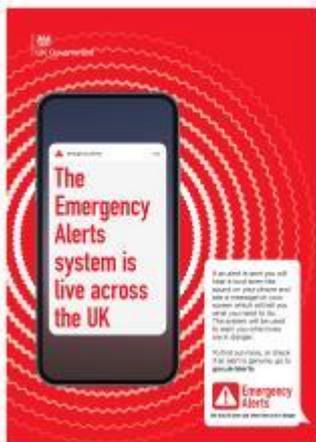


RUSHDEN BRANCH NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2025

NATIONAL EMERGENCY ALERTS SUNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 1500 HOURS (3PM)



There will be a national **test** of the UK's Emergency Alerts system on Sunday 7th September at 1500 hours (3pm).

The test alert will be sent to most mobile phones across the UK, but especially those on a 4G or 5G network.

Devices will make a distinct, siren-like sound for up to 10 seconds, including on phones switched to silent mode. Phones will also vibrate and display a message about the test.

For further information visit www.gov.uk/alerts

THIS IS A TEST ONLY In a real situation, if you do not have a compatible device, you'll still be informed about an emergency. The emergency services have other ways to warn you when there is a threat to life.

POPPY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: 25TH OCTOBER TO 8TH NOVEMBER 2025

It may appear to be too early asking for Poppy Volunteers, but now is the time to get in touch. If you wish to volunteer, please contact Poppy Appeal Organiser Ruth Miller at either poppyappealrushden@gmail.com or via text ONLY on **07962 040685**. Please do pass Ruth's details to any family, friends or neighbours who wish to help out.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN CHURCH SERVICE – SUNDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER 2025

The Battle of Britain took place in 1940, and 2025 will mark 85 years since that pivotal event in WW2; historically, 15th September is the actual date. The RAF Association Padre, Rev Louise Bishop, will be holding a service in St Mary's Church at Higham Ferrers, on Sunday 14th September 2025 commencing 1030 hours after which there will be an unveiling of a Blue Plaque on the wall of Wilson-Browne Solicitors in Higham Ferrers Market Square, in honour of WW2 RAF Fighter Ace Pilot Air Vice Marshall Edward Dixon Crew CB DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar and where he was born. Our Branch Standard will be present at St Mary's Church in Higham Ferrers. Read more about AVM Crew on page 4.

MERCHANT NAVY DAY – WEDNESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2025

A brief ceremony to commemorate Merchant Navy Day will be held at the Rushden War Memorial at 1100 hrs on Wednesday 3rd September 2025. Standards will be present, and it is hoped a bugler will be available. All are welcome to attend, and light refreshments will be available in the St Mary's Church Hall afterwards.

WHAT'S ON IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS?

- 3rd September – Merchant Navy Day – see Page 1
- 4th September – Friends of the RBL Coffee Morning
- 6th September – RDVG BBQ at Stanwick Lakes
- 6th September – Proms in the Park
- 7th September – Bark in the Park – see Page 3
- 8th September – Branch Social – see below
- 14th September - Battle of Britain Church Service – see Page 4
- 15th September – 85th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Day

Second Monday of every month except March, June, September and December – Branch Monthly Meeting at the Athletic Club commencing 7.30pm. 8th September is a Branch Social. A Karaoke is planned, but don't worry, nobody is going to be asked to 'perform'. The idea is music is played from the Karaoke Machine, and you choose a well-known popular song of your choice, and we all sing along with everybody else. Snacks and nibbles will be provided. Come along and have a bit of fun.

Next month's Branch Monthly Meeting is on 13th October 2025, chaired by Branch Vice Chair Paul McKay, after which he will talk about and chair an open discussion on "*Our Strategy 2025-2035*". This much talked about 10 Year RBL Strategy is of importance to us all. Laminated copies of the 10 Year Plan will be placed on tables and if you wish to look at this double-sided document, visit our branch website under Newsletters. For more information see Page 9.

