



**MINUTES OF THE 33RD MEETING OF THE
FLY NAVY FEDERATION**
Held online, 1300 Friday 30th October 2020
www.flynavyfederation.org.uk



Present (via Zoom – recording available on request):

Jock Alexander	Chairman/Navy Wings
Cdre Nick Walker RN	Commodore Fleet Air Arm/Deputy Director Naval Aviation
Rod Fearnley	Aircraft Handlers Association
Adrian Naylor, Harry Worth	Aircrewmans Association
Serena Davidson	AnyFace Association
Arthur Charles, Gill Charles,	Cloud Observers Association
Jim Moulson	FAAA + Armourers Association
Arnold Thompson, Ben Worship	Fleet Air Arm Association
Peter Montgomery, Brian Stanley, Robin Harper	FAA Buccaneer Association
H Williams	FAA Field Gun Crew Association
Steve George (briefing provided by)	FAA Memorial Church
Andy Harris, Gill Kerslake	FAA Officers Association
Dave Clark	Fulmar Association/Covesea
Alan Breward	National Memorial Arboretum rep
Danny du Feu, Ray Whitehouse	RN Photographers Association
Dave Philpot	RN Safety Equip & Survival Assn
Steve Abbott, Bob Gellett, Gary Neil	Sea Harrier Association
Phil Carpenter	Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. Jock Alexander opened the meeting, thanked all for ‘attending’ in this new online format, and wished all members of associations well in these challenging times. He also welcomed Serena Davidson and the AnyFace Association to the Federation, and it is great to have them onboard.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

2. On-going items were carried forward to the agenda.

COMMAND BRIEF

3. Commodore Nick Walker, Commodore Fleet Air Arm and Deputy Director Navy Aviation, is thanked for sparing the time in his very busy schedule to brief the meeting. He outlined the great work being carried out by all arms of a very busy FAA. This includes supporting Covid response at home and abroad, whilst continuing to train hard, introduce new equipment, and prepare for the first operational deployment of HMS Queen Elizabeth and the Carrier Strike Group in 2021. These are amazing times for the FAA (including a Cdr RN being CO of 617 Sqn RAF – the Dambusters – ready to deploy F35s on HMSQNLZ next year) with a lot of positive media coverage of Navy Aviation.

NAVY WINGS (navywings.org.uk, office@navywings.org.uk, 01935 842005)

4. As CEO of Navy Wings, Jock Alexander explained that with no flying taking place it has been a difficult year for the charity (as for all charities), but that things remain positive. There has been wide interest in the social media output and FAA dits, excellent interest in the lottery, and consequently a very good increase in online sales.

The ex-RN Historic Flight aircraft are planned to transfer to Navy Wings ownership on the 1st of January 2021. They have been placed on the civil register, but can't fly until full transfer of ownership to NW. Ground running is taking place, and the aircraft are in good shape. It is hoped that several of the key aircraft will be flying early next year, along with the many associate aircraft, now including a Stinson Reliant, Wessex Mk5, and Sea Kings Mk4 and 5. The exciting prospect of being able to offer passenger flights in the likes of the Swordfish and Sea Fury is a real possibility for 2021.

A grant from the government's Culture Recovery Fund has also been a huge and very welcome boost to keep the charity itself in good shape, for when the aircraft can return to the skies.

The Navy Wings Store www.navywingsflightstore.org has many new lines of books (FAA Boys, Harrier 809 recently added) and FAA-related goods, and continues to offer a discount to members of all Associations of the Federation – **including special offers for Taranto and (soon) Christmas.**

FLEET AIR ARM MEMORIAL CHURCH (navyyeo-chaplaincyshared@mod.gov.uk, 01935 455257)

5. Steve George was not able to attend the meeting, but forwarded an update presentation on the **Fleet Air Arm Memorial Pathway Project**. The presentation is attached with the minutes, and gives more detail about the project's progress and aims. Primarily this is to keep it inclusive and to appeal to all members of the Fleet Air Arm, celebrating all who have served, whether still with us or not.

FLY NAVY FEDERATION - ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

6. **I. AnyFace Association.** www.anyfaceassociation.com. Serena Davidson explained the origins of the Association and its name, which comes from the callsign for a friendly Airborne Early Warning (AEW) aircraft. The AnyFace Association is dedicated to the Royal Navy's AEW Capability since 1952. It is open to members of 849, 854, 857 Sqns & 824 D Flight, and currently has 220 mainly aircrew and engineer members. Please see the website for more details and history. Association webmasters please create a link to AnyFace for 'mutual support' where appropriate.

