



NAVY NEWS

JANUARY 2014

H.M.S. DEFENDER

EYES FRONT

AB Daniel Bradshaw keeps watch on the bridge as HMS Defender sails up the Clyde for a visit to her 'twin town' of Glasgow – the first time she's been back to the city of her birth. See page 9 for details.

Picture: LA(Phot) Will Haigh, FRPU North

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LUSTY FOR L



STATISTICS.

Lots of numbers. Reams of data.

129. 274. 800. 23,000. 6,000. 12,823.

As the great philosopher Homer once said: “Booorrrriinnngggg.” But put them in context and they’re meaningful. *Really* meaningful.

129 is the number of children who can now resume their education at Batuan Primary School on the island of Calagnaan.

274 – that’s how many hours the seven helicopters on HMS Illustrious flew during two weeks of hectic activity involving the 800 or so souls aboard after the 23,000-tonne carrier made the 6,000-mile dash from the Horn of Africa.

And 12,823? That’s the most important figure of all. That’s the number of Filipinos aided by Lusty in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan. (That’s on top of the estimated 10,000 people who received aid courtesy of HMS Daring.)

Statistics only tell part of the story. They show the scale of the effort and the amount that’s been achieved.

But not everything is quantifiable. Sometimes it’s the gut reaction, that indescribable feeling, which makes a difference.

How do you quantify the joy of children skipping as Royal Marines twirl the rope for them?

You could count the number of times grateful locals said ‘*salamat*’ – thank you – or the number of makeshift signs (some tied to trees, some placards in halting English, others marked out in the sand with pebbles and even clothing) saying the same thing, but then it starts to lose its significance. Gratitude, however, is never lost on anyone.

“From simple gestures like an offer to join a game of skipping to hand-painted messages of thanks, the islanders’ appreciation has been obvious,” says Cdr Rob Taylor, the carrier’s head of weapon engineering.

“Everyone has been touched by the gratitude shown by the Filipino people.”

There is not a note or email from the carrier which has crossed the *Navy News* desk which doesn’t strike an identical chord.

“I think the thing that I will remember most is the attitude of the people and how they remain so positive during such a difficult time,” said 23-year-old Mne Ivan Oxley, from Prince Rock in Plymouth.

“They have not given up. They just needed a little help along the way.”

“I have never met people that were so welcoming and gracious. I feel that we have made a real difference so far.”

Lusty gave up her Christmas for the people of the Philippines – she was due home from her Cougar 13 deployment, like flagship HMS Bulwark, on December 13.

And while families in Portsmouth, in Yeovilton, in Culdrose, in Plymouth will be disappointed, they know the reason why.

And that’s important. It’s not just some exercise, some contingency which has often prolonged deployments in the past. Lusty is late for a good reason. What she’s done is real.

“We will be away from our families over the festive season,” said CPO(PT) Jason Gay, “but to know that what we have done is so very much appreciated really makes up for it.”

“Everywhere we went, we were met by a wall of smiles. It was truly touching. These were people who had suffered enormously and their gratitude means a lot to us.”

BUT back to statistics...

By the time Illustrious made for Manila, her relief mission complete, she had delivered:

10,000 sheets of tarpaulin – enough to re-roof 5,000 homes

8,000 litres of drinking water – enough to fill the fuel tanks of nearly 150 family cars (although we wouldn’t recommend it...)

68.2 tonnes of food (the equivalent of 68,200 bags of sugar)

76 disaster relief packs

2,000 bags of rice

500 pallets of supplies (by air)

dozens of bespoke packs – building materials, tools, clothes, generators, and boat repair kits.

Delivering those pallets by air demanded a lot of flying – far above the norm, even on an operational deployment.

In the first week alone, Lusty’s seven helicopters – Army Air Corps Lynx, Fleet Air Arm Sea Kings and one solitary Merlin – flew 252 hours, performing 227 sorties with loads slung beneath them to deliver aid in large quantities to inaccessible areas.

Take December 1. Probably the most intensive day of aerial operations aboard Illustrious in her recent history – certainly since her conversion to helicopter carrier three years ago.

That Sunday five helicopters transported 40 tonnes of stores in 61 under-slung loads, with 50 sorties taking freight and landing ship’s working parties and officials from the Department for International Development ashore.

And when the sun went down, the work continued in Lusty’s hangar; teams of personnel toiled around the clock to sort and pack the much needed supplies ready for the daylight hours to be distributed ashore, while the air engineers and technicians serviced the helicopters for a renewed day’s flying.



The sole Merlin flight on Lusty comprised one helicopter, two pilots, one observer and one aircrewman, supported by a dozen technicians and maintainers – although the latter were bolstered by four engineers from HMS Illustrious and two from 829’s sister Merlin squadron 820 NAS.

It clocked up 75 flying hours in two weeks (twice the *monthly* average) buzzing around the remote islands of the Visayan Sea.

It’s not just the tempo of operations which posed a challenge, but also the types of sorties – more typically carried out by their counterparts in the Commando Helicopter Force, carrying loads slung in giant nets beneath the aircraft and landing at unusual, otherwise inaccessible sites.

Thanks to its cargo and passenger-carrying ability, the Merlin was used extensively to lift aid – slung beneath the helicopter using 80ft ‘strops’, one-use-only bags which can carry a two-tonne load and can be dropped without requiring anyone on the ground to help – and transport teams of specialists such as medics or teams of sailors and marines to carry out damage repair.

“The flying has been quite challenging,” said pilot Lt Jon Maumy.

“Trying to land such a big aircraft in small, confined areas is all about crew co-operation and patience; we need to ensure we don’t damage the aircraft or more importantly the surrounding areas we are here to help.”

There was another ‘hazard’ on the ground too. People. Not in a nasty, dangerous sense. Just sheer numbers. Wherever Illustrious’ helicopters went, they were followed by groups of Filipinos – mainly children – gaping in awe.

Indeed, there’s also been something slightly surreal about the relief effort – certainly watching it from afar.

Many of the images beamed back by first Daring, then Illustrious, have often featured

pictures: po(phot) ray jones and la(phot) nicky wilson, hms illustrious





LIFE

white sands, palm trees, lush vegetation, clear blue seas and even clearer, bluer skies. Temperatures by day reached the high 30s or low 40s Celsius (although the humidity was rather less pleasant).

In other words, paradise. Do not be fooled. "It was much worse than I had expected," said OC Matt Wells who went ashore on Calagnan Island.

"There was simply nothing left of some of the houses. The typhoon had uprooted most of the trees and defoliated the ones that were left standing. It was absolutely devastated.

"It's going to take them years to fully recover. We left tools and building supplies so that they can carry on rebuilding. I hope we have at least helped them on their way."

They have. Just one example. Batuan Primary School on Calagnan is typical of the buildings wrecked by Haiyan – and its repair typical of the effort put in by Team Illustrious.

The school comprises three wooden and two large concrete classrooms and as well as educating local children, it acts as a safe haven for islanders when storms strike.

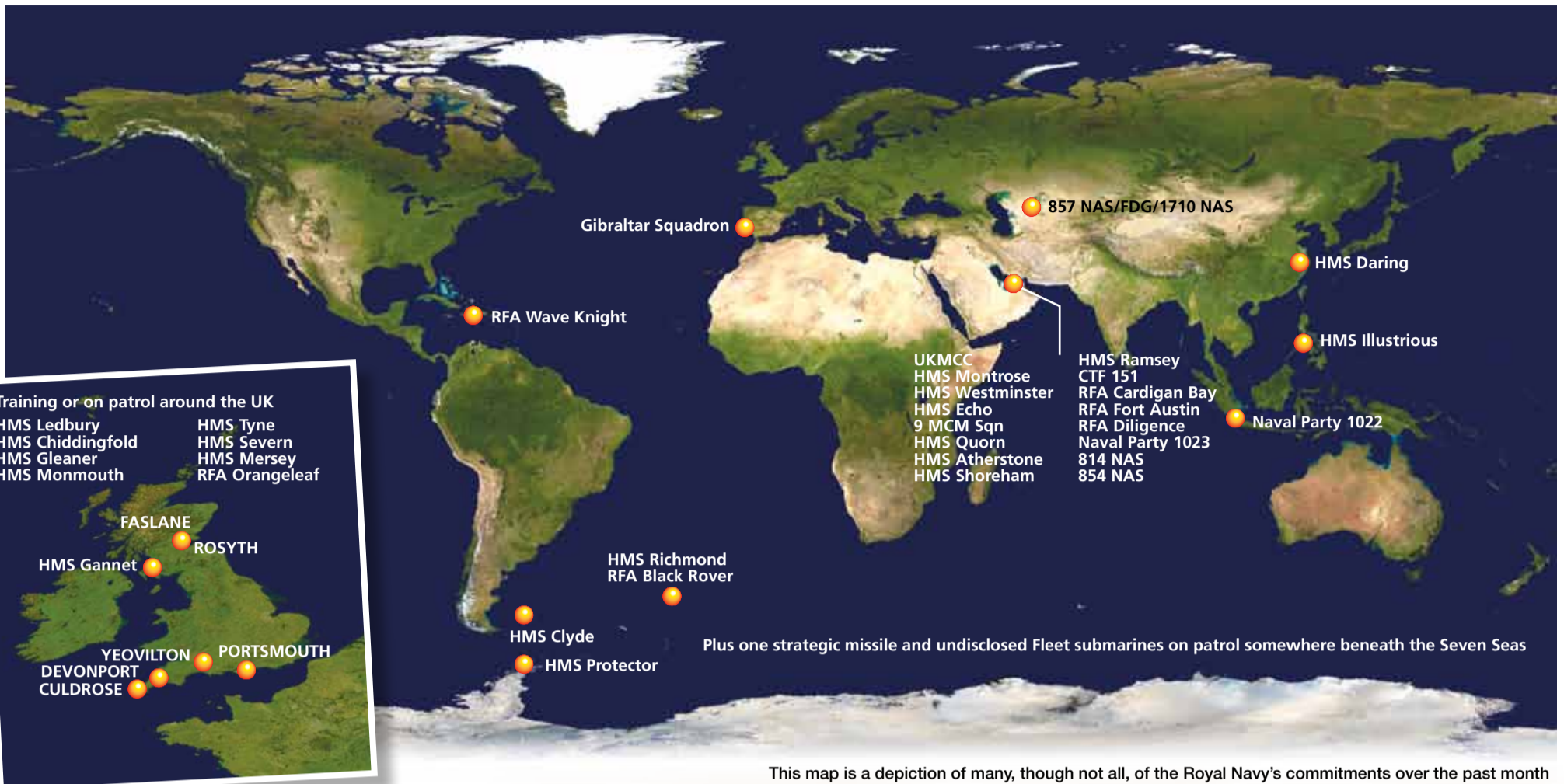
The buildings didn't prove strong enough to withstand the most powerful storm ever to make landfall: the wooden structures were completely blown apart while the roofing boards of the concrete classrooms were ripped off and the metal-framed roof structure collapsed into the building.

Thankfully no children were hurt, but the damage was too extensive for other emergency aid teams to deal with – a metal-framed roof is quite rare on Calagnan so islanders had neither the tools nor skills to fix it.

Luckily, HMS Illustrious did. Almost half of the 650 ship's company are engineers whose skills transfer well from fixing and

Continued on page 4





This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month

LUSTY FOR LIFE

FAREWELL 2013, hello 2014.

The new year opens with more than 20 Royal Navy warships and squadrons and RFA support vessels deployed around the globe, not to mention Search and Rescue units on stand-by at home.

Which is pretty much how 2013 opened – although 12 months ago we didn't have a carrier deployed over the cusp of the year.