Fourth Tuesday of every month – 23rd September 2025. The Community Social & Craft Group meet at the Rushden Athletic Club on Newton Road, between 1pm and 3pm. RAFA Members Free. Guests £3/entry or £20 per year. This is open to any RBL Rushden Branch Member. For more information contact Carol on **07922 141589** or treasurer@rafarushden.org.uk Next meet after this month's is on 28th October 2025.

Every Wednesday & Saturday Morning – 9am start. Northants Breakfast Club (**NBC**) dine at The Needle and Awl. All Veterans are welcome. Families are invited to join on the last Saturday of each month, namely 27th September and 25th October.

First Thursday of every month – 4th September: 10am to 12.30pm – Friends of the Legion meet at The Athletic Club, Newton Road, Rushden. Pop along for a cuppa and a chat any time between 10am and 12.30pm. The next after this month's meet is on 2nd October.

Second Thursday of every month - 11th September 2025 - 9am start - NGH Breakfast Club at Northampton General Hospital, Cliftonville, Northampton, NN1 5BD. **Eat Street** is the hospital restaurant on the main corridor through the hospital opposite the Chapel. The Breakfast Club is open to **all veterans (staff, patients and public)**. Attendees to purchase their own breakfast and drinks. The next **NGH Breakfast Club** meet after this month's is on 9th October 2025.

Last Friday of every month – 26th September 2025 – 9am start – KGH Breakfast Club Kettering General Hospital, Rothwell Road, Kettering, NN16 8UZ. The Basement Brassiere is located on the lower ground floor of the main hospital building. The Breakfast Club is open to **all veterans (staff, patients and public)**. Attendees to purchase their own breakfast and drinks. The next **KGH Breakfast Club** meet after this month's is on 31st October 2025.

BARK IN THE PARK – SUNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 2025

This popular event is returning to the Walled Garden of Rushden Hall Park on Sunday 7th September 2025. It's an annual fun dog show organised by Rushden Town Council and will run from 1000 hrs to 1600 hrs. You can enter your dog in show classes on the day at just £2 per class and the RBL Rushden Branch stall will be there with other stalls and vendors and this year, for the first time, the charity Veterans With Dogs will be there. They will be co-located with our stall, so you can't miss them! The charity is doing fantastic work for our veterans. Please come along and support both stalls, learn more about Veterans With Dogs, and *"The name of the dog mentioned in the last newsletter is.....?"*



VETERANS WITH DOGS
Helping lead independent lives

ASSISTANCE DOGS FOR "INVISIBLE INJURIES"

- Enabling Recovery
- Enhancing quality-of-life and increasing independence
- Improved well-being
- Promoting motivation, structure and routine

Providing Training, Education and Support Services for Assistance Dogs and Companion Animals

There are lots of ways to get involved in your area! We run training for Veterans with their own dogs, residential activities, seminars, group walks, workshops and other events. For all the latest news and developments you can sign up for our newsletter at www.veteranswithdogs.org.uk



Calling All Supporters
Could You Take on a Challenge for Veterans With Dogs

Looking for a meaningful way to challenge yourself, unite with friends, and make a real difference?

Join the Veterans With Dogs fundraising community and take on one of our exciting challenge events! Whether you go solo or rally your squad, every step you take helps change a veteran's life, one wet nose at a time.



More information:
<https://veteranswithdogs.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise/challenge-events>

Veterans With Dogs delivers life-changing support through specialist programmes that harness the human–canine bond. Their assistance dogs support daily routines, reduce hyper-vigilance and anxiety, and help veterans navigate public spaces with confidence. Practical training gives veterans a non-judgemental partner, makes independent living easier, and builds connections within their communities.

At Veterans With Dogs, the transformative power of canine partnership supports veterans living with mental health challenges. Their approach pairs specially trained assistance dogs with veterans to improve daily life, confidence, and wellbeing — especially for those experiencing PTSD, anxiety, and depression.

This fascinating **PALS™ Programme** is a fine example. Veterans With Dogs groundbreaking PALS (Partner Animal Life Skills) Programme™ sits at the forefront of mental health support for veterans. It trains and provides assistance dogs specifically tailored to address mental health needs, forming one essential part of a wider system that enhances quality of life and fosters independence.