II. FAA Memorial – National Memorial Arboretum (NMA). Thanks to Alan Breward for continuing to check on the memorial and provide an up-to-date brief. Thankfully the memorial has stayed relatively clean, but it is now 11 years old, and does have some small but significant areas of damage (frost and other weathering) to some of the stones and lime mortar. Pictures are on the FNF website. It will be necessary to do some repairs, the costs of which are explained below. Natural Cut Stone (NCS) believe that a probable cause of the cracks in the Portland Stone is the wet ground, and lack of damp-proof course (DPC) in the original build. Adding a DPC would be a large, expensive and long-term problem to rectify, albeit that once carried out the memorial would be much better protected against weathering. Although general upkeep has so far been undertaken by NCS, who also make the plinths, the NMA offers maintenance packages, with staff on site.

- Annual steam-cleans (x4), weed removal and grass trimming - £198 per year (£168+ VAT). This was approved by all, using existing FNF funds.

- The above service can be offered in perpetuity (the life of the memorial/NMA) for an up-front donation to the NMA of £4000 (25 years of the annual fee, minus VAT). This would be an excellent proposition, but without a legacy/donation this was deemed too large an outlay.

- To remove and replace the cracked stones, and repair the damaged lime mortar/pointing, the estimated cost is £1500. This work will need to be undertaken in Spring 2021 (lime mortar work is not advisable in cold/wet conditions), and funds found/approved. Several associations said that they will be willing to contribute, which was greatly appreciated. More details to follow in the new year.

- To add a DPC would involve taking apart the 'carrier' structure, inserting blocks and a damp-proof membrane, re-assembling the memorial and potentially adding a more durable top surface. Estimated cost is £5000-£7500, depending on the chosen materials. This is a very long-term goal, as it is unlikely that such funds would be available without a large legacy/donation.

The 820 Sqn plinth is ready at NCS, but probably will be laid in spring, after the memorial has been cleaned, and consequently in prime condition for any ceremony once Covid restrictions are lifted.

III. Remembrance Day Cenotaph March. Following the meeting a further national lockdown was announced. Therefore, with gatherings limited to only two people from different households in public places, very sadly all Remembrance ceremonies, events and gatherings for 2021 have been cancelled. Hopefully 2021 will see a return of the main ceremonies, the FNF gathering at the Embankment FAA Memorial, and association social events following-on afterwards.

IV. FAA Memorial Service - Lee on Solent. The first lockdown meant that the usual ceremony could not take place in May 2020, but many thanks to Arnold Thompson, Ben Worship and a small safely-distance group who placed wreaths at the FAA Memorial on the day to keep the tradition going. If the situation does not allow the full ceremony to be held in 2021, it is likely that a similar arrangement for placing wreaths will be put in place if possible.

V. Lossiemouth Covesea Museum. covesealighthouse.co.uk Dave Clark stated that the museum was not able to open until July, but did then welcome visitors during the summer period. Items for display are always welcome, and it is hoped that a relationship can be established with the FAA Museum at Yeovilton, in order to utilise some of the many relevant items in storage in Cobham Hall, which the Covesea Museum would be delighted to display. The museum received a government grant, and income from renting out the luxury holiday cottages, which have seen virtually full bookings. All enquiries for the cottages are best made through Dave, as this will result in a 5% donation of the proceedings going to Navy Wings.

VI. i. Veterans' Railcard. www.veterans-railcard.co.uk. The railcard is now available to anyone who served *one day* in the Armed Forces (that definitely covers most association members!). It gives 1/3rd off most rail travel, including peak time, as well as for another nominated person + up to 4 children, which is more flexible than most other railcards. Currently the railcard costs £21 per year

(£30 after 31.3.21), with a 3-year card available for £61 (£70 after 31.3.21). Please follow the link above for more details.

ii. **Veterans' Oyster Card.** This offers superb free travel benefits, but is more restrictive as to who can obtain one; it is primarily for those on the War Pensions Scheme, or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. Details can be found at: <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/veterans-oyster-photocard>. Thanks to Rod Fearnley for highlighting this.

iii. **Veteran's ID card.** The card is currently only available to those who left the Forces after December 2018. Phase 2 of the roll-out to existing veterans should be announced soon.

