

**Email Trail from June 2023 until September 2023 between MWA Chirman and The Royal  
British Legion Cenotaph Events Team.**

**From:** Cenotaph

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023, 10:51 AM

**To:** chairman@mwassociation.co.uk

**Subject:** RE: Marching at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday 2023 [Incident: 230706-000313]

Dear Jim,

Thank you for getting in touch again. We're very sorry you did not receive our correspondence – we did send a reply on the 9<sup>th</sup> August at 12:09 to this email address.

As stipulated in our previous email, unfortunately, we are too far into the process to facilitate a new 'Association Registration' and, incidentally, due to a review of the Cenotaph parade taking place this year, we took the difficult decision not to permit any new association requests for 2023. The Cenotaph Parade is already at its capacity of 10,000 attendees and we need to consolidate our position before conducting a full review of all the associations that currently march at the Cenotaph.

However, we are offering all unused ticket allocation to non-associated veterans as we hope to be able to open the Cenotaph parade to more veterans.

Any remaining unused tickets to eligible veterans who are not members or affiliated to a service or unit association, so that they are afforded the opportunity to march in the Cenotaph Parade. This will be done on a first come first served basis and will be restricted to UK and Commonwealth veterans from the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and the Merchant Navy. Those who apply should enter their association in the free text box to ensure that anyone who receives a ticket can march together. Please note that registering here does not guarantee anyone a place to march.

This registration is open via the link below: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/remembrance-sunday/national-service-of-remembrance-at-the-cenotaph>

There are a number of new associations who have requested to march in 2023 and we have to hold fast to the rules for this year.

I am very sorry for any disappointment caused this year and I hope we can work together ahead of the 2024 parade to review this going forward.

Best wishes,

The Remembrance Events Team

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**From:** [chairman@mwassociation.co.uk](mailto:chairman@mwassociation.co.uk) <[chairman@mwassociation.co.uk](mailto:chairman@mwassociation.co.uk)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 5, 2023 6:28 PM

**To:** Cenotaph

**Cc:** Info

**Subject:** FW: Marching at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday 2023 [Incident: 230706-000313]

**Importance:** High

Dear RBL,

Would you PLEASE be so kind as to reply to my correspondence below, as I currently have a number of association members awaiting an answer to my last email.

In addition, we as a veterans' association find it somewhat disrespectful and discourteous that we haven't had a reply as yet!

Yours Aye,

*Jim Hawkins* QVRM, VR\*, MCMI, MARRM

Chair of the MineWarfare Association



Mobile - 07951912285  
WhatsApp - 07951912285

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**From:** [chairman@mwassociation.co.uk](mailto:chairman@mwassociation.co.uk) >

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 26, 2023 11:22 AM

**To:** 'Cenotaph' >

**Cc:** 'Stephen Warren'

**Subject:** RE: Marching at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday 2023 [Incident: 230706-000313]

Dear Remembrance Events Team,

I feel I must contact you to record our despondency regarding our request to parade at this year's Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph.

As I am sure you are aware that the naval sea mines were first used by the Chinese in the 14<sup>th</sup> century against pirates and have been progressively developed over the years to increase both power and complexity. Mine countermeasures were introduced and developed to meet this threat.

During both World Wars the UK Armed Forces were heavily involved in locating the enemy's mines, unexploded bombs, and other explosive ordnance which, for the Royal Navy, involved dangerous operations both under the sea and on land. Throughout World War II the use of sea mines increased substantially, and many ships were sunk or damaged by them. This blockade, along with the actions of U-boats, threatened the survival of the population. Converted trawlers were pressed into service as minesweepers but for mines dropped by aircraft onto shoals and mudbanks the clearance tasks fell to personnel from HMS VERNON.

In the hours before and during D-Day, Allied minesweepers operated off the coast of Occupied France. In addition, 120 Royal Navy divers, including Reservists and Royal Marines, with a few Royal Engineers, and civilians, cleared 2500 mines and other obstructions from the approaches to the Normandy beaches. This dangerous work, which was carried out under fire, significantly reduced the risks to Allied soldiers and sailors and was continued later to make the harbors of Europe safe, enabling resupply of Allied invasion forces and later commercial development.

The important work of Royal Navy mine warfare and diving specialists has continued to this day in both peace and war, during the conflicts in the Falklands, the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Libya. Much closer to home, whilst preparing Portsmouth Harbour for use by the aircraft carriers HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH and HMS PRINCE OF WALES in 2018, Royal Navy mine warfare personnel and divers removed some 46 tonnes of explosive ordnance from the seabed within sight of Gunwharf Quays. Hence the erection of the MineWarfare and Diving Monument, at Gunwharf Quays, as an eternal reminder of the people who have carried out this dangerous work throughout history and who continue to do so.

