

# The Fulminator

HMS Fulmar Association  
Newsletter



September 2011

Hello to you all and I hope this communication finds you all fit and well. Much has happened since the last newsletter with real concerns over the fate of the RN, the FAA and RAF Lossiemouth. Thankfully all three are still very much active although the cuts have hit at all three, the FAA in particular. But more of that later as the main news for most of you will be the progress made with organizing the much awaited HMS Fulmar reunion.

I can now finally announce the dates and prices of the 2012 Reunion package which has finally been put together and agreed between ourselves and the hotel. It will be held at the Eight Acres Hotel and Leisure Complex in Elgin over the weekend of the 25-27th May 2012, which incidentally is the late May bank holiday weekend. The hotel is very popular and the only other weekend we were offered fell in the middle of the school holiday period so this date was the preferred choice. I can confirm the fixed prices for May 2012 as £68 pp for 1 night, £105 pp for 2 nights and £138 pp for 3 nights. There will be a £10 supplement for the weekend to cover entertainment and drinks for the meet and greet etc. (50% discount for full members). Some of you will recognize these as the same as for the 2011 RCH reunion so I believe we have a good deal as the hotel is as good if not better than the RCH. There is no hotel in the Area with enough accommodation for everyone so, like 5 years ago some of you will have to make your own arrangements. In regards to accommodation breakdown the hotel has offered the following:

18 Single, 11 Double, 7 Twin, 12 Twin/Double, 3 Triple and 2 Suites

The Sherwood Suite can hold up to 220 people for a sit down meal, (we had 224 five years ago in the Mess), however there is an additional function room next to this called the Westray Suite which can hold up to 80 people. We intend to put the Casino in the Westray with a couple of overflow tables for additional people who wish to attend but not eat. The cost for this will be the £10 supplement. The cost for people in other accommodation but having the Saturday Gala Dinner will be **£20** pp. The people sitting on the dance floor tables will also be relocated to this room (or the Bar!!) once the meal has finished so the disco dancers can strut their stuff.

Hotel rooms must be booked individually by yourselves on a first come basis quoting the Reunion Booking Number which is 1408. You must use this number to get the package price and if you do not quote it you may be told the hotel is full as all rooms are booked by the FAABA against this number. Once you have booked please contact myself to book your places on the master list sending me the supplement charge or if in other accommodation, the meal costs (which excludes the supplement). Please make cheques payable to the FAA Buccaneer Association.

People in other accommodation may elect to have their Friday evening meal in the hotel if they wish. I have asked for a "Stovies Night" and the non resident cost for this will be **£7.25**. (Both costs exclude the supplement so for example a non resident couple wishing to take the Friday and Saturday meals will pay £74.50 in total).

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## The Defence Overview and comments on the consequences.

Late last year, the UK armed forces were rocked by the effects of a Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) process overseen by a new coalition government determined to tackle a massive budget deficit head-on. Almost 12 months later, the defence industry will gather for its largest post-SDSR coming-together at the Defence & Security Equipment International show, or DSEi, which will be held in London's Docklands on 13-16 September. It will be very interesting to see what benefits, if any are seen to have come out of the SDSR.

Since the SDSR the UK has lost its fixed-wing carrier strike capability with the early retirement of the Harrier GR7/9s, and seen its replacement maritime patrol aircraft, BAE's Nimrod MRA4, axed after a programme investment of over £3 billion. Also gone are two of the Royal Navy's three Invincible-class aircraft carriers and the Royal Air Force's last Tornado F3 fighters and Nimrod R1 electronic intelligence aircraft. Two squadrons equipped with the newer Tornado GR4 strike aircraft have also recently been disbanded, with the move having also trimmed a fleet that is expected to remain in use until around 2020.

Attention at DSEi will be given to Lockheed Martin's F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), which will be on display as a full-scale mock-up. The UK's last-minute decision to swap to the C-model carrier variant, to meet the Joint Combat Aircraft requirement from late this decade, means the F-35C will now be flown from the Royal Navy's (RN's) two future aircraft carriers, with the need to reintroduce a big-deck operating model last employed by the UK in the late 1970s.

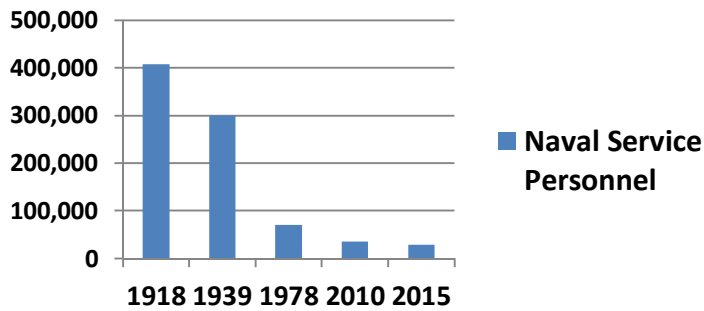
Abandoning years of experience in flying vertical/short take-off and landing Harriers could end up costing UK taxpayers billions of pounds extra, defence sources claim, as a result of the additional training needed to ensure pilots maintain proficiency. Regaining this skill is already a focus of attention, with the RN looking to train a new cadre of Fleet Air Arm officers on US Navy Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornets, a programme currently ongoing in the US. Interestingly there are no current exchange of maintainers and aircraft handlers to keep this expertise in the FAA! But for now, while the UK's carrier strike capability lapses, the strong performance of the Army Air Corps' Westland/Boeing Apache AH1 attack helicopters over Libya in May 2011 from HMS Ocean has highlighted one likely means by which the nation could respond to other such contingencies until its future aircraft carriers and F-35Cs enter use.

