



THE H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION

(Official Website www.hmshood.com)

Message from the Chairman

Shipmates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with regret I have to report two of our veterans have crossed the bar since the last Newsletter was printed. Ken (Nobby) Clark died on 20th October and Ron Paterson died on 16th December. Both were 93 years old and had been members and officials since the Association was formed in 1975, Nobby as Treasurer and Ron as Chaplain. Due to declining health they retired from their official positions in 2007 and 2008 respectively. Ron had conducted all our Memorial Services, initially at St. Ann's in the Naval Dockyard and latterly at St. George's in addition to our Remembrance Services at Portsmouth Naval War Memorial. They will both be sadly missed.

Personally I can never praise enough the work undertaken by Nobby as Treasurer. His responsibilities included all membership matters; record keeping; producing and distributing the newsletter; purchasing and selling the slops; and, keeping the financial accounts. In recognition of the dedication to his duties, Nobby was elected as a Vice President at last year's AGM. I know how much work was involved as a result of taking over his duties for a total of three years after his fire and during his illnesses. On these occasions, I had no spare time left to do anything else.

This year we have decided to hold a 'get together' at the National Memorial Arboretum. This location may be more convenient for members living in the Midlands and North than our Dinner in Portsmouth. The event will be held in part with the HMS Neptune Association on Friday 9th July at 1100, as there was no date available in July for a dedicated Hood event. It is hoped John Green, our Chaplain, will be available to conduct a joint service at 1200 in the vicinity of the memorials. A buffet lunch will be provided. Please make every effort to attend. If the occasion is well supported, we may make this an annual event.

Due to increasing costs, the Committee has reluctantly decided to increase the membership fee to £7.50 when paid by cheque or bank standing order and £8.00 when paid by PayPals for each member living in the UK. For members living abroad the fee will be £12.00 paid in sterling (cash or bankers cheque) and £12.50 when paid by PayPals. We stress the fee must be paid in sterling as the bank charges £10 for cashing each cheque in foreign currency. Please note, these new fees take effect from the renewal for 2010/11, which commences on 1st May.

Included with this Newsletter is an application form for tickets for our Reunion Dinner on 22nd May. We would like as many as possible of the members and their friends to attend. The numbers have been falling in recent years

When I spoke to the Royal Maritime Club recently I was advised there were no single rooms and only three double rooms left for the night of our Reunion. This has been caused by a large booking of foreign naval personnel standing-by the construction of their vessel in the Dockyard. For those who haven't yet booked rooms, recommended hotels nearby are the Holiday Inn Express, The Plaza, Gunwharf Quays (02392 894240) and the Ibis Hotel, Winston Churchill Avenue in the City Centre (02392 640000).

At the last count we had 222 members, of which 22 live abroad. The membership includes 12 veterans and 12 veteran's widows. 27 new members have joined so far in this membership year.

God bless you all,
Peter Heys

Important Events

- **2010 Boldre Church Service:** 1100 on Sunday 16th May
- **2010 AGM/Reunion Dinner:** 1600/1830 on Saturday 22nd May at Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth.
- **2010 Memorial Service:** 1145 on Sunday 23rd May at St George's Church, Portsmouth.
- **2010 Hood Event:** 1100 on Friday 9th July at National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs.
- **2010 Remembrance Service:** 1045 on 11th November at Portsmouth Naval War Memorial.
- **2011 AGM/Reunion Dinner:** Saturday 21st May at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth.

Reverend Ronald Paterson MBE – Lieutenant Commander Royal Navy 1916 - 2009

Ron Paterson our Association Padre for many years died on 16 December 2009 aged 93 after a long illness. He had a long and distinguished Royal Naval career joining as a boy seaman in 1932 with his first ship being HMS Hood 1933 to 1936. There were some events during that commission, the unfortunate collision with H M S Renown and the Review of the Fleet at Spithead in honour of King George V Silver Jubilee in July 1935. He later served in HMS Neptune. As an officer in World War 2 he served in HM Ships Sandwich, Nelson and commanded Landing Craft Gun 831. During the Normandy landings he was staff officer to the Beach Commander on Juno Beach where he spent 5 weeks living in a German pillbox until Cherbourg was captured. In August 1945 he was in the Far East for the war against Japan and was placed in charge of 600 American troops on his ship in Manila and saw at first hand the appalling physical condition to which they had been reduced during the 3 years in Japanese captivity. It was then that he resolved to devote the remainder of his life to the cause of peace, justice and reconciliation.

