

ROYAL NAVAL COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

PATRON; VICE ADMIRAL SIR PATRICK BAYLY KBE CB DSC\*\*

President; Rt.Hon. The Earl Nelson ... Vice President; Rear Admiral E.F.Gueritz CB OBE DSC\*

Hon. Vice Presidents; Mr. N. Draper DSC  
Mr. G. Fagence

Chairman Mr.K.Oakley

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 84 DECEMBER 1996

N.B. For the time being please channel all secretarial correspondence  
through the Hon. Treasurer Ron Lawrence, 18, Crane Drive, Verwood, Dorset.

Shipmates,

It is with deep regret that I have to open this letter on a particularly sad note, but many of you will be unaware that our Hon. Secretary, George Wilson has recently died. Unfortunately with our membership being so widespread, the Newsletter is our sole means of communication except locally, and I hope you will be understanding and forgive any unavoidable delay in letting you know.

We convey our heartfelt love and sympathy to Jean and her family, and wish them to know that they have our support and prayers at this time.

It was George's express wish that he should be allowed to "Cross the bar" quietly and without ceremonial, and so it was. Twenty three of our members and their wives attended the funeral service of our shipmate who stood so high in our regard and affection. Donations as a tribute to his memory may be sent to Mr. Charles Rutt at The Old Farm House, Hinton Martell, Wimborne Dorset. BH21 7HE for either the RNCA or the British Lung Foundation.

George was a pivot of the Association and a staunch friend, quite dedicated in his work as our secretary, he carried out so conscientiously despite his long and taxing illness. We owe him a considerable debt of gratitude.

One of our members has written the following as his own tribute to George which expresses the feelings of us all.

"George was one of nature's gentlemen. He was indeed a gentle man with a rare sense of humour which was much appreciated.

His dedication and professionalism to the Association was outwardly manifested by the quarterly Newsletters which were eagerly awaited and avidly read.

His obvious courage in the face of his adversity is an example to us all and those of us who were associated with him have benefited from the experience.

George will be sadly missed"

-----

So many of you have written or telephoned expressing your own personal condolences that I am sure you will understand that Jean is unable to reply individually

contd:

and she has asked that you accept her grateful thanks for the wonderful support you have given her, through the medium of this Newsletter.

-----

I am conscious that a number of members will have submitted items of interest for inclusion in this issue, but at the time of "Going to press" I have not had access to this material, and for the same reason you will understand this letter is in shortened form. Your Committee were concerned to keep up the tradition of maintaining our link with members at this very special season of the year, so its "Make do and mend". However, to use a good old BBC term, we hope to resume normal service as soon as possible.

-----

### REUNIONS

The Association Annual Reunion and A.G.M. will take place at the Nautical Club Birmingham, followed by the Church Parade at St. Augustine's Church over the weekend of Sat/Sun. 10th/11th May 1997. Those members requiring hotel accommodation will like to know that the proprietor of the New Norfolk Hotel, 267, Hagley Road, Egbaston, Birmingham, has informed us that he is able to offer B&B at £17.50 per person and an evening meal at reasonable terms if required. Some of our members have used this hotel regularly previously and it comes highly commended. It also has the merit of being close to the church.

-----

### HAYLING ISLAND

This now annual event was again voted highly, even more members attending this year. Our roving photographer has captured a bunch of the lads and lasses. See picture on later page.

-----

### DOWN IN THE FOREST ??

A mini reunion of former B.5 members was held over the Trafalgar weekend at a secluded hotel deep in the New Forest - no comments please!! Once again we have a photo. - perhaps captured on one of those telescopic lenses formerly used on Fergie and Di ? Picture on later page. If this continues we must consider starting a Page 3 !! Seriously though, its great to hear that these social gatherings are taking place, and on this occasion two prospective new members resulted. Well done lads.

