



NAVY NEWS

JULY 2013

**MARVEL ON
THE MERSEY**

**MAGNIFICENT
ATLANTIC
CEREMONIES**

**FAREWELL
TO THE 42**

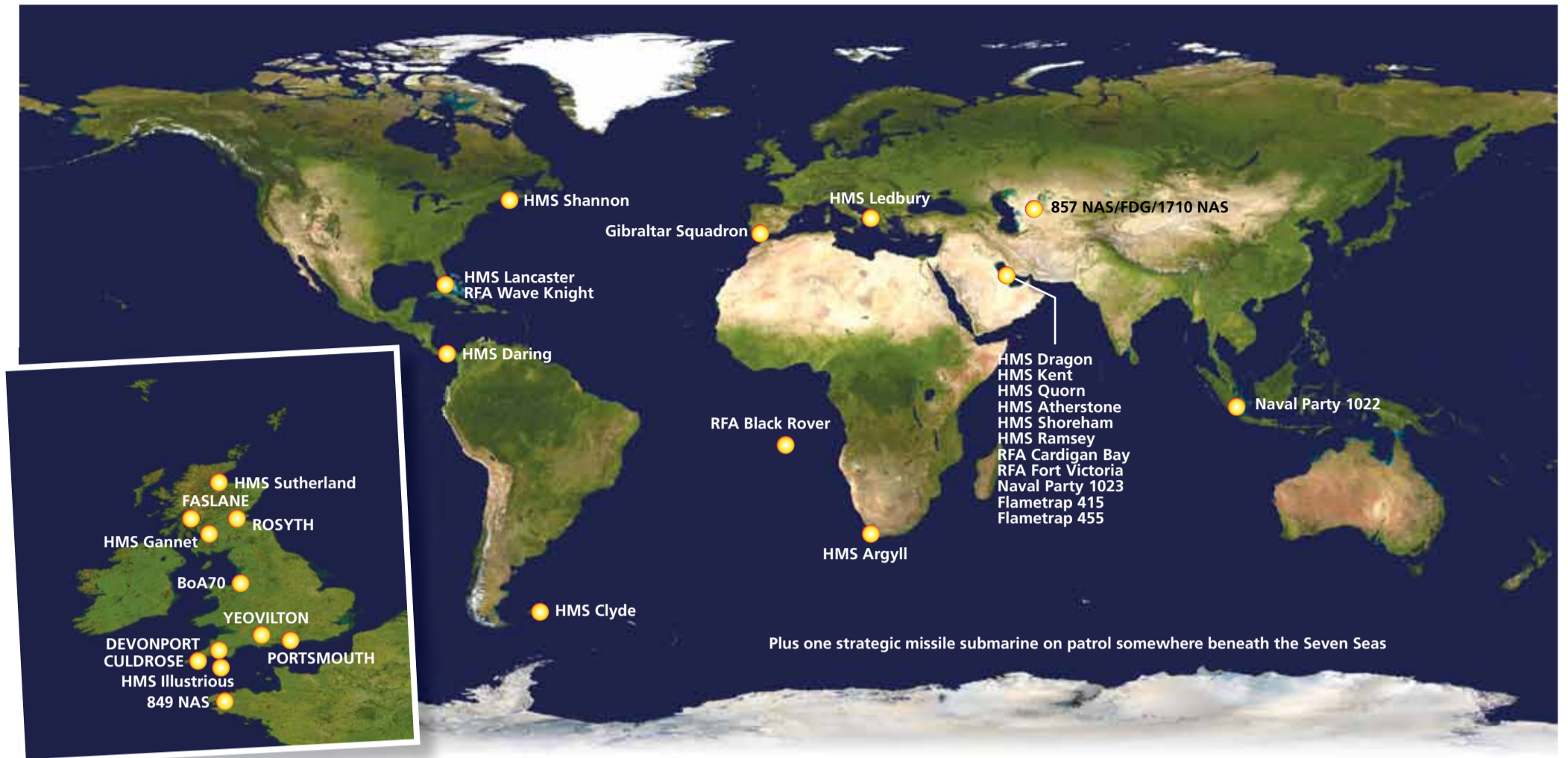
**TRIBUTE TO
A LEGEND**



**INDIAN
SUMMER**

The mid-summer dusk falls in the Western Approaches as an Apache gunship prepares to touch down on the deck of HMS Illustrious. The helicopter carrier has undergone a month of intensive training to ready her ship's company for the RN's key annual deployment, Cougar. See page 17 for details.
Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones, HMS Illustrious





IT'S going to feel very strange never seeing the names of one of Britain's great cities moving around our map any more.

With the passing of **HMS Edinburgh** – and the 13 Type 42 destroyers which have gone before her – a great and proud RN era is over. *We pay tribute to this fine class of ships on pages 19-21.*

The tributes and accolades don't stop there. In Liverpool, the dwindling band of brothers from the Royal Navy's greatest generation gathered, as did Edinburgh, **Bulwark**, **Pembroke**, a cluster of **P2000s**, and the **RN Historic Flight** *inter alia* for impressive Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary events (*see pages 23-25*).

The final completed section of **HMS Queen Elizabeth** – the aft island – should be standing proud on her flight deck now having been transported from the Clyde to the Forth (*see page 5*).

QE is not just about the kit. It's about the people too. Like handlers who marshal those fast jets and helicopters around the deck. The latest group of Brits are earning their spurs aboard the **USS Eisenhower** right now (*see right*).

Relations between the two navies – and nations – haven't always been so friendly. Commemorations have been held in the UK and across the Pond to honour the dead of the War of 1812. In Halifax, Nova Scotia, Britons, Canadians and Americans remembered the men of **HMS Shannon** and USS Chesapeake, while on Dartmoor personnel from **Devonport Naval Base** took part in acts of remembrance for US prisoners of war who died there (*see page 42*).

HMS Trenchant completed the longest patrol by any T-boat (11 months) – indeed possibly the longest deployment by any RN vessel in the modern era – when she returned to Devonport from east of Suez (*see page 4*).

Also back in Devonport are survey ship **HMS Enterprise** (from east of Suez) and veteran tanker **RFA Gold Rover** (from the South Atlantic) – *see pages 5 and 6 respectively*.

Enjoying the sun (so obviously not in Blighty) are the crew of **HMS Lancaster** who are beginning their Caribbean deployment, hopping around British territories in the region (*see page 6*).

HMS Sutherland visited her namesake historic county – and set some of the ship's company the challenge of getting home to Devonport from Scotland without any money. Or ship. *See page 16*.

Her sister **HMS Somerset** went as far west as you can in England, to the Scillies (but didn't dump any sailors ashore minus cash) for Battle of the Atlantic events (*see page 7*).

700W NAS have been carrying out the latest series of trials with Wildcat – this time deck landings on **RFA Mounts Bay** (*see opposite*).

But don't write off its predecessor just yet. There's plenty of life left in Lynx, as **HMS Dragon** and **815 NAS** showed when the destroyer operated two of the helicopters on the front-line for the first time (*see opposite*).

Dragon's also been heavily involved in the second half of the major Gulf mine exercise **IMCMEX**, including a convoy escort mission with a gigantic gas tanker, while as well as serving as a one-stop-shop (or should it be ship?) **RFA Cardigan Bay** tested her medical facilities in a gory mock mine explosion. (*see pages 14-15*).

HMS Illustrious is fully prepared to play a key role in this autumn's annual Cougar task group deployment after a month's testing work-out off Plymouth (*see page 17*).

After five years in the Falklands **HMS Clyde** is almost a permanent presence there. Her name is as it has joined other RN vessels associated with the islands whose titles are marked in stone opposite Stanley (*see page 11*).

HMS Vigilant was singled out as Britain's best bomber for her efforts coming out of refit, culminating in the firing of a test Trident missile (*see page 9*).

Also emerging from a lengthy refit was Henry VIII's flagship **Mary Rose**, unveiled in her magnificent new museum (*see page 10*).

Just like riding an Ike...

HOW many fingers am I holding up?

CPO Stacy Gager marshals jets on the deck of the USS Dwight D Eisenhower – and makes a bit of Royal/US Navy history.

This is (we believe) the first time a Royal Navy sailor has performed the job of aircraft director aboard an American super-carrier.

With the nation investing in its first big deck carriers since the demise of the fourth HMS Ark Royal in the late '70s, the Navy needs personnel who can arm, move and direct fast jets and helicopters safely around HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

Thanks to an agreement with Washington – the US-UK Long Lead Specialist Skills Programme – a kernel of around 300 personnel from both the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force will be trained aboard American warships until the end of the decade.

Since the beginning of 2013, RN personnel have been serving with the assault ship USS Kearsarge and the Eisenhower. This month an eight-strong group of Brits joins USS Harry S Truman.

They're being immersed in a world of hectic flight deck operations, maintenance and weapons handling – everything they'll be expected to perform when the Queen Elizabeth enters service later this decade and begins flying the F35 Joint Strike Fighter from her deck.

All those chosen for the programme already have at least ten years' experience of working with aircraft – but despite that depth of knowledge, the trailblazers have found working on such busy flight decks challenging.

CPO Gager heads the four RN aircraft handlers aboard the Eisenhower. He's now one of around a dozen directors on the Ike's flight deck during operations, responsible for directing all aircraft movement.

"I am really pleased," he said. "I studied whenever I could and worked hard on the deck so that I could pass their exams just as their own US sailors do, so it made me very proud to get my qualification. "I have really enjoyed the



training on the US carrier – it has been exciting and something different.

"I wanted to do this from the first time it was mentioned and the first to be out here learning these new skills and bringing them back to the Royal Navy."

Work on Ike for Stacy and his shipmates is hard: 16-hour days and no access to rest or relaxation areas apart from the dining hall or their own bunks.

"It is important that we learn about using these large flight decks," he added. We may not be operating cats and traps but working with a huge amount of personnel as well as operating on a deck of this size helps with the understanding of how it all works. "It has been a huge learning

curve that I have really enjoyed. Working with their aircraft has been interesting – there are so many different types on one ship – and also different ways of launching and recovering."

Both groups of Britons aboard American flat-tops have been involved in active operations east of Suez. Those aboard the Kearsarge have the familiar sight of Harriers (the US Marine Corps' AV-8B variant) to marshal around the deck among other aircraft; those on the Eisenhower are dealing with Super Hornet jets, Hawkeye early-warning aircraft, specialist Prowler electronic warfare jets, twin-prop Greyhound transporters and Seahawk helicopters.

"The feedback we have had from the team out there is that it's

been a very valuable experience," says Lt Cdr Jon Llewellyn, on the carrier staff at the Royal Navy's headquarters on Whale Island in Portsmouth. "It is pretty tough training for them and the difference in living and working in that environment is a feat in itself."

"The flight deck is one of the most dangerous places to work in the world. You have to have an awareness of everything that is going on around you – there are jet blasts coming from all around and aircraft landing and taking off.

"But as far as job satisfaction goes it is very, very rewarding. They are enjoying learning the skills and putting what they already know into practice. This is what they signed up to do and they don't get to do it very often. It is going to put us in good stead for our own carriers."

Double Dragon



FLANKING the imposing superstructure of the Navy's most advanced warship, this is the first time two Lynx helicopters have joined a Type 45 destroyer on front-line operations.

For the past two months, HMS Dragon has been operating not her usual solitary Lynx, but two, to see how a pair of the nimble helicopters can enhance the day-to-day mission of the Royal Navy in the Gulf.

The Portsmouth-based warship is on her maiden deployment to the region, spending six months working with the UK's allies in the region and keeping the sea lanes open – as demonstrated by recently taking part in the largest mine warfare exercise staged east of Suez (see pages 14-15).

When Dragon took over from HMS Monmouth back in April, the frigate's Lynx – still bearing the charging Black Duke knight decal on her nose – joined the destroyer.

The Type 45 had already brought her own 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx from the UK when she sailed in March: callsign Draco (Latin for Dragon) outside the Gulf and Flametrap 455 in it (there's another vessel in the region with the same callsign...).

The destroyer also carried a spare Flight – air and ground crew – ready for the arrival of Black Knight (renamed Flametrap 415 aboard Dragon – we hope you're following all these name changes...).

Before the ship could begin double operations, Flametrap 415 needed maintenance after her six months of exertions in the region – deep maintenance on the airframe, engines and avionics which would typically be carried out back at home at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset, rather in the back of a hangar of an operational Royal Navy warship.

While Flametrap 455 took on the operational surface search and secondary role tasking sustaining an intensive period of work in the Gulf, skilled maintainers worked long hours on the second Lynx to ensure that the helicopter would be ready not just to work with her sister, but to remain in theatre for at least ten months; it's remaining in the region now the Dragon trial is done.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, HMS Dragon



“The physical logistics of operating and maintaining two Lynx in the hangar were a hurdle – especially with the essential extra equipment carried on a deployment to sustain an aircraft,” explained Lt Cdr Kevin Miller, Dragon's weapon engineer officer.

“It wasn't just the airframe that came over from HMS Monmouth. A large quantity of essential spares came over as part of the package and each item was secured in a carefully-selected stowage so that the vital tracking of aviation stores could be closely

controlled.

“The engineers orchestrated the manoeuvring and servicing of both aircraft in a hangar that is big enough to house a Merlin.”

And they did all this in a region where temperatures are now regularly over 40°C during the day.

“Dual aircraft operations has been a busy time for all,” said maintainer PO(AET) Matt Ferris. “The maintenance hours have been triple that of a normal flight due to 415 staying in theatre, and keeping up with the



high flying tempo whilst having two aircraft.”

Facing the prospect of operating two aircraft to tactical advantage, Dragon adopted the ‘crawl-walk-run’ plan – aided by the fact that the destroyer's Flight Commander, Lt Cdr Paul Ellerton, has done this before from ice survey ship HMS Endurance which carried two Lynx on her Antarctic missions.

What having two Lynx has allowed above all is the ability to carry out the ‘day job’ of surface searches and support to board and search operations, while the second helicopter carried out training with the Royal Marines sniper team, rapid roping, passenger transfers and, most importantly, picking up mail to bolster morale among the 235-strong ship's company.

And when a call came from minehunter HMS Quorn that she needed equipment, vital to sustain her mission, flown in from Bahrain – the hub of the RN's east-of-Suez mission – simultaneously with the need to return a group of American junior officers to the destroyer USS Higgins when rough seas prevented them going back by boat, the loudspeakers aboard Dragon sounded: *Action Four-Five-Five, Action Four-One-Five.*


Within two hours the helicopters were both back in the hangar being prepared for the next day's tasking having completed their double mission.

Amid all the serious high-tempo operational flying – and in typical FAA fashion – the aircrew managed to squeeze in some ‘fun’ by conducting formation flying; a skill rarely exercised in this part of the world.

“It was a great opportunity to actually apply the training we receive in the UK and put it into practice – dual operations in an operational theatre,” said pilot Lt Rob Gleave as the two months aboard Dragon came to an end.

As far as Dragon's principal warfare officer Lt Cdr Jason White is concerned this double helicopter experiment has been well worthwhile.

“Having two Lynx aircraft embarked on Dragon for this short period has allowed valuable experience to be gained and lessons learned throughout the ship which have been captured for the future,” he added.

 Dragon on escort duties, pages 14-15

Wildcat tries out her new lair



ABOUT to ‘slide’ across the flight deck of RFA Mounts Bay, this is the Navy's next-generation helicopter going through a crucial workout off the South Coast.

Fleet Air Arm aircrew were flying by day and night – the latter courtesy of night vision kit – on to and off the deck of the amphibious support ship as they took another important step down the road to introducing the Wildcat to front-line service.

The helicopter will replace the long-serving Lynx as the air power of the Royal Navy's destroyers, some of her frigates (which also operate the Merlin), and whichever warship or Royal Fleet Auxiliary requires an aircraft for its global mission.

Wildcat has already carried out trials at sea on RFA Argus (its first deck landing) and HMS Iron Duke (first time on a Royal Navy frigate) as test pilots, specialist engineers and technicians noted the helicopter's flight characteristics to help them set the limits so it can be safely operated at sea by the Fleet Air Arm.

The helicopter's now in the hands of the Yeovilton squadron which is

charged with bringing it into front-line service, 700W (W for Wildcat), who embarked on Mounts Bay to hone deck landing skills. The squadron is formed specially to introduce new aircraft into the Fleet Air Arm (most recently the Merlin).

Although Wildcat looks very similar to a Lynx the two are different beasts. The new aircraft has more powerful engines – giving the pilot around one third more power than its predecessor – and new avionics.

And on the fighting side, there's a glass cockpit with four large colour displays, replacing dials and screens of old.

As for firepower as well as Sting Ray torpedoes, and a .5in M3M machine-gun mounted by the side door, there'll be the new light and heavy versions of the Future Anti-Surface Guided Weapon – the next-generation missile for use against targets at sea and on land.

Learning how to use the weaponry lies in the future. For now, 700W has been concentrating on the basics of flying Wildcat at sea and the lessons it learns will help the Fleet Air Arm

devise the training courses for the Wildcat aircrew of tomorrow.

“As a maritime attack helicopter, going to sea is what the aircraft was designed for,” explained Lt Cdr Rob Taylor, 700W's Commanding Officer.

“Flying to a moving deck is one of the most demanding evolutions any aircrew can conduct and it is vital the team is fully-trained in this task to support further tactical development activity on the squadron.

“Wildcat performed beyond expectations, building on the noteworthy lineage of the Lynx helicopter which has been operating from the flight decks of RN warships for over 30 years – and will continue to do, for some years to come.

“This recent activity will provide a springboard for further radar and sensor trials before, in 2014, the training of the next generation of pilots and observers who will take the Royal Navy's newest maritime attack helicopter to sea, is due to commence.”

The Fleet Air Arm is buying 28 Wildcats which will be operational in early 2015.

Iron Duke goes far with new radar

AT SEA for the first time in 16 months following a major overhaul in her home base is the new-and-improved HMS Iron Duke – the first RN ship to be fitted with one of the most advanced radars in the world.

Among many other enhancements, the 22-year-old frigate is testing Artisan – a 3D radar which spins atop Iron Duke's main mast and is five times better than the old radar it replaces.

She's the first of the Type 23 fleet to receive the Gucci new piece of kit as part of a £100m programme to fit the frigates as well as the Royal Navy's two future aircraft carriers.

Artisan could also be the principal air radar of the Type 26 combat ship, successor to the 23s, which enter service next decade.

For now, Iron Duke is basking in the accolades and superlatives surrounding the new radar.

It can spot something as small as a cricket or tennis ball travelling at three times the speed of sound more than 25 kilometres (15 miles) away.

Impressive. But it's just the beginning of the gee-whiz facts.

It's built out of the same lightweight carbon glass fibre materials found on Formula 1 cars and weighs just 700kg (1,540lb) – slightly heavier than an F1 racer and driver.

As well as being able to track up to 800 targets simultaneously, it can do so if they're 200 metres from Iron Duke – that's roughly the width of the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour – or 200 kilometres (125 miles) away.

Put another way: Iron Duke could sit in her home base and follow aircraft flying into Heathrow, Gatwick, Southampton, Stansted, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cardiff, Exeter and Birmingham international airports.

On top of accuracy it's packed with anti-jamming features – it isn't bothered by interference from 10,000 mobile phone signals – and can pick out targets against a background of electronic noise and interference.

The ship has received other weapons upgrades and improved air conditioning for forays into hot parts of the world.

Get on the phone to Guinness...

THE brewery and the record book adjudicators.

The brewery because a homecoming is *always* worth raising a glass to...

... and the book of world records because HMS Trenchant was last seen on the Hamoaze exactly 11 months ago.

The T-boat was greeted by some 200 families as she completed the longest patrol by a Trafalgar-class submarine in their 32-year history: 335 days away.

To mark their achievements on that record-breaker – beating HMS 'Tireless' 2010-11 patrol by 12 days – the 130 crew were thanked personally by Britain's most senior military figure, Chief of Defence Staff General Sir David Richards, who joined the boat at Plymouth Breakwater for the final few moments of the marathon tour of duty.

Once alongside, the tears flowed and the smiles beamed from ear to ear as crew and families were reunited.

Thanks to rotation of the 170-strong crew, at least 40 of Trenchant's ship's company have been at home at any one time – but seven submariners, 'black watch', completed the whole 11-month deployment.

"Submariners enjoy their work so they are not affected by long deployments and simply get on with their duties, meeting every challenge head-on," said Trenchant's Commanding Officer Cdr Irvine Lindsay.

"Whilst I am enormously proud of the achievements of my ship's company I do not believe that they are a unique body of men. I am convinced that the resilience, dedication, professional pride and sheer grit demonstrated by this ship's company is indicative of the high calibre of personnel serving across the whole of the Submarine Service – and indeed the Royal Navy."

Cdr Lindsay, who was met by his wife Janet, added: "I'm looking forward to fresh air outside a submarine, to a full night's sleep



Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Shread, FRPU West

instead of being woken up to go into the control room and to climbing the Cairngorms, far from the sea."

Lt Cdr Stuart Barrie, the submarine's weapon engineer officer, was greeted by his wife Fiona and their excited children Niamh, three, and son Toby, six.

"It's fantastic to be back home after so long," he said, "It's a bit surreal really after so long away. I last saw them five months ago – the longest I've been away from them."

Fiona added: "It's great to have Stu back. The children are so excited to have their daddy back. Toby wants to show him all the swimming certificates he's got and his good school reports. And Niamh's going to show her daddy her dancing."

The long-awaited homecoming was marked by families with

traditional welcoming banners at Devil's Point, while families waiting in the Naval Base itself were entertained by the Band of HM Royal Marines Plymouth as they waited impatiently for Trenchant to tie up.

Sailor Daniel Tookey, a tactical systems operator, was welcomed by his wife Lisa and son Lucas, aged two years, who was dressed in a sailor's suit. Daniel said: "It is a great relief to be home after so long away. I was so longing to see Lisa and Lucas. I want to bath him and spend time with them both, to eat when and what I want and to sleep in my own bed."

As the latest Royal Navy hunter-killer submarine to uphold the Silent Service's presence in the Middle East – a mission going back to 2001 – Trenchant spent 267 days east of Suez.

Some 37 crew completed the patrol as fully-qualified submariners having earned their coveted Dolphins badges as the boat added 38,800 nautical miles to her odometer – that's the equivalent of sailing around the world one-and-three-quarter times.

The impressive statistics don't end there. Trenchant spent 4,700 hours dived – that's six and a half months without sunlight (bit like a British summer...).

The long patrol meant the crew consumed 30,240 eggs – which would take 45 hens laying two a day the length of the deployment to achieve; 7,904 litres of milk (the average dairy cow produces 5ltr a day, so 4.3 years 'work' for a single cow); and 20,592 sausages – laid end to end these would stretch approximately two kilometres.

In all Trenchant's chefs cooked 103,350 meals, and produced over 44,000 homemade rolls.



When the Albanians want to RAS, that's Vlorë...

THE green slopes of the Adriatic port of Vlorë provided a lush backdrop for HMS Ledbury as she and her NATO sisters spent three days in Albania on the latest stage of their Med-wide deployment.

About 60 miles south of the capital Tirana, it's one of the Albanian Navy's two main bases (the other is up the coast at Durrës)

Although the port is not a regular RN haunt in the Med like Taranto, Grand Harbour or Souda Bay, Vlorë is not entirely alien ground: the Cougar task group was here last autumn for exercises with local forces.

The NATO force did exactly the same, carrying out various manoeuvres in the Bay of Vlorë in company with the Oriku, a coastal patrol vessel, and an Archangel class patrol boat – similar to RN P2000s, but smaller and faster – culminating in a replenishment at sea by the Oriku with Ledbury and Italy's ITS Crotona.

Those exercises came at the conclusion of the visit by NATO's Mine Counter-Measures Group 2, a small, ever-changing force of international warships with a never-changing mission: keep the Med safe.

The visit by the three vessels currently assigned to the force – Turkey's TGC Edincick completes the trio – coincided (roughly) with *Festa della Repubblica* (Italy's Republic Day) and the Queen's Official Birthday, which prompted the Crotona and Ledbury to dress overall on their respective sides of the jetty.

The Portsmouth-based Hunt-class ship hosted Cdr Andrew Lamb, squadron commander of the 2nd Mine Counter Measure Squadron, Ledbury's mother unit, and the UK's Ambassador to Albania, Nicholas Cannon.

Ledbury's CO Lt Cdr Justin Hains said the people of Vlorë had made his sailors "feel very welcome" during the short visit, while the Albanian Navy had demonstrated "high professional standards" during the joint exercise.

Marines leave Turnchapel to concentrate

SWARMING past Drake's Island, these ten Offshore Raiding Craft complete the move of the Royal Marines' amphibious assault specialists to their new £30m home in Devonport Naval Base.

The ORCs from 539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines were the last boats to leave their long-standing base at Turnchapel in Plymstock as the Royal Navy focuses its amphibious forces at the northern end of the vast base.

Once commonly referred to as 'frigate alley', Weston Mill Lake near Camel's Head Gate is now the Senior Service's home of amphibious warfare, serving as the berth for Albion-class assault ships and helicopter/commando carrier HMS Ocean (currently in refit).

As part of that concentration, the Royal Marines amphibious forces – landing craft, hovercraft, raiders and RIBs – are relocating from Turnchapel and Poole to the £30m RM Tamar complex.

539 is the UK's only self-supporting and organised assault squadron – part of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines. Unlike other assault squadrons whose focus is on amphibious assault and mass deployment from ships such as HMS Bulwark, 539's emphasis is on smaller scale raiding and river and river estuary operations.

The final flotilla to arrive at Tamar were ten armoured ORCs, which sped up the Tamar, past Drake's Island in Plymouth Sound and up the River Hamoaze to take up permanent residency in their new home.

"The official handover of Royal Marines Tamar from a building site to an operating amphibious base is fantastic," said Col Garth Manger, Commanding Officer of both 1 Assault Group Royal Marines and RM Tamar.

"RM Tamar is the first of the Navy's centres of

specialisation and has been delivered on time and in budget. It offers defence, the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines a modern, bespoke amphibious operating base capable of delivering support to worldwide operations, training and maintenance in a 'one-stop amphibious shop'."

One building in the Tamar complex will serve as the HQ of both 539 ASRM and 10 (Landing Craft) Training Squadron Royal Marines (currently in Poole), and provides training rooms.

A second large building will house landing craft and mechanical transport engineering workshops, including hard-standing available for landing craft storage.

Some 25,000 cubic metres of material have been dredged from Weston Mill and the area around Wilson's Beach at the eastern end of the lake.



Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Shread, FRPU West



Island in the stream

THE stream in question being the Clyde. Big stream at that. This is the final completed section of HMS Queen Elizabeth – her aft island – being carried on a sea-going barge, beginning a 650-mile journey to its final destination on the other side of Scotland.

The iconic structure was due to be fixed in place on the 65,000-tonne carrier's flight deck at the end of June, following a journey around the top of Scotland.

The 753-tonne island spent a week on the barge on passage from BAE's yard at Scotstoun on the Clyde to the Babcock yard at Rosyth, where the ship is being assembled.

It's a distance of just three dozen miles as the crow flies, but given the size of the island – 52m (170ft) long, 14m (46ft) wide and 31m (101ft 6in) high – a barge around the Scottish coast was the only option.

From the island – the official designation in the gigantic jigsaw that is the future carrier is Upper Block 14 – all of Queen Elizabeth's flight deck operations will be directed.

The block is home to Flyco – Flying Control, effectively the carrier's equivalent of an airport control tower. It is slightly heavier and larger than the forward island (home to the bridge) installed in April. Inside are some 110 compartments, 1,000 pipes and 44km (27 miles – or just longer than a marathon) of cabling.

"This marks a great achievement for the team here on the Clyde," said BAE's Angus Holt, overseeing the firm's production of blocks for Queen Elizabeth and her sister Prince of Wales.

"It's a real credit to their hard work and skill that the block was completed ahead of schedule – and to an exceptional standard – demonstrating the pride and drive among the team to deliver the nation's flagships."

With the island in place on the carrier – courtesy of the huge Goliath crane which dominates the north shore of the Forth – Queen Elizabeth stands taller than Niagara Falls at 56m high (183ft)

It doesn't quite complete the Queen Elizabeth jigsaw. Still to be added are her ski ramp to launch her F35 jump jets and a few final sponsors to finish the flight deck.

In a few weeks' time, the team from the Aircraft Carrier Alliance will begin to give the carrier her battleship grey appearance; right now she's a mish-mash of colours, with the flight deck a very un-RN-like crimson.

Although the islands are painted grey, they've yet to have the final coat of paint applied. Indeed, the only part of the ship which is in the final livery are the window frames on the forward island – and that's because the panes had to be installed.

In all, Queen Elizabeth requires 1½ million square metres (over 16 million square feet) of paintwork... which is slightly larger than Hyde Park.



Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Shread, FRPU West

Duncan passes her first test

HMS Duncan has sailed for the first time under the White Ensign as she begins the long road to front-line duties.

After three months in her home base following her arrival from the builder's yard on the Clyde, the final of the RN's six Type 45 destroyers put to sea last month for initial training and assessment under the supervision of staff from Flag Officer Sea Training organisation.

The FOST team had helped Duncan to prepare for her inaugural run out, as had the Maritime Commissioning and Testing Authority, Portsmouth Flotilla and BAE Systems, who made sure ship and 200-strong ship's company were in top form.

It was the FOST staff who had the final say on what came next, however. They wanted to know whether the sailors could master the basics of taking a warship to sea: from safe seamanship to dealing with multiple fires, floods and machinery breakdowns.

The FOSTies said yes. By passing that initial two-day assessment, Duncan is able to move on to the next stage of her journey: trialling her equipment around the UK.

"It's really exciting to get Duncan to sea for the first time in Royal Navy hands," said Duncan's CO Cdr James Stride.

"It is a testament to all the hard work, not only of our ship's company, but also all of the outside organisations that support us."

There'll be a break from trials and training for summer leave, while Duncan will be formally commissioned into the bosom of the Senior Service in Portsmouth in September.

Enterprise in, Echo out

THAT'S one for the album...

A quick snap of a passing pusser's grey making her way towards Devonport Naval Base.

The pusser's grey in question, Her Majesty's Ship Enterprise, was returning after nine months away.

Her mission done charting the waters east of Suez, the star ship (sorry) of the Royal Navy's hydrographic fleet sailed up the Hamoaze at the end of May to a noisy and colourful welcome from loved ones.

She returned having found undiscovered wrecks, stunning and previously-uncharted ocean features, and with the wider Enterprise family having grown by five since departing last autumn: five babies were born to families of the ship's company while deployed.

LS Mark Reynolds was nearly rushed off his feet by his family when he stepped off the ship. His children Phoebe, seven, and Ethan, five, dropped their 'welcome' banner and were first to hug their father.

Waiting with their new daughter Theia, 12 weeks, was his wife Amy. As he cradled Theia, Mark said: "It was a good deployment, but I'm so happy to be back, especially to see Theia – I last saw her when she was three weeks old and now she's double the size and so cute."

"I came back for her birth and flew back to the ship which was a fantastic experience. I'm now very keen on sleeping in a bigger bed and having home-made food and having some normal family life."

His wife added: "This is a special day – having Mark back and I'm hoping we can have a normal life for a while with him, for him to see Theia growing fast, while Phoebe wants him to see her improving swimming."

Mark's mother Angela, from Wirral, said: "I always get very excited on these occasions. I think I embarrass him shouting at the ship louder than anyone else. I never get used to them coming back, even though my other daughter is also a navy medical assistant at Lympstone and my other son is joining the Navy soon."

The bulk of Enterprise's deployment was focused in the Red Sea, where the ship's hi-tech sensors revealed a Grand Canyon-style feature on the seabed.

Having boldly gone (sorry) over 1,220km² of ocean with her

sensors – that's an area 15 times the size of her native Plymouth – Enterprise will feed her data to the UK Hydrographic Office which produces the 3,300 Admiralty charts used by the RN and many other seafarers.

Among the charts to be updated as a result of Enterprise's efforts, are those covering Dubai's Port Rashid harbour, where the ship found two previously-undiscovered wrecks.

"We've been gathering oceanographic and hydrographic data for merchant mariners and for military use on what has been a successful deployment," said Cdr Derek Rae, Enterprise's CO. "But first and foremost we are a Royal Naval warship and where we operated there is pirate activity. We were able to reassure merchant ships by our mere presence that the Royal Navy was acting in their interests and that we mean business if they needed us."

As for Enterprise's joyous return, Cdr Rae said it was "very uplifting to see the families cheering us back in Plymouth. They are owed a lot of gratitude from the Navy because without their support back home looking after the children and keeping the home going we could not go about our work."

While HMS Enterprise was enjoying a warm welcome in Plymouth, sailors in her sister ship HMS Echo were slipping their lines quietly 40 miles down the coast.

The survey ship departed Falmouth the same day, to return to waters she knows well as she begins her second 18-month deployment in three years.

For the next year and a half, she'll update charts of stretches of the Mediterranean, Red Sea and Indian Ocean – pretty much exactly what she did on her previous year-and-a-half-long deployment which concluded in the summer of 2012.

That mission saw her find hitherto unknown, potentially-dangerous natural features, in particular in the Red Sea, as well as wrecks in the Med, and an historic first visit to Tripoli since the fall of the Gaddafi regime.

Since completing that first extended tour of duty, Echo's undergone a revamp, followed by training, two weeks taking part in the Joint Warrior exercise off north-west Scotland, and a spot of maintenance in Falmouth

– which has become a second home to these Devonport-based hydrographic ships.

The passage to the Med wasn't exactly pleasant sailing – and we're not talking about the vagaries of the Bay of Biscay; aboard Echo was a team of assessors testing the ability of the ship's company to

deal with various damage control scenarios (fire, flood – basically the things you don't want happening on a ship).

Although Echo herself will be away for 18 months, not so her sailors; thanks to rotation of the ship's company, one third of the sailors change every few weeks.



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French Navy likes sacs

THE Navy's eyes in the sky hopped across the Channel to help their French counterparts prepare for action with Europe's most powerful surface ship.

Two 'bagger' Sea Kings from 849 Naval Air Squadron at Culdrose decamped 120 miles to Brittany where the French Navy's Carrier Air Group was working up ahead of joining France's flagship Charles de Gaulle.

The French had organised a week-long air defence exercise to give the four squadrons which provide their carrier with its aerial punch a work-out – and invited the British and Swiss to take part.

The Swiss obliged with a squadron of F/A18 Hornets. The British obliged with the two Airborne Surveillance and Control Sea Kings which have proven so useful over land and sea from Iraq, through Afghanistan (where they're still deployed) to Libya over the past decade.

In terms of air defence, *les sacs* (we couldn't find an exact French translation for bagger) provide early warning for a Royal Navy task force of encroaching enemy aircraft – a role performed on the Charles de Gaulle by the E2C Hawkeye, a propeller-driven fixed wing aircraft.

It's joined on the deck of the French *porte-avions* by two squadrons of Rafale fighters, and one of Super Etendard.

The Sea Kings and Charles de Gaulle worked together as recently as last autumn on exercises in the Med, so the latest get together at the French Naval Air Station in Landivisiau in Brittany, two dozen miles east of Brest, helped cement long-standing Anglo-French naval relations.

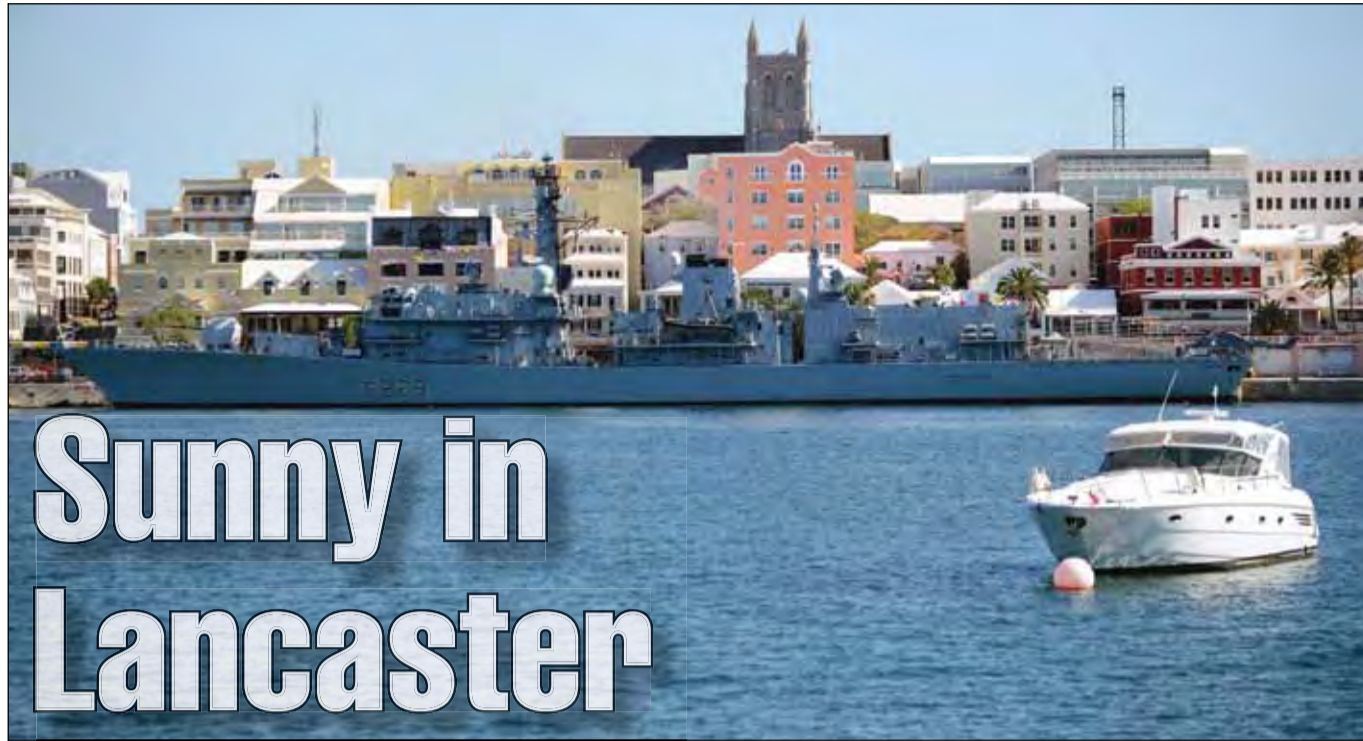
Among the highlights of the week, which saw the hosts provide the bagger detachment with all the logistical support they could hope for, were fighter control training missions for the de Gaulle jets on their way to attack naval surface vessels from France and the UK.

The Sea Kings notched up more than 40 hours flying, completing 16 missions.

"We achieved a significant amount on so many levels," said Lt Cdr Jim Hall, 849's senior observer. As well as an important training package for his crews, it helped three rookie aircrew complete their training and offered 849 the chance to renew ties with the Hawkeye squadron, with whom they're affiliated.

Culdrose's Commanding Officer Capt Mark Garratt also popped over the Channel to observe some of the exercise – and was impressed. "We can learn a great deal from each other," he said.

"This exercise has proved the mutual benefit to be gained from working closely together in challenging operational scenarios."



AND we don't mean the northern town.

Or a return of the infamous (and rather foul-beaked) parrot. No, we're talking tropical island paradises.

Over the next six months the Red Rose frigate will call upon every one of Britain's overseas territories in the North Atlantic and Caribbean.

(That means Bermuda, Anguilla, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos and the Cayman and Virgin Islands if you're a little rusty on your geography.)

First stop, Bermuda – but you might not necessarily recognise the colourful backdrop of Hamilton (above), because RN ships don't normally berth here.

Typically RN vessels calling at the island make use of the former royal dockyard, just three miles away across the Great Sound – but a lengthy bus or taxi ride if you want to get into the capital.

With the yard undergoing extensive redevelopment (including, sadly, the removal of the iconic naval badges which visiting ships left on its walls), the Portsmouth-based warship enjoyed a berth slap bang in the middle of town instead.

The weekend visit to the island gave the 190 sailors the chance to get their land legs back after a 3,500-mile Atlantic crossing.

and for the command team to explain to local officials what the frigate can offer in terms of assistance should the island be struck by a tropical storm (the North Atlantic hurricane season began on June 1).

Aid in the wake of a hurricane (or volcano in the case of Montserrat) is one half of Lancaster's mission; the other is to support the international war on drug-trafficking.

This six-month tour of duty is Lancaster's first since a 14-month



refit, from which she emerged at the beginning of last year. It's the first by an RN warship in several years; the task of the North Atlantic patrol has been performed by vessels of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, most recently tanker Wave Knight with whom the Type 23 met up in Bermuda.

During the Portsmouth-based frigate's four-day stay the ship's company attended a reception at the Governor's residence, the change of command parade at the Bermuda Regiment and dressed the ship overall for the Duke of Edinburgh's 92nd birthday (as did their counterparts around the world).

Aside from the ceremonial there was some training to conduct with both the regiment and the police service.

And more than 1,000 Bermudans took the opportunity to tour the Red Rose when she opened her gangway...

...while heading in the opposite direction were the frigate's cricket,

football, rugby and golf teams to take on local opposition.

"We were made to feel very welcome by the Governor – and all the people of Bermuda – and I am delighted we had the opportunity to work with the Bermuda Regiment as well as the emergency services," said the frigate's Commanding Officer Cdr Steve Moorhouse.

"We all appreciate the historic links the Navy has with Bermuda and we continued the long relationship the Royal Navy has with the island." Phew. Not one mention of triangles or shorts...

Twelve hundred or so miles to the south-west and the port of call No.2. Key West, the end of the United States (also an important naval base in the Gulf of Mexico and a vital stop for any ship taking part, like Lancaster, in the war on drugs).

The visit coincided with the Queen's official birthday and, as she is the frigate's sponsor as Duke of Lancaster, the warship was suitably colourfully dressed to mark the occasion.

While the command team were being briefed on counter-narcotics work, most of the ship's company were enjoying the sights of the Keys: Ernest Hemingway's House, Sloppy Joe's

(the novelist's favourite bar) and the southernmost point marker buoy (a rather garish concrete block which is not at the foot of the USA... the real point is on another, private, island), which was briefly adorned with the White Ensign and copies of *Navy News*.

But the visit to Key West was not just about posing at tourist traps. It was about honouring the RN's own.

Sixty years ago 30 Royal Navy men were sent to Florida as part of a United Nations programme to provide trained aircrew for squadrons in action over Korea.

In February 1952, two of the Brits – Sub Lt Smith and Mid Dwyer – were killed in an accident while serving at Milton Field, Pensacola.

