



THE H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION

(Official Website www.hmshood.com)

Message from the Chairman

Shipmates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with deep regret I have to report the death of four of our *Hood* veterans. Percy Price died on 16th August and was cremated at Worthing Crematorium on 28th August. Percy was well known to most of us and had been a regular attendee at our Reunion Dinners. He was a leading figure in several other naval associations. Keith Evans represented the Association at the cremation service. Jim Taylor died on 15th April and was cremated at Portchester Crematorium on 1st May. Our President and several other local members attended the service. It has also been reported Brian Carlisle died on 23rd April 2005 and Charles Liddiard on 8th November 2006. They will all be sadly missed.

Our Chaplain, Ron Paterson who is 91 years old, had a fall earlier this year and was quite badly injured. Although he is recovering slowly, he is now much less mobile and has admitted he can no longer take our services. We all wish you well Ron and hope you can continue to attend our functions. At the last minute we were fortunate to acquire the services of Archdeacon John Green, the Fleet Chaplain, for our Memorial Service at St George's Church this year.

Several changes to the Committee were agreed at the AGM. Ken Clark has retired as Treasurer, Membership Coordinator and responsibility for sales. However, he will remain on the Committee as his knowledge of the Association since its inception in 1975 is invaluable. Please note, he no longer lives in Bereweke Avenue, Winchester. Paul Bevand has now joined the Committee as Membership Administrator. This is in addition to the work he will continue to undertake for the website. All future membership renewals etc. should be addressed to him at 98 Monarch Drive, Worcester, WR2 6EU. At the meeting, Alex Kellaway volunteered to take responsibility for sales. As soon as I am able to transfer all the stocks and suppliers' information, all request for items should be addressed to him. When this takes effect it will be announced on the website together with a new priced order form.

Once again this year's Reunion Dinner was well attended with over 90 participants. The Guest of Honour was *Hood* veteran Robert Philpott. Although I was unable to attend due to illness, I understand the event went down very well with three members of the Mers el Kebir Association from Brest in France present as our guests. We had expected about 12 cadets from TS Hood in St. Austell to be joining us, but due to a last minute problem with accommodation they were unable to attend. However, I am now in contact with the Chairman of their Management Committee, Surgeon Rear Admiral R.D. Curr, who will personally take over responsibility for making future arrangements. He is confident a contingent of cadets will be attending our Reunion next year.

This year's Boldre service was again well attended by our members. As usual the church was filled to capacity. Ted Briggs was Standard Bearer for the occasion. This was Tony Pearce's last year as organiser of the service and he gave the sermon.

I would like to announce the Committee has decided to grant Honorary Life Membership to *Hood* veterans in addition to the widows of *Hood* veterans. These members will be advised and issued with a new membership card.

We announced in the last Newsletter, from the start of this membership year we have introduced alternative methods of renewing your membership. In addition to the normal payment by cheque etc., UK members can now renew automatically by Bank Standing Order and for those living abroad by PayPals via the internet. Unfortunately, since advising some of our members, we have had to change our bank account due to a change of Treasurer. For those who were arranging standing order agreements I am advising them of the change. If any member would like further information, please contact me or the new Membership Administrator, Paul Bevand.

For the 2006/7 membership year we had 248 members, an increase of 26 from the previous year. 23 members were living abroad and we welcomed 48 new members. It is not unusual at this time of year for our membership to have dwindled and currently stands at 190.

God bless you all,
Peter Heys

Important Events

- **2007 Remembrance Service:** 1100 on Sunday 11 November at the Naval War Memorial, Southsea.
- **2008 AGM/Reunion Dinner:** 1600/1830 on Saturday 24 May at Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth.
- **2008 Memorial Service:** 1130 on Sunday 25 May at St George's Church, Portsmouth.
- **2008 Boldre Church Service:** 1100 on Sunday 1st June

Keith Evans, Vice Chairman H.M.S.Hood Association

The Loss of H.M.S.Neptune and H.M.S.Kandahar

On the evening of 18 December 1941, Force 'K', the Cruiser Raiding Squadron, led by H.M.S.Neptune (Captain Rory O'Connor – the Executive Officer of H.M.S.Hood in 1933-36) with 'Aurora' and 'Penelope', escorted by destroyers Kandahar, Lively, Havock and Lance, sailed from Grand Harbour Malta to intercept and destroy a crucial Italian Convoy, loaded with Panzer tanks, fuel and vital military equipment bound for Tripoli.

