



THE DASH

The Newsletter Of The Channel Dash Association



Volume 1 Issue 4

www.channeldash.org

February 2009.

Welcome to the fourth issue of 'THE DASH'. In this issue we are saddened to inform you of the passing of two of our Vice Presidents since the previous edition of 'The Dash' was distributed. The first, Don Bunce, passed away in hospital following a long illness. He 'crossed the bar' on 29 September 2008. On 1 November 2008, Les Sayer also 'Crossed the Bar'. Les had been in hospital just prior to his death and, following consultation with the Doctors and his wife Val, Les decided he would like to return home to spend whatever time he had left. Both Don and Les will be sorely missed for their determination to see the Channel Dash Association succeed, their invaluable contribution to our facts database of the events of 12 February 1942 and their wonderful sense of humour. **Rest in Peace Shipmates.** Also in this issue we are pleased to update members of our progress towards achieving Charitable Status and some forthcoming events during FN100—the Centenary Year and the Association's involvement. The Fundraising Dinner at the former Royal Naval College, Greenwich and the Channel Dash Memorial. Statue.

The new Fleet Air Arm Association—Kent Branch, based at Ramsgate have secured a number of places for a visit to HMS Illustrious on Sunday 10th May whilst she is visiting the Thames at Greenwich. A number of places have been made available to the Channel Dash Association to join with them (continued on page 4)

At a Special General Meeting called on 10 November 2008 the members present voted unanimously to amend the Channel Dash Association's Name and Constitution. This was done in order to better improve our application for Registered Charity Status. The Association now has its formal name 'Channel Dash Memorial Trust' with the name Channel Dash Association being our common, or working name. application to the Charity Commission has been made however, due to forthcoming amendments to the 'Act' we do not expect to become a registered charity until sometime this Summer. As work was due to commence on the Channel Dash Memorial it was considered important by the Committee that we should register the Trust with Companies House as a private limited company. This has now

been undertaken and the Channel Dash Association is now incorporated under the Companies Act 1985 as a private company and the company is limited. The Company's name is the **CHANNEL DASH MEMORIAL TRUST** and our Company Number is **6803186**.

The Fly Navy 100 Team published and distributed Edition 1 of its newsletter weeks ago and all members should have received either a hard copy edition or an email with a pdf version attached. The second edition of the Fly Navy 100 Newsletter has now been published and the CDA have arranged that all members will receive a printed copy direct to their home address. The next edition mentions a couple of forthcoming CDA events and there is an interesting article about the Fairey Swordfish.

STOP PRESS — STOP PRESS — STOP PRESS

The Trust has received confirmation from HM Revenue & Customs that our application to be registered as a charity for tax purposes has been accepted under their reference **XT14965** with effect from 26 February 2007. This means that we now qualify for Gift Aid status and that we can claim 28p for every £1 donated to the Trust. We also believe that because of the structure of the Trust, members annual subscriptions may also qualify for gift aid. Once this matter is confirmed the Trust Treasurer will be sending out Gift Aid Consent Forms to each member which, we hope you will consider completing and returning so that we can then submit a claim through the Tax Return scheme. The trust can only claim back gift aid from donations made by individuals who pay an annual amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax in each tax year at least equal to the tax that the Trust will claim from HM Revenue & Customs on any Gift Aid donation.

giftaid it

Remembrance Memorial Service
St. George The Martyr Church,
Thursday 12th February 2009.

The Channel Dash Association held its annual Remembrance Service on 12 February 2009, at St George the Martyr Church, Ramsgate. The service commenced at 12.15hrs and was led by the CDA Chaplain, Reverend Peter Adams. In excess of forty members attended the service along with the Mayors of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs & St Peter's. Standards and representatives of other Veterans Associations whose members had took part in 'Operation Fuller' also attended. The Service concluded at 12.45hrs, the precise recorded time that the last of the Swordfish aircraft was seen

to explode and crash into the sea. Following the short service, Reverend Peter Adams led the congregation out to Ramsgate War Memorial immediately in front of the church main entrance, for a wreath laying ceremony. A minutes silence was observed at the War Memorial with the Last Post played by Mr Alec Kirkland of Birchington Silver Band. During the Silence CDA member Miss Patricia Knox-Duignan gave 'The Exhortation and following Reveille Member Eric May recited the Kohima Epigram. The Standards of the Veterans Associations were lowered in salute during the silence. A wreath was laid on behalf of the CDA by Chairman, Peter Nixon with further wreaths laid by Councillor John