-----

### BESIDE THE SEASIDE

Ken Barry asks me to remind those concerned that his local annual reunion will take place at the Southend-on-Sea R.N.A. East Street on 15th March 97 Those interested should contact Christine Enright, 2 Whitewaits, Harlow, Essex CM20 3LJ or telephone 01279 415002.

-----

### NEW MEMBERS

We have appointed no new members since the last Newsletter

### Hythe Memorial

The Association has purchased a seat to be erected close to our Memorial stone in the pleasant Waterfront Gardens at Hythe. This is being done in conjunction with the Local Authority who will carry out the work and affix a suitably inscribed brass plate. The seat will be dedicated at the annual memorial service which will take place next year on Sunday 8th June. Details will follow in a later Newsletter.. The cost will be in the region of £350.00 and donations towards this will be gratefully received. Your Committee wish to convey their thanks to those who have already kindly contributed.

-----

### Local Co-ordinators

This question has been raised on several previous occasions unfortunately with little or no response, but I am pleased to say that I have been recently reminded how valuable this can be. Len Ward, who has from outset been prepared to help in this way was a wonderfull help to me in passing on the sad news of George to members on his "patch" I have had a further volunteer from Devon. Ken Boyce has offered to help. Come on shipmates, it is not an arduous job, but it would help us tremendously if we had an address in say six or eight areas throughout the country to pass on urgent information locally. By the same token, and equally importantly, the same network should be able to give us feed back of members taken ill or in need of help. In those immortal words so familiar to us all - **LETS BE AVIN YOU**

-----

### Mystery Solved

We are all familiar with the song "Who is Sylvia" ? but until recently no answers were forthcoming. Now at last we know - the poor lass has married our Billy Graham !! A little belatedly we send our congratulations and very best wishes to them both.

-----

### Thanks For The Memory

Claudē and Bette Beavis recently celebrated their Golden Wedding and they have asked me to say how very much they appreciated the many warm messages of good wishes they received from our members.

-----

### Subs.

With my other hat on - a reminder please that Subs. are due on 1st MAY next year when they increase to £7.00, and incidentally shipmates we still have too many defaulters for this time of the year on the current dues. So if your ears are burning wish the poor old treasurer a Happy Christmas and **PAY UP !!**

We rely on the income from subs. to pay for the Newsletter



Author Seeks Help

David Files, a former post war Bunting tosser, has written seeking help with a book he is writing entitled "Operation Overlord and Neptune, The Ships and Men, 50 Years On" . He wants information on any ship or Naval unit involved and the men who served in them together with any interesting yarns of their experiences then and what has happened to them since. David would be grateful to hear from any of our members prepared to offer this material. Write to him at Myfanwy, 171, Raedwald Drive, Moreton Hall, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 7DH

-----

Crossed The Bar

Shortly after our last Newsletter we sadly learned that "Digger" Mitchell had died. The enthusiastic New Zealander with the cheerful grin will be missed by many of us that knew him during the war years when he served Beach Signals well from Dieppe to the "Med" and Normandy in my own section B.6. Safe Haven "Digger"

-----

Slops

It has been requested that we should publish an up to date list of Slops available. I regret that space does not permit in this issue, but a note has been made for next time.

Walter Brown tells me that he is able to obtain White "T" shirts and Polo shirts, overprinted with the Association logo. The cost will be £9.00 and £12.00 respectively including postage. Advise chest size when ordering from pigeon to barrel !

-----

Picture Parade

On the following pages you will find a series of photographs including some with an Oriental theme (clean of course) submitted by our foreign correspondent in Romsey. He hopes these will be of some nostalgic interest to those members who at one time were issued with "Bombay Bloomers" !! If you like the idea, we could perhaps extend the feature to other foreign parts visited by our heroes in days of yore - let us know.

