



Photographers
Association

NEWSLETTER



Issue 80 Summer 2026

Welcome to the Summer edition and thank you to all who have contributed articles and photographs. Can I please ask members to continue to supply article that will be of interest to fellow RNPA members.

Alan Ferguson, RNPA Newsletter Editor.

Isle of Wight Get Together

Alan Ferguson & Julie Richardson

At the last AGM it was suggested that we should have informal get togethers and our Chair, Julie, suggested the Isle of Wight as being a good place to visit. This is probably because she and her family have lived there for many years. Julie and her husband Brian were the hosts for the weekend of the 17 to 19 July with many of us staying at their home in Ryde. The weather was really kind to us, and it did feel as if we were all on holiday. Some of us, including myself, my wife Ingrid and Joan Roberts, took the opportunity to extend our stay arriving early so we could relax into the IOW way of life. We got some extra swims in too.



The actual IOW Get Together started on the Friday with a lovely evening meal at Fumo 33 where we all enjoyed catching up and getting to know each other better.



After a Saturday morning coffee/tea/snack at RT Cafe Grill with a lovely view over the Solent, we visited the English Heritage Osbourne House which, as well as a look around the historic house, involved a good walk around the gardens and grounds and a paddle in the sea for some of us.



In the evening Julie and Brian then hosted a BBQ at their place which was a great opportunity for everyone to catch up further, get to know each other and reminisce. Brian was an excellent BBQ Chef and kept us well fed.



On Sunday some of us finished off our visit with a trip to Sandown Beach for another dip in the sea. I took the chance to go in Brian's kayak where he was definitely the "engine room".

Julie commented that the reunion was great fun in the sun, lots of talking, drinking, eating, swimming and reminiscing. Thanks to all those who made the effort to pop over to the Isle of Wight, we may make it a regular thing! Alan & Ingrid Ferguson, Joan Roberts, Cath Kelly, Stewart (Bunny) & Linda Warren, Caroline Coombes, Danny & Tina du Feu, Ian & Carol Hooper, and Wilf Frances.

We will all miss the lovely view from Julie and Brian's, nicely captured by Brian in the photograph taken on our last day.



Visit to RAF Cosford and the Museum, 7th May 2026.

Alan Ferguson & Pete Bunting

In preparation for the RNPA 107th Reunion at RAF Cosford and Telford Area, 2 to 4 October 2026, Pete and I met with Edwin Hedges (Bense), the Officer Commanding, Photographic Faculty (DSOP) and Tim Robinson, his deputy at the Defence School of Photography, RAF Cosford. We discussed and walked through the proposed visit, which has a planned duration of approx. 2 hours.

The visit will incorporate seeing plenty of historical equipment and systems. We started in the Centenary Room, a museum by any other name, with a very impressive timeline on the history of military photography. We will then move on through the varied training areas which embrace different specialisations and service requirements.



We then visited the RAF Museum and discussed the visit there with Karen Dixon, who heads up the Museum's Corporate team. Karen was Pete's boss, when he used to work as a volunteer at the museum. Good communications imperative. Karen is taking the lead on our visit and arranging guides for the day.

It's envisioned that we will cover the tour in two groups, but we have the option of a third if our numbers increase. We have suggested a whistle stop tour lasting no more than two hours. This would embrace the WW1, WW2 and Cold War display areas.

In summary the schedule for the weekend:

Friday 2nd October

- Meet and Greet at the Royal Navy Association Newport, where Pete is President

Saturday 3rd October

- 10:30 Visit to the Defence School of Photography, RAF Cosford
- PM – Visit and Guided Tours of the RAF Museum
- Evening – Private Dining meal, Park House Hotel, Shifnal

Sunday 4th October

- Options to visit Ironbridge and/or the Blist Hill Victorian Village (now under the National Trust)

The Flyer for the reunion is attached at the end of this newsletter.

The initial planning for the reunion is well underway and further information will be sent out closer to the date.

