creation of the modern RFA Service we have today - a unique civilian shipping enterprise led and managed entirely by its seamen and engineers.

In 1982, in the second year in office, the Falkland's were invaded and at very short notice the RFA was pitch forked into a pivotal role of providing, maintaining and managing a huge logistical shipping effort which involved every man and boy in the Service. Gordon surrounded himself with a small highly professional team and led the Service brilliantly in dealing with all the preparation, support and advice to the



seagoers, and with the joys and sorrows that followed.

Following the Falklands there was renewed public interest and awareness of the RFA and its role resulting in a new pride in the Service, and a new identity. Gordon capitalized on this and continued to press for reforms in training, arming the ships and preparing the crews to man the emerging new classes of RFA. At his instigation the Service was granted a new badge formed of sea tritons and an anchor, created by the College of Heralds and approved by Her Majesty. Uniform was introduced, not previously issued to ratings, and the public began to see smartly turned out parties at national events in the capital, identified by their distinct blue uniform and mid-blue beret.

GB retired late in 1985 and was made a CBE (Mil) in the 1986 New Years Honours. He and his wife Phyllis retired to their lovely home of forty years in Saltash, and there he kept a close eye on his former charges through the splendid views he enjoyed down the Tamar toward the Hamoaze. The couple were probably the most famous in the RFA, Phyllis having shared many of Gordon's travels and adventures at sea, and the two remained in close touch with colleagues.

Gordon was a frequent and popular after dinner speaker at mess nights, and there was also always a warm welcome at Dunvegan (their Saltash home) for visiting officers, with a round of golf at St Mellion also a possibility. Very sadly Gordon was widowed after only five years of retirement, and this was a great personal blow, shared by his many friends. However he continued to inspire and interact with both serving and retired colleagues in the following years, becoming President of the RFA Association when that was formed in 2001.

Declining health obliged Gordon to retire finally in 2005, and he did so on the occasion of the appointment by Her Majesty of HRH the Earl Of Wessex as Patron of the Association on board RFA Fort George. He had earned the position of "Father of the Fleet" and he certainly made an outstanding contribution to the life and development of the RFA Service.

*Captain Rex Cooper*

## Trustee moves



*Richard Fernley in Namibia*

Two of the Association's trustees have moved abroad for a long period of time Richard Fernley has moved to Namibia for 16 months and Chris Locke to the Falkland Islands. Whilst it is possible to run the associations's affairs whilst abroad and we have succeeded in using a skype link once with Chris it is clearly better to meet face to face. Accordingly both Richard and Chris have put their trusteeship on hold until they return to UK. In their place Captain Ray Bennett has offered us his services which we have been delighted to accept.

Richard Fernley is working on a project for Namibian Ministry of Education, setting up a country wide supply system for textbooks.

Chris Locke is the Queens Harbour Master at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands

## RFA Bayleaf Final Voyage



Bayleaf was launched in 1981 and during her life was used to supply and refuel ships in the Falklands War in 1982, the Gulf War in 1991, and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. She sailed on her final voyage on 3rd August this year from Portsmouth to a scrap yard in Izmir, Turkey.

The Association has been given permission to make a limited number of copies of this picture painted by Jack Rigg when the ship returned from the Falklands in 1982. Copies are available for sale for just £10 which includes P & P.

If you would like a copy please contact Captain Pat Thompson at:-  
[deputy.chairman@rfa-association.org.uk](mailto:deputy.chairman@rfa-association.org.uk)

## CROSSED THE BAR

**David Marsden**, a former deck officer died on 18 August. His funeral was 3rd September at Hamble Church. The RFAA was well represented and there were probably about 150 - 200 people there in total. David was given a splendid send off and his coffin was draped with an RFA ensign.

**Ken Morrison**. Ken died suddenly on 1st September from an Aortic aneurysm (rupture of the Aorta). He was 58. The funeral was well attended - with Martin Tromen, Dave Barker, Russ Taylor, Duncan Garford and Terry Simmons. The crematorium in Hastings was full with standing room only. His partner, Carol, his children, Katie and Pete and Heather his ex-wife, were there. His son, Pete, wore his Dad's medals and spoke very movingly about his father. Everybody who sailed with Ken will remember him with affection as he was such a good shipmate and friend.

**John Cooper** a former motorman died 13th September and his funeral was held on 25 September. His coffin was draped with an RFA ensign

## Did you know that the RFA Association is open to all seafarers and retired members of the RFA?

Its purpose is to care for the RFA Community, their families, and their dependents, afloat and ashore.

- There is an annual dinner held at different venues around UK (in 2013 it will be Liverpool)
- We help keep both serving and ex seafarers in touch
- Maintain the history, culture and ethos of the service by retaining many RFA artefacts that are available to view and borrow
- Run our own website: [www.rfa-association.org.uk](http://www.rfa-association.org.uk)
- Have professional contacts, give advice in times of need which can help when afloat or ashore
- Answer questions that often arise in retirement
- Can assist in times of bereavement.

Will you consider joining and help us to continue our work?  
Membership is just £15 per year.

Request a joining form by emailing [dawn@rfa-association.org.uk](mailto:dawn@rfa-association.org.uk)  
telephone 01772 685427

or visit our website [www.rfa-association.org.uk](http://www.rfa-association.org.uk)  
The RFA Association for all RFA's family and friends.