After the war he commanded HMS Albacore, a minesweeper engaged in clearing mines and wrecks in the Mediterranean. In 1955 he was awarded the MBE for his work as Assistant Drafting Officer at Chatham. Ron left the Royal Navy in 1958 and studied for the Ministry and was Ordained Deacon in 1959.

From 1962 to 1985 Ron was the Vicar at Saint Barnabas, Swanmore where his later years were overshadowed by three bereavements, he was twice a widower and his younger son died at the age of 25. Ron retired in 1985 at the age of 69 and lived for the remainder of his life in Bishops Waltham. It was here in Saint Peter's church that the service of Thanksgiving for his life was held on 23 December 2009.

Chairman Peter Heys, Veterans Keith Evans and Alec Kellaway, Standard Bearer Simon Sillence and Michael Davidson – Son in Law of the late William Stone, were present from the HMS Hood Association. The order of service included verses from Psalm 107 read in turn by representatives of the Associations of which Ron was Chaplain namely HMS Ganges, HMS Hood – by Keith Evans, the D Day and Normandy Fellowship, Algerianes Coastal Veterans and HMS Neptune.

Ron was a very kind man, one of nature's gentleman and will be greatly missed by very many people both from the Naval associations and in the area where he lived. Our sympathy goes to his son Gordon, his daughters Deidre and Elizabeth and their families.

Kenneth Albert Clark 1916 - 2009.

Ken Clark known to us all as Nobby crossed the bar on 20 October 2009 aged 93. A service of Thanksgiving for his life was held at Southampton Crematorium on 5 November 2009. He was one of the founder Fathers of the association who was treasurer, membership secretary and slops organizer until 2008. For all his dedication to the association since 1975 he was elected Vice President at the 2009 AGM.

Nobby grew up in Winchester and left school at 14 years old. He had many jobs before deciding to join the Royal Navy age 20 with the ambition to becoming a Physical Training Instructor but was told he was too old, so joined as a stoker. After initial training his first ship was HMS Hood which he joined on 11 September 1937 at Malta, and left on 2 May 1940. Following Hood he was involved in the Dunkirk landing and then in 1942 joined HMS Boston on minesweeping duties in the Mediterranean to keep the harbours and approaches clear for convoys. Later in 1943 HMS Boston supported the Sicily landing.

After leaving the navy he had many jobs one being a switchboard operator for Post office telephones now BT.

Nobby was without doubt the central figure of the association who kept things ticking over and it's to him and the support of his wife Gladys that the association has survived. They permitted their home to be used for committee meetings which become a social occasion. His knowledge of the Hood and the many items of memorabilia has been a very useful source of information that has helped many who have researched HMS HOOD. Our sympathy goes to his son John and his family.

George Walker

We have heard from his nephew that George has recently crossed the bar, he served in Hood as an Engineer Room Artificer in 1939. Initially he was drafted to HMS Royal Oak but was unable to join as he broke his arm in the gym, he said he was lucky. Whilst on Hood he was sent on shore party duties at Andelness, Norway and fought with the Howitzers, was hit in the knee with shrapnel and hospitalised, the ship sailed without him. Once again he said he was lucky. He was captured by the Germans and spent 5 years working in quarries in extreme heat and freezing cold. He survived the long marches often being strafed by aeroplanes and diving for cover the right way, "again I was Lucky". Later he served on HMS Vanguard and in the Korean War. Our sympathy goes to Mrs Walker and family.

Mers-El-Kebir Oran 3 July 1940

An invitation has been received from Herve Grall, who is the President de l'Association des Aciens Marins et des Familles des Victimes de Mers-el-Kebir, for a delegation of the HMS Hood Association to visit BREST in Brittany on Saturday 3 July 2010 to take part in the 70th Commemoration of the tragedy at Mers-el-Kebir on 3rd July 1940. This was operation CATAPULT when Force H flying the flag of Vice Admiral Sir James Sommerville in HMS Hood, all other options having been refused, fired on the French Fleet causing the destruction of 2 battleships, 1 battlecruiser and other units, resulting in the death of 1297 French sailors.

At this important event the ceremony will probably be organised under the presidency of Mr Hubert Falco, Secretaire d'Etat a la Defense et aux Amciens Conbatants, with the presence of Sir Peter Westmacott, the British Ambassador in Paris and Admiral Pierre-Francois Forissier, Commander-in-Chief of the French Navy.

The main event will take place at the Memorial dedicated to all the French sailors "morts pour la France", which includes the five French sailors lost in HMS Hood on 24th May 1941, and lost in 2 world wars, and erected at St Mathews Point near Brest.