WHO'S WHO IN OUR BRANCH?

President - David Hawker: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Chair/Media Rep: Jake Baker rushden.chairman@rbl.community 07525 441267

Vice Chair – Paul McKay: rushden.vicechairman@rbl.community

Secretary – Lynne Baker: rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Treasurer – Janet Flowers: rushden.treasurer@rbl.community

Committee Member – Heather Phillip: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Committee Member – Sally Morton: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Committee Member – Steve Miller: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Committee Member – Graham Chambers: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Branch Padre – Pauline Cook: richardpaulinec@yahoo.co.uk 07871 923337

Asst Branch Padre – Richard Cook: richardpaulinec@yahoo.co.uk 07871 923337

BCS Rep/BCC Rep – Peter Armstrong: rushden.bcc1@rbl.community or 07498 243683

BCS & BCC – Paul McKay: rushden.bcc2@rbl.community

Poppy Appeal Organiser – Ruth Miller: poppyappealrushden@gmail.com

Standard Bearer - Mark Taberner-Stokes: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

AIR VICE MARSHALL EDWARD DIXON CREW CB DSO & BAR, DFC & BAR



AVM Crew was a member of the University Air Squadron, Cambridge. He joined the RAF in 1940 and was posted to No 604 Squadron, equipped with Blenheim If's as a night fighter pilot. In the spring of 1941, 604 was re-equipped with the new Bristol Beaufighter and he soon began to make a name for himself, destroying five enemy aircraft in ten weeks, for which he was awarded his DFC. With the help of a radar operator, he got another three kills to his credit, so was awarded the Bar to the DFC.

Shortly after the D-Day landings, Britain began to hit back from what seemed an endless stream of V-1 flying bombs; AVM Crew's 96 Squadron, which he commanded, was one of the units tasked with providing night defence against them.

Photo credit to Battle of Britain Monument

By the end of World War Two, he had destroyed 12 enemy aircraft, shared in the destruction of one, damaged five and destroyed 21 V-1s. On one occasion, he and his radar operator were forced to bail out of their Mosquito, when it was damaged by the explosion of the V-1 they had just destroyed.

He continued serving in the RAF after the end of WW2 and was mentioned in despatches for his work in 1949 during the Malayan Emergency.

In 1965 he was back in the Far East, this time as Commander of the Air Forces in Borneo, where he was involved in operations in combating Indonesian incursions during what became known as 'The Confrontation'.

He retired in 1973 after 43 years' service. There is more detailed information including his awards citations of this incredible senior RAF officer at www.rafweb.org/Biographies/Crew_ED.htm

Join us for a special commemoration event for the
**85th anniversary of the
Battle of Britain**
Bede House, Higham Ferrers
Sunday 14th September
12.30pm - 3.30pm

Tea/coffee/cake and other
refreshments will be
available to purchase

Free entertainment
Enjoy some fabulous sounds of the
forties from our singing trio The
Candy Bars. They will be playing
2 sets -
1pm - 1.45pm and
2.15pm - 3pm
Come along to catch one of their sets and enjoy some wartime-era music

Free entry

Also...join us for the unveiling of our brand new Blue
Plaque in Higham Ferrers - to be installed at 12 Market
Square (Wilson Browne Solicitors) to honour the life of
Edward Dixon Crew. A small unveiling ceremony will be
held from 11.30am at 12 Market Square on Sunday 14th
September ahead of the Battle of Britain event
You can view a small exhibition in the Bede House to find
out more about Crew and his links to the Battle of Britain

RAF Association Chair and Branch Member Denis Murphy said this event is free for all to attend, where you can enjoy some fabulous sounds of the forties and wartime-era music from *The Candy Bars* from 1300 hours to 1345 hours and 1415 hours to 1500 hours. Light refreshments will be available to purchase.

All this at Bede House, Higham Ferrers on Sunday 14th September 2025.