Rather than repatriate the officers' bodies – this predates regular transatlantic flights – the decision was taken to bury them at Key West.

And so it was that in 30°C heat nine sailors from the Red Rose gathered at the graves to tend to them and hold a short service of remembrance (pictured inset).

The act was prompted by the father-in-law of Lancaster's chief stoker, CPO(MEM) Neil 'Chelsea' Halsey; in the early 50s, Sub Lt Michael Inkpen was one of those 30 men sent to Florida.

"The grave restoration was a great way to pay our respects to the families of shipmates and others," said LS(AWW) Chris Tongue. "I feel in this day and age it's important to keep traditions going and show the junior members of the RN what sacrifices our elders made for us."

As the *Navy News* team were pressing the big shiny red 'print' button, Lancaster's next stop, 600 miles away via the waters separating Cancun and Cuba, was Grand Cayman, with the identical aim as in Bermuda: reassurance that the RN is here to offer help should natural disaster strike and to support the island's authorities in the fight against drug trafficking.

Just two thirds of the UK's territories in the region left to visit then...

Eagle eyes for the Fleet

ROYAL Navy warships are to get their first 'eye in the sky' pilotless reconnaissance aircraft in a £30m deal.

Whitehall is investing in the small, unarmed ScanEagle robot planes which can be launched from the flight decks of Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels day or night to gather intelligence and survey the wider area of operations.

The aircraft has been used extensively by the Americans for the past decade – including while working alongside the Royal Navy on recent mine warfare exercises in the Gulf, flying from the back of the USS Ponce – and was trialled aboard frigate HMS Sutherland back in 2006.

Now the MOD is buying the small plane to complement the existing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets used on Royal Navy operations such as helicopters and long-range radar.

The small drone – the official military terminology is Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, or UAV – has a wingspan of just over three metres (10ft) and weighs 22kg (48lbs) and is launched from a pneumatic catapult.

Flying at about 60 knots, it is piloted by a specialist team on board the ship who will plan the ScanEagle's missions, control its flights and monitor and analyse the information it gathers using its state-of-the-art sensors, including a video or infra red camera, beaming back 'real-time' high resolution images via a satellite link. It stays airborne for around 15 to 18 hours at distances upwards of 70 miles from the ship.

Once its flight is over it returns to the mother ship where it's caught by dangling a rope vertically, which catches in a hook at either end of each wing. The aircraft is grappled by a recovery device and lifted back on board.

They think it's all Rover. It is now...

THE oldest active ship in the Naval Service – tanker RFA Gold Rover – has returned to Plymouth after nearly two years keeping Royal Navy warships on station in the South Atlantic.

It was the job of the 39-year-old vessel to provide sustenance to HMS Clyde, the RN's permanent presence around the Falklands, as well as any vessel on Atlantic Patrol duties – most recently veteran destroyer HMS Edinburgh.

The tanker travelled 91,860 nautical miles – that's the equivalent of more than four times around the world – since leaving Portland in August 2011.

Collectively, her crew spent 7,789 hours on watch – more than 46 weeks – whilst refuelling and resupplying Royal Navy ships on patrol in the region with black gold, equipment, spares, medical supplies, water and whatever else they required.

"Not a bad achievement for an old lady," said her CO Capt Nigel Budd RFA.

"Our return is the end of another chapter in the proud task of continuous RFA logistic support to the South Atlantic, which for the majority of the time has been provided by a Rover-class vessel.

"I am proud that the ship and my ship's company have been recognised for the versatility and fortitude that has shown in the widest range of activities and areas, all in the generally extreme conditions of the South Atlantic."

As well as her mainstream work, the ship has visited Gran Canaria, Ascension Island, St Helena and South Africa during her 21 months away.

Her slightly-younger sister RFA Black Rover has taken her place (see page 42).

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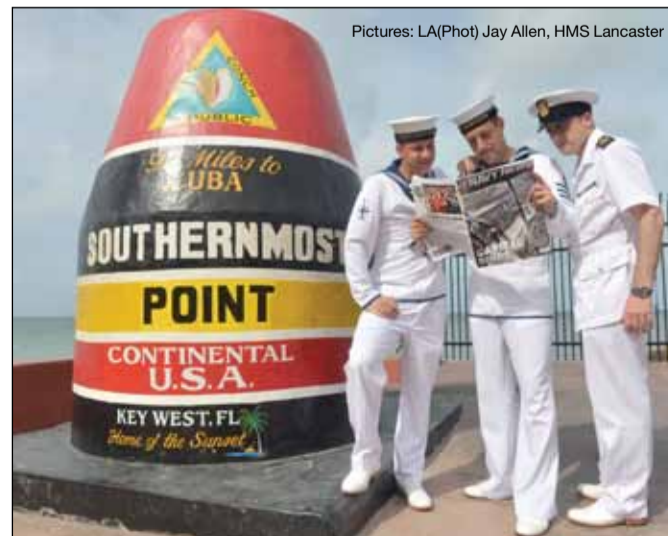


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Pictures: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, HMS Lancaster

● Lads, it says here if we dress in whites, and cheesily pose reading Navy News next to a tourist-trap landmark, we'll get in the paper. You don't know of any such landmarks, do you?...

SILHOUETTED against the setting sun, HMS Somerset sits serenely at anchor in England's westernmost outpost.

This is the roadstead at St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly, home to the Devonport-based frigate for three days as she helped islanders commemorate the Battle of the Atlantic.

It also gave island folk a fairly rare insight into the world of the Senior Service.

And it gave the 180-strong ship's company a short respite from the rigours of bringing Somerset back to life after a nine-month £20m refit in her

home port.

Those rigours include two months of Operational Sea Training off the South Coast.

And whilst that's largely focused on fire, flood and all the most terrifying bits of the Bible, there are some quieter moments.

For warships aren't just warships. They're a little slice of Britain, flying the flag around the globe. They're expected to host public events, champion UK industry and show Blighty in the best possible light.

To ensure Somerset can do just that when she deploys again, the ability to host ceremonies and the public are part of the

OST experience.

So the Type 23 dropped anchor in St Mary's Roads for a weekend, beginning with an official reception and capability demonstration, during which 90 guests were treated to RN hospitality whilst being shown what HMS Somerset and her crew can do.

Sea boat and boarding team displays were followed by a tour of the ship's key compartments before guests mustered on the flight deck to watch a ceremonial sunset.

The second day's busy programme opened with the public invited aboard – and

around 400 locals and tourists accepted the invite.

That was followed by islanders paying tribute to the heroes of the Atlantic battle. The White Ensign was raised over Star Castle ahead of a formal service, attended by the ship's company and around 600 members of the public.

A 12-man guard of honour acted as the centrepiece of commemorations, while Cdre Jamie Miller, Naval Regional Commander Wales and Western England, paid tribute to the contribution made by islanders during this long and hard-fought campaign.

He also personally thanked two surviving Battle of the Atlantic veterans attending.

The White Ensign was lowered during the closing Ceremonial Sunset, overlooking Somerset at anchor on a perfect summer's evening.

Guard commander Lt Gary Turner said: "A Royal Navy guard of honour, Royal Marine buglers and a Ceremonial Sunset overlooking the Atlantic Ocean was a fitting tribute to the longest military campaign of World War 2."

The final day of the visit saw around 100 schoolchildren invited aboard for a personal

tour of the ship, followed by some of the islands' leaders who were treated to lunch as a thank-you for the hospitality they'd shown Somerset's sailors.

"As the West Country's favourite warship, it is fantastic to be able to visit the most westerly part of England and be made to feel so welcome," said Cdr Mike Smith, the frigate's CO.

"It has been a pleasure welcoming islanders onboard HMS Somerset and helping them understand a little more about the role the modern Royal Navy has in protecting our nation's interests both at home and further afield around the globe."



Somerset's Scilly sunset

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SUMMIT TO BE PROUD OF

WHEN is a mountain not a mountain?

When it's a beach. Or Scottish scrubland. Or a compound in Afghanistan.

Confused? Well, allow the Royal Marines' mountain leaders to explain – as they open up the branch to the most junior Royal Marines for the first time.

The mountain leaders trace their history back to the Cliff Assault Unit in World War 2 (you might remember their American counterparts scaling the steep shores of Normandy in *The Longest Day*).

And as the title suggests, they remain the Corps' kings of the mountains – vital to instructing the rest of the brigade on the art of skiing, surviving and fighting in the Arctic, where the marines train most winters.

Typically it's a world which has been the domain of corporals and above.

But the Corps is now expanding the branch to all ranks of green beret as it introduces the Mountain Leader 3 course (the most experienced are Mountain Leader 1s).

And the current cadre of mountain leaders want to stress that in 2013 the branch goes way beyond climbing, mountain training, clambering out of holes in the ice or building a quinzhee shelter from snow.

Joining the mountain leader branch opens up the world of reconnaissance and information gathering in the elite Brigade Patrol Troop, the small, specialist team which goes in ahead of the main

Royal Marines force. The troop – part of the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron, based at Stonehouse in Plymouth – has seen action in every major Royal Marines operation from the first Gulf war to Afghanistan.

They're taught how to parachute – demonstrated recently over south-west Scotland during the Joint Warrior exercise; how to drive a multitude of vehicles; how to provide first aid; and how to escape or evade capture.

They can also expect to work with the specialist amphibious teams of 539 Assault Squadron, the Mobile Air Operations Team from the Commando Helicopter Force, the signals and intelligence specialists of Y Squadron, the gunners of 148 Battery Royal Artillery and the combat engineers of 24 Commando Regiment.

In the patrol troop the emphasis is on gathering intelligence, as C/Sgt Lee Waters, the chief instructor on the subject at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone, explains: "In layman's terms it's finding out information on the enemy, their locations, strengths, dispositions, equipment – anything that's relevant to our battle plan and then putting it into the intelligence cycle."

Increasingly such intelligence gathering calls upon technology – anything from closed-circuit television and ground sensors, acting as early warning, all the way up to drones.

Once the raw information is gathered it is passed to the combat intelligence cell at the squadron, where it's quickly

analysed and passed up the line, directly impacting on front-line decisions and actions.

"The lion's share of what the squadron is designed to do is surveillance and reconnaissance – but they also have the ability to prosecute targets through direct action," says Maj Ads Rutherford, in charge of mountain leader instruction at Lympstone.

In May 2011 the squadron (known then as the Brigade Reconnaissance Force) received intelligence of a possible Taliban bomb factory.

"We took off in two Chinooks and when we landed we were immediately in contact with the enemy – and that contact continued for the entire four hours we were on the ground," said WO1 Andy Ives, the mountain leader branch advisor.

One of the helicopters was hit by small arms fire and later had to make a forced landing.

"Our snipers were able to suppress the enemy, whose fire was very accurate at times. We repeatedly had to call in Apache helicopters to engage enemy snipers. The troop that went into the compound had to navigate their way through numerous booby traps, which were in almost every doorway.

"When we entered the compound we found it was a very large ammunition dump and an old Taliban training facility. There were two floors in the main buildings, which were riddled with booby traps, and a basement with explosives which were also booby trapped.

"Some US explosive experts rigged the basement with demolition charges and removed the compound from the face of the earth. We then extracted to the landing site and were picked up by helicopter again still under fire from the Taliban throughout."

More typically, however, the Brigade Patrol Troop is going

about its business unseen and unknown.

"We can see everything, hear everything and get an understanding of exactly what is going on in our area," says C/Sgt Waters.

"It's become a very important part of the training for mountain leaders. It's no longer just about the climbing and tactics. Now we concentrate massively on the end product and making sure from the marine level right up to the Mountain Leader 1s all have a thorough understanding of how important their role is and how important the way time-sensitive information is treated."

At the corporal level the mountain leader course is regarded as one of the toughest military tests in the world (there's a 40-50 per cent drop-out rate).

The new course for commandos of marine rank sees them learn specialist communication skills, taught how to be reconnaissance operators, and how to carry out surveillance and vertical assaults.

They spend two weeks in Glencoe for practical mountain training, and take part in two exercises where they practise close target reconnaissance and guiding attack troops to their objectives.

"We are the only organisation in the UK that teaches military mountaineering and military climbing," explains Maj Rutherford.

"Military mountaineering is different because everything we do is orientated to having an effect on the ground in terms of combat operations.

"We teach guys to work in cold weather conditions which range from +3 to -30°C – as well as desert and jungle. We teach them to own the environment in which they operate so they can exploit the unique capability they have for UK defence."



● (Clockwise from top right) A mountain leader on the slopes of Norway; the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron make their first jump in nearly a decade over Galloway; an icy cliff assault in Norway; and the BRF are dropped off by Chinook during a mission to destroy a Taliban bomb factory





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Top bombing

THE first test firing of the Royal Navy's ultimate weapon in three years – and the months of extremely demanding work which led up to the launch off the coast of Florida last October – have earned the crew of HMS Vigilant a trophy.

The launch of the unarmed Trident ballistic missile was the climax of a good six months to prepare the Faslane-based submarine for front-line duties after a major revamp in Devonport.

Vigilant – the third of the Royal Navy's four Vanguard-class nuclear deterrence submarines – was out of action for 40 months as she underwent a Long Overhaul Period (Refuel), a £300m revamp which took a team of 2,000 experts 2.3 million man hours to complete.

With that work done in March 2012, the crew worked tirelessly to turn Vigilant into a premier fighting machine once more – including the ultimate test, firing one test variant of the Trident II D5 missile, as each V-boat does once per commission.

That successfully occurred on a range off Florida in late October, an event widely reported in the national media, and now recognised with the SSBN Efficiency Trophy as the best boat in the Submarine Service's 'bomber' fleet.

The Captain of the Faslane Flotilla, Capt Ian McGhie, presented the rather fine trophy to the ship's company at ceremonial divisions on a rather fine spring day in Vigilant's home base.

Cdr Mark Lister, Vigilant's CO, said he had been blessed with "an

extremely hard-working and dedicated team".

He continued: "Vigilant has completed each milestone to date with exceptional enthusiasm – and to a consistently high standard."

"I am honoured to think that this has been recognised outside the submarine."

WO 'Jack' Hawkins, Vigilant's coxswain said the trophy was "true recognition of the hard work and endeavour by all of team Vigilant".

Before heading to the Eastern Seaboard for the four weeks of what is known as DASO – Demonstration and Shakedown Operation – which culminated in the test launch, the 130 crew went through thorough trials, tests and training, including rigorous safety and damage control assessments by the staff of the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation.

The Trident was fired on October 23 from the range off Cape Canaveral and the boat's operations officer, Lt Dean Ingram, said every man aboard should be "justifiably proud" of the moment.

It's the tenth time one of the test missiles has been fired by a Royal Navy submarine, going back to 20 years to the first launch from HMS Vanguard.

Of the quartet of V-boats, the youngest HMS Vengeance is going through her mid-life revamp presently. The remaining trio of Vanguard, Victorious and Vigilant take it in turns to carry out deterrent patrols of roughly three months duration – a mission the Royal Navy has carried out consistently since the late 1960s.



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Mary Rose's Tudor treasure chest



Picture: The News Portsmouth



Picture: Heather Lane



Picture: Heather Lane



Picture: Portsmouth Historic Dockyard



Picture: Heather Lane

NEARLY half a millennium after her loss shocked a nation – and more than three decades since her raising captivated it – Henry VIII's immortal flagship Mary Rose at last has a museum befitting her importance.

In a day full of splendid ceremony and eye-catching images, the final 'reveal' of the new building took place to a triumphant fanfare conducted by Royal Marines Band trumpeters from the parapet of the new museum.

Sea Cadets – fittingly from its affiliated namesake TS Mary Rose – drew back the giant Tudor standard flag with fine military precision.

The plan for a suitable building to display over 19,000 of the preserved artifacts began when the 16th-Century hull was lifted from the sea bed more than 30 years ago.

To the great delight of the Mary Rose Trust that plan was finally realised through the generous support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and sponsors.

The day began by following the journey of Mary Rose's bell, which was first struck solemnly during a dedication service over the wreck site early in the morning.

A wreath was dropped into the waves where so many sailors drowned, trapped in the hull as it sank rapidly into the Solent.

As Mary Rose's bell was brought to land, escorted by a vessel with its water cannons blasting high into the morning sky, a gun salute rang out.

A volley of flaming arrows was fired by archers in Tudor battle dress from the Purbrook Archers group on the battlements of the castle, where Henry VIII stood, watching his beloved ship sink with horror and dismay.

The bell was piped ceremonially on board HMS Duncan and kept safely aboard the modern destroyer until borne by an RN escort party, accompanied by music from the Royal Marines Band, to the museum to become the last item reunited with the Mary Rose herself.

After the large standard had been drawn theatrically aside by Sea Cadets, the bell was symbolically carried into the museum by the RN sailors as 'King Henry VIII' declared the museum open.



Picture: Basingstoke Sea Cadets

● Sea Cadets from TS Mary Rose – based in Basingstoke and Winchester – reveal the new Mary Rose museum to a fanfare by the trumpeters from the Royal Marines Band Portsmouth

The cadet unit TS Mary Rose, formed in 1982 when the ship was raised, has maintained a longstanding affiliation with the Mary Rose Trust.

Trust organisers and guests praised the smart bearing of the sea cadets who had spent their day enjoying the celebrations in the Victory arena alongside those in Tudor dress and Royal Navy sailors rehearsing for the grand opening.

The 'jewellery box' style of the museum, which was designed by Wilkinson Eyre architects, has created a visually delightful account of Tudor life.

Henry VIII's flagship sank in the Solent while preparing to lead an attack on approximately 200 ships from a French fleet bearing down off the Isle of Wight on July 19 1545.

The wreck lay undiscovered on the seabed for centuries until exposed timbers were spotted by divers in 1971. More than 60 million people watched as the hull section was carefully lifted in a specially created cradle to the surface on October 11 1982.

The wreck underwent a long process of preservation and gentle drying which continues on the remaining hull to this day in the sealed hotbox at the heart of the new building located within 20 yards from where she was originally constructed in 1511. The Mary Rose Trust believes it has the home it deserves to show off the wealth of treasures.

The galleries include a wide range of items from 500-year-old nits to longbows and the favourite of visitors, the skeleton of the ship's dog Hatch.

John Lippiett, chief executive

of the Mary Rose Trust, said: "When the Mary Rose was raised from the muddy waters of the Solent in 1982, the founding members of the Trust always had a dream to put the ship and her contents into a permanent museum.

"It has been a long and difficult passage since then to achieve this aim. The technical challenges of preservation have been very considerable, and the funding challenges equally so. The dedication and determination of those engaged in this vital project have steadily brought the dream into reality, and today marks a truly significant milestone in the ship's 500-year history."

Bob Bewley, director of operations at the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) said: "The Heritage Lottery Fund has been a long-term supporter of the Mary Rose Trust and its work. Our major investment has helped convert years of painstaking archaeological endeavour into an amazing historical experience which is a fitting commemoration for all who lost their lives in 1545.

"What I love about this new museum is that it brings to life the multiple stories of the sailors who lived and worked on the ship. Thousands of unique artefacts, so perfectly intact that it's almost impossible to believe they're over 400 years old, have been brought together under one roof for the first time.

"Visitors can now see the vessel in all her glory. As one young visitor has already observed 'It's like walking into a history book'."

The museum is also a

memorial dedicated to the 500 who lost their lives serving in the Mary Rose. Religious leaders dedicated the building in their honour.

A short service of blessing was conducted by Portsmouth's Anglican Bishop, the Rt Rev Christopher Foster, with the Catholic Dean of St John's Cathedral in Portsmouth and the Principal Chaplain of Portsmouth Naval Base before the building was opened. He said:

"As we pray for the repose of the Mary Rose's souls, we ask this museum may be worthy of their service and sacrifice."

One of the ship's company is buried in a grave in Portsmouth Cathedral, while others rest in the Solent. A skeleton of one of the crew is on display as part of an exhibition showing how the sailors lived.

The Mary Rose Trust says the decision to show some of the human remains was not taken lightly, and it formed a committee to decide how, and if, it should be done.

Eight of the faces of former crew members have been forensically reconstructed with their personal and professional items on display around them.

Mr Lippiett said: "It's the most extraordinary time capsule of life and death 500 years ago. It isn't just about a ship, it's about life in Tudor times, it also rewrites history; some historians said that gimballed compasses didn't come in for another 100 years hence but we have three of them here, found on Mary Rose."

The total cost of the project to conserve and house the only 16th century warship on display in the world is £35m, with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) providing more than £32m during the past 18 years.

To date, the new museum has attracted increased visitor numbers – not just to Mary Rose but to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Tickets for the new museum are on sale online and in the Visitor Centre.

A time slot can be booked when you buy your ticket so be sure that you will be able to attend at your selected time. See www.historicdockyard.co.uk/tickets / www.facebook.com/historicdockyard or visit www.maryrose.org

● Great balls of fire! The Purbrook Archers mark the passage of Mary Rose's bell at Southsea Castle

Picture: The News Portsmouth



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World War 1 centenary events named

SERVICES across the land and on the Continent will mark the beginning of commemorations of Britain's role and sacrifices in the Great War.

Whitehall has announced its initial plans for marking the 100th anniversary of the conflict, from national acts of remembrance, to multi-million pound heritage initiatives and schemes to encourage the next generation to understand the 1914-18 conflict.

Jutland – the greatest naval battle ever waged in European waters – and the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign (where sailors fought above, on and below the waves, and on land) will be the RN's pivotal commemorations.

Ahead of those (in 2016 and 2015 respectively), the centenary begins on August 4 2014 – 100 years to the day that Britain declared war on Germany – with:

- a service for Commonwealth leaders in Glasgow (commemorations come a day after the end of the Commonwealth Games) followed by a wreath laying at the city's cenotaph;
- a service at St Symphorien Cemetery in Mons, where the first and last Commonwealth casualties of the war are believed to be buried;
- and Westminster Abbey will host a candle-lit vigil.

The Royal Navy lost 32,287 men in the 20th Century's first global conflagration, plus 7,547 officers and ranks of the Royal Naval Divisions – sailors who fought alongside the Army in Flanders, on the Somme and in Gallipoli. In all, Britain lost 886,000 souls, the Empire more than 1.1m men and women.

Other events and initiatives include national days of remembrance to mark the 100th anniversaries of the first day of the Somme (July 1 2016) and Armistice Day (November 11 2018).

Up to £1m will be provided to cruiser HMS Caroline in Belfast – the last survivor of the Grand Fleet – to preserve her as a living memorial to the Great War generation so thousands of people can visit her.

Over £5m will be spent in the nation's schools to allow two student ambassadors and a teacher from every state school to visit a WW1 battlefield and carry out research on local people who served in the conflict.

The Heritage Lottery Fund will set aside at least £15m to help young people conserve, explore and share WW1 local history and heritage.

And £10m will be spent on a series of cultural events over the four years spanning the anniversary of the conflict.

Visit www.gov.uk/ww1centenary for more details.

Norse is strong with Bangor

HMS Bangor made the short journey from her home in Gareloch to help locals in Largs mark a clash with the Vikings 750 years ago.

The minehunter spent three days in the small Ayrshire town, berthed at Largs Pier – the first RN vessel to do so in more than a decade.

Her visit coincided with the Gathering of the Clans and commemorations connected with the Battle of Largs in 1263 when the Norwegians tried – and failed – to reassert their influence in western Scotland.

Unlike the Norsemen, the Bangor sailors positively welcomed the good folk of Largs, inviting them to cross the gangway over two days.

And youngsters from Ardrossan Academy, Auchendarvie Academy and TS Gannet, Ardrossan's Sea Cadet unit, were treated to special guided tours.



Small ship but a big impression

THE Royal Navy's constant presence in the Falklands now has a constant presence in the islands' capital with HMS Clyde's name marked in giant boulders overlooking the harbour.

The patrol ship becomes the sixth Royal Navy vessel to be honoured with the gigantic 'inscription' on the Camber, directly opposite the heart of Stanley – names which celebrate vessels with long or important associations with the remote British territory.

It took Clyde's crew four days to move the boulders into place (by hand) then paint them – all the time lashed by the inclement Falklands weather, for it is now midwinter in the Southern Hemisphere.

Each letter is ten metres high (32ft) by five metres (16ft) wide, made from roughly four tonnes of rock and laid on top of the scrub and bog that make up the Camber.

Two work parties were assigned the task of carving Clyde's name with pride.

During the first two days sleet, 40 knot winds and snow made the ground very boggy, as Lt Johnny Mason, Clyde's Gunnery Officer, was to find out on a number of occasions whilst at the wheel of one of the Land Rovers.

Having moved over 20 tonnes of stone from the overhanging escarpment by hand, to form the letters, on the final day the boulders sprang to life as they were painted white to make them stand out against the foliage.

So now she joins HMS Barracouta – a 19th-Century cruiser which patrolled the islands, mainly to keep fishermen in check; Charles Darwin's survey ship Beagle stopped here during her groundbreaking round-the-world voyage in the 1830s; Protector honours the previous Antarctic survey ship, not the present one, which carried out research in the '50s and '60s; Endurance honours both icebreakers which called in on the islands for nearly 40 years; and the last name, before Clyde was added, Dumbarton Castle, whose boulders were put in place in 2007 after 25 years of taking it in turns to patrol the region with her sister Leeds Castle.

So large are the names they

can be seen on Google Earth (51°40'57"S, 57°51'39"W – although the satellite imagery's not been updated yet to include Clyde's moniker). Or you can stand in Philomel Street in Stanley or sit in the Globe Tavern, a regular venue for the ship's company during any trip to the capital.

"It is a privilege to lay such a permanent reminder of what Clyde means to the Falkland islanders," said Lt Cdr Marcus Hember, the patrol ship's Commanding Officer. "In true Royal Navy fashion, my ship's company embraced the challenge, working extremely hard with a robust sense of humour to achieve this unusual task in challenging conditions."

"Clyde has made her mark positively over the years through her enthusiastic can-do approach and professionalism, and it is very gratifying to have that recognised by the people of Stanley granting this singular honour."

The stones are not the only unusual – and impressive – natural reminder of the patrol ship's presence in the southern ocean.

The ship features on a stunning first-day cover of one of the most magical natural sights in the world: a star trail.

Clyde was captured on camera on one winter's night at King Edward Point in South Georgia by astrophotographer Samantha Crimmins.

She was fortunate to (a) find Clyde in Grytviken as the ship spends the bulk of her time around the Falklands; and (b) clear skies over South Georgia as clouds are a much more common phenomenon.

In fact it took her six months to take the five images which make up the collection of stamps celebrating this remote island.

Thanks to South Georgia's isolation (the nearest human habitation is 800 miles away in the Falklands), its skies are not spoiled by light pollution – making it ideal for such images.

"On a clear winter's night, with the sun well below the horizon, the quantity of stars is simply breathtaking," says Samantha.

Beginning of Patrick Moore bit. Star trail photographs are



created by taking long exposure shots of the night sky. As the earth turns, the stars appear to move, creating streaks of light across the image. These lines of light appear as circles around the celestial poles – the points in the sky which correspond with the North or South Poles, and about which the earth spins.

End of Patrick Moore bit.

The series of star trail stamps – one over the Harker Glacier (65p); over the Maiviken Hut (75p); over the wrecks of the Albatros and

Dias (£1); and behind Hope Point, where a simple cross was erected in memory of fabled explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton (£1.20) – are intended to celebrate South Georgia's unique scientific role.

Stamps and first-day covers are an important source of income for the sparsely-inhabited island (population circa 30), sold either to passengers and crew of visiting cruise ships or yachts, or via the web.

If you're interested in the star trails series, contact John Smith of Pobjoy Mint, 01737 818181, email jcs137@pobjoy.com or visit www.pobjoystamps.com.

Heavy work under way at Raleigh

TRIALS have begun to help tomorrow's Navy sustain global operations with its next-generation warships and support vessels.

The Heavy Replenishment At Sea (HRAS) complex, a £26m facility dominated by a 25-metre (82ft) mast at HMS Raleigh, is designed to recreate the experience of resupplying HMS Queen Elizabeth from one of the new Tide-class tankers.

Even though the complex is firmly on dry land, a series of hydraulic motion simulators recreate the effect of two ships in close company rolling on the high seas as they transfer supplies.

In theory, the new HRAS rig should be able to transfer up to five tonnes of food, ammunition and spare parts at a time across a gap 55 metres (180ft) wide. The limit on existing ships is just two tonnes.

To ensure the theory is correct, the completed system is now undergoing thorough testing as operators help draw up the guidelines and rule books for real RASing at sea when the Tides and QE and her sister Prince of Wales enter service later this decade.

Once the trials are complete, builder Rolls-Royce will convert the site into a training facility – which includes replicas of reception points on a Type 23 frigate and Type 45 destroyer.

There's also a working Type 23 bow structure as part of the HRAS complex to teach wider seamanship skills.

The facility is due to be handed over to the RN in 2014.

"This new way of delivering heavier payloads will show the way forward," said WO Dave Deakin, Raleigh's seamanship training officer.

"The basics of replenishment at sea are already taught here."

When his country needed him, Eddie was there.



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Glückstadt1814
Baltic1855

Motto: Premier in the first
Class: Archer-class Patrol
Boat
Pennant number: P279
Builder: Watercraft,
Shoreham
Commissioned: 1988
Displacement: 54 tonnes
Length: 20 metres (68ft)
Beam: 5.8 metres (19ft)
Draught: 2 metres (6ft)
Speed: 14 kts
Range: 300 nautical miles
Complement: Up to 18
Propulsion: 2 x MTU V12
diesels
Armament: can be fitted
with 1 x 20mm Oerlikon

Facts and figures Battle Honours

ENJOYING their first taste of life in western France right now are the ship's company and students of HMS Blazer, which is in the early stages of her summer deployment.

Over the next few weeks the Portsmouth-based patrol boat will edge her way down the French coast, across Biscay and finally down to the northern coastline of Spain. And then all the way back again as she gives university students a taste of life in the RN.

It's the first time she's strayed from the UK this year, though not the first time she's crossed the Channel in 2013.

Blazer popped over to Jersey for the island's boat

show with sister HMS Smiter and fishery protection ship HMS Mersey in the middle of an exceptionally busy spring.

Her Easter deployment in company with HMS Ranger (mostly in horrendous weather) took Blazer along much of the South Coast, first westwards via Poole, Weymouth, Torquay and Dartmouth to Plymouth, then east all the way around to London, where she hosted VIPs and Saracens Rugby Club on trips on the Thames, before back to Pompey via Ramsgate.

The highlight of 2013 was undoubtedly participation in Battle of the Atlantic commemorations in Liverpool (see pages 23-25 for full coverage) with Blazer taking

her place with other smaller RN vessels attending events in Albert Dock – that's when she wasn't out on the river taking part in the 'Battle of the Mersey' demonstrations to give the public an insight into today's board and search and pirate take-down methods.

From there, back to Portsmouth again, this time for her pre-deployment inspection courtesy of the Flag Officer Sea Training. For frigates, destroyers and capital ships, the experience lasts eight weeks. For a P2000 (crew, five) it's just two days "but feels like two months" in the words of Blazer's Commanding Officer, Lt Amie Jackson.

Which, appropriately

enough, is the length of the summer deployment (two months, not two days...). Once back in Blighty, Blazer's due to put in appearances at the Bournemouth Air and Southampton Boat Shows, before the ship's company ready themselves for Freshers' Week and recruiting the latest intake of students, while the boat herself undergoes a refit.

Although Blazer is attached officially to Southampton University Royal Naval Unit (abbreviated to SURNU), she also serves students attending Southampton Solent and Portsmouth universities as well.

Unlike many of her P2000 sisters, Blazer has no WW2 escort carrier heritage (such as

Archer, Biter and Charger).

The current Blazer – built with a glass reinforced plastic hull – is the seventh Royal Navy vessel to bear the name, and the first built in more than 110 years.

The previous Blazers were all built over a 75-year period spanning the end of the 18th-Century through to the middle of Queen Victoria's reign.

They were mostly gunboats and sloops (one had a brief spell as a survey vessel) and all owe their names to the second Earl Spencer, then First Lord of the Admiralty, who named the first Blazer in the lineage after a hound in his pack.

As for whether the ship has given its title to the namesake jacket, that's less clear-cut,

although well into the 1840s, the crew of the gig of the then Blazer wore rather smart blue and white jackets (the RN's uniform didn't become standard until the late 1850s) which is suggested, though not proven, as one etymological route.

IWM PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

SMUGGLING. Arabian Sea. Insurgents. Royal Navy boarding parties searching clapped-out dhows. Success. International news.

Plus ça change...

The ships are different, so too the uniforms and equipment, but in some respects the Royal Navy's mission in the Indian Ocean hasn't fundamentally altered in over a century: stop criminal activity.

Our dip into the Imperial War Museum's photographic archives takes us to the summer of 1908 and a long-running (and oft forgotten) mission to stop gun-running in what was then known unanimously in the English-speaking world as the Persian Gulf.

At the end of the 19th Century and first decade of the 20th, the illegal trafficking of arms in the region was a major problem.

International pressure was brought to bear on the Persian Government to keep its people in line, but the global community was less successful with Muscat.

The Sultanate of Muscat did not just rule over most of present-day Oman, but extended into the Gulf, across the Arabian Sea into what is now Iran, and along the eastern seaboard of Africa.

Policing such a swath of ocean would require a substantial naval presence – as it does now. Battleships, cruisers, sloops, armed launches and what were termed 'cruising boats' (ship's cutters with parties of ten men aboard) were all employed by the Royal Navy to curb the smuggling.

In April 1908 the 12-year-old light cruiser HMS Proserpine – built principally for overseas policing duties – encountered a dhow in the Arabian Sea.

Like today's pirates and drug-runners, the dhow's crew tried to escape, taking to skiffs. And like today's pirates and drug-runners, it didn't do them



any good as they were soon overhauled, disarmed and taken prisoner.

Proserpine's boarding team found at least 1,500 rifles and an estimated half a million rounds of ammunition on their dhow, all intended for rebels in Afghanistan.

But there was more. The Afghans threatened to wipe out the British colony in the small port of Jask in Persia, on the coast of the Arabian Sea.

Joined by another cruiser, HMS Hyacinth, Proserpine patrolled the Arabian Sea – and

soon found a suspicious dhow close to shore, not far from the site of the earlier capture.

A landing party was sent in aboard a steam launch and a whaler, but the enemy fire proved too strong for the bluejackets, two of whom were fatally wounded.

It could have been worse. A bullet grazed the jacket of the officer leading the charge and, observed a correspondent of *The Times*, "if the Afghan shooting had not been so extremely execrable they would have shot everyone of the party

of about 30 men as they were only about 100 yards away when they opened fire."

The Royal Navy boats providing covering support were less than effective; their Maxim machine-gun jammed after barely two dozen rounds.

At this point the Proserpine weighed in with her 4in guns and three pounders. "The shells could be seen bursting on the beach and among the trees," a correspondent of *The Times* enthused.

While it subdued the Afghans, it did not necessarily safeguard

Jask; HMS Hyacinth put 50 men ashore to defend the small town and its telegraph station in particular, while the captured dhow and smugglers were taken to Muscat to face legal proceedings.

The Royal Navy's campaign against the arms trade – and it was a campaign, recognised by a medal approved by George V – continued until the outbreak of the Great War, when the smuggling had largely been curtailed.

In many respects the mission mirrors today's efforts in similar

waters: policing duties in a vast ocean with sporadic successes (roughly one dhow, 600 rifles and 130,000 rounds of ammunition seized a month – Proserpine's 'bust' was hailed at the time as a record haul) amid otherwise tedious patrols in trying climatic conditions.

■ THESE photographs (HU 103191 thorough 93) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

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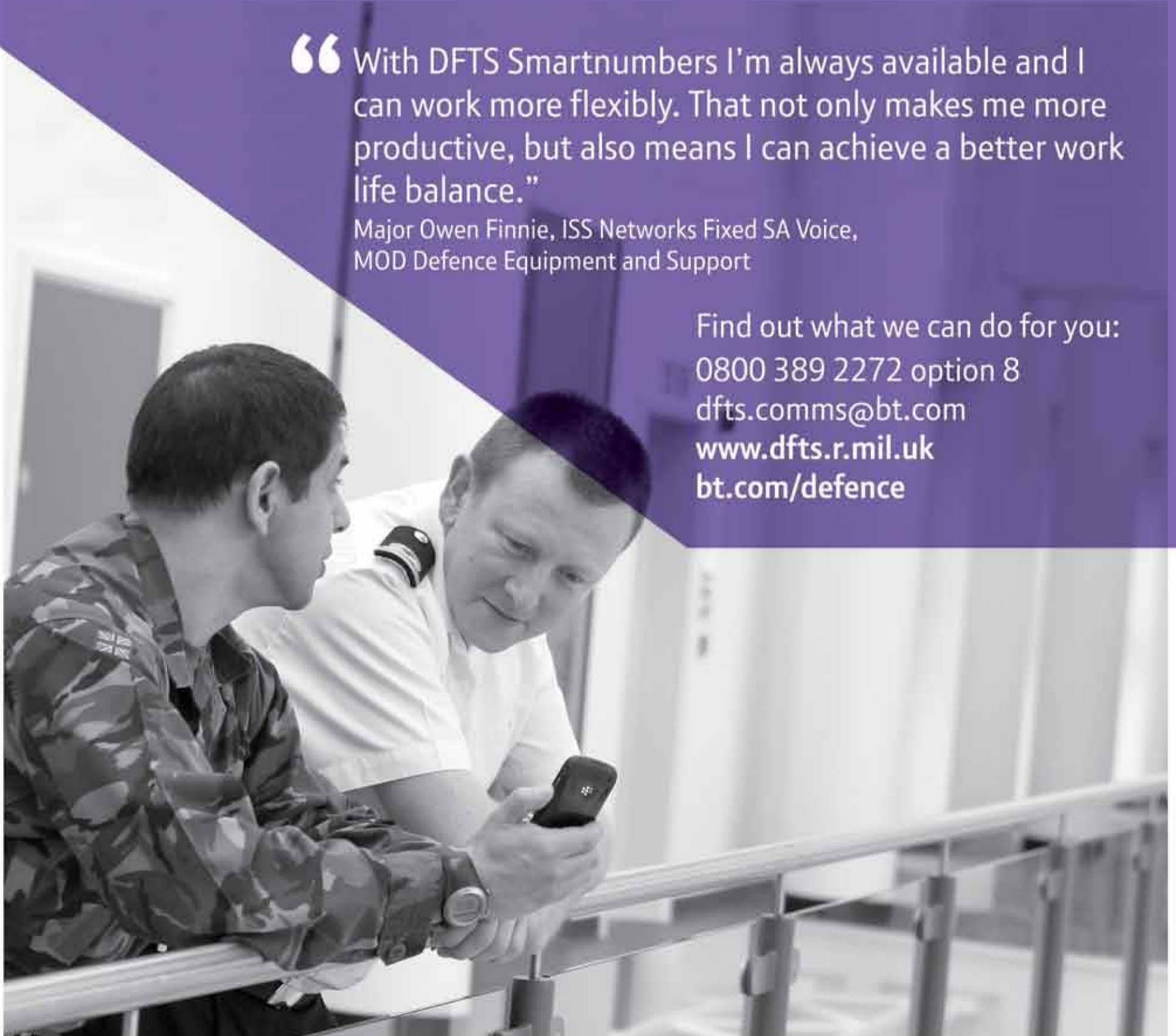
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● Fast patrol craft USS Firebolt sails in company with Dragon while (below) partners in kind, minehunters HMS Quorn and USS Gladiator, link up and (bottom) the enormous liquefied natural gas tanker bears down on the camera



Mine ga

Just when you thought it was

WELL, actually, it should be safe to take a dip now – now that most of the world’s mine experts have done their stuff.

For after scouring 70 square miles of the Gulf seabed – that’s twice the size of Brighton, but not necessarily as interesting... – using sonars, robot submersibles, divers carrying out finger-tip searches, flying 70 helicopter sorties and collectively sailing 8,000 nautical miles (roughly the distance from the UK to Singapore), the biggest mine warfare exercise in the Middle East is over.

Yup, 41 nations, 35 ships – six of them British – 6,500 military personnel have done their bit.

We left ICMEX (not an Aztec leader but the International Mine Counter-Measures EXercise) at the half-way point... in fact, right about the time the minehunters were taking a back seat briefly for a convoy exercise.

As they did, enter the big boys.

Big. Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon (8,500 tonnes).

Bigger. Arleigh Burke destroyer USS William P Lawrence (9,200 tonnes).

Biggest. a liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) tanker (carrying up to 210,000 cubic metres of fuel).

The task: to safely escort the bulk carrier through one of the world’s choke points.

The point in question: Hormuz.

At its narrowest, the strait – separating the Gulf and the Arabian Sea – is just 21 miles wide – with around a third of the world’s seaborne oil passing through (that’s around ten tankers carrying upwards of 17 million barrels of oil daily).

And in recent years the Gulf’s vast gas resources have also been tapped to meet the global energy needs – including the UK’s.

Qatar is home to the third largest reserves of natural gas in the world – its vast gas fields contain one seventh of the globe’s known resources.

The UK consumes over 90 billion cubic metres of natural gas every year – roughly half of it coming by sea, and a quarter of it through the specially-built terminal in Milford Haven in south-west Wales.

Among the regular visitors

to the facility, the huge tanker which took part in the convoy; it can carry up to 210,000 cubic metres of liquefied natural gas (enough to fill over 80 Olympic-sized swimming pools).

It fell to Dragon and the William P Lawrence to rendezvous with the gas carrier in the Arabian Sea and escort it through Hormuz – an exercise which tested the military and Merchant Navy’s ability to practise the fine art of co-ordination and control, particularly as much of the passage occurred at night.

To assist the transit on the military side, Dragon hosted US liaison officer Lt Josh Sando and sent one of its team to the Lawrence in return with the aim of making sure that radio, signal and email traffic, even secure internet-style ‘chatrooms’ allowed sailors on both destroyers to share information quickly and, crucially, in an understandable format.

Lt Sando, who hails from North Dakota, was impressed by his five days aboard Dragon, not least as her crew made him feel “really welcome”.

He continued: “There’s an air of calmness and professionalism onboard that shows a real quality of life balance – that’s something that is really difficult to achieve, and it is really noticeable.

“The whole ship was performing at a very high level – but in a way that can be sustained over a long period.”

He was also impressed by the output of Dragon’s galley. “The food is great – you can see the effort and pride that goes into such an important part of the sailor’s way of life.”

