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H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION

14th September, 1978.

PRESIDENTIAL NEWS LETTER NUMBER 1

Dear Member,

You may well recall that when our Founder Member, Mr. Fred White, first started the Association he put out, initially at his own expense, a periodic News Letter. At the first Annual General Meeting held in Weymouth in May, 1977 a proposal was put and accepted that these News Letters be discontinued. However, that Annual General Meeting was somewhat sparsely attended and subsequent letters and enquiries indicated that a large number of people wished the News Letters to continue. This was overwhelmingly borne out when the matter was again raised at the second Annual General Meeting held in May, 1978.

This matter was discussed in some length at the last Committee Meeting held on Sunday 3rd September, 1978 and, as a result of this, I offered to publish a Presidential News Letter at least twice a year. My own views regarding this letter are that it should be precisely what it says, i.e. a News Letter in which items of interest concerning Members and their families and H.M.S. Hood in general should be published. A typical example being the forthcoming visit of our last Chairman to Canada in September of this year when he hopes to see again some of our Canadian shipmates. A brief resumé of his visit would, I feel sure, be of interest to you all.

It is my present intention to issue a News Letter every six months, in June (immediately after the Reunion) and in January. These will be the standard dates, but subsidiary News Letters can be published should any items of immediate interest come to hand.

PUBLICISING OF THE ASSOCIATION

At the last Annual General Meeting a discussion was held regarding "letting people know" more about the Association and, to this end, one of our Committee Members, Mr. George Andrews, was invited to forward a publicity item to the Press for circulation to local newspapers. This George has done, and I print below his contribution which, it is hoped, will be published together with relevant items from this News Letter.

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H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION

The 42,100 ton Battlecruiser H.M.S. Hood was sunk by the German Battleship Bismarck at 0555 on 24th May, 1941 - there were only three survivors from 1,421 ship's company - only two are alive today.

HOOD was the pride of the British Fleet from the date of commissioning in 1920 and is still affectionately known as the Mighty HOOD by those who served in her. The Association was formed by ex-Petty Officer Fred White of Weymouth, it is growing in strength and stature with a membership now of about 200.

The President is Lt. Ted Briggs M.B.E. R.N. (Retd.) one of the two survivors, who with the officers and other members of the Committee, reside in or near the Portsmouth area.

In simple terms the Association's aims are :-

- (a) to perpetuate by friendly association, the intense pride held by all who served in the world's most famous warship of modern times.
- (b) when appropriate, to voice our views on current Naval matters.
- (c) to urge the naming of another H.M.S. HOOD at the earliest possible date.

FULL MEMBERSHIP is open to men who served in H.M.S. HOOD from her first commission until her tragic destruction in 1941 and to widows and immediate dependents of those who perished in her. Annual subscriptions £2 under age 65, £1 over age 65.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP is open to wives and relatives of members or anyone interested in our aims.

Application and fees for membership or other correspondence should be submitted to the Secretary, Mr. A. N. Purdue, 85 St. John's Road, Locks Heath, Hampshire. "

GUEST OF HONOUR AT NEXT REUNION

Those of you who attended the last Annual General Meeting will know that we have made tentative enquiries concerning a V.V.I.P. as our guest of honour at the reunion to be held on Saturday 19th May, 1979. It is not yet known for certain, whether or not this guest will be able to attend. Suffice to say that, at the present time, we have had a very hopeful reply from his Assistant Private Secretary, and a definite yes or no is expected to be given in November, 1978. Should this be in the affirmative an immediate News Letter will be forwarded to all members giving details.

The venue of the next Reunion has been tentatively booked at the Gaiety Suite, South Parade Pier, Southsea. It is possible, however, that for security reasons, this may not be ideal should we be honoured with the guest we hope. Investigations are, therefore, being made regarding the possibility of obtaining the use of a Naval Establishment Wardroom or even the Guildhall. Further details will be given in the next News Letter.

BISMARCK SURVIVORS

A comment was made at the last Annual General Meeting regarding the possibility of inviting Bismarck survivors to the next Reunion. This was discussed at length and a proposal made and accepted that they be invited.

Contact was made with the Bismarck Association who very much regret that, due to their own Reunion which is being held in Hamburg in 1979, they will be unable to attend. They would, however, if invited, be delighted to send one or two Members to the Reunion in 1980.

They also extended a cordial invitation to any of our Members who wish to attend their Reunion in Hamburg. I understand that H.M.S. Dorsetshire Members frequently attend and, should you be interested, I will be only too willing to make any enquiries on your behalf.

MEMORIAL PLATE

It has been suggested that a memorial plate be donated to "St. Annes" Church, H.M.S. Dockyard, Portsmouth. This is, however, not as simple as it was initially thought. Contact was made with the Padre who informed us that application has to be made, with a design and wording to the Ministry of Works and the Ministry of Defence, who will then form a faculty to carry out our work. It is they who allocate where the plaque will go and which will be the final design. The only available place is to be approximately 36 inches by 24 inches and the cost will depend on what is actually placed in the Church, over which we do not have a lot of control.

In view of the above and the envisaged cost, which may well be beyond our present means, it has been decided to temporarily shelve this project.

NAMING OF ENGINE

British Railways are apparently naming a new class of engine after famous warships. Investigations revealed that an engine was to be named "HOOD" and it was suggested that British Railways

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Railways' point of view, and the engine, we understand, has already been named.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

At the last Committee Meeting on the 3rd September, it was decided that this project was too late for this year but that we will endeavour to have a selection available at the next Reunion for ordering for Christmas 1979.

HATCH/MATCH AND DESPATCH

I would also like to include in future News Letters a list of births, marriages and deaths of Association Members and to this end it would be appreciated if these, together with any other items of interest you may consider should be published, could be forwarded to me at my home address, which is 10, Lambourn Close, Fareham, Hants. PO14 1SL.

With all best wishes to you all for the present.

Yours sincerely,

Ted B...