

SEPT 04



# The HMS Exmouth 1940 Association

Founded 2001

“WE WILL RETURN!”.....since our very first meeting in September 2001, it has been the stated aim of our association to return to the town of Wick, dare I say our spiritual home. Where the town folk of that remote Caithness town turned out in great numbers to bury those crew members from the Exmouth washed up along their coastline, and honour the memory of the entire crew 64 years ago.

It was most apparent during our visit to Wick three years ago, that the succeeding generations of that town still remember, and hold the crew of the Exmouth in such high esteem.

I can report that this week I have received official confirmation from David More, Session Clerk, that they will allow us to place a Commemorative Plaque in the Old Parish Church as a permanent memorial to the crew of H.M.S Exmouth for ever more.

A lot of planning needs to take place over the next 12 months and we will send out further details as and when they are known. However we are advising that you pencil in the dates for the weekend of 3<sup>rd</sup>/ 4<sup>th</sup> September 2005 to attend the unveiling of the commemorative plaque (see copy attached), which has been approved at the recent Kirk Session.

Rather belatedly, I would like to thank all those members who attended the D- Day celebrations back in June, in the town of Exmouth, where we were made most welcome by everybody especially at the Royal Air Force Association (who kindly donated £200 to our funds) and not least the Viscount Exmouth and the town Mayor himself.

The weekend was blessed by glorious weather , and for our members to be part of the service which included veterans of World War 2 and a Royal Marines band and Guard of Honour was a most memorable occasion.

The site of our own veteran, Gordan French , laying the wreath in memory of his fallen comrades must have brought a tear of sorrow to everyone who attended - well done ‘Froggy’ you did us and your ship mates proud. He really was a “star” over the weekend and every body wanted to meet him.

A special mention must also go to Tom Stennant, who’s father Leonard was lost onboard, who amongst many others took part in the parade through the town to the applause of the crowds lining the streets. I trust he won’t mind me mentioning his advancing years and the fact that he doesn’t enjoy the best of health, but to see him march, proudly displaying his medals, was an inspiration to us all, as was the turn out of all the veterans on parade, well done Tom.

I must also mention that Tom travelled to Exmouth from Leeds on the National Express coach on his own as his wife was too frail to accompany him. In his haste to get to Exmouth, he left his suitcase including all his clothes, medals and treasured memorabilia book on the coach. An anxious 24 hours was had by all before, I am pleased to report, it turned up safe and sound at the Exeter bus depot.

One further piece of news received from Wick is that the Rev. Stevie Thomson, who held such a memorable service on our behalf in 2001, is himself joining the Royal Navy as a Chaplain later this year. He will be based in Portsmouth and will spend time at sea on operational warships- we wish him all the best.

With Kind Regards,

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Secretary: Mrs Sue Eastwood ~~54 Redhouse Park Gardens~~ Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2EE

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