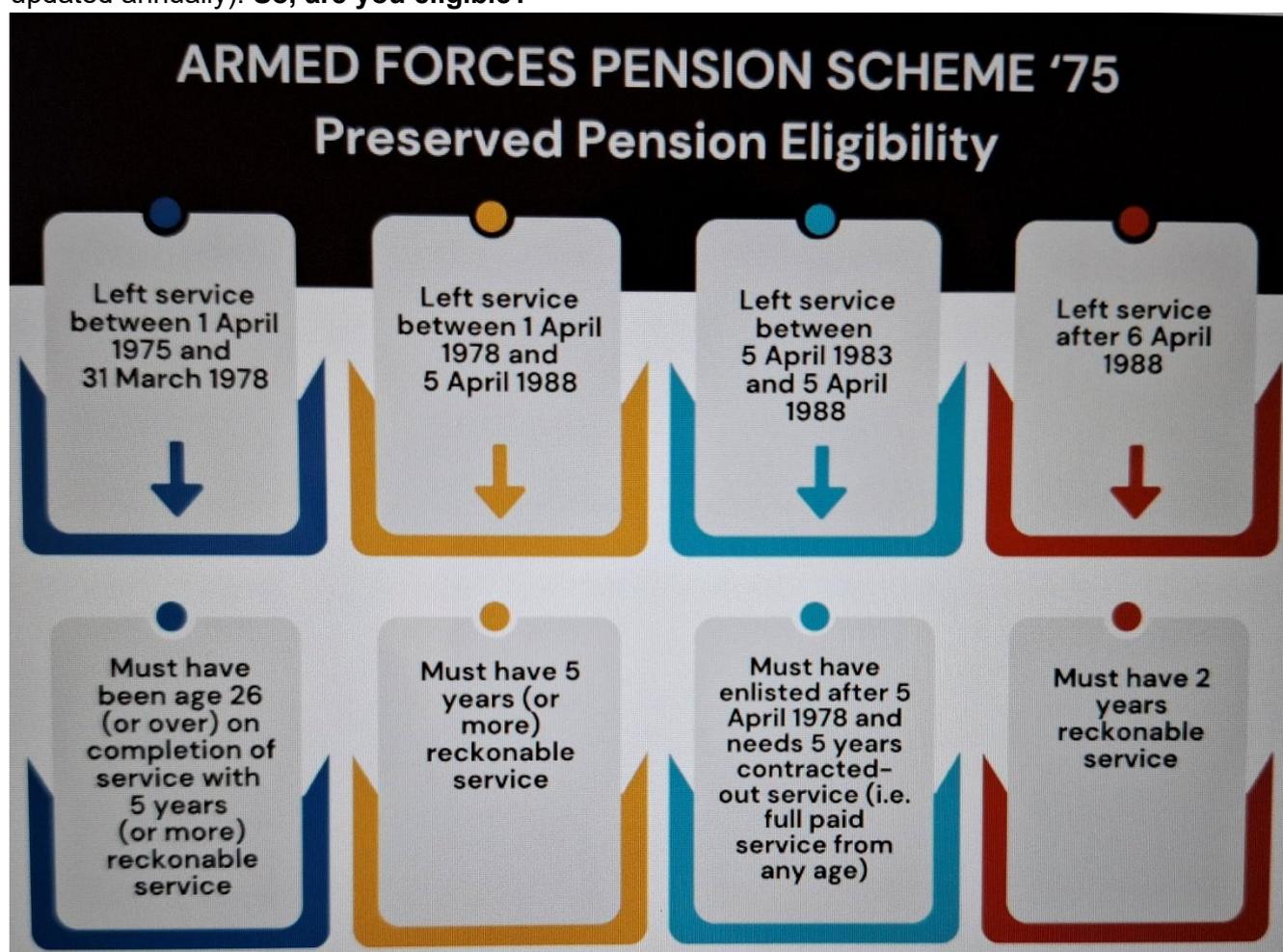
RBL HELPLINE – 0808 802 8080 - CALL 8am to 8pm 7 DAYS A WEEK

RBL WELFARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

DO YOU NEED ANY HELP, OR DO YOU KNOW A VETERAN OR RBL MEMBER WHO NEEDS HELP? IF SO, PLEASE CALL OUR BRANCH COMMUNITY COORDINATOR, PETER ARMSTRONG ON **07498 243683**. REMEMBER, THE RBL IS HERE FOR YOU. IF HE CAN'T HELP, HE'LL GET YOU HELP. PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT EVERY SITUATION IS DIFFERENT.

