

Dear members.

I hope you are keeping well. Please see below details of events for the coming year - so far! I have decided not to compile a newsletter as I have sent out a few updates earlier. However, if I do mention something that I've already informed you about, please accept my apologies in advance; it's just an age thing! Or, on the other hand, let me know if I've missed anything that I can help with.

PLYMOUTH MEMORIAL SERVICE

As we approach the 85th anniversary of the loss of the three ships, I am really pleased to inform you that we have now been granted access to the church of St. Nicholas in HMS Drake, Devonport, to hold our memorial service, very appropriately on June 8th. Our committee member Lauren Soar is dealing with all aspects of this particular function and she will shortly be emailing the booking form for your completion. We are extremely grateful for the help received in allowing us back into HMS Drake and must say a big thank you to Jane Burrett, Sam Azzopardi and the HMS Ardent (1982) Association.

Can I please stress that HMS Drake is an active nuclear naval base, and security is very tight. We will be under the guidance of sponsors, and must follow their instructions to the letter. It is important that we do this, as any breach, however small, may result in the sponsor losing their access and we may not be allowed back in future, so please bear this in mind.

PLYMOUTH EVENTS

These are the events that we have planned for the weekend:

Friday June 6th 8 pm:

An informal social gathering at The Gypsy Moth pub on Citadel Road.

Saturday June 7th 11 am:

GLARAC AGM at The Drake Hotel, Lockyer Street.
Refreshments will be available.

Saturday June 7th 2 pm:

Members Remembrance Service at The Plymouth Naval Memorial, Hoe Gardens, Citadel Road.

Saturday June 7th 7 pm:

Our main social gathering of the year at The Drake Hotel, Lockyer Street. A buffet will be available.

Sunday June 8th 10.30 am:

Service of Remembrance at St. Nicholas' Church, HMS Drake, Devonport.

Sunday 12 noon:

Buffet reception at The Drake Hotel, Lockyer Street.

We've decided to hold our Saturday remembrance at The Naval Memorial on The Hoe because last year some members found it difficult to access the steps and road

to Belvedere Gardens, where our memorial plaque is located. Of course, members can still go there if they wish but we felt that we must give consideration to everyone, and opted for the main memorial in Hoe Park.

We've decided not have a buffet in the naval base after the service on Sunday because this would place a greater burden on our sponsors, who would have to stay with us for a longer period. There was also the question of venue availability for a buffet in the base and taking these into account, we opted for an after service buffet at The Drake Hotel. I can assure you folks, these buffets are excellent and well worth your attendance!

Please try to attend if you can on the 85th anniversary of the loss of our brave boys this year, even if it's just for the Sunday Service. It will be really nice to see you.

GLARAC MALTA

GLARAC Malta Chairman, Sam Azzopardi, his wife Iris and other members continue with their good work in remembering the casualties of Glorious, especially the Maltese. Glorious had more Maltese casualties than any other Royal Navy vessel in WW2.

Towards the end of last year, Sam featured in a 10 week series of short programmes about the Glorious on Maltese TV. These received great interest, so much so that the series was extended beyond the planned 10 weeks. Sam knows the history, and relates it very well.

GLARAC Malta hold a memorial service every year and this is well attended by many senior dignitaries, amongst them last year was the British High Commissioner to Malta, the German Ambassador, the Irish Ambassador and the President of Malta along with members of the RBL. This year, Sam was hoping to hold the memorial on April 6th at Fort St. Angelo, Valletta, but so far there is no confirmation of this, which is a shame as Fort St. Angelo is lovely venue and very appropriate as it once served as a naval base for the Royal Navy.

Sam has also been very helpful in enabling us to return to Devonport for our memorial service in St. Nicholas' Church.

Well done and thank you Sam for all the hard work that you do in helping us to remember. We are extremely grateful.

HMS GLORIOUS DIESEL TRAIN DEDICATION

Some members may recall that in 2020, The Severn Valley Railway had restored a diesel locomotive and named it Glorious, after HMS Glorious. The dedication had been planned for May that year but was cancelled due to the Covid Chaos caused by Bojo the Clown. However, we were contacted recently by Dawn Spencer at the SVR to let us know that the dedication will now take place on Saturday, May 17th, commencing at 11.30 am. There will be representatives from the Royal Navy and we have been invited as an association. The whole event is expected to last approximately 4 hours, which I think includes a journey on the train. I don't think there is an admission charge to the facility but there is a charge to ride on the train. There is plenty of parking but the cost is £4 per day. If anyone would like to attend,

would they please let me know as soon as possible by email so that I can forward details to the SVR. If you're not on email, my phone number is at the end of this letter. The address for the SVR is as follows:

1, Comberton Place
Kidderminster
DY10 1QX

THE SWAN PUB, WIRRAL

Quite recently, one of our members was researching for a book, when he found that there was a pub called The Swan, on The Wirral, that had a photo of HMS Glorious on the wall plus a plaque that had been dedicated to the ship. Subsequent enquiries weren't definite, but we think they were placed there by one of our former members, Fred Thornton, who was a survivor and lived quite local. Sadly, Fred is no longer with us but he was friends with Nigel Heath and David Woodcock, both founding members of GLARAC.

It has been suggested that we try and arrange a visit to the pub, so anyone who would like go please let me know, although we haven't arranged a date yet. If there is enough interest, I'll arrange it to try and suit anyone who wants to go. Please let me know.

THE SHIP INN, DEAL, KENT.

Towards the end of last year, one of our members, Joe Vella, was visiting a pub in Deal called The Ship Inn and noticed a photograph of HMS Glorious on the wall. When he enquired about the relevance, the manage said it was just a navy photo with no attachment to Glorious, just that it was one photo of a ship among many, in a pub called The Ship Inn. Oh well, at least the photo is there for patrons to look at. However, the manager did say he was ex Royal Navy and had served in Malta, with many happy memories, so a big thank you to Joe Vella for letting us know about this.