Very early on the morning of 19 December, when closing the Libyan coast, Neptune struck the first of four mines, disabling her rudders and propellers, later severely damaging her port side amidships and finally sinking her before dawn. Rescue attempts were made by Kandahar and Lively but when Kandahar herself struck a mine which wrecked her entire stern section, all ships were ordered by Neptune to withdraw from further rescue attempts.

Aurora and Penelope, themselves temporarily damaged by close mine explosions, had for their own safety, to clear the coast before dawn so reluctantly withdrew, escorted by the remaining destroyers. An unknown number of survivors tried to swim to the relative safety of Kandahar and due to rough seas and darkness none were successful. Only one Able Seaman Norman Walton, remained alive on a carley float to be rescued by Calliope, an Italian Torpedo Boat five days later.

The destroyer Jaguar, sent from Malta, rescued the remainder of Kandahar's ships company before dawn on 20 December and then sank the severely damaged destroyer. No survivors from Neptune were seen. Her ships company comprised 47 officers and 712 ratings.

On Saturday 21 April this year I flew with 59 members of the H.M.S.Neptune Association to Malta where we stayed in a hotel in Sliema. On Sunday I went to church in St John's Cathedral and later we went on a cruise in the Grand Harbour – for me rather emotional as some 36 years previously I had dispatched a casket containing my mother's ashes to those waters. A visit to the War Rooms in the Castille and the George Cross Memorial followed by a visit to the Kalkara Naval Cemetery where there are some of the graves of relatives of our party. In the afternoon I met up with some Maltese friends whose home is in Ta'Xbiex adjacent to the flat I hired in 1966-69 whilst serving on the staff in H.M.S.St Angelo as the Base Supply Officer.

On 24 April we flew to Tripoli to stay in the Al Kabir Hotel, our passports were confiscated on arrival only to be returned to us on departure 3 days later. The weather was mixed quite a lot of rain. A Service of Remembrance was held at the Tripoli War Cemetery where there are six named graves of Neptune's men and 16 unnamed graves most likely to be from Neptune. One whole day was given to visits to one or other of the ancient cities of Leptis Magna or Sabratha to the east and west of Tripoli respectively, and in the evening a very welcome reception (with alcoholic beverages) by Sir Vincent Fean the British Ambassador at the Embassy.

The most important event was in a hired dredger which took us some 15 miles from Tripoli to the approximate site of the mining of Neptune and Kandahar, where we held a very moving Remembrance Ceremony. After wreaths of fresh flowers and messages of remembrance from relatives, including one from the daughter of John Walton the sole survivor (who had recently died) were cast onto the sea. I laid one on behalf of the H.M.N.Z.S.Royalist Association having served in that cruiser on loan to the Royal New Zealand Navy in the Far East Station 1957-58. I should add that Neptune was destined to join the New Zealand Navy and 150 of their sailors formed part on her ships company on that fateful day.

An evening of light relief followed as guests of our hosts at a local restaurant with entertainment by young ladies belly dancing and so forth to which most of us joined in as the evening progressed.

Back in Malta a ceremony in the Maritime Museum Vittoriosa (the Old Naval Bakery) attended by the President of Malta and local dignitaries, was held for the unveiling of a Memorial to Neptune and Kandahar and a presentation of a Scroll of Honour to Heritage Malta. The service was led by the Chaplain to RNA Malta and the Archpriest of Vittoriosa and included the singing of the naval hymn. At a later reception in the St Angelo Hall, I presented on behalf of the H.M.S.Hood Association a framed photograph of H.M.S.Hood passing the breakwater before anchoring in Bigli Bay, which was accepted by The British High Commissioner and will be kept in the Maritime Museum. (H.M.S.Hood was a unit in the Mediterranean Fleet 1936-38).

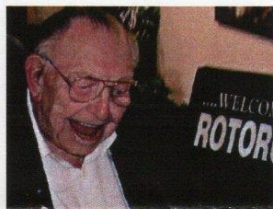
After attending morning service in Holy Trinity church Sliema on Sunday 29 April, where I was sidesman in 1967-69, we returned by Air Malta to London.