The message we need to get across to the Public, and we must keep hammering this point home is that the defence of this island country is dependent on a strong Navy and a strong Fleet Air Arm. Whilst popular opinion is that the RAF led Battle of Britain was the saving point of WW2, in fact this was not the actual real truth. The reason we were able to continue and eventually win the war was due to the superiority of our Navy and it's Air Arm in the Atlantic in protecting the convoys, which ensured a steady stream of supplies and armourment into the country. Without the air cover the FAA provided to these convoys shipping losses would have been far higher and our ability to take the war to the continent would have been severely compromised by lack of food and vital equipment.

It is NOT the Associations policy to get into a slanging match with the other services; we are all in need of additional resource and political commitment. That said we all need to fight to get the public perception of the FAA in its true perspective and worth to the country. Ask the Public how many enemy aircraft have been shot down by the RAF since WW2 (Ans. NIL). How many will get it right?

The graph opposite illustrates the reduction in Naval personnel over the last 100 years. This is a trend which must be reversed if we are to continue to protect our country from 21st Century threats.

## Naval Service Personnel



The photograph below shows some of the FAABA members who attended the 2010 reunion at the Royal Court Hotel near Coventry. This event is open to all HMS Fulmar members, some of who make the annual pilgrimage down to attend. Do you recognise anyone? More pictures and names can be seen on our website.



A young Scottish lad and lass were sitting on a low stone wall, holding hands, gazing out over the loch. For several minutes they sat silently. Then finally the girl looked at the boy and said, "A penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was thinkin'... perhaps it's about time for a wee kiss."

The girl blushed, then leaned over and kissed him lightly on the cheek. Then he blushed. The two turned once again to gaze out over the loch. Minutes passed and the girl spoke again, "Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was thinkin' perhaps it's about time for a wee cuddle." The girl blushed, then leaned over and cuddled him for a few seconds. Then he blushed. And the two turned once again to gaze out over the loch. After a while, she again said, "Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was thinkin' perhaps it's about time you let me put my hand on your leg." The girl blushed, then took his hand and put it on her knee. Then he blushed. The two turned once again to gaze out over the loch before the girl spoke again, "Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

The young man glanced down with a furled brow, "Well, noow," he said, "my thoughts are a wee bit more serious this time."

"Really?" said the lass in a whisper, filled with anticipation.

"Aye," said the lad, nodding.

The girl looked away in shyness, began to blush, and bit her lip in anticipation of the ultimate request. Then he said, "Dae ye nae think it's about time ye paid me the first three pennies?"

Coming Up soon ....

### THE BI-ANNUAL FIXED WING CHARITY DINNER

This event is open to **all** Fulmar and FAABA members. It will once again be held in the WO&SR Mess at RNAS Yeovilton on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2011. Tickets are £30 a head with all proceeds being donated to the new work being carried out on the FAA Memorial at the National Arboretum. This is a joint venture between the FAABA and the SHA and the evening is open to anyone who has served on, or in support of, any FAA FW aircraft in any capacity. Please contact Dave Clark if you would like to attend or alternately download the form from our website and apply yourselves.

### REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE AT THE CENOTAPH

The FAABA/Fulmar Associations have 24 allocated tickets to march at the 2011 parade. They are available to all members on a first come basis from Brian Stanley (see contacts panel). It would be nice to get a few more members involved in this very high profile event. (Bring a hip flask)

### THE LIMES CHARITY BALL

This event is also open to **all** Fulmar and FAABA members. The 3rd Annual Charity Dinner is to be held at The Limes Country Club (South Birmingham area) on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The premises are owned and managed by Dave Morris (a member of the FAABA and FGC Associations) and all profits this year are again going to Armed Forces Charities including donations to the FNHT and the Memorial Fund.

Those that attended last year will know what a great evening's entertainment was had by all and almost everyone pledged to attend this year's event, so leave that weekend free in your diaries and come along and enjoy. There is plenty of reasonably priced accommodation in the area, and a list of local hotels, B&B etc. will be sent out later. Tickets are priced at £45 each which includes a four course meal and a full entertainment programme. Again tickets are available from Dave Clark.

The FAABA and HMS Fulmar Associations are non profit, comrades organisations with the aim of bringing together old friends and colleagues who served in the Royal Navy, and who worked either on Buccaneer aircraft, or served at HMS Fulmar or RAF Honington. We operate a strict security policy and do not put personal details into the public domain without prior permission. All contact details are kept on a secure off line database. Anyone wishing to have details of themselves visible on the website can contact our webmaster with the info they wish to show.

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