Events in the Philippines prompted the dispatch of **HMS Illustrious** to offer relief and support in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan (as you'll no doubt have read on the preceding two pages).

Lusty relieved **HMS Daring**, who promptly resumed her 'world tour' by visiting Korea, then Shanghai (see opposite). The slight relaxation of tempo after the frantic fortnight around the Philippines has allowed the ship's company to reflect on a deployment which will live long in the memory for all aboard (see the centre pages).

Elsewhere, the RN's headline autumn deployment, **Cougar 13**, ended with the return of **HMS Bulwark** to her native Devonport (see page 6).

HMS Westminster has resumed her counter-piracy patrol after a three-week break in Dubai to mark the half-way point in her deployment (see page 8) while the RN-led staff directing that mission by **Combined Task Force 151** have handed over to the Danes. During the Brits' time in charge not a single merchantman off the Horn of Africa was hijacked by pirates (see page 6).

For much of the RN's time in charge of CTF151 its staff were based aboard **RFA Fort Victoria**, which has now returned to the UK after more than three years away (see opposite).

The Queen is now bigger than Nelson – **HMS Queen Elizabeth**, that is, which with the addition of her main radar is taller than Nelson's Column (see page 10).

Wildcat, the successor to the long-serving Lynx, is continuing down the road to front-line service. Its parent squadron **700W** took the helicopters aboard **HMS Monmouth** off the South Coast for the latest series of trials (see page 16).

Monmouth is about to bow out for the next 12 months as she undergoes a refit. Her younger sister **HMS Somerset** deploys this month after a demanding 2013 bringing the frigate out of refit (see page 14).

Also tested after a refit of her own, **RFA Argus**, whose impressive medical facilities were put under the microscope during Exercise Sabre Dawn (see page 7).

HMS Dragon completed her extended maiden deployment to the Gulf and eastern Mediterranean with cake (and a few hundred friends and family) waiting for her in Portsmouth (see page 6).

HMS Defender and **Duncan** (Type 45s No.5 and 6 respectively) have yet to deploy, but they are beginning to make their mark on the national and international stage. D36 returned to her affiliated city of Glasgow for the first time since she left the place of her birth (see page 9) while Duncan visited her first foreign port (Amsterdam) and then made her inaugural appearance in her 'twin town', Dundee, home of Admiral Duncan for whom the destroyer is named (see page 7).

We take a rare look inside the most important vessel in the RN's inventory, a nuclear deterrent boat. Uniquely, the latest patrol by **HMS Victorious** was recorded for posterity on camera (which is normally forbidden aboard – see page 18).

And finally... Blessed as we are with stunning imagery courtesy of the **Royal Navy Photographic Branch**, we use barely the merest fraction of the images supplied. So we've delved through the 2013 archive to showcase some of the best unseen photographs of last year (see pages 23-26).

Continued from page 3

maintaining marine and weapons systems and machinery and aircraft to domestic and civil engineering.

And should they alone not suffice there were members of 24 Commando Royal Engineers – the specialist Army unit attached to the Royal Marines – and Juliet Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, who brought a mix of engineering expertise and sheer strength.

The school roof had twisted as it collapsed and had ended up in a tangled mess. Lusty's engineers needed to remove the metal carefully without causing further damage by cutting the metal into sections using a pneumatic cutter, before hammering and twisting it away from the building.

The mechanical cutter struggled with the metal beams – testament to the incredible strength of Haiyan's winds – but after a day's toil the engineers had successfully removed all of the metal from the roof.

The school lost almost all of its books and learning materials but anything that could be salvaged was laid out to dry on the remaining chairs on a hill behind the school.

Having cleared out the debris, the team of engineers built a temporary flat roof on one of the buildings using bamboo and tarpaulin, allowing schooling to resume.

"It is a very special feeling to be able to come and use our skilled people and specialist equipment to help get the local community back on their feet," said 24-year-old Sub Lt Tom Thickness, from Somerset, who oversaw the engineering effort.

"All those in my team will be able to go home knowing that they have played a part in rebuilding people's lives and livelihoods – it gives a real sense of purpose to what we do.

"Salamat" was repeated more times than the team could count."



● 'There was simply nothing left of some of the houses...' A recce team from **Illustrious** heads down the beach on Calagnaan to assess the damage to the local school. Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones, HMS Illustrious

What has struck airman, commando and sailor alike is the resilience of Filipinos. Their islands, after all, endure more natural disasters than pretty much anywhere else on the planet.

"The locals were very tough – and in high spirits," said Mne Oxley. "They'd been working hard to try to rebuild their lives, but with little in terms of food and building materials they were limited in what they could do."

OC Wells added: "The islanders had done what they could but the scale of the task was just too great for them.

thank-you letter.

"It was really humbling."

The *salamats* did not stop there.

With her relief mission complete, the carrier briefly put into the Filipino capital Manila, where the country's Secretary of National Defence, Voltaire Gazmin, came aboard.

"No amount of words can precisely express our most profound gratitude for the noble deeds of HMS Illustrious and the British sailors in extending utmost assistance to the victims of that deadly natural disaster which has ravaged many islands of our archipelago," he told the assembled sailors, soldiers and Royal Marines.

"We can only thank you from the depths of our hearts, and treasure your most-appreciated help in our trying moments that has in no small way eased the pains and sufferings of our affected countrymen."

And in Cdr Taylor's cabin there's a crumpled piece of paper covered with slightly-halting English, from the children on the island of Sicogon: a thank-you letter "to the members of the Royal Navy".

"May you continue to help and served [sic] as an inspiration to all people, especially those who are less fortunate, not only in our country but also those who are in need from the whole world. "GOD BLESS YOU ALL!!!"

Bund of brothers

FRESH from her exploits in the Philippines, the Royal Navy's most advanced warship paid her first visit to China with a four-day visit to Shanghai.

There was a sizeable welcoming party from sailors of the People's Liberation Army Navy – and a sizeable media presence – on Shanghai's world-famous Bund as HMS Daring came to berth on the north bank of the Huangpu River.

Also among the senior officers, VIPs and diplomats on the Bund was Britain's Ambassador to Beijing, Sebastian Wood, who hailed Daring's visit "an exciting moment for relations between our two nations".

He added: "It symbolises the potential for deeper cooperation between us in areas from security to creativity, culture and innovation."

As well as being the first Type 45 destroyer to visit China, Daring was the first Royal Navy vessel into the People's Republic in five years.

As well as events with her PLAN hosts, Daring staged an evening reception, hosted UK business in China and a counter-piracy conference.

In addition, her detachment of musicians from the Royal Marines Band performed at the iconic Oriental Pearl Tower which rises 468m (1,535ft) above the city – directly opposite Daring's berth.

"Although ship visits to China are infrequent we hope HMS Daring's visit is the first of many such interactions between our militaries," said Cdr Angus Essenhigh, the Type 45's Commanding Officer.

"We share similar global challenges such as counter-piracy, preventing conflict, protecting our citizens overseas and supporting United Nations peacekeeping efforts and we are looking forward to developing our navy-to-navy links."

On a more solemn note, Daring's ship's company will take part in a service of commemoration for gunboat HMS Peterel, sunk on the second day of the war with Japan, December 8 1941.

Peterel was based in Shanghai – near to where HMS Daring was berthed – and her mixed Royal Navy and Chinese crew fought bravely against overwhelming odds before her commander, reservist Lt Stephen Polkinghorn, was forced to abandon ship; Chinese in sampans came to their assistance.

Throughout the visit, HMS Daring's sailors were hosted by the PLA Navy frigate Xuzhou.

Upon leaving Shanghai – as Navy News went to press – Daring was due to take part in exercises with the Xuzhou before continuing her world tour which ends next month.

Join HMS Daring, see the world... centre pages



Fin-tastic voyage ends

HE'S almost as happy as the 150 men and women aboard the ship...

A dolphin leaps out of the azure – and relatively calm – waters as RFA Fort Victoria makes her way home to the UK at last.

After stopping 20 armed pirate groups and seizing more than 50 pirates, the large support vessel completed a marathon 40-month deployment by returning to the Forth last month.

For many of her 1,197 days away from the United Kingdom, support ship Fort Vic acted as Britain's leading warrior in the fight against 21st-Century piracy in the Indian Ocean.

The vessel – built to provide the warships of the Royal Navy with fuel, food, ammunition and stores – twice acted as the flagship for Operation Capri, involving a specially-formed task force of sailors and Royal Marines charged with successfully hunting down 'pirate action groups': clusters of skiffs and mother ships operating off the Somali coast, intending to attack merchant shipping.

Each one of the successful blows against the pirates – be it a disrupted attack or arresting suspects – has been marked with skull and crossbones painted on the bridge wing of the 35,000-tonne oiler/replenishment ship: 20 successes in all.

Fort Vic's deployment began when she left Crombie Jetty, near Rosyth in Scotland, in August 2010 – and it was to the same place that she returned, mission complete.

"During our time away we have led a number of counter-piracy task groups, captured over 50 pirates, recaptured a large Italian bulk carrier – the MV Montecristo – rescued a significant number of merchant seamen from pirates and, most importantly, made the waters around Somalia much safer," said her Commanding Officer Capt Shaun Jones RFA.

The ship is a specialist auxiliary, fast and well armed; she carries stores, ammunition and fuel as well as having a large flight deck and hangar.

That allowed her to not only conduct patrols but to replenish other British and Allied warships in the region to enable them to stay on task longer.

Although Fort Vic has been away from the UK since August 2010, her 150 crew – mostly Royal Fleet Auxiliary, supported by Royal Navy and Civil Service personnel – change every few months.

"It has been a magnificent honour to serve as Fort Victoria's Commanding Officer through much of this period and I have nothing but admiration for the men and women who have worked onboard," said Capt Jones.

"Together the RFA, Royal Navy and Civil Service personnel – plus other military units who have served in the ship – have ensured that the deployment was such a unique and stunning success.

"We've all been looking



forward to seeing our families and loved ones again and the ship will now have a well deserved refit prior to returning to operations in early 2015."

Fort Victoria's east-of-Suez mission is being

continued by RFA Fort Austin, which was the flagship of the international Combined Task Force 151 (more from them overleaf) until the middle of last month, overseeing the counter-piracy effort across 2½ million square miles of Indian Ocean.

Picture: US Navy

Who rescues the rescuers?

TO misquote Juvenal the Roman poet.

Why HMS Gannet, of course. The Prestwick fliers were called on to help their RNLI brethren when a lifeboat crew member needed winching to safety in heavy seas off the Mull of Kintyre.

Campbeltown lifeboat had responded to a Mayday from a fish farming boat which had lost rudder steering west of Kintyre.

The vessel was successfully brought under tow by the lifeboat which began taking it to Campbeltown in the depths of night when one of the crew suffered an injury to his leg.

Gannet's duty Sea King responded – and faced challenging conditions, flying into a strong westerly headwind, gusting up to 45 knots.

Making a radar approach due to a lack of visual references and working on night vision goggles, they found the lifeboat towing the larger vessel.

The lifeboat was pitching violently, but eventually aircrewman and trained paramedic PO Shaun 'Boogie' Knights was lowered to assess the casualty.

He was repeatedly bashed against the lifeboat's rails and deck but succeeded in making the injured crewman comfortable in the stretcher and ready to be lifted to safety.

The sailor was flown to Crosshouse Hospital in Kilmarnock where he was treated and subsequently discharged.

Despite the tow rope parting at one point, the stricken fishing vessel was eventually towed into Campbeltown the next day, while the Sea King returned to base in Ayrshire after its three-and-a-half hour mission.

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Life sentence for commando

A ROYAL Marine has been sentenced to life behind bars after being convicted of murdering an insurgent in Afghanistan.