Once into the wider waters of the Gulf, Dragon, the Lawrence and the tanker linked up with other Coalition forces including minehunters HMS Quorn and USS Gladiator, and the fast patrol boat USS Firebolt.

The latter, a fast patrol boat capable of speeds up to 35kts, provides both force protection and helps safeguard some of the Gulf’s infrastructure such as the many oil and gas platforms. It’s a mission her 28 crew relish.

“It’s a lot of fun to drive – a bit like riding a motorcycle,” said her executive officer Lt Matthew Hipple.

“You have to protect the sea

lanes and infrastructure. The important thing is to act with determination – then people stay away from you.”

Overseeing Firebolt as well as Dragon and the Lawrence during the passage was Capt Stephen Evans, acting commander of Combined Task Force 152 which is charged with ensuring the waters of the Gulf are safe and secure.

He visited the Type 45 as the convoy exercise concluded and praised Dragon’s efforts to date – she’s about two and a half months into a seven-month deployment east of Suez.

“I’ve been very impressed with the way in which the ship has conducted herself in all aspects throughout her time in the region,” he said.

The convoy passage was just one part of ICMEX which strayed from the overall remit of countering mine warfare.

Another was testing the impressive sick bay facility of RFA Cardigan Bay – the mother and command ship to all four of the RN’s Bahrain-based minehunters.

It was brought to life for the mine exercise by 18 surgeons and medics who make up the Royal Navy’s Role 2 Afloat Team (R2A).

Role Two medical aid is damage control surgery – performing immediate, life-saving operations so that the patient can be transferred to hospital for more comprehensive, long-term care.

It’s the first time the concept – which has deployed operational on other ships for counter-piracy operations and off Libya in 2011 – has been tried out on Cardigan Bay or either of her two sisters, Lyme and Mounts Bay.

Given the background of the exercise, the incident was a simulated mine strike: an explosion ripping through the hull of a merchantman, wounding six sailors. Two were in danger of losing limbs, another could not breathe, a fourth was badly burned.

“Our first main training aim is to validate ourselves in our ability to operate from this type





Amos II

safe to go back in the water...

of ship and deal with patients using the facilities on board," explains Surg Cdr Richard Heames, in charge of the R2A team.

"We're also here to provide support to the exercise, offering 'real world' cover to everyone involved."

The two-day mass casualty exercise – a mine strike aboard a minehunter was also thrown into the mix – drew upon numerous ships, helicopter and boat movements, and a great deal of co-ordination.

And like a recent exercise at Chivenor involving the Royal Marines' Forward Surgical Group, the medics called on the services of Amputees in Action to give the training added realism.

"It's been a great experience all round," said John Pickup, playing one of the casualties – and also Amputees in Action's director.

"The reality of our injuries enables us to play very real, but simulated, casualties and provide a realistic level of training that a lot of people wouldn't normally be exposed to."

People like Cardigan Bay's LH Jacqueline Todd, for example.

"I've dealt with broken bones before, and that's what I had on the first day of the exercise," she said. "However the amputee casualty was something new."

"I didn't stop to think about how gory and realistic the injury was. I just remembered my training, and knew I had to get a tourniquet on to stop him bleeding."

"He came up to me afterwards and thanked me for my efforts, telling me that if I'd done what I did for real I would have saved his life. I asked him how he knew: Because you tied it really tight!"

Trauma nurse LNN Lesley Robinson was delighted with the outcome of the two-day exercise. "Everything came together during the exercise. We were able to deploy and set up out here within 48 hours, and during the scenario everything went really well."

"The Amputees in Action and the make-up all add a huge sense of realism to the trauma

cases we have to deal with."

Amputees. Nurses. Surgeons. This was just the beginning of the maritime pot pourri aboard Cardigan Bay.

There were Japanese divers. Dutch divers. American divers. American patrol boats.

"We've stayed on Cardigan Bay for other exercises, and we've always found her to be a great ship to work from. The crew are very accommodating and the facilities are great," said Lt Ginn Gruber, in charge of an American underwater unmanned vehicle (mini robot submarines): Remus 100s, which are also used by RN divers.

More importantly, says Ginn of Team Cardigan Bay, "they make the best pie on board that I've had in the military!"

Which should be music to the ears of CPO(Cook) Neil Turner, whose galley team found themselves dealing with triple the number of mouths to feed that they are used to, some of whom have very specific requirements.

"With the wide range of differing religions and cultures we have onboard we have made sure all our meat is halal" he explains. "We've made specialised Arabic dishes, put on sushi for the Japanese, and just tried to help people feel as comfortable and at home as possible."

"Cooking for 263 people is just another, slightly bigger day in the galley. We crack on like we always would."

The aim of this foreign 'invasion' on the large auxiliary? To see whether the ship could cope with such varied teams at short notice and meet their every need.

"What we want to achieve is to be able to invite other countries on board and all instinctively know how to operate together," explained Capt Paul Minter RFA, Cardigan Bay's Commanding Officer.

"Were we to do this for real, our remit would be to keep the British and other countries' Mine Countermeasures Vessels at sea for as long as possible. We're very, very good at doing just that."

It wasn't solely Cardigan Bay doing the hosting of foreign visitors.

Aboard the USS Sentry, three

RN Bahrain-based engineers were learning about the Americans' Gulf counterparts to Shoreham, Ramsey, Quorn and Atherstone.

Like Britain, the US Navy runs a quartet of minehunters from Bahrain: Sentry, Gladiator, Ardent and Devastator. These Avenger-class ships are slightly younger than the Royal Navy's Hunts and a similar age to our older Sandowns.

LET(ME) Taz Tozer and ET(ME)s Scott Driver and Wayne Roycroft are part of a small but specialist team of marine and weapons engineers who maintain and support the four RN minehunters.

They joined Cardigan Bay as additional engineering support for the exercise – and leapt at the rare chance to spend time aboard a US warship.

"There are some real differences to the way they do their business compared to the way we work," said Wayne.

"Their officers, for example, aren't specialists in any one area – they can potentially go from an operations or navigation job into a post as an engineering or logistics officer."

"That said, their lads are far more specialised, many focusing on a single aspect of the job throughout their careers."

As for general life aboard the Sentry when not on duty...

"The way they live is completely different from us," said Wayne.

"Instead of having mess squares, they have just one big recreation area that everyone uses."

As for the wider meeting of minds from IMCMEX, Cdr Neil Marriott, in charge of the RN's Mine Warfare Battle Staff on Cardigan Bay, is in no doubt that it worked.

It proved, he says, "that we can deploy at relatively short notice anywhere in the world to maintain freedom of navigation."

"We are recognised as a world-leading mine countermeasures force – but we cannot do it alone."

"It's exercises like IMCMEX that allow us to bring together international expertise to ensure freedom of navigation anywhere on the high seas."

As ever, together, we are stronger...



● Soldiers from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment carry 'casualty' Aerographers Mate 3rd Class Michael Owen (not that one, despite his many injuries...) from a Sea Hawk helicopter on Cardigan Bay's flight deck and (below) make-up artist Jenny Bucklant adds the finishing touches to a prosthetic limb worn by an Amputee in Action to simulate the effects of burns and flesh wounds after a mine explosion



Northern Sutherland



● AB Cliffe helps clear an overgrown path to create a safer route to school for Dornoch children
Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell



● Members of the Sutherland party at the Hood stones overlooking Loch Eriboll

HMS SUTHERLAND – the Fighting Clan – had the rare opportunity to conduct a five-day affiliation visit to the county of Sutherland.

The last visit, in early 2011, was cut short when the ship was involved in Operation Ellamy, the campaign in Libya, so it was with much enthusiasm and anticipation that the ship returned to the north of Scotland after completing Exercise Joint Warrior.

The visit started with an overnight stay at anchor in Loch Eriboll, where the frigate hosted local visitors, including estate owner James Clarke, who allows the MOD to use his land for Joint Warrior.

A party of sailors was landed to climb a nearby slope and re-paint the ship's name, set out in stones – close to that of HMS Hood, which used the anchorage in World War 2.

The task was particularly special to CPO Jamie Cockfield – whilst serving onboard Sutherland in 2002, he was part of a team which renovated the Hood stones (which are at 58°30'25.19" N, 4°43'25.39" W, north of Laid).

Having finished repainting the stones and weeding the area, the sailors decided that Sutherland should make its mark on the hill and laid their own ship's stones.

As the ship departed, a group of sailors from Durness (26-man) Mess was left behind to help out in the nearby namesake village.

The sailors were met by Highland Cllr Hugh Morrison and were soon helping children from the local primary school to plant 450 trees, donated as part of a Woodland Trust project.

Cllr Morrison said: "We are thrilled to have HMS Sutherland visit us again."

"The whole community came together for our Year of Natural Scotland tree-planting event, and to have members of the Durness Mess assisting us made it such a special occasion – especially for the local children who were very excited to meet the sailors."

LS Dando, Leading Hand of the Durness Junior Rates Mess, said: "It was great to rekindle our association with the people of Durness."

"The mess members who attended the visit thoroughly enjoyed it, especially meeting the locals, contributing to the community and sharing stories of our deployment with the children of Durness Primary School."

The next morning the ship berthed alongside Invergordon, which, whilst not in Sutherland, is the closest port to the county, and one with a strong naval heritage. After visits by the Lord Lieutenants of Sutherland and Ross and Cromarty, as well as local councillors, the ship's company were invited to Dunrobin Castle by Lord and Lady Strathnaver and the Highland Council, where they were met by the spectacular sight and sound of the Sutherland

Schools Pipe Band lining the staircase to serenade the guests in.

The Royal Marines Band Scotland Corps of Drums also provided a musical display.

Sutherland's CO, Cdr Al Wilson, presented Lord Strathnaver, the Highland Council and the Lord Lieutenant with prints of the frigate's commissioning painting, which depicts the ship off the Sutherland coast with Dunrobin Castle in the background.

Cdr Wilson said: "The ship is fiercely proud of its incredibly strong bond with the county of Sutherland and Lord and Lady Strathnaver."

"We really feel that we are bringing their ship to our county."

Sunday brought a flurry of activity, starting with a church service at Dornoch Cathedral.

All afternoon and into the evening, the ship hosted more than 500 invited members of the public, including VIPs and youth and community groups, who watched demonstrations and were entertained by the RM band.

Cdr Wilson told *Navy News* that one of the objectives of the visit was to get sailors out and about in the county as much as possible.

"Sutherland is a huge geographical area, beautiful and rugged, but with many small communities spread far and wide," he said.

"I wanted the Royal Navy's, and HMS Sutherland's, footprint to extend to beyond Invergordon, Dornoch and Golspie so that the people of Sutherland were given the opportunity to interact with their Navy."

With all the ship's messdecks being named after local towns, each mess undertook a community project, some travelling up to two hours from the ship to achieve this.

The 45-man mess is affiliated to Dornoch, so a six-strong team of volunteers, led by PO Underdown,



● A young visitor tries the Captain's chair (and cap) for size during the ship's visit to Invergordon
Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell

were met in the seaside town by Judi Sutherland, who briefed them on their task – clearing paths.

Warlock, the frigate's helicopter was also busy during the visit, visiting Plockton High School.

Later, during a visit by local youth organisations and dignitaries to the frigate, Warlock conducted a fly-past of the ship.

After a further two days of community activity, sporting events and social functions on board, the ship glided out of the Cromarty Firth early one morning, laying a wreath over the wreck of HMS Natal.

Launched in 1905 in Barrow, the cruiser had spent Christmas 1915 in the anchorage, but on December 30 she was ripped open by an internal explosion and sank, taking with her more than 400 souls – including women and children on board for a film party.

By the time the Fighting Clan had paid her respects, five of her sailors were heading south.

But this was no 833-mile dash back to Devonport – they had an hour's notice, had no money, credit cards or phones and no transport or accommodation arranged.

They also had to complete several tasks along the way.

Operation Highland Escape, raising money for the RNRMC, tested the group's survival instincts, wits, charm and leadership skills – and not only did they prove their worth, but they also raised more than £6,000.

Along the way they blagged at least two vehicles, and all meals and accommodation free of charge.

The Highland Escapees – MAA Dean Latham, PO (AWT) Russell Simpson, LCH Brad Morton, ET(ME) Steve Weaver and AB (WS) David Grey – called in on Stirling Castle, Old Trafford, Twickenham, Westminster and RAF Benson, as well as most of the ship's affiliations.

Tasks included meeting an MP (Helen Grant, Minister for Justice and Equality) at the House of Commons, a photo outside 10 Downing Street, meeting the head of the Navy (proven by leaving a special 'Sutherland Coin' on First Sea Lord's desk in his absence) and meeting the first winning jockey and horse at Taunton Racecourse.

Journey over, PO Simpson said: "It's great to be back in Plymouth and to have beaten the ship to Devonport."

"This challenge was one of the best things I've done in the Navy."

"We were thrown different tasks each day out of the blue, which added to the excitement and pressure."

"We were constantly amazed and humbled by the generosity of the people we met on the way."

He thanked, among others, One Call Direct (which donated a van and over £3,000), the Master Mariners, Taunton Racecourse, FlyBe and Enterprise Rental, Costa Coffee, Ron Dewdney pasties, Waterstones and Greggs Bakers.

Sutherland's visit was not complete until the ship paid a final tribute in the form of a steam-past off Dunrobin Castle to bid farewell to Lord and Lady Strathnaver – with Lord Strathnaver waving a flag to acknowledge the gesture.

● The Sutherland Schools Pipe Band greets sailors at Dunrobin Castle (left)
Pictures: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell



● Scott Morrison, General Manager of Dunrobin Castle, acknowledges HMS Sutherland as she sails for home
Picture: Laura Morrison



NAVY NEWS

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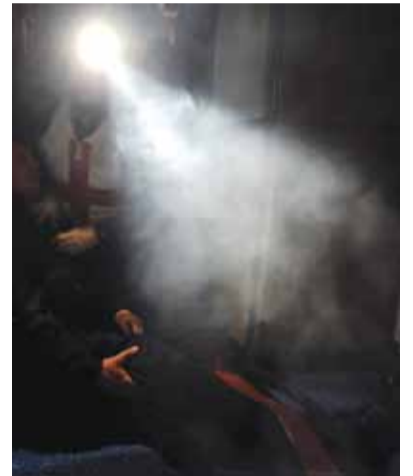
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Now bring on the big cat...

FIRE, flood, riots, war – and not much peace.

That sums up life aboard HMS *Illustrious* this spring as her sailors and aircrew were tested to the limit. Again.

Barely had the veteran carrier completed *Joint Warrior* off Scotland – billed as the biggest military exercise in North-west Europe this year – than she was thrown into four weeks of ‘total war’ to prepare her ship’s company for the Royal Navy’s key deployment of the year, coming up just next month.

Illustrious will be at the heart of the latest *Cougar* deployment, the annual workout for the UK’s Response Force Task Group, the naval flotilla ready at a moment’s notice to respond to world events should the government require it.

This year’s *Cougar* will take *Lusty* to the Med – like last year – to work with the French – again like last year.

To make sure she’s ready for that deployment, just shy of a month’s bespoke

instruction – Directed Continuation Training is the official term – was lined up by the team at FOST.

They squeezed their normal eight-week package into half that time and included some *Lusty*-specific bits, such as commando carrying and Apache operations.

And the FOSTies left in all their usual shenanigans. So between May 20 and June 13 there were fires daily (*second row*), injuries daily – everything from minor burns to heart attacks – and most of the 23,000-tonne carrier’s compartments have been flooded, even those well above the waterline.

The Portsmouth-based warship was hit by a container ship, helicopters fell off her lifts into her hangar, setting it on fire, and just to add to the fun, *Illustrious* has come under attack from ‘Ginger’ forces (the default bad guys in many of FOST’s training serials).

Indeed, there was a distinct feeling of *déjà vu* for some of the training.

Lusty was accompanied by frigate HMS *Westminster* (as she was on *Joint Warrior*) and both she and the ‘capital ship’ found it particularly difficult to fend off a swarm attack of small fast boats (exactly as they had done on *Joint Warrior*).

There was certainly a feeling of *déjà vu* for *Illustrious*’ new Commanding Officer, Capt Mike Utley. Until not that long ago he was one of the people responsible for overseeing this training.

“We have amazing facilities and resources here that bring us as close to real situations and high-intensity war fighting as we can possibly get,” he said.

“Flag Officer Sea Training really makes the key difference in giving the Royal Navy the edge we need to succeed in everything we do.

“I must say, now I’m on the receiving end of the training, that it’s pretty tough! Everyone around the ship is buzzing because they’ve had the opportunity to do what they have been practising for a very long time.”

Some things are practised more often than others. Refuelling (with FOST tanker *Orangeleaf*, *above*) Fire and flood damage. Man overboard (although the Fred dummy has now been replaced by the more realistic *Ruth*... who’s equally accident-prone).

Less commonplace, securing a bridgehead in a port (done for real by the RN in Libya during the evacuation of civilians a couple of years ago).

In this instance, *Illustrious* was charged with setting up a vehicle checkpoint in the troublespot that is ‘Freetown’ (which bears an uncanny resemblance to *Devonport*...).

The local militia (played by FOST staff) tested the patience of the Royal Marines and sailors standing guard before things heated up a tad. Blank rounds were fired, explosions set off and finally an angry mob (a mix of FOSTies and *Lusties*) tried to storm the barrier.

Never a ship to just sit there and take the hits, *Lusty* struck back with her Army

Air Corps Apache gunships (*top row*) and the Royal Navy’s *Lynx* and submarine-hunting *Merlin* helicopters embarked (*bottom row* – admittedly not at the angry mob but other foes during the exercise).

The net result? Everyone aboard – from the chefs and stewards catering for the ship’s company and embarked air groups (pot mess has been a favourite at action stations) – to the medics dealing with those burns and heart attacks, the ops room team trying to fend off multiple missile and air raids and submarine attacks were put through their paces.

That’s 650 souls. Plus the tailored air group.

They can rest a little for now. The ship’s undergoing a spot of maintenance in her native Portsmouth before her crew head off on summer leave.

They’ll return next month to take the carrier on *Cougar 13*, which will be led by Cdre Paddy McAlpine and the staff of the Commander UK Task Group from the nation’s flagship, HMS *Bulwark*.





● HMS Richmond's CO, Cdr Robert Pedre, is joined by six of her previous captains

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Knott

Richmond celebrates anniversary

FRIGATE HMS Richmond celebrated the 20th anniversary of her launch by welcoming back on board guests that have played a significant role in her life so far.

The ship's company were proud to welcome their sponsor, Lady Hill-Norton, who launched the ship at Swan Hunter Shipbuilders in 1993.

Lady Hill-Norton and her husband, Vice Admiral The Honourable Sir Nicholas Hill-Norton, were keen to see how the ship's capabilities had been enhanced following her comprehensive upgrade in Devonport last year.

They toured the ship to witness her transformation since launch, met some of the ship's company and heard how they were preparing to deploy later this year.

Richmond's CO, Cdr Robert Pedre, said: "Lady Hill-Norton has maintained a strong connection with HMS Richmond since her first visit, having met every Commanding Officer to date."

"It is a great honour to host our sponsor as part of our 20th anniversary celebrations, and I very much look forward to welcoming Lady Hill-Norton onboard again in the near future."

Seven of the ten COs of Richmond also gathered for an anniversary dinner on board to celebrate the ship's service.

Dartmouth opens gates

THE spiritual home of the Royal Navy's officer corps opens its gates to the public this month to allow a rare look around the imposing college on the hill which has dominated the River Dart for over a century.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Britannia Royal Naval College's association with Dartmouth, going back to a cadet training ship which arrived on the Dart in 1863 to turn boys into Royal Navy officers.

The world famous red-brick college building on the town's skyline came along 40 years later – and you have the chance to tour some of it on Saturday July 27 between 11am and 4pm.

Those who walk through its hallowed gates on the day will learn about the college's history and its Royal connections.

Visitors will also be shown how BRNC continues to contribute to the modern Fleet by providing first-class training to the next generation of Naval leaders and cadets from all over the world.

Around 400 cadets a year pass through the college and, while the RN remains by far the heaviest user, last year budding officers from 20 different nations passed out of the establishment.

There will be a series of displays and demonstrations, including boats and a helicopter, throughout the day, culminating with a performance by the Royal Marines Band.

There will also be entertainment for children. Admission is free and refreshments will be available.

● Lauren Thompson tries the controls of the Lynx helicopter



Seaside Lynx

A UNIQUE military unit that brings together MOD scientists, naval engineers and civilian specialist contractors under the badge of 1710 Naval Air Squadron held its annual Families Day in Portsmouth.

A Lynx in Black Cat markings from 815 Naval Air Squadron proved a major draw at the event, staged on a seafront playing field close to Clarence Pier in Southsea.

Fortunately the leaden sky cleared just as the hog had begun to roast, and by the time families arrived for lunch the afternoon had brightened sufficiently to allow children to enjoy the games and attractions laid on by the organisers.

WO Mark Fisher, Executive Warrant Officer of the squadron, was delighted with the support he had received from many external agencies who rallied to make the day a success.

He said: "We were massively pleased to receive a special grant from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity which allowed us to provide prizes for the games and subsidise the cost of laying on our Families Day."

"I'm really grateful to the Fire and Emergency services for bringing down two of their fire engines, also to St John Ambulance for giving us first aid



● Twins Jasmine and Daisy Grant, with older sister Holly, peer out from a survival raft

Pictures: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell

cover and to the local police and MOD Guard Service for their presence.

"We were also really lucky to have the HMS Sultan Sentinel steam engine with their cheerful group of serving Navy and retired volunteers providing free rides down along the Southsea sea front."

"That's been really popular too, along with the Lynx helicopter."

The helicopter was of particular interest to both the children of the

staff at the squadron and visiting firecrews.

The aircrew, Observer Lt Cdr Chris Yelland and pilot Lt Andy Ratches, brought the Black Cat display aircraft from their base at RNAS Yeovilton – the aircraft, complete with Wildcat motifs on the side, had just returned from display flying for the Battle of Atlantic Commemorations in Liverpool.

The helicopter stayed for several hours, allowing the children to

climb into the cockpit and hear from the aircrew of the work of the maritime attack and surveillance Lynx, which will be soon replaced by the even-more-capable Wildcat.

The Royal Navy's Chief Aviation Scientist Dr Richard Raistrick, explained how the successful fusion of civilian expertise and military knowledge has worked particularly well at 1710 NAS.

He said: "We have military working with scientists and scientists working alongside the military, all to tailor our scientific output to what is applicable and realistically achievable out on operations in theatre, where environmental conditions can be tough."

"We are quite simply, one Squadron and these welcome social occasions blur any edges or cultural differences we may have between us."

Eight-year-old Lauren Thompson sat in the pilot's seat as her mother Joanna took photos.

"It's the first time I've been in a helicopter – it's great!" Lauren smiled.

"My Dad fixes these helicopters. We've already been on the steam truck counting how many waves we got as we went along the sea front."

Dad – CPO(AEA) Paul Thompson – works in the Service Modifications section.

Australians return to honour lost comrades

SEVEN decades after the Battle of the Atlantic, eight Australian World War 2 veterans made an emotional journey to Britain to remember those who didn't return Down Under.

The veterans, aged between 86 and 95, visited London and Liverpool for commemorations, supported by a team of Australian military, with medical and civilian staff from Australian Veteran's Affairs on hand to help guide them.

The group was hosted in Portsmouth Naval Base by RNA General Secretary Capt Paul Quinn and Captain of the Base, Capt Aidan Talbott.

The RNA arranged a service of dedication in St Ann's Church, and a boat trip to lay a wreath in the Solent in memory of all those lost at sea.

Despite the torrential rain in Portsmouth, the visitors were keen to tour HMS Victory, and joined the ship's company for tea on board.

They particularly enjoyed seeing the RN ships, including a new Type 45 destroyer in their short, very wet, harbour boat trip.

It was British weather that former Sunderland flying boat pilot Flt Lt Dudley Marrows DFC DSO, aged 95, and air gunner Tom Sheridan, aged 92, grew familiar with 70-odd years ago.

They were in their early 20s when the Short Sunderlands of 10 Sqn, ordered by the Australians, were retained in the UK along with their crews to support the Battle of Atlantic.

Their squadron made a vital contribution in the critical period between 1941-43, conducting U-boat patrols and flying long convoy protection missions.

Dudley recalled that time with clarity and his vivid memories still moved him.

"It was simply tragic, circling low overhead, seeing German and British survivors struggling in the sea and hearing their desperate cries," he said.

"On one occasion, against strict regulations, after sinking a U-boat, we dropped one of our precious survival rafts into the sea, although I knew I would be in trouble later."

"Years later, after the peace, my wife met one of the wives of the German submariners whose life had been saved by that action."

"She wanted to pass on her warm regards and said to my wife: 'Your husband gave me 50 more years of marriage – I will be forever in his debt.'"

On another occasion he was shot down and, as only one life raft was undamaged, the crew of 12 were crammed into it.

"Fortunately we were picked up by one of Johnnie Walker's anti-submarine sloops and very kindly delivered all the way back to our base in Pembroke Dock," he recalled.

The veterans also attended Australian-led services commemorating RAN, RAAF and Merchant Navy personnel, including wreath-laying ceremonies at the RAF Coastal Command plaque in Westminster Abbey and the Merchant Navy Memorial at Tower Hill.

Around 5,000 Australians were awarded the Atlantic Star for their service in the Battle of the Atlantic, with at least seven Royal Australian Navy vessels being used in some capacity during the conflict.



● Former Australian Sunderland pilot Dudley Marrows (centre) with Mark Kelly, Commissioner of the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs (left) and veteran Doug Gilling

Picture: Nigel Huxtable (RNA)

Go West for air shows

PAST and future in harmony – innovation and heritage will come together when the Royal Navy's cutting-edge Wildcat maritime attack helicopter flies alongside the historic Swordfish torpedo bomber at this year's RNAS Yeovilton Air Day on July 13.

The pairing makes up just one of the spectacular fly-pasts being lined up within Air Day's all-action flying display.

Now being evaluated at RNAS Yeovilton both by the Royal Navy's 700W Naval Air Squadron and the Army Air Corps' Wildcat Fielding Team, the AgustaWestland AW159 Wildcat is a highly-modified version of the well-established and successful Westland Lynx (see p3).

With the Fairey Swordfish joining the Royal Navy in 1936, nearly eight decades of naval might will be represented when Wildcat and Swordfish, owned and operated by the Royal Navy Historic Flight (RNFT), unite.

Other historic naval aircraft taking part in Air Day will include at least one of the RNFT's Hawker Sea Furies, along with Kennet Aviation's Douglas Skyraider and its Supermarine Seafire, the navalised version of the Spitfire.

Also participating is the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight's Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane.

Air Day 2013's other highlights include debuts from the Czech Air Force Gripen and Swiss Air Force Hornet, more fast jet action from the RAF Typhoon and Belgian Air Force F-16 and the Red Arrows.

Throughout the day there will be plenty of family attractions, including performances from the Royal Marines Band and the Military Wives Choir Yeovilton, a fairground, vehicle exhibition, service demonstrations, field gun competition, picnic areas, helicopter pleasure flights, simulator rides and trade stands.

Discounted advance tickets are available from www.royalnavy.mod.uk/yeovilton-airday or by calling the Ticketline on 08445 781 781.

Some of the cast at Yeovilton will also be appearing in Cornish skies for the Culdrose Air Day on Wednesday July 24 – Wildcat, Swordfish, Sea Fury and Red Arrows are on the list, along with examples of some much-loved veterans such as the Catalina, P51 Mustang, Meteor, Venom and Vampire.

For more details of participants and how to obtain tickets for the Culdrose event see www.royalnavy.mod.uk/The-Fleet/Air-Stations/RNAS-Culdrose/Air-Day-2013

In all cases at both air shows the final line-up for static displays and fly-pasts may be affected by availability of aircraft and the weather.

Farewell, old friend



A little after 10.30am on May 31 2013 and with her long, narrow decommissioning pennant trailing in the green-grey waters of the Solent, Britain's last Type 42 destroyer enters Portsmouth for the final time under her own steam. A flotilla of yachts accompanied HMS Edinburgh home, while overhead the ship's Lynx – from which this stunning photograph was taken by LA(Phot) Dean Nixon – hovered. RICHARD HARGREAVES reports from the last of the 42s. Continued overleaf.





1.36am on the sixth day of June, 2013.

Under a cloudless sky, the north-easterly breeze carries the strains of *Sunset* along Victory Jetty in Portsmouth Naval Base.

Two hundred and fifty sailors turn to face and salute their ship.

The White Ensign billows in a lively fashion as CPO Christopher Lindop slowly lowers it.

And thus did HMS Edinburgh become plain Edinburgh – and the book was closed on a proud chapter in Royal Navy history: the Type 42 era.

The ship herself gleamed in the June sunshine, belying her 28 years.

First the Lynx which had supported her final deployment to the South Atlantic, flew overhead in appreciation of the service the Fortress of the Sea has given the nation since 1985.

Then came a sleek Sea Fury of the Royal Navy Historic Flight, making several low-level passes, its

Bristol Centaurus engine purring, and finally an RAF Typhoon whose roar – there is no other apt description – reverberated around Portsmouth Harbour.

In a career which began with her launch, performed by Lady Heseltine at the Cammell Laird yard on the Mersey in April 1983, the Fortress of the Sea was under way for more than 70,000 hours – that's eight whole years – sailing 800,000 miles (32 times round the earth) in the process.

But no more.

"These are the final moments of HMS Edinburgh and the final moments of the Type 42 – a class which has served the Navy and the nation with distinction," the destroyer's Commanding Officer

Cdr Nick Borbone told the 250 guests including families of the ship's company, ex-42 crew, former Edinburghers, affiliates, dignitaries from the Scottish capital, and the destroyer's sponsor, Lady Heseltine, who received the folded ensign from CPO Lindop.

"This is truly the end of an era. These ships will take their place in history as a real success for the Royal Navy."

The ceremony in Portsmouth marked the end of a month-long goodbye by the Fortress of the Sea – three major port visits (London, Edinburgh and finally Liverpool for Battle of the Atlantic Commemorations – see pages 23-25) – before a final entry to Portsmouth on the last day of May (also graced by a flypast from her Lynx and the Sea Fury).

The thunder of a 21-gun salute reverberated around Portsmouth's harbour entrance – acknowledged in kind by Edinburgh's saluting gun which left a swirl of smoke drifting down the destroyer's port beam – almost drowned out the bagpipe skirl of *Scotland the Brave* performed on the ship.

A barrage of camera clicks, cheers, waves and the flying of the obligatory White Ensigns and Union Jacks from Round Tower and ancient ramparts greeted the venerable warship as she trailed her long, thin decommissioning pennant in the Solent.

Among the public gathered to watch the historic final entry, was former radar senior rating Steve James from Whiteley, near Fareham.

He left the RN nearly a decade ago having served in five Type 42s, including two drafts in Edinburgh. He met his wife Julie serving in HMS Manchester and the couple's son, Will, was christened aboard the Busy Bee; his name is inscribed on the ship's bell.

"There was a good family feeling on

board a Type 42," he said. "Everyone looked after each other. And whichever ship you served in, you knew your way around and you always knew someone on board. I had good times on them."

He, and many others, were back six days later for the act formally ending the ship's active life, including 15 of Edinburgh's 17 former commanding officers.

Capt Martin Ladd was the first of those back in 1985-86. Proudly wearing an HMS Edinburgh tie, he could not help but shed a tear as he admired his old ship for the last time.

"She doesn't look very much different now than she did when I stepped off her 27 years ago. She looks so fine – it is difficult to believe that this is her final ceremony."

"These ships have done their job extremely well – they were *key* ships. But technology moves on. The life cycle of the Navy moves on. Edinburgh ploughs away gracefully, leaving behind those who follow her."

But why do these ships inspire such strong emotions? They're old. They're smelly. They're cramped. Even in a naval world where rabbit warrens are the norm, they're almost maze-like. The cold water coming out of the taps is often warmer than the hot "and tastes of diesel or fish". And there's an incessant noise of generators

And yet...

"Brilliant ships with a great bunch of people," says stoker PO Darbz Allen. Cut him in half and he'd have "Type 42" through him like a stick of Blackpool rock. He's served in Birmingham, York, Exeter, Glasgow and finally Edinburgh.

"I love them and I will miss them."

Perhaps it's because they've carried the names of Britain's great cities around the globe for the past 40 years – Cardiff, Birmingham, Sheffield,

Coventry, Newcastle, Liverpool, Exeter, Manchester, Nottingham, York, Southampton, Edinburgh, Gloucester, Glasgow.

Perhaps it's because they've served in every major conflict and action the Royal Navy has been involved in over the past three decades – hence the proud nickname 'Fighting 42s': the Falklands, Iraq (twice), the Adriatic, Libya. They are battle-proven, battle-hardened, but not without great cost: Sheffield and Coventry never came home from the Falklands; 41 men lost their lives in the tragedies.

Perhaps it's because as many as 30,000 men and women have served in them. There were WW2 veterans among those first men in Sheffield, which gives an idea of the naval history these destroyers span.

Perhaps it's the 'tribal messing': you work with your branch, you live with your branch: a stokers' mess here, warfare there, chefs somewhere else. It's all but vanished from the rest of the Fleet.

"There is nothing like a 42 crew," says Lt Ben Smith on the bridge. "And because we are the last one there's a bit of 'us against the world'."

Here it doesn't look too much different from 30 years ago, apart from a couple of WECDIS navigation computers.

Otherwise, it's like stepping back to a 1980s timewarp: the CCTV feed from the flight deck is black and white, displayed, of course, on a cathode ray tube.

In the operations room, there are now full-colour flat screens and computer consoles to replace the original systems. But there are still boards for recording details with Chinagraph pencils, and, tucked in a corner, an old orange-screen radar, untouched and unloved – a last resort if everything else fails.

"Edinburgh's been a good ship to serve in," says ops room supervisor LS(AWT) Matthew Townsend, at 24 a veteran of four Type 42s. "The same goes for other 42s – they're all I've ever known. There's a camaraderie about them."

"Each 42 has its own personality," says Darbz. "They look the same, they have the same equipment, but each one is slightly different."

Indeed. None of that prefabricated, built-in-blocks sterility. This is good old-fashioned shipbuilding.

Designed by men with slide rulers and pencils behind their ears. Built by blokes called Bob and Ted who wore donkey jackets and stood around braziers frequently during strikes in the '70s and '80s (which delayed progress on various 42s).

If you're of the '70s and '80s generation like the *Navy News* team, they're what you expect a warship to be like. Pipes everywhere. A snakes' wedding of cables hang from the deck. You have to stoop to climb every ladder. You *will* bang your head repeatedly, or scrape your shins.

But before we get too misty-eyed...

"There's hardly anyone on board who's not been very busy simply because she's so old," says LET(ME) Nathan Sawthell. "If it's broken, we're the ones who have to keep fixing it. Keeping her going really is hard work."

"The younger lads want to move on to equipment which is more relevant to civvy street – no-one uses the equipment we have on board any more. This is historic technology. You learn the fundamentals of big old clanky stuff, basic mechanics, gauges."

You're reminded of the historic technology at almost every turn. It's a world of dials, switches, keys, green lights, red lights, a traditional ship's telegraph, knobs aplenty – "the bigger the knob,





pictures: la(photos) maxine davies, dan rosenbaum and gaz weatherston, frpu east



the older the ship", one stoker helpfully imparts. There are a lot of big knobs in Edinburgh. And everything is in imperial: pounds per square inch – these ships were, of course, designed in the days of pound, shilling and pence.

"Come in here for the first time and it's daunting," says LET(ME) Goldie Gouldin as he sweeps his hand across the bank of dials and lights that is the Ship Control Centre, the marine engineering hub of a Type 42.

"There is a lot to learn, but once you do, it's like riding a bike."

It is a world away from the consoles of the equivalent compartment on Daring and her sisters. *Star Trek's* Scottie would feel at home on those. This is more Fred Dibnah.

Here there's an aversion to the world of computers – not in a Luddite sense, but for practical reasons.

"It works," says Goldie. "Why change it? There's a lot to go wrong on computers." There is also a lot to go wrong, however, on a 30-year-old warship.

Bells sound repeatedly. A bit of kit has tripped and gone off-line. "The age of these ships makes it hard work," Goldie points out. "You have problems finding parts – we've raided the decommissioned 42s a lot."

Edinburgh, and all her older sisters, was built around Sea Dart, shield of the Fleet from the early 1970s right up until the first Sea Viper launch a couple of years ago.

Fired in anger extensively – though never by Edinburgh – today the 20 half-tonne missiles (17 live, one test, two dummy (filled with concrete) sit inertly in their magazine.

But not always. POET(WE) Craig Nelson turns a key and presses a few switches.

"Everyone is impressed by this, even though it is so old." The missiles shuffle in the magazine – they move like sliding around a square puzzle – and, for 50-year-old technology, it is impressive, so too the 'twiddly bit' when the missile is loaded on to the launcher and spins around ready for firing.

And firing Sea Dart is also impressive. In the missile control room, it's over in a matter of seconds: a series of lights briefly flashing as the system quickly moves through the launch process.

And above deck, there's fire and fury as boosters power a 14ft missile to twice the speed of sound in a finger click, leaving behind a wall of flame and smoke on the forecastle.

"You feel the bang and vibrations down here," says Craig. "It's enough to set off some of the smoke alarms."

Not much, if anything, has changed in this compartment since the ship was built. The console still has the original British Aerospace sticker fixed to it: *Sea Dart – anti-aircraft, anti-missile, anti-ship.*

Craig opens one of the grey cabinets which powers the missile system to reveal a forest of wiring – "all original".

This is computing, 1960s and '70s style.

"You know that if there's a red light, something's wrong," Craig explains. "And you are actually fixing things – it's proper engineering, not just changing a circuit board."

There are 1,000 relay panels in this particular cabinet... and if one panel fails, rather like a set of Christmas tree lights, the entire system fails.

Still, all these cabinets and the like. This must be up there with a Cray supercomputer...

"Everything in here you can fit in a laptop these days," says Craig.

Which rather explains the demise of the Type 42s.

The diesel engines hark back to the 1950s – "British Rail had them first".

The Rolls-Royce Tyne engines – like Sea Dart, being retired with the demise of the 42s – date from the same decade; they remain five times more powerful than the engine in a Bugatti Veyron, however.

Not all of Edinburgh looks old. The kit in the galley wouldn't look out of place on any other of Her Majesty's Ships, young or old. And the budget is the same too: £2.60 to provide three meals a day to each man and woman aboard.

After the last meal is served – breakfast on July 5 – much of it will be stripped out for re-use.

"The last few weeks of the ship's life have been manic," says PO(Caterer) Graham Chandler. "Function after function. And we've had to feed everyone on board as well as part of our daily routine."

"For the big events, you're hyped up, you get enthusiastic. Professional pride takes over. And when they go well, then for us that makes it a great occasion."

The senior rating has served on nothing but this class of ship – Edinburgh is his fourth and he savoured every moment of her final days in service.

"I am proud to be serving in the last 42 – and to do a tour of the UK in her, it's been a privilege and quite emotional."

Two weeks later after his team departs, so too the final members of the ship's company, among them CPO Tom "Two Dads" Hayzen-Smith.

"I turned the lights out on Gloucester," he says.

"A decommissioned ship is an eerie feeling. These ships have spent 25 or 30 years in service, been around the world,

and suddenly they're dormant.

"You could still hear noises afterwards as if she was still alive. You can't help but be touched by these ships."

But although sailors are a sentimental bunch, they're also pragmatic.

"These are nuts and bolts warships," says Lt Cdr Phil Boakes, marine engineer officer. "Analogue, not digital."

"You accept that times move on – and the Navy moves on with them – and the Type 45 is the future."

Cdr Borbone nods in agreement. "These ships have been a massive part of the Royal Navy, the backbone of the Fleet," he says.

"But we are ready to hand over the mantle to the Type 45s. The time is right for the 42s to go."

Edinburgh is his fourth 42 – through officer training, watchkeeping as a junior lieutenant, air defence officer in Newcastle.

"So I have a really strong affinity for 42s," he adds. There's a great spirit aboard these ships. People tend to enjoy serving in them.

"There is no doubt that Edinburgh is a great ship but it is the people who have made her."

Sentiments echoed by pretty much every man and woman aboard. Other ships are more modern. More spacious. But do they have the same spirit?

"Everyone on here is one big family – there's nothing like it on other ships," says Craig, using a word ('family') which cropped up repeatedly chatting to Edinburgh's sailors.

"Some people are sad, some people want to move on," says LStd Gemma Raybold.

"For me it's sad because everyone on board bonds so well. We know each other on first-name terms."

"But Edinburgh cannot go on forever. She wants to go to bed now, bless her."

The ship's company will now scatter among the Fleet – Gemma's off to join a Type 45. The ship's bell will be given to St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh for safekeeping.

The ship herself? Well, there's a lively campaign to move her to the Scottish capital as a museum ship, but such projects are, alas, rarely successful. The breaker's yard seems more likely.

For the time being, once stripped out, she'll join her sisters in the 'ghost fleet' up Fareham Creek.

And so ends the Type 42 story. One of tragedy, yes, occasionally, but ultimately triumph. A triumph of British engineering. A triumph of British seamanship. A triumph of the sailor's stoicism and resolve.

"Quartermaster – Officer of the Watch. Ring off"

"Ring off, Sir." *Ting, ting, ting ting.* The lever order telegraph is set to zero – repeated from the Ship Control Centre.

"Pass to the SCC. Deselect and shut down port and starboard Tyne."

"SCC – Bridge. Deselect and shut down port and starboard Tyne."

The whine of the engines winds down slowly and the blue haze from the funnel disappears.

"Bridge – SCC. Port and starboard Tyne shut down. request notice for sea?"

"SCC – Navigator. No notice for sea."



Chatham gallery opened

ONE of four new galleries at the Historic Dockyard, Chatham, has been officially opened by the Minister for Sport and Tourism.

Performing the ceremonies at the Hearts of Oak gallery, Hugh Robertson said: "Our museums and galleries are an integral part of our cultural offer that attracts tourists and boosts local economies across the country."

"The new Hearts of Oak museum gallery, funded by the DCMS Wolfson Museum and Galleries Improvement Fund, will bring to life the close connection local people from Kent had with the Royal Dockyard in years gone by."

Hearts of Oak is the first of four new 'Age of Sail' galleries at the yard.

The Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust is currently fundraising for a major project, Command of the Oceans, which will enable the transformation of the remaining galleries in the Mast Houses and Mould Loft, and develop a new gallery telling the story of the Namur, a second rate ship built in Chatham in 1756, some of the timbers of which were found beneath the floor of the Wheelwrights' Shop.