HMS GLORIOUS DOCUMENTARY

You may remember that I told you about our Plymouth Liaison Officer, Lauren Soar, producing a short documentary about the loss of the three ships. This is well in advance now and not far short of completion. Part of the filming took place recently on HMS Belfast and it is hoped that enough interest can be generated in order to produce a full documentary which may be broadcast on main stream media. Lauren has managed to acquire generous funding for the production and GLARAC was pleased to help with this and donate £500 towards the costs. Lauren is hoping to produce new evidence in order to get to the truth about the loss of the three ships, so we look forward to seeing the production fairly soon.

MEMORIALS

Because of your generosity with donations, it was felt that we should try and locate some more memorial plaques in relevant places. John Clarke is trying to have a memorial plaque for each ship located in, or near, the shipyards where they were built, i.e. Ardent and Acasta in Glasgow, and Glorious in Belfast, so far this is looking

good and we have designed a plaque for each location but will wait for permission before ordering production.

We were hoping to have a plaque located in Lyness Cemetery, Scapa Flow, as this was the last venue that the ships sailed from, but the CWGC refused us permission on the grounds of equality, ie, if we do it for you, we'll have to do it for everyone else. A great shame.

Another blow came when we had a new plaque produced with the intention of changing it on our memorial plinth in the National Memorial Arboretum. The new plaque has the badges of all the units that were lost on the three ships and it was felt this would be a more suitable memorial to those that were lost. See attachment. However, when it was submitted to the NMA, they refused us permission to use it because they said it mentions sponsors. The last line on the plaque says "Donated by family and friends of the GLARAC Association". The NMA said this wasn't acceptable, which I found to be a bit rich, when the front page of their website says they need sponsors and donors. I asked would it be acceptable if we removed the last line and they said yes but we would have to pay approximately £4,750 in application and maintenance fees. We decided that it was too expensive to commission another plaque, as this one had cost over £600 and we now need a location for it. The centrally located arboretum is the ideal place, but the cost is too prohibitive, so we now need your suggestions please for a location. One suggestion is the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard; a good suggestion, but I feel we should try and locate it somewhere more central in the country. The NMA is out, so we're open to ideas!

We are also hoping to place a memorial plaque in the city of Cork, in the Republic of Ireland. There were approximately 50 casualties from Ireland, lost on the three ships, many of whom came from the Cork area. This year, European Maritime Day will be held in Cork on Sunday May 25th and it would be really nice if we could have a plaque ready for that date. With this in mind, the chairman of GLARAC Malta, Sam Azzopardi, had been in contact with the Maltese Ambassador to Ireland, Giovanni Buttigieg, to see if he could help us to have the plaque located in Cork in time for EMD. Sam is keen for this to happen and has worked hard to help with it but was very disappointed to hear from Mr. Buttigieg that he could not justify his involvement as there is no connection to Maltese casualties. A big disappointment but one that we can try and overcome. I intend to email the EMD Committee to see if we can make any progress, so watch this space.

That's all for now folks. I'll be in touch again soon, hopefully with good news about our new memorial plaques.

Take care and best regards. I wish you good health.

Vinny Marcroft, Secretary & Treasurer, GLARAC.

Dear members,

Following on from my recent updates, I just want to remind people of a few things. I hope you don't mind me doing this.

85TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE, PLYMOUTH

You should have received your booking form by now, for the 85th Anniversary Memorial Service at St. Nicholas' Church in HMS Drake. If you haven't already done so, and you intend to be there, can I ask you to return your confirmation as soon as possible to Lauren please? This will help The Chaplaincy to plan our visit and ensure we are properly catered for. Even if you only intend going to the church service, it will be nice to see you. We are hoping for a large attendance this year, to mark the 85th anniversary of the loss of our brave relatives, so if you can make it, we look forward to seeing you.

GLORIOUS TRAIN DEDICATION

This will take place on Saturday, May 17th, commencing at 11.30 am, at The Severn Valley Railway in Kidderminster. As mentioned previously, I don't think there is any admission charge, but parking costs £4 per day. Seating will be provided for anyone who requires it. Please let me know.

This is great honour for Glorious to be remembered by the SVR. They also have locomotives named after other great ships, such as Hood, Ark Royal, Exeter, Valliant and others.

The itinerary for the visit is as follows

Rededication of 50033 Glorious held on the platform with representation from HMS Glorious Association and the Royal Navy

11:30 Light refreshments provided

12:00 - 12:45

Sea Cadet guard of Honour and invited dignitaries proceed to the platform in front of the locomotive and gathered audience.

Ceremony

- * Welcome
- * Service of remembrance for HMS Glorious and her crew
- * Speeches

13:00 /13:30

Locomotive and saloon observation coach are attached to service train and travel to Hampton Loade or Bridgnorth with return to Kidderminster with 50033

Invited guests will travel in the luxury observation saloon with refreshments provided as our guests.

Round trip takes approximately 3 .5 hours.

This event is due to take place during the Severn Valley Railway Spring diesel gala and the railway will be busy.

The railway has a large car park and I can consult to arrange some reserved parking spaces if required.

Kidderminster mainline National Rail train station is right next to Kidderminster SVR station.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you wish to attend, as the SVR are asking for numbers.

THE SWAN INN, WIRRAL.

There is no great hurry to arrange a visit to The Swan, but I know a few people have expressed an interest. If you would like to be a part of that, can you let me know please? Thanks.

That's all for now folks. Hope to see you soon.

Take care and best regards,

Vinny Marcroft, GLARAC.