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**Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust**

**Secures LIBOR Funding for “Memorial Fleet”**

The Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust (PNBPT) is delighted to have been granted £2.4M in LIBOR funding by the Chancellor for its “Memorial Fleet” project. The project will create an operational Memorial Fleet of small craft which have played a significant role in the defence of the nation during the Twentieth Century.

LIBOR funding comes from fines levied on the banking industry for manipulating the LIBOR rate, and is being used to support those that represent the best of values, in particular military and emergency services charities and other related good causes.

We are thrilled to have been granted LIBOR funding, which will ensure that valuable naval heritage is maintained for future generations; the project will offer the public the opportunity to engage with the historic craft both in Portsmouth and farther afield, and will provide rehabilitative and vocational training for veterans.

The Trust will work closely with the International Boatbuilding Training College (IBTC) Portsmouth, Highbury College and the Trust’s Boathouse 4 volunteers, as well as with the Company of Makers, a Hampshire based charity dedicated to assisting veterans and their families. Veterans will participate in the construction and restoration of the boats, learning valuable new vocational skills; the diversity of the restoration projects will ensure broad scope for veteran training.

Peter Goodship, Consultant Chief Executive of the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust says “*The creation of this operational fleet commemorating the role these pioneering craft played in both World Wars will provide a fitting tribute to the veterans who crewed them and a reminder to us all of the heroism these crews displayed in the defence of our nation. The Fleet will also create a new attraction within Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, enabling visitors to access the water in a way not presently possible.”*

Caroline Barrie Smith, Business and Finance Director of IBTC Portsmouth says “*We are thrilled. LIBOR funding will give veterans the chance to be involved in the conservation and restoration of unique artefacts of British naval history. We are particularly excited to offer service veteran men and women the opportunity to train on the types of craft that they, and their predecessors, may have served on. We look forward to working with our project partners, and would urge any interested veterans to get in touch!*”

Steve Bomford at the Company of Makers said “*We are delighted, and are looking forward to working with the veterans on the project. This is great news for the local military community and heritage of the city.”*

The Memorial Fleet project comprises five elements:

The First World War Armed Steam Cutter, Falmouth, will be restored. Falmouth served aboard the cruiser HMS Falmouth in 1916 and was present at the Battle of Jutland. She is one of only two known Jutland survivors to still exist today. Within the Memorial Fleet Falmouth will represent ships’ boats, without which no major fleet unit could operate.

Foxtrot 8, a landing craft formerly aboard HMS Fearless which took part in the Falklands conflict, will also be restored. An integral part of this restoration project is the inclusion of Falklands and other modern conflict veterans. F8 offers a unique learning platform and an ideal vessel for veteran training, upskilling and rehabilitation.

The Second World War Motor Gun Boat (MGB) 81 will receive new engines. MGB 81 is a rare example of a mobile museum ship, and she is able to visit communities and events that are taking place away from the traditional historic vessel locations such as Portsmouth or London. MGB 81 will become a roving ambassador for the history of the Royal Navy, reaching a wider audience of veterans, their families and the general public at large.

The Trust will construct a replica of Coastal Motor Boat (CMB) 4 which, under the command of Lt Augustus Agar, sank the Bolshevik cruiser Oleg in 1919. The CMB 4 replica will be a complete construction project from new, enabling IBTC students and volunteers, many of them veterans, to loft, frame, plank and complete an entire boat from start to finish. Vessels such as this have not been built in significant numbers since the First World War, and the techniques and skills required offer a unique opportunity to explore ‘living’ archaeology.

Rodney Agar, nephew of Augustus Agar VC, says “*This is quite marvellous news that the Trust has been awarded the funding to build a working, sea-going Replica of a Royal Naval 40ft Coastal Motor Boat with its revolutionary Thornycroft hull design from 100 years ago. Not only will this require great boatbuilding skills, but this project will preserve the history of these epic craft for future generations and demonstrate also the ability, resource and seamanship required by the officers and men who operated these small craft – the forerunners of the Royal Navy’s Coastal Forces.*”

LIBOR funding will also enable the creation of a new pontoon, which will act as a base for the Fleet. The new pontoons will allow the public to get much closer to the boats, and will improve access for passengers, many of whom are aged volunteers and veterans.

**For further information please contact:**

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