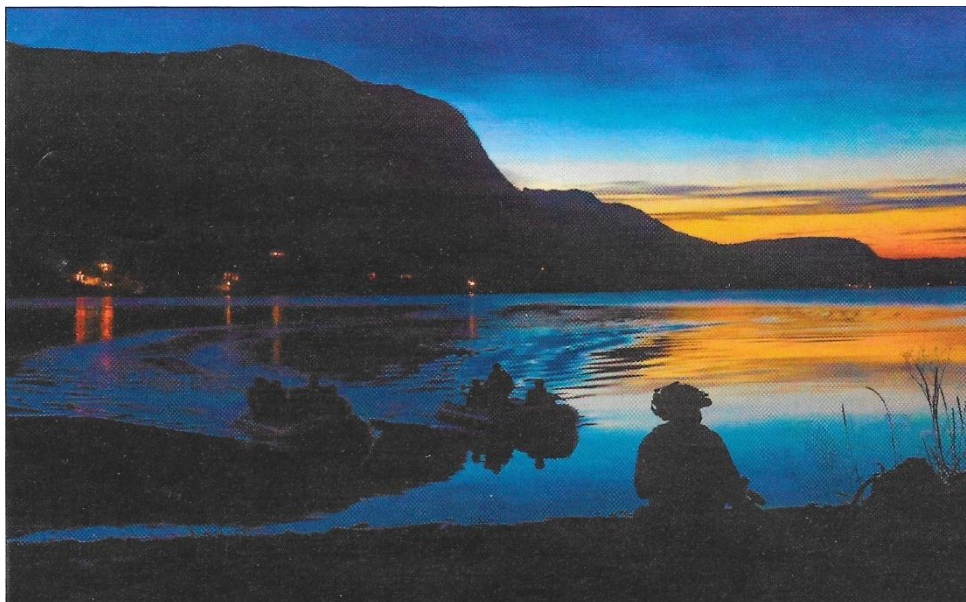
Any queries please contact Alan Ferguson (alan.ferguson_7@virgin.net, Tel 07946 534423) or Pete Bunting (pete_bunting@hotmail.com)



Peregrine Trophy 2026

Petty Officer Alexandra 'Alex' Ceolin from Plymouth took the title as the Royal Navy's top photographer over the past 12 months for her work covering the UK Commando Forces.

And she also collects the coveted Peregrine Trophy – awarded to the best photographic unit in the Navy, again for their portfolio over the past year – on behalf of the two-strong team she leads with L/Phot Finn Stainer-Hutchins.



PO Phot Alex Ceolin, right, won the coveted Royal Navy Photographer of the Year award with her portfolio which included the image, above, of Royal Marines in the Arctic



Clockwise from above left, L/Phot Bill Spurr won the RFA Professional title; L/Phot Ollie Leach's image of HMS Dragon; PO Phot Clarke's winning entry in the Submarine Service category; L/Phot Finn Stainer-Hutchins took this image of RM in the Arctic



PO Phot James Clarke won three awards

The full list of winners is:

The Peregrine Trophy: 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Combat Camera Team (PO Phot: Alex Ceolin/L/Phot Finn Stainer-Hutchins).
Royal Navy Photographer of the Year: PO Phot Alex Ceolin.
Royal Navy Videographer of the Year: PO Phot James Clarke.
Commandant General Royal Marines' (Stills): L/Phot Finn Stainer-Hutchins.
Commandant General Royal Marines' (Video): L/Phot Gaz Smith.
Global Operations (Stills): L/Phot Finn Stainer-Hutchins
Global Operations (Video): L/Phot Gaz Smith
Royal Navy Open: PO Phot Lee Blease
Surface Fleet: L/Phot Ollie Leach
Submarine Service: PO Phot James Clarke
Fleet Air Arm: PO Phot James Clarke
Royal Fleet Auxiliary Amateur: Matthew White

Royal Fleet Auxiliary Professional: L/Phot Bill Spurr
Royal Navy Amateur Photographer of the Year: Mne Sajan Rai
Royal Navy Amateur Videographer of the Year: Mne Sajan Rai
Royal Navy Amateur Open: ET(WE) Simon Evans
Royal Naval Association Veteran: Chris North
Royal Naval Association Amateur: ET(WE) Simon Evans.
Royal Naval Association Professional: L/Phot Ollie Leach
Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity Family and Friends Pro: PO Phot Lee Blease.
Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity Family and Friends U18s: Raef Dolly.
Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity Family and Friends Over 18s: David Cronin.
Cadet Amateur Photographer of the Year 2025 U18: Cadet Aiden Forry, Tamworth Sea Cadets.
Cadet Instructor Amateur Photographer of the Year 2025 Over 18: PO Lauren Swann, Borough of Poole Sea Cadets.