● Members of the winning field gun crew from HMS Heron; back row from left, LPT Collin, PO Partoon, CPO Lewis, Lt Harris; holding the trophy, PO Pollard and LAET Burton. Picture: L(Phot) Caroline Davies

Air men triumph

HMS HERON'S field gun crew took the honours at the annual competition, held as part of HMS Collingwood's open day.

In hot and testing conditions over two days 21 crews from across all three Services vied for the coveted Brickwoods Trophy, a competition now in its 106th year.

Heron's crew of 18 won their place in the final via seven gruelling heats.

Facing stiff competition in the final from crews representing HMS Excellent, Sultan, Portsmouth Naval Base, REME and HMS Seahawk, the men of Heron emerged victorious with a winning time of 1m 19.4s – which also secured them the overall fastest time trophy and best aggregate time trophy in addition to the Brickwoods trophy.

Heron's first trainer PO Gavin 'Dolly' Partoon said he was immensely proud of his team's achievements, especially after the disappointment of losing last year's

Tribute to bomb victims

THE anniversary of a bombing raid which killed more than 30 trainee sailors at HMS Collingwood has been marked at the Fareham establishment.

In the early hours of June 18 1943, just one bomb dropped on to one of the accommodation huts and killed the volunteers, mainly 17 and 18-year-olds.

They had only been in the Royal Navy for just over a fortnight, were still under training, and there were no photos of them in uniform.

Survivors and relatives and friends of those who lost their lives came to the base to remember and say a final farewell to their loved ones on the 70th anniversary.

Sidney Anderson, nephew of Sidney Charles Heath, one of the sailors who lost his life, read the Act of Remembrance.

After the *Last Post*, Cdre Mike Mansergh, CO of Collingwood, laid the first wreath of behalf of

Mercy dash for Max

Course raises awareness

A ROUTINE exercise turned into an emergency mission for the crew of a Royal Navy search and rescue helicopter in Scotland.

The team from HMS Gannet had embarked a Royal Navy photographer from Clyde Naval Base as they undertook a two-day programme of exercises.

The plan was to conduct winch drills and mountain rescue training scenarios using their Sea King aircraft, based at Prestwick near Ayr, and all recorded by the photographer.

But on to the agenda came Max.

The helicopter was called in to assist in the evacuation of critically-ill 16-week-old Max MacRaild from the Cowal peninsula.

Max had been reported as displaying symptoms of meningitis, but the red-and-grey Royal Navy helicopter had to head to the Yorkhill Children's Hospital in Glasgow first, collecting two on-call doctors who would provide initial professional medical support during the rescue.

The Sea King then flew out to Strachur, a community on the west side of the peninsula, where Max and his anxious parents Rebecca and Neil were waiting



● Rebecca and Neil MacRaild on board the Royal Navy Sea King of HMS Gannet which flew their critically-ill 16-week-old son from the Cowal peninsula to hospital in Glasgow. Picture: LA(Phot) Will Haigh

the aircraft's arrival on the local shinty pitch.

On landing, the doctors went straight to work, providing immediate treatment, before the whole family was ushered into the helicopter for a flight back to Yorkhill for further treatment.

Rebecca said: "I was so relieved to see the Royal Navy helicopter

arriving, as I was initially told that the air ambulance from Dunoon Hospital was in Aberdeen and would be unavailable for more than three hours.

"At the time I was so worried about Max.

"I was also a bit surprised to see Royal Navy on the side of the helicopter. As I was unaware

they provided such an invaluable service.

"I can only say that without the professionalism and support provided by the very kind members of the Royal Navy search and rescue crew and accompanying doctors, things might have turned out very differently."

Max has made a full recovery

Ready to support the new Queen

IF the Supermess at Clyde Naval Base is reminiscent of a modern city hotel, MOD Caledonia was more redolent of a slightly faded country house B&B, writes Mike Gray.

Until recently they were separated by 50 miles and 50 years, with Faslane gearing up to a new era of submarine activity and Caledonia gently fossilising. Torpedoes on the Clyde, torpor on the Forth.

But Caledonia is being revived.

It will always (tectonics permitting) be 50 miles from Clyde, but the gulf in time is narrowing – and all because of the new carriers.

MOD Caledonia is run by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), and – unusually for a military base – has one of its own, David Jack, as Head of Establishment. He was the ideal candidate, having undertaken a study into the DIO running such a base.

So David has been in the hot seat for just over two years – "ground-breaking, and more than a little bruising at times," he admitted, "but I think we have made a very significant difference."

David said the DIO can and do undertake most of what is required to run the base, but certain aspects "we did not consider it sensible for DIO to take on."

That included the ranges, armoury, medical centre and, of course, Service discipline.

"The First Lieutenant (Naval Party) is responsible for those areas – she is my right-hand person in the Royal Navy, the one I go to for assurance that these aspects are being run properly," he said.

Caledonia may look a dormant site on first inspection but there is already an increase in activity on the tidy little establishment, perched above Babcock's shipyard.

The former apprentices' training school is home to the Royal Marines Band Scotland, local RNR unit HMS Scotia, the Sea Cadet Training Centre as well as the Sea Cadets Northern HQ, the local Rosyth cadet unit, the RN HQ for Scotland and Northern Ireland, the RMR, the RN Acquaint Centre (North) – and an RAF cadet group.

So there are between 100 and 120 people on the base on an average weekday and evening, some remaining on site overnight.

That figure will change in the coming months, and the reason can clearly be seen just to the south in the shape of Queen Elizabeth.

"The ship's company of the carriers will be our largest customer and will see Caledonia running at full capacity for a sustained period for the first time in a very, very long time," said David.

Already things have improved markedly, but it has not been a money-guzzling exercise.

"Caledonia had been 'in managed decline' in relative funding terms. In its old state this place would not have withstood the substantial increase in load for long.



● MOD Caledonia looking east, with accommodation blocks (foreground) the landing site to the right, sports pitches top left and the pool and gym top right. Picture: Lt Cdr Ali Lang

"Some of the accommodation buildings looked in a very poor state externally and needed significant attention internally too.

"So we set about doing as much as we could with the running cost savings that DIO had undertaken to re-invest in the site.

"There is still some work to do, but we are just about ready for the increased load when the Queen Elizabeth starts crewing up, and we have already had good feedback on the improvements we have made."

As well as DIO replacing the windows, heating systems, bathrooms and beds, the Base Warrant Officer has taken the lead in applying for additional funding from Service charities to upgrade and improve the social facilities. For example, in the Junior Rates' mess, old-fashioned facilities such as a snooker area will hopefully be supplanted by a coffee lounge facility with reliable internet connectivity.

Tea rooms have also been provided in the accommodation blocks for those staying on site, to be used when the galley is shut – flat-screen TVs in these rooms have been provided by the RN Welfare Fund.

An emergency generator has been installed to ensure the base can keep running even during major power cuts, as happened early last year. David commented: "If I have 450 Service staff relying on Caledonia for their accommodation and food, I cannot simply send them home in the event of a major failure in the external power supply."

Other issues are being assessed and tackled, such as the helicopter landing pad which doubles as a car park – "the problem is if we get a call saying an aircraft needs to land, it could take days to locate the drivers and clear the car park," said David.

"Having said that, working closely with the

First Lieutenant and staff of HMS Queen Elizabeth, we have handled a number of VIP flights recently."

A turnstile gate on the southern boundary is also being upgraded – the single gate constantly broke down, blocking a much-needed direct route between MOD Caledonia and the Babcock site. The new facility will have three turnstiles and should remain operational at all times.

The old swimming pool – one of the biggest in Scotland – has a net draped over the roof space to catch material flaking off the ceiling, but although old, the facility is clean, warm and still in regular use.

New windows in the gym have eliminated a condensation problem, allowing the old, warped wooden floor to be replaced, complementing a modern outdoor multi-use games area, both of which are popular with Service staff and cadets in particular.

Just off site to the east is the Fleet Grounds, a large area of grass which is well past its heyday.

"When Rosyth was host to a full Naval Base with the adjacent dockyard there was a very significant Naval population working and living in the area. The appetite for sports was huge and the large area fully justified" said David.

"Our requirements now are much less – one football and one rugby pitch is sufficient. The remainder will be considered for disposal.

"With significant areas of the old Fleet Grounds on a minimal maintenance regime, I do get complaints from local residents who ask 'why are my kids covered in dog dirt when they play on the Fleet Grounds?' and I also get dog owners complaining that 'the grass is so long that their dogs cannot easily 'perform' their natural functions'..."

"Some you just can't win..."

Veterans take the spotlight



FOR probably the final time the nation and Navy have paid their respects to the greatest generation of sailors: the men who fought – and won – the Battle of the Atlantic.

An extended weekend of events on the Mersey – witnessed by around a quarter of a million people in person, and many more on national TV – honoured the sailors, shipwrights, staff officers and aviators who seven decades ago defeated the U-boat, and in doing so ensured that Britain's maritime lifelines were no longer in danger of being strangled.

After events and ceremonies earlier in the month in London and Derry-Londonderry, the 70th anniversary commemorations culminated over four days in Liverpool from the spectacular – mock battles on and over the great river – to the solemn: a service of thanksgiving.

Liverpool was both the focal point of the struggle against the U-boat as the headquarters of the Western Approaches Command from 1941-45, and the port of departure and destination for many Atlantic convoys.

So it was fitting that British and foreign warships converged on the city at the end of last week for the anniversary ceremonies.

They and the estimated 120,000 daily visitors to Liverpool's waterfront were blessed with mostly fine spring weather – especially for the crucial day, Sunday May 26.

After laying a wreath at the Merchant Navy memorial, which honours 1,400 merchant sailors who served in 120 Royal Navy vessels – one of several wreath-laying ceremonies over the weekend, including one at the statue to Capt Johnnie Walker at Pier Head – the Princess Royal represented the Queen in Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral for a service to remember the sacrifices made 70 years ago.

In all, around 30,000 merchant sailors – roughly one in six who served – were casualties of the battle.

Precise figures for the Atlantic theatre do not exist for the Royal Navy, but throughout the war 188 escorts were lost in the war against the Axis powers, a dozen of them sunk in 1943 alone by German submarines.

Today the small band of survivors are all in their late 80s at the very youngest – making this month's events the final official major commemorations of the battle, which raged from the first day of war with Germany till the last.

Nearly 2,000 people – veterans of the Royal and Merchant Navies, today's generation of sailors, senior officers, local MPs, dignitaries, the Russian Ambassador to the UK, and the Deputy High Commissioner for Canada – attended the service.

Bishop of Liverpool the Rt Rev James Jones told those gathered in his house of worship: "Let us give thanks to God for the faith and courage of all those who have lived and died in the course of freedom and justice, and especially for those who gave their lives in the Battle of the Atlantic."

Capt Ian McNaught, Deputy Master of Trinity House, representing the Merchant Navy, said thanks had to be given to sailors for their courage and

perseverance.

"In particular we remember the men and women of the Western Approaches Command: the leaders, Admiral Sir Percy Noble and Admiral Sir Max Horton, members of the Royal Air Force Coastal Command who supported them from the air, the brave men of the Merchant Navy who did not flinch from their accustomed duties, and the Maritime Regiment who served with them."

After the service Princess Anne took the salute at the beginning of a parade through the heart of Liverpool.

In places crowds up to ten deep watched the spectacle, applauding the marching veterans and military personnel – including Poles, Canadians, Russians and Germans.

A flypast by a Fairey Swordfish of the Royal Navy Historic Flight (the Fleet Air Arm's counterpart to the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight) and present-day RN helicopters – Merlin, Lynx, Jungle and Search and Rescue Sea Kings – brought the march to a close.

Later, Liverpool City Council hosted an official reception for the Royal and Merchant Navies in the port's town hall.



● (Above) Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel is deep in conversation with Battle of the Atlantic veteran Rex Ayers during the charity reception on board HMS Bulwark

● (Left) The Princess Royal and her husband, Vice Admiral Timothy Laurence, walk past the statue of Capt Johnnie Walker at the Pier Head in Liverpool

● (Below) SIM Sim Mayou, who served in the Royal Naval Patrol Service, enjoys the atmosphere in Liverpool

● (Below right) Some of the veterans association standards outside Liverpool Cathedral for the commemorative service

Pictures: LA(Phots) Dean Nixon and Dan Rosenbaum



● Association of Wrens members (from left) Kathleen Roberts, Stella Passey, Margaret Wall and Freda Speakman pictured with First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas at the commemorative service



Liverpool salutes



● The White Ensign is lowered as HMS Edinburgh arrives at her berth on Merseyside



ALTHOUGH poor weather limited visibility on the final day, it didn't hinder a spectacular finale to a weekend of commemoration, nostalgia, pride and entertainment at the former nerve-centre of the Western Approaches Command.

Trinity House flagship Patricia and Merseyside tug Brocklebank closed up opposite Albert Dock to allow assault ship HMS Bulwark to lead a Parade of Sail between them.

Flag Officer Regional Forces Rear Admiral Chris Hockley was on Patricia to take the salute, joined by Naval Regional Commander (Northern England) Cdre Dickie Baum, along with the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Cllr Gary Millar and other civic dignitaries.

Following the Fleet flagship was Liverpool-built HMS Edinburgh, en route to Portsmouth, her final voyage before decommissioning –

a poignant moment for her crew and commanding officer, Cdr Nick Borbone, who remained on the bridge wing of his destroyer for the duration, waving his cap.

Belgian frigate BNS Louise-Marie, Polish frigate ORP Gen T Kosciuszko, Canadian destroyer HMCS Iroquois and minehunter HMS Pembroke followed closely astern, strung out along the river in front of the iconic 'Three Graces' – the Royal Liver Building, the Cunard Building and the Port of Liverpool Building.

Sea Cadet training ship TS Jack Petchey and six of the 1st Patrol Boat Squadron's P2000s were also in attendance, as were a host of other vessels supporting the 'co-ordinated departure'.

Rear Admiral Hockley said: "It has been a great privilege to stay right through this commemorative weekend and to see the wonderful events that have taken place, in

Albert Dock, at the Cruise Liner Terminal and at the Pier Head.

"In particular, it was stirring to witness the extraordinary, powerful service at the Anglican Cathedral on Sunday, and then to take the salute from the THV Patricia.

"It's been a wonderful reunion, in a great maritime city, with a lot of the navies that have made that link so strong. It was wonderful to see the veterans play such a central part in all of the proceedings, and to have so many coalition navies sailing out with us and it is a fantastic way to sign off such a memorable event."

Other highlights of the weekend included a reception hosted by

Bulwark which welcomed a number of veterans from the battle.

The 18,000-tonne amphibious assault ship – berthed downstream at Bootle, from where Capt Walker's sloops steamed out to rout the U-boats – provided the venue and an impressive backdrop for a charity reception sponsored by the Fly Navy Heritage Trust (FNHT).

The reception, attended by up to 300 guests including civilian and military VIPs, raised money for the FNHT Battle of the Atlantic Appeal, which provides funding for the Royal Navy Historic Flight, in turn helping to preserve the nation's naval aviation heritage.



● (Above) A team from HMS Edinburgh (D97) compete in the raft race in D97.5 on the Albert Dock

● (Far left) A Junglie Sea King carries out a demonstration with HMS Example on the Mersey

● (Left) Standards are lowered in salute during the cathedral service



● (Above) HMS Bulwark leads the warships down the Mersey at the end of the commemorations

● (Right) A queue builds as members of the public wait to board HMS Edinburgh during Ship Open to Visitors

● (Below) HM Ships Smiter (left) and Ranger on the Mersey



Pictures: LA(Photos) Dean Nixon, Dan Rosenb

Ocean Warriors

HMS Bulwark's Commanding Officer, Capt Andrew Burns, said: "It is fitting that the Royal Navy's flagship, HMS Bulwark, is playing a leading role in the commemorations for the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic."

"So many of our forebears made the ultimate sacrifice and my ship's company looked forward to supporting the veterans of this epic campaign."

"It is also important that we celebrate our maritime heritage and demonstrate the enduring requirement for the Royal Navy to provide security at sea and protect our economic interests."

The Navy's highest-ranking officer, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas, and Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Philip Jones were among serving and former sailors who swapped stories and reflected on the past.

Members of Bulwark's ship's company and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel spoke to veteran Rex Ayers during the reception – Rex served in River-class warship HMS Lossie as a lieutenant (signals officer), regularly finding himself at the helm of the frigate as it rolled across the Atlantic on convoy escort missions.

Now 97, and a resident of Liverpool, he recalled one particular encounter when they were ordered to pick up survivors from a U-boat and found "the captain of the submarine was a most delightful man."

Rex had to 'mind' the German officer on the passage back to Liverpool, from where many transatlantic convoys started and finished, and which was home for the Royal Navy and Allied escort ships and submarine hunters that turned the tide of the battle in 1943.

More than 30 military and

civilian ships and a variety of aircraft, including the Royal Navy Historic Flight's Swordfish, took part in a programme of over 100 events to commemorate the sacrifice of the Merchant and Royal Navy personnel involved in the campaign.

The occasion was also an opportunity to celebrate the UK's maritime heritage as a nation still dependent on the sea for its economic wellbeing and security.

As well as solemn ceremonies, there was a range of displays over the weekend, including field gun runs, semaphore demonstrations, a 1940s-style tea party at St George's Hall, unarmed combat from the Royal Marines, and a sold-out charity concert by the RM Band Portsmouth, at the Philharmonic Hall.

On the Mersey, commandos righted wrongs after a ferry had been 'hijacked' by pirates, and a raft-race in Salthouse Dock attracted 15 entries – led home by the in-form HMS Edinburgh team (who won a Christmas race in Stanley).

And also playing their part in the weekend's events, helping out or putting on displays, were more than 200 Sea Cadets from the North-West.



● Aircrew in the Observer's and Telegraphist/Air Gunner's positions salute as Fairey Swordfish LS 326 of the Royal Navy Historic Flight makes a low pass over Liverpool – the city whose name it bears. This particular aircraft, unofficially a Blackfish as it was built under licence by the Blackburn Aircraft Company, took part in Atlantic convoys from late 1943 onwards



● (Above) Members of the Royal Marines Band Portsmouth perform The Joyful Skeleton during the charity concert at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall
● (Above left) HMS Pembroke alongside a busy Hartley's Quay during the commemorations



● (Below) The scene outside Liverpool Cathedral before the commemoration service
● (Right) HMS Liverpool back at her birthplace – the Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead – close to RFA Fort Rosalie, currently in refit



● **Sam and Nicky Wilson**

Calling all Plymwick

IN March 1974, I took command of the frigate HMS Plymouth and a month later delivered her to Gibraltar Dockyard as the next ship in the refit chain, designed to keep the yard in being.

The ship's company transferred to HMS Berwick, whose refit had just completed.

Since then I have always referred to my consecutive commands as 'HMS Plymwick'.

In 1975, Berwick became part of a deployment group which went eastwards around the world though my time was up when we reached Sydney.

I kept in touch with some of the Ship's Company and slowly the idea evolved of a Plymwick reunion. This will now take place from September 13-15 next at the Torrington Hotel Stafford.

Finding former Plymwick has been a priority and so far about 40 have signed up for the weekend. We have been greatly helped by Forces Reunited and kind inclusions in *Navy News*.

I feel it worth telling you of the event because it must be something of 'voices from the past' affair! Most were in their early 20s when we last met; now retirement looms!

I have asked those attending to tell me how they have fared in Civvy Street and have been delighted by the many success stories, careers obviously helped by naval training and experience.

— Capt Peter Hames
East Sheen, London

Points of review

MAY I respectfully correct the caption on page 16 of the June's issue of *Navy News* referring to the photograph of helicopters flying over the 1953 Spithead Fleet Review?

The ship to starboard of HMS Manxman is correctly identified as HMS Apollo but she was a fast minelayer of the same class as HMS Manxman and not a cruiser as stated.

Five of this class were built but only these two present at the Review survived the war.

The only other three funnelled RN vessel in the 1953 Fleet Review was the London class 8in cruiser HMS Devonshire, and she was at the head of the cruisers in Line E at the review, the two mine layers being in Line D.

— Lt A E Bird RN,
ex-PO Wtr HMS Swiftsure and Manxman

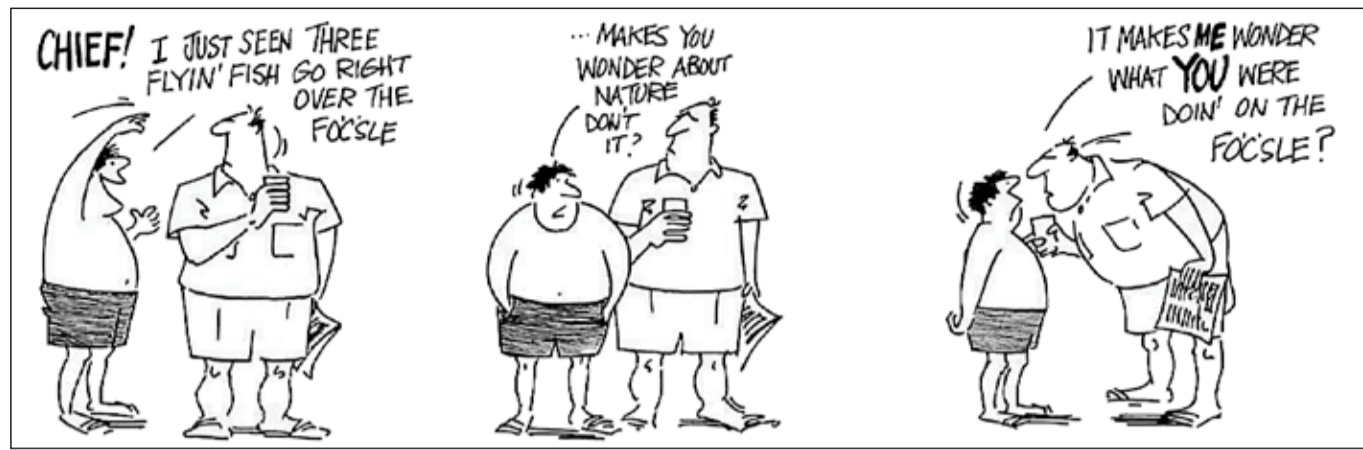
A Ganges paradox Starling Surprise

DURING the first week of June I decided to visit HMS Ganges on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of my joining up. (59 recruitment Drake 37 mess 250 class)

Imagine my shock on walking up Caledonia Road to the main gate and seeing an overgrown bomb site, the mast is in a right state.

I would have hoped that the site could have been preserved for our future heritage but I

CLASSIC JACK



Ships gone west

WITH the departure of HMS Ark Royal to be scrapped in Turkey on May 20, I was reminded that on August 4 2010, I went to The Hard in Old Portsmouth to commemorate another sorrowful departure.

Fifty years earlier I was there as a 13-year-old to witness the passing of HMS Vanguard, our last battleship, to the scrap yard at Faslane, however she ran aground blocking the harbour mouth (pictured right).

After an hour or so she was refloated and reluctantly continued to the breakers.

At that time I was in HMS Victory cadets based at RNB Portsmouth (HMS Nelson).

We did a lot of sailing in whalers around Portsmouth Harbour, tacking around the reserve fleet including Vanguard, the carrier Theseus, cruisers Mauritius, Kenya and Sheffield and any number of destroyers and frigates.

To the east of Portchester Castle in the mud, was a derelict American submarine.

Incidentally, as a naval cadet I sold the *Navy News* at Portsmouth Navy Days in August 1959 and got time off to go on board Vanguard when she was open to visitors alongside South Railway Jetty.

Today, over fifty years later, how things have changed: no longer Vosper building MTBs in the Camber; gone from HMS Vernon the ex-German 'Deepwater' and the Ton Class minesweepers with their distinctive red pennant numbers.

Long gone are the submarines emerging from behind Fort



Blockhouse. Royal Clarence Yard and Priddys Hard; abandoned.

Foudroyant gone, but preserved elsewhere, however there were four rusty Type 22 and two Type 42 warships up the trots in an otherwise very empty harbour.

The towering 45-ton lift crane dismantled. Even the dominating presence of the ASWE building looking out from Portsdown Hill has been demolished.

I press-ganged my wife into accompanying me on the day of my pilgrimage in 2010 to 'The Hard and the Still and West.

I noticed that the pub had an 'On This Day...' notice board in the bar. The notice said:

On this day 4th August 1801 was Nelson's indecisive bombardment of the Boulogne invasion flotilla.

I pointed out to a member of staff that on this day in 1960 Vanguard nearly demolished this very pub and they had a large picture displayed upstairs to prove it. However my observation was lost on him.

Let's hope Ark Royal is better remembered.

— Flt Lt Richard Boden (Rtd)
Titchfield, Hants

Starling Surprise

WITH reference to the Capt 'Johnnie' Walker article in last month's *Navy News*, I was Senior Naval Overseer at Hall Russell's shipyard in Aberdeen when HMS Starling (Hong Kong Patrol vessel) was launched on the River Dee (1980s)

Among the invited guests were some surviving members of Walker's Old Boys who served with Johnnie Walker (pictured, right, courtesy of the Imperial War Museum) on the previous Starling.

They were suitably impressed with the new ship, the launch ceremony and had photos taken.

Afterwards the guests went to the Station Hotel by coach for lunch. At some stage in the meal one of the Old Boys got to his feet and thanked the shipbuilders for the excellent day with lunch (and wine!) and the opportunity of meeting other Old Boys.

Unfortunately he was not the official spokesman for the Old Boys — to the obvious embarrassment of the party.

The official member then rose to his feet and made a very good job of his vote of thanks speech without repeating too much of what went before.

We were intrigued to hear another speaker being announced as his worship the Mayor of Sefton,

Liverpool, where Johnnie Walker's Starling was based during the Atlantic Campaign. His Worship was a lady! She asked that the ship be affiliated with Sefton, Merseyside.

— Jim Jarvie
Dunfermline, Fife

...REGARDING the article about Capt Walker and his ship HMS Starling that appeared on page vi of the supplement in the May edition of *Navy News*.

First of all, HMS Starling was a 'Bird Class' sloop, not a frigate, pennant number U66.

Most of Capt Walker's ships he commanded were sloops.

I served on one of these sloops after the war in the Persian Gulf, HMS Wren (U28) as well as HMS Wild Goose (U45).

Please note the pennant numbers: we had English U-boats sinking German U-boats.

Sloops were more heavily armed than frigates.

— G W Coring,
Birchington, Kent



Mines focus minds

THE article in June's *Navy News* [on the Gulf mine exercise] was one of the best I've ever read on that subject and made many highly valuable points as well as being an interesting read.

Like many large and medium Navies, the "regular" Canadian RCN has had little interest in mine warfare.

I wrote a major paper on the subject as a Reserve in the early 1970's, when our Navy had no M/S capability at all.

As the article said, it will happen, it's cheap, will surely restrict operations until dealt with. And I felt it would fall to Reserves to do it if ever "the balloon went up."

MCM (mine counter-measures) has come a long way since then, but so have the mines. This article heartens we toilers in the low end warfare that at least those 40 nations are keeping up to date.

In Canada we have now commissioned 12 potential MCMV's, using them for training in general, bottom searching practice and such inshore duties. And largely manned by our Reserves.

We've come a long way, and articles like that help concentrate the mind. BZ

— Cdr Fraser McKee RCN
(Reserve, ret'd)
Toronto, Canada

Oldest 'starship'

WITH reference to the 'Ironsides Afloat' letter (*June*) can I be permitted to correct Trevor's statement that she is the oldest warship afloat.

If he reads my book, "*Preserved Warships of the World*" (Melrose books) which was kindly reviewed by *Navy News*, he will see that she is actually the oldest 'Commissioned' warship afloat.

The oldest warship still afloat in the world is USS Constellation by two months. She was laid down in 1794 and launched September 7 1797 whereas USS Constitution was launched two months later in November 1797. Not much, but she is younger!

Constellation is moored at Pier 1, Pratt St, Baltimore, USA, where she was built at Stidders Fells Point Shipyard in Baltimore.

She is kept in a beautiful condition by her minders, who showed me over when I visited her, as did also the sailors on Constitution, when I also, like Trevor visited her in the US. They are a credit to the their nation and loving carers.

Constellation, like Constitution, also had a great war record and served as static flagship of the US Atlantic Fleet in World War 2, being appointed by President F D Roosevelt himself.

Best wishes to you all and keep up the good work.

— Gerry Gerhard
Armadale, West Australia

Falklands boy sailor

I HAVE always wondered if I was the youngest serving sailor during the Falklands War.

I joined the Royal Navy on July 6 1981 aged 16 years 4 days (date of birth July 2 1965) my official number was D193315L.

I joined HMS Active and sailed for the Falklands on May 10 1982.

I was not landed at the Ascension Islands (under 18s) I did receive my Falklands medal with rosette.

Would this be something you could help me with?

— Roy Meikle
Dunfermline

ROYAL NAVY NEWS

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V&Ws forged friendships for life

YOUR article 'Not a place for the faint-hearted' in your excellent June edition will have evoked many memories for all who served in V&W destroyers, as it did for me.

It was my privilege to join HMS Walker as my first ship, which provided me with many unforgettable experiences. We certainly earned our Hard Lying allowances.

Hammock berths were at a premium in an overcrowded fo'c'sle.

I slept with others for a month at least on the capstan engine casing. When a berth became available in the starboard entrance to the galley flat I did not hesitate to claim it.

Friendships forged under the harsh conditions prevailing have endured the ravages of time.

There has existed for some years a thriving V&W Destroyer Association, whose chairman 'Stormy' Fairweather has assembled and published an excellent collection of personal reminiscences from V&W seamen, entitled *Hard Lying*, which I recommend, as I do joining the Association.

Contact Stormy at Stable Cottage, Colchester Road, West Bergholt, Colchester CO6 3JQ

– Cyril H Hill
Braintree, Essex

New jets follow Review

FIRSTLY may I once again thank you for your excellent paper which I look forward to receiving each month, as do a couple of my friends, whom I pass my copy onto.

In last month's copy on the article re: the Fleet Review '53, I was serving on board HMS Indomitable at the time. We were third in line, alongside the Russian cruiser Sverdlov. We were all impressed by her presentation and her overall floodlighting was outstanding.

After the Review had completed and all of the other ships had dispersed, we had to stay out in the Solent.

The reason for this was due to the extent of the severe damage caused by the explosion of Malta on February 3 1953, we were being scrapped. But before we could go back into harbour, we had to do the first jet plane landings on a flight deck.

So we had to go up and down the Solent so that 100 take-offs and landings could be carried out.

Thank you once again for an excellent paper.

– Len F Simpson
Cramlington, Northumberland

Gruesome salvage

THANK you for another interesting read. Reference the letter on page 26, May issue, 'Crew swept away'; I disagree with Brian H Jackson from Canada.

He states that no-one died on the Truculent. This is not so.

My wife's late uncle, Ted Woodley 2nd Cox submariner, served on boats during WW2 and after.

He was also on Arctic Convoys. When the Truculent was salvaged, he was one of the men that had the gruesome task of retrieving the dead bodies from the boat. Needless to say, the officer in charge flatly refused to allow them to have a tot of rum until after the task was completed.

– John Wyeth ex-submariner
Alton, Hampshire



● HMS Bulwark blends in with the gun-metal-roofed sheds of Alexandra Dock, Bootle during the BoA commemoration

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson, HMS Bulwark

Flagship hidden?

AS an ex-HMS Bulwark rating, I was looking forward to the ship visiting Liverpool for the Atlantic celebrations.

However what a shock it was to find she had been berthed in Bootle, Alexandra dock, at least six miles from the city centre and away from all the celebrations which were taking place.

Why invite the current Flagship of the Royal Navy to such celebrations if she is going to be hidden miles away and not even open to visitors?

She was that far into the dock that you weren't even able to see her from the surrounding areas.

As an active member of the ship's association, I along with some other members were invited on board to have a look around, (which I'm sure plenty of other people would like to have been).

I would like to know who was responsible for organising this event; the Navy or the Docks and Harbour board? Either way it was embarrassing.

– John Finley
ex MEM HMS Bulwark
Kensington, Liverpool

Where is Eagle's Coronation baby?

SOME old naval hands of my acquaintance regret that there were no special celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of the 1953 Spithead Review.

Perhaps the omission wasn't surprising given the huge success (not to mention expense) of last year's jubilee festivities.

On June 15 1953 hundreds of British, Commonwealth and foreign vessels gathered in the Solent off the Isle of Wight to honour the Queen's coronation – an incomparable sight never to be forgotten.

Among the guest ships was the newly minted Soviet cruiser the Sverdlov.

At the time, I was studying Russian at the Joint Services School for Linguists at Coulsdon in Surrey.

A 19 year-old naval national serviceman, a coder special, I was sent to Portsmouth to interpret. On the day of the Review, free from translating duties, I was allowed to observe the pageant from the deck of HMS Eagle.

It was my first and only experience of life aboard an aircraft carrier. I have a vivid memory of the ship's guns being fired (presumably at the approach of the Queen's launch) and, shortly after, chaos breaking out, and men running in all directions.

For a brief moment I naively wondered if real shells had been fired: could the Sverdlov have turned its guns on us?

Then someone was heard to

RN Regional Command Chief of Staff, Cdr Richard Jermy responds:

The berthing plan was discussed many times during the planning phase for the Battle of the Atlantic event and the reason why this particular berthing plan was adopted was as follows:

Liverpool is a busy commercial port and the Royal Navy cannot dictate where vessels are to be located and every plan requires consultation and formal permission from the port authorities.

The Cruise Liner Terminal on the Pier Head has only been available since 2006 and hence this is the first time that this option was available for a commemoration on this scale.

However, the size of the cruise terminal is limited and if HMS Bulwark took this berth then none of the foreign warships could have been placed at this iconic location. Rafting vessels was not an option at this location.

The visiting foreign ships were our guests and had sailed great distances to partake in

the BoA anniversary events. HMCS Iroquois, in particular, as a representative of a key ally in the battle deserved special recognition.

None of these ships are likely to return soon, although HMS Bulwark will no doubt be seen here again frequently.

HMS Edinburgh, the last Type 42 destroyer, was built at Cammell Laird, and as major sponsors for the event, it was deemed essential that she be berthed with this current and historic defence contractor.

Minehunter HMS Pembroke, in the Canning Half Tide and the P2000 class patrol boats in Albert

Dock did represent the White Ensign.

I understand that Mr Finley, as an ex-Bulwark man feels aggrieved. However, not all of the 20 visiting ships could be in the prime position so some hard decisions had to be made.

Thousands of members of the public queued for hours to visit the foreign ships. I visited Pier Head that evening and was impressed by the imposing sight these fighting ships presented.

Not that dissimilar, I thought, to the hundreds of escorts that formed the backbone of the ships that fought in that terrible campaign 70 years before.



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Helen high water for Lympstone challenge

Medal for 27 years of service

A GOSPORT civil servant has been recognised for 27 years loyal service for the Royal Navy.

Joan Parker (above) was presented with the Imperial Service Medal by RN Director of Resources Liz Cassidy at a ceremony in Whale Island, Portsmouth.

Joan first joined the Civil Service in 1985, working in the offices of the Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command, before taking maternity leave.

On returning, and following a short post with Flag Officer Portsmouth, she went on to spend more than five years working on a Logistics programme.

Joan took up her first post as a Personal Secretary (PS) within Chief of Staff Second Sea Lord in 2002, and later moved to Chief of Staff Warfare. Thereafter, Joan continued to provide expert support until her retirement as PS to Chief of Staff Capability in the RN Headquarters in Portsmouth.

Liz Cassidy, said: "During her career with the Civil Service Joan has shown real professionalism and dedication, and she has been a constant source of support to her colleagues."

TV PRESENTER Helen Skelton is no stranger to tough assignments.

For a start, as a *Blue Peter* presenter she follows in a long and illustrious line of daredevils, though she has probably surpassed most of them – Helen kayaked for 30 days up the Amazon River in 2010, completed the 78-mile Namibian ultra marathon in 2009 and walked a 200ft high tightrope between two chimneys at Battersea power station in 2011.

Most recently she turned her attention to the Royal Marines' endurance course, part of the first commando test undertaken by fledgling commandos at the end of their training at Lympstone.

And Helen not only tackled the gruelling course on Woodbury Common near Exmouth – she succeeded.

Presenters from *Blue Peter* have a long history of attempting Royal Marines Commando Tests.

In 1986 Peter Duncan attempted the 30-mile speed march across Dartmoor for the TV series *Duncan Dares*.

Twenty years later Gethin Jones also attempted the 30-mile speed march and finished it – but just outside the time that Royal Marine recruits are expected to achieve.

Presenter Joel Defries previously did the endurance course in 2008 as well.

When Helen proposed taking a shot at the test, the bootnecks invited her to their training camp



● Presenter Helen Skelton tackles the endurance course near Lympstone

Picture: LA(Phot) Emz Nolan

at Lympstone to do the endurance course as a fitness assessment.

The course is a series of tunnels, including a short underwater tunnel called the Sheep Dip and an extremely narrow tunnel called the Smartie Tube.

These are followed by a four-mile run back to the training centre after which the recruits have to pass a shooting test.

Royal Marines recruits have 73

minutes to pass this test and have to carry 21lbs of equipment and a rifle.

Helen did the assessment within the time, but without carrying a rifle or any equipment.

"I thought Helen did really well on this assessment," said Capt Ben Chappell, Physical Training Officer at Lympstone.

"She passed this initial test and we have invited her back to do

some more training with us with a view to her possibly attempting a Commando Test in the future."

The Commando Tests include the endurance course, a nine-mile speed march done in 90 minutes, a high-wire Tarzan course and the 30-mile speed march across Dartmoor which is done in 8 hours.

All tests are done carrying 32lbs of equipment.



● Lt Mark Taylor as Dr Watson

Culdrose back in limelight

THE cast and crew of RNAS Culdrose Theatre Club are celebrating after winning five awards at the annual RN Theatre Association Festival with their play *Sherlock Holmes & the Mystery at Mallen Hall*.

The play, staged at the base's theatre, was a huge success after a five-year absence from the competition.

In all, Culdrose Theatre Club bagged five awards plus two nominations, which were presented at the festival award ceremony, held at HMS Collingwood in Fareham.

The five awards were for:
 ● Best make-up, hair and wigs: Laura Harris and Danny Berry;
 ● Best Costume: Gillian Wilton;
 ● Best Lighting: Pete Armstrong;
 ● Best Set: Annette Shaw;
 ● Best Supporting Actress: Kathryn Cartledge.

Nominated:
 ● Best Newcomer: Rachel Gilbert;
 ● Best Actor: Mike Smith.

Whilst presenting the award for best set, RNTA Festival Adjudicator Chris Jaeger said: "I can safely say that the *Sherlock Holmes* set at Culdrose is the best amateur set I have seen in 30 years."

Lt Rachel Gilbert, a Lynx helicopter Observer, had no acting experience before the offer of a part in the play came along, so for her to be nominated for 'Best Female Newcomer' was an outstanding achievement.

The other cast members came from squadrons and units across the Cornish air base, combining their thespian talents with the business of running a Royal Navy air station.

Director Annette Shaw said: "I am so proud of all the cast and crew."

"It was a lot of hard work, but we had so much fun along the way."

"There was some great feedback from our audiences, and so to win these awards is the icing on the cake for us."

Agincourt man-o'-war

FOUR centuries adrift and wrong type of battle, but Agincourt will have Nelson's flagship as a spectacular backdrop when Collingwood Random Salad Company bring their version of Shakespeare's *Henry V* to the Victory Arena in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard this month.

Collingwood RSC, part of the RN Theatre Association, tackle the Bard's history play in the open air on July 17-20.

Vice Admiral David Steel, Second Sea Lord and President of the RN Theatre Association, said: "This will be a very exciting production."

"*Much Ado About Nothing* last year was excellent, and I very much look forward to what I am sure will be another marvellous evening's entertainment alongside *Henry*."

Tickets cost £12 each (£10 concessions) and are available online through www.historicdockyard.co.uk/henry

Medals for sale

MEDALS awarded to Admiral Sir William Goodenough, whose 49-year career included service in the Boxer Rebellion and at the Battle of Jutland, are to be sold by specialist London auctioneers Morton and Eden early this month.

Kryten, Rimmer and a charity mess dinner

HERE at *Navy News* we often mention Kryten.

But we don't often get the chance to mention Rimmer – so we are going to make the most of this.

When a charity mess dinner was organised for the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess at HMS Collingwood, comedian and actor Chris Barrie was invited as guest of honour.

More than 110 mess members booked their places for the evening, all eager to see and meet Chris, who first made his name as an impressionist on *Spitting Image*.

Barrie also won plaudits as leisure centre manager Gordon Brittas in *The Brittas Empire* – but his main claim to fame is as the cowardly, pompous hologram Arnold Rimmer in *Red Dwarf*.

One of his co-stars was downtrodden mechanoid Kryten, whose angular head resembled the Mod 1 version of the Royal Navy's venerable 4.5in gun.

And as Collingwood is the place where weapons specialists are trained, it seemed obvious (to *Navy News*, at any rate) that Rimmer and Kryten should be pictured together.

The evening kicked off with pre-dinner drinks and Mess beatings conducted by the Royal Marines Band Collingwood, followed by a group photo and some Rimmer-style ornate salutes for the various musicians as they departed.

After dinner Chris spoke about his career for about 35 minutes – as the son of a senior Army officer his military knowledge was impressive and his humour at times had members of his audience in tears.

He had done his research for a naval slant – including a pre-dinner visit, when he met Kryten – and there was a rare appearance by Mr Brittas himself.



● Chris Barrie meets HMS Collingwood's training Kryten gun, accompanied by (from left) PO Pat Paterson (Mess Social rep), WO1 Speedy Steedman (Mess social rep outgoing), MAA Cozy Powell (Mess Vice President) and PO Les Leslie (incoming Social rep)

After dinner a charity auction was held in support of the RNRMC – including some special Red Dwarf lots brought by Chris.

In total the mess raised £2,336, plus over £95 from collection buckets.

Chris said: "The whole experience of being guest speaker has been utterly superb. From being taken on a tour of the training

weaponry (including Kryten) to last Thursday's meat auction, from watching the Field Gun crews practising on the parade ground to the spine tingling precision of the mess beatings, I will cherish my memories of Collingwood for many a year."

He added: "I feel extremely honoured to have been involved in such a wonderful event."



● WO1 David Pooley with sons AB Joe Pooley (left), Lt Glenn Pooley, Royal Welsh Regiment, and AB Harry Pooley

Picture: Southgate Studios

Like father, like sons

PROUD wife and mother Tracy Pooley contacted *Navy News* with a photograph showing her husband and three sons, all of whom are currently serving in the Forces.

