

1 Warsash Association 2015 Events (UK and Branches)

1.1 Remembrance Day Ceremony and Poem – Captain Brian Hoare ([HoareB62](#))

‘We Will Remember Them’: On 11th November four Warsash Association members, led by our Chairman Roger Holt, participated in the armistice day commemoration held at the Warsash Maritime Academy to mark the end of the 1st World War at the 11th hour, on the 11th day of November. It is also fitting that not long after Remembrance Sunday, we also reflect on those who lost their lives in WWII and in particular the nearly 40,000 Merchant Navy personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice while keeping the nation supplied with food and our armed forces supplied with war materials.

A substantial number of Officer Cadets, Senior Students and members of staff, gathered at the campus flag mast as 1100 hrs approached. At the appointed time the Red Ensign was lowered to half-mast to the sound of the last post being played very proficiently by an Officer Cadet. The two minutes silence was observed after which David Baker recited the words of remembrance, the ensign was then hoisted to the masthead as the bugler played reveille. Besides marking a very important occasion it was rather nostalgic for ex-Cadets of a certain vintage as it had been 54 years since I heard my last bugle call at the then School of Navigation Warsash.



WMA’s Armistice Day Commemoration: Right and centre - Officer Cadets gathering
 Pictured right - Officer Cadet Doug Willats, David Baker (OC Liaison Officer) and Officer Cadet George Whitfield



WA Chairman laying wreath



WW2 Roll of Honour (SoN Cadets)



WW2 SoN Memorial



Three pictures immediately above, left to right:

- L to R: WA Chairman Roger Holt, John Bazley, Angela Winteridge, Doug McAllister, John Metcalf, Capt. Brian Hoare, David Baker (OC Liaison Officer)
- L to R: Officer Cadets George Whitfield, Jack Stanbury, Zoe Davis, James Stockbridge, Guy Limb, Doug Willats
- L to R: Doug McAllister, WA Chairman Roger Holt and John Metcalf

On completion of the public observance the Warsash Association party, accompanied by members of the Academy staff and Officer Cadets, mustered at the plaque in the Library foyer commemorating the 13 Warsash Cadets who lost their lives at sea during WWII. Our Chairman made a short address and then read a very poignant poem written by David Partridge of Sydney, followed by a short period of silence. The poem made an impact on us all; it really captures the horrors and the day to day heroism of those who served on merchant ships during WWII and deserves much wider publication.

Our thanks to the Warsash Maritime Academy for allowing us to combine our own particular act of remembrance with their observance of the national two minutes silence.

Remembrance Poem 'Heroes' – David Partridge of Sydney, *Sent in by Captain Peter Small, Australia Branch.*

Don't speak to me of heroes until you've heard the tale
Of all those merchant seamen who sailed through storm and gale
To keep the lifelines open in freedom's hour of need
When a tyrant cast a shadow over every nation's creed.

Captains, greasers, cabin boys, mates and engineers
Heard the call to duty and cast aside their fears.
They stoked those hungry boilers and stood behind the wheel
Whilst cooks and stewards manned the guns on coffins made of steel.

They moved in icy convoys from Scapa to Murmansk,
And crossed the widest oceans, never seeking thanks.
They sailed the South Atlantic where raiders lay in wait
And kept the food lines open to Malta and the Cape.

Tracked by silent U-boats which hunted from below,
Shelled by mighty cannons and fighters flying low,
They clung to burning lifeboats where the sea had turned to flame.
And watched their shipmates disappear to everlasting fame.

I speak not of a handful, but forty thousand plus,
Some whose names we'll never know in whom we placed our trust.
They never knew the honour of medals on their chests
Or marching bands and victory and glory and the rest.

The ocean is their resting place, their tombstone is the wind,
The seabirds' cry their last goodbye to family and friend.

Freighters, troopships, liners and tankers by the score,
Fishing boats and coasters, four thousand ships and more
Flew their country's ensign as they sank beneath the waves,
And took those countless heroes to lonely ocean graves.

Their legacy is freedom to those who hold it dear,
To walk with clear horizons and never hide in fear.
So when you speak of heroes, remember those at sea,
And thank those Merchant seamen who died to keep us free.

YouTube video - [Merchant Navy Day](#), 15th September 2015 at Liverpool where 'Heroes' was read by Michael Partridge, brother of David Partridge (not a WA Member). Our grateful thanks to David for his fitting tribute.