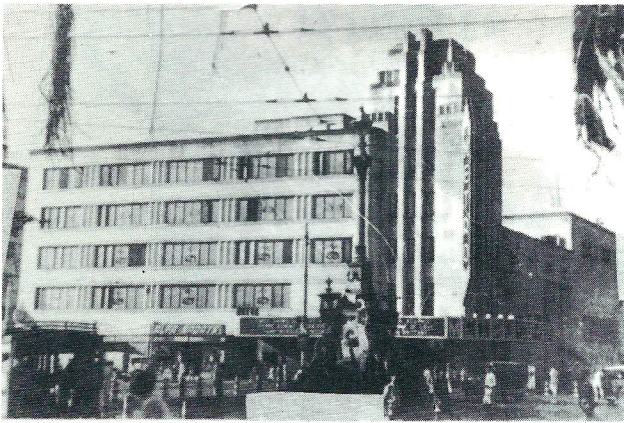
-----

Well shipmates "Thats your lot" on this occasion, anyway the steam is rising from my typewriter. Your Committee wish every one of you the Blessings and Peace of Christmas and good health and fortune in the New Year.

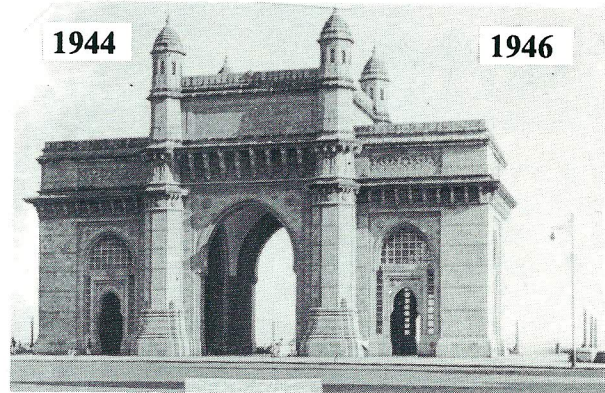
God Bless - be good to one another.