Husband WO1 David Pooley has completed 34 years' service, having trained as an engineer artificer at HMS Sultan and served in various ships, including HMS Tartar, Diomedea, Arethusa, Hermes, Coventry, Northumberland, Enterprise and Severn.

WO Pooley, who is currently at Flag Officer Sea Training in Devonport, also had the honour of marching in the State funeral of Lord Mountbatten.

Submariner AB Joe Pooley recently returned from the record-breaking 11-month deployment by HMS Trenchant.

Lt Glenn Pooley bucked the family trend on the one hand, but maintained a long family tradition on the other.

He passed out of the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst last year, and although he is the only Pongo in the immediate

family, he is the fourth generation on his mother's side to serve with the Royal Welsh Regiment.

Youngest son Harry passed out of HMS Raleigh in February this year and remains at the Cornish establishment for Phase 3 training.

Stepping out

ROYAL Naval personnel from RNAS Culdrose and their partners took part in the traditional Flora Day pageant in the streets of Helston.

Amongst the Naval contingent was the new CO of the air station, Capt Mark Garratt, and his wife.

"It was an honour for all of us at Culdrose who were invited to dance on Flora Day," said Capt Garratt.

"The crowds around the streets of Helston were tremendous, and it really made us feel very much part of the community."

Lily of the valley was the flower of the day for the old tradition, with dancers adhering to a strict dress code – top hat and tails for the men, colourful tea dresses for the ladies.

Historic journals delivered

A RARE and personal account of life in the Royal Navy during the early part of the 20th Century has been hand-delivered to HMS Collingwood by the daughter of the man who wrote them.

Dulcie Pyle, aged 90, decided the Royal Navy should have the records of Chief Yeoman William Brooman, who served for over 25 years until he left in 1937.

Dulcie presented the journals to Cdre Mike Mansergh, Commanding Officer HMS Collingwood, and the pair spent some time sharing old naval stories.

Dulcie said: "My father was a brilliant and lovely man. He would be helpful to anyone and the Royal Navy was his life.

"He loved to write, especially about what he saw on his travels. I recount him saying 'I don't think there's a country I haven't visited.'

"If he ever received a letter he would send a 14 page one back."

The commodore and his guest were joined by other personnel who had made the visit possible, including CPO James Capps, who is in a role equivalent to the last position held by Dulcie's father.

Within the collection is a diary with detailed descriptions of William's time on board 21 ships and their crew members, photographs of King George V on board HMS Queen Elizabeth and newspaper cuttings containing information on the Japanese negotiations dating back to 1922.

The journals include his account of being sunk by torpedo, witnessing the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet in November 1918 and his time on HMS Hood up to 1936.

After leaving the Navy he worked as a civilian on the British radar development programme and also supported a radar training programme in Canada.

The documents will be studied by the Naval Historical Branch and added to the collection of the National Museum of the Royal Navy to complement other articles kept for research.

First call

NEW Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral Ben Key has paid his first official visit to the Maritime Warfare School.

During his visit the admiral toured the school, watching students in the bridge simulator, the Maritime Composite Training System, the Weapon Engineering Training Group, Victory Squadron and the Close Range Training Section, Mantle Hall.

Zest for life

MORE than 20 students and their mentors had a busy day of exercises and challenges when RNAS Culdrose hosted a Citizenship for Life (C4L) 2013 programme launch day.

The privately-funded C4L project has been running for three years, and aims to inspire and motivate young people from Cornwall.

Rare trip to sea

IT IS not just the big ships that get a chance to take families to sea.

There might have been a bit more by way of demonstrations when HMS Bulwark organised a families' day (above) but those with loved ones in HMS Enterprise were also treated to a special day.

After nine months away on operations, the survey ship headed from her home port of Plymouth to Falmouth for maintenance with families on board – and raced a bike on land in aid of charity.

The coastal trip gave their special guests an insight into the crew's living and working routine and accommodation on board.

They also witnessed a fly-by of a Royal Navy Merlin helicopter from RNAS Culdrose.

Seven-year-old Hannah Priestley, daughter of PO John-



● Sailors families enjoy a day at sea watching HMS Bulwark going through her paces

Picture: L(Phot) Nicky Wilson

Bulwark stages a day to remember

FAMILIES were treated to a day at sea by the grateful crew of Plymouth-based amphibious assault ship HMS Bulwark.

The Royal Navy's Flagship, at high readiness to deploy anywhere in the world at short notice, took a short break from duty to welcome the families of her ship's company at sea off the Devon coast.

A busy training and exercise programme since the start of the year has meant the 18,000-ton assault ship has spent a significant amount of time away from home.

So the sailors took the chance to thank their loved ones for the support they give from home while they are far away by allowing them to see where they live and work while on duty.

And with a major exercise coming up later this year, the crew will be spending even more time away from families.

Bulwark's Commanding Officer Capt Andrew Burns said: "The support we receive from our families when we are away from our home port is a vital component of our operational capability and, therefore, immensely important.

"Holding a families day onboard enables them to visualise where we work, and it's also an opportunity to thank them for their commitment and for the sacrifices they make on our behalf."

Over 450 family members of the crew embarked in Plymouth Sound by 4 ASRM landing craft

from the naval base before sailing off the South West coast.

The guests enjoyed a variety of activities throughout the day including a dynamic display by the Assault Squadron Royal Marines which sails with the ship, fire-fighting demonstrations and static displays.

A highlight of the day was a

flying display by a Lynx helicopter of the Royal Navy's Black Cats display team.

The day also presented an opportunity to hold a series of pre-deployment briefings by organisations such as the British Forces Broadcasting Service and Naval Families Federation to explain the practical assistance

and support available to family members when the ship deploys.

Bulwark now begins a maintenance period, in preparation for deployment to the Mediterranean and the Gulf at the end of the summer as the flagship of the Response Force Task Group – the UK's high readiness maritime force.



Meet the God Quad

AFTER the 'Biking Bish' a few years ago, meet the God Quad – a Naval chaplain on a winged quad bike who's providing support in Afghanistan.

The Rev Stuart Hallam normally serves with the Commando Helicopter Force at Yeovilton, but is currently at Camp Bastion with air and ground crew.

The 47-year-old, who original hails from Mansfield, is one of only a handful of commando-trained 'bishes' in the Senior Service (hence his green beret).

He's currently on a three-month tour as chaplain to the Joint Aviation Group, where his ministry is a little different from normal duties back in the UK.

"And the highlight is I get the 'God Quad' to ride around on!" he said (pictured above).

On a day-to-day basis, Stuart finds that operations in Helmand "tend to focus the mind – and for many UK serving personnel faith and spirituality, so often neglected at home, start to become more important.

"Many people find themselves asking very deep and searching questions about their own beliefs and values."

Paul Priestley, said: "I've had a brilliant day seeing what Daddy does.

"It's been very exciting and more fun than being at school."

Because Enterprise operates far from the UK for up to two years, there are fewer opportunities for families to experience life on board at sea.

The ship also staged fire-fighting and other demonstrations, a weapons display, and a man overboard exercise.

During the trip, the ship's Executive Officer Lt Cdr Mark Vartan raced the ship by bike to raise money for the ship's adopted charity, Muscular Dystrophy.

Enterprise arrived in Falmouth, to be met by the cyclists – the other being Lt Cdr Toby Foster (rtd) – and as they narrowly won the race, they collected the sponsorship.



● Aidan Trembath

Twins go separate ways

CORNISH twins Aidan and Alex Trembath have completed their Royal Navy initial training – and are now going their separate ways for the first time in 19 years.

The brothers, from Par, joined HMS Raleigh in January with Alex the first to embark on the ten-week course by seven days.

Alex said: "To be split up for the first time in 19 years and take on a new leg of the journey in our lives was strange to say the least.

"However, it was good to see how we would cope in the company of new people in a completely different environment.

"When Aidan arrived it was good to know that I still had someone who knew me so well to go and have a chat with, especially when times got hard.

"He would boost my morale."

For Aidan, having his twin brother a week ahead of him was a real advantage.

"Having a person in training I recognised certainly made training a little less alien," said Aidan.

"Also, with him being a week ahead of me meant that he could give me the details of what was coming up.

"Alex also came over to my accommodation block to help me with my kit which was a massive help."

Initial training culminated with the passing-out parade attended by families and friends, which for the twins' parents meant two consecutive Fridays at Torpoint.

But sadly the one person missing from each trainee's parade was his brother – Aidan was undertaking his final assessment when Alex was on the parade ground, and a week later Alex had already left Raleigh for his specialist training.

Alex is now at HMS Collingwood in Fareham, where he is training as an Engineering Technician specialising in weapons engineering.

Aidan has remained at Raleigh where he is undergoing training at the Submarine School to qualify as a Warfare Specialist, though the pair keep in close contact.



● Alex Trembath

Victory role

VICTORY Squadron trainees and staff based at HMS Collingwood, Fareham, were proud to be able to offer support to the inaugural Southampton Maritime Festival hosted at Southampton Docks.

The trainees enjoyed the opportunity to mingle with members of the public who were, as always, delighted to meet the young sailors.

Duties included acting as car park attendants, marshalling visitors on and off the Dunkirk Little Ships that were open to visitors, and answering photo-calls from members of the public who wanted their pictures taken with a real-life sailor in uniform.



● HMS Heron winning the RNRMC Field Gun Competition
Image by Keith Woodland

Thank you to everyone who came to meet us at HMS Collingwood's Open Day and congratulations to HMS Heron for winning the RNRMC Field Gun Competition and the coveted Brickwood Trophy.

UPCOMING EVENTS



South Coast Proms, July 5 and 6: Set in the grounds of HMS Excellent (home of the RNRMC), bring your own picnic and enjoy over three hours of world-class entertainment for

all the family, featuring the The Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines the Military Wives Choir, aerobatic display and firework finale. Tickets: 023 9231 2007 or at southcoastproms.com

RNAS Yeovilton Air Day, July 13: Five-hour flying display featuring fast jets, historic warbirds, helicopters, formation display teams, aerobatics and Commando Assault Finale with troops, aircraft and pyrotechnics

galore! Tickets: royalnavy.mod.uk/yeovilton-airday
RNAS Culdrose Air Day, July 24: The Red Arrows and Apache Display Team confirmed. Tickets: royalnavy.mod.uk/RNASCuldroseAirDayTickets



A final splash...

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) awarded an amenity grant of £4,000 to support the emotionally charged decommissioning ceremony of HMS Edinburgh on June 6 – attended by some 250 guests.

Edinburgh's formal departure from the Service marked a major milestone in the Navy's history as the Type 42s handed the torch to the next generation of Type 45 destroyers. For the past 30 years the Fortress of the Sea has ploughed the waves, hunted pirates and drug runners, defended the fleet from attack, and provided humanitarian aid after natural disasters.

Her crew has also returned support to the charity with some fantastic fundraising efforts. To make their final deployment to the South Atlantic memorable, ET(WE) Alex 'Taff' Tossell and seven colleagues made use of sporting facilities and set themselves the challenge of swimming the equivalent length of the English Channel, 22 miles, in a non-stop relay. The successful challenge raised more than £500 for the RNRMC.

Alex said: "While we were deployed on

maritime operations it was difficult to find the time to train for this, but there's nothing that we like more than a physical challenge, having fun along the way and working together as a team.

"We chose the RNRMC which carries out brilliant work, not only for the service men and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, but also provides vital support to the families and loved ones of those serving. For many of us serving in the fleet it's a charity close to our hearts, with many members of the ship's company having benefited from the support they provide."

Edinburgh also took the charity to their hearts with other fundraising during the past month. When the ship held its final Ship Open to Visitors' Day at the beginning of June, bucket collections were organised and, with public support, raised £889.

At the Battle of the Atlantic commemorations, the ship also held bucket collections and raised £2,131.

As the sun set for the last time for the T42s, the sun rises on the latest additions to the fleet.

In March, the commissioning ceremony was

held for HMS Defender, the fifth of six new T45 destroyers to enter front-line service. The RNRMC awarded an amenity grant of £5,000 to support the event for the 190-strong ship's company, proud family members and loved ones of the crew, and invited guests.

The RNRMC also awarded an amenity grant of £5,000 to support the commissioning ceremony for HMS Ambush, an event attended by the submarine's crew, Naval Base workers, families and around 500 invited guests.

Says RNRMC CEO Robert Robson: "These ceremonies are hugely significant for the ship's company and we were delighted to support them."

"For HMS Edinburgh, it was an opportunity to acknowledge the support that family and friends have provided to the ship's company during its life which has affected thousands of sailors and their families.

"We are extremely grateful to Alex and his team for their amazing fundraising efforts on our behalf in a very tough challenge. Their wonderful support and that of all the HMS Edinburgh crew will make a difference to the lives of many in our Naval family."



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Join Jamie's flying cause

Surg Lt Cdr Jamie Phillips (pictured right) has survived one of the most challenging endurance events in Britain, 'Tough Mudder', to support Wings4Warriors, a charity committed to providing injured Service personnel with the chance of a new career in the aviation industry.

The medical officer at BRNC Dartmouth is a founding trustee of Wings4Warriors, having become involved through his work with critically-injured Service personnel.

The pioneering charity helps those with life-changing injuries to forge new careers as commercial helicopter pilots in completely unmodified helicopters.

"Tough Mudder" is a 12-mile obstacle course designed by former Special Forces operatives to test each team's all-round strength, stamina, determination and camaraderie. It comprises a mixture of unforgiving and challenging obstacles, providing plenty of entertainment for onlookers.

Jamie said: "Our team - The Aviators - entered Tough Mudder as a way of raising much-needed funds for the charity but also to raise awareness of our message."

"It was a hugely popular event with many teams entered. It was good fun, the two toughest stances were where we got the electric shocks."

"We firmly believe that, with access to the right people and the right organisations, an individual can achieve pretty much anything."

"When we started out as a charity we were told that an amputee could never qualify as a commercial helicopter pilot but we have shown that that is not true."

"We were keen to show people that disability is not a barrier. My work with Wings4Warriors is incredibly rewarding and I am



humbled on a daily basis by the guys' motivation to overcome life-threatening injuries and achieve their dream.

"Our charity is focussed on offering people a future not just an experience. Through learning to fly and realising their dream I have seen severely injured Service personnel regain control over their future and move on with their lives. They are no longer labelled as an amputee but rather as a helicopter pilot who just happens to be an amputee."

Director of the charity Mark Radcliffe, a professional pilot

and the Chief Instructor said: "Employers are supportive, they see the value of ex-military personnel, with character shaped by self discipline and calm under pressure."

"They want to invest in these young men and in return they get fiercely devoted employees who are highly motivated."

"It costs around £40,000 to train a commercial helicopter pilot and the money donated has helped to put six men into training. We are also looking at training in air engineering and air traffic control."

One of the Wings4Warriors recent success stories has been former marine Matt Bryant, who has achieved his pilot's licence and is off to America for his Instrument Rating course. He is hoping to take up a two year flying contract in Africa.

Further details on Wings4Warriors are available on the charity's website: www.wings4warriors.org.uk

With the running total raised so far at £1,707, support Surg Lt Cdr Phillips' worthy cause at www.justgiving.com/TheAviators

Picture: Claudia Cox, Wings4Warriors

Blyth's run for Heroes

TAKING a break from survey operations off the west coast of Scotland, nine crew members from minehunter HMS Blyth took the opportunity to raise £250 for the forces charity Help for Heroes.

On May 24, during a stop-over in Port Ellen in Islay, LS(MW) John Kaney organized a 10km run in memory of Drummer Lee Rigby. Donations were collected from the ship's company.

LS Kaney said: "After hearing of the tragic event we wanted to commemorate our fallen colleague and raise some money for Help for Heroes in his name."

Tour de Paris

A TEAM of recently qualified Warfare Officers is embarking on the challenge of a lifetime as they cycle from HMS Collingwood to Paris.

As *Navy News* was going to press the team was aiming to complete the challenge in five days.

The team will be raising money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) and are keeping an online blog so that their progress can be followed.

The 275-mile route will take them past many historical sites in northern France, including the Operation Overlord (D-Day) beaches.

Lt Alan Morrison who is heading up the team said: "This route will no doubt be physically, mentally and emotionally challenging for the team."

The team would welcome support from anyone. Donations can be made at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/IWOC1208

Progress can be followed on their blog iwoc1208charitycycle.wordpress.com



Bun-derful effort for Harvey

A SUCCESSFUL cake sale at HMS Sultan helped to raise funds needed by toddler Harvey Young to travel to America for life-changing surgery.

Harvey - pictured above with the Sultan team by LA (Phot) Guy Pool - was born with spastic diplegia, a form of cerebral palsy, and as a result, his legs are unable to function properly. Unless this is treated over time his legs are likely to become deformed.

Harvey's uncle, Lt Mike Young, works at the Marine Engineering School, and when his colleagues heard about Harvey's condition they were inspired to raise money for the Help-4-Harvey cause.

Mike said "It was really moving to be able to bring Harvey into work to see all the effort that people are making to help raise money. I must give a special thank you to Lt Jo Chambers and Lt Sarah Wetherfield who organised the cake sale."

"The overall target we need to raise is £50,000, but around £35,000 has been raised already and we are now chasing the last £15,000 which will enable him to have an operation that will change his life forever."

With the specialist medical treatment unavailable in the UK, the family plan to fly Harvey out to the world's leading experts in St Louis, Missouri for the

surgery and physiotherapy, which should allow him to use his legs more normally.

To help Harvey you can donate at www.help4harvey.co.uk

■ In other good-hearted cake-related fun, delicious aromas wafted out of the command building at RNAS Yeovilton... and base personnel were drawn in to support Childhood Eye Cancer Trust (CHECT).

Sarah Pike, a classified books officer at the air station, wanted to raise awareness of the charity and raised £200 from the sale of cakes to support the vital work, research and support to the children affected.

The rare childhood eye cancer retinoblastoma affects mainly children under the age of five - among them Sarah's son, Corbin, who was diagnosed with the condition when he was just three.

"We'd never heard of retinoblastoma and didn't realise that the golden glow that we occasionally saw within our son's eye was anything that we should be concerned about," said Sarah.

Corbin was diagnosed with a Grade E cancerous tumour in his right eye. To save his life, he had to have his eye removed - and CHECT helped the family through the difficult period.

Paddlers left to their own Devices

A JOINT collaboration between the Royal Navy and Divex, an international diving equipment technology company, saw two hardy individuals raise £1,298 for their nominated charities.

Lt Cdr Richard (Soapy) Watson, the Navy's Diving Standards Officer, and Andy Brunton, a manager at Divex, completed a gruelling 24-hour paddle to raise money for both Project Vernon and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

The two had originally planned to participate in the 125-mile Devizes to Westminster (DW) canoe race, but organisers imposed major restrictions on participation due to extreme weather conditions at the time which meant many teams were forced to withdraw.

Lt Cdr Watson explained: "After we got over the heartache of not competing in this year's DW we very quickly focused on another challenge - to paddle up and down the 1,000-yard-long Horsea Lake for 24 hours."

"In the end we covered 110 miles or 193 times up and down. It was a pleasure and honour to paddle with my old 'baby diver' course instructor - although I think I have heard all of his dits now!"

The money raised is destined for two charities close to the hearts of the two divers; Project Vernon is raising funds to commission a statue of a clearance diver which will stand in Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth, the former site of HMS Vernon which was the home of RN diving for many years. The statue will pay tribute to all the personnel from the diving and minewarefare branches that served at the former base.

Funds will also be donated to the RNRMC to provide a better quality of life for serving and former Naval Service personnel and their families.

Andy Brunton commented on the paddle: "We were very disappointed to have to withdraw from the DW especially as we had trained in extreme conditions over the winter."

"We felt we owed it to our kind sponsors and to ourselves to put this training to the test hence the 'Plan B' 24-hrs paddle. This proved to be every bit as challenging both mentally and physically, not helped by the poor weather conditions on the day and the monotony of paddling up and down Horsea Lake."

The fundraising page is still open for anyone who wishes to find out more: www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/divexnavydivers

A sauce for good

THE Royal British Legion and London-based veterans' charity Stoll have backed veteran Bob Barrett's inspired vision of a range of table sauces - branded Forces Sauces, launched, appropriately enough in a military club in Piccadilly, (not Piccalilli) to generate an income stream to support those serving and who have served and improve the quality of veteran's lives.

Corporal Ketchup and Brigadier Brown are the first of two tasty treats we might see gracing the dining facilities of military messes and households in the future after the new products were launched in June.

The soldier-shaped recyclable bottle has been designed to appeal, while the advertising blurb promises an authentic flavour that captures a quintessentially British spirit.

The two charity partners have worked together before, training veterans to become chefs through an apprenticeship scheme.

Stoll veterans were determined to give something back to the charity and this is how Forces Sauces came about.

The range will sell nationally in Tesco branches for around £2.19 for a 500ml bottle with every bottle sold raising funds towards supporting the Armed Forces beneficiaries.

Marching forward, Forces Sauces hopes to expand its range and advance on the messes in the future.

Whether there will be a Captain Tartare, Colonel Mustard or Marine Mayonnaise remains to be seen but the two charities are hoping to introduce more products.



Wedding drums are beating

AUDIENCES at this month's South Coast Proms can win a genuine Royal Marines drum used at the Royal Wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

Two drums - both decommissioned in 2011 - will form the centrepiece of a prize draw at each of the Proms events at Whale Island in Portsmouth on July 5 and 6.

Over the past 17 years the ceremonial drums have performed at events such as the handover ceremony of Hong Kong in 1997 and the funeral of the Queen Mother in 2002. The last engagement before their decommissioning was the April 2011 Royal Wedding.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to win an iconic piece of military musical history that has been used on many national, ceremonial and royal events of the last two decades," said organiser WO Reg Sheen.

Tickets for the draw are only available to proms-goers and will be available on arrival at Whale Island. Tickets for the concerts can be bought via 02392 312007 or www.southcoastproms.com. All proceeds will go to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

'A good story emerging...'

THE MINISTRY of Defence is a big organisation, writes Mike Gray.

As well as more than 60,000 civilians, from administrative staff to highly-specialised technicians, there are over 160,000 military personnel.

Between them the men and women of the MOD and Services work in offices, train indoors and outdoors, and live, eat and shop in messes or other MOD property.

MOD covers a lot of ground – 230,000 hectares, give or take a field here and a common there. That is one per cent of the area of the UK mainland – which makes it one of the biggest estates in the country, right up there with the Forestry Commission, the National Trust and their ilk.

Almost a third of that land, 73,000 hectares, is classed as 'built estate' – from the major naval bases, garrisons and air stations to tiny satellite affairs.

It includes accommodation, scientific facilities, storage and distribution depots, comms centres and offices – and it puts the MOD on top of the pile as the UK's largest property manager.

Within that portfolio are ultra-modern IT centres and supermesses, and an impressive collection of listed buildings.

The other side of the coin is the 'rural estate', almost 160,000 hectares – roughly the size of London – which covers training areas and weapons ranges, much of it on undeveloped land which may have its own environmental significance, either in terms of archaeological gems or in the unspoilt ground which protects rare flora and fauna.

And the smooth running of all the above is the responsibility of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).



● The arrival of HMS Ambush and her sisters at Clyde Naval Base is one of the factors behind a major investment programme by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation in facilities in and around Faslane

Picture: LA(Phot) Stu Hill

At the top of the DIO is Chief Executive Andrew Manley, who is charged with taking the fledgling organisation – it was created in April 2011 as a result of the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review – to the next level as an 'Enhanced Operating Model' is introduced.

"The aim was to bring together all the elements of Defence infrastructure previously done by Top Level Budget holders and front-line commands, with their

own systems and methodologies.

"Some 3,000 people manage the estate, and we spend £3.3 billion each year," he said.

"The value is about £25 billion, which means that the DIO would be the size of a FTSE Top 30 company. It is a very big enterprise in its own right."

DIO brought together a disparate collection of property and infrastructure elements within the MOD, with a view to rationalising them into a more

logical and streamlined machine.

And if this all sounds like remote highbrow strategy and business-speak, don't be fooled – if you are connected to the military, the chances are that you depend on DIO.

"We provide all estate, whatever condition, to ensure people can live, work, train and deploy everybody across the MOD," said Andrew.

"We buy and sell estate, build buildings, maintain them and service them."

Guarding, catering, cleaning, laundry, and providing medical facilities also falls within the DIO remit.

"We are very far-reaching and probably touch everybody in the MOD every day," added Andrew.

One crucial objective of the evolving DIO is to achieve consistency, promoting the kind of stability that is so important in the often-disrupted life of military personnel and their families.

"We brought together the legacy of eight organisations, and we are trying to get that all to work in a consistent manner so that people broadly get the same treatment wherever they are and whatever they are asking for," said Andrew.

"In the past there were 17 different ways of making a move for the military – there should only be one.

"We are cleaning up the legacy of about 120 management information systems – next year we will be able to offer one system open to all users across the estate."

A unified system means more transparency for all – so, for example, with a fully-costed estate in the database, the financial consequences of using training facilities or occupying office space will be clear to a commanding officer at just a few keystrokes.

And it means the power at the fingertips of a civilian who is moving house – who can browse online and rapidly make informed decisions – is already possible with some 50,000 houses in DIO's UK portfolio.

Indeed, 98 per cent of applications for family housing are now made online – in February this year 4,582 applications were made across the MOD electronically,

and just 98 on paper.

Housing is a hugely important part of the DIO empire, and there are a number of initiatives to meet expectations.

Eight former Housing Information Centres across the country have been replaced by two Housing Allocation Service Centres (HASCs) based in Thetford and Aldershot, underpinning a more streamlined one-stop-shop approach to allocating accommodation for families.

Standards have also improved – Andrew said that 95 per cent of family accommodation is in the top two bands for quality, and no family accommodation in the lowest two standards have been allocated since January 2012, meeting the DIO's commitment in the Armed Forces Covenant.

Single Living Accommodation (SLA), however, is patchy.

"There is an awful lot of this stuff," he said. "Some is state-of-the-art *en suite*, such as Faslane. High-quality stuff."

"At the other end of the scale, some is legacy, from World War 2, such as some of the training estate. Some of it is relatively poor by anyone's standards."

A study is being undertaken for the Secretary of State, and by the end of the decade it is hoped that SLA will also be predominantly in the top quality bracket.

Hand-in-hand with better-quality accommodation is a desire to provide a reliable maintenance programme.

In February this year, 99.8 per cent of emergency repair call-outs were tackled within target times, and almost 98 per cent of routine work was achieved within 15 days – well within the 20-day commitment.

Looking at just one RN patch by way of example, since 2011 DIO has delivered £7 million of internal and external upgrades to more than 270 Service Family Accommodation homes in Helensburgh, close to Faslane, with a further £3 million earmarked for this financial year.

130 properties received full internal upgrades – each getting a new bathroom, kitchen, electrical wiring and insulation.

A further 43 properties had new roofs and entrance canopies, brighter-painted facades and neater gardens with sheds, patios and privacy fencing.

And it is not just properties which have benefited, as DIO has delivered new play areas and upgraded roads, paths and lighting.

"I think as we increasingly start to benchmark that against other housing organisations it is a pretty good level," said Andrew.

"On accommodation space there is a good story emerging."

The tidying-up of a ragtag and bobtail collection of IT systems extends into the bewildering array of contracts for both 'hard' (buildings and real estate) and 'soft' (services such as catering and cleaning) facilities management.

'Next generation' estate contracts are replacing current arrangements, building on the use of regional commercial experts in the field to deliver support services.

The initiative will see four regional prime contracts, a national housing prime contract and a national training estate prime contract to cover the 'hard' elements (with some limited 'soft' services where necessary).

The bulk of the 'soft' contracts will be let as nine regional blocs covering all MOD sites in the area (again with specific exclusions), all delivered by specialists who are familiar with MOD ways.

"We are looking for a better consistency – it can be variable, depending on what base you are on," said Andrew.

"That is a legacy – in fact, in 2010 there were over 200 different contracts providing services on the bases.

"I hope by 2017 to have that standardised across the MOD.

"When you go to McDonald's you pretty much know what hamburger you are going to get. It should be pretty much the same with cleaning or catering, so that you know what to expect."

The DIO is also investigating whether a strategic private-sector partner would improve their capacity as a business organisation – all part of the evolving new business model.

Other aspects of DIO business which are benefiting from a new approach include booking SLA bed spaces – although controlled locally, a new single system gives a more comprehensive and swifter service for military commanders, helping to avoid the use of private rented spaces and identifying surplus accommodation.

The final part of the DIO's evolving strategy for the new-look, leaner, more efficient MOD is a review of the estate – including redundant land.

The most obvious example is the withdrawal of 20,000 Army personnel from Germany, but the initiative applies to all three Services.

"The biggest news for the Royal Navy at the moment is the gradual migration of the submarine fleet to Faslane and the development of the Submarine School there – it will be a multi-million pound development over the next decade," he said.

But the ripples spread beyond those directly affected by base-port moves – the overhaul of MOD estate carried out by DIO will include a cold, hard look at smaller outposts to see whether they could operate more efficiently in larger establishments, and also whether isolated enclaves or parcels of land in the three main naval bases could be sold.



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Sultan sailors in Gosport tribute

SAILORS from HMS Sultan were joined by former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band and members of the public at a service of remembrance in Gosport.

The service reflected on the central role the town had during World War 2, and paid tribute to those who lost their lives in the Allied cause.

A parade round Ann's Hill Cemetery, and a flight by a Spitfire from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, set the tone for the occasion, while the service was led by HMS Sultan's chaplain, the Rev Horne.

Admiral Band attended in his role as Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire.

Special mention was made during the service of

the 'air balloon disaster' on August 12 1940, when ten Servicemen and two civilians were killed in an enemy attack on a barrage balloon squadron.

Support to the Service personnel involved in the Normandy landings offered by the people of Gosport was just part of the town's contribution to the war effort.

Gosport was still the home of the Submarine Service during the war; it played its part in the construction and assembly of the Mulberry artificial harbours used after D-Day; arms were manufactured and stores supplied; and Haslar Hospital, along with other hospitals in the region, received wounded warriors from the front line.



Centenarian receives Arctic Star

A CENTENARIAN from Halifax has received his Arctic Star medal from the senior naval officer in Northern England.

Tommy Leonard, aged 101, was presented with his commemorative award by Naval Regional Commander Northern England Cdre Dickie Baum, who recently helped mastermind the Battle of Atlantic 70th anniversary commemorations in Liverpool.

The veteran met Cdre Baum and a party of civic dignitaries at the Savile Park care home in Halifax, where he now lives.

Tommy was called up to serve in the Royal Navy in 1941 when he was 30.

His first ship, HMS Pozarica, was part of the ill-fated Arctic Convoy PQ17, which was mauled by German U-boats and aircraft after it was ordered to scatter, but Tommy served the rest of the war before returning to Fletcher Brothers Dye Works where he notched up a total of 50 years.

Tommy's ship was torpedoed almost two years later off North Africa, and he recalled helping his injured shipmates.

He went on to serve in HMS Birmingham, which was badly damaged by torpedo in the Med, and his last ship was HMS Aldenham, which hit a mine in the Adriatic in late 1944 and was the last RN destroyer lost in the war.

"Dad was blown clear, unlike the young lad next to him who hit the awning they were chatting under," said Tommy's daughter Kathleen Daveney

"Dad recalls going down and down under the weight of his duffel coat and expecting not to survive.

"When he did surface he watched the ship split in two as she sank in just two minutes.

"He suffered a fractured spine and was taken to Italy and then to hospital in Malta before returning to Hayling Island to complete his war service."

Wrens recall roles in winning the Battle

WARTIME Wrens were among the veterans who returned to Liverpool to mark the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic.

And although they didn't serve in the convoy escorts and U-boat hunters, they played a crucial role in bringing about Black May in 1943 – a turning point in World War 2.

In 1941 the RN Western Approaches Command in Liverpool had 2,648 WRNS Officers and ratings, writes Celia Saywell, Public Relations Officer for the Association of Wrens.

By 1943 this had risen to 10,284, and stood at 15,583 the following year.

Eleanor Roosevelt stayed overnight in WRNS Quarters in 1942 – it could have been a Nissen hut or a requisitioned stately home, but was at Ackerly House where she had dinner and made her *Postscript* broadcast message.

Earlier that day she inspected the WRNS Divisions and took the salute at the march-past.

Wren despatch riders were constantly up and down the docks during the period of the Battle of the Atlantic, supplying the escort ships with signals and sailing orders and going on board with instructions to all manner of strange craft from obscure wharves and jetties.

Stores and Supply Wrens walked through Liverpool to the docks to collect baskets of fish for the galley.

The Pay Office for those returning from Merchant and RN ships was at the David Lewis Northern Hospital.

Liverpool was the largest of the



two Naval Control Service ports, with two departments completely staffed by Wrens.

One department was the Information Bureau, dealing with the coming and going of all ships, from 'monsters' to coastal vessels.

NCS Wren Boarding Officers dealt with sailing orders for the convoy, mustered and checked amendments in Confidential Books and the signals which all had to be done in very short time.

Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships (DEMS) Wren Boarding Officers checked gun equipment, ammunition and armaments.

Wrens also trained naval officers in anti-submarine tactics at the Western Approaches Tactical Unit School, where a captain remarked

that all those who have seen this team at work will understand that the WRNS Officers and ratings have neatly stepped into the shoes of the naval staff.

Two Association of Wrens veterans were featured in an art project that focused on stories of Royal and Merchant Navy seamen and women 70 years ago.

As part of an international photography festival, Blind Spot Collective presented *Stranded*, which included the Lightship exhibition montage in images taken by Rachel Wagh Photography (above).

Muriel James, aged 90, joined the WRNS at the age of 19 in 1942.

She wanted to be an accountant and took many courses and exams

at night school from the age of 16 until the age of 32 but was never allowed to work as an accountant in the Navy as it was believed that accountancy was a man's job...

Megan Moir joined the Wrens in 1944 at the age of 18. She wrote up training results and kept records whilst at sea onboard HMS Philante, for those vessels preparing for escort duties.

She had to remain ashore when the Philante was sent North to escort a German submarine that had surrendered at Loch Eriboll.

Megan was one of two AOW veterans interviewed by photographer Rachel Wagh who were invited to take tea at the Hilton Hotel during the anniversary commemorations, the other being Penny Peters who worked in the Western Approaches Pay Office in 1943.

BBC TV assistant director Peter Trollope also met a group of AOW veterans at their weekly Tea Dance club. The resulting programme, introduced by Peter Sissons, included Stella Passey reliving her daily journey from WRNS quarters to the War Office in Derby House, where she worked in the Confidential Document Rooms.

Post-war Wren Margaret Wall, who accompanied Stella to the location, noticed that the two WRNS Officer models at Derby House doorway had ladders in their tights – not even stockings – brass buttons, and a blue killick anchor on one sleeve.

Margaret hopes to get these shipshape and Pusser before long.

Cooks gather in Birmingham

MORE than 140 Cooks and Caterers descended on Birmingham for their second reunion weekend.

Rick and Helen Clinton and the staff at the Nautical Club hosted the gathering, which saw the coming-together of cooks ranging from those who served as far back as the 1960s to personnel currently serving – so there was a lot of catching up to do.

A raffle of cooks' and naval memorabilia, which included an old pair of 'steaming bats' (steel-toe-capped sea boots) and a tin of 'babies' heads' (tinned steak and kidney pudding), raised £450 for the club funds, and another collection raised £250 for the family of Drummer Lee Rigby.

Another reunion has already been organised for next year, again at the Nautical Club in Bishopsgate Street, starting on May 2.

For further details contact Colin Joy at colinbjoy@hotmail.com

Memories of Duke

A PRODUCTION company is working on a documentary for ITV on the impact the Duke of Edinburgh has had on people across the country – and they need some Naval input.

Shiver, who produced a documentary, *The Queen & I*, to coincide with the Diamond Jubilee last year, would like to hear naval anecdotes and stories about Prince Philip, who served in HM Ships Vanguard (1941), Wallace (1943) and Whelp (1945) – particularly his role in the battle of Matapan in 1941, and later as an instructor at HMS Royal Arthur in 1947.

If you can help, contact Hettie Mitchell at Shiver on hettie.mitchell@shiver.tv

↓ RNA HQ, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.
 ↓ admin@royalnavalassoc.com
 ↓ 023 9272 3747
 ↓ www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our May edition (right) was HMS Indomitable, and the squad of sportsmen who hitched a lift Down Under were rugby league players.

M Arnold, of Cambridge, correctly identified the aircraft carrier and the sporting team, and therefore wins our £50 prize.

This month's mystery ship (above) was built as a minesweeper in Hampshire, and completed in late 1956.

In January 1970 she was converted for duties with Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, when she had her Bofors and sweep gear removed and a chart room fitted aft.

What was her name? We have removed her pennant number from the image. Complete the coupon and send



it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is August 12. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our September edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 221

Name

Address

My answer

Vindictive bow rededicated

THE rededication of the memorial to the second raid on Ostend, in May 1918, has been carried out by King Albert II of Belgium.

The bow of the old cruiser HMS Vindictive – which took part in the raid on Zeebrugge the previous month – was recovered after the war and placed on dry land as a monument to those who died in the dangerous mission, which was intended to block access to the open sea for German U-boats.

The raid was only a partial success – fog, bad luck and a broken propeller prevented the battered Vindictive from blocking the channel as planned – but larger ships were bottled up in the harbour complex and it was seen as a morale-boosting example of Navy planning and daring.

The bow had become rather forlorn in recent years, but work to expand harbour facilities allowed the chance for the monument to be moved and spruced up.

Although the weather during the ceremony was poor, there was a good turn-out for the ceremony, including descendants of those involved in the raid.

Amongst them was Capt Walter Godsall RN (rtd), whose

father Cdr Alfred Godsall was CO of Vindictive – having also commanded a blockship at the first Ostend raid just weeks earlier.

"The transfer of the Vindictive memorial to its new position, and the presence of the King and Queen at the rededication ceremony,

illustrate the lasting significance which the Belgian people continue to attach to the operation of May 10, 1918" he said.

"For the many family members who were present, this was a memorable occasion and a fine tribute to all those who took part

in the attack.

"The memorial now stands, appropriately, close to the spot where the ship was scuttled 95 years ago.

"BNS Crocus 'piped the still' as she passed – RN ships should do likewise."

Another tough journey

AN ARCTIC convoy veteran who personifies the toughness required to survive the "worst journey in the world" travelled to the north of Scotland from Nottingham to collect his Arctic Star medal.

George Langton completed 22 years in the Royal Navy, ending up as a CPO Cook, and amongst the many ships he served in was HMS Diadem, which was on the Russian convoy run when George was aboard.

George, who turned 93 last month, and his daughter Pat went to the remembrance service and medal presentation ceremony held at Loch Ewe.

He subsequently spent some time in hospital, which friends think was a result of the strenuous journey to Wester Ross.

Peter Maguire, who knows the veteran, said: "George personifies the toughness and never-say-die spirit of the Royal Navy, and everyone here at our sheltered housing complex respects and admires him for what he and many others did for their country."

The gathering at Loch Ewe, an assembly point for many Arctic convoys, was organised in association



● S/M George Langton with his Arctic Star

with the Russian Arctic Convoy Museum.

As well as the presentation, attended by some 40 convoy veterans, a World War 2 week was held which included talks and films, and local residents and businesses joined in by recreating aspects of wartime Britain such as period costume.





Sound man pumps up the volume

HE STARTED three years ago by trying to ensure delegates heard each other.

And this year he did his best to drown out all conversation.

Lyndon Ford, RNA Headquarters' expert on musical and technical issues, has been improving the sound system at Conferences since 2010 in Ouistreham – and National President Vice Admiral John McAnally believed Liverpool was the best for years.

But not content with twiddling knobs at the sound desk during the Conference – and playing a major role in the organisation of the Sunday church service – Lyndon had another trick up his sleeve.

For during the lunch break he slipped into the adjacent, cavernous Main Hall and got to grips with the third-largest pipe organ in the country, a 7,700-pipe monster originally built in 1855 by Henry 'Father' Willis, the foremost organ-builder of the Victorian era (pictured above).

To a small but select audience – which included most of the Association's senior officers and National Council members at one point or another – Lyndon thundered out a selection of classics before returning to the sound desk to stifle feedback and switch microphones as shipmates spoke during the afternoon session. "When you are playing, the overall volume is very deceptive – you do not get the full effect when you are sat at the console," said Lyndon, who also devised the

Career moves

BACK in 2010, when the Conference was staged across the Channel, the First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope's advancement to Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath was formally announced as delegates gathered in Ouistreham.

Fast forward three years, and National President Vice Admiral John McAnally observed that "coming to RNA Conferences is good for your career" as delegates in Liverpool congratulated WO1 Terry Casey, the Warrant Officer of the Naval Service, on the announcement that he had been awarded an MBE.

Two prizes for 3

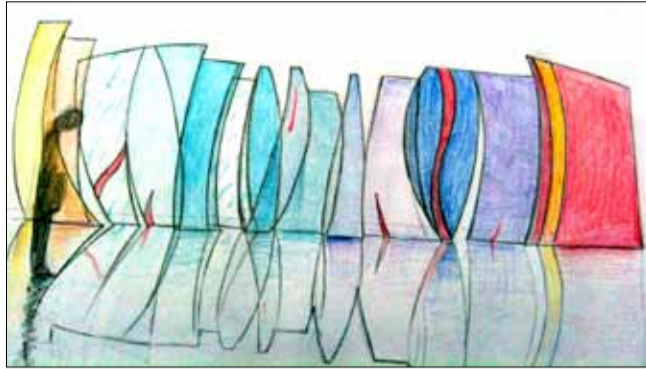
3 AREA confirmed their prowess at recruiting full members by retaining the Sword of Honour.

And 3 Area also upped their effort in returning Gift Aid forms to take the Tasker Bowl as well.

The Briggs Dirk for the large branch (over 30 members) that recruited the biggest percentage of new full members went to Cleethorpes, while the small branch prize – the Briggs Rose Bowl – was won by Stirling.

In the overseas section of the President's Awards, the certificate to the most successful large branch in terms of recruiting went to Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), while the most effective small branch was Jersey.

Glass memorial is chosen



THE Association has decided on a design for a new Naval memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum, and it is hoped the structure can be dedicated during next year's conference weekend.

Vice Admiral John McAnally told delegates that 22 designs had been submitted, including four by professionals, and two were short-listed by a 'committee of taste,' led by the RNA's Legal Adviser, Lt Cdr Helen MacKenow RN.

