



From the General Secretary

Dear Area/Branch Secretaries and HQ Roll Shipmates,

23 Mar 2020

ESTABLISHMENT OF HQ ROLL RNA SHIPMATES HELPLINE – 07542 680082

Government Advice. The current Government advice is that the over 70s should now be self-isolating. Clearly this is an anathema for RNA Shipmates as we are all about sociability and avoiding social isolation however these are drastic times and if we are to beat this virus then I would implore our membership to follow the Government's advice.

Branch Support. Our experience this 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.

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,

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