RNPA member Chris North won the Royal Navy Association Veteran's Category with a striking photograph featuring fellow Ilkley Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club member Geoffrey Hogben. The image, praised for its character and composition, and highlights not only Chris's talent behind the camera but also the strong sense of identity and camaraderie shared within the local veterans' network.



National Memorial Arboretum - New Memorial to the “Greatest Raid of All”

Ian Hooper

This year at the National Memorial Arboretum saw the installation of a memorial to Operation Chariot considered the greatest commando operation of all. During WW11, Winston Churchill was worried that if the German battleship Tirpitz and the battlecruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau broke out into the North Atlantic they would annihilate our convoys.



The reason they hadn't done so so far was that they would have had to run the gauntlet of the Home Fleet and British bombers to return to Germany to carry out maintenance and rearming. However, they did have the occupied French port of St Nazaire available with the Normandie dock, the only dock on the Atlantic coast big enough to take the German ships and well protected by coastal defences and the Luftwaffe. If this dock could be put out of action then the chances of the German ships entering the Atlantic would be minimal. Hence "Operation Chariot" came into being. The Operation involved using HMS Campbeltown, an old four funnelled American lend lease destroyer formally USS Buchanan. The Superstructure was altered to resemble, as near as possible, a German patrol vessel. The hull was packed with explosives and the plan was to ram the dock gates, land the embarked commandos, who were to destroy as much dockyard machinery and installations as possible then blow up the gates putting the dock out of action for years. Accompanying the Campbeltown was a fleet of motor launches, whose role was to embark the commandos and sailors for their return to England.



Ian and Carol Hooper - NMA Volunteer guides

The Operation was a success although it came at a cost. The motor launches were constructed from plywood and were un-armoured with fuel tanks mounted on the deck and suffered heavy casualties from the German shore defences. Of the 600 men who took part in the operation, around 200 were killed or wounded, just over 200 captured, the remainder making it back to England. Five Victoria Crosses were awarded to men involved in Operation Chariot.



The full story can be seen in a brilliant documentary by Jeremy Clarkson, available on YouTube entitled “The Greatest Raid of All”.

Recognition of 10 Year Volunteer Service at NMA

Ian has just been awarded a Certificate of Accomplishment in recognition of 10 years service as a NMA Volunteer since starting in July 2026. He was presented with his certificate by Andy Answll, Head of Grounds who was duty manager that day.



National Memorial Arboretum to become RBL National Remembrance Gardens

From September 2026, the National Memorial Arboretum will become known as the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens, following its integration with the RBL, its parent charity since 2003. The change reflects the evolution of the site over the past 25 years and its role at the centre of RBL’s national Remembrance work.

Over the past 25 years, the 150-acre estate has grown from the seed of an idea into an inspirational living landscape of Remembrance. Welcoming more than 300,000 visitors each year, it has become a place where people can reflect, learn and remember the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces, emergency services and civilian organisations.

The Royal British Legion became the Arboretum’s parent charity in 2003, with full integration completed in April 2026. The new name reflects the RBL’s long-term commitment to the site and its ambition, set out in its strategy to 2035, to evolve Remembrance and widen participation.

Maritime Reserves Field Gun - RNA Newport demonstration

Alan Ferguson & Pete Bunting

The Maritime Reserves Field Gun (MRFG) team is a composite crew made up of Royal Naval Reservists and Royal Marines Reservists from across the UK. They compete annually in the prestigious Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) Field Gun Competition, testing grit, speed, and endurance.

The crew is drawn from various Maritime Reserve units, bringing together part-time personnel from diverse civilian backgrounds who train rigorously to meet the intense demands of Field Gun racing.

The team frequently engages with the public and veteran communities, often participating in regional outreach and fundraising events (such as Gun-a-thons) alongside the Royal Naval Association.

On 25th April 2026 they carried out an outreach activity at the Royal Naval Association in Newport, part of their role to help build and maintain links with key supporters of the Royal Navy.

Their Field Gun Officer, Lt Joe Jamie, let the team where they did a demonstration of aspects of the Field Gun competition in the limited space outside the Association building in Newport.



On completion of the event the Club President, our own Pete Bunting, was presented with a framed MRFG Team T-shirt.

Everyone present was impressed by the drills and welcomed the MRFG team into the club for the evening's social events where some of the team impressed all by their dancing skills.



