

# R.N.A.

# NEWS.



## WIGSTON



## BRANCH



VOLUME 14. ISSUE 8.

AUGUST 2010.

### What Have We Learned in 2,065 Years?

“The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt. People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance.” – Cicero, 55 BC.

EVIDENTLY NOTHING.

Hello Shipmates and welcome to the August meeting.

I am sorry that I can't be with you today but nearly all of my time is now taken up with my wife Dawn who is ill in hospital.

I am going to try to keep your newsletter going and with luck and a fair following wind I shall succeed.

An opportunity has now presented itself for anyone in the ships company to write an editorial for the newsletter on a monthly basis whilst I am otherwise engaged – it's not hard – just a few words of interest will suffice.

If we have a volunteer, let me have your insert by post or computer and I will type it in. Thank you.

**David.**

### Social Notes

This years Trafalgar Night mess dinner will soon be upon us so I look forward to a good turn out for our Guest of Honour Captain John Hall. The cost has had to be increased this year but is still being subsidised to the tune of £8.20 for members and remember that you are not paying for wine so this still represents excellent value for money.

If there is sufficient interest I intend to organise a trip to Eastbourne next February for a few days from a Monday to Friday. Cost is likely to be £135 for half board.

**Mike**

### **Welfare Corner.**

Welcome Shipmates to the August meeting, it is good to see you all.

During the meeting we shall give you an update of all the Welfare matters.

Roy & Sheila.

### **Diary Dates for August 2010.**

- 8<sup>th</sup> Pearl Moran. Birthday.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Fred Findley. Birthday.
- 25<sup>th</sup> Irene Rolfe. Birthday.
- 26<sup>th</sup> Doris Tite. Anniversary.
- 31<sup>st</sup> Pat Hickling. Birthday.

Congratulations to you all. 'Have a nice day'

## **OPERATION “VIGOROUS” (MW 11) June 1942.**

“Vigorous” was the code name given to a supply convoy to the beleaguered island of Malta. This convoy was vitally important for the survival of the people of Malta and the Allied forces that were based there. (Royal Navy, Royal Air force and British Army) Malta was an extremely important base for our country mainly because the R.N and R.A.F attacked German supply convoys sailing from the South of France and Italy to North Africa where Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and the Africa Corps were in a tremendous battle with the Allies. If Malta had fallen to the Axis armed forces and they in turn had been victorious in North Africa, the conclusion of the war may have been different. It was said after the war that Malta, “Was the most bombed piece of land in World War two.”

The convoy “Vigorous” formed one part of two simultaneous convoys to Malta, the other being “Operation Harpoon.” (RNA News, July 2010 edition) and it was formed in the ports of Haifa and Port Said. The following Allied Merchant ships sailed in the convoy:

1. Ajax. 2. City of Edinburgh. 3. City of Lincoln. 4. Pretoria. 5. Elizabeth Bakke. 6. Bulkoil (Tanker)  
7. Potaro (Tanker) 8. Aagtekirk. 9. Bhutant. 10. City of Calcutta. 11. Rembrant.

The merchant ships were escorted by:

H.M.S. Newcastle. H.M.S. Birmingham. H.M.S. Cleopatra. H.M.S. Dido. H.M.S. Hermione. H.M.S. Euryalus. H.M.S. Arethusa. H.M.S. Coventry. H.M.S. Fortune. H.M.S. Griffin. H.M.S. Hotspur. H.M.S. Dulverton. H.M.S. Exmoor. H.M.S. Croome. H.M.S. Eridge. H.M.S. Airdale. H.M.S. Beaufort. H.M.S. Hurworth. H.M.S. Tetcott. H.M.S. Aldenham. H.M.S. Pakenham. H.M.S. Paladin. H.M.S. Inconstant. H.M.S. Jervis. H.M.S. Javelin. H.M.S. Kelvin. H.M.S. Hero. H.M.S. Hasty. H.M.S. Sikh. H.M.S. Zulu. H.M.S. Delphinium. H.M.S. Erica. H.M.S. Primula. H.M.S. Snapdragon. H.M.S. Boston Minesweeper) H.M.S. Seaham (Minesweeper) H.M.A.S. Norman. H.M.A.S. Napier. H.M.A.S. Nestor. H.M.A.S. Nizam.

M.T.B’s 259, 261, 262, 264.

Rescue ships. Antwerp and Malines.

H.M.S. Centurion.

Submarines. H.M.S. Proteus. H.M.S. Thorn. H.M.S. Taku. H.M.S. Thrasher. H.M.S. Porpoise. H.M.S. Una. H.M.S. Uproar. H.M.S. Ultimatum. H.M.S. Umbra.

As it was with the convoy “Harpoon” it is more than likely that Axis spies, fifth columnists, Nazi sympathisers and others, who were operating in the area where the convoy “Vigorous” was being formed, passed information regarding the convoy to the German and Italian authorities and thus warned them of the operation.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> June 1942, this large convoy sailed from the Alexandria, destination Malta, a journey of approximately 1,000 miles.