Kirby, Chairman of Thanet District Council, Councillor Brian Sullivan, Mayor of Margate, Councillor David Lawson, Broadstairs & St Peter's and Councillor Steve Ward deputising for the Mayor of Ramsgate. Wreaths were also laid by the east Kent Submariners Association, Royal Air Force Association and the Lest We Forget Associa-

escorted the party out into the Dover Straits. Following both services CDA members, Civic Dignitaries and veterans retired to Ramsgate RNA where a tot of Rum was available for a Toast to 'The Channel Dash Heroes'. A very welcome mug of hot soup was available thanks to Mrs Williams. The Channel Dash Association are very grateful to Estuary Services Ltd for the ex-

clusive use of the Pilot Cutter and crew, who were the Operations Manager Mr Andrew Thompson and Mr Mark Stamford. We are also very grateful to St Georges Church for a very fine service and Ramsgate RNA for the use once again of their club premises for the occasion. afterwards

St George The Martyr Church, Ramsgate



tion. Estuary Services Ltd once again very generously made a Pilot Cutter available to the CDA. The boat departed Ramsgate Harbour and proceeded into the Dover Straits where the CDA Vice Chairman, Mike Foot led 8 CDA members in a Memorial Service and Mrs Laura Wyness read the 23rd Psalm. The 'Offshore Service' coincided with the service at St Georges Church. Following the service Mr Sid Wyness recited the Exhortation and the Kohima Epigram and the Vice Chairman laid a wreath on the waters of the Dover Straits. Ramsgate Royal Naval Association Standard carried by Mr Les Smith



HONOURING BRITAIN'S ARMED FORCES,
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Armed Forces Day
27 June 2009

Members may have recently seen on television the announcement that Veterans Day, which was celebrated on 27th June each year will now be replaced by the 'Armed Forces Day' which will celebrate both serving and former members of the Armed Forces. The date will remain that used previously as Veterans Day. The Historic Dockyard Chatham will play host to the (continued on page 4)

Channel Dash Memorial Dinner

18 MARCH 2009

In The Painted Hall of the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich

In Support of the Channel Dash Memorial Appeal.

By kind permission of the Second Sea Lord.

A Very Special Opportunity to be Part of an Evening of History and Ceremony

The programme for the evening is now confirmed for this superb and very unique occasion. It will follow the custom and practice of a Royal Naval Mess Dinner in the time honoured tradition of this historic venue. A cocktail reception drink will be served in the Queen Mary Ante Room from 1900, at 1935 the Ceremonial Corps of drums from the Royal Hospital School at Holbrook will Beat Retreat before leading guests through to Chalk Walk to dinner in the Painted Hall. In the Painted Hall a traditional 3 course meal especially designed for this event by Executive Head Chef Colin Woolvern will be served accompanied by wines and followed by coffee and traditional passing of the port. During the course of the meal guests will be entertained by the Band of The Royal Hospital School, there will be readings relating to the Channel Dash; Camille Sims will perform a song she had especially written for the occasion, The Guard, Band and Corps of Drums will perform a moving Sunset Ceremony and the dinner will conclude with Toasts, a short speech and in true Naval Mess Dinner Tradition the evening will finish with a few 'Mess Games' in support of the memorial. Carriages will be at 2300.

There are a very limited number of tickets left for this spectacular evening and members wishing to attend must order their tickets before 17.00hrs Monday 9 March 2009. The ticket hotline numbers are: 0207 7471185 or 01843 860242. alternatively email: events@channeldash.org or chairman@channeldash.org

(continued from page 1) first ever Armed Forces Day and the event promises to be very exciting. Anyone having visited Chatham for previous Veterans Day parades will know that it is a fantastic day out for the whole family with lots to do and see. The Channel Dash Association had been invited to take part in the Veterans Day celebrations for 2009 this invitation still stands although now we will be part of the new celebrations. It is intended that the CDA will set up a stand from which we will both promote the Association and our aims and objectives and also hopefully use the occasion to recruit many new members. If you would like to either attend the celebrations as a Channel Dash member or as a volunteer helping to staff our stand and help promote your Association please contact any of your committee using the website 'Contacts Page' or telephone the Chairman on 01843 860242.

Coastal Forces

The Motor Torpedo Boats.