Post article note: Pete celebrated his 80th birthday recently at the club and was called outside where, to his surprise, the MRFG Team were present. On the command from Lt Joe Jamie they then sang “Happy Birthday” to Pete. He was really moved by this, and it was definitely a high point of the evening's celebrations.

Visit to WW1 France sites April 2026.

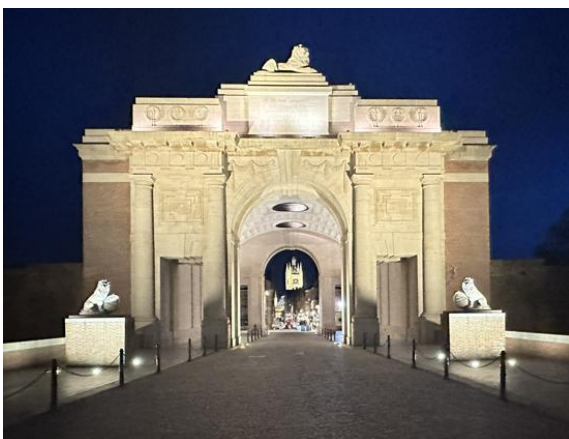
Alan Ferguson

In April myself Ingrid and four other friends (Sue, Tim, David and Hazel) took a trip to France to view some of the First World War (WW1) sites and memorials. Personally, I wasn't really aware of the location of some of the WW1 sites and places but felt it was a good opportunity to learn more by actually going there. We crossed into France via the Le Shuttle, a new experience for me and one that our Grandson Jack was impressed by the video I sent him of us loading onto the train carriages. He now wants to go on a “Car Train” as he calls it.

Our first visit was to Lijssenthoek Cemetery just outside Ypres. It is the second largest cemetery for Commonwealth forces in Belgium. During the First World War, the village of Lijssenthoek was situated on the main communication line between the Allied military bases in the rear and the Ypres battlefields. Close to the Front, but out of the extreme range of most German field artillery, it became a natural place to establish casualty clearing stations. The cemetery was first used by the French 15th Hospital D'Evacuation and in June 1915, it began to be used by casualty clearing stations of the Commonwealth force. The particular interest to Sue and Hazel, as nurses, was to visit the grave of Nurse Nellie Spindler (10 August 1891 – 21 August 1917) who was a staff nurse at the No. 44 Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) and was killed during the Battle of Passchendaele. She is the only women to be buried among more than 10,000 men.



We then travelled to Ypres and stayed overnight so we could visit the Menin Gate, a war memorial in Ypres, Belgium, dedicated to the British and Commonwealth soldiers who were killed in the Ypres Salient of World War I and whose graves are unknown. Its large Hall of Memory contains names on stone panels of 54,395 Commonwealth soldiers who died in battle but whose bodies have never been identified or found. We especially wanted to witness the nightly “Last Post” ceremony performed by buglers of the Last Post Association who are responsible for the day-to-day organisation of this unique act of homage. A particular moving part of the ceremony that evening was to witness an Australian lay a wreath in memory of his Great Great Grand Father, Patrick Budgen VC who was killed during the Battle of Polygon Wood where he displayed the bravery for which he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. I spotted the VC medal he was wearing and later spoke to him as he was staying at our hotel.