## BOMBAY 1944

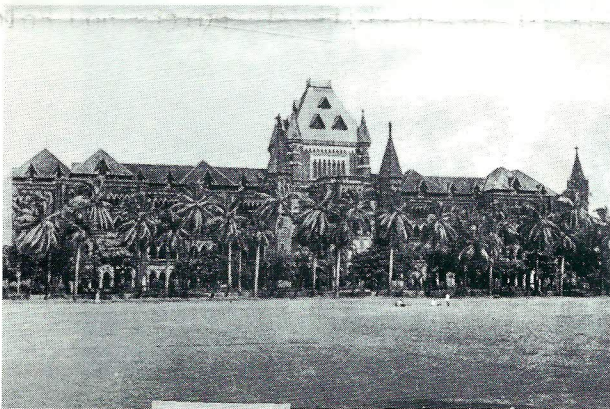


GATEWAY



ESPLANADE

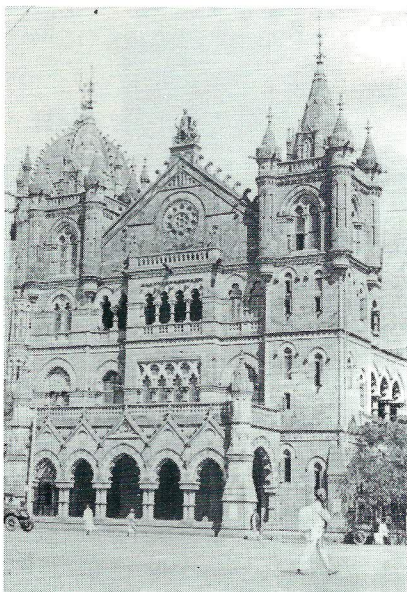
OVAL



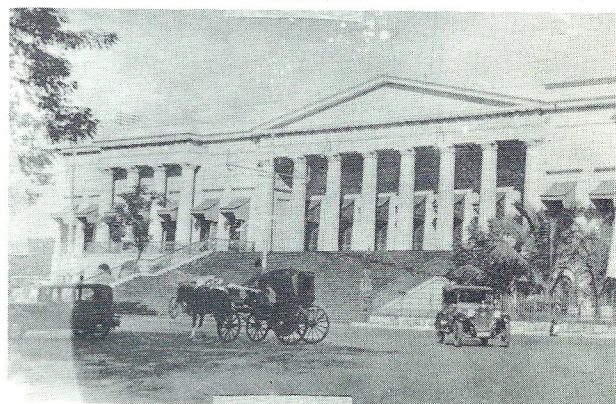
CAGES



YMCA

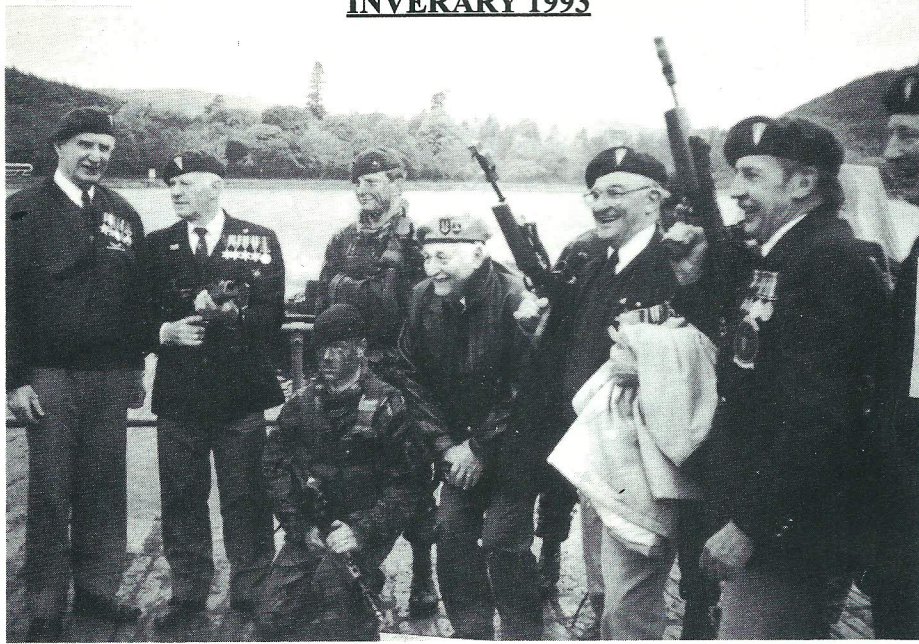


VICTORIA STATION





INVERARY 1993



**MILL RYTHE**

**HAYLING ISLAND 1996**



**F. CROOK - J. POLWIN - J. EVA - R. CHILDS - C. BEAVIS**





# BEACHHEAD COMMANDOS

A. CECIL HAMPSHIRE

Spearheading the British assault waves in every Allied invasion landing during the Second World War were parties of khaki-clad naval officers and ratings, whose principal tasks were to secure the beachhead in the teeth of enemy defensive fire and direct and control the arrival of successive waves of landing craft bringing ashore the main body of the fighting troops and their equipment. Above the famous Combined Operations badge on the shoulders of their battledress they wore a special flash which bore the words 'RN Commando', a distinction for which they were fully qualified.

Not only were they required to control the invasion beaches and, until the landings were assured, remain on them for days on end with little rest or food and under enemy bombing and shelling, their only protection a slit trench, they were also expected to undertake a variety of roles unrelated to that for which they had been specially trained. Their work was considered by Force Commanders to be 'the most important and dangerous in any landing'.

Royal Navy Commandos took part in combined operations in Madagascar, at Dieppe, in North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, Anzio, northern Italy and the Adriatic, the steaming, disease-ridden *chaungs* on the Arakan coast of Burma, and finally in Normandy itself and beyond up to the time of the collapse of the Third Reich.