UNCLAIMED ARMED FORCES PENSIONS

Every year some 2,000 deferred Armed Forces pensions go unclaimed and the sums involved can be significant. The latest MoD report* states at least 14,800 pension benefits remain unclaimed, down from 17,100 in 2023. This is progress, but more needs to be done, which is why the Forces Pension Society Charitable Fund is supporting the 2025 Unclaimed Pensions campaign. They aim to raise awareness and signpost eligible veterans to unite them with their pension benefits. *As at July 2024 (report is updated annually). **So, are you eligible?**



Yes? The pension is **NOT** paid automatically – veterans must apply to Veterans UK using **AFPS Form 8** or call **0800 085 3600** for further information.

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS (OVA)

Feeling overwhelmed navigating support? The OVA directory streamlines it all. It helps you find both government and charity services in a user-friendly format. This is a 'top marks' award as far as the Editor is concerned. Take a look at this link here <https://www.gov.uk/support-for-veterans> or simply call **0808 802 1212** for help. This may be the starting point for many questions being answered.

VJ DAY 80 AT THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM & RUSHDEN HALL PARK

A sombre silence fell over the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on Friday 15th August 2025, as 33 VJ Day veterans paid their respects to their compatriots who gave their lives, so that we might today live in peace.

The ceremony, led by their Majesties The King and Queen, to commemorate 80 years since Allied Forces declared Victory over Japan, also featured flypasts by the Red Arrows and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. Fellow RBL Rushden Branch Members, Veterans and family and friends enjoyed a most historic day, blessed with fantastic weather, too hot at times, but better than rain! It was a most memorable occasion with over 3,000 people present.



This is the best shot taken though Fran Middleton is hiding 🙈 Our minibus driver Ash Patel, who we specifically asked for because he is a very safe and considerate driver, drove for us, despite him not usually driving on Fridays. He is presented a Certificate of Appreciation adapted accordingly and yet again, surprised and presented us with a further £51 for Branch funds. We could not thank him enough!

Rushden Town Council organised the evening commemorative service at Rushden Hall Park, convenient for those working that day and for those fortunate to have attended the commemorations at the National Memorial Arboretum earlier in the day. There was great representation from our Branch, the RNA, RAF Association and the Northants Breakfast Club. The Standard Party looked immaculate and performed their duties most impressively. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Janet Pinnock welcomed everybody, especially Deputy Lieutenant of Northamptonshire Garry Liburd who delivered a speech. Branch President David Hawker gave a brief history of how Victory over Japan came about on this significant day 80 years ago. He conducted the brief ceremony and after the last post, two minutes' silence and reveille, there was the Lighting of the Beacon of Hope.



Left to Right: Steph Andrews & her Dad Phil Andrews, former Branch Chair Paul Mills, RN WW2 Veteran and 99-year-old Peter Cook with his Carer Kay.



Union Standard Bearer & Branch Vice Chair Paul McKay, Branch Standard Bearer Mark Taberner-Stokes, RNA Standard Bearer Paul Mills, RAF Association Standard Bearer Paul Whiteman and Branch President David Hawker.



The three Pauls and Mark immaculately presented.....and so too is Deputy Mayor Janet Pinnock with Marion and Arthur proudly and suitably attired



CRIME PREVENTION

The local neighbourhood policing team will be holding a Crime Prevention Surgery in Rushden Library on Saturday 13th September 2025 commencing 1100 hours; it lasts just an hour.

Please come along to meet your local officers and find out more about some of the steps you can take to prevent crime and keep your home and family safe.