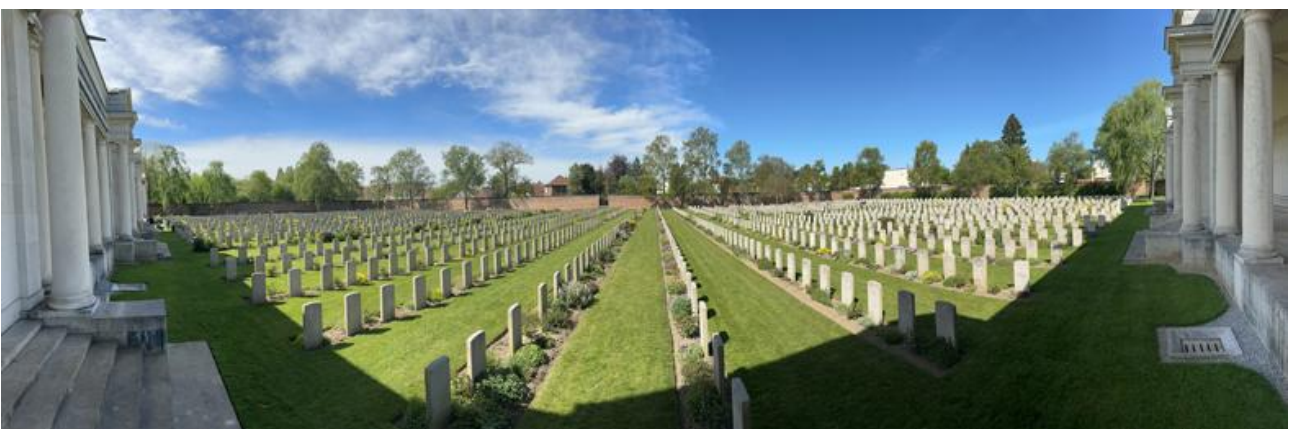
The following day we drove to Vimmy Ridge to visit the Canadian National Vimy Memorial which is dedicated to the memory of 11,285 members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force killed during the First World War and have no known grave. France ceded to Canada the perpetual use of a portion of land on Vimy Ridge on the understanding that Canada use the land to establish a battlefield park and memorial.



Wartime tunnels, trenches, craters, and unexploded munitions still honeycomb the grounds of the site, which remains largely closed off for reasons of public safety. During our visit a Bomb Disposal Unit appeared in order to recover the body of a sheep that had died within the closed off area.

Arras was our next stop where we stayed for two days, visiting a number of sites there including the Arras Memorial located in the Faubourg d'Amiens British Cemetery.

The memorial commemorates 35,942 soldiers of the forces of the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand with no known grave, who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and 7 August 1918. Located in the same cemetery is the Arras Flying Services Memorial (commemorating 991 airmen with no known grave).



I was particularly moved by this as it recorded those airman as from the Royal Flying Corps on one side, The Royal Naval Air Service on another and then, post 1918, the Royal Air Force on a third side.

We also spotted a bag of biscuits and looking closer it was in memory of a Private Harry Upward who disappeared on the 3rd May 1917 with his 6th Queens Own (Royal West Kents). A week earlier he had been punished to eating the emergency biscuit ration out of his pack. A note with the biscuits states "Harry deserves all the biscuits. Please let him have these as long as possible". I also noted the number of graves from the Royal Navy Division with both naval personnel and Royal Marines commemorated.

We also visited the Wellington Quarry/Tunnels Museum which commemorates the soldiers who built the tunnels and fought in the Battle of Arras in 1917. It is named after a former underground quarry which was part of a network of tunnels used by forces of the British Empire and Commonwealth during the First World War. 500 miners from the New Zealand Tunnelling Company, including Māori and Pacific Islanders, recruited from the gold and coal mining districts of the country, were brought in to dig 20 kilometres (12 mi) of tunnels. They worked alongside Royal Engineer tunnelling companies, made up of British coal miners and expert tunnellers who had built the London Underground. Thousands of soldiers were billeted in the tunnels for eight days prior to the start of the Arras offensive on 9 April 1917. At 05:30 that morning, exits were dynamited to enable the troops to storm the German trenches. The Germans were taken by surprise and were pushed back 11 km (6.8 mi).



It was an amazing experience to be guided through the tunnels and told of their history and importance.

Driving through Belgium and France I was taken by the number of other Commonwealth War Graves that there are. It definitely brings home how many lives were lost in the First World War, "we will remember them".

This visit has definitely ignited an interest in History of both the World Wars and the six of us plan to visit Normandy and surrounding areas next year.

A Barbados Farewell

Ray Pogson

The RNPA member Dave and Olga Price flew from Heathrow accompanied by elder daughter Susan, her husband Chris and daughters Seren and Skye.

Dave always knew a family dinner in Barbados would be a bittersweet affair because, as he and wife Olga holidayed with members of their immediate family on the Caribbean island in April, he knew it could be the last time they would all be together.

"Olga grew up in Barbados, but with no close relatives now living on the island, it was almost certainly our final holiday there as a family," said Dave. "It was a memorable meal, with lots of laughs and banter."

Younger daughter Victoria, husband Todd and children William, Allegra and Sophia, meanwhile, journeyed from their home in Christchurch, New Zealand via Brisbane, Los Angeles and Miami to the holiday rendezvous.

