

Captain John Harry Neal, who “Went Aloft” earlier this year, completed his initial training at King Edward VII Nautical College and, in October 1945 signed indentures with the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, remaining with them until 1950 when he joined The Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

In 1956, on obtaining his Master’s Certificate John left the RFA and joined Cable and Wireless, the company in which he was to remain throughout his distinguished career.

Appointed to Command (C.S “Cable Enterprise”) in 1976 he served on a number of cable ships working globally until his retirement (in Honolulu) in 1983.

A friend and colleague who served as John’s Chief Officer remembers his leadership abilities. *“I recall that he was a man who planned everything to the n'th degree and frequently, in his own words, reminded everyone that he was a "Belt & Braces man". He meticulously planned any operation and would require every piece of equipment that could conceivably be used be ready for it's purpose. He was firm but fair and certainly didn't suffer fools gladly, but was equally ready to compliment a job well done”.*

After his retirement, John and his wife Jane settled in Romsey, he became a “Cachalot” and, in addition to becoming a Ship Surveyor he was recalled by Cable and Wireless (Marine) as Head of their Survey Department.

A man of strong Christian belief who had supported the local Anglican churches during his postings to Brazil, Fiji and Spain, John now volunteered as a guide at Romsey Abbey, and as a driver for The Blind Club as well as assisting with the running of the annual Romsey Show.

In 2002 John and Jane moved to the Springbok Estate in Surrey where he became an active part of that community of retired seafarers. Ill health dictated a move to live with their family members in Dorset where Jane passed away in 2014, followed by John on March 31st 2016.

Captain Neal was a Liveryman of The Honourable Company of Master Mariners, a member of The Royal Institute of Navigation, an associate of The Royal Institute of Naval Architects and a Freeman of The City of London.

John resigned from The Cachalots in December 2009 due to his ill health.