The winning design, by Graeme Mitcheson (who sketched the outline concept shown left) "does take a bit of getting your head

around," said the Admiral, adding: "I hope you agree with me that it is highly-imaginative and very striking, respectful and uplifting."

The memorial, a focal point of the RNA's Charter Challenge to mark the 60th anniversary of the granting of the Royal Charter, will feature glass panels and a figure with bowed head.

It is hoped to win Navy Board approval to name it the Naval Service Memorial.

See September's *Navy News* for an in-depth look at the symbolism of the memorial, and some of the other designs submitted.



● S/M Dave Tollerton, 10 Area chairman (left), passes the responsibility for the National Conference over to S/M Chris Dovey, National Council member for 8 Area

President reflects on 'a good year' for RNA

NATIONAL President Vice Admiral John McAnally paid tribute to his deputy, who stood down at Conference after eight years in post.

Cdre Adrian Nance "has provided cogent and trenchant advice over the years, particularly drawing on his qualification as a chartered director in the areas of governance and during the move of the headquarters to Portsmouth," he said.

"I will always be grateful for his wise advice, strong support and comradeship.

"Adrian, a big thank you from the shipmates here today and continuing success in your exciting and so important work in Africa providing disaster helicopter support to those in great need."

There were thanks, too, for S/M Dave Tollerton's team from 10 Area, Crosby and Trafford branches for organising the Conference.

The President went on to express his pleasure at "a very good year" for the Association, particularly with a strong performance on full member recruitment, the development of the Shipmates campaign and the settling down of the mentoring programme for RN Phase 1 and Phase 2 trainees – more than 1,000 trainees visited HQ in Semaphore Tower in the past year.

Other developments over the past year included that of the Conference of Naval Associations, which Admiral McAnally "had the great privilege of chairing."

CONA, he told delegates, is "a loose grouping of naval associations keen to share information and work together," but he added that "while recognising the distinctive nature of the different associations and respecting our and their independence" the new group "had made great strides in sharing ideas, in communications, and negotiating discounts."

CONA now has 17 members,



● Standard bearers at the Capt Johnnie Walker statue at Pier Head after the Sunday parade in Liverpool

with applications still coming in.

Talking of partnerships, the President reported that the partnering between the Association and the RN is "in good health."

"The Second Sea Lord approached Paul [Quinn] and I in early January with an entirely new idea of his own.

"This was that all those leaving after 12 years of service should receive a valedictory certificate personally signed by him together with an invitation, and encouragement, to join... the RNA, and for officers also to join the Association of Royal Naval Officer as well, with a year's complementary membership," said Admiral McAnally.

"He was very anxious to implement this in record time.

"In fact, from bang to flash was less than a month," he said, observing that it had contributed, along with Shipmates campaign, to full membership recruitment.

Moving on to recent

commemorations, the President said: "I have been very proud to see the prominent position given to the RNA in many events, with our own National Council Battle of the Atlantic veteran, S/M Peter Reed, honoured at the main national dinner on board HMS Illustrious.

"Liverpool is such a special place to have our conference and tomorrow our service will be held at St Nicholas, the church for those on convoy duty and I will lay a wreath on behalf of us all at the memorial to Capt Johnnie Walker, who did so much to develop and implement ASW tactics against the U-boat threat.

"Finally, I applaud the outstanding vision and the effort of Londonderry branch and 12 Irish Area to commission and dedicate their statue to the Battle of the Atlantic, which now proudly matches an exactly similar memorial on the other side of the Atlantic in Halifax, Nova Scotia."

Admiral McAnally also had a special invitation for those who endured the Arctic convoys.

"I am very proud to lead this important and highly-regarded association at this time of special memories," he said.

"Recognising this we have offered to the RN and in articles in the national press to accommodate any veteran who would like to receive their Arctic Star at a formal parade, rather than just coming through the post (like the Atlantic Star they were originally awarded would have done) that we would be honoured to do so at the Biennial Parade on September 8 in London.

"I hope to see a great turnout of shipmates to honour these brave and dedicated men who undertook the worst journey in the world."

Anyone who wants an Arctic Star presented should contact the General Secretary on paul@royal-navalassoc.com or 02392722983

Trustees 'delighted' with state of finances

THE RNA has emerged from a "particularly challenging year" with a strong financial performance, according to the man who handles the Association's money.

Honorary Treasurer S/M Ray Barraclough told delegates that the RNA had been determined to "seize the opportunities to expand our Association fast and without financial burden to our membership," despite the current climate of austerity.

And that initiative had translated into a headline figure of a surplus in funds of over £85,000 last year, effectively increasing the Association's reserves by over five per cent.

Drilling down to the details, S/M Barraclough said subscriptions had, as expected, fallen – the 2011 income of £169,700 dropped to £160,800, "which reflects the increasing age profile of members, and the demise of 18 branches.

A small apparent decrease in Gift Aid tax reclaimed was actually skewed by the removal of a relief system brought in when the basic tax rate dropped from 22 per cent to 20 per cent, and when that was factored in there was a like-

for-like rise of £1,000 – and S/M Barraclough reminded delegates that the National Council strongly urged members to support the Gift Aid scheme.

Other measures that have yielded cost savings included a review of rent paid for Headquarters in Portsmouth and a change in accounting procedures (yielding a saving of £4,000), with total expenditure coming in at £325,000 – more than five per cent under budget.

The Association's funds, held with Blackrock in their Armed Forces Common Investment Fund, rose 6.33 per cent in 2012 – outperforming the FTSE100 index – making an unrealised gain of almost £50,000.

However, it had been a "roller-coaster year" for investments, noted the treasurer, with early gains last year falling back sharply in the second quarter, only to recover again towards the end of the year.

Legacy income amounted to almost £117,000, while the money gained by selling off the old HQ in London yielded £10,646 in interest, having been put into a fixed-rate bond. S/M Barraclough thanked Brooms

Professional Services Ltd for their help and guidance – adding "it is worthy of note that again much additional assistance has been provided by them at no extra cost to the association."

In conclusion, the Treasurer said: "I hope you will agree that the Association has managed its affairs to good effect over the year.

"The changes made, some of which have been major, are within the corporate plan for tight financial control over expenses. The intention to maintain this approach is paramount for the future.

"It is not without effort, of course, and I should like to commend to you the magnificent way in which the General Secretary and the Headquarters staff have responded to the challenges over the past year.

"The Trustees are delighted with another strong financial performance in the year, with good control of costs, excellent legacy income, and a recovery in the value of investments.

"The rigid control of costs is particularly pleasing given the high level of activity and achievements during the year."

Folkestone via Coventry (and Bristol)

NAVIGATORS in St George's Hall were checking charts when the sole Motion of Urgency was addressed at the Conference.

The ball was set rolling when it was mentioned in the morning session that Eastbourne had put in a bid for the 2015 Conference – which came as a surprise to fellow 2 Area delegates, who thought Folkestone were making the bid.

Any confusion was quickly cleared up when S/M Roger Ide, of Chatham branch, said he was representing Folkestone, who proposed that they should host the event in two years; Eastbourne had been a slip of the tongue.

S/M Ide, whose proposal was seconded by Paddock Wood branch, then outlined the scenario.

Conference would be hosted on June 19-21 at the Grand Burstin Hotel, which boasts 550 rooms and facilities large enough to host both the business and social elements of the weekend.

The town centre is just ten minutes walk, he said, and added that there would be a free coach trip to France for delegates' partners (which elicited the hopeful enquiry "is it one-way?" from one member of the audience).

There would be a cabaret every night, a gala dinner – and all at a cost of £127 per person for three nights dinner, bed and breakfast.

With the National Council fully endorsing the plan, the proposal was unanimously carried.

After further business was concluded, the glories of Coventry were expounded as a taste of what to expect at Conference 2014.

Although it was claimed that Bristol Airport was just ten minutes from the venue – the speaker's mind had strayed to thoughts of holidays, but fellow delegates clarified that it is Birmingham Airport that is close to Coventry – the highlights were outlined.

S/M Jim Good, vice chairman of 8 Area, told the assembled shipmates that the conference will take place over the weekend of Friday June 13 to Monday June 16.

"Why Coventry – it is the furthest city away from the sea in the UK..." he pondered, going on to outline the good transport links and assure delegates that transport would be provided from the city centre to the Royal Court Hotel, which would be able to provide everything the Association needed.

Although Lady Godiva could not appear (she apparently had no problem with Portsmouth or Chatham ratings, but those from Guzz were a different matter...) there would also be the unveiling of the new memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Charity call

GUEST speaker Robert Robson, Chief Executive of the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity, gave a presentation to shipmates about the role and history of the RNRMC.

Mr Robson, a former RN officer, used case studies to illustrate the wide range of work the charity undertakes, including benevolence, prizes, amenities for working sailors and wider 'benevolence' such as grants for care and death grants.



Sunday best by the river

RNA GENERAL Secretary Capt Paul Quinn was, as ever, busy with the rest of the Headquarters team, making sure everything was in place for the Sunday church service.

Music maestro Lyndon Ford had just found that the church organ was out of action, so was steeling himself to bang out the hymns on a piano – it has to be *fortissimo* to cope with the Senior Service's predilection for lusty, if not always tuneful, singing.

Nigel Huxtable was, aside from his other duties, taking photographs, while Andy Christie and Michelle Bainbridge were ensuring stewards were in place and had other roles in the church to attend to.

But Capt Quinn managed to take a moment out to listen to the bells of the Church of Our Lady and St Nicholas – the Sailors' Church.

"That's a Grand Sire Double," said Paul, a keen learner bellringer who recently rang his first quarter peal back in Hampshire.

Someone mentioned they were surprised he was not helping the bellringers out. "I would like to..." he said.

The church itself has long had maritime links. There has reportedly been a place of worship on the site since the 13th Century, and until the 18th Century the waters of the Mersey lapped the churchyard wall at high tide.

Merchant and Royal Navy sailors have worshipped there – including those involved in Atlantic convoys and the warships that protected them.

During the service, S/M Harry Harley spoke movingly of those who suffered and died out beyond the Bar Lightship, and of a battlefield with no monuments, and where the only visitors are seabirds "dipping their wings in unknowing salute."

Following the service a parade formed up close to the Liver Building on the Mersey waterfront, and marched the short distance to the Capt Johnnie Walker statue.

The band of Ellesmere Port Sea Cadets led the way (other cadets from Sefton and Kirby units also joined the parade), with a fine show of almost 40 standards including the RNA National Standards and that of the Irish Naval Association.

With 16 RNA officials and National Council members, over 100 shipmates, almost 30 Irish shipmates and more than 25 cadets, the parade was watched and applauded along the promenade by hundreds of onlookers.

The parade wheeled round to form up close to the Walker statue, where a wreath was laid.

To the strains of *Ferry 'Cross the Mersey* from a vessel at the nearby terminal, Vice Admiral John McAnally then made his customary closing remarks, thanking the cadets ("Well done, well played and well marched – you are the future and it looks good"), the Irish visitors and the three civic VIPs, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool and the Mayors of Sefton and Wirral for attending.

There was also praise for the thorough manner in which 10 Area had organised the Conference, including an effective use of a team of stewards.

"What a wonderful time we have had here," concluded the National President.

"Thanks to the people of Liverpool for the warm welcome they have given us."

That formally concluded the weekend – though there was still the matter of a final piece of entertainment.

Sefton Sea Cadet's Glee Club had won praise at the Saturday night gala dinner, attended by over 500 people, at the Adelphi Hotel.

How else could you follow that – other than by wheeling on Elvis's Dad, Salome *et al* for the Crosby Branch Sods Opera...



• Ellesmere Port Sea Cadets Band leads the Sunday parade

Recruitment initiative is paying dividends

NATIONAL Chairman S/M Chris Dovey reported a year of good highs – and unfortunately a few lows as well – to conference delegates.

One cause for sadness was the loss of S/M Terry Halder, who died not long after bravely attending last year's conference, despite the state of his health, to accept his Life Vice Presidency award.

Among those having to stand down from Association duties were S/M Bob McGuinness, National Council member for 6 Area, and S/M Jeremy Owens, chairman of the Standing Orders Committee for more than two decades.

"Finally, on the low side, it has been disappointing that we have had to cancel the proposed last two clubs seminars through lack of support," said S/M Dovey.

"At a time when clubs are facing difficult trading times, and several have been in significant difficulty or even closed, it is sad to see the opportunity for sound advice and support not being taken up."

On the brighter side, the Chairman said he was delighted with the increase in 2012 of nearly 200 full members – the only increase in this category for some 20 years.

"This is the first flush of new growth from the marketing initiatives; and the continuing highly successful mentoring campaigns have meant that the RNA is much more in the hearts and minds of the serving Navy than probably it has been at any time in the past," he said.

"Add to this the Shipmates programme which grows in strength daily, and it should not be too surprising if I tell you that Nigel Huxtable informed me just ten days ago that over the past 12 months he had issued cards for new RNA members to 278 branches, significantly up on recent years.

"In all, he had issued 1,416 new member cards over that period – and that does not include HQ Roll members.

"The Shipmates programme – no longer a campaign as it is now to be a permanent feature of our partnering agreement with



• National President Vice Admiral John McAnally addresses shipmates after the Sunday parade. Standing in parade marshal S/M Bill Roberts of 10 Area is centre, wearing the red sash

Pictures: Nigel Huxtable

the RN – has over 1,200 Service leavers enrolled, and if we could turn just one sixth of those into paid-up full members it is another 200 on our books. We of course hope for many more than that.

"The optimism we had for this programme last year is proving to be very well founded. To date, the Shipmates programme has been funded entirely from outside grants and we are confident that we can continue this process.

"But it is my belief that should these grants dry up we should seriously consider funding it from our reserves.

"Not only is it proving to be a valuable, and the only consistent, Naval support contact to Service leavers after they leave the Service, it is crucial to the future of the RNA.

"The early shoots of growth are there, so let's all do our best to ensure they are nurtured well to develop into their full potential."

Another highlight was the Association's financial performance

in difficult economic times.

"The HQ staff have worked hard to keep a tight control on costs with great success, and in a year that saw a great deal of activity," said S/M Dovey.

"Over the past three years our operating costs have reduced by some ten per cent, and last year National Council costs reduced by almost as much."

He congratulated branches and areas that contributed to the Battle of the Atlantic commemorations, especially veterans of the battle, which helped keep the RNA in the limelight.

On the wider issue of commemoration, S/M Dovey added that if some members had been disappointed by arrangements they should be respectful when expressing their feelings – "we need to be mindful of the image we create, and we want to be seen as a supportive and welcoming association, and not, as more than one sailor has expressed to some of us, a lot of

'grumpy old men,'" he declared.

Turning to another initiative, S/M Dovey said: "Our work with the Confederation of Naval Associations (CONA) gives us hope that the collective voice we are building – two new ship associations joined this week – will give us a platform of strength from which to speak on naval veterans affairs to the Navy, to the MOD and to the government.

The Chairman finished with thanks to S/M Adrian Nance, "an excellent and very popular Deputy National President", and to S/M Paul Harries, who is standing down as National Council member for 7 Area, but will continue to provide counsel as the new National Clubs Advisor.

There was also a special mention for National Ceremonial Officer S/M Mick Kieran, who did much preparatory work alongside 10 Area for the Conference earlier in the year but suffered a stroke a month before the event, preventing him from attending.

Lord Mayor 'honoured' to meet veterans

THE traditional double-bill of guest speakers opened the Conference – the local First Citizen and an admiral at the sharp end of the Navy.

Lord Mayor of Liverpool Gary Millar told delegates how the day after he took over the role, he was introduced to the First and Second Sea Lords, the Fleet Commander and the Princess Royal at the Battle of the Atlantic events.

He said he hoped he did the right thing – but he was sure that the city did the right thing: "It wrapped its arms around every visitor", including mariners and Battle of the Atlantic veterans.

He added that 99-year-old and 89-year-old veterans had told him what an honour it was to meet the First Citizen.

"I said no, it's not – it's quite the reverse. It is an honour for me to meet the veterans, to meet people who put their lives at risk for the freedom of this nation," said Cllr Millar.

Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Capability) and Controller of the Navy Rear Admiral Duncan Potts told delegates what sailors and Royal Marines were doing on behalf of the nation around the world that very morning, and reviewed a busy year, including the Olympics.

Turning to the future, Admiral Potts touched on the new carriers, the Astute-class submarines, Type 45s in service and Type 26s and RFA supply ships to come, and said he was confident of a bright future for the smaller but much more capable Royal Navy.

He added that the kit would be nothing without the people; excluding those under training, the injured, and Royal Marines, there are now less than 20,000 people working in dark-blue uniforms, with an average age of 24.

Loose ends are tied up

UNUSUALLY, the Liverpool conference saw no branch motions up for debate, so other than a motion of urgency to discuss a venue for 2015 (see p34) there were just some loose ends to tie up from the Newcastle conference.

Last year, delegates decided to extend eligibility to certain associate members to be nominated as branch delegates to Area or Conference; this year the only issue on the agenda was the wording of the rule change – no debate could be held as the decision had already been made.

The National Council motion was passed with just one dissenter, as was the associated Motion 1(b), which proposed the necessary amendment to Standing Orders.

A second proposal to delegates from the National Council adjusted the time period in which National Council motions to Conference could be submitted for scrutiny, as the timing of their main March meeting meant that proposals could not always be processed in time.

The proposal was carried with no opposition.

Loss is mourned

PROCEEDINGS opened on a sad note this year when prayers were said for an attendee who died on the night before the Conference.

S/M Julie Rochford was taken ill at the Adelphi Hotel, and despite a rapid response – fellow conference-goers included several medically-trained individuals – her life could not be saved.

Association members rallied round to support her Pendleton branch and 10 Area colleagues, and Chaplain of the Fleet the Rev Scott Brown said prayers for Julie, while the National Standard, carried by S/M Steve Susans, bore a black drape throughout the conference as a mark of respect.

Reserves commitments

As part of the reorganisation of the personnel area, career management of the Maritime Reserve is now under the DACOS Career Manager, Capt King.

The personnel team that facilitates the employment and administration of Reservists is led by Cdr Mel Robinson.

Contact details for the members of her team are detailed below.

You will want to engage with them if you are a line manager of a position or an individual member of the Royal Fleet Reserve (ex-regular), Royal Naval Reserve (volunteer reserve) or a service leaver seeking employment under the Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) Scheme.

FTRS is a period of full time service undertaken by a member of the Reserves in accordance with the Reserve Forces Act of 1996, for a specific period of time which is formalised by means of a written commitment, normally three months to three years.

Throughout a period of FTRS a Reservist has a continuous liability for duty depending on the type and length of the commitment. The scheme is not intended to be, nor is it managed, as a full time career.

It is an incisive and reactionary lever used to make good shortages of regular personnel at specific ranks or rates and by competence.

Personnel remain members of the Reserve Force throughout their FTRS service and are managed

Drafty's corner



in and out of commitments to meet the manning requirement.

The types of Commitment under which a member of the Reserve Forces may undertake a period of FTRS are:

Full Commitment

Fulfilling the same range of duties and deployment liability as a Regular Service person with generally the same pay and allowances package (see full terms and conditions of service) – maximum age limit normally 55;

Limited Commitment

Fulfilling a full range of duties generally in one location, but with a liability for compulsory detachment for up to 35 days in the UK or overseas in any one year, with no single detachment lasting in excess of 21 days. Pay is less 9% X-factor and no allowance package – maximum age limit normally 60;

Home Commitment

Fulfilling a limited range of duties in a restricted location; compulsory detachments are to be confined to training periods and other limited duties specified in the individual's FTRS Commitment. Pay is less 14% X-factor and no allowance package – maximum age limit normally 60;

Eligibility

All applicants to undertake a period of FTRS must be suitably qualified by rank/rate, specialisation, qualifications and experience to fill the posts for which they apply. Applicants must also be medically and dentally fit to fulfil the duties which their

Commitment will require them to undertake. RFR personnel will normally only be considered if they have left service within the last 3 – 5 years depending on the maintenance of their key skills since leaving regular service.

Method Of Application

If you wish to register your interest in the FTRS scheme and receive a copy of the full terms and conditions of service please either email your postal address or send details of your postal address to : FTRS Enquiries, Room 108 MP 1-2 West Battery Whale Island Portsmouth Hants PO2 8DX.

For short notice opportunities, individuals will be selected from

those that are already registered and so it in your interest to contact the team so that you can be placed on the database.

Where longer notice of FTRS requirements is available it is good practice to trawl for specific skills and competence.

This wider trawl of potential candidates is beneficial and so these opportunities will be advertised and subject to recruitment process that may involve a selection interview. You will find them on www.royalnavy.mod.uk/FTRS and also through the Officers Association, White Ensign Association web pages.



● Lt Cdr Rachel Smallwood and her two-year-old son Tom Anthony

Picture: LA(Phot) Maxine Davies, FRPU East

Maternity buddies deployed

THE trial of a Maternity Coaching Scheme aimed at retaining women in the RN after having children has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from those taking part.

Lt Cdr Rachel Smallwood from the Diversity and Inclusion department has set up a maternity coaching scheme to provide reassurance, advice, information and support to women both before and after motherhood.

Recent discussion sessions show that the mothers' main concerns are deploying for months at a time.

The trial phase of the scheme informally called 'Maternity Buddies' was launched in Portsmouth with the aim of introducing it to other establishments.

It is the first to be run across the three Services – the Army and RAF have also expressed interest in setting up their own coaching groups.

Lt Cdr Smallwood, herself a mother to two-year-old Tom Anthony, said: "I am hoping there will be an improvement in the numbers of women returning to work and then staying for a full career after having a baby."

"Nationally 85 per cent of civilian women who worked full-time before having a baby either don't return to work at all or return part-time. Part-time isn't currently an option for Servicewomen so the Navy loses far too many very talented women who can't make it work upon having a family."

Women in the RN who have had babies, returned to work and deployed on operations come into the sessions to offer advice on how they manage their situations.

Cdr Felicity Campbell, an intensive care nurse in the Royal Navy's medical branch and a mother of two, is a maternity buddy. One month after returning to work following her first child she was deployed to Afghanistan to work at Camp Bastion.

"My son was about 17 months old when I deployed," she said.

"It was difficult for me to adjust because when I went away he couldn't talk and when I came back he was a little chatterbox."

"I don't think children are as aware of time as we are so I don't think it affected him in the same way as me – he knew when I was there and when I was back but not the length of time I had been away."

"The thing that made all the difference to me was really good childcare. I think it is important that women in the Services have people to turn to for advice and support. I would have loved something like this when I was pregnant."

For further information on the Maternity services available please contact Leading Hand Lesley Smith on 9380 23892 or 02392 723892.

Inclusive agenda

DIVERSITY and inclusion continues to feature highly on the agenda in successful businesses and the Naval Service demonstrated its own commitment to being an inclusive employer of choice at the recent Stonewall Workplace Conference.

Cdre Rupert Wallace, the Advocate for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) was accompanied by members of the Diversity and Inclusion Policy Staff and the Naval Service LGBT forum.

Stonewall is a professional group that continues to ensure the rights and needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are addressed in the wider community.

Alongside colleagues from the Army and RAF, Cdre Wallace and the team were able to take part in training sessions which included: religion and sexual orientation in the workplace, authenticity in the workplace and working internationally.

Lt Cdr Dougie Ward (Chair NSLGBT forum) spoke about working internationally in one of the sessions. He said: "From the feedback that I received on the day and afterwards it was clear that the society we serve is always extremely interested in their Armed Forces and the ethos that we share and promote."

Cdr New, Diversity and Inclusion SO1, said: "Diversity is about more than minority groups, it is about recognising that we are all different and, by capitalising on everyone's individual strengths, we can maximise operational effectiveness".

NEED to get your message across?
To feature in the Navy News' Two-Six pages contact Navy Command Media – Internal Comms Staff Officer: Lt Cdr Emma McCormick, 93832 8809, email (Dii) NAVYMEDIACOMMS-IC-TL@mod.uk (External) NAVYMEDIACOMMS-IC-TL@mod.uk

Pensions and medical discharge

THE number of enquiries surrounding medical discharges handled by the Forces Pension Society have increased quite significantly of late.

Lt Cdr David Marsh looks at this subject from an ill-health pension point of view, and highlights some of the lesser known qualification requirements needed to be eligible for these awards.

You've just been informed by the Medical Board that you are to be discharged from the Armed Forces because your medical condition makes your future employment in the Services no longer possible. What, if anything, are you likely to receive from your Armed Forces occupational pension scheme?

To begin with I should point out that there is quite a difference between your occupational pension scheme and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) and War Pension Scheme. Space permits me to deal only with the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS).

It is said that a picture paints a thousand words, and so the easiest way to see what is payable for either AFPS05 or AFPS75 is to look at the table right.

In the case of both schemes entitlement to Invalidity Benefits from your occupational pension scheme are only payable if you have completed at least two years' reckonable service.

The AFPS05 pension scheme has three tiers of award and a simple definition of each tier is as follows:

Tier One
Your medical condition prevents you from doing your job in the Armed Forces but is not sufficiently bad enough to prevent you from obtaining gainful employment in the private sector.

Tier Two
Your medical condition is not sufficiently severe that you are left

permanently incapable of gainful employment, but your prospects of a solid second career are significantly impaired.

Tier Three

Your medical condition is such that it is considered you will be permanently incapable of any further full time employment.

To help you link each tier with the tariff levels used by the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, each tier is effectively equivalent to:

Tier One Tariffs 12 – 15

Tier Two Tariffs 7 – 11

Tier Three Tariffs 1 – 6

Remember, the formulas in the table right demonstrate what financial rewards are payable to you from your particular occupational pension scheme on the basis of a medical discharge, whether the cause is due to, or aggravated by, your service in the Armed Forces.

If it transpires that your medical discharge was due to, or aggravated by, your service in the Armed Forces, then these payments will be supplemented by awards from either the War Pension Scheme or the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme – whichever is applicable to you (it could, in some circumstances, even be both).

If you find that you are in the position of a potential medical discharge and you want to have some idea of the award you could receive from your pension scheme you should contact the JPAC for an assessment of potential payments due to you.

If you are unhappy with the response you receive; would like a second opinion, or merely an independent assessment of potential death benefits payable to your dependants, you can, if you are a member, obtain one from the Forces Pension Society, www.ForcesPensionSociety.org or call 020 7820 9988.

Benefit Payable	AFPS75	AFPS05
Gratuity payable on Exit (Tax Free)	3 Times the Pension payable using the enhanced 'Invaliding' Rates.	3 Times the Pension payable for those discharged under Tier Two and Tier Three and those under Tier One who are aged 55 or more. Tier One: If aged 55 or more on discharge a pension based on the length of their reckonable service. Tier Two: Pension based on your reckonable service on your date of discharge, plus one third of further potential reckonable service between date of discharge and 55 th birthday. Tier Three: Pension based on your reckonable service on your date of discharge, plus one half of further potential reckonable service between date of discharge and 55 th birthday. However, if this equates to less than 20 years then 20 years is to be substituted for this calculation.
Pension on Exit	Annual Pension payable using enhanced 'Invaliding' Rates. Index Linked from the day of receipt. Tax Free if your discharge is attributable to Service.	Tier One: Pension based on your reckonable service on your date of discharge, plus one half of further potential reckonable service between date of discharge and 55 th birthday. Tier Two: Pension based on your reckonable service on your date of discharge, plus one third of further potential reckonable service between date of discharge and 55 th birthday. However, if this equates to less than 20 years then 20 years is to be substituted for this calculation.
Lump Sum on Exit (if no Gratuity is payable)	Not Applicable	A tax free Lump Sum based on one-eighth of your pensionable pay multiplied by the length of your reckonable service (subject to a minimum of 6 months' and a maximum of 24 months' pensionable pay).
EDP Lump Sum on Exit	Not Applicable	Tier One: If you have completed at least 18 years' reckonable service and have past your 40 th birthday but not your 55 th birthday, equal to the Preserved Gratuity you have earned that is payable at age 65. Tiers Two & Three: Not payable
EDP Income Stream on Exit (Tax Free if you discharge is deemed Attributable to Service and the subsequent Preserved Pension payable at age 65 is Tax Free too)	Not Applicable	Tier One: If you have completed at least 18 years' reckonable service and have past your 40 th birthday but not your 55 th birthday, equal to 50% of the value of the pension earned on exit at the 18/40 point; increased by 1.6667% for each complete additional year beyond the 18/40 point. Tiers Two & Three: Not payable
Preserved Pension	Not Applicable	Tier One: Payable at age 65 Tiers Two & Three: Not payable
Preserved Gratuity	Not Applicable	Tier One: Payable at age 65 Tiers Two & Three: Not payable

Women 'Share, Inspire, Empower'

IT WAS quite possibly the largest gathering of RN Servicewomen seen since the WRNS were disbanded when the Naval Servicewomen's network (NSWN) met in HMS Collingwood for their inaugural conference.

For the record, the event was open to all serving personnel (men and women) and their Civil Service employers.

Indeed, several men took a close interest in the forum, not least the Naval Secretary, Admiral Sir Jonathan Woodcock, Cdre Mike Farrage (CNPers) and Cdre Jon Pentreath (Gender Advocate) who joined the lively and occasionally passionately-delivered discussion sessions.

Female representatives from the MOD, Army and Royal Air Force, the Naval Families Federation, Parents' network and the Girlguiding Association joined the conference which celebrated emerging new opportunities and considered some of the future challenges.

Those attending were given an insight into the professional life of one of the UK's most senior female police officers, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police, Sara Thornton.

A skilled communicator, the chief constable delivered the keynote speech, offering generous advice following her experiences to the assembled company on the challenges faced on her career journey.

The NSWN network was launched in March by Cdr Ellie Ablett with another key objective in mind; to address the issue of retention of women in the RN.

The network is keen to identify why numbers of female recruits is declining – in 2001, 20 per cent of recruits in the RN were women but numbers have declined significantly to about half of that number in 2013.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel opened proceedings, stressing the importance of retaining more of the Navy's experienced and talented personnel, both men and women.

"Women tend to be transformational and inspirational leaders, excel at building teams, know how to get the most out of individuals by making them feel valued and supported," he said.

"My goal is to ensure we set the conditions for retention of our female personnel so that they have the time and inclination to challenge for the higher ranks."

The network's motto – 'Share, Inspire, Empower' – was clearly evident in the calibre of speakers, the progressive agenda and discussion between delegates and representatives from the Diversity and Inclusion and Naval Personnel People Strategy teams and Policy staff.

"Here we have an opportunity to move things along. I'd like to think that when I decide to have children that the process will not hinder my promotion," said Sultan's AB Charlene Sheehan.

A speed mentoring event was also available for women to seek advice and guidance from the experience of volunteer mentors. To join the network email NAVY-NSWomensNetworkMailbox@mod.uk or visit the NSWN webpage on the Defence Intranet.

Sort out your affairs before JPA goes down for a fortnight

JPA will be unavailable between 1700hrs on August 23 and 0800hrs on September 3 2013 as the Oracle software is being upgraded to a newer version.

This work can only be completed when the system is not being used in any manner.

Between September 3 and 10 there will be a phased re-introduction of accessibility commencing with unit HR and Career Managers.

How does this affect you as an individual?

Although the work has been programmed to be undertaken during a normally quiet period of activity (summer leave) it will undoubtedly have an effect on all individuals to some degree.

During this period you will not be able to amend or action any i-expenses, input absence requests (leave), make changes to bank details, apply for CEA, LSAP, terminal benefits, amend your Move and Track, NOK/EC, early termination and many other self-service JPA processes.

Your unit HR will not be able to make changes to your location via the Move and Track function nor start/stop allowances etc.

Key dates to meet the August payroll and processing of non-payroll activity are as follows:

- **Aug 6** Complete Pensions Form 1 if last day in Service is prior to 16 Aug 2013
- **Aug 12** All manual forms that affect pay to be with SPVA by 2200hrs
- **Aug 16** All JPA entries that affect pay to be completed by 2200hrs. This includes changes to bank details
- **Aug 16** CEA window closes for online claims
- **Aug 16** August Bank Holiday absence, requiring authorisation, to be completed on JPA
- **Aug 19** Changes to NOK/EC details to be completed on JPA by 1700hrs
- **Aug 21** i-Expenses must be authorised by 2200hrs
- **Aug 22** Final payments of authorised LSAP
- **Aug 22** All pre-termination activity to be completed on JPA by 1700hrs
- **Aug 22** Any Move and Track not completed before this date will impact in Sep/Oct
- **Aug 22** All non-payroll activities to be completed on JPA by 1900hrs

Entries affecting payroll that are inputted later than the dates/times above will be run in September with backdated payments not taking effect until October.

Most importantly, a number of activities will need to be completed well in advance of Aug 23 2013. The key to ensuring minimal impact on your pay in August and September and JPA record is to ensure you amend any details that you think may change before the cut off point on Aug 23 2013.

Remember to follow the seven Ps – Prior Planning and

Preparation Prevents Poor Pay Performance.

Any questions about the ten-day JPA outage should be directed in the first instance to unit HR admin. For detail on specific JPA processes, including a JPA upgrade self-service user guide, this can be found on the SPVA InfoCentre (search for JPA Technical Refresh Communications Notes).

Where to look

GALAXYS

Galaxy 14/2013 – Future Armed Forces Pension Scheme – Update on Extensions of Service
Galaxy 15/2013 – Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 – Updated Pension Calculator

DIBs

DIB37/13 – The New Employment Model – Consultation Period
DIB 34/13 – Upgraded Online Pension Calculator now available

RNTMs

RNTM 124/13 – Provision of Medical and Dental Advice to Afloat and Deployed Units
RNTM 125/13 Alcohol and Substance Misuse Awareness Education.

RNTM 127/13 – Desmond Wetheren Fleet Award 2013
RNTM 128/13 – Introduction of the Naval Nanny Service

DINs

DIN2013DIN01-115 – Support to SP assigned to European Joint Support Unit (EJSU) – posts in Europe
DIN2013DIN01-106 – Winter Sports Travel

DIN2013DIN01-107 – The Award of Combined Services (CS) Sports Colours and Clothing Colours for CS teams.
DIN2013DIN01-113 – Extension of MOD Contract for Service Life Insurance (SLI)

DIN2013DIN04-073 – Support to Military Training and Exercises by Defence Marine Services.
DIN2013DIN05-021 – MOD Scanning Policy

DIN2013DIN06-020 Unlicensed Tattooing within Units
DIN2013DIN07-080 – Defence Media Training 2013-2014

DIN2013DIN09-006 – The George Beeching Prize for Compassion
DIN2013DIN09-007 – The Oliver Sword Award 2013

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION



A summer of top topical tips

WELL summer is upon us and 'tis the season for Families Days and briefings.

The NFF team has enjoyed travelling around the country to talk to families and personnel at events, and looks forward to meeting more over the next few months; these events allow us to gain a good understanding of how things really are on the ground.

A big date in the NFF calendar is the Families Forum in mid-July.

This is an opportunity to discuss the concerns and views of families with the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare & Veterans.

What topics would you like us to raise?

We are collecting evidence for the meeting via our web poll, please visit www.nff.org.uk to leave your comments. The poll closes on July 14. We will report on the meeting in next month's article.

Service Families Accommodation (SFA): 2nd Offers

From May 1, in the event of the first offer of SFA being rejected for personal reasons, the Housing Allocations Service Centre (HASC) will now make a second offer within 15 working days.

Previous policy did not establish a deadline to provide a second offer.

This change should help to reduce the number of personnel awaiting a second offer. Should the second offer be further rejected for personal reasons then the chain of command and the single service housing colonel will urgently review the matter.

For more information personnel should see 2013DIN01-079 on the Defence Intranet, or families can contact their local HIVE Information Centre (link available via www.nff.org.uk homepage).

Listening to YOU: Service Families Accommodation

The MOD is keen to understand customer satisfaction

of those living in Service Families Accommodation (SFA). M•E•L Research is an independent research company that has been appointed to undertake a monthly satisfaction survey with a random sample of SFA residents.

Feedback will be used to measure how DIO are performing and to identify ways of making further improvements to the service.

Calls will be made between 10:00 – 18:00. Responses will be treated in the strictest confidence.

If you have any queries, or would like to follow up a call, M•E•L Research can be contacted on: 0121 604 4664/Freephone: 0800 0730 348.

New Online Update Service for CRB Checks

Waiting for criminal record (CRB) checks can cause service spouses/partners delays when seeking employment in a new area.

A new online update service has been introduced for these checks. Please note that CRB checks are now called "Disclosure and Barring Service" (DBS) checks.

Individuals can subscribe to the update service for an annual fee of £13, which will keep their DBS certificate up-to-date, so that they can take it with them from role to role within the same workforce.

If an individual has subscribed to the update service their employer can go online, with their consent, and carry out a free, instant check to find out if the information released on the DBS certificate is up-to-date.

If someone has subscribed to the service, they only have to seek a new record check if the system says something has changed.

There are different rules for obtaining criminal record checks in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

More information is available on the Disclosure and Barring Service website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

Revised Pension Calculator and an update on the Future Armed Forces Pension Scheme

The MOD remains on track to deliver the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 (AFPS 15) in April 2015 (previously called the Future Armed Forces Pension Scheme (FAFPS)). Almost all Service personnel will automatically transfer to the AFPS 15.

The MOD recognises that personnel are keen to understand the effects of the AFPS 15 on their future pension benefits and has launched a revised online Pension Calculator, which can be found at: www.mod-abc.co.uk.

The improved calculator allows personnel to forecast their future pension entitlements and model scenarios to see how different lengths of service or promotions could affect the pension that they receive.

It shows both accrued rights to pension benefits under existing Schemes and benefits that could be accrued under the new Scheme.

Please note that the information generated by the calculator is for guidance purposes only and does not constitute an entitlement to the benefits stated.

The calculator will provide forecasts for 95.5 per cent of regular Service personnel; some groups will be unable to use the calculator.

Visit our website: www.nff.org.uk and navigate to the 'Money' - 'Pensions' section for details.

Here you will find links to some helpful YouTube videos, uploaded by the MOD, to explain the AFPS 15 and how to use the calculator.

Personnel should view the

videos before using the calculator.

There is also a message from Second Sea Lord that provides an update on pensions, focusing on the work surrounding the new Early Departure Payment (EDP) point.

Introduction of the Naval Nanny Service

This service provides Naval Service parents with a reliable option for childcare, to be used when the regular childcare solution is insufficient to enable them to carry out their professional duties.

It provides parents with the flexibility that regular childcare is often unable to provide, and ensures children receive the highest standards of care. All Naval Nannies are registered, thoroughly checked and fully accredited.

The Naval Nanny Service provides emergency and irregular childcare;

a Naval Nanny can be used when regular childcare arrangements are not sufficient and parents are struggling to find a way of going to work. The service should not be used as a regular childcare solution.

There is a £50 set-up fee, which is paid by the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund (RNRMCF).

The Nanny's fee should be paid by the parent(s); costs vary depending on the area and times of care, but is likely to be £7-10 per hour.

This fee is regardless of the number of children in the family to be cared for. In cases where parents are unable to afford the fee, up to 100 per cent may be subsidised by the RNRMCF.

For further information;



contact the RNRMCF: 023 9263 9534 between 08:30 – 16:00 (out of hours contact the Association of Nannies direct: 01932 852 299).

Are You MoneyFit?

MoneyForce is a financial awareness website specifically for Armed Forces personnel and families. Whether you're dealing with debt or puzzled about payday loans, MoneyForce will arm you with all the information you need to get MoneyFit.

There is independent guidance on Service life issues, including regular family moves, postings abroad and pensions. The website also offers interactive tools, such as loan and savings calculators. Visit: www.moneyforce.org.uk

Improved Flexibility with Overseas Travel Allowances

Earlier this year, amendments were made to the tri-Service policy on overseas allowances, which benefit families living overseas.

The amendments help harmonise and widen eligibility for the following allowances: Get You Home (Overseas), School Children's Visits, and Concessionary Travel for Families. Visit our website (www.nff.org.uk) and navigate to the 'Money' section for details.

New Mental Health Support App for Service Personnel

A new iPhone app has been launched to provide Armed Forces personnel with mental health support and information.

The app, called Joining Forces, provides information on 11 mental health problems, including anxiety, post-traumatic stress and depression. It also highlights where to access help.

The app offers interactive videos that outline the signs of mental health problems and encourage personnel to seek advice if they feel they have any of the symptoms.

The app is available to download for free via the iTunes store. An Android version is being

developed and is scheduled to be available later this year.

YouTube

Following on from the redundancy videos mentioned; we would like to highlight the great videos available from the Service via YouTube.

The RN, Royal RM and MOD all have their own YouTube channels, and post up informative videos. Visit: www.youtube.com and search for 'Royal Navy official', 'Royal Marines official' or 'Ministry of Defence'.

Young Singers Wanted!

Do you know a child who can sing? Are they aged 9-16 years old, with a parent or sibling serving in UK military?

The Royal British Legion (RBL) and Decca Records are looking to give a group of talented young people the opportunity to perform a new song at this year's Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall, in front of the Queen.

The group will also have the opportunity to record a single and shoot a music video – all in aid of RBL's Poppy Appeal.

Nominations close July 15. Visit: www.britishlegion.org.uk and search 'sing' for details.

Summer Homeport Out Now

The summer magazine is packed full of information, including our annual summary of activity – 'A Year in the Life of the NFF'.

There is information on the New Employment Model, the Help to Buy Scheme for priority house purchase, and our competition to win an annual family pass for Merlin Attractions.

You can read the latest Homeport online via our website www.nff.org.uk or e-mail editor@nff.org.uk to join the mailing list and we will post you a free copy.

Contact the NFF: Tel: 023 9265 4374. E-mail: admin@nff.org.uk Address: Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth.



● Snap! Proudly displaying their MBE medals, WO Annette Penfold and Lt Cdr 'Grassy' Meadows outside Buckingham Palace

Inspirational pair visit the Palace

IT WAS the classic ... 'wait all day for one and then two turn up at once' – this was the situation when Naval Reservists Lt Cdr 'Grassy' Meadows and WO1 Annette Penfold were invited to Buckingham Palace on the same day to receive their MBE awards.

The investiture was carried out by Prince Charles wearing his dress uniform of Admiral of the Fleet.

Lt Cdr Meadows said: "It was a great honour to be at Buckingham Palace in the first place, but to share the occasion with Mrs Penfold – who is also my work colleague in the Naval Headquarters at Commander Maritime Reserves – was a terrific coincidence that made the day even more special."