"I always tell people I have one wife two daughters and four grand-daughters, and they are all beautiful girls," said Dave. Lone grandson William is a keen rugby player, and is currently developing his skills at New Zealand's Otago University.

Before emigrating with her family, Victoria spent 19 years in the Royal Navy. Having qualified as a doctor whilst a member of the Royal Navy Reserve, she served at sea aboard HMS Marlborough, HMS Gloucester and HMS Newcastle and was promoted to Surgeon Commander, later becoming Principal Medical Officer at HMS Sultan.



Dave and Olga with their family. L-R Chris (Susan's husband), Seren and Skye (Susan's children) Susan (Olga and Dave's eldest), Dave, Olga, Victoria (Olga and Dave's youngest, Todd (Victoria's husband), William, Sophia, Allegra (Victoria's) children.

Introducing VALOUR

VALOUR is a new national programme designed to make it easier for veterans across the UK to access the care and support they deserve.

Led by the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) within the Ministry of Defence, it aims to improve how services are coordinated at national, regional and local levels, ensuring veterans get the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

How VALOUR will work

VALOUR has 3 key components:

- 1. VALOUR recognised centres**

These centres will facilitate access to multiple services for veterans. They will be required to meet high standards and provide timely data to the UK government about the needs and experiences of veterans to inform future service improvements.

2. **VALOUR field officers**

Field officers will build strong regional networks with councils, public services and charities. They will share insights from their region with VALOUR HQ to help shape better services.

3. **VALOUR HQ**

VALOUR HQ will be based in the Office for Veterans' Affairs. It will provide training and quality assurance across the VALOUR network, gathering data and working with policy teams to make sure services meet local needs.

25 March 2026

First VALOUR-recognised centres announced

The first 14 organisations to be funded to develop VALOUR-recognised centres have been confirmed.

A second round of funding will be announced in the Spring, with a further opportunity for organisations to be able to apply to become part of the VALOUR network.

The first 14 organisations are:

- **Northern Ireland:** Brooke House
 - **Scotland:** SSAFA
 - **Wales:** Bulldogs Boxing and Community Activities
 - **North East England:** Northumberland County Council and East Durham Veterans Trust
 - **North West England:** Armed Forces Community HQ and Veterans in Communities
 - **Yorkshire and the Humber:** Hull 4 Heroes
 - **West Midlands:** Telford & Wrekin Council
 - **East Midlands:** Derbyshire Addictions Advice Service
 - **South East England:** Veterans Outreach Support and Royal British Veterans Enterprise
 - **South West England:** Alabaré and Improving Lives Plymouth
-

Right Place Right Time

Brian Cartwright

I am always hoping that I will be in the right place, at the right time, to capture a different image. I walk around Anton Lake almost daily, but on one occasion, early in the morning, I caught a Little Grebe bathing with the light just in the right place for a decent image.



Recently while photographing a polo match, again I was looking in the right direction when a rider and pony decided (I think the decision was made by the pony) to part company. It is not a common occurrence for a rider to be unsaddled so 'right place,



Note: Brian covers the Royal Navy Polo Team matches and had photographs in the July edition of the Navy News.

Cenotaph Marching 2026

Danny du Feu – RNPA Cenotaph Marching Coordinator

This year will be the 11th year the RNPA has marched as a platoon during the Cenotaph Ceremony, held on Remembrance Sunday each year.

We have managed to keep up numbers even though some of us have had to call on the NHS to fix things. We are hoping that all that join us this year, are so enthralled by their getting together with other Ex-Phots, that they continue to join the RNPA Marchers in the years to come. We had a few new people join us last year and they thought the day was a fantastic and emotional experience.

I would also like to call on all Ex-Phots and those that have recently become members of the RNPA, to come and join us.



After the formal parts of the Ceremony, fellow marchers, meet up at the Tom Cribb Pub in Piccadilly, which has adopted the RNPA, along with a few from Bomber Command, Ton Class Minesweepers and HMS Ark Royal. After the Loyal Toasts there is a welcome hot buffet laid on for all, and later, entertainment by the 'Fallen Heroes' Jazz band.

Lastly, if there are any marchers who need Berets, Beret badges or Blazer badges, please get in touch with me soonest, as I have a small stock of beret badges which includes JR's, SNR rates and Officers.