Few know even that Royal Naval Commandos existed, so that this is their previously untold story. Much of it, which had to be wrung out of its former members, is related in their own words combining a fascinating blend of outstanding courage, humour and, occasionally, tragedy and disaster. It is an overdue postscript to the history of the Royal Navy in World War II.

*Illustrated*

Publication 13 June 1983

## HMS ARMADILLO CAMP DANCE



RAMERY JAN 1945  
BAY OF BENGAL

PAGE 20

DAILY MIRROR, Thursday, May 11, 1972

## BOOKS by ALEXANDER MUIR

**T**HE British Army has had some strange allies, but none more weird than those which came unsolicited to its aid in an island battle. Hundreds of giant crocodiles.

More than 1,000 Japanese soldiers were trapped by British troops in a mangrove swamp on Ramree, in the Bay of Bengal, in February, 1945.

The din of battle and the smell of blood attracted every salt-water crocodile from miles around.

Soon after nightfall, the crocs moved in at once, attacking the dead, the wounded and the healthy, with the fine impartiality of the most notorious man-eater of the animal world.

The British, waiting for dawn to renew their attack, chilled in the tropical night as they listened to the screams of dying men. In the morning, they found only twenty Japanese survivors.

**When  
crocs  
went  
V3  
to war**  
MAY 1946

are the main characters by Joy ("Born Free") A d a m s o n (Collins, £2.75).

## Attack

This horror is "the greatest mass attack on man by any large animal on record," says zoologist Gerald Wood in his fascinating, almost hypnotic anecdote-stuffed book, "The Guinness Book of Animal Facts and Feats" (Guinness Superlatives Ltd., illustrated, £2.95).

Two other admirable wild-life books just published are "Operation Rhino" by John Gordon Davis (Michael Joseph, £2.50), and "Pippa's Challenge," in which a cheetah and her children

Two new novels can be recommended to those who like who-dun-its but are tired of the modern mode. Both are set in 18th-century England, which comes to colourful life — "The Village of Rogues," by Jeremy Sturrock (Macmillan, £1.60), and "The Dark Forest," by Raymond Foxall (Robert Hale, £1.90).

"Aircraft, Aircraft," by John W. R. Taylor (Hamlyn, £1.05), is a welcome new edition of an authoritative story of aviation from earliest times. The illustrations include rare photographs and old engravings.

**PAPERBACK PARADE**



## LOST AND FOUND

Our Chairman, Ken Oakley spotted this happy newspaper report of a family reunion concerning RNCA member Vic Jobber of "E" Party - a nice story for this time of the year - we wish you and your sisters an especially Happy Christmas Vic.

SHROPSHIRE STAR MONI

# Sisters reunited with 'lost' brother

Two Shropshire sisters have met up with the brother they have not seen for more than 30 years in an emotional reunion after months of research to find him.

Mrs Muriel Price, of Woodside Road, Ketley, and her sister Mrs Una Gough, of Broseley, were desperate to find out what had happened to their long lost brother Victor Jobber, 76.

His niece, Mrs Maureen Perks, of Hampton Hill, Wellington, said the family had tried everything, including trawling telephone directories and going to the Salvation Army for help.

The family had lost touch when Mr Jobber left the area,

she said.

"The last we knew was that he was in Liverpool but we had no luck tracing him, then we applied to the National Statistics Bureau," Maureen said.

"It took several months before they came up with information that he was alive but would not give the whereabouts. I telephoned them and they said my mother should write a letter and they would send it on to my uncle and then it would be up to him if he wanted to get back to us."

Victor immediately replied from his home in Runcorn, Cheshire, and last week the family travelled up and brought him back home to Shropshire to stay with them.



Together again...Victor Jobber with Muriel Price, left and Una Gough



Down in the Forest - B.5 Photo.

Back row L to R Bernard Stone, Les Seldon,

Ron Wallbank.

Front row --Barbara Stone, Ray Evans DSC

Pat Wallbank, Malcolm Robinson