It has been considered that our delegation should not be more than 6. Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks CB DSC our President has agreed to take the lead and others will be veterans Keith Evans, who led a similar delegation to Brest in 2006 and Alec Kellaway. Any volunteers please contact Vice Chairman Keith Evans at Whitegate, Chilcrotts Road, Kingsley Green, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 3LS Tel No 01428 642122 who will supply any further information

Armistice Day Gathering 11 November 2009

As has been our custom over many years, members of the Association gathered again on 11 November 2009, Armistice Day, at the Naval War memorial on Southsea Common for a short service of grateful remembrance to those who died in the world wars and especially remembering the 1415 of HMS Hood. We are the last Association to hold a service on Armistice Day itself rather than on Remembrance Sunday and we are happy to keep tradition going.

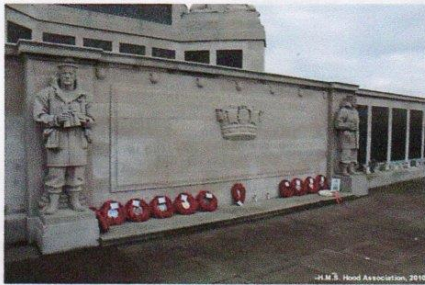
Our service this year was led by Father Bernard Clark, QHC, MA, FRGS, RN. Members of the Association began to gather from 1030 and included veterans Commander Keith Evans and Alec Kellaway Others present were Alan Plant, who we believe to be the longest member of the Association, Simon Sillence – Standard Bearer, Paul Bevand – Membership Secretary, John Clark – son of recently departed Association founder Ken Clark, Hazel Collins, Jean Winter, Steve Lovelock and Michael Nottage. We were also glad to see representatives from other naval Associations including Anne Randall of the Dunedin Society. In addition we were delighted to be joined by a larger than usual group from other military Associations and members of the general public. In all we numbered around 80 people present.

The service started at around 1050 with an opening prayer by Father Clark. This was followed by the Act of Remembrance which was read by Keith Evans. Father Clark had timed the commencement of the service perfectly as, immediately we all replied, "We will remember them" the field gun fired to start the silence.

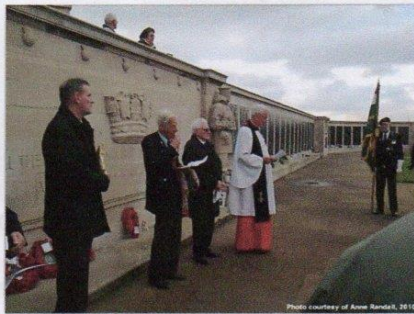
The service continued after the silence with prayers and the Bidding which was read by Keith Evans. At the end of the Bidding we all said The Lords Prayer together before we heard passages from St John's Gospel read for us by Hood veteran Alec Kellaway. After this we all said the Naval Prayer together. Paul Bevand read the Act of Commitment in the absence of our Patron Lord Hood, who was sadly not able to join us on this occasion. The service ended with a blessing given by Father Clark.

Once again, we all went away feeling that it was important that we continue to keep this service on Armistice Day going and that it is certainly a significant service that the Hood Association provides in organising the event on behalf of the whole community.

Several members and others present adjourned to The Maritime Club in Portsmouth for a spot of lunch before heading home.



Naval War Memorial Southsea



Keith Evans Alec Kellaway
Paul Bevand Father Clark
Standard Bearer Simon Silence



Members of the Association

Rededication of the H.M.S. Hood Memorial

Members will recall that on 25th October 2008 a Memorial having been constructed at the National Memorial Arboretum was dedicated to the 1415 officers and ratings who lost their lives in H.M.S. Hood on 24th May 1941.

It has now been arranged for a rededication of the memorial in a joint ceremony for the rededication also of the memorials of H.M.S. Neptune and H.M.S. Kandahar which were lost in a minefield off Tripoli, North Africa on 19th December 1941, in the former there being 1 survivor of a ships company of 765 and in the latter 71 casualties.

The ceremony will take place on Friday 9th July 2010 at 1200 at The National Arboretum Memorial Park starting with a service conducted by The Fleet Chaplain, our Association Chaplain, Canon John Green. The service will take place between the Hood and Neptune memorials and will be followed by a buffet lunch and informal meetings in the marquee. This is an advance notice so that hopefully there will be a large presence of Hood Association members and friends present.

Members who would like to attend please complete the enclosed form and return it as soon as possible so that catering arrangements can be made.

Newsletter

It is now possible to have the newsletter E mailed to members if they so wish. Anyone who would like to participate please E mail Paul Bevand paul@hmshood.org.uk

The editor is always pleased to receive items of interest from members. Please forward to :-

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