VII. **Channel Dash 80.** Malcolm Godfrey was not able to join the meeting, but asked it to be noted that plans for Channel Dash 80 in 2022 are still pushing ahead. The Memorial Trust is awaiting decisions on the development of Manston airfield, and although this will not affect the commemoration of CD80, it will have an effect on the venue, and will be the swansong of the Trust.

AOB AND INDIVIDUAL ASSOCIATION UPDATES

(Note: For a list of RN Associations' reunions, visit <http://www.rnshipmates.co.uk/reunions.php>)

7. i. **All face-to-face events, AGMs and reunions since March were cancelled, but in the main deposits from venues, bands and hotels have been carried forward to 2021.**

ii. **FAAA.** Reunion re-planned for late 2021, AGM online in May. A Solent Branch social event for 20 members, consisting of 5 socially-distanced tables of 4 people on each, planned for Tuesday 3rd Nov just beat the 2nd lockdown and remained within the rules. Well done!

iii. **RNPA.** Zoom AGM in December, all else moved to 2021. It is hoped that the 102nd anniversary of the Phot branch will be noted by the BBC for Remembrance Sunday in 2021.

iv. **SHARA.** 40th anniversary of the Sea Harrier carried forward to 2021. The planned Thames River Cruise following the Cenotaph March will be re-attempted in 2021 – other associations are very welcome to join and get some sea time.

v. **AnyFace.** Gannet Reunion still planned for April 2021 in Haverfordwest. AnyFace 70 celebrations being planned for 2022.

vi. **RNSES.** Reunion/AGM planned for April 2021 at the Aztec Hotel Bristol.

vii. **FAAOA.** Taranto 80 Dinner postponed to March/April 2021, with the usual Taranto Dinner to follow in November 2021. AGMs held successfully online.

viii. **Aircrewmen.** Membership numbers are up (482), with all direct entry crewmen joining the association, which is great news. Adrian Naylor raised the subject of the Army Navy rugby game, which Jock Alexander stated will almost definitely be moved from Twickenham to another venue for 2021. Twickenham is too expensive for a much-reduced crowd; more details to follow when available.

ix. **AHA.** One of the few associations to manage a face-to-face reunion in 2020, this was held on March 1st, just before the 1st lockdown. It involved a fitting retirement send off (after 12 years in their respective roles) for Vic Murphy and Rod Fearnley, with Admiral Sir Adrian Johns (founder of the FNF) attending. Les Stringer is the new Chairman, Del Bowmer has taken over as secretary, and Joe Doyle takes over as treasurer.

x. **FAAFGCA.** 4 meetings held online successfully, all plans on hold until things become more clear for 2021. H Williams will follow up with Jock Alexander to feed in to VL Command the question of whether Yeovilton will be placing a wreath in Ilchester this year.

xi. **FAABA.** Elgin reunion carried forward to 2021. The association donated towards the move of the Buccaneer Aviation Group from Bruntingthorpe to Kemble, and continues to support Blind Veterans UK – many thanks for that.

xii. **Website.** Arthur Charles is thanked for continuing to maintain and update the website, and highlighted that a change of platform will be required, as it will no longer be supported from the end of 2021. The secretary will discuss this with Arthur.

xiii. Steve Abbott raised the subject of the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands War (2022), and wondered whether associations have any plans for commemorations. There are no current plans, but the discussion has now been raised.

xiv. Navy wings had planned a Zoom Taranto 80 dinner, which was set to have some fantastic speakers of senior FAA figures past and present. Sadly the second lockdown has forced the cancellation of this event.

xv. **A request from the Chairman to all associations: please reach out to all members, particularly those in vulnerable situations, now that the second lockdown has come in to force. This will leave many shipmates potentially isolated and lonely, so a phone call, and maybe online tot, will always raise morale. Look after your oppos, and Up Spirits!**

TOT.

8. A tot was held online following the meeting, with the toast being the most relevant of the new Royal Navy toasts for the current times – Our Families – followed by its original wording – Sweethearts and Wives. This will be continued at the next meeting if held online.

NEXT MEETING.

9. Although it is impossible to plan the format for the next meeting at this range, it is proposed to be held on **Friday 26th March 2021**, more details to follow in due course.

Phil Carpenter
Secretary
Fly Navy Federation

(Signed on original)

A copy of the recording of the Zoom meeting is available on request from the Secretary -
(secretary@flynavyfederation.org.uk)