Sgt Alexander Blackman was found guilty at a court martial in November of killing an unidentified wounded rebel fighter.

The senior NCO was part of a patrol which came under fire in Helmand in September 2011 and called in air support, with Apache gunships responding to the call.

After the helicopters had struck, the commandos moved in and found a badly-wounded man lying in a field. One of the marines' helmet cameras recorded Sgt Blackman's subsequent words and actions, including him firing his 9mm pistol at the wounded insurgent.

Known only as 'Marine A' during his three-week

trial, Sgt Blackman's name was revealed when an anonymity order was lifted by a higher court.

Sentencing the 39-year-old from Taunton in Somerset to life in prison – with a minimum of ten years to serve behind bars – Judge Advocate Jeff Blackett said the marine was probably suffering from the stresses of combat after six tours of duty in Afghanistan, but that in no way justified his actions.

"While we acknowledge your personal circumstances and the immense pressure you were under, we note that thousands of other Service personnel have experienced the same or similar stresses," he told the senior NCO.

"They exercised self-discipline and acted properly and humanely; you did not."

Two of Blackman's comrades, 'Marines B and C' were cleared of murder.

HMS Quorn is Americans' mine host

SAILORS on minehunter HMS Quorn took their American counterparts to sea to show how the Royal Navy finds and deals with underwater devices.

Twelve sailors and officers from the USS Devastator joined the Hunt-class vessel as she sailed out of her base in Bahrain.

The visitors watched the launch and recovery of the ship's Seafox mine disposal system – a small remote-controlled submersible used by the Royal Navy to identify mines (courtesy of a CCTV video feed to the ops room), then destroy them with a one-shot explosive charge.

The Americans also watched Seafox in action from the ops room and had the chance to compare notes with their British opposite numbers about how their jobs are carried out.

"Time spent together under way and in port is crucial for building the foundation of our skill-sets and helps to build life-long friendships," said Lt Rob Kelly from USS Devastator. "This type of experience is invaluable and can only help both of our missions move forward to form a more effective international mine counter-measure force. I very much look forward to our next visit."

PO Simon Cooke, Quorn's operations room supervisor, said: "Working with our US partners is always a great experience and today was a useful opportunity to show off our minehunting equipment to our contemporaries."

His CO, Lt Cdr Eleanor Stack, added: "Opportunities to learn from each other are always of vast benefit to both navies and my sailors are always proud to show off their capabilities."

The US and Royal Navies each base four minehunters in Bahrain (Atherstone, Shoreham and Ramsey complete the British quartet).

Christmas hasn't moved

...BUT it has changed its name.

Many thanks to all our correspondents who spotted the 'deliberate' (ahem) error in last month's Photographic Memories feature.

The nuclear tests on Christmas Island were most definitely carried out in the Pacific, not Indian Ocean.

Since the tests were carried out half a century ago, the island has reverted to its Gilbertese name of Kiritimati... and the (surprisingly new) *Navy News* atlas only features the other Christmas Island, 6,500 miles away, hence our *faux pas*.

Re-enter the Dragon

A MEGA homecoming and cake. It's as if Christmas came early for the men and women of HMS Dragon.

Thirty-three days early to be precise. But they were a month late home due to an extended eight-month maiden deployment, so they were allowed to celebrate a bit.

A lot actually. In addition to the usual balloons, banners and cheers of several hundred family members and friends, there were roars (an RAF Typhoon flypast) bangs (a 17-gun salute) and, rather less cacophonous, the Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth and dulcet tones of Portsmouth Military Wives Choir to give the destroyer's maiden deployment a memorable finale.

"It is a great feeling to be coming home after all we have done as a ship's company in the last eight months," said 20-year-old ET(ME) Grant Mitchell, the youngest member of Dragon's company.

"Working with so many other countries' navies and visiting so many places has been a great experience."

The bulk of the Type 45's first tour of duty was spent in the Gulf, but the later stages of the deployment were spent in the Mediterranean as part of the UK response to the recent crisis in Middle East.

Dragon was deployed off Cyprus to help protect the two sovereign base areas on the island which are home to more than 6,000 British service personnel and their families.

The ship – one of six built to shield the Fleet from air attack –



Picture: LA(Phot) Maxine Davies, FRPU East

worked with the RAF to generate a constant picture of activity in the region as part of the air defence effort.

Before shifting her efforts to the Med, D35 had visited nearly all of the Gulf states including Oman, Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain.

In exercises with the US Navy, Dragon demonstrated her ability to work side-by-side with American carrier battle groups and their potent aerial firepower.

In all, the ship clocked up 50,000 nautical miles – more

than 57,000 miles, or more than twice around the world – since leaving Portsmouth in mid-March.

"I am immensely proud of what my ship's company have achieved in the last eight months," said Capt Iain Lower, the destroyer's CO.

"Dragon's success is testament to the agility and hard work of all her people who, building on the fine work of her predecessors, have set the standard for integration with our allies particularly with the US Navy.

"When taken alongside the challenging environmental conditions and engineering and logistical complexities, I am very proud of the team."

And the cake? Well several commemorative – and highly decorative – homecoming cakes were baked to celebrate Dragon's return (which, we believe, could be a first; we're more used to seeing them at (de)commissionings).

In time-honoured RN tradition, it fell to ET Mitchell to cut the cake assisted by Capt Lower's wife Pippa.

Aargh force one (five one)

NOT a single ship was seized by pirates during the Royal Navy's three-month command of a task force sweeping the Indian Ocean for raiders.

With up to half a dozen ships assigned to it at any one time, Combined Task Force 151 policed an area more than eight times the size of the North Sea.

It hunted down one pirate action group which had tried – and failed – to hijack two vessels, seizing nine pirates in the process and destroying their boats.

Despite that success, and the pirates' failure to take any ships and their crews hostage this autumn, the Royal Navy officer in charge of the task force, Commodore Jeremy Blunden, says the threat remains.

"Piracy has been much reduced in recent months but the

problem has not gone away," he said.

"The swift manner in which the pirates were dealt with should send a clear message – that those who are thinking of resuming piracy can expect an unhappy ending."

He headed a two-dozen strong Royal Navy staff, joined by sailors from numerous foreign navies who support the 29-nation Combined Maritime Force, which is dedicated to security of the seas east of Suez.

"I was curious to know how a team consisting of different nationalities, some of whom spoke little English, and various naval backgrounds, would adapt to work with each other," said CPO Bernie Dath, the staff's coxswain.

It was great to see how all the staff pulled together and worked as a team in a very short period of time."

The task force choreographed the efforts of the ships attached to it from two British naval support vessels: firstly RFA Fort Victoria, then Fort Austin.

The force concentrated on keeping the pirates holed up in their camps on the Somali coast – and should any slip through the cordon on what Cdr Blunden says "is a very long coast with a big bit of water".

One group which did get away tried to seize an oil tanker and fishing vessel and was driven away by armed teams on both craft.

Under CTF151's direction, the pirates were promptly hunted down by HMAS Melbourne before they could strike a third time.

During the UK's tenure of CTF 151, its units carried out numerous boardings and reassurance visits to merchant vessels and dhows to deter illegal maritime activity and provide security for the seafaring community.

Boarding teams visited more than 120 merchantmen and fishing vessels to talk to crew, warn them if there were any suspicious goings on in the area, and offer engineering assistance, medical aid and food and water if required.

The task force's helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft flew 850 hours – that's more than five weeks airborne – looking for illegal or unusual activity.

Typically, CTF151 has been directed from a headquarters ashore in Bahrain, which is the hub of operations by the Combined Maritime Force.



Cat's all folks

THE Royal Navy's key deployment of 2013 achieved all its objectives – and more – says the man who commanded it.



The nation's flagship HMS Bulwark brought the curtain down on Cougar 13 when she returned to base in Plymouth in mid-December.

The deployment saw major amphibious exercises take place in Albania, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, allowing important training for the lead Commando group, 42 Commando, their Viking armoured vehicles – and the vast panoply of logistical, aerial and military support needed to put them ashore and ensure they could push inland.

In addition, the UK Response Force Task Group – which comprised 11 warships and auxiliaries, plus elements of several Fleet Air Arm and Army Air Corps helicopter squadrons, and 3 Commando Brigade – worked with the military of nearly 20 nations, tackled piracy off the Horn of Africa and, most recently, provided vital humanitarian assistance, with the dispatch of HMS Illustrious to the Philippines.

The bulk of these exercises, visits and operations was directed from Bulwark by the Commander UK Task Group, Cdr Paddy McAlpine, and his staff.

"It is already evident that Cougar 13 has made a positive impact and a tangible contribution in support of national strategy – and I am enormously proud of the men and women who have made this possible," said the commodore.

"During an exceptionally busy four months, the Cougar 13 task group has remained forward deployed at high readiness to carry out a range of tasks in support of defence and wider government objectives.

"It has undertaken a number of high-intensity and challenging exercises alongside partner nations, contributed to counter-piracy operations alongside the European Union and other forces and undertook a range of other activities designed to engage across the Middle East region."

For Bulwark's Commanding Officer Capt Andrew Burns, the deployment had been "a remarkable success, and we exceeded expectations in all we did."

He continued: "My ship's company is quite exceptional – a team who have worked together with determination and huge professionalism. "I am certain they have achieved so much partly because of the support they receive from their families and loved ones at home."

Although Bulwark mustered with the bulk of her task group for the major set-piece exercises, such as Albanian Lion, Red Alligator (with the Saudis in the Red Sea), Sea Khanjar (in the Gulf with the UAE) and Omani Cougar, at times its ships were spread across 3,500 miles of ocean in three different time zones.

It has operated in two seas, two oceans, five gulfs, been through two straits, one bay and one channel.

As for the many nations it has worked with... they came from France, Japan, Portugal, Italy, Albania, Greece, Saudi Arabia, the USA, Norway, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Pakistan, India, Djibouti, Somalia, Egypt and finally Libya.

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Irish eyes smiling on Monmouth

FOUR days in the city of Belfast marked the final port of call for HMS Monmouth in 12 months as the frigate prepared for a major revamp.

The birthplace of the Titanic, HMS Belfast, Fearless, Glorious and Eagle was a fitting last visit for the Devonport-based warship's Commanding Officer Cdr Gordon Ruddock.

He comes from Newtownards, barely half a dozen miles from Northern Ireland's largest city, and studied at Methodist College Belfast before joining the Royal Navy in 1991.

Although HMS Monmouth is the fourth ship he has commanded, this was the first time he has been able to take a ship into the city.

"I have been looking forward to bringing my ship into Belfast for a number of years," said Cdr Ruddock.

"Coming back to Belfast is in some respects coming home for me, and this is a very poignant way to mark not only the end of my 18 months in command but also the end of a particularly successful period in the life of the ship herself."

Cdr Ruddock was not the only Northern Ireland native enjoying a homecoming; Weapon Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Steve Gilmore hails from Saintfield, while marine engineer PO Paul McCann comes from Moira, both in County Down.

In addition to a capability demonstration for invited guests from around the city, engineering students from schools and colleges were welcomed onboard to quiz the ship's company on the diverse roles and commitments of the Royal Navy and discover the unique challenges of operating and maintaining a warship thousands of miles from home.

HMS Monmouth was due to begin a large-scale refit this month which will keep her out of action throughout 2014.

A GLORIOUS winter sunrise casts a glow over the industrial shoreline of the North Sea Canal as Britain's newest destroyer makes her way towards Amsterdam.

HMS Duncan spent eight days across the North Sea in the Dutch capital – her first foreign port of call – flying the flag for Blighty in support of major trade shows.

