

Shipmates Helpline – Invitation to all MNA members

28th March 2020

Dear MNA Shipmates

Shipmates Helpline – Invitation to all MNA members

Whilst we remain in a state of emergency, for the duration of the coronavirus, outbreak, our colleagues in the Royal Navy Association have established a ***Shipmates Helpline*** and have invited and encouraged MNA members to use this, for which we are most grateful. The advantage is that, of course, many of them are below 70 years of age and without underlying health problems. This means, wherever they have such members, they can make shopping trips and collect prescriptions. They also have a referral service if you need other forms of assistance.

If you need help, please contact them. The details of this are as follows:

ESTABLISHMENT OF HQ ROLL RNA SHIPMATES HELPLINE – 07542 680082

Government Advice. The Prime Minister has just outlined drastic measures restricting our movement in order to combat Covid-19. Much of our RNA demographic is over 70 so already will be self-isolating.

Branch Support. Our experience last week is that many branches have established some sort of buddy buddy system to look after the more vulnerable element of our membership. One branch is operating a kind of reverse Sea Daddy operation where younger shipmates are teamed with more elderly shipmates to make sure they are okay. That's great and exactly what this organization is all about. For those Branch Committees who haven't yet put something in place, please can we request you consider this at the earliest opportunity keeping in mind that some Shipmates may not be connected via email. Meanwhile, we have refocused Central Office outputs to concentrate on Welfare Support to shipmates.

HQ Roll Helpline. While branches will undoubtedly play their part, we are conscious that well over 1000 of our shipmates are HQ Roll members so, by definition, do not have a branch. For this section of our membership, Central Office has established a

helpline which will be manned initially from 0900-2100 commencing with immediate effect. We will review operating hours in line with demand.

Although aimed at HQ Roll members any member in need of assistance who cannot raise their Branch or an oppo can feel free to use this Helpline - 07542 680082

Concept of Operations. When a shipmate calls in requesting assistance, his location and contact details will be logged. Depending on the request, it may be that through our network of branches we can provide support from within our organisation and, in these cases, contact will then be made with the Welfare Officer or Secretary of the closest branch who will be asked if they can provide the support requested. As the PM directed, providing help to a vulnerable person is a legitimate reason to leave the house.

HQ Roll Buddy Buddy. We remain concerned about those who are socially isolated; a situation which is only amplified by the current restrictions. If desired, we can also establish a buddy buddy connection service to pair up shipmates who might find themselves on their own. Please call the helpline (**07542 680082**) if you would wish to be part of this and we will look to hook you up with an oppo. Volunteers to be part of this system would also be very welcome. Shipmates are reminded of the 1000 Good Deeds Fund which is available for minor grants. See attached.

Shipmates and Oppos. In addition, through our Shipmates and Oppos programme and wider welfare work, Central Office has built up a good understanding of the network of support agencies which operate in the military charity and veteran environment. Until now Shipmates and Oppos has been aimed at those transitioning from RN to civvy, but again with immediate effect, we're changing it's focus to be a support system for help signposting any shipmate who is experiencing difficulties with their life whether attributable to naval life or not. Whether it's financial, housing, employment, health care or even marital, we can help you find the right organisation to be able to help.

Follow guidance, stay safe and best wishes



Royal Naval Association

Building 1/87

Scott Road

HM Naval Base

Portsmouth

PO1 3LU

Email admin@royalnavalassoc.com

Tel 023 9272 3747

Registered charity No. 266982