Lt Cdr Meadows, who has now completed an impressive 45 years in the Naval Service, was commended for providing excellent support as a media liaison officer to families of Royal Marines touched by tragedy.

He was also described as

'inspirational' in his zest for life in supporting team spirit and military ethos in the finest traditions of the Service.

For WO Penfold, it was a family double MBE celebration with husband, Bob (a retired Naval CPO Physical Training Instructor) who is already a recipient of the prestigious honour.

Beaming with delight, WO1 Penfold said: "I was here a few years ago as a guest to support Bob on his achievement and now here I am receiving the same award."

"It really is a great feeling, I feel so very proud right now."

WO1 Penfold was highly commended for her exceptional performance in her current role as the RNR Command Warrant Officer and praised for her commitment and inspirational leadership in diverse appointments encompassing new entry training, operational service and Navy Command Headquarters.

Both were awarded the MBE in the 2013 New Years Honours list.



Jump off at Royal Show

IT is not every day that you get the chance to conduct a jump-off before The Queen in her back garden but Naval Reservist Lt Sharon Brown from HMS King Alfred was thrilled to be selected for this special honour at the Royal Windsor Horse Show in May.

Two teams represented the Naval Service at the showjumping event in the extensive grounds of Windsor Castle with one of the teams comprising three Naval Reservists.

Sharon's excellent score in the Landrover Services Team Jumping event helped to place them 12th overall and she was selected to conduct a display of showjumping before the Queen on her 16.1 hands, dark bay horse, Hidden Meaning" or, as she calls him in the stable, Gromit.

"It was such an honour to be there in the first place, I can hardly put into words how I felt to be in the jump-off before the Queen."

"It was particularly emotional because I hadn't expected it to go so well; it was a tough course and a lot of people fell on the day."

"It is really quite daunting when the stadium seating is packed full but it was a marvellous result for the team."

She was joined on her team by Rear Admiral Simon Charlier and team captain Lt Cdr Suzanne Clark from the Air Branch of the RNR.

The three paraded in uniform with their horses before the Queen alongside other members of uniformed services, including the Police and Emergency Services. Having recently retired after a long career in the RN and prior to that the WRNS, Sharon is a now a civilian Customer Relationship Manager at Portsdown Hill Technology park in Portsmouth, where she assists consultants and technical specialists providing information systems expertise to the Royal Navy.

Kia Ora, Bell Buoys

A TRADITIONAL Maori greeting was awaiting Naval Reservists from ten nations who gathered in New Zealand for Exercise Bell Buoy to practise Maritime Trade Operations (MTO), working within a joint command in response to a natural disaster, writes Lt Richard Burdett.

Exercise Bell Buoy was held this year in Devonport, Auckland, the home of the Royal New Zealand Navy, and saw five UK Naval Reservists and a member of the Fleet AWNIS Unit crossing the globe to take part.

The nations were welcomed to the base with a traditional Maori ceremony at the marae (meeting house), with some of the Maoris in naval uniform.

All the visitors, from the Maritime Component Commander, Commodore John Martin RNZN, to the naval rates, were greeted with the traditional touching of nose and forehead, the hongi. (pictured right and below)

The exercise, called Trade Freedom in the UK, is a Maritime Trade Operations exercise conducted in the Pacific Rim, and this year sought to apply MTO in support of a humanitarian aid disaster relief exercise.

Naval staff, both Reserves and from the regular forces, from ten nations worked together for two weeks as the Regional Assistance Mission Nivaki Islands (RAMNI) – the Nivaki Islands being a fictitious archipelago in the Pacific.

The British participants were practising two disciplines within MTO – AWNIS (Allied World Wide Navigation Information System) and NCAGS (Naval Cooperation And Guidance to Shipping).

NCAGS was represented by three RNR officers: Lt Cdr Sue Roll from HMS Flying Fox, as the watch commander with the HQ element; Lt Cdr Gary Brogan, from HMS Eaglet, in Exercise Control (Excon) providing CIMIC (Civilian Military Cooperation)



● Reserve Forces participants in Bell Buoy 2013 gather on the first day outside the marae (meeting house) in Auckland, New Zealand.



input to the exercise; and Lt Cdr Alan Eastham – who is currently in Full Time Reserve Service as the Officer in Charge MTO Training Element – from HMS King Alfred, was OIC of Detachment A, briefing shipping.

The exercise marked a new direction in NCAGS focus, working on humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

Sue Roll, a teacher in her civilian life, said: "This was the first time I've undertaken this type of exercise, which demonstrated NCAGS broader scope. "I've really enjoyed working in a multinational headquarters, and we got real value from seeing how other nations conducted their business."



Brendan's fine example

AB Brendan Saunders was awarded the Best New Entry prize at HMS Wildfire's Annual Ceremonial Divisions in June.

The award was presented by Commodore Maritime Reserves, Commodore Andrew Jameson. (pictured above with AB Saunders by Stewart Turkington)

In the short time he has been a member of HMS Wildfire, Brendan set a fine example to the new Initial Naval Training class, proving commitment through regular attendance and a willingness to contribute to unit evolutions, including the Reserves' Crowborough leadership weekend.

He took part in many outreach events and during training weekends helped to prepare shipmates for future courses at HMS Raleigh, demonstrating enthusiasm and strong

commitment.

He is currently assisting with organising more Maritime Reserves recruiting events in the region.

The citation read: "Saunders' extremely high standard of rig and commitment to Guard training and getting it right show a continued pride in the uniform he fills."

"Always willing to give 100 per cent and to help others out and displaying a sharp sense of humour, this year's winner exudes all the very best traditions of the Naval Service."

"He manages the balance of his very demanding job and the RNR commitment well."

"Not only is he a pleasure to instruct, he is a fine example to both his peers and indeed all new entries in the Royal Naval Reserve."

a homeless charity in civilian life, was also in Excon, but his work took him out of the office for a lot of the exercise.

Richard took the lead in guiding officers through the principles of RPA, practising in six ports on the north island of New Zealand, from Auckland to Whangarei.

"This wasn't just a wonderful opportunity to visit New Zealand, but was a great chance to work with staff from other navies," He said. "We've found fertile ground for what AWNIS can do and the teams on RPA have proved able and enthusiastic to explore this capability."

The RPA teams started with basic techniques, fixing buoyage with relative positions recorded on a piece of card and some pins from the laundry, and taking bearings with a magnetic compass.

This gave the grounding needed to problem solve when confronted with an exercise chart that differed considerably from reality. They went on to use GPS and laser range finders where they were the best option for the task.

Lt Cdr Jeremy Packham, Executive Officer of the Reserve Unit, HMNZS Pegasus in Christchurch, said: "The training value provided by our RN counterparts was invaluable, and helped us to understand how best to approach this particular task."



AWNIS was represented by Lt Cdr Michael White, of the Fleet AWNIS Unit (UK Hydrographic Office), from HMS Vivid, Bob Higgs (ex-RN), also of the Fleet AWNIS Unit, and Lt Richard Burdett from HMS Flying Fox.

Their mission was to impart what AWNIS can add to an operation, whether within an area of conflict, or in this case, in support of humanitarian aid tasks.

AWNIS offers swift promulgation of navigation safety information, to both military and merchant shipping.

Lt Cdr White, who was in Excon for Bell Buoy, said: "We've been talking to other navies outside NATO for a while about what AWNIS can do, but this exercise marks a shift in the understanding of other navies of what it can do to aid de-confliction and quickly get maritime safety information out to those at sea."

Bell Buoy also saw a new AWNIS capability being practised, with Rapid Port Assessment (RPA) being demonstrated to officers from New Zealand, Australia, Chile and the United States.

Lt Richard Burdett, who runs

Clinical excellence

SURGEON Commander Richard Graham from HMS Flying Fox has been presented with a prestigious national medical award at the 2013 Military and Civilian Health Partnership Awards in Cardiff City Hall.

The Healthcare Reservist of the Year Award is presented to the individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the healthcare of patients in the Armed Forces or the Reserve.

The awards promote clinical excellence by all the professional groups involved in the healthcare of the UK Forces, their families and veterans.

Surg Cdr Graham was nominated for this award following two deployments to Afghanistan as a consultant radiologist in Camp Bastion.

In his civilian life, Richard is a Consultant Radiologist from Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust. He said: "I joined the Cambridge University Royal Naval Unit in 1995 after growing up in South Devon and being surrounded by the maritime environment."

"I was also very motivated by public service and wanted to do



● Surg Cdr Richard Graham and proud wife, Bessi, with his Healthcare Reservist first prize

my bit for the country."

After University he joined the Royal Naval Reserve to commit operationally to the Naval Service.

"I am very honoured to have received this award which recognises the important contribution that the RNR Medical Branch makes to healthcare in the battlefield and the vital part deployed radiology has played in trauma outcomes at Camp Bastion."

Minister's MTO briefing

HMS Wildfire's Lt Gill Niblock, currently mobilised to the UK's Maritime Trade Operation (UKMTO) in Dubai, recently met Alistair Burt, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he visited.

The MTO team are the primary point of contact for merchant vessels in the region and ships transiting the Suez area are encouraged to regularly report their position, course,

speed and estimated time of arrival at their next port. This enables them to track vessels and ensure their safe passage.

Gill said: "We pass emerging and relevant information affecting commercial traffic directly to ships, rather than by company offices, which improves the speed of response to incidents."

"We also liaise between EU, CMF HQs and with warships in the region."

Parade of honour for Liverpool's finest



Sword of honour

HMS Wildfire's Acting Sub Lt Dominic 'Poppa' Simonis (*Poppa-Dom - geddit?*) recently passed out of BRNC Dartmouth after completing the Royal Naval Reserve Initial Naval Training Officers' Course.

Dominic is pictured (above) outside the college's front entrance with the new Wildfire Sword.

It was donated to the Northwood unit by former Commanding Officer Cdr Ant Chapman at his dining out in the spring.

Having enjoyed a fine dinner (prepared by Northwood Officers' Mess chef Steve Callen) with 50 guests, Cdr Chapman presented the current CO, Cdr Stephanie Shinner, with his gift to his old unit.

Cdr Chapman has now undertaken an Engagement role on the Staff of the Commander Maritime Reserves.

WITH immense pride, HMS Eaglet's Honour Guard paraded through the streets of Liverpool marching in company with veterans from World War 2 following the Battle of the Atlantic Commemorative Service.

Dignitaries and veterans from across the globe assembled at Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the battle to beat the U-boats of Admiral Dönitz and the German Third Reich of Adolf Hitler.

The Princess Royal received the salute from the marching platoons accompanied by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Michael Zambellas and Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Philip Jones.

It has been ten years since HMS Eaglet was last approached to support the event but the response from the officers and ratings of the RNR was not just enthusiastic but also highly professional.

With months of preparation and rehearsal behind them and a little help from the RN's ceremonial team, three marching platoons including a 48-man (and woman) honour guard escorted the Colour of the Royal Naval Reserve to parade past Princess Anne and the dignitaries from the political, international and Armed Forces gathered on the steps of the cathedral.

The service and subsequent parade was the highlight of a busy weekend of activity for both the City of Liverpool and members of HMS Eaglet who supported a wide range of activities both from behind the scenes and in the public eye.

Cdr Phil Russ, CO of HMS Eaglet, said: "This has been a fantastic as well as challenging event to be involved with.

"The planning has been



● *Eaglet's Honour Guard marches through the streets of Liverpool while (right) Sub Lts Philip Roberts and Chris Green hold the crowds back at the start of the parade*

intense but helped by the fact many members of the ship's company were able to draw on their experiences with delivering the previous Battle of the Atlantic 60th anniversary celebrations."

Lt Bob Champion, who acted as the commander of the colour party, said: "The event was a very proud moment for me, it is only on the rarest of occasions opportunities like this occur and for the younger members of HMS Eaglet it was a very memorable



Wolf packs in the years at Eaglet

ERIC Wolfenden has seen 23 commanding officers come and go at HMS Eaglet's headquarters in Liverpool – and the ship's company believe he is the longest-serving member of staff at any RNR unit as they prepared to celebrate their veteran shipmate's 88th birthday.

"Eric the Wolf" (pictured above), as he is known to the Liverpool-based Reservists, came to HMS Eaglet in 1949 to sort out the bar accounts and stock control, following his active service during World War 2 as a canteen assistant in the Bird-class sloop, HMS Crane.

Eric recalls those momentous years at sea with pride and holds many fond memories of his long service in support of the Royal Navy.

Within just two days of joining HMS Crane, he was heading out to the Bay of Biscay on a U-boat patrol in 1943. Crane also later participated in the D-Day invasion as one of the escorts at the landing beaches with Eric on board.

He vividly remembers celebrating his 19th birthday on June 14 1944; the only time he was ever sick at sea; being teetotal he suspects his shipmates had tampered with his drinks.

"I still find it hard to think I was there when I see programmes on the television of the wartime convoys and landings," he says.

Eric transferred to HMS Reaper after the European war ended and his ship was just entering the Pacific when the atomic bombs were dropped.

He transferred to HMS Implacable after a brief spell spent running a bar in Australia.

Eric never misses a Wednesday evening drill night to open the junior rates bar. He is well known as a fund-raiser for the Royal British Legion and many other charities.

Naturally Eric was looking forward to participating in the reunions at the Battle of the Atlantic commemorations celebrated in late May, with Eaglet actively involved in the 70th anniversary events.

Working at Eaglet with the NAAFI in the early days, Eric frequently accompanied the Naval Liaison Officer to many visiting ships, arranging supplies for receptions, including a number of visits from HMV Britannia.

Awarded the British Empire Medal by the Queen for his services to the Naval Reserves, Eric also received a citation from the Admiral of the Fleet and Second Sea Lord, presented to him on HMS Victory.

Eric's colleagues at Eaglet thanked the veteran for many years of service and support to the Naval Reserve and especially to their unit, wishing this local hero a happy birthday.

President turn to oars power

HMS President provided the first naval crew of the Queen's row barge *Gloriana* to mark the start of the gruelling 2,000-mile GB Row 2013 round Britain race – still ongoing as *Navy News* went to press in late June.

Manning the oars for the first time, 18 volunteers from London's Royal Naval Reserve Training Unit, the *Gloriana* led the six competing boats under the Tower Bridge at the start of their epic race around Britain.

Fortunately for HMS President's crew, they were not undertaking the round Britain race in the magnificently decorated vessel but their colleagues at the Reserves training unit near St Katherine's Docks had the perfect spot to witness the spectacle.

Gloriana – a £1million replica of King Henry VIII's historic row barge and star of the Queen's Jubilee Pageant – was under the watchful eye of coxswain Malcolm Knight, who holds the record for sculling non-stop the length of the Thames.

He said: "It takes a certain type of person to take on the challenge of rowing non-stop around Britain. I wish them all well."

The six teams are chasing the world record for completing the gruelling journey through some of the most treacherous waters on the planet. The current record stands at 26 days 21 hours and 14 minutes. The first boat to break that record will win a £100,000 bounty – the richest prize in rowing anywhere in the world.

After some interesting practice runs, the RNR rowing crew



● *Reservists from HMS President man the oars on the Thames to mark the start of the GB Row 2013 race*

mastered a traditionally-smart naval salute with *Gloriana's* 18 oars.

The vessel was provided to Her Majesty by Lord Stirling, who is an Honorary Vice Admiral of the Royal Naval Reserve.

Both the *Gloriana* and HMS President played a starring role in the Queen's Jubilee River Pageant in June last year, when the Royal Family disembarked at President's pier from the Royal Barge *Spirit of*

Chartwell after witnessing the 670 vessels taking part in the Jubilee Pageant. The Queen then met many Naval Reserves in a parade at the unit.

One of the team skippers rowing to raise funds for Combat Stress was former RN Cdr David Hoskins. He has rowed the Atlantic and is the father of London Olympics gold medal rower, Sophie Hosking. David won gold in the 1980

World Championships in the men's lightweight eight. Sadly his team had to retire at Land's End due to a steering failure.

Follow the progress of the remaining intrepid teams online at: www.gbrowchallenge.com.

If you'd like to take part in the next event in 2015, register your interest with race organiser Chris Osborne – email: chrisu@gbrowchallenge.com



A clean gun run

THE Maritime Reserves Field Gun crew achieved a rare feat by lifting the 'least penalties' cup without incurring a single penalty at the 2013 Royal Navy Field Gun Competition held at HMS Collingwood.

Delighted field gun trainer Lt Cdr 'Grassy' Meadows said: "To be the only team from 21 highly trained gun crews to achieve eight clean runs under this most intense competition pressure is truly amazing.

"This clearly demonstrates the calibre of the Reserves we have volunteering to participate in what is recognised as the toughest team event in the Royal Navy."

The gun crew dedicated their achievement to the memory of the mother of their field gun officer, Surg Cdr Alastair Wilcockson, who sadly passed away just days before the competition.

Maritime Reserves were also very evident in the winning crew of the Plate 3 final; the Barbarians.

Made up of volunteers from all of the competing crews, five Reserves were released to compete for the victorious team.

To submit your RNR stories, contact Lt Cdr Heather Lane on 9380 25067 / 023 9272 5067 or send your submissions to edit@navynews.co.uk

Deaths

Admiral Sir John Fitzroy Dwyland Bush GCB DSC... Joined training ship Froisher 1933 as special entry naval cadet...

enemy craft and Reynolds was awarded a DSC. He was on the Admiralty Interview Board for more than 30 years... Lt Donald 'Don' Thompson (MIME)...

Submarine Service 1959-84 in Alcide, Porpoise and Oberon. Barrow branch. Aged 79. J E 'John' Dunn AB UW. Submarine Service 1954-62 in Alderney, Turpin and Finwhale...

Reunions

July 2013 Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm Shooting Team: Meeting at 1100 on July 20 in front of the NRA Office, Bisleigh... September 2013 HMS Kenya Association: Reunion to take place at the Hallmark Hotel, Derby...



The Princess Royal addresses the members of the WRNS Benevolent Trust AGM. Picture: LA(Phot) Maxine Davies

Trust message is spreading

THE Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) Benevolent Trust were delighted that their Patron, the Princess Royal, was able to join them again this year in Portsmouth for their annual general meeting in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard...

Swap drafts

AB(SC) McKie. AB(SC) at Faslane Naval Base would like to swap with a Plymouth based AB(SC). DESNBCD-COB-BLC-W-Refit4Amod.uk

Assignments

Cdr T M Henry to be promoted Captain and to be CO of HMS Ocean from December.

Sports lottery

May 18. £5,000 - LH M Evered; £1,500 - AB2 M Sewell; £500 - Mne A Egan. May 25. £5,000 - LH J Winter; £1,500 - Cdr P Moore; £500 - Sgt A Palmer...

Ask Jack

HMS Intrepid: Diane MacLaren is trying to trace any former shipmates of CPO Archie MacLaren, who served in HMS Intrepid 1978-82 including the Falklands...

Queen's Birthday Honours

A CROSS-SECTION of naval personnel have been recognised for their public service in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. In total, 26 members of the Royal Navy and RFA have been granted honours for work in the Forces or other aspects of UK defence...

announcement than me. "I had no idea this was coming but am absolutely delighted to be receiving an MBE." Working alongside Lt Col Dare was Lt Cdr Adam Thomas, who ensured the RN had sufficient manpower to cover day-to-day operations during this busy time...

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Entries for the Deaths column and Swap Drafts in August's Noticeboard must be received by July 15

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Charles learns about Faslane's high tempo

MINEHUNTING'S changed a bit since I was in charge of one of these...

Sailors from HMS Bangor describe how the Royal Navy's battle-proven Seafox system deals with the modern mine threat to Prince Charles when he visited Faslane.

The heir to the throne – who holds the title Duke of Rothesay north of the border – served in the RN for five years in the 1970s, with the final ten months of his career in charge of the minesweeper HMS Bronington, one of the last of the 'wooden walls' – warships with mahogany hulls so as not to trigger magnetic mines.

These days glass-reinforced plastic has replaced wood, as Lt Cdr Toby Shaughnessy and his ship's company explained during the tour of Bangor, one of seven Sandown-class minehunters based on the Clyde.

"As a former commanding officer of a minesweeper, His Royal Highness was particularly interested in the latest technology and we were able to show him our Seafox mine disposal system," said Lt Cdr Shaughnessy.

"It was also great to have the opportunity to speak with him about some of the current operations the 1st Mine Counter-Measures Squadron is engaged in around the globe.

"I think he was impressed by the high tempo of our work and the dedication and sacrifices which the crews make worldwide."

After touring Bangor, Prince Charles was hosted in the Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess where he was given a warm welcome from children from St Kessog's Primary School, who had travelled from nearby Balloch.

The Duke then met a cross-section of Naval Base personnel, including men and women from the Faslane Flotilla, 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines, submarine units, personnel from HMS Neptune and experts from the Northern Diving Group.

Picture: LA(Phot) Will Haigh, FRPU North

Raleigh's gates opened

THERE'S a chance to see what goes on at the RN's premier training establishment in the South West when HMS Raleigh opens its gates to the public on Thursday July 25.

The last time the Torpoint base held an open day in 2011, around 5,000 people took a look.

On a typical week some 400 men and women are going through the ten-week conversion from civvy to sailor – this year Raleigh will feed the RN with upwards of 2,000 new ratings.

Although the base is principally known for that conversion process, it's also home to the School of Maritime Survival (fire-fighting, damage control, sea survival); the Defence Maritime Logistics School, where chefs, stewards

and logistics experts learn their skills; the RN Submarine School, which features an impressive working replica of a submarine's 'bomb shop'; the Board and Search school, used extensively by sailors and Royal Marines; and a replenishment at sea simulator where sailors practise the art of refuelling and resupply in safety before doing it for real.

Chefs will lay on cookery demonstrations, recruiters and instructors will be on hand to talk about joining the RN and what people can expect, and visitors will be shown the (rather spartan) accommodation trainees share as they go through the ten-week basic training package.

The gates are open from 10am-4pm.

When Yankees were captive on Dartmoor

HERE'S a sight to behold – glorious skies over Dartmoor.

Oh and re-enactors dressed in the garb of warriors of 1812 as enthusiasts, historians and representatives of the navies of Britain and the United States remembered the last time the two nations went to war.

They gathered at Princetown on the heart of Dartmoor, where two centuries ago Americans captured in the War of 1812 were imprisoned after previously being incarcerated in Devonport dockyard.

A memorial service was held at the Church of St Michael's and All Angels – started by Napoleonic prisoners and finished by captive Americans – attended by Devon's Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Rear Admiral Ric Cheadle, Plymouth Lord Mayor Vivien Pengelly and contemporary British and American sailors, including a contingent from HMS Vivid and Naval Base Heritage Manager WO1 Adrian Boswell.

Also present, two dozen members of the National Society United States Daughters of 1812, who'd travelled from the USA to the South West of England to see sites with historical ties with their country.

"Today is a sombre occasion, but with a spirit of celebration," said the National President of the Daughters Virginia 'Ginger' Apyar.

"The prisoners of war had a hard hike across the moors, many barefoot. Not every prisoner survived the journey and we are here today to keep their memory alive."

The first group of 250 American prisoners marched from Plymouth to Princetown in April 1813. The Royal Navy was responsible for the custody and care of both French and American prisoners of war.

More than 6,500 Americans passed through the prison gates on Dartmoor. Some 271 of them never returned home – they were buried in the prison's American cemetery. That sacrifice is marked by an imposing granite slab listing the names of the dead.

After the service at St Michael's, the dignitaries took the short walk to the monument and as a flock of starlings noisily circled overhead, wreaths and floral tributes were laid. *The Last Post* sounded as everyone looked on, reflecting on the hardship the prisoners had suffered.

The War of 1812 is ingrained into the US psyche – major events



Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, FRPU West

are planned throughout the 200th anniversary (despite its name, the conflict ran on until 1815).

The Daughters arranged for stained-glass windows to be installed in St Michael's Church at Princetown in 1910 and funded the creation of the Door of Unity at the Minster Church of St Andrew, which is next to the graves of two American naval officers killed during the action between USS Argus and HMS Pelican in the South West Approaches on August 14 1813.

A ceremony was held to honour their memory and among the wreath bearers were Devonport Naval Base Commander, Cdre Graeme Little, and the Assistant Naval Attaché at the US Embassy in London, Lt Cdr Alan Brechbill.

As part of their stay in the UK, the Daughters have honoured American dead in Exercise Tiger at Slapton Sands – a disastrous practice run for D-Day in 1944 – enjoyed a tour of Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, a guided boat tour of Devonport Naval Base organised by the RN, and paid a visit to Plymouth's Mayflower Memorial.

Events on Dartmoor weren't the only ones marking the bitter war between London and Washington

two centuries ago.

Exactly 200 years to the day of one of the most celebrated naval clashes of the War of 1812, today's sailors remembered those lost on both sides in that battle.

On June 1 1813, the frigates HMS Shannon and USS Chesapeake clashed off Boston, Massachusetts. Bostonians were convinced of success after the relatively junior US Navy had inflicted several defeats on its much older and larger foe.

A victory banquet was prepared and many Bostonians sailed in yachts to watch the triumph.

Instead, however, Capt Broke delivered a lesson in naval gunnery and training. For every shot fired by the Chesapeake into Shannon, the Royal Navy responded with two into the American warship.

After just 15 minutes of battle, Chesapeake's battle flag was lowered and the Blue Ensign of the Royal Navy hoisted by the Shannon's boarding team, even though the mortally-wounded Capt Lawrence urged his men: "Don't give up the ship" – a motto which lives on in today's American Navy.

Both ships subsequently made for Halifax in Canada, some 300 miles away, where the casualties of

battle were treated and the dead laid to rest in what is now known as the Old Burial Ground.

It was there, 200 years later, that the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Brig Gen John Grant, unveiled a commemorative plaque and laid a wreath on the joint grave of the Shannon's Midshipman John Samwell and Boatswain William Steven.

In all 38 sailors, marines, landsmen and immigrants lost their lives in the Royal Navy frigate during the short but ferocious action; 60 American sailors and marines were also killed.

Representing the RN at memorial proceedings was Lt Cdr Mike Jones-Thompson, air warfare officer who's one of five on exchange with the Canadians in Halifax.

"It was an honour to represent the RN at this historic event – and remember the sacrifice that has been made by so many of our forefathers," said Lt Cdr Jones-Thompson, who teaches Canadian ops room officers and assesses ships' warfare teams.

"The War of 1812 had a profound effect on the way that the UK, USA and Canada developed as nations, and ultimately led to the close ties that we enjoy today."

Tanker crew remember ill-fated Darkdale

Picture: Museum of St Helena



THIS is the haunting image of the twisted upturned bow of a wartime tanker rising out of the Atlantic off an idyllic island.

As sailors in Britain converged on the Mersey for a weekend of commemorations to mark the 70th anniversary of victory in the Battle of the Atlantic, the crew of RFA Black Rover paid homage to their forebears killed aboard RFA Darkdale on a terrible night in 1941.

Darkdale had arrived off the tiny island of St Helena in the summer of 1941, providing fuel for passing Royal Navy warships such as carrier HMS Eagle and cruiser HMS Dorsetshire.

She was still there on the night of October 21-22 when U68 found her at anchor off the island's capital Jamestown; her captain, U-boat ace Karl-Friedrich Merten fired four torpedoes at her.

"Explosions tore the silence of night apart," Merten recalled. "All we could see then were flames, flames and yet more flames burning as high as a house and flaring up repeatedly in the dark night sky: from bow to stern there were flames 20 or 30 metres high – there was nothing to be seen of the ship herself. It was one raging inferno, burning as tall as a house and three times wider than the ship itself had been."

The blast caused Darkdale to turn over and sink in minutes. Two men survived – blown off the upper deck and clear of the wreck.

Forty-one men went down with her, however, and the ship herself was torn in two, with sections protruding ominously from the Atlantic.

The dead of the Darkdale are commemorated with a plaque on Jamestown's cenotaph – a memorial visited by sailors from Black Rover.

A party of volunteers was put ashore on St Helena (it's impossible for the tanker to dock on the island) to spruce up the cenotaph and plaque – and, says Black Rover's Commanding Officer, Capt Ian Pilling RFA, "to remind our colleagues who went down with her that the Royal Fleet Auxiliary has not forgotten them."

His ship has now resumed her duties as the RN's duty tanker south of the Equator, providing fuel, stores, spare parts, medical kit and other supplies to any Royal Navy vessel in the South Atlantic which requires them.



● Arthur Baldwin with Sultan's Olympus after it was powered down for the last time. Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool

The god of engines

THE greatest British engine of its generation has breathed its last as instructors at the Royal Navy's engineering school switched off the 'mighty Olympus'.

For 35 years, marine engineers at HMS Sultan in Gosport have learned how to maintain and run the Olympus, which has powered a generation of warships (as well as Concorde and the Vulcan bomber).

But with the very last Olympus-powered ship in the Fleet, HMS Illustrious, due to pay off next year, there's no longer the need to train marine engineers.

So after burning 2.1 million gallons (9.5 million litres) of fuel – enough to fill the tanks of nearly 175,000 Ford Focus cars... or take your average family car to the moon and back 176 times) – since 1978, the gas turbine was powered down for the last time.

The Olympus traces its history back to the early days of the Cold War and the need to power the RAF's nascent V-bomber force.

The Bristol Aero Engines company responded to the challenge and ran the first Olympus in 1950.

By the 1960s navies were looking to adapt the by-now-highly-successful engine in their ships as they began to shift from steam.

The RN experimented with HMS Exmouth, then Chief Naval Engineer Sir George Raper decreed that gas was the future (by then Rolls-Royce had taken over Bristol and have remained associated with the engine ever since).

Thanks to the admiral's vision – celebrated with Raper Block at Sultan, where marine engineering skills are imparted – gas has powered the workhorses of the Fleet for 40 years: Type 21, 22, 23 frigates, Type 42 destroyers, plus the Invincible-class carriers.

Four Olympus engines powering two shafts, generating 25,000 horsepower on each, propel the 22,000 tonnes of the carriers through the oceans at speeds up to 28kts.

With Invincible herself fitting

in 1978, the Olympus was installed in Raper Block. A then 31-year-old Arthur Baldwin, now Sultan's Outboard Motor and RIB Mechanical Instructor, was shown the engine as a direct entry artificer beginning his RN career.

Three and a half decades later he was among the last people to instruct on the mechanics of the Olympus – and to see it depart.

"The Olympus engine was newly installed and looked awesome," said Arthur of his whistle-stop tour of the facility back in 1978, "but our PO stoker guide was less enthusiastic. Yeah, he said, impressive, but it'll never catch on."

"That wasn't an unusual attitude, as even in the late 1970s the RN was still very much a steam-driven navy. When I sat my Unit Watchkeeping Certificate in HMS Invincible in 1981, a third of the exam questions were still steam based!"

In 1997, Arthur was serving aboard Vince again when she dashed across the Atlantic from Barbados to Gibraltar before heading on to the Gulf.

"The trip took us three days, running at full power on all four Olympus and I worked out that assuming that the navy paid 25 pence per litre for its dieso (probably a lot more), on that one trip we used £1.2 million worth of fuel!"

With all Type 21, 22s and 42s gone and Lusty around for only another 18 months, Sultan's looking to the next-generation gas turbine, the MT30, which will drive HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales. Generating 30MW, it's one and a half times as powerful as the Olympus – and will take its place in Raper Block where its predecessor once stood.

"I was there at the beginning and there at the end," said Arthur. "Olympus was one of the best engines that I have ever worked with and I, for one, will miss it."

What should you do with your Naval pension?

LEAVING the Royal Navy with a Preserved Pension?

Not sure whether to keep it in the Armed Forces Pension Scheme or move it into a civvy scheme?

Think long and hard before you do anything with such a valuable commodity.

The majority of Royal Navy personnel do not know the full value of the pension they have earned during their service.

For example, a Petty Officer on the AFPS75 scheme, who leaves after ten year's reckonable service for pension purposes, will have earned an annual index linked pension of approximately £4,470 per year and a lump sum of £13,410.

There also carries with it a possible dependant's index linked pension of around £2,235 per year too.

The valuation factors used by Government's Actuary Department's would calculate the value of that pension for Life Time Allowance income tax testing as £102,810.

To be able to buy the same pension today on the open market at an age of 65 (the age most of the preserved pension is going to come into payment) you would need to have a pension pot to the value of £235,000.

Before you move your pension out of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme ask yourself these two questions:

- Between leaving the RN and reaching age 65, could I save the £132,000 needed to bridge the gap in terms of pensionable income?
- If the answer is 'yes', would it be more sensible to leave my Royal Navy pension where it is and find a better use for the £132,000 than plough it into another pension scheme?

It is quite possible the answer to the second question is 'no', in which case moving your RN pension entitlement could be the right thing for you to do.

But for the majority the answer to the second question would probably be 'yes', so a move of benefits would be quite the wrong financial move to make, despite the fact that the age of 65 might seem a point in the distance so far off that it is almost unobtainable.

If you do intend to move the preserved benefits you have earned into either another Government department's scheme, or a civilian

scheme, be aware that there are time constraints in allowing such a move to take place.

If you want to transfer your preserved benefits into another government 'defined benefit'

scheme then you must apply to SPVA to do this when you are within 12 months of joining that new scheme.

If it is any other pension scheme such as a defined contribution scheme, group pension scheme or private pension scheme, then you have until your 59th birthday to apply to have such a move take place for the portion of your pension relative to service up to, and including, April 5 2006; for service from April 6 2006 onwards then you have until your 64th birthday. For those on the AFPS05 scheme it is until your 64th birthday.

The following website address takes you to the MoD document about transferring of pensions, and is well worth consulting if you are considering such a move: <http://goo.gl/ealNJ>.

All Armed Forces personnel, serving or retired are eligible to join the Forces Pension Society and enjoy the benefits such membership offers.

If you are not already a member, and would like to join, visit our website at www.forcespensionsociety.org or call 020 7820 9988.



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Go wild with new beer

RAISE a glass to the Fleet Air Arm's new helicopter – preferably a glass of its own beer.

Yes, you can now enjoy a pint of Lynx Wildcat courtesy of a special RN-endorsed beer produced by a local brewery.

Award-winning Yeovil Ales were looking for a suitable name for their new brew – according to the blurb it's "a bronze full bodied hoppy bitter" – and the eyes of managing director Rob Sherwood fell upon the Wildcats buzzing around the skies of Somerset.

Thus was born Lynx Wildcat. Each 500ml bottle features the namesake helicopter – based at RNAS Yeovilton and successor to the trusty Lynx – as well as the Royal Navy logo.

Rob was invited into the air station by 700W NAS – the squadron helping to introduce Wildcat – to see the helicopter up close.

The beer's available to pubgoers around Yeovil and West Country, or you can buy a 12 pack of bottles from www.realbeerathome.co.uk.

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The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) is the organisation behind the highly successful Admiralty brand, providing comprehensive world coverage of navigational charts and publications, digital products and services to the mariner and international shipping.

We are looking for an Editor to work with one of the UKHO's geographic production teams at Taunton to produce and maintain volumes of Sailing Directions and advise on aspects of navigation for the team's production and maintenance of paper and digital charting products.

The work entails assessing and verifying navigational information; preparing, amending and proof-reading Sailing Directions copy; producing Section IV Notices; dealing with external enquiries; liaising with Harbour Masters and other external sources of information; contributing towards the effective inclusion of navigational data into UKHO products and data bases.

The successful applicant should hold STCW 4/2 Master or Chief Mate's certificate of competency and have practical navigational experience, particularly overseas.

You should have practical experience of the use of UKHO products and their application for the benefit of the safety of mariners. You will have the ability to distinguish significant information from the range of data presented; and keep accurate records of the subsequent actions taken. You will be an effective communicator and can demonstrate good literacy. IT literacy is also essential.

This is a Ministry of Defence non-reserved post for which applicants must be British citizens, citizens of the Irish Republic, a Commonwealth state, or EEA nationals. Successful applicants will require security clearance; you will therefore need to have resided in the UK for a minimum of 5 years. Re-location expenses may be applicable.

Please visit www.ukho.gov.uk for an information sheet and an application form. Alternatively, you can contact the Recruitment Team at the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, Admiralty Way, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 2DN.
Tel: +44 (0)1823 722252.
Email: recruitment@ukho.gov.uk

The closing date for applications is 31 July 2013.

ADMIRALTY CHARTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Midweek weekend activities

THINGS didn't always go to plan on the Farnham, Fleet and Aldershot unit's Junior Spring Weekend.

For a start, the Weekend happened during the middle of a week, though it was at least on their own patch, in Farnham.

During the two days the cadets, along with a select few New Entry cadets, took part in a wide range of activities for their Yellow Community Modules.

This included a visit to Rushmoor Fire Station, but the firemen were called away to a large heath fire just as the cadets were using the fire hoses.

At least the visitors got to see the engines racing off to action – and they were out of the station doors, sirens screaming and blue lights flashing, in 55 seconds.

Aldershot Military Museum was also on the agenda, where the cadets learnt about the Army and life as a soldier in Aldershot Garrison.

And there were also local navigation challenges, and a memorable game of rounders on the only decent evening for weeks.

The unit also made good use of the Sea Cadet Corps' Row the World initiative by holding an open day at the same time, encouraging members of the public, prospective members and supporters to call in at TS Swiftsure – bringing in extra support for the (indoor) rowers.

Award for Southwark volunteer

A SOUTHWARK cadet has won a prestigious national award for young people.

LC Joshua McBride received a Diana Award for being a Diana Champion Volunteer in the local community with the Sea Cadet unit and City of London Academy.

The Diana Award celebrates the contribution "which young people make to society, especially those who are young ambassadors, young leaders, young humanitarians, fund raisers, environmental campaigners, peer mentors, sports leaders, and those who inspire others as Diana, Princess of Wales, did."

Joshua is often involved in community activities, such as the recent fund-raising event staged by the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants in the City of London, where the Past Master commented that he "rose to the occasion most splendidly and really added an extra zest to proceedings."

Southwark's First Lieutenant, PO (SCC) Daniel Chan, said: "We at Cossack are extremely proud of Joshua, who always attends to his many important duties with enthusiasm, professionalism and a smile, together with witty comment."

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Volunteer, donate or even leave a legacy
Visit sea-cadets.org or call 020 7654 7000

SEA CADETS

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Squelching towards target



FOUR staff members from London Eastern District resorted to dirty tactics to raise money for two Sea Cadet causes.

Lt (SCC) Gary Dodd RNR, Sub Lt (SCC) Sebastian Rowland RNR, Lt Cdr (SCC) Michael Chittock RNR and PO (SCC) Vicky Geerkens – The Squelchers, pictured left to right – took part in the Maldon Mud Race, and all completed the event, which sees hundreds of people 'race' through mud and the River Blackwater at low tide.

The Squelchers have set themselves a target of £2,000 to be split between the New Ship appeal to replace TS Royalist and funding for offshore bursaries for cadets from the 11 units within the district, and donations can be made until the end of this month via the website <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/squelchers>

After their exertions – see Lt Cdr Michael Chittock RNR, right – the quartet were happy to clean up and head back to Maldon unit, where more than 60 people joined them at a barbecue staged in their honour.



Susan heading to Africa

A CADET from Ross and Monmouth unit has been named as one of the nine winners of the CVQO Duke of Westminster Awards.

POC Susan Utting a pupil at Malvern St James Girls' School, Worcestershire, was successful following a gruelling four-day selection event in Somerset during April.

Each winner will now have the chance to travel to South Africa on a three-week educational expedition, where they will undertake an environmental awareness course and a cultural project.

"This competition has enabled me to develop many valuable skills such as teamwork and leadership, which will be so useful throughout university and in achieving my ultimate aim of a career in the Royal Navy or the defence and security industry," said Susan.

"We are all very proud of Susan's achievement," said Patricia Woodhouse, Headmistress of Malvern St James Girls' School.

"Her award is tribute to her hard work and dedication during the selection process as well as her outstanding contribution to both her local community as a Youth Councillor on the Ross-on-Wye Youth Council, and here at Malvern St James as a high-achieving A-level student and school prefect who contributes so much to school life."

Guy Horridge, CVQO Executive Director, said: "It couldn't have been closer this year with some excellent cadets making it through to the final 21 in Somerset."

As *Navy News* went to press the final nine were due to attend a ceremony at the Ironmongers' Hall, London, to be presented with their ILM certificates and discover who will be named as the overall winner.

CVQO is an educational charity which has been helping cadets gain internationally-recognised vocational qualifications since 2001.

Each year, CVQO's most outstanding learners from across the UK are nominated for the Duke of Westminster Award, a challenging competition delivered by CVQO and sponsored by the charity's patron.

Susan was nominated by her Officer-in-Charge, Lt (SCC) Adrian Gittens RNR, and selected as the nomination for Severn District.

Mildenhall defy cold to back ship appeal

MILDENHALL unit rose to the challenge set by Headquarters to help them raise funds for the Ship Ahoy Campaign – despite having to endure icy spells for their special events.

The unit chairman started the ball rolling by calling a meeting of the president and vice presidents to enlist their help.

Lord Iveagh, the unit president, suggested they should liaise with his events team and use the venues on his estates.

Following several meetings with staff, the unit management committee and vice presidents, they devised a series of events that would encompass all that Sea Cadets means...

The first venue was the Elveden Inn on a Saturday in late March, where a supervised car wash started at 7.30am to catch the breakfast trade at the inn.

Stalwart cadets and staff braved the elements, and for two hours washed cars in the snow.

Donations were gratefully received, and with £133 raised (plus tickets being sold for a 'Grand Prize Draw' throughout the day) they were off to a good start.

There then followed an activity afternoon with various



● ON a recent visit to Mildenhall unit for their RN Parade, Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor tried his hand at a bit of cook/stewarding...

fun and games, including Learn Semaphore and radio protocol, colouring flags for the younger attendees, trying to sink the ship, find the buried treasure and learn how to tie bends and hitches.

Cadet demonstrations throughout the afternoon of rigging and de-rigging sail boats, parade drill and virtual kayaking were planned, but as the weather came in these were abandoned and other events moved inside.

Cadets became restless and decided to demonstrate marching around the field, in the snow, and then the juniors wanted to give a demonstration of their semaphore skills, also out in the snow.

Food and drink at the inn took a maritime theme, with seafood specials and cocktails served to patrons, with a donation to the cadets from the sales.

The attendance was smaller than expected, largely due to the

snow, but the unit raised another £71 towards their total.

After the activity afternoon, the maritime dining theme continued into the evening.

Senior cadets were present to assist with helping to wait at tables – and sold many more draw tickets, bringing the total draw ticket sales from the venue to £208.

The second event was in the form of a fete at Elveden Estates Courtyard restaurant and shop.