You can also speak to them about any concerns you have about crime and anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood and find out more about the work they are doing to tackle local priorities. Everyone is welcome.

SERVE COLLABORATION WITH THE RBL

Many of us have got some amazing stories to tell, whether it be our life story, a specific period or event, or even a brief story of our careers. The local charity SERVE is looking for members, and not just Veterans, who would like to tell their story by befriending a SERVE Volunteer, who'll come to your home with an iPad or Tablet, and beaver away typing, whilst you tell your story. They could even upload some of those treasured photographs that would not even leave your house, visiting as many times as possible, and not just to get your story, but being a Befriender. All of SERVE's Befrienders are vetted formally through the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS). If any member is interested in wishing to share their story or simply wishes for a SERVE Befriender to visit them, they should contact **SERVE** on **01933 315555** and ask to be put through to the Befriending Team.

RBL HELPLINE – 0808 802 8080 - CALL 8am to 8pm 7 DAYS A WEEK

WANTED FOR BRANCH FUNDRAISING

Gifts for children and adults for Tombola prizes for the Rushden Christmas Lights Switch-On (29th November 2025) are required to be donated. Suggestions are good quality soft toys, games and stationery items; and for adults, toiletries, in-date goodies, unread or high-quality books, etc. All donations can be received at our Branch Monthly Meetings in September, October and November or if unable to do so, please contact Jake Baker on **0725 441267** to plan arrangements for collection.

🌀 LET'S HAVE A BIT OF HUMUS, OOPS,HUMOUR!! 🌀

I tried to walk like an Egyptian and now I need to see a Cairo practor.

It takes 7 seconds for food to pass from mouth to stomach. A human hair can hold 3kgs. The length of a penis is three times the length of the thumb. The femur is as hard as concrete. A woman's heart beats faster than a man's. Women blink 2 times as much as men. We use 300 muscles just to keep our balance when we stand. A woman has read this entire text. A man is still looking at his thumb.

I told a joke during a Zoom meeting and nobody laughed. I guess I'm not remotely funny.



When I get a headache, I take 2 aspirin and keep away from children; just like it says on the bottle!

ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 17TH NOVEMBER 2025

The AGM this year is being held on 17th November 2025, **the third Monday of November 2025**. Members are asked to note this date in their diary. It is hoped that as many members as possible can attend; this is also a great opportunity to be updated and to learn what we will be doing in 2026.

FROM BFBS FORCES NEWS

Members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces have become the latest to take part in the Changing of the Guard ceremony outside Buckingham Palace.

The Ukrainian Naval Band performed alongside the Band of the Scots Guards outside Buckingham Palace during the Changing of the Guard to mark Ukrainian Independence Day (24th August).

In a celebration of the bonds that unite Ukraine with the United Kingdom, the bands marched together from Wellington Barracks to Buckingham Palace, before playing alongside each other.

What is the Changing of the Guard? The ceremony, which is officially known as Guard Mounting, dates back to 1656 and represents a formal handover of responsibilities for palace security. It originally took place at the Palace of Whitehall, which was the Sovereign's official residence in London until 1689. When the Court moved to St James's Palace, the ceremony took place there.

After Queen Victoria moved into Buckingham Palace in 1837, The Queen's Guard remained at nearby St James's Palace, with a detachment guarding Buckingham Palace, as it still does today. Today, the main ceremony is conducted at Buckingham Palace.

RBL 10 YEAR STRATEGY – 2025 TO 2035

The acronym MATCH which Vice Chair Paul McKay mentioned at the August Branch Monthly Meeting, is an adopted strap line for all RBL membership communication and engagement and something we as members, whether officials or not should adopt in all member to member communications, to ensure RBL integrity.

Key Principles ‘MATCH’

Right M essage	Tailored, relevant, accurate content
Right A udience	Understanding needs, behaviours, attitudes
Right T one	Kind, warm, friendly, welcoming, grateful
Right C hannel	Integrated campaigns, preferences
Right H our	Scheduling for greatest impact

Membership Communication and Engagement strategy

We should adopt these key principles for our communications and engagement; and so, to make it easier, try to remember to use this acronym MATCH.