Please let me know soon, if you can join us, as I have been contacted by the RBL for numbers. I will then inform the RBL that you wish to march and they will then contact you direct for your service details. All those that send in your names should receive E Passes in late October.

I have shared above photographs from previous parades. I look forward to meeting up with you all on the day



Eulogy for John Anthony Flack

Ray Whitehouse

John Anthony Flack - 26 June 1931 - 28 May 2026

Pam and I were deeply saddened to learn of John's passing on 28th May. John was one of the founding members of the Royal Naval Photographic Association and remained a loyal supporter of the RNPA for over forty years, attending reunions regularly until ill health made travel difficult. He was also the oldest surviving member of the Royal Navy Photographic Branch.

I first met John almost seventy years ago in 1957 at the Royal Naval School of Photography, HMS Peregrine, Ford in Sussex. That was shortly after he returned from Operation Grapple, the British hydrogen bomb tests on Christmas Island during 1956/7.

My first memory of him has stayed with me ever since. I was struggling with my photography examination portfolio when John stopped, watched for a moment, and said, "Why don't you do it this way?" The advice he gave me transformed the job I was doing and, more importantly, introduced me to the man John would always be, generous with his knowledge, patient with others, and always willing to help.

Over the years I had the privilege of working alongside him on several occasions. He was an outstanding photographer and a consummate professional, but what stood out most was his kindness, good humour and friendship. Many younger photographers, me included, benefited from his guidance and encouragement.

John was born on 26th June 1931 in the village of Orwell, near Cambridge, and was brought up by grandparents whom he described as "the most wonderful people in the world." He enjoyed an idyllic countryside childhood, exploring fields and woods, playing football and cricket with friends, and occasionally getting into mischief. One story he told with great amusement was how he and his friends once set fire to a farmer's haystack while trying to smoke a stolen cigarette. Thankfully, they all lived to tell the tale.

The war years left a lasting impression on him. He saw air battles overhead, watched aircraft operating from nearby RAF stations, and developed a lifelong fascination with aviation.

That interest led him to join the Royal Navy, in January 1950, in the Fleet Air Arm Branch. Although he had hoped to become a pilot, he narrowly failed the eyesight requirements and was instead selected for photographic training. It proved to be a fortunate turn of events, as photography became both his profession and his passion.



During twelve years of naval service John served in several ships and establishments, including HMS Illustrious (Home & Med Fleets); HMS Birmingham Far East Fleet and HMS Messina; in which he sailed out via the Panama Canal into the Pacific to Christmas Island. Messina was the H.Q. ship for Operation Grapple; John's role there was the photographing & documenting Britain's hydrogen bomb tests.

Seventy years later he was finally awarded the medal recognising his role, receiving it only a few months before his death. One of the highlights of his time in Grapple was when the ship managed to fit in a visit to New Zealand, and he, and his colleague PO Phot John Noble, hired a car and Island.



Following the H bomb trials, John returned to the UK aboard HMS Warrior via Cape Horn. During the voyage, the ship called at several South American ports and the Falkland Islands, including a memorable visit to Buenos Aires via the River Plate, which he greatly enjoyed. He often reminded me of this experience because two years later HMS Albion was due to make the same journey. Unfortunately, we never reached Buenos Aires; Albion ran aground sixty-five miles up the River Plate, leaving us stranded for almost a week before tugs finally pulled us free.

The shore establishments he served in HMS Gamecock in the Midlands; HMS Seahawk in Cornwall; HMS Peregrine in Sussex and two in Scotland, HMS Fulmar & Condor.

In 1953 John married Iris, the love of his life. Together they built a happy family life and were blessed with two daughters, Helen and Joanne. Following his discharge from the Navy in 1962, John continued working in photography, first in London and later with the Civil Service at Fort Monckton in Gosport, where he remained until retirement.

John also had a wonderful sense of humour. One of my favourite stories concerns a visit he made to Leningrad during the Cold War in HMS Apollo. Officially, he was there to photograph the ship's visit and ceremonial events. Unofficially, he and his colleague, Gordie Johnson, were keeping their eyes open for anything that might be of interest back in London. As their ship passed beneath a bridge, John looked up, hoping to spot something worth photographing. Instead, he found himself staring directly into the faces of two Russian military photographers looking down at him from the girders above. For one moment, both sides seemed to have the same idea. When he told me that story, he had that look of amusement on his face suggested he admired their professionalism almost as much as his own.

Away from work, John had many interests. He was a passionate football supporter from boyhood, particularly of Arsenal and sometimes Wolves & Preston North End; he remained devoted to the game throughout his life. He enjoyed cricket, music concerts, cruising, and spending time with friends. He could often be found attending local matches, particularly Southampton F.C. often with Helen and Joanne or enjoying a day at Hampshire cricket.

Both John and Iris were active members of their local community and shared a love of travel and music. The loss of Iris in 1997 was a devastating blow, but in later years John found companionship and happiness again through his friendship with Andrea. Together they enjoyed holidays, concerts and many memorable adventures. Sadly, Andrea passed away just a few weeks before John.

Throughout his long life, John remained loyal to his family, his friends and his former naval colleagues. He never lost his curiosity, his enthusiasm for life, or his willingness to help others. Those qualities made him not only respected but genuinely loved.

When I think of John, I do not first think of the ships he served in or the places he travelled. I remember a kind and generous man who took the time to help a young photographer all those years ago. That simple act of kindness was typical of him and remained unchanged throughout his life.



John with Mike Keeling and his wife Jean. Andrea is sat on the right in the picture.

John lived a long, full and rewarding life. He served his country with distinction, enjoyed a successful career, devoted himself to family and friends, and touched the lives of countless people along the way.

To Helen and Joanne, and to all who loved him, we offer our sincere condolences and our gratitude for having known such a remarkable man.

John will be greatly missed, fondly remembered, and never forgotten.



His funeral took place at the Porchester crematorium on Friday 26th June 2026. Joanne informs us that on the day of his funeral he would have celebrated his 95th birthday.

Fair winds and following seas, John.

Your Committee:

RNPA Committee 2026			
Chair	Julie Richardson	07884 007244	jmrichardson59@gmail.com
Vice Chair	Pete Bunting	07850 462575	pete_bunting@hotmail.com
Secretary	Ian Hooper	07835 919862	ihoops@btinternet.com
Social Secretary, Cenotaph Marching Coordinator and Exhibitions & Display Coordinator	Danny du Feu	07711 083465	ddf.photography@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Tiz Jardine	07843 525464	ysobeljardine@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Joan Roberts	07774 439068	photoguild@aol.com
Financial Assistant	Val Darbyshire	07414 831200	vdarbyshire@gmail.com
Webmaster	Tony Darbyshire	07429 517100	tony.darbyshire@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Alan Ferguson	07946 534423	alan.ferguson_7@virgin.net

Useful Links:

RNPA Website: www.rnpa.org.uk

Royal Navy Photographers: [Royal Navy Photographers | Facebook](#)

Ex RN Photos Camera Club: [Ex RN Photos Camera Club | Facebook](#)



RNPA 107th Reunion

RAF Cosford and Telford Area

2nd to 4th October 2026

This year's main reunion will be a more informal event with no formal Gala Dinner or AGM. As agreed at the last AGM this will be a more relaxed get together.

With both myself (Alan Ferguson) and Pete Bunting living locally we have agreed to organise this year's reunion.

The Park House Hotel in Shifnal has agreed to a group B&B rate for Fri 2nd and Sat 3rd October of £120 per night (2 people sharing), £110 single occupancy. To book contact the hotel, Tel: 01952 460 128 or The Park House Hotel quoting Group ID 16839. Please let me know when you have booked.



We will look at using that venue for a relaxed Private Dining meal on the Saturday evening. This will be charged separately at £30 per person and will mean non-resident members can attend too. Can those interested please do a bank transfer to: Alan Ferguson, Sort Code 09-01-32 (Santander) A/C 12112406 as I will be co-ordinating the event.

The schedule for the weekend:

Friday 2nd October

- Meet and Greet at the Royal Navy Association Newport, where Pete is President



Saturday 3rd October

- 10:30 Visit to the Defence School of Photography, RAF Cosford
- PM – Visit and Guided Tours of the RAF Museum
- Evening – Private Dining meal, Park House Hotel, Shifnal



Sunday 4th October

- Options to visit Ironbridge and/or the Blist Hill Victorian Village (now under the National Trust)



For further information and to let us know if you are interested in joining us for the weekend contact Alan Ferguson (alan.ferguson_7@virgin.net) or Pete Bunting (pete_bunting@hotmail.com)