A hook-a-duck game, guess the weight of the cake, name the bears, find the buried treasure, sink the battleship and many more fund-raising stalls all featured, and more draw tickets were sold.

Although it was another freezing cold day, Royal British Legion members from Mildenhall turned out to support the cadets with the branch providing a tombola stall, whilst members of the unit manned the rest.

With the help of a bucket collection, the day raised another £532.

Across the two events, activities draw tickets were sold by staff, cadets, parents, UMC and vice presidents raising another £925.

The grand total for the New Ship Appeal was £1,282.82.

Methil demonstrate their craft



CADETS from Methil and District unit spent a day at Letham Glen Craft Day showing visitors the skills and disciplines they have picked up during their time in the Corps.

During the day the cadets gave a demonstration of 'throwing a line' and invited members of the public to have a go themselves.

"We are trained to throw a line and how to recover someone by line if they are in the water," said OC Amy Newell.

"It is amazing that this simple ability can save a life.

"It was great when Cllr Charles Haffey [of Fife Council] decided to have a go – but I think he needs to practice a bit more..."

"Cllr Haffey enjoyed taking a few minutes out to have a go," said Sub Lt (SCC) Fiona Sekkat RNR.

"Throwing a line can appear to be a very simple task to complete but in reality it takes patience, skills and lots of practice.

"The cadets would like to thank everyone who helped to raise £193 for our unit."

Letham Glen, on the edge of Leven, is a small park – known locally as 'the Glen' – owned and managed by Fife Council.

● *Methil cadets demonstrate how to throw a line at the Letham Glen Craft Day*

Picture: Sub Lt (SCC) Fiona Sekkat RNR



Cardiff pay homage

MEMBERS of Cardiff unit played a prominent role in supporting the Merchant Navy's Battle of the Atlantic 70th Anniversary commemorations in the Welsh capital.

In addition to parading their own standard, carried by LC James Stiles, the unit also had the honour of once again parading the War Widows' standard and that of the Mission to Seamen, carried by OC Lauren Powell and AC Rhys David respectively.

And by special request of the event's organising committee, AC Cerys Thomas read a passage from the Bible in Welsh during the service, held on the shore of Cardiff Bay (above).

After the two-minute silence,

wreaths were laid by the unit's CO, CWEM(O) Mike Dixon, assisted by LC Olivia Stickland and OC Bethan Smith-Williams.

Cadets also assisted in preparations for the event by laying out chairs and handing out Order of Service booklets to the dignitaries who attended.

Byron Jones, chairman of the Merchant Navy Association (Wales), said: "Thanks to TS Cardiff for stepping into the breach yet again.

"What would we do without them?"

"Special thanks to Cerys and the wreath layers who were all terrific, and also to the cadets who helped to return the chairs to the Senedd Building."



● LC George Kettleborough receiving the award for best dressed guard from Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor



Portrush presented with award

PORTRUSH unit have been officially presented with a certificate and crystal glass marking their success in achieving a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

The Lord Lieutenant for County Antrim, Mrs Joan Christie, presented the certificate and glass to unit chairman Ian McCullough at Portrush Town Hall.

The unit also received their pennant for 2012 and the Officer-in-Charge, Lt (SCC) David Philpot RMR, received his Cadet Forces Medal.

The flag was proudly unfurled at Easter, a unique occasion as Portrush are to date the only one of the 400 UK units to win this prestigious award.

And at the end of May Mr McCullough and Lt Philpot attended a reception at St James's Palace in London for award winners, at which the Portrush representatives met members of other voluntary groups and chatted to Royalty, including the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

Scot-Paddle tops the list

THE Ulysses Trust has chosen Sea Cadets 'Scot-Paddle – the Great Glen Open Canoe Expedition 2012' as the winner of Best Cadet Expedition in their annual awards.

The trip was a coast-to-coast, self-sufficient journey by open canoe from Neptune's Steps at Fort William to Inverness, a total of 97km.

The Ulysses Trust provides funding assistance to challenging expeditions and adventurous activities involving members of the Volunteer Reserve Forces and Cadet Forces of the UK.

www.ulyssesrust.co.uk

Local decision on security

FOLLOWING heightened security after the death of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich in May, safety issues once more rest with local Sea Cadet officers.

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor said: "Sea Cadets is a youth organisation that follows the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy.

"Further to the incident in Woolwich we've been working closely with MOD to ensure our young people across the country are safe.

"Currently we are advising all Sea Cadet units, training centres and MSSC locations to revert to our standard practice that security measures are a matter for commanding officers and line managers.

"We'll continue to work closely with MOD on this issue and as we receive new information we will update our guidance accordingly."

Warsash winner

POC Rebecca Leach of Warsash unit has won this year's Institute of Seamanship national award, presented to the cadet who achieves the best overall scores and promotes seamanship within the Corps.

Mr John Johnson-Allen, chairman of the Institute – and a former Sea Cadet – was the VIP guest at TS Tormentor's monthly full uniform Divisions, during which he presented POC Leach with her engraved silver platter.

Rebecca also received a £30 Marine Society book token and an Institute pin badge.

CO Lt (SCC) Tony Thurgood RNR said: "PO Leach is one of our most impressive cadets, who has been with us since the unit started in 2006, and we are very proud of her achievement in winning this prestigious national award."

Weston success

WESTON unit picked up two top prizes at the National Drill competition, held at HMS Raleigh.

Having won the District and Area competitions, cadets from Weston went forward to represent the South West at the prestigious competition.

And the Somerset unit took two trophies – one for the Best Colour Party, and the other for the Best Dressed Guard Commander.

Captain Sea Cadets, Captain Mark Windsor presented the trophies to Weston contingent.

Sartorial triumph

THE winners of this year's Sea Cadet Royalist Regatta were Sunshine (the Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation), closely followed by the Royal Navy.

And while Sea Cadets didn't place in the top three – Fort Vale came third – they did win best-dressed crew for a second year running...

Sea Cadets from Edmonton unit were members of the Worshipful Company of Actuaries crew, while Cowes Sea Cadets had a crew sponsored by Lord Iliffe and a mixed Sea Cadet crew took part thanks to donations from sponsors.

Other prizewinners were: City Cup: Worshipful Company of Actuaries and Edmonton Sea Cadets;

Bonhams Scope: Cowes Sea Cadets

Regatta 'dishes crew': Umpires.

Total nears £150,000

THE total raised for the New Ship Appeal by Sea Cadet units currently stands at £147,000 pledged (of which £52,271 has been raised).

Half of all units have become involved to help raise funds, from joining the recent national rowathon to more traditional tried-and-tested fundraising methods such as bag-packing, street stalls, quiz nights and community events.

MSSC Headquarters has thanked units and districts across the UK who have embraced the challenge of raising funds for the Corps' new flagship.

"They all deserve a mention, but as space is at a premium in *Navy News*, you can see them all at www.sea-cadets.org/new-shipappeal

Birkenhead recognised

BIRKENHEAD unit have been awarded the Indefatigable Trophy.

The trophy was presented to Officer-in-Charge Lt (SCC) Rita Morton RNR by Indefatigable School Old Boys Association chairman Brig Bill O'Leary.

The unit was nominated for the award by Area Officer for the North West, Cdr Mark Irwin, to Captain Sea Cadets.

This award is for the unit that has made the most significant improvement over the last 12 months.

Cadets pay tribute to Atlantic veterans

MORE than 200 cadets travelled to Liverpool from across the North West to take part in the Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary commemorations.

And the cadets made a big impression on visitors to Merseyside with parades, displays of the mini field gun, corps of drums, traditional club swinging, semaphore display and piping and knots, as well as taking time out to serve tea to veterans at the Old Port of Liverpool Building (top right).

It was a great opportunity for young and old to share knowledge and skills

One of the units represented was Huyton-with-Roby, based in Merseyside and therefore very conscious of the part played by the city and wider region in the victory over German U-boats during World War 2, and the sacrifices made by those who "gave their tomorrows for our today".

For Huyton cadets the commemorations began on Friday May 24 when they were invited to Liverpool Maritime Museum to help receive guests and fundraise on behalf of Seafarers UK.

Many prestigious guests were present and the cadets had the opportunity to meet First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas, the professional head of the Royal Navy, as well as spending time with international naval officers who showed interest in how the cadet force experience compared to their own naval cadet forces.

The following day the commemoration activities were

Unsung hero

CPO (SCC) Kim Cleary of Redditch and Bromsgrove unit won the Community Unsung Hero award at the Redditch Inspired Awards – the first person to win this award in the community.

Training Officer Kim was nominated for the hard work and dedication she has put in over the past 23 years.

Mid (SCC) Sanders RNR was also Nominated for the Young Volunteer Award.

Yorkshire units support Kohima service

SEA Cadets from five units attended the Kohima Memorial Veterans Service in York at the request of the Duke of York, Admiral of the Sea Cadets Corps.

The 15 cadets lined the steps leading to the West Door of the Minster, took part in the service, then formed an Honour Guard for veterans as they went into the Chapter House to meet the Duke (right).

Finally they went to the Kohima Memorial, where wreaths were laid.

The commemoration marks a protracted battle with the Japanese in north-east India, when a besieged force of British and Indian troops held off a Japanese offensive in April 1944 and by late June, heavily reinforced, finally broke the Japanese formation and reopened their supply route.



centred around Pier Head, where Huyton cadets were seen by the public upholding Naval traditions of communication through their semaphore display (top left).

While that was going on the unit's juniors turned out to visit the commemorations and learn for themselves the importance of the Battle of the Atlantic – and during their day out they were invited by the Royal British Legion to engage in some publicity photos in anticipation of this year's Poppy Appeal.

As a thank-you the juniors were invited to the grand opening of

the Veterans Centre in the Port of Liverpool Building, formally opened by the First Sea Lord.

The cadets enjoyed meeting veterans and listening to their stories of their time in the Services.

Sunday saw further semaphore displays, while some cadets went to Liverpool Cathedral and performed ceremonial duties in the presence of the Princess Royal – who spoke to the group – and took part in a ceremonial march-past.

Monday May 27 marked the end of the long weekend, but there was still plenty for the cadets to get involved in.

For example, Huyton Marine Cadet Detachment were at Salthouse Dock fully-prepared for the raft race, with a well-built craft and water-bombs to help their cause.

Well, when we say well-built... the weather was far from good, and the team – the only youth competitors in the race – managed to capsise before the race was under way (above).

However, they showed great resilience in completing the course and reported that although it was cold they had loved every minute.

First trophy win in 13 years

THE Falklands Trophy, a tri-Service cadet adventurous activities competition, celebrated its 30th year this year.

For each of those 30 years, cadet teams from Essex Sea Cadets and Royal Marine Cadets, Air Training Corps and Army Cadet Force have competed against each other in a fun, activity-filled weekend.

The last Sea Cadet winner was Hornchurch unit in 2000, and it's been a long wait for another winner – but that wait is finally over, with Walton-on-the-Naze unit finally breaking the winless streak of 13

years by taking the honours.

Team leader POC Will Andrews – in his last Falklands Trophy competition before he joins the Armed Forces – received the trophy from Wing Cdr Glenn Mayes, Officer Commanding Essex Wing ATC, backed by his team and colleagues from Thurrock and Southend units.

Needless to say, unit CO Lt Gary Dodd was speechless.

A fantastic effort in what is a very challenging competition – now for the Elworthy Trophy...



Extra beds for events at Temeraire

OLYMPIAN Peter Reed and Olympic hopeful John Jackson helped the Second Sea Lord formally open new £730,000 accommodation for teams visiting the home of RN sport.

The new block at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth provides 96 bed spaces and includes a physio room, meeting space and lounge area, all of which will be regularly used by sporting teams from across the Forces when they come to the Solent for competitions and training.

Opened by Vice Admiral David Steel, the new complex was endorsed by two of the RN's elite athletes – double Olympic gold medallist rower Lt Reed and GBR1 bobsleigh lead driver Sgt Jackson RM. "It is amazing to be back here and to see how much has changed," said Sgt Jackson, who is preparing for next year's Winter Olympics in Sochi, on Russia's Black Sea coast.

"When I used to compete at a Royal Marine level and come here for competitions, accommodation was always something that could prove difficult. Since then it has come along so much – and to see this open today really demonstrates that Navy investment in sport, which is so important."

The ground floor had already been built in 2008 – providing 56 beds – but increased demand saw the need to bid for a second floor of accommodation; in those four years, 28,000 people used the original storey, hence the need for more.

Built by Dorset-based building firm Rollalong, the cost of the project came to £730,000 which was paid for with funds from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund and the Royal Navy Royal Marines Sports Lottery.

"We have excellent facilities here and teams from across the country come here to use them but accommodating them was always an issue. If bed spaces at Nelson and Excellent were full then they would be looking at hotel rooms – which can all get very costly," said Ian Rees, Naval Service sports accommodation manager.

"Now they have their own accommodation onsite which will make a huge difference."

The first sportsmen to christen the complex were Plymouth and Scotland Command cricket teams, down in Portsmouth for the Inter-Command contest.

"This has been about so much more than just beds," he said. "By bringing people together on this facility it is not just about accommodation but also facilitating courses and ensuring team spirit," said Cdr Peter Lewis of the Naval Sport and Personnel Development department at Temeraire.

"We have made sure teams can talk about sport, learnt about it and then go out there on the facilities and play it. It is just one example of the investment the RN makes in sports and its personnel."



● LPT 'Arnie' Arnold negotiates one of the turns at Silverstone on LAET Colin Wilson's GSXR 600 during the grass roots day



Kirsty makes Euro debut

REPRESENTING the Navy and nation as you read this (unless you're reading this in late July...) is wheelchair basketball player Lt Kirsty Wallace (pictured above by Sooty Ahmad/SA Images).

She's making her debut in a team which took bronze the last time they competed for the European Championships.

Originally from Ardrishaig, Argyll, but now based at Communication Information System Training Unit at HMS Collingwood, Lt Wallace discovered wheelchair basketball after she fell from a height in 2007 and broke her back.

As part of her recovery she signed up to Battle Back, an organisation dedicated to getting injured Service personnel back in to sport.

She made her GB debut in 2011 and narrowly missed out on London 2012, where she was a reserve. In 2013, however, she impressed GB women's basketball coach Joe Jayaratne and earned her place in squad.

At the 2013 championships, held in Frankfurt, the GB team have been drawn in a pool with the Netherlands, Turkey and Italy.

"I mostly feel relieved at being selected after four years of being a reserve. I'm really looking forward to playing alongside the rest of the team at a major event," said Kirsty.

"I'm excited to be involved in bringing this new team forward and I hope we are able to do better than the traditional third place that we normally come."

Her coach added: "It was a really tricky selection process and, after a lot of discussion, we are happy that we have selected a team that will not only be competitive, but also has the scope to develop greatly, with the future in mind."

"Our first and main goal at the Europeans has to be to qualify for the World Championships next year and then, hopefully, to try to improve on our positioning relative to previous European campaigns."

Plenty to be proud of

STALWART of Cornish football Lt Cdr Andrew Plenty has been recognised for his long-standing support for the beautiful game.

The officer – known throughout the Kernow footballing world as Scooby – was named the Community Volunteer of the Year at the HQ of the Cornish FA in Bodmin.

Lt Cdr Plenty has been involved with RNAS Culdrose FC for over 20 years as player and manager, as well as performing committee roles. He's also played a pivotal role in the Trelawny Football League, especially in helping it to get FA Charter Standard League status.

"It was an honour to have just been considered – let alone win it as there are so many worthy volunteers that dedicate their free time to football in the Duchy," said the humble winner.

"I've been very fortunate to have met some wonderful people within the Cornish football community. I also have a very understanding wife!"

Thunder in Norfolk

ANOTHER month, another weekend of top-notch motorbiking courtesy of Team Navy and Rounds 8 and 9 of the Isle of Man Race Products Combined Military Services Championship together with ThundersportGB.

The venue: Snetterton in Norfolk, one of the fastest circuits on the calendar. The players: 45 Cdo's Mne Frankie Gallagher (No.47) on his CBR 600, 824 NAS' LAET Karl Dyer (No.44) on his Yamaha R6 and 30 Cdo IX's Sgt Stevie Elliott (No.81) on his Triumph Daytona 675.

After testing on Friday and two qualifying races on Saturday, it was time for the first contest, writes Sgt Elliott.

Race 1

Just minutes from the start, the heavens opened. Frantic wheel changing began. Frank and his crew succeeded with a couple of minutes to spare, Stevie was just behind, but Karl didn't quite make it and missed the start.

Both Frank and Stevie had to start at the very back of the grid with the rain now pouring down.

Off the line and with spray everywhere, Frank was off into the pack as if immune to the rain. Stevie held back and decided to ease into it.

Corner after corner, riders were dropping like flies... among them Frank when he was too eager going into Murray's. Stevie went from strength to strength taking it steady and moving up the grid to finally finishing eighth from 23rd

with a best lap of 1:42.6.

Race 2

With the sun out at last, the track dried and Team Navy managed a full complement on the grid. After a good start, things went wrong for Stevie and Frank. Stevie had issues from the off – Karl saw a puff of blue smoke from his exhaust just after the start. Stevie had further problems with gear selection then finally, while on the power on the back straight, his bike went 'pop' and ground to a stop.

Frank, from 12th on the grid, immediately made his way through the pack to ninth, just behind the leading pack. He was smashing in lap times around the 1:20s, but a racing incident with a back marker ended his race prematurely.

Karl fared much better and was, at last, getting some laps in. He had a good battle with ex-Army lad Nige Pitt (no.113) but started where he finished, in 26th, with a best of 1m 27.599s.

Race 3

At last, for the first time this season, the sun was shining and conditions were almost perfect. With Stevie watching from the trackside, due to his 'popped' engine needing more maintenance than could be provided in the paddock, Karl and Frank lined up.

Frank was flying from the start. From 14th he managed to make it up to 11th, helped by blistering

pace – a fastest lap of 1:18.724. With this sort of pace a podium place in the overall championships was on the cards.

Karl, was again duelling with Nige Pitt. He was making all his passes while on the anchors, going into Murray's.

Karl ended up making a cracking move on the last lap, again going into Murray's. He slotted up the inside of both Nige and Luke Harrison (Army), but didn't manage to get the gears sorted out ready to put the power down. The lost drive allowed the two bikes back past, just before the line.

Race 4

With the sun still beaming it was another cracker from Frank who overtook six riders on the first lap and carried on to take a superb finish of 10th. A best lap of 1:19.597 widened his grin past the stops. Karl had a decent race and had another good tussle with Nige. A solid average 1m 25.783s and 26th was his at the flag.

Team Navy will be looking for the nearest padre to bless the new leathers – at the moment it feels like they may have been cursed.

Yet again a disappointing weekend for Stevie, who has seen his season go from bad to worse. Karl, after a disastrous testing, had a solid weekend and has only a few seconds to find to get himself mid-pack.

Lake 3 was the place to be

THE 2013 Royal Naval angling championships were held at the normally-very-prolific Makin's Fishery in Nuneaton.

With the first decent period of warm weather of the year preceding the event, the fish decided to take the opportunity to start spawning, thus providing an additional problem for everyone to overcome.

Despite that fact, Steve Foreshaw showed everyone the way ahead on day one's team event, taking full advantage of fancied peg 25 on Lake 4.

With the wind blowing into his bank, he amassed a level 173lb, taking fish from the margins for most of the day.

Second overall over on Thames peg 6 was Dave Harper with 70lb 6oz and third Mark Cullerton, also on Lake 4, peg 11 with 65lb 4oz.

Team-wise it was a convincing victory for the tastefully-titled **** Knows, comprising serving and previous members of the RN, who romped home with a four-point advantage over their nearest rivals, the Exiled Exiles. Of the Service teams, the Pompey Kings beat the Royal Marines into second by two points.

On the second day, the individual title was up for grabs. All the pre-match talk determined that Lake 3 was the place to be, as the fish on there hadn't started to spawn – and so it proved to be with the top four anglers coming from that very lake.

Nigel Roberts of the Royal Marines and current RN&RMAA team captain pulled out Lake 3 peg 20 and put a level 102lb on to the scales, becoming the Navy Champion for 2013 in the process.

This was despite a mid-match swim to retrieve his top four.

He received rich encouragement from those on the lake, but had the last laugh when he managed to land the fish that swam off with the top four off in the first place.

Second on the day and the associate champion for 2013 was Alan Palmer who smashed out small carp all day on peg 17 for 83lb 7oz; third was Mal King as associate runner-up, with 67lb 12oz from peg 3, who pushed John Harvey into fourth – he managed 67lb 10oz from peg 8 to take the servicemen's runner-up spot.

To take up the sport in the RN, contact CPO J Harvey at cornucox@btconnect.com.

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Magnificent Merralls

THE 2013 Naval Air Command Golf Championships took place at Dartmouth Golf and Country Club on a course presented in pristine condition.

The weather remained dry throughout, but conditions were very windy, writes CPO (ACMN) Pip Piper.

A number of trophies were contested during the three-day competition and some good golf was played by the 64 entrants.

On the first afternoon – in the best conditions of the week – POAET Craig Merralls (Heron) won the Regan Trophy, scoring 37pts Stableford, narrowly pipping CPO Piper (824 NAS) into second place on 36pts.

Next morning the competitors awoke to freshening winds for the first round of the scratch and handicap medal competition.

Tough conditions meant that the reigning RN golf champion (Lt Cdr Norris, 771 NAS) and runner-up (Cdr Selway, 1710 NAS) shot 83 and 81 gross respectively to lie in third and fourth places in the scratch, just behind POAET Merralls and LAET Lown (Heron) who carded a pair of 75s for the first day's play.

In the handicap competition the conditions meant the aforementioned players were again close to the top of the leaderboard, along with Matt Rowe, Jules Crew and Pip Piper – all with scores below net 75.

The afternoon concluded with a pair's better ball competition for the premier cups. This was won by POAET 'Chats' Harris and his partner, young-and-upcoming RN player AET Gareth Owen (both 771 NAS), with 41 pts.

The challenging conditions meant that the cut for the top 24 players for the finals day's play to contest the scratch and handicap competition in the second medal round fell at a score of gross 95.

Again some good scores were posted despite the conditions, Lt Cdr Hills (Culdrose) raced through the field to be near the top of scratch with a fine best score of the week, gross 74, net 67, to end up third.

He consoled himself by winning the Wylie Handicap trophy with a net 79 plus 68 for 147 pts total.

In the scratch, LAET Lown let a few shots go to card a second round 80 for second place overall, but once again it was LAET Merralls who shot a solid 77 for a total of 152 gross to become Naval Air Command champion once again and winner of the Heliotrope Trophy.

WO1 'Zippy' Thompson won the consolation stableford with a fine 43 points for those players who didn't make the cut in the main competition held on Dartmouth's second course on the final morning's play.

Team events were also close with Culdrose 1 winning the team Jackdaw handicap trophy with the best five of six net scores ahead of Yeovil 1.

Yeovil won the Fulmar Cup, a trophy for the air station with the best five gross scores in the medal competition.

Overall Cdr Mark Selway has a solid selection of players from which to choose his team to represent the Fleet Air Arm at the RN Championships at Saunton Sands; last year the team made a clean sweep of titles.

RAF win rain-hit U25 contest

Continued from page 48

With one over remaining the Army required five runs to win with one wicket in hand. However, with two balls to go, the batsmen unsuccessfully ran for quick runs and the final batsman was run out, only short of his crease by inches, giving the reigning champions victory by two runs.



In Leagues of their own

THE military's top rugby league stars – including seven Royal Navy players – are taking on the world this month after honing their skills in Portsmouth.

A 27-strong squad was selected to face the Aussies, Kiwis and Serbs for the Armed Forces Rugby League World Cup – a trophy the UK holds after the previous competition in Australia back in 2008.

A five-day training camp at HMS Temeraire was held to prepare the team – 24 core players, plus three reserves – for the international clashes which began on the last day of June in Colchester with GB facing New Zealand.

Flying the flag for the RN are LPT Steve Lockton (HMS Collingwood); LAET Lewis Taylor (Yeovilton), a veteran of the 2008 triumph; AET Tommy Wilkinson (Culdrose); Mne Kitone Kamikamica (42 Commando); ET Mike Haldenby (HMS Illustrous); AB(WS) Darren Bamford (HMS Dragon); and, in reserve, LAET Richie Metcalfe (Yeovilton).

Overseeing efforts to hold on to the trophy is head coach – and mainstay of Royal Navy rugby league – WO1 Wayne Okell, who masterminded the 2008 win (including defeating the hosts

The remaining World Cup fixtures are:

WEDNESDAY JULY 3 (BUDD VC GYMNASIUM, BERECHURCH ROAD)

3.30pm GB vs Serbia
6.30pm Australia vs New Zealand

SATURDAY JULY 6 (GARRISON B GROUND, CIRCULAR ROAD NORTH)

11am New Zealand vs Serbia
1.30pm GB vs Australia

WEDNESDAY JULY 10 (BUDD VC GYMNASIUM, BERECHURCH ROAD)

4pm 1st Place vs 4th Place
7pm 2nd Place vs 3rd Place

SATURDAY JULY 13 (GARRISON B GROUND, CIRCULAR ROAD NORTH)

2pm Final

Entry to all the games, all in Colchester, is free for spectators.

You can find out more about the tournament at www.pitchero.com/clubs/combinedservicesrl/

twice on their home turf, which was nice).

He whittled down an initial

51-strong squad over three months of intensive training and believes the 27 who've made the final selection could comprise the strongest team ever to don the coveted GB shirt.

"Selection has been very intense and extremely close. I can honestly say it's produced a fit, strong and smart bunch of individuals that fit the profile for the team we are looking to create," said Wayne, who's based at HMS Temeraire.

"Indeed it's my opinion that this squad has the potential to be the best team we have ever fielded."

The tournament features a mini-league format feeding two semi-finals ahead of the final itself on July 13.

The Great Britain-Australia clash on July 6 will be graced by flypasts and the Parachute Regiment's Red Devils dropping in to deliver the match ball, while the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight will appear overhead before the final seven days later.

Away from the international level, HMS Sultan completed a third consecutive triumph in the annual RNRL Inter Unit 9s tournament on Temeraire's new state-of-the-art synthetic pitch.

Despite poor weather the five teams competing in this year's contest – Portsmouth, Dauntless, Heron and Defender completed the quintet – put on great display of rugby league with Sultan, coached by Wrenegades scrum

half Zoe Waring (pictured above celebrating with her team), coming out on top with an impressive unbeaten run throughout the day.

Although the number of teams was down on recent years there were still almost 70 players involved as well as coaches and support staff. One very pleasing aspect of the day was the participation by teams from two 45s, despite having relatively-small ship's companies.

With Defender bowing out at the group stage the semi finals were contested between Sultan and Dauntless, while Portsmouth faced Heron.

Two good-quality matches resulted in a final between Sultan and the Portsmouth Naval Base team. Despite putting up a great show throughout the day the 11-man squad from the Naval Base could not contain the Sultan side, who ran out comfortable winners.

The event witnessed a little slice of RNRL history with the ever member of the RNR playing in the 9: AB(CIS) Jamie Love (HMS Eaglet) travelled down from the North West to join the Pompey squad whilst on leave from his day job with Lancashire Police.

Jamie is a key member of the Lancashire police RL Team and used the day as an opportunity to get some game time in as well as meet RNRL with a view to arranging future fixtures.

Golden era for martial artists

FOLLOWING success as the Royal Navy Sports Team of the Year, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Martial Arts Association (RNRMAA) arrived at the 16th Inter-Services Martial Arts Championships, hosted by RAF Cranwell, quietly confident.

Usually a summer event, the Championship had been moved due to last year's Op Olympics which drew many fighters away from their respective teams.

For RNRMAA this allowed individual fighters, many of whom are reigning Inter-Services champions, more time to hone their skills and up their training in preparation for imminent glory.

All martial disciplines recognised by the Combined Services had been packed into a single weekend event pulling together kendo, karate and both taekwondo disciplines (ITF and WTF).

After a week's training at Cranwell under the expert instruction of their coaches, the championships opened with kendo and WTF taekwondo on the Saturday followed by ITF taekwondo and karate on the Sunday.

For RNRMAA the medal haul began early on Saturday morning as the current reigning kendo champions, led by PO Taff Howells, demonstrated sheer determination, aggression and fighting spirit which snapped not one, but two shinai (bamboo swords) during the competition.

The kendo team and individual competitions saw Royal Navy vs Army finals for the second year running, with the Royal Navy holding on to both titles. PO Howells also took home the individual IS champion.

The medal haul continued into the afternoon with the completion of WTF taekwondo, one of the more recent sporting additions to the Olympics.

The RNRMAA gave an impressive display of fighting – males and females across junior and senior grades.

RN sportsman of the year Cpl Phil Tovey came out on top in all his bouts, walking away as the IS WTF taekwondo black belt champion.

Mirroring his success was L/Cpl Jim Hayward RM who retained his junior IS championship through an impressive knock-out in his first bout before eventually winning on points.

He secured victory in the final when his opponent threw in the towel following an overpowering head kick.

The ladies divisions were dominated by an all-RN final, which saw impressive performances from Surg Sub Lt Deona Chan, LH Luena Thomas as well as WTF taekwondo newcomers ABs Natalie Parkes and Jennifer Brammer.

Sunday had a lot to live up to. Both competition rings got off to an early start with the ITF taekwondo patterns and karate katas being run first.

In the ITF taekwondo, the RN took away an impressive medal count in the individual and team pattern events.

Opening with the junior females final comprising a mixture of heavyweight and lightweight fighters, Army Cpl Hayley denied

AB Brammer gold, despite the lightweight Brammer achieving a knock-out in the final moments.

Next up was the lightweight female black belt final contested by the RN's reigning IS champion AB Parkes and the Army's Lt Debbie Boyd. AB Parkes walked away victorious for the second year running following a number of head kicks to secure her success.

With the ladies' medals in the bag, Royal had the job of matching their success.

Unfazed, Cpl Tovey and L/Cpl Hayward both went on to win their ITF finals in the senior and junior finals respectively, making them both ITF and WTF Champions, – something unmatched by any other Service in martial arts IS history.

The weekend ended with an impressive 19 gold medals IS champions for the RN plus 18 silvers – beating last year's efforts.

The past two years have seen the RNRMAA train under many of the best coaches, fighters and instructors worldwide.

If you're interested in taking up martial arts in the RN/RM, visit pdevportal.co.uk/sports/martial_arts or search under RNRMAA on Facebook.



Chris enjoys the full 'fax

ACKNOWLEDGING the support of the Canadian public, runner Lt Cdr Chris Gare crosses the Angus Macdonald suspension bridge spanning one of the world's great natural harbours as a four-hour slog around Halifax draws to a close.

The officer, on exchange with the Canadian Forces Naval Operations School, upheld the tradition of RN personnel taking part in races around the Commonwealth port.

Last year, Lt Cdrs Gary Rawlings and Mike Jones-Thompson took part in the ten-kilometre event. This year Lt Cdr Gare vowed to complete the full 26-mile Blue Nose marathon – his first crack at the distance.

The full marathon course took runners over the 60-year-old suspension bridge which spans the harbour to Dartmouth and the trails of Shubenacadie Wildlife Park, then back across the bridge to Halifax taking in the whole of the peninsula including the iconic Citadel Fort on the hill above the city... several times.

Conditions on race day itself were ideal – a chilly 2°C at the 8am start (it's called Blue Nose for a reason) warming up to 9°C by midday with a light breeze and sunny skies.

Lt Cdr Gare set himself the goal of a sub 4h 30m finish. He beat that time substantially, crossing the line with 20 minutes and 29 seconds to spare.

Beyond a personal achievement, the officer was determined to give something back to his hosts. He chose the operations school's affiliated charity, Bryony House, which provides accommodation and support for women and children who suffer domestic abuse.

They're now over \$630 (£400) better off courtesy of Lt Cdr's running and fund-raising efforts.

"It was great to be able to give something back to the local community and run alongside members of the Canadian Forces," he said. "The support from the crowds was fantastic." Although the race is over, the running is not for those on exchange in Halifax. They'll be hitting the city's hilly streets again next month for the Navy 10k run.

There was an early race start too in Afghanistan – to avoid temperatures of 40°C by mid-morning – as Lt Cdrs Ed Black and Jon Binns found out, lining up for the US Marine Corps' half marathon at Camp Leatherneck.

The real race is run in Fredericksburg, Virginia, but various 'forward' versions of the event are staged wherever large numbers of leathernecks are serving, hence the race at the Afghanistan base (which is next to the UK's own Camp Bastion).

An unplanned detour (trespass) into Bastion added an extra couple of miles at the start and various confusion over the correct route meant that instead of 13.1 miles, runners actually completed a 16.4-mile 'half marathon'.

Lt Cdr Black crossed the line in third place (behind the 49 year old USMC winner and a sprightly US Army runner up). A top-200 finish ensures a medal, believed to be en route from Fredericksburg.



FIFA foe fun, we smell the blood of Englishmen...

ORDINARILY, we'd be a bit sheepish about reporting a 12-1 defeat for the Royal Navy on the football pitch. But when you're facing the national side – even one ranked 161st in the world (England are ninth, Scotland 74th) – such a scoreline isn't ignominious.

The national side were Bermuda. On the receiving end, HMS Lancaster's 1st XI, making their first appearance on the pitch as their Caribbean deployment got under way.

Even though it was a 10am kick-off, the weather was already very hot and humid. A quick warm-up from Lancaster's clubz LPT 'Robbo' Robinson and some Gatorade, and the boys in red and black were ready for action...

The game started very well for the ship as the sailors held their own for the first ten to 15 minutes, playing some neat football, even creating some chances.

But as the match progressed, the heat took its toll, and the Bermudans' standard of football shone through.

Ranked one above the Faroe Isles in the FIFA standings, Bermuda were very quick and fit throughout, using the encounter as a warm-up for the Island Games, a worldwide competition involving islands around the globe.

One-touch passing and some speedy wing play helped the locals to a 6-0 lead at the break, although the visitors continued to create chances courtesy of ET(ME) Fitzpatrick, while LET Lawson's – the Red Rose's man of the match – ran midfield.

After some much-needed half-time Gatorade and a few changes, the first ten minutes of the second period saw Lancaster once again hold their own, this time with LPT Robinson and AB Coleman shooting at the Bermudan goal.

And once again the Bermudans responded with neat first-time passing and through balls splitting Lancaster's defence on numerous occasions.

The sailors' only goal came mid-way through the second half, when the ball was somehow bundled through to AB Heskins who found himself one-on-one with the keeper. Heskins slid the ball into the net and Lancaster's morale was high; they'd scored against a FIFA-ranked side.

There were no more. And there were quite a few banged in at the opposite end. The sailors trooped off the pitch having lost 12-1, but having enjoyed the unique opportunity of playing a national side, and perhaps hoping the next opponents would be more Lancaster's standard.

"It was a great footballing experience and it really showed me the difference in class from amateur to semi professional football. I enjoyed it, regardless of the result," said AB 'Smokey' Coleman.

Robbo added: "It was a stiff challenge for the lads, as most have never played at that level before. However we gave a strong account for ourselves, especially as for the first 20 minutes it remained goalless."



YOU can almost hear the Hawaii-Five-O drum roll as the surf begins to engulf Lt Ollie 'Slater' Judd.

Except that this is the Indian Ocean, the waters off the Maldives to be precise – the perfect setting for a 12-strong team from the RN and RM Boardriders Association and their 2013 sports tour.

The Maldives were picked as the monsoon winds and southern Indian Ocean swells would start to stir favourably from April – pushing swells northwards, with first landfall around the atolls of the Maldives.

And so it proved. The surf stayed around 'head to head and a half' high with offshore winds and sunny skies.

The boardriders were out from dawn (about 6am) daily to try to outfox other charter boat surfers – and get the early uncrowded waves.

Famous point breaks of colas and chickens quickly became favourites – they catch more swell than other more southern breaks.

A cola is a fast breaking hollow 'right-hand' wave with several fast sections which rolled down the coral and urchin-strewn reef.

And a chicken is a long-walling 'left-hand' wave with a bowling end section that will thrash you across the reef if you don't generate enough speed.

The riders settled into the surfing routine quickly, with the team splitting up and surfing their preferred waves and riding alongside Australian (including ex world champion Barton Lynch), American, Brazilian, Israeli and even Greek surfers – all of whom were keen to trade the Brits for their RN-RM Surfing rash vests.

During the last four days of the tour, a larger-than-normal swell was travelling north through the Indian Ocean and was due to hit the Maldives.

The three-metre swell, 17-second swell

period and the usual offshore winds would make for a challenging finale to the tour.

As predicted the large swell arrived and the sound of eight to ten-foot waves crashing on to the reefs set heart rates pulsing.

The surfers shifted location to a well-known point break called Jails – the island has a prison/drug rehabilitation facility.

More importantly, Jails has a 300m-long walling right hander with fast sections which suits long as well as short boarders.

The surf had become very challenging with riders taking turns to get thoroughly worked up across the reef if a mistake was made.

PO Paul Stainsby (824 NAS) took an impressive beating which made his colleagues chuckle; as he gasped for air it was nice not to hear his voice for a few moments. LAET Jarvis snapped his prized short board 'duck diving' a 'bomb set' wave and Lt Judd claimed the first stand-up 'tube ride' with all the modesty and humility for which he's renowned.

Lt 'Bungi' Williams, took off on several bomb waves and sped through the line up of surfers with a huge smile, recording the whole event on his GoPro camera.

AET Chris Lewis (771 NAS) carved his way down the line in his typical fully-committed style; with slashing top turns and radical cut backs he was the stand out surfer of the tour.

CPO Burr (Culdrose SMWS) took some big waves with carving back-hand snaps but somehow managed to ruin his favourite surfboard as one of his fins and plugs came off, never to be seen again.

The unusually large swell for the last few days were challenging for all. Everyone left the Maldives with memories of great waves – and photos just in case they forget.

For details on RN/RM Surf association events, including beginners weekends, visit www.surfnavy.com.



Wham, bam, thank you, Dan

HMS Sultan's LAET Dan Graham delivers a heavy blow as befits his 'Powerhouse' nickname in his final, successful boxing bout of the season.

Taking the beating, Mark Walters from Titchfield ABC, in an evening of top pugilism hosted by Portsmouth ABC.

Dan was the sole RN fighter on the bill – and did not disappoint in what was his final fight for the Gosport establishment before he went on draft.

The leading hand dominated the first round utilising his jab with maximum effort and forcing the pace.

He was warned by his corner to watch out for Walters' looping left hook – and at the start of the second round Walters landed the shot that had Dan on the back foot.

In fact, Dan's opponent was now landing some heavy blows but the sailor covered up and moved off, getting in a few shots of his own as he did so.

Moving into the third round Walters was pushing hard, trying to land the big shots, but Dan was finding success in targeting the body, often landing big blows to the mid-section.

At the final bell both lads were tired from the work they had put in during the three rounds.

The bout could have gone either way, but by majority decision, Dan got the nod.

He leaves Sultan with a record of seven wins and two defeats.

"Each bout he has got better and better, becoming a more all-round boxer," said coach PO(PT) Daz 'The Hatchet' Hoare. "So to the end of another successful season for Sultan, finishing on another high."

RAF win rain-hit U25 contest

THE 2013 Inter Service U25 cricket festival saw the RAF hold on to the title on their home turf of Vine Lane, Uxbridge.

After a lengthy spell of good weather, which enabled the RN team to complete a full set of preparation matches – including wins against In-cogniti, the Royal Marines and the British Prison Service – the conditions during the week of the Inter-Services were quite the opposite, writes Lt Cdr David Cooke, RNCC.

On arrival at the ground on day one, both RN and Army teams were confronted with steady rain, covers on the wicket and tarpaulins covering bowlers' run-ups. Not a good omen and highly unlikely that any cricket would be played that day.

The match was officially called off at lunchtime and declared a 'no result'. The captains tossed a coin to decide who played against the RAF on the second. Having won the toss, the RN elected to play.

So the current champions, the Royal Air Force, started the defence of their title against the RN – but after a rain-delayed start.

The RAF won the toss and invited the Navy to bat, but after steady progress by LAET Daz Riley (RAF Benson) and L/Cpl Lee Evans (Illustrious), Evans was struck on the head, between helmet and visor, with a short ball from a fiery opening bowler and retired to hospital for stitch treatment.

Riley soldiered on, but was eventually removed by paceman S Morris whose final figures were 8-21 off 10 overs and the RN were dismissed for only 114.

In reply the RAF made short work of reaching their target for the loss of just three wickets. Perhaps quite fittingly Morris hit the winning runs and claimed the man of the match award.

After another delayed start on the final day, a confident Army side took on the RAF in an attempt to wrest the crown from them.

Batting first, the RAF lost early wickets, scoring was difficult and the Army managed to restrict them to 129.

In reply the soldiers went off at full marching pace rapidly, getting ahead of the required run rate, but shock wickets fell mid-innings – quite a number to Morris again – followed by others close to the tail.

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Somerset joins in OSTAR ceremony

HMS Somerset acted as the starting platform for a tough single-handed transatlantic yacht race setting off from the South Coast at the end of May.

The Devonport-based frigate took time out from Operational Sea Training to embark race officials, guests from organisers Royal Western Yacht Club and official starter, Vice Admiral Sir Richard Ibbotson, to get the OSTAR race under way.

The race – which traces its history back to the 1960s and Cocksleshell Hero/avid yachtsman 'Blondie' Hasler – was originally sponsored by the Observer newspaper. It no longer does, but the race has remained true to its original acronym, the OSTAR: Observer Single-handed Trans-Atlantic Race.

Twenty boats and skippers lined up for the 14th event: a race across 2,700 miles of the North Atlantic to Newport, Rhode Island.

They set off as soon as HMS Somerset signalled the start courtesy of her 3lb saluting gun.

Lt Christopher Owen, the ship's race liaison officer, and an accomplished sailor himself, said: "It is superb for HMS Somerset to play such a key role in this amazing event – although for me sailing with a crew is more enjoyable, just like serving aboard a warship."

Somerset's upper decks offered an unparalleled vantage point for guests and the ship's company to view the start of this four-yearly race.

The mixed field of amateur and professional sailors were expected to reach American shores at the end of June.

One of the competitors, 69-year-old former Royal Marine Mervyn Wheatley, said: "This race has many challenges – getting to Newport is the main one!"

"I have a glass of sherry with peanuts every evening and, quite often, a glass of Merlot with my freeze-dried meal."

Once the yachts had gone, Somerset quickly returned to the rigours of sea training, preparing for operational tasking later in the year (see page 7).