At RBL, effective communication and engagement with our members are crucial to achieve our purpose and ensuring the organisation's sustainability, which is becoming increasingly more important with the lower member retention, limited participation in events or initiatives, and a general decline in the strength of our member community.

The RBL is currently facing challenges in delivering and maintaining consistent, high quality, targeted communication with its members, leading to disengagement and missed opportunities for deeper involvement. The RBL acknowledges its communications throughout the membership structure can be fragmented and lacks coordination across channels and may be misinterpreted or considered to be unfriendly. Additionally, they say they do not fully understand members' preferences or needs, which prevents building stronger, more meaningful relationships with our members.

To overcome these barriers, the RBL acknowledges it needs to develop and implement a comprehensive membership communication and engagement strategy that delivers effective, tailored member outreach and strengthens connections with key stakeholders in our branches and counties. By maximising our impact via improved communications, this will help everyone with galvanising support, increasing member-driven advocacy, and fostering a sense of belonging within the RBL.

As a branch, we know we can do more in terms of membership involvement and encouraging our friends who have an interest in supporting our Armed Forces personnel, past and present and their families, be it fundraising or simply being amongst a group of like-minded people, not to mention making new friends. **Members are reminded that one need not to have served to be a member of the RBL.** Please spread the word and let's get more members, especially from varying backgrounds and ages.



OPEN DAY
Northampton Magistrates' Court
13th September 2025
10am to 4pm

- Learn about the Criminal Justice system.
- Explore career opportunities within CPS, Probation, Youth Justice Service and the Police.
- Learn how to become a Magistrate.
- Take part in a mock trial.
- View a Police crime scene.
- Meet Northampton's Probation and Youth Justice Service and CPS.
- Tour our cells!
- Suitable for adults and Children

Ministry of Justice
Northampton Magistrates Court
Campbell square
Northampton NN1 3EB
01604 497000

Please note that entry into the building is subject to a security search. No sharp objects, cans or bottles permitted.



**NATIONAL HERITAGE DAY
NORTHAMPTON MAGISTRATES COURT
OPEN DAY**

Saturday 13th September 2025 10am - 4pm

This is an open event promoting National Heritage, so you are invited. If anybody is interested in attending, please contact

Jake Baker on 07525 441267

Ministry of Justice Northampton Magistrates Court, Campbell Square, Northampton, NN1 3EB Tel: **01604 497000**

Please note that entry into the building is subject to a security search. No sharp objects, cans or bottles permitted.

MORE FROM BFBS FORCES NEWS AND WHY SCARLETT JOHANSSON PAID A VISIT TO HMS PRINCE OF WALES



Mark Ebulu , who plays Commander Chris Ndidi, with Scarlett Johansson who plays as a Royal Navy Captain (Katherine) (Picture: Mark Ebulu )



HMS Prince of Wales is currently in Tokyo on Carrier Strike Group 25 (Picture: MOD)

One of the world's leading actors has been pictured after shooting a film on the Royal Navy's £3.5bn aircraft carrier, HMS Prince of Wales. Scarlett Johansson, 40, who has appeared in films like *Lost in Translation* and *Marvel's Avengers Assemble*, was filming *My Mother's Wedding* when she was photographed on the vessel. *My Mother's Wedding*, which was at the Toronto International Film Festival two years ago, follows three sisters as they go back to their family home to attend their twice-widowed mother's wedding.

'Huge honour' Mr Ebulu  has a naval past, and said it was a "huge honour" to work on the Royal Navy's flagship and referenced his own naval history in an Instagram post about the film.

'Incredible memories' "Before acting, I actually trained at a naval school, naval college, and was fast-tracked to follow a career and have a life in the Navy," he said. "To be back on a real ship, drawing from that part of my life, felt like things coming full circle. "In another life, I may have gone down the naval route entirely (part of me still wants to), so stepping back into that world brought back some incredible memories."

RBL HELPLINE – 0808 802 8080 - CALL 8am to 8pm 7 DAYS A WEEK