The visit to the Netherlands was deliberately timed to coincide with a defence exhibition down the coast in Rotterdam, and the largest marine equipment trade show on the continent.

Both events were supported by the UK Trade and Investment and defence sections of the British Embassy as part of the 'GREAT Britain' campaign, also backed by Rolls-Royce and Aston Martin, who sent their iconic cars to park next to the Portsmouth-based destroyer on the jetty in Amsterdam.

The ship laid on capability demonstrations to give Dutch military personnel and industry

leaders an insight into what a Type 45 can do – everything from air defence to bridge operations and damage control.

Throughout her stay in Amsterdam the destroyer was an excellent ambassador for the UK – this from the UK's Ambassador to the Netherlands, Sir Geoffrey Adams: "HMS Duncan demonstrated diplomacy at its best and I was proud to be able to greet guests on the Royal Navy's most modern warship."

With an excellent berth only a ten-minute walk from the city centre, the ship's company were also out and enjoying the sights and culture of the largest city in the Netherlands, with many hiring bicycles to explore the area.

One in five members of the ship's company also signed up for the Zevonheuvelloop (Seven Hills Run), a 15-kilometre (nine-mile) race in Nijmegen. As well as posting some very respectable times, the run also raised money for Northern Ireland Children's Hospice – one of

Duncan's affiliated charities.

On the way to the run, the sailors paid their respects and laid a wreath on behalf of Hampshire Royal British Legion at Jonkerbos Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, the last resting place of 1,600 Allied servicemen.

Duncan also used her time to host guided tours for English and Dutch schoolchildren.

"Amsterdam has been an excellent opportunity to show my sailors – many of them in their first sea draft – what it means to fly the White Ensign around the world," said Cdr James Stride, Duncan's CO.

"The visit has also helped to further improve defence and trade links between two great allies."

Following the Netherlands trip, HMS Duncan made her first visit to her affiliated town of Dundee, where more than 3,500 members of the public toured the destroyer during the two days she was open to the public.

● Cdr James Stride, below, brings his ship alongside in Amsterdam



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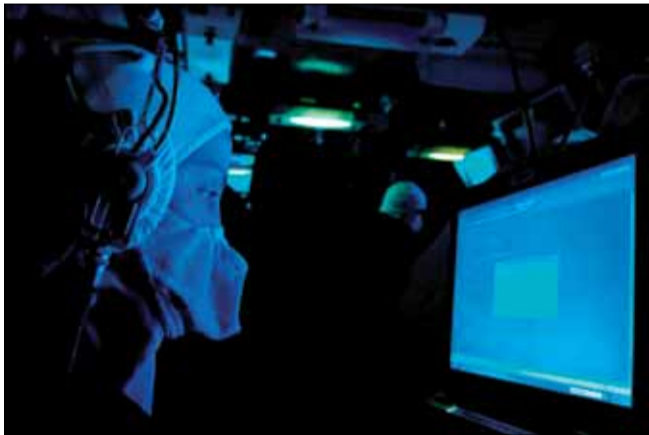
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● Go Green Team... (Above) Westminster's Royal Marines boarding party carry out a practice search and (below) perform one for real on a colourfully-painted fishing dhow in the Indian Ocean during an assurance and assistance visit

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum, HMS Westminster



● Wtr Sara Jones types in a narrative of a full-scale war exercise in Westminster's ops room



Recess is over

AH, Dubai.

With the winter sun dancing on the calm waters of the Gulf, three of HMS Westminster's junior rates take a last look at the Middle Eastern metropolis for some time.

After three weeks alongside in the UAE for her mid-deployment break, the 'capital ship' returns to sea to resume the fight against piracy "galvanised and ready for anything".

The recess (*Westminster*, recess – *geddit?*) in Dubai allowed ship and ship's company to recuperate from their exertions during the first half of their east-of-Suez deployment – a spot of maintenance and TLC for the frigate, a spot of downtime for the 200 sailors and Royal Marines.

Before the break, the warship's Royal Navy and Royal Marines boarding team inspected seven vessels during counter-drug smuggling operations and spoke to more than 80 skiffs and dhows during her anti-piracy work off the Horn of Africa, offering advice and learning about the 'patterns of life' among seafarers in the region.

HMS Westminster has also worked with other navies in the region, notably the Indians, taking part in the annual Anglo-Indian Konkan exercise, this year hosted in and around Goa.

To sustain the 'capital ship' to date, she has taken on 1,906 cubic metres of marine diesel – enough to fill the tanks of more than 34,000 Ford Focuses – to power her engines.

Westminster's Lynx helicopter

wasn't quite as thirsty, requiring 46,000 litres of aviation fuel (which would only top up the tanks of around 835 family cars).

The frigate's crew are almost as thirsty as their engines: 14,201 cups of tea have been downed, as have 3,920 litres of milk (that's 17 baths full).

On the food front, 455kg of sugar, 2,900 baguettes and 10,500kg of potatoes (that's the same weight as a double decker bus). If you were to line up the baguettes end-to-end, it would take you 4½ minutes to run the length.

And if lining up nearly three thousand baguettes sounds rather tedious (to say nothing of a tad pointless), the chefs tell us that if all the baked beans swallowed by the crew were laid end-to-end (that's *individual* beans, not tins thereof...) they'd stretch 1,800 metres, or seven and a half times around the upper deck.

So there really are bean counters in the MOD...

It proved rather easier to calculate the mileage (courtesy of the ship's log, electronic charts and all that). Before sailing into Dubai the frigate had covered 20,969 miles (Portsmouth-Sydney and back, as the crow flies) during 1,715 hours at sea (more than ten whole weeks).

The break in Dubai allowed some sailors to try their hand at adventurous training – cycling, indoor climbing, mountaineering and kayaking – while many crew

flew their families out for a holiday.

"The adventurous training in Dubai was brilliant – kayaking on rapids and white-water rafting," said 19-year-old Mid Philippa Little from Winchester.

"We slept out in the desert and climbed a mountain the next day, where the views were spectacular.

"It was a great opportunity to get to know many of the ship's company better, after only my first three weeks onboard."



PO(UW) Stuart Linehan was joined in Dubai by his wife and three children from Havant – and it was, understandably, "the highlight of the deployment so far".

He continued: "Now back at sea I feel galvanised and ready for anything."

"The most challenging moment would have to be conducting boarding operations off the Somali coast.

"My training prepares me for everything bar the heat and conditions you may encounter on vessels. It is a test of endurance and discipline in a physically-demanding environment and you have to be professional at all times, even when your body tells you otherwise."

Twenty-six-year-old AB(Sea) Alex Gregory from Basingstoke agreed.

"The most challenging part has been the boarding operations. At times it has been extremely testing, given the baking heat

and often cramped conditions," he said.

"The stops have been the best thing about the deployment so far – I've been able to see a variety of different and diverse cultures and try out new foods."

New foods would be utterly, utterly wrong at Christmas, of course. Crammed into the fridges, freezers and stores back in August were turkeys, cranberry sauce, stuffing, brandy, mince, and the devil's vegetable (aka sprouts) – all items not readily available in the Gulf – ready for festivities aboard.

That will barely tickle the stomachs of 200 souls. During Christmas dinner, the ship's company were due to devour an additional 20kg of beef, 20kg of gammon, 120kg of potatoes, 30kg of carrots, 30kg of broccoli, 150 Yorkshire puddings, 15 Christmas cakes, 300 pigs in blankets and 12 gallons each of tomato soup and gravy.

There was the small matter of a bit of pirate-busting to carry out first, however. So with his team "well rested" and his ship in fine fettle, Westminster's Commanding Officer Capt Hugh Beard took the Type 23 frigate back out on patrol.

"Westminster returns to sea ready for the challenge ahead," he said. "I have no doubt that the high standards of professionalism that characterised the first three months of operations will continue, and we will remain ready to undertake any tasking required of us throughout the remainder of the deployment."

● Royal Marine Sgt Richie Ness takes aim with his L22 carbine from one of Westminster's sea boats during a small arms practice shoot



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PUDDLES. They ruin your shoes. And they ruined Dr Foster's day.

But every now and then, they can be beautiful.

Get the right light (sunset on a December day), the right location (Glasgow's King George V Dock), the right subject matter (one Type 45 destroyer, represented here by HMS Defender) and the right person behind the camera (LA (Phot) Will Haigh) and you have a truly perfect image – a perfect memento of the ship's first visit to her adopted city since she was handed over to the RN.

The three-day visit to the Clyde gave the city's schoolchildren (and grown-ups) the opportunity to tour the fifth of Britain's six Type 45s.

The ship's company were also hosted by civic leaders at a reception in Glasgow City Chambers.

"I am hugely proud to be the first commanding officer to bring her back to the city and river where she was built – my ship's company and I feel extremely privileged to be affiliated to Glasgow," said Cdr Philip Nash, Defender's CO.

"I also served on HMS Glasgow and have experienced the true warmth and hospitality this great city has to offer."

Glasgow's Lord Provost Sadie Docherty added: "Glasgow has a strong shipbuilding and maritime tradition, and in 2014 the Royal Marines will be given the Freedom of the City to

acknowledge our highest respect for the proud history of the Royal Marine Corps and mark its enduring links with Glasgow."

While the ship was making her journey from Portsmouth to the Clyde, a group from the ship decided to climb their way north by completing a three-peaks challenge.

Having already completed both Snowdon and Scafell Pike, the group took on the Ben Nevis climb to raise money for charity, including Kelbourne Park School in Glasgow, which is one of the ship's affiliated organisations.

Sadly the December weather wasn't always this kind to D36 – her weapons trials straight after her Glasgow visit were scuppered by winter storms.

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Knights by name, knights by nature

SAILORS aboard tanker RFA Wave Knight gave up their free time while visiting Antigua to help repair a shelter for abused and abandoned children.



The Good Shepherd Home asked the British High Commission in Barbados for help and, despite a busy programme during the ship's visit to the island, a team of Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Royal Navy and US Coast Guard personnel were more than happy to lend a hand.

Three days were spent re-tiling the laundry room, rewiring the building, repairing plumbing and fixing the TV aerial before the 31,500-tonne vessel resumed her counter-drugs patrol of the Caribbean.

"I am incredibly proud of the ship's company for the hard work and enthusiasm they put in to helping the local community," said Wave Knight's Commanding Officer Capt Chris Clarke RFA.

"Not only did they give up their time but the ship bought the centre a new microwave from its amenities fund and also made a donation of £500 raised aboard."

The British High Commission was fulsome – and unusually emotional – in its praise for the tanker's efforts.

"I don't know where to start," it told Capt Clarke. "You and Wave Knight are like fairy godfathers as you go around our eastern Caribbean islands doing so much good."

"Your team's commitment in giving up three days, your generosity in donating the ship's charitable funds, the efficiency in getting the Tot Club involved, and the giving of all your technical expertise and skills is awe-inspiring. The High Commission is hugely grateful to you and everyone who was involved."



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THIS is the most powerful weapon in the Army Air Corps: eight tonnes of heavy metal, throbbing through the skies at 160mph, capable of spewing fire and fury at a foe unwise enough to challenge it.

At the controls is a sailor. Overseeing its maintenance is a sailor. Helping with the maintenance are two sailors.

For the past five months a four-strong Royal Navy team has been working side-by-side with their Army counterparts of 653 Squadron, flying or supporting daily missions by the helicopters which provide crucial air cover for ground troops.

Just as the Army's Apaches recently joined HMS Illustrious in the Gulf to give added punch to amphibious exercises, so a small cadre of Navy personnel has been vital to supporting the gunships' missions over Afghanistan.

Lt Jonny Orchard took charge of the 53 troops in the Close Support Section, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) soldiers who are responsible for the maintenance of the Apache.