It was nine sometimes exhausting, sometimes emotional, yet most enjoyable days with very good company being mostly relatives of first and second generation of those who lost their lives on that fateful day – 19 December 1941.

I pay tribute to Legion Travel Direct for making the arrangements for the tour, to the members of the H.M.S. Neptune Association and especially to Commander John McGregor OBE R.N. the Chairman, whose father was the Paymaster Commander of H.M.S. Neptune.

Fred Ogilwy

Mr W T Hickton toured New Zealand earlier this year and whilst stopping in Rotorua he walked into the Returned Service Association Club and met Mr Fred Ogilwy who is 95 years old. He served on H.M.S. Hood from 1931-1934 when he was in the Royal Marines, and during the war he was on H.M.S. York. The ship was attacked by the Italians and beached in Suda Bay, Crete, Fred swam ashore and survived the war. He is in good health and went to live in New Zealand in 1951. We are very pleased to see that you are still keeping in good health Fred.



Fred has written a book called **Load Load Load**. The only place that is known where you can purchase a copy is at the internet address below, unless anyone has another contact.

<http://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResult?n=load&sts=t&an=ogilwy&y+0L&x+0>

From Commander Bill Bradbrook

Bill Bradbrook who lives in Durban, South Africa is 97 years old, and sent the following article of a happening when he was the Ordnance Artificer in 'Y' turret of Hood.

We had completed a 15 inch full charge firing and were now at anchor in the bay at Gibraltar, where guns were being cleaned, tampons out etc. My position was the O.A. of Y Turret, the QD turret, I had two sweepers (junior ratings) to clean the gunhouse etc, assisting shipping sub-calibre guns where required and generally looking after the turret. One of the sweepers could mimic, quite accurately, the various bugle calls and often would suddenly purse his lips and make a bugle call. He was now in the gun's chamber cleaning out cordite residue. Suddenly the turret door flew open and in came the Officer of the Watch. He said if anyone has made a bugle call, they better sound the 'carry on' as both the Admiral and Captain are standing to attention on the Quarter deck. The sweeper had sounded the 'still' and the gun had carried it out onto the Q.D. He now sounded the 'carry on', the Admiral and Captain continued their walk. They obviously had thought that some small ship, hidden by Hood's superstructure, had crossed Hood's bows.

Service of Commemoration at St John the Baptist Church, Boldre

The annual service of Commemoration for those who lost their lives on 24th May 1941 took place on Sunday 13rd May 2007 at 1100 with a full congregation in attendance. The H.M.S. Hood Association, The Royal British Legion along with other local organizations paraded their standards. Our standard was carried by our president Ted Briggs. Before the service commenced Commander Keith Evans, Vice Chairman of the H.M.S. Hood Association spoke on behalf of the association welcoming all to the service, with a special mention of the sailors from the Commonwealth, France and Poland who were also members of the Hood's ships company. The service conducted by the vicar of St John the Baptist Church Boldre, the Reverend Camilla Walton. The first Lesson was read by Vice Admiral Boissier, Deputy Fleet Commander, the second by Lieutenant Commander Cross, Hood Association and the sermon given by Commander Tony Pearse who for the past 13 years has been main organizer of this service on behalf of both the Admiral Holland family and the Hood Association. Tony Pearse was presented with a gift and his wife with a bouquet of flowers in appreciation of his dedication to this event and associated activities within the church. The Act of Remembrance and Prayers were led by Commander Keith Evans, After the service the congregation was invited to coffee which provided an opportunity to chat to friends.

The service next year will be held on **Sunday 1st June 2008 at 1100**

AGM-Reunion Week-end 26th -27th May 2007.

The weekend of 26-27 May saw members of the H M S Hood Association and assorted guests come together for the 32nd annual Association reunion. The gathering was based at the wonderful Royal Maritime Club (formerly the Royal Sailors Home Club) in Portsmouth, UK. The events consisted of an Annual General Meeting (AGM), Reunion dinner and a memorial service. It was our pleasure to have with us this weekend our guests from France a very special delegation from the L' Association Mers-el-Kebir, consisting of Herve Grall, Bernard Madec and Andre Jaffre. Herve and Bernard lost their fathers in the unfortunate action of 3rd July 1940. Andre is a survivor of the warship Bretagne which was lost that day. These gentleman were absolutely wonderful and it was an honour to have them with us. They arrived on Friday, were met by committee members, accommodated at the Royal Maritime Club. On Saturday

morning they had a conducted tour of the Portsmouth Dockyard Naval museum and attended our reunion dinner in the evening. On Sunday they attended the service of remembrance at St George's Church where a framed photograph of H M S Hood was presented to them by Bill Stone

Saturday 26 May 2007 – Annual General Meeting and Reunion Dinner

The AGM was held between 1600 –1640 hours in Brock's Bar. Various standard items were discussed, accounts, minutes of last meeting etc. One major resolution was passed that Hood veterans will now receive free life membership.

