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President: The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Gainsborough

SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER

The Remembrance Service held at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 22nd November 2008 was once again very moving. As usual it was preceded by evensong but exceptionally this was also attended by 1500 people who had come to remember a famine 75 years ago in the Soviet Ukraine known as Holodomor. It was a National Day of Remembrance for the 3.5 million people who starved to death in the country's worst catastrophe in modern times.

Our Remembrance service was attended by 97 members and their guests including three survivors: Mr George Knott, Mr Jack Nealon and Mr Jim Pratt. Because of the Holodomor remembrance Abbey staff led members of the Association directly to seats in the south transept for Evensong. On completion of the service and after the others had left, Association members retired to the nave for our Remembrance Service. This was conducted by the Canon in residence Canon Nicholas Sagovsky who accepted the Standard paraded by Chief Petty Officer Bob Woodgate. This was followed by the family of the late survivor Arthur "Ginger" Bryant laying the wreath on behalf of those present. The service started with a minute's silence in memory of lost comrades, parents, husbands and relatives.

We would particularly like to thank Mr Alan and Mrs Pat Picket for again kindly making and delivering the beautiful wreath. This year they had the additional task of making a new stand as after last year's service the wreath and stand had inadvertently been disposed of by the Abbey staff. Thank you both for all your very successful work.

It was very pleasing for committee members to meet so many old and new friends attending the service and it was good to welcome Mrs Nellie Mogridge for her first visit. Afterwards some members made their way to the Union Jack Club where they were made welcome for a rewarding beverage and meal.

Provisional dates for the 2009 Remembrance service will either be Saturday 21st or 28th November. We will let you know which in our autumn newsletter.

CPO Bob Woodgate has been awarded the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for meritorious service. This is awarded annually by the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Greater London and is recognition of his 41 years service with the Sea Cadet Corps as a uniformed instructor. Bob joined HMS Barham, Wembley Sea Cadet Unit, and completed 4 years cadet service before joining the staff. The presentation took place on 12th March at the RFCA Headquarters in Fulham.

The Secretary would like to thank all members of the Association for all their support during his period as secretary and treasurer, but feels that he is slowing down and would prefer a younger person to take the helm. The main requirements for the position are arranging for members to attend the Remembrance service, publishing and posting the newsletters and arranging for two committee meetings each year. It would therefore be appreciated if a volunteer or volunteers could step forward for either or both these positions. The Association's funds are comfortable and the secretary would be able to help with the handovers.

Unless we get a volunteer we will not be sending out a spring newsletter next year. A report of the service will be placed in the latest news section of the website "www.hmsbarham.com". We will try to keep the autumn newsletters going until 2011, after which we will review the situation again.

I have received a letter from Billy Allum whose father Francis was a survivor. One of Billy's work colleagues on holiday in Corfu had spotted a grave of interest in the English cemetery, and Billy has forwarded on the two photos he took of the grave. The stone states it is to the memory of John Stephen Hudson Ordinary seaman of HMS Barham who died on 8th December 1937 and says that the stone was erected by his shipmates as a token of respect.

I would like to thank all those who have been in contact with the Association for their support and gifts. I would also like to thank my committee for all their work to keep the organisation going.

Yours sincerely
Michael K Stratton-Brown, Chairman