He's coming to the end of a three-year exchange with the Apache force, becoming the first and only Royal Navy air engineer officer responsible for the gunships in theatre or on exercise.

He was joined in Helmand by fellow sailors pilot Lt Dan Leaker and air engineer technicians Petty Officers



● The RN's Apache warriors in front of one of the gunships... from left, pilot Lt Dan Leaker, POs Mark Stanton and Steve Capper, and Lt Jonny Orchard

Steve Capper and Mark Stanton.

In theatre, Apaches are always at immediate readiness to scramble in support of the international mission in Helmand – placing big demands on air and ground crews, as well as the helicopters themselves.

"Our technicians have worked extremely hard to keep the aircraft battle-ready and took pride in the service they have delivered," said Lt Orchard.

"Apache is a formidable aircraft. It's been a privilege to lead such a dedicated team and a great way to end three years with the British Army."

Lt Leaker is one of six Royal Navy/Royal Marines pilots on exchange across the Apache force. 653 Sqn generally focuses its operations over land, while if any gunship

squadron is likely to go to sea with the Royal Navy, it's 656 Sqn.

In Helmand province, Lt Leaker – a former Navy fast jet pilot who's switched to helicopters and has now completed his second Apache tour of duty – says the gunship has proved its worth, even without having to fire its arsenal of weaponry.

"It is normally enough to stop any determined enemy from attacking if it is seen arriving overhead," he explained.

"The Army Air Corps is quite rightly very proud of its achievements with this aircraft during Afghanistan and Libya, and it is a privilege to be a part of it."

The fact that soldiers understandably outnumber sailors on the squadron has made it "very hard to maintain

a real Royal Navy ethos", said Lt Orchard, but he and his fellow Senior Servicemen have striven to do so.

"It is a matter of having pride in our own Service – and remembering at all times that we are Fleet Air Arm and not British Army," he pointed out.

"Saying that, we have become fully involved with all Army activities and physical tests, such as the advanced (eight miles carrying 15kg and an SA80) and personal fitness tests (1½ miles, plus press-ups and sit ups)."

One staple of Naval life which has been introduced to the Apache warriors is the Brickwoods Field Gun run, such that personnel from across the helicopters' home base in the UK – Wattisham in Suffolk – have formed the 7th Air Assault Battalion REME team to run against Royal Navy and other military squads at HMS Collingwood each year, under Lt Orchard's direction.

"It is an event which the soldiers look forward to – and they take it very seriously. The natural rivalry between the RN and Army comes to the fore."

After a career supporting Fleet Air Arm jets, PO Capper said switching to Army helicopters "couldn't have been more different".

He added: "It has been a superb experience, in terms of maintaining such an important operational asset and working with some great people."

"It seems REME and Fleet Air Arm technicians share a great 'can do' attitude and a similar sense of humour."

Queen can see far with new radar

A LARGE black slab now sits atop Britain's biggest warship as the huge radar antenna was fitted to the superstructure of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The nation's future flagship now stands 56 metres (183ft) tall – higher than Nelson's Column – after the enormous Goliath crane lifted the 8.4-tonne long-range radar into place on top of the carrier's forward island.

The radar – similar to those fitted on the Type 45 destroyers – safely arrived in Rosyth with its support, the mast cap, from Hengelo in the eastern Netherlands back in September.

Since then feverish work has been going on around Queen Elizabeth to complete her hull (finished last month with the addition of her ski ramp).

With the addition of the mast cap and black slab – officially an antenna, despite its

size (32m² or 344ft²) – all of the ship's main structure blocks are now in place.

The radar, which provides a three-dimensional, long-range picture not just of the skies around Queen Elizabeth but also the waters, sits 27 metres (88ft) above the flight deck, 50 metres (164ft) above the sea.

And that's still not the highest point on Queen Elizabeth. When the communications pole mast is fitted next year it will be 70 metres (230ft) from tip to keel – which is almost as long as a River-class patrol ship.

As for the radar, it can track up to 1,000 contacts up to a range of 400km (250 miles) from the ship.

So, if fired up in Rosyth it could track every aircraft in UK skies as far south as Birmingham and Nottingham.

Or from Queen Elizabeth's home base of Portsmouth (arriving over the winter of 2016-17) the radar's eyes can see as far north as the Lake District, as far south as Nantes and as

far east as Brussels.

It now falls to the weapon engineering department and Aircraft Carrier Alliance technicians to mesh the radar and the data it will gather in with the rest of the systems.

It's the first time the civilian and RN engineers have worked side-by-side on a shipbuilding project; traditionally, shipwrights complete the installation of kit, then hand over the finished product to the Navy.

In a ship's company of 50 at present, the WE department is 21 strong – and will slowly rise to a full strength of 94 by 2015.

Given the size of Queen Elizabeth and complexity of her systems – billed as the Navy's ultimate engineering challenge – the engineers (marine and weapon) are keen to encourage their branch brothers and sisters to join them on the Forth.

Weapon engineers should contact WO Kenny Read (9335 65275), marine engineers WO Ian Hazel (9335 65741).

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The men and women of Diligence can. And much more to boot. (Not sure how they'd look on the catwalk though...)

The crew of the floating workshop – Forward Repair Ship is the correct official designation – describe their ship as the Navy's 'Swiss Army knife'; she can turn her hand to anything. (Her sailors also say she's 'ready for anything' and one of the most active and busiest ships in the Fleet.)

A few weeks ago Diligence was the hub of the largest engineering exercise the Naval Service has run in the Gulf

region, coming to the rescue of a 'stricken' HMS Montrose, towing the frigate and providing power and other amenities.

After that successful exercise, Diligence reverted to her more typical role east of Suez – mother ship, providing fuel and force protection to British and American minehunters based in the region as they went about their business.

The small ships have limited endurance – food and fuel – which means they're popping in and out of ports regularly. Not ideal for a sustained operation.

So to prolong their time on station, the minehunters 'rafted up' – effectively berthing alongside Diligence in the middle of the sea; once 'berthed', the RFA could meet most of the hunters' needs.

That's two different roles performed since Diligence sailed from Portsmouth back in July for a deployment of anywhere between five and eight years' duration (although in true RFA tradition, the crew change every few months).

Given that protracted presence in the region, even the floating workshop needs some work every now and then – hence a three-week stint towards the end of 2013 for a spot of essential maintenance of her own.

And over the festive season she was back on duty performing the principal mission of her lengthy deployment: submarine support vessel (somewhat like the depot ships of old – although these days its a case of providing support for the nuclear-powered duty T-boat east of Suez).

And when the submarine is back on patrol, there's fresh tasking. A team from FOST will assess the readiness of the ship's company to respond to all eventualities.

And then it's time to slot into Combined Task Force 152, the force which patrols the Gulf (and to which HMS Montrose is presently attached).

Diligence began life as a support ship for North Sea oil rigs. But at the height of the Falklands War in 1982, the then MV Stena Inspector was chartered by Whitehall as a repair vessel to support the Operation Corporate task force.

In October the following year, she was bought outright and converted for use by the RFA, formally commissioning in March 1984.

She provided vital after-battle support to the damaged USS Tripoli and Princeton during the first Gulf War in 1991 and, in company with HMS Chatham, spent several weeks off Sri Lanka in 2005 in the aftermath of the devastating Asian tsunami.

Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Herron



Kuwait1991

Class: Forward repair ship
Pennant number: A132
Builder: Öresundsvarvet AB, Landskrona, Sweden
Launched: January 1981
Bought: October 1983
Commissioned: March 12, 1984
Displacement: 10,595 tonnes
Length: 112m (367ft 6in)
Beam: 20.5m (67ft 3in)
Draught: 6.8m (22ft 4in)
Speed: 10kts
Complement: 54 RFA, up to 147 RN, and 55 embarked personnel
Propulsion: 5 x NOHAB Polar diesel generators and 4 x NEBB motors;
 2 x Kamewa bow thrusters;
 2 x azimuth aft thrusters
Armament: 2 x Oerlikon 20mm cannon; GPMGs; Mk44 Miniguns
Aircraft: flight deck can accommodate up to Chinook-sized helicopters

Battle Honours

Facts and figures



IWM PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

AFTER pummelling German lines on the Cotentin peninsula in June 1944, cruiser HMS Black Prince returns to Newcastle to take on board supplies – and is immediately connected to the telephone network, here tested by a Wren.

In an age of almost instantaneous global telecommunications allowing sailors contact by phone, mobiles – when within range of land – and email, our random dip into the bottomless lucky bag that is the Imperial War Museum's photographic archive takes us back to the early days of ship-to-shore communications.

This month marks the 66th anniversary of radio telephone service being introduced for ships in the Home Fleet and home waters (and this photograph obviously isn't a radio telephone...)

For 10s 6d – 52½p, or about £15 in today's money (and in 1948 the equivalent of a day's pay for a senior chief petty officer or three days' pay for a junior able seaman) – you could make a three-minute radio telephone call to friends and family via an operator.

Radio telegrams had been around since the 1920s – telegrams passed on by the Post Office to the Royal Navy for onward transmission to ships at a cost of 11d (just under 5p – or about £1.20 today) – per word.

So not especially cheap. Nor especially fast; the promise was to deliver a message inside five days. But it was heavily used. By the mid-1930s, three million words a year were being sent to ships by 'radiogram'.

Indeed, long after the introduction of radio telephone calls, radiograms continued to prove hugely popular; 11 million words were passing through the radio hub at Portishead, near Bristol, in the mid-60s, and 20 million a decade later.

As for the spoken word, rather than the written one, well it could be a rather convoluted affair, involving assigning frequencies, the ship's position and setting up a suitable time to make the call (to ensure there would be someone on the other end). After all that the call would be passed through the international exchange in London and then on through local exchanges until ultimately being put through.

Service calls were free. Personal ones were not – and the further away you were from home, the higher the cost. In the late 1950s, whilst it was still 10s 6d for a three-minute call around the UK, the price for ringing home from the Med was £1 16s and £3 12s further afield (a senior AB was now receiving about £1 3s pay a day, a veteran chief £2 2s 6d).

All of which sounds (a) very expensive and (b) very complicated compared with the package deployed sailors and marines get today as part of the welfare package: 30 minutes' free calls home each week (and they can buy top-up cards for a longer natter...).

The radio telegram has gone, replaced by free email; via the military's DII computer system it's delivered to individual machines aboard ship – rather than trotting down to the main communications office with a floppy disk carrying the words you wished to send home... and which everyone in the MCO could read if they were nosy.

And there is limited internet access (speeds are akin to dial-up rates in the late 1990s rather than the super-fast WiFi broadband you might enjoy at home).

For all the technology, however, snail mail remains hugely popular – especially at this time of year, with around 11 tonnes of letters and parcels being flown out to deployed ships and units wherever they are in the world.

■ THIS photograph (A 24477) – 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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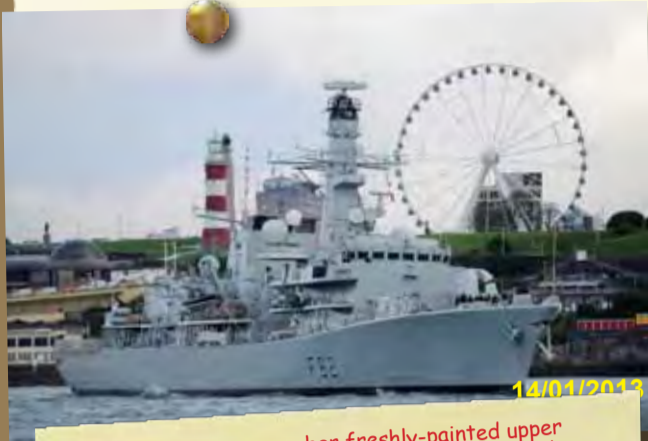


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Somerset spent 2012 out of action undergoing a £20m refit following two back-to-back deployments east of Suez. Although the ship was laid up in Devonport's landmark 'frigate shed' for much of that time, the Type 23 held on to most of her ship's company throughout the revamp, which gave them a real sense of ownership and fostered team work. Somerset's weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Paul Maddison takes us through a year in the life of the ship as she was 'regenerated' ready to deploy... again east of Suez... this month.