'A personal account by CDA

Vice Chairman Reg Mitchell'

A Telegraphist on MTB '48'

"About two weeks previous to the escape through the Channel of the German Battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau accompanied by the Heavy Cruiser Prinz Eugen we were sent over to the French coast with the understanding that *"a very important and large target is expected"*. Although we had been reinforced at Dover by a flotilla of British built, brand new, faster and more heavily armed boats of a Dutch Flotilla, there was a great shortage of serviceable boats, a result of which was that we on MTB 48 were going out every night, sometimes with one or two other boats, mostly it was the old J.S. White boats, 42, 44, 45 and 48. It was expected that the 'target' would come through the Dover Straits at night under the cover of darkness

however, the German's had anticipated that we would expect this to be the case and instead timed their 'Dash' through the Straits during daylight. When it was realised that the German fleet were actually approaching the Dover Straits and all hell broke loose the only serviceable boats were in Ferry Dock, Dover. Of the six boats available only five 'crash started' and departed Dover Harbour flat out. On the way over, the poor devils in the old Swordfish bi-planes they sent out passed overhead just as we came into sight of the enemy. It was at this juncture that my radio went u/s, and having reported it to the Skipper, was told to come up top and 'grab a rifle or something'. It was a vile day in early February 1942, wind force 5-6 (we were not supposed to fire torpedoes above force 3 and not even supposed to be at sea above (cont on page 4)

(continued from page 1) for the visit. As HMS Illustrious will be moored on a buoy midstream, personnel will have to be ferried out and board using the ships boarding ladder. Whilst this shouldn't be very difficult it is something that members should keep in mind when requesting to join the tour. The tour is from 1500 to 1600 hrs in single group of 25 people. CDA members wishing to apply to join the visit should contact the Chairman on 01843 860242 or email chairman@channeldash.org Depending on the actual number of places allocated to the CDA and numbers wishing to be considered, places will be allocated by a draw and the successful members contacted to confirm details. It is hoped that if sufficient members from both the CDA and FAAA combined are from the Thanet area that it may be possible to provide a mini coach. If there is sufficient interest it may be possible to travel early and spend some time in the Greenwich area where it is expected there will be various shore based activities going on based on Fly Navy 100—the Centenary Year.

At the February meeting of the CDA Committee it was agreed to introduce an Honorary Life Member Scheme. A member could be recommended for Life Membership for outstanding contribution to the Association. We are pleased to announce that the Committee have agreed our first Life Member. Details will follow after it is agreed how recipients of the Award should be recognised.

(continued from page 3) Force 5, as small flat bottomed planing boats could easily break their backs. When I arrived up on deck, what a sight met my eyes. A rough choppy day, grey and scudding clouds, bouncing about on 5 - 6 feet high waves. Not much for a ship, but to us, heavy weather. On the horizon, about five miles away, two filthy great Battleships and a Heavy Cruiser with around eight Destroyer's and maybe another ten smaller, Minesweeper's and

design, made of sticks and canvas, most of the cannon shells went straight through, but one by one they were all shot down without getting near the Battleships. We had a couple of ME109's come down and buzzed us, but didn't fire, I could plainly see the pilots face under the canopy grinning at us, he was only about 40 feet up, but they didn't fire either, they obviously all thought we were pathetic and insignificant, which we were, our cockle-shells were only intended to creep up on something in a calm sea at



Painting by the Author Reg Mitchell of the MTB's in action during the Channel Dash.

such like and, probably

another dozen large E Boats, one of which was passing and blocking our way and was about fifty yards away, we could see them all sitting there on their guns which, were pointing at us but they were not firing them.

Overhead, were many aircraft, nearly all of them with Swastikas on, and half a dozen antique British biplanes (Swordfish). The Messerschmitt were queuing up to get a shot at them, they were coming up on them with wheels and flaps down, revving their engines to save stalling, all this to get a longer burst in at them. Mind you, the Swordfish being WWI

night, probably only doing about eight

knots, not Battleships doing thirty-four knots in a rough sea in broad daylight. So we fired our torpedoes at maximum range with no result, and at this juncture a large Waterspout appeared close to us, then another and another, it was a German Destroyer tearing up on us, so we turned around and put our feet down to get out of it, he following, so we sailed straight over the Goodwin Sands, knowing he couldn't follow us as it was too shallow."

These actions are not in Chronological order, I can't remember that much after fifty years, but I do remember the date of the 'Channel Dash' as it was five days before my 19th birthday.