AnyFace Reunion Mess Dinner 17 September 2022. Planning for the AnyFace 70 & Project LAST 40 Mess Dinner at RNAS Yeovilton is in full swing and we're delighted to be able to provide some further detail and the opportunity to secure tickets.

Our President, Commodore Michael Clapp, will be joined by two further Guests of Honour; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Ben Bathurst, who was instrumental in Project LAST and the development of the Sea King Mk 2 in just 12 week and Rear Admiral Steve Moorhouse, Navy Director Force Generation and Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm.

We are working hard to make this a special event; The Royal Marines Band Corps of Drums will perform during pre-dinner drinks and their Small Ensemble will entertain us through dinner. We have commissioned Steve George, who provides the artwork for the RN Flight Safety Centre calendars, to produce a piece to commemorate the event and our member Richard Scott will officially launch his book entitled 'Eyes of the Fleet' on the evening. The book covers the journey of rotary wing AEW from the development of the Sea King Mk 2 to the Crowsnest capability of today.

The dinner is open to all Association Members and their guests and although we can't give an exact ticket price at this stage we are expecting somewhere between £50-£60 per ticket (it may well be less depending on any sponsorship we receive). To secure you tickets now please complete the Ticket request form here and transfer £15 per ticket to our account details below. The outstanding amount will be requested closer to the event.

AnyFace Association
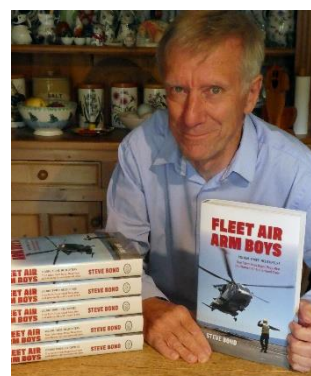*17736048*
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AnyFace Memorial Service 18 September 2022. We are currently working with the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church to finalise details and timings for the service, so more details will follow. If you are interested in attending, then please do RSVP here if you haven't already done so.

Fleet Air Arm Boys Volume 3.
A reminder that Steve Bond's Fleet Air Arm Boys Vol 3 will be launched at the FAA Museum on 9 July. It would be great if we could have a good number of AnyFace members there to show our support to Steve and Heather. More details can be found here.

FAAOA Summer Lunch.
For those also members of the FAAOA, just a reminder that the summer lunch is back and will be held at Phyllis Court, Henley on 18 August. More details can be found here.

A chance meeting!

I hope no-one minds my monopolisation of the newsletter this month, but I recently had a completely by chance meeting with a lady who has an incredibly strong connection to 849 NAS and I thought I would share the story.

Although we focus on the AEW capability of 849 since 1952, it is important to remember that 849 and our sister squadrons 854 and 857 were WW2 squadrons and particularly key to the successes of the British Pacific Fleet in 1945.

A few weeks ago, I was lucky to attend the Queen's Jubilee Party at the Palace and as I was queuing to go through security (along with 1000s of others) I noticed on the arm of the lady stood beside me, the bottom of tattoo which showed a name and then what looked like a squadron crest.

The more I stared the more I was sure it was a naval air squadron crest and I asked her if she wouldn't mind showing me. I couldn't believe it when she revealed the 849 crest. It turns out that the lady, Vicky, is the grand-daughter of PO Airman William James Smith McRae (known as Jimmy), a TAG on 849 NAS who was embarked in HMS Victorious. Sadly, Jimmy was one of nine aircrew captured as POWs during the raids on Palembang in January 1945. The nine were held in captivity and were tragically executed after the surrender of Japan. Jimmy's wife campaigned for years for recognition of the 'Palembang Nine' and was instrumental in commissioning the memorials at Changi and Auckland. Vicky and her family have provided me with many personal photos of her grand-father and I will tell the story of Jimmy in our next newsletter.

Jimmy (bottom right) pictured along other aircrew from 849.

Yours aye,
Admin Director