14/01/2013

Somerset returns to sea, her freshly-painted upper deck looking spotless. All 165 members of her ship's company, including Cdr Mike Smith - the newly-appointed commanding officer - are focused on regenerating 'the West Country's favourite warship' (their words, not ours!) back to full operational capability. A series of testing sea trials were successfully undertaken.



11/02/2013

Any highly capable anti-submarine warfare frigate needs an aircraft to match. In February Somerset welcomed aircraft back to her decks. For the first half of 2013 she operated with a Merlin and from summer has been paired with a Lynx. In 2014 she will also be the first RN warship to fly the Scan Eagle 'eye in the sky' on front-line operations.



15/03/2013

Somerset achieves Fleet Date (acceptance back into the Fleet) on time - and in some style - having achieved all of the required elements of sea trials. With her systems fully assured, she is the most up-to-date and capable Type 23 frigate in the RN's inventory.



12/04/2013

April was filled with a Fleet Time Support Period in Devonport, during which Somerset's command team started to plan the 2014 Kipion deployment and the challenges to be overcome. To be ready for that deployment - beginning in January 2014 - the ship must pass Basic Operational Sea Training, undergo Area Capability Training anti-submarine warfare, Directed Continuation Training and Exercise Joint Warrior. With a period as Fleet Ready Escort thrown in for good measure the rest of 2013 was going to be busy!



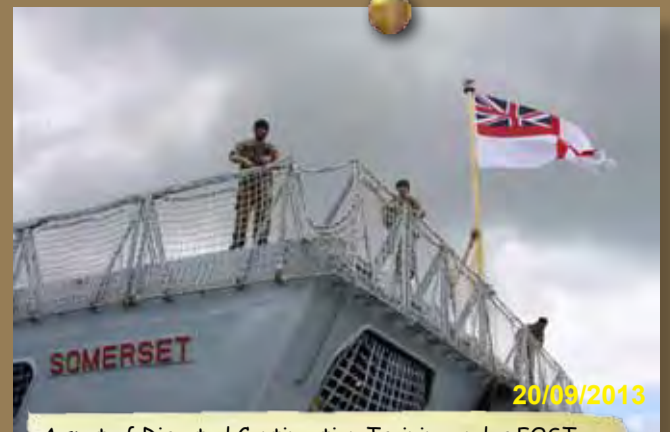
10/06/2013

Somerset undertakes a successful BOST under the watchful eyes of the Flag Officer Sea Training. During the six-week package a considerable number of threats were countered, fires extinguished, floods made dry, Thursday wars fought, submarines hunted, helicopter hours flown and action snacks eaten. A visit to the Isle of Scilly was used to test the ship's ability to 'meet and greet' during port visits and a disaster relief exercise determined the sailors could respond to the ravages of nature.



24/07/2013

Anti-submarine training in the North Atlantic provided Somerset with the opportunity to hone her sonar skills and drills. As a Sonar 2087-fitted ship, Somerset has a world-beating ability in this field - and certainly proved this during 2 weeks of training with a RN submarine. It was during this period that the ship became home to Paul the Pigeon, who landed on her over 300 miles out to sea, very lost and tired. The bird was subsequently returned to his owner in the North-East of the UK.



20/09/2013

A spot of Directed Continuation Training under FOST. Somerset practised her ability to deal with all situations she is likely to encounter East of Suez in 2014. The 'mission rehearsal' included a considerable amount of boarding training, with the ship's embarked Royal Marines detachment. Somerset again proved her mettle.



14/10/2013

Exercise Joint Warrior, off North-West Scotland, allowed Somerset to operate with a large number of other units, at sea, in the air and over land. Complex naval gunfire was practised alongside more demanding anti-submarine tasking. The ship and ship's company delivered all that was required of them by operational commanders. After nine months of intensive work, Somerset was now truly ready.



12/11/2013

Somerset returns to Devonport for a pre-deployment support period, including Scan Eagle fitting, ahead of her deployment in 2014. The ship is made materially ready and the ship's company receive some top-up training and have the opportunity to undertake adventurous training.

And that's how one of Her Majesty's premier warships spent 2013.

The year ended with HMS Somerset ready for operations having spent 160 days at sea, proven all her systems and equipment, practised all the skills needed and fought hard during 11 Thursday wars at FOST. It has been a challenging but rewarding year - and it has flown by. The West Country's favourite warship has developed a reputation as 'a can-do ship' and with all regeneration boxes ticked, she looks back with pride - and forward with confidence.

A golden year in Somerset

All eyes on Argus after medical test



RFA ARGUS has passed her first medical exercise since an extensive refit.

Argus – the Royal Navy's Primary Casualty Receiving Facility (PCRFR) – successfully completed Exercise Sabre Dawn, which tested her capability as a ship capable of delivering life-and-limb-saving emergency medical care at sea.

As a PCRFR she has a fully-equipped 100-bed hospital with four operating theatres, a ten-bed critical care unit and a 20-bed high dependency unit as well as a CT scanner.

Exercise Sabre Dawn put all of these to test, and with her mixture of embarked medical staff, Royal Navy and RFA personnel she sailed through her evaluations.

The exercise concluded with a VIP visit from Rear Admiral Jonathan Woodcock, Naval Secretary and Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Personnel), who hosted senior personnel from the three Services as they watched a demonstration of the ship's capabilities.

Adm Woodcock said: "I am immensely proud of Argus."

"She is a proven capability for defence and remains at high readiness to deploy on operations worldwide."

Commanding Officer Capt David Buck RFA said: "Having recently assumed command of Argus, I'm delighted to have been provided the early opportunity to partake in Exercise Sabre Dawn."

"Successful completion now



● Above, right and left: Medical personnel and sailors on board RFA Argus during Exercise Sabre Dawn

PICTURES: PO (Phot) Si Ethell

means the validation of the hugely impressive onboard PCRFR capability."

Exercise Sabre Dawn saw 120 medical personnel take part from the Ministry of Defence Hospital Units, with representation from all three Services, the Royal Marines Band Service and the

Royal Naval Reserve.

PCRFR Commanding Officer Cdr Danny Follington added: "All of those involved have undergone intensive maritime and medical training, and worked diligently to prove that the hospital is ready to receive casualties if called upon."

"During the recent refit, many improvements have been made, with the expansion of the emergency department and the installation of a state-of-the-art CT scanner."

In the spring RFA Argus will take part in the latest Joint Warrior exercise.



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Wild eyed

DON'T, as the tried and trusted, nay clichéd, proverb advises, judge a book by its cover.

It's what is inside which matters. Take Wildcat. Beyond the mottled grey camouflage livery and the tailplane, it looks like a Lynx. Sounds like a Lynx. Buzzes around like a Lynx. Drops in on the back of Type 23s like a Lynx. Has a pilot, observer like a Lynx. It's based at Yeovilton like a Lynx. Will be the mainstay of frigate and destroyer aerial operations around the globe like a Lynx.

And speaking to the flight deck team aboard HMS Monmouth, with whom Wildcat conducted the latest stage of its comprehensive trials programme late last year, strapping it to the deck of a Type 23 is just like a Lynx "although the straps used did seem stronger", ET(WE) Danny Sharp observed.

Getting over the 'Lynx mindset' is just one hurdle facing the men and women of 700W Naval Air Squadron, who've got just 12 months to get Wildcat ready for front-line duties.

If Wildcat were a souped-up Lynx – a sort of super Super Lynx – it would be rather easier introducing it into service. And maintaining it.

There are about 60 parts which are identical with a Lynx. Everything else is new. That's thousands of parts, sensors and systems to get your head around.

"Mechanically it's like a Lynx, but the electronics and sensors, that's all new. And that's a steep learning curve for everyone," explained WO2 'Mitch' Mitchell, 700W's senior maintenance rating.

"We have 30 years of Lynx knowledge. Here we have to learn

everything about Wildcat in about a year."

His colleague, PO(AET) Stu Picton, nodded.

"It's a big step up in technology, – it's much more advanced. You're going from the 70s to the digital age," said Stu.

"Lynx is still a great aircraft, it still does a great job, but compared with this, it looks antiquated. I wouldn't want to go back – it'd be like returning to the Stone Age."

Mitch has 18 years' experience looking after different variants of Fleet Air Arm Lynx. He wanted the challenge of working on Wildcat.

"It's not easy but morale is high. It's new kit – and people like new kit. We've got to write the rule book for the next 40 years."

That book, like the aircraft itself, will be digital. When it deploys, Wildcat will take with it eight maintainers and seven laptops (all the manuals for looking after the helicopter are electronic).

As for the operator's – rather than engineer's – manual, well there's a lot to write. And it's got to be written quickly.

"This is exciting," says 700W's CO Lt Cdr Simon Collins.

"The people I work with are something else. Their morale and enthusiasm overcomes any frustrations we might encounter."

Later this year 700W's sister squadron, 702 – which currently instructs Lynx air and ground crew – will begin training air and ground crew so it can begin feeding the Fleet Air Arm with trained Wildcat crews.

So what world will those would-

be Wildcats step into?

Well, where once cockpits were a jumble of dials and gimbals, there are four large computer screens which can display everything from maps, radar readouts and weapons targeting to all the information a pilot requires – speed, altitude, artificial horizon – but in digital form. They're clear, simple and easy to read. (There's still a bit of analogue in here for that end-of-the-world scenario.)

On the nose is the main piece of kit which distinguishes the Navy from the Army variant: the radar. It's good. "It can give you a sort of Google maps-type aerial view," pilot Lt 'Woody' Woods explained.

A Lynx's radar 'only' covers 180° – you have to point the helicopter in the direction you want to look. The Wildcat gives 360° coverage.

"Before we even get to the South Coast we have pretty much every contact within 80 nautical miles plotted and tracked – it does it automatically," explained Lt Cdr Collins.

If there's a contact of interest, simply point and click on the mission system and the WESCAM camera – able to see by day or night – will zoom in for a visual inspection (and the footage can be recorded).

"In the right conditions, you can see 30 or 40 miles away," Lt Cdr Collins continued.

"In the past you'd have to get within ten miles to have a look.

"So you've saved yourself a good 20 minutes' flying time each way."

As an observer, Lt Cdr Collins is

"used to a lot of information.

In Wildcat, it comes in more quickly, and the quality is better.

"Some things will not change – navigation is still a question of getting from A to B, but how we fight and operate Wildcat will be different."

And the experience of flying Wildcat?

"It's easy to think you are in a Lynx," said Lt Woods. "You're not. You're in a Wildcat."

"Wildcat feels similar to fly, but there's a lot more power and a lot less vibration. It's a smooth ride. It's like getting in a brand-new car after being in an old one.

"It's also much more comfortable, more ergonomic. It's been built with the crew in mind."

And passengers too. In the back of the cab, gone is that horrible, uncomfortable inflatable 'sofa', replaced by proper seats.

The Wildcats clocked up 19 sorties while aboard Monmouth off the South Coast – half a dozen more than originally planned – and helped the frigate with two simulated Harpoon missile firings to boot.

The Black Dukes were impressed by the new helicopter (even if they did think it was rather Lynx-like...).