It is for this reason that members of the Minewarfare Branch, old and new, would welcome being able to march alongside our 'brothers-in-arms' in the Ton Boat Association and Mine Clearance and Diving Association. The Mine Warfare Association is made up from ex and serving members of the Royal Navy Mine Warfare branch. Many of the members being involved in Mine Clearance in the Falklands, Gulf Wars and other Conflicts. The sole role of the branch is identifying and disposal of sea mines, as shown in this selection of videos <https://mwassociation.co.uk/nostalgic-videos/> (especially the opening remarks in the last video "The Dangerous Game") we are one of only two branches of the Royal Navy still dealing with left overs from WW2!

Whilst the association is relatively young, having been formed in 2008, it has much deeper roots having been preceded by an annual Mine Warfare reunion that goes back to the start of the branch in 1975. Its members range from former ratings to high-ranking ex serving Royal Navy Officers. We are a rapidly growing association with circa 130 members, which might not seem a lot, but the active branch of the Royal Navy is less than 100. We have our own standard that is paraded in Weymouth and Portsmouth every year, the association has also raised over £300,000 for a MW monument that celebrates our history (this monument also celebrates RN Clearance Divers, who also parade each year). With a second fund raiser taking place to build a monument at the National Arboretum.

Having consulted, the association Vice Chair - WO Warren, who applied last year, he was unaware of it being 'a special occasion, to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Falkland's war.' Can I, as the Chair of the Mine Warfare association, please ask that you review you decision below and allow us to parade at the Cenotaph in 2024?

Yours Aye,

*Jim Hawkins* DVRM, VR\*, MCMI, MARRM

Chair of the MineWarfare Association



Mobile - 07951912285

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**From:** Cenotaph

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 12, 2023 11:57 AM

**To:** [chairman@mwassociation.co.uk](mailto:chairman@mwassociation.co.uk)

**Subject:** RE: Marching at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday 2023 [Incident: 230706-000313]

Dear Jim,

We are very sorry for the delay in response - we have done a thorough search of our inboxes and cannot find your original email, so we will be taking this up with our IT department.

Unfortunately, due to a review of the Cenotaph parade taking place this year, we took the difficult decision not to permit any new association requests for 2023. The Cenotaph Parade is already at its capacity of 10,000 attendees and we need to consolidate our position before conducting a full review of all the associations that currently march at the Cenotaph. Therefore, we would be unable to register your organization this year.

However, we are offering all unused ticket allocation after 28<sup>th</sup> August to non-associated veterans as we hope to be able to open the Cenotaph parade to a group of veterans that won't traditionally have been able to march. You can keep an eye on the website for updates on this.

Your association's participation in the Cenotaph last year was a special occasion, to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Falkland's war.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Best wishes,

The Remembrance Events Team

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**From:** [chairman@mwassociation.co.uk](mailto:chairman@mwassociation.co.uk)

**Sent:** Monday, July 10, 2023 4:24 PM

**To:** Cenotaph

**Subject:** FW: Marching at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday 2023 [Incident: 230706-000313]

You don't often get email from [chairman@mwassociation.co.uk](mailto:chairman@mwassociation.co.uk). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Cenotaph team,

Would you please be so kind as to confirm that you have received the communications shown below and would you be able to update me on the status of our application?


Many Thanks.

Yours Aye,

*Jim Hawkins* DVRM, VR\*, MCMI, MARRM

Chair of the MineWarfare Association



 Mobile - 07951912285

 WhatsApp - 07951912285

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**From:** The Royal British Legion

**Sent:** Saturday, July 8, 2023 5:19 PM

**To:** [chairman@mwassociation.co.uk](mailto:chairman@mwassociation.co.uk)

**Subject:** Marching at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday 2023 [Incident: 230706-000313]



You recently requested personal assistance from our on-line Support Centre. Below is a summary of your request and our response. If this issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may reopen it within the next 28 days. Thank you for allowing us to be of service to you.

*To access your question from our support site, [Click here](#)*

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**Subject**

**Marching at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday 2023**

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Response By E-mail (Melissa) (08/07/2023 05.18 PM)

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Dear Jim Hawkins,

Ref: 230706-000313

Thank you for your recent reply

Good Afternoon Jim

Thankyou for confirming your details I have now passed this across to the cenotaph team. Someone will contact you in due course,

If you require any further assistance you can contact us directly on 0808 802 8080, we are open from Monday to Sunday 0800 - 2000.