Almost immediately after the convoy got under way, heavy attacks by German and Italian aircraft, torpedo boats and submarines started over a period of more than four days. Also present was a very strong Italian Battle Fleet which joined in the assault on the convoy.

Eventually, it was decided that the convoy had little chance of ever reaching Malta intact and the best course of action was to return to Alexandria so, orders were given to that effect and the convoy reversed its course on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 1942.

During the attacks on the convoy, H.M.S Hermione, H.M.S. Hasty, H.M.S Airdale and H.M.A.S Nestor were sunk along with the Merchant ships, Aagtekirk - Bhutant and MTB 259.

H.M.S. Umbra sank the Italian ship Trento.

Without doubt, the fact that the convoys “Harpoon” and “Vigorous” had been unable to reach their destinations intact was a great disappointment to the Allied navy and Air force but, the odds were against them from the start mainly, because of spies reporting the formation of the convoy and the fact that the Axis Air force bases in the Mediterranean were so close to Malta that it allowed their planes and Stuka dive bombers to attack the convoys, and then, return to them in a very short space of time to reload and then, return to attack the convoys almost 24 hours a day, during the short hours of darkness in the month of June.

Once again, the bravery, courage and skill of the Allied Seamen, Soldiers and Airmen were without any doubt and they lived and fought to the highest traditions of their services and patriotism, in the fight against the cancer of Nazism.

---

### The Afghan footballer.

The Liverpool FC manager flies to Kabul to watch a young Afghani play football, is suitably impressed and arranges for him to come over.

Two weeks later Liverpool are 4-0 down to Chelsea with only 20 minutes left, the manager gives the young Afghani striker the nod and on he goes.

The lad is a sensation, scores 5 goals in 20 minutes and wins the game for Liverpool. The fans are delighted, the players and coaches are delighted and the media love the new star.

When the player comes off the pitch he phones his mum to tell her about his first day in English football.

“Hello mum, guess what?” he says “I played for 20 minutes today, we were 4-0 down but I scored 5 and we won. Everybody loves me, the fans, the media, they all love me.”

“Wonderful” says his mum, “Let me tell you about my day. Your father got shot in the street and robbed, your sister and I were ambushed, gang raped and beaten and your brother has joined a gang of looters, and all while you were having such a great time.”

The young lad is very upset. “What can I say mum, but I’m really sorry.”

“Sorry? Sorry?!!” says his mum, “It’s your bloody fault we came to Liverpool in the first place!”

---

A man was riding his Harley along a Californian beach when suddenly the sky clouded over his head... In a booming voice, the Lord said, “Because you have tried to be faithful to me in all ways, I will grant you one wish.”

The biker pulled over and said, “Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can ride over any time I want.”

The Lord said, “Your request is materialistic. Think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking; the supports required to reach the bottom of the Pacific and the concrete and steel it would take! I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that could possibly help mankind.”

The biker thought about it for a long time... Finally, he said, “Lord, I wish that I, and all men, could understand our wives; I want to know how she feels inside, what she thinking, why she cries, what she means when she says nothing’s wrong, and how I can make a woman truly happy.”

The lord replied, “You want two lanes or four on that bridge?”

---

*The Privilege according to the Royal Navy of remaining seated while drinking the Sovereign's health is of a long standing but obscure in origin. There are three popular beliefs about this*

- a. that King Charles II when onboard the Royal Charles bumped his head on rising to reply to the toast;*
- b. that King George IV when Regent dining onboard one of HM Ships said, as the officers rose to drink the King's health "Gentlemen, pray be seated, your loyalty is above suspicion";*
- c. that King William IV while Duke of Clarence (Lord High Admiral) bumped his head as he stood up at dinner on one of HM Ships.*

*In most of the Sail of the Line it was almost impossible to stand upright between decks except between the deck-beams; furthermore, in ships having a pronounced 'thumble-home' (i.e. steeply sloping sides) anyone seated closer to the ship's side would find it difficult to stand at all.*

**The privilege of remaining seated does not extend to naval messes or shore, nor afloat when the National Anthem is played.** *If no one takes wine for the loyal toast, the mess president has his glass filled at the expense of the mess so that, through him, all the members of the mess do drink the Sovereigns health.*

*In 1966, the Queen extended the privilege to Chief and Petty Officers of the Royal Navy.*

This article was in the Southern Ontario RNA newsletter and kind permission was given to include it in our RNA newsletter.

A mechanic was removing a cylinder head from the engine of a Harley Davidson motorcycle when he spotted a well known cardiologist in his shop. The cardiologist was there waiting for the service manager to come and take a look at his bike when the mechanic shouted across the garage, "Hey Doc, want to take a look at this?" The cardiologist, a bit surprised, walked over to where the mechanic was working on the motorcycle.

The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands with a rag and asked, "So Doc, look at this engine. I open its heart, take the valves out, repair any damage, and then put them back in, and when I finish, it works just like new.

So how come I earn £29,675 a year and you get the really big pay packet (£1,695,759) when you and I are doing basically the same work?"

The cardiologist paused, smiled and leaned over, then whispered to the mechanic:

"Try doing it with the engine running."