Further exposure to the rest of the Fleet throughout 2014 should spread the Wildcat word ahead of the first deployment of a flight with a destroyer or frigate this time next year – and maybe, just maybe, help it to shed its 'just a Lynx' tag.

"It looks like a Lynx and that is the biggest problem," said Lt Cdr Collins. "Wildcat needs to be viewed as a completely new aircraft. What it can do goes way beyond what a Lynx can do."



NAVY NEWS

SHIP of the MONTH

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The faces of the men who bear the ultimate burden

IN HIS chair in the control room of the most potent machine in the Royal Navy's – and UK's – arsenal, tactical systems officer Lt John Cursiter considers the task at hand.

This – and the other portraits peppered around this page – is the burden of the Senior Service's ultimate mission, Operation Relentless, the continuous at sea deterrence, as you've never seen it captured before.

For several months on an operational patrol, Cdr Stuart Blackburn captured day-to-day life aboard HMS Victorious, providing a unique snapshot of the Royal Navy's 'bomber' force.

The photographic branch (rather unimaginatively) calls these images 'people at work' shots. They're a useful glimpse of life in the RN – and are a staple diet of recruiting campaigns.

Chefs toiling in the galley, the ops room team in their anti-flash running through another air defence exercise, the stokers crawling in some god-forsaken sweaty, oil-smearing cranny to fix a pump.

Now try looking for photographs of the same aboard one of the four V-boats which perform the nation's ultimate mission.

Not much is there?

The reason is simple. Given the nature of what the submariners do, cameras are not allowed on board.

So not only are you cut off from your family for months at a time, receiving a few words in a 'familygram' once a week, but you have nothing to show them: here's what I do, here's where I live. Unlike the surface fleet, there's no homecoming with fanfares, no opportunity to take the folks aboard.

And given that the bomber community tends to stick together, you could spend years – and some deeps do – in the V-boat force without any personal record

of what you do, save a shiny silver or gold 'pin badge'.

Which is all rather sad. Because life in the RN isn't just about deployments – it's about the people you serve with, the fun you have and, at times, the burden you bear.

So with several weeks on a deterrent patrol, Victorious' executive officer Cdr Blackburn – now Commanding Officer of HMS Vanguard (Port) – decided to make a permanent record of the men with whom he served, as a project for himself and, more importantly, as a keepsake for his shipmates.

As Victorious' security officer he knew what he could – and could not – capture on camera.

So armed with a Nikon 300 he began roaming around the 490ft leviathan – although his shipmates were slightly reluctant subjects initially.

"I took a couple, showed them to the lads and then I began to receive requests from other members of the crew," he says.

"It was a good way of getting to know the crew, of breaking down any barriers.

"It's about giving them a memory of their time aboard. I wanted to give them an image that they would probably not have had to give to their families and say: 'That's me at work'."

After taking a photographic course in sixth form and a ten-week Open University course, it was when he was working in London that Cdr Blackburn picked up a camera again in earnest and studied the capital's homeless.

"I don't do perfectly-framed portraits – I prefer something which is more

natural, more authentic – and black and white gives a photograph a much more intense and emotional force."

The result is a cross section of images of every branch, every rank aboard – chefs, engine room watchkeepers, sonar operators, the control room team and coxswain.

"These are the faces behind the deterrent," Cdr Blackburn adds. "Most of the guys are happy, but there's an intensity there as well. You can see the burden that some of them bear.

"But the photographs also show that you can have a bit of fun as well."





● Capt Tim Peacock RN, Capt (South) to FOST, presents a cheque to Robert Maltby of St Lukes Hospice at FOST(S) HQ.

Picture: LAPhot Joel Rouse

FOST boost for Devon hospice

RENOWNED for their tenacity and dedication to setting high standards, staff from Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST), based in Plymouth, have raised the bar again in their fundraising efforts.

They recently presented local charity St Luke's Hospice with an impressive £5,447. The money raised by sponsored events including the Plymouth Half Marathon, an auction at a FOST dinner and a Hadrian's Wall walk of 84 miles in four days from Bowness-on-Solway to Wallsend in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Receiving the cheque, Robert Maltby, from St Luke's Hospice, said: "I know how much hard work the sailors put in to these challenges. They could opt for something easy, but their dedication and passion to make these challenges interesting and support to our charity is truly amazing."

"Over £5,000 is an impressive amount raised and will help towards the £4.5 million we have to raise every year to provide free end-of-life care to our local community. Thank you from everyone at St Luke's."

FOST staff have also raised £435 for the Jubilee Sailing Trust, enabling two disadvantaged children from the Plymouth area to spend time at sea on the tall ship TS Tenacious, and £500 has been raised for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Lt George Blakeman, from FOST, said: "St Luke's Hospice is an important local charity so we are delighted to be able to raise money for this fantastic organisation."



Friends in the North

HMS DAUNTLESS sent a small contingent 'home' to Newcastle-upon-Tyne for the Great North Run.

Led by their ship's CO, Cdr Adrian Fryer, Lt Cdr Iain Kearsley and LET Matt Yates ran to raise funds for the Percy Hedley Foundation, one of the official charities of the ship, which is affiliated to the city.

Although the race took place in wet and windy conditions, all three were delighted to finish.

At the line in South Shields, Cdr Fryer presented a cheque for over £1,000 to the charity, in addition to the individual sponsorship funds which had been raised by the runners, raising the total to over £1,700.

Cdr Fryer said: "The Percy Hedley Foundation is a fantastic charity and I am delighted that Dauntless is affiliated to it, and able to support it in this way."

"I know the money the ship has raised will be put to very good use and will make a real difference for children and adults in the North East."

Sign up for 100k walk

BLIND Veterans UK, the national charity for blind ex-Servicemen and women, still has places for its 100K walk 2014. Taking place June 21-22 2014, for the first time two-man relay teams can walk 50km of the trek each. Participants need to complete the walk in just 24 hours. The cost of a space is £99 per person or £120 per relay team.

The all-inclusive entrance fee for participants includes hot food at three rest stops, snacks and refreshments along the route, first aiders en route as well as a free event t-shirt.

For details see: www.walk100.org.uk/sign-up.

Support network recognised

FIVE years ago, four ladies sat around a kitchen table in Southsea and identified the emerging need for a support network for widows and widowers in the Naval Service, sadly growing in number over years of military conflict, fatal accidents and terminal illness.

From these humble beginnings, The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Widows' Association grew in stature to be held in high regard, respected by those who have had any contact with the support network.

Two of those ladies at the table were Bridget Robison and Liz Fry who, after five years of serving on the committee,

recently stepped down to let others take on the mantle of helping to run the Association.

As a mark of appreciation and thanks for all the time and effort they spent developing and raising the profile of the Association, the two were 'dined out' by other members of the committee at a luncheon held in the Wardroom of HMS Nelson.

Bridget Robison, on stepping down from the committee, will be the Widows' Association first President.

Chairperson Lesley-Ann George-Taylor, one of the original founders of the Association, has also decided to step down and will be replaced by Elaine Hanby. Lesley-Ann's many years of

hard work and dedication is greatly appreciated by all the members.

In recognition of their service to the Association, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel invited the founders along with two other members of the Widows' Association to lunch at Admiralty House to convey his sincere personal thanks to the team.

The RNRMWA was formed to bring friendship, support, guidance and comfort to those who have experienced the trauma of bereavement, and now has a membership of over 70 ladies countrywide and continues to attract new members as the bereaved become aware of the support network.



● The committee ladies meet for a farewell lunch

Picture: Helen Wise

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*2013 Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey shows satisfaction among those serving in the RN fell from 63% to 44% over the past 5 years.



● PO(SE) Hall (left) and LA(SE) Senior in the raft

Teamwork the key to duo's grand bid

TWO naval servicemen spent 24 hours in a liferaft in Portsmouth Harbour to raise nearly £1,000 for two charities.

PO(SE) Ben Hall and LA(SE) Ashley Senior were supported by a team from the Royal Navy Air Engineering and Survival School, HMS Sultan, during the survive-a-thon at the Gosport Ferry pontoon.

The duo raised £990 from

members of the public, which will go to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) and Bembridge Primary School on the Isle of Wight, where PO Hall's four-year-old daughter Nava has just started in reception class.

POA Hall said: "So much of Navy life is about facing challenges together and this has been no different."

Get your bids in now for next round of cash

PERSONNEL wishing to improve facilities and recreational spaces across the Naval Service are encouraged to apply for a major grant from the Naval Service Amenities Fund (NSAF).

Applications for grants over £5,000 are considered three times a year, and the closing date for the next round of applications is January 7 2014.

Anne Carr, Head of Grants at the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, said: "We are urging personnel to get in touch... we have funding

available for the right projects.

"Personnel should consider the impact they could make to a mess area, sports facility or their work environment – especially if the additional funding would enhance morale, well-being or operational efficiency."

Applicants will be expected to complete an application form, cover at least 25 per cent of the overall project costs from other funding sources, and have the written support of their Commanding Officer. Find out more by calling 023 9254 8191.

Codfather chips in with supper offer

AN award-winning fish and chip restaurant in Cornwall is offering discounts for all serving and veterans of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

The Harbour Lights restaurant in Falmouth has won awards for quality and the National Good Catch Award for sustainable fish practices in 2013.

Military personnel and former members of the RN and RM are being offered a discount on its standard prices – plus a donation to Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) on these purchases will be made.

"The money raised by the Harbour Lights restaurant will make a real difference," said Malcolm Pollock, from the RNRMC.

"It is a real bonus that our men and women receive a discount too."

The restaurant is owned by a former RN aircrew officer who was based at RNAS Culdrose for 18 years, Pete Fraser, and his wife Sue, who are keen to keep their links with the RN.

As a proud Cornishman and committed to supporting worthy charities, Pete is eager for the Harbour Lights Chip Shop to support the work of the RNRMC, the Royal Navy's charity of choice.

RNRMC improves the lives of those serving in ships, squadrons, submarines and commando



● Sailors from HMS Enterprise pictured with Sam the Sustainable Cod from the Harbour Lights fish and chip restaurant in Falmouth

Picture: Pete Wooldridge

units – in 2012 alone the charity distributed over £6.5m to its beneficiaries, so the financial support offered will contribute to the charity's aim of 'raising more, so it can give more'.

Pete said: "Ships from the RN make frequent visits to Falmouth, and many naval personnel live and work in the area."

"These sailors, airmen and

Royal Marines are expected to give everything for their country, maintaining a strong military presence in tough environments, at sea and on the land.

"It's important we in the community support them, which is what the Harbour Lights is proud to do, and hopefully other businesses will follow."

HMS Enterprise is a frequent

visitor into Falmouth, often programmed to visit for planned maintenance and docking periods.

"Falmouth never fails to extend its hospitality to us," said PO Matthew English.

"We couldn't ask for a warmer reception, especially when it comes to having award-winning fish and chips after completing our Friday duties."

Men of iron take the cake

SAILORS from HMS Iron Duke took some well-earned time out from preparing their ship for sea trials and turned chef for a day for the Great Iron Duke Bake-off Charity Cake Competition.

The competition, held on board the Portsmouth-based warship, involved each mess-deck providing sweet selections for judging and subsequent charity sale, raising £114 for the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity when they were sold around various ships in the dockyard.

The Type 23 frigate's ship's company showed that as well as being Men of Iron, they were also Men of Mouth-Watering Manna (from Heaven) with their culinary cook-offs.

Leading Physical Trainer 'Smokey' Cole – who loves a bit of cake – got each mess deck frantically searching for the baking ingredients, accessories and cook-books, in order to raise money for the RNRMC.

There were many delicacies on offer – banana cake and loaves, layered cakes, coffee and walnut cake, ginger bread biscuits and even the odd meat pie.