Alternately, you can follow the link below which will direct you to the knowledgebase and live chat facility.

<http://support.britishlegion.org.uk/app/home/session>

Yours sincerely,

The Royal British Legion Advice and Information Line

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Customer By CSS E-mail (Jim Hawkins) (07/07/2023 07.03 PM)

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Dear Steve,

Please find the information you require, below:-

To look into this for you could I please take your

- |              |                                |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| (1) Name     | <b>Mr Duncan 'Jim' Hawkins</b> |
| (2) Address  | <b>38 Alton Gardens</b>        |
| (3) Postcode | <b>SS2 6QZ</b>                 |

(4) Phone number **07951912285**

(5) Your consent to store and forward your details within the Royal British Legion - do I have your consent? **You most Certainly do, and I am enquiring on behalf of the Minewarfare Association of whom I am the chair.**

Yours Aye,

*Jim Hawkins* QVRM, VR\*, MCMI, MARRM

Chair of the MineWarfare Association



 Mobile - 07951912285

 WhatsApp - 07951912285

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Response By E-mail (Steve) (07/07/2023 10.26 AM)

Dear ,

Ref: 230706-000313

Thank you for your recent enquiry.

Good morning Jim

I am sorry to read of the situation you are in

To look into this for you could I please take your

(1) Name

(2) Address

(3) Postcode

(4) Phone number

(5) Your consent to store and forward your details within the Royal British Legion - do I have your consent?

If you require any further assistance you can contact us directly on 0808 802 8080,

we are open from Monday to Sunday 0800 - 2000.

Alternately, you can follow the link below which will direct you to the knowledgebase and live chat facility.

<http://support.britishlegion.org.uk/app/home/session>

Yours sincerely,

The Royal British Legion Advice and Information Line

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Customer By CSS E-mail (Jim Hawkins) (06/07/2023 06.25 PM)

**[Caution] This email originated from outside of our organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Dear RBL,

Please see the email chain below, in which I contacted you on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2023 and received an automated reply on the same day saying that you would endeavour to reply within 48 hours!

It is now over a month, and I (along with my association) are becoming a little worried that we may not have the honour of marching at this year's Cenotaph Parade, would you please be so kind as to update me, soonest, please.



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**From:** Cenotaph <[Cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:Cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk)>

**Sent:** Thursday, June 1, 2023 11:50 AM

**To:** [chairman@mwassociation.co.uk](mailto:chairman@mwassociation.co.uk)

**Subject:** Automatic reply: Marching at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday 2023

Thank you for your email.

We are experiencing a high number of emails and will endeavour to answer your email within 48 hours. Please note this inbox is not monitored over a weekend.

Best wishes,

The Cenotaph Team

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**From:** [chairman@mwassociation.co.uk](mailto:chairman@mwassociation.co.uk)

**Sent:** Thursday, June 1, 2023, 11:42 AM

**To:** '[Cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:Cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk)' [Cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:Cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk)

**Subject:** Marching at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday 2023

Good Morning The RBL Events Team,

As you will be aware we marched at last year's cenotaph parade and were very honoured to do so. We would like to apply for 25 places at the 2023 Parade, please? Just as a reminder:-

The Mine Warfare Association is made up from ex and serving members of the Royal Navy Mine Warfare branch. Many of the members being involved in Mine Clearance in the Falklands, Gulf Wars and other Conflicts.

The sole role of the branch is identifying and disposal of sea mines.

The association is relatively young, having been formed in 2008, however it has much deeper roots having been preceded by an annual Mine Warfare reunion that goes



back to the start of the branch in 1975. Its members range from former ratings to high-ranking ex serving Royal Navy Officers.

We are a rapidly growing association with circa 130 members, which might not seem a lot, but the active branch of the Royal Navy is less than 100.

We have our own standard that is paraded in Weymouth and Portsmouth every year, the association has also raised over £300,000 for a MW monument that celebrates our history (this monument also celebrates RN Clearance Divers, who also parade each year). With a second fund raiser taking place to build a monument at the National Arboretum.

The monument is located in seawater pool at Gunwharf Quays adjoining a waterway known historically as Vernon Creek. More info can be found at **HMS VERNON**.  
<https://www.vernonlink.uk/>

To this end the Mine Warfare Association would like to be represented at the cenotaph on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

If there is anything else you need please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours Aye,

*Jim Hawkins* QVRM, VR\*, MCMI, MARRM

Chair of the MineWarfare Association



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WhatsApp - 07951912285

**Question Reference # 230706-000313**

- Date Created: 06/07/2023 06.25 PM
- Date Last Updated: 08/07/2023 05.18 PM
- Status: Solved