Following the AGM, people prepared for the dinner or waited in the Compass Room. Everyone assembled in the ballroom at 1830 with dinner commencing shortly after 1900hrs. The ballroom itself was an impressive sight decorated with various flags as well as dozens of photographs spanning Hood's career. Also present were various volumes of Hood specific information and a superb model of Hood by Colin Vass. In addition to these, there were also photographs of 635 men who died in the sinking of Hood. These along with an original 1930s era Union Flag from Hood (courtesy of Jim Sikorski) and a brand new Roll of Honour, which had been researched and compiled by Paul Bevand, occupied an entire corner of the ballroom.

There were 88 association members and guests present including 9 veterans of Hood, (Ted Briggs, Ken "Nobby" Clark, Keith Evans, Alec Kellaway, Robert Philpott, Fred Rockey, Percy Price, Bill Stone, Cy Thistlewaite) Veterans Dixie Dean, Eddie Coggins, Frank Pavay and Jim Taylor all had "crossed the bar" since the last reunion. Their absence was keenly felt. There were a number who came from other countries, Jim Sikorski and Frank Allen our webmaster who had flown in from the U.S.A. and Mr & Mrs Pelkonen from Sweden, and our guests from L' Association Mers-el-Kebir of France.

An excellent dinner menu consisted of watercress soup, lamb shank and vegetables, followed by raspberry pavlova, cheese and biscuits, coffee and mints with a good glass of wine. After dinner toasts were made to The Queen, our Guest of Honour, the ladies, and absent friends. Following the toasts our Guest of Honour, Robert Philpott was introduced. Robert gave a witty and interesting speech on his service in Hood (1935-1940). He was presented with a lovely engraved brass bell by Association Vice Chairman Keith Evans. You can read the account of Robert's sea service on our website. After the speeches and presentation the annual raffle was drawn after which members relaxed in the bar.

Sunday, 27th May 2007. St George's Church Service.

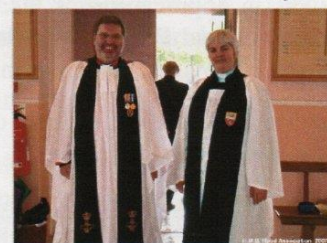
The weather was unfortunately a repeat of last year, cold and driving rain, it was decided that members would be bussed to church. The band of T.S. Tenacity however decided to brave the conditions and march to church accompanied by the Royal British Legion Standard carried by Standard Bearer Simon Sillence. There was a delay in proceeding as there was a communications hiccup that prevented the start of the march to church. Whilst waiting for the band to arrive the various standards were brought in and wreaths presented. The Chaplain of The Fleet John Green addressed the congregation until the band arrived. Once the band arrived the service commenced led by The Chaplain of The Fleet and assisted by St George's vicar Karina Green. Some of the young cadets from HMS Collingwood took part in the service by leading prayers and readings. During the service, the H.M.S. Hood Association presented a framed photograph to Herve Graff and the L' Association Mers-el-Kebir as a thank you for the hospitality they showed our Association delegation during our July 2006 visit to Brest. It was also a symbol of the friendship between our Associations and for our support in their very noble cause (to repatriate the remains of their lost men from Algeria to France). The service concluded with the bugle sounding the Last Post and Reveille. As it was still raining the members were bussed to the Royal Maritime Club for refreshments and lunch, then made their way home.



Robert Phillpott accepting his engraved brass bell



Bill Stone presenting a framed photo of H M S Hood to Andre Jaffe with Herve Graff on the left and Bill Stones Daughter Ann



The Chaplain of The Fleet Archdeacon John Green and the Vicar of St St Georges Reverend Karine Green