HMS Iron Duke's Commanding Officer, Cdr Tom Tredray, had the hard job of choosing the winner. After much discussion and deliberation, the title of 'HMS Iron Duke Great Bake-off Champion' went to Leading Engineering Technician Lee Blease.

LET Blease thanked his mum for helping him complete a magnificently decorated HMS Iron Duke cake.

The frigate is nearing the end of a long period of refit and maintenance in preparation for an operational deployment during the first half of this year.

Charity supporter Mrs Pam Montacute, from Somerset, raised more than £75 when she arranged a cake sale for her friends and family.



● LPT Smokey Cole with cakes made by crew from HMS Iron Duke

Legends honoured at tri-Service fundraiser

SCORES of British military legends have been celebrated at the biggest tri-Service fundraiser of the year – the British Military Tournament (BMT) – which took place at Earls Court in London as *Navy News* went to press.

The show, which promised to be one of the most daring and exciting yet, included a dramatic re-enactment of one of the most important moments in World War 2 history – the seizure of Enigma codebooks from U-559 in October 1942.

The show paid tribute to the three men involved – AB Colin Grazier, Lt Tony Fasson and NAAFI Canteen Assistant Tommy Brown.

AB Grazier and Lt Fasson drowned when the scuttled submarine finally sank and Brown died in a house fire later during the war.

The Duke of Cambridge, Prince William, was on the guest list, as was David Beckham, showing their support for the three charities

represented – the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity; ABF -The Soldiers' Charity and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.

Other moments captured by performers included Nelson's victory at Trafalgar and a tribute to the heroes of the Falklands.

Tributes were also paid to today's modern-day military legends, such as serving and ex-Servicemen who have overcome disabilities to walk to the North Pole, row the Atlantic and compete in the Olympics.

JANUARY 2014 FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH

Royal Navy Theatre Association

Stage right for actors



● Robin Sheppard as Nanna in HMS Collingwood's production of Peter Pan

Picture: Pam Johns

BUDDING thespians from the Royal Navy Theatre Association raised more than £700 for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

The group put on a number of successful plays – including *Henry V*, which was performed outside HMS Victory – and a run of Christmas pantomimes.

In addition to proceeds from programme sales, the cast and stage crew were hard at work collecting donations during the interval and following each performance.

EVENTS

FEB 5

Fight night

Royal Navy boxers will bid for glory at the HMS Nelson Boxing Tournament on February 5.

To enjoy a three-course meal with drinks from your ringside seat call Hilary on 023 9254 8416.

A table of ten costs £500 and all proceeds go to the RNRMC.

MAR 13-15

Making music

Music to mark the 350th anniversary of the Royal Marines will feature at this year's Mountbatten Festival of Music.

The event takes place at the Royal Albert Hall on March 13, 14 and 15.

To book your tickets, from Monday January 6, call the box office on 0845 401 5018 or www.royalalberthall.com

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H4H grant boosts club plan

A GRANT from the military charity Help for Heroes will enable the Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth – formerly the Royal Sailor's Home Club – to progress ambitious plans for enhanced facilities for its disabled guests.

General Manager John Alderson welcomed the news, saying: "This grant is the first step in realising our ambitions to become the South Coast's premier R&R facility for all sailors, veterans and their families."

The club will now start on the building work for a new, specially-adapted bedroom suite, en-suite wet room and adjoining carer's (or children's) room.

Two 'disability friendly' bedrooms will also be fully upgraded and refurbished.

The next big project is the installation of a new hydraulic platform linking the ground floor with the Trafalgar ballroom and balcony facilities, ensuring that disabled guests and visitors have access to all of the facilities.

Bryn Parry, CEO of Help for Heroes, said: "We are delighted to have been able to support the Royal Maritime Club to allow greater accessibility for all sailors, veterans and their families."

"The club's facilities are superb and will offer welcome respite to those who have suffered life-changing injury or illness as a result of their service."

"We look forward to seeing the work develop over the coming months and hearing the difference the grant will make to our heroes."

Donors help to stock up

WHILE the nation was writing Christmas lists, waiting to see what Santa might bring, spare a thought for those waiting anxiously for their must-have gift.

Their longed-for present is something far more vital than any of the latest electronic gadgets or toys – it's blood.

Cdr David Cox is a regular blood platelet donor who stepped forward to support the NHS Blood and Transplant Service in their thought-provoking Christmas campaign, which calls for donations to help those whose lives depend on blood or platelet transfusions.

Christmas and the New Year is typically a challenging time for blood stocks. Hospitals in England and North Wales need almost half a million units of blood to see them through this busy period. However, with the general rush to get organised for the holidays, taking the time to donate can slip off people's to-do list, which puts pressure on blood stocks.

Every three weeks, David takes a few hours away from his desk at the Ministry of Defence to donate. In December, he took part in the NHSBT Christmas promotion which saw several regular donors dress up as Santa raising awareness of the need to donate blood and platelets over the festive period.

David first started donating blood when he turned 40 back in 2010. At his second blood donation, he readily agreed to donate platelets, the small cells working with the plasma to stop and prevent bleeding.

Unlike normal whole blood



donation, platelets can be collected 24 times a year with a minimal interval of 14 days in a procedure which takes about an hour and a half.

David donated for the 46th time on Christmas Eve, helping to save and improve the lives of so many people.

He said: "Giving platelets has been one of the best things I have ever done. It's very rewarding knowing that doing something as easy as donating platelets can make such a difference to people's lives. It also supports military personnel serving on operations which is

another important reason why I like to donate."

A unit of blood has a shelf life of 35 days. Besides being crucial to care in A&E, blood is used to treat patients with cancer, blood disorders like sickle cell or thalassemia as well as women needing blood during childbirth.

If you're 17 and over and in general good health, visit www.blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 23 23 to find a session near you in England or North Wales to give blood.

Platelet donors can donate at one of 24 donor centres across England. www.blood.co.uk/platelets

Supporting the NHS's Blood and Platelet donation Christmas campaign, Cdr David Cox (far left) dressed up as Santa for the campaign to raise awareness to donate over the festive season while (below) in a simple routine lasting about 90 minutes the officer donates his platelet cells, helping to save countless lives.

Main picture: Adrian Brooks, Imagewis



CPO Donna Steenvoorden and LS Emma Deacon brew up
Picture: Keith Woodland

Intelligent brew-up

PERSONNEL from the Fleet Intelligence Centre were literally presented with food for thought when challenged to guess the weight of a hefty cake donated to HMS Collingwood's annual 'Big Brew Up' event in aid of SSAFA.

Organiser CPO Donna Steenvoorden, supported by LS Emma Deacon and LS Kirsty Varney, laid out an impressive spread of home-made and donated cakes to the delight of their colleagues.

Donna said: "It's such a wonderful cause and to be supporting an Armed Forces charity seems appropriate. "We're a lodger unit here and this has brought everyone in the building together."

SSAFA provides practical support and assistance to Servicemen and women, veterans and their families every day of the year.

The brew-up raised £185, and the team paid tribute to the support they received from Soothills Bakery, BB's Coffee and Muffins and ASDA (Fareham) for their donations.

New venture for Steve

SINCE 2007, Help For Heroes has been supporting hundreds of men and women wounded, injured or long-term sick as a result of their service to the country.

Maj Steve McCulley has an inspirational story of his fight to recover from severe injuries sustained serving with the Royal Marines in Afghanistan. Happily, he found a new career direction with support from H4H and other Service charities.

In May 2011 an improvised explosive device severely wounded Steve.

"Shrapnel hit me everywhere tearing through my right side, fracturing six ribs and penetrating a lung – everything started going dark – I thought I was going to die," he said.

After three weeks in a medically-induced coma in intensive care and two further months' treatment in hospital, Steve was transferred to the Defence Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court.

Unfortunately after a year there, he had to undergo further surgery to remove most of his right lung along with 15 pieces of shrapnel from his chest.

Despite the severity of his injuries, Steve began to plan for the future and, with support from Help For Heroes, Heropreneurs, the Corps itself and the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund, Steve founded his own business, LIOS Custom Carbon bikes.

LIOS provides a bespoke bike-fitting service and also builds complete high-end custom carbon bikes to specifications with hand-built carbon wheels.

Steve explains: "I'm passionate about cycling and bikes and I wanted to offer a personalised high-end service for people who appreciate quality."



Maj Steve McCulley RM is building a new career - in bikes

He has ploughed all of his remaining energy into building and developing his business.

Steve is determined to give back to the charities that helped him.

He said: "I'm an ambassador for the charity and just recently, I attended a H4H corporate event as one of the Band of Brothers."

Help For Heroes also helped Steve with a grant to qualify as a Cytech Level 3 Bike Technician and he attended bikefitting courses which makes him one of the few certified Retul motion analysis bike fitters in the UK.

Then Heropreneurs provided a business mentor to sit down with Steve and look over his

business plan, offering advice and guidance.

"Although I've set this up on my own, designing my own website and investing my own money in the high-end materials required, the charities have been really great," he said.

"I've been delighted to receive help with a business start-up grant which has reduced the risk on setting up a new business venture, and I'm particularly grateful to the Royal Marines for allowing me the time to make this transition at my own pace during rehabilitation."

Based in Hampshire, Steve travels up to London regularly, setting up pop-up shops promoting the bikes in and around the capital – a key target market for cyclists who know what they want in terms of quality bikes and performance.

Steve has given back to charities supporting him by auctioning a LIOS high-performance bike to raise funds and has helped to adapt and fit bikes free for other injured Servicemen.

While Steve is steadily building the business he is as keen as ever to get back on his own bikes and is clearly itching to take part in the charity Hero rides and the Big Battlefield Bike ride.

Fortunately cycling is one of the best exercises he can do, being non-impact and rotational.

"I don't often get the chance to express my thanks to all those who've helped me but those closest to me, especially my wife Janey, family and friends – they have been totally supportive, coping with the strains of looking after two small children as I was recovering from my injuries."

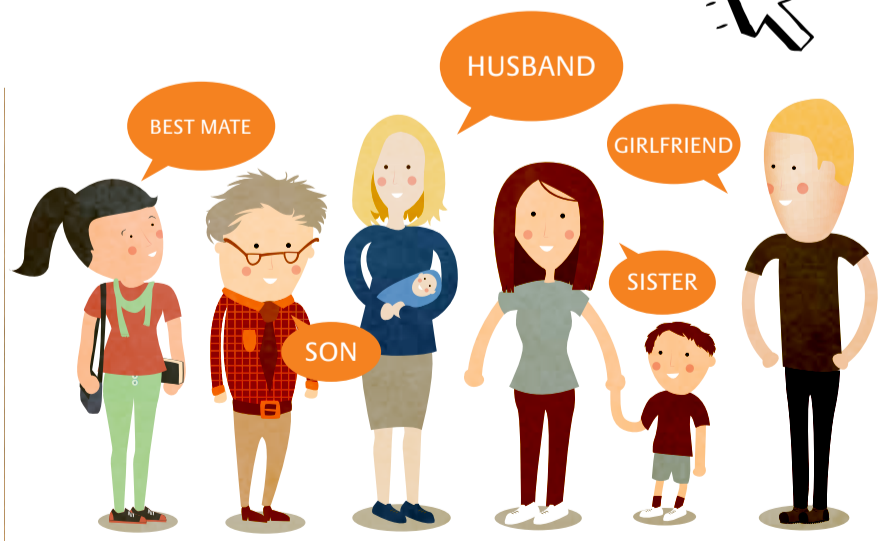
"I am so thankful for everything they, the charities and the wider RM family has done to allow me to set up my business – I really want to make it work."

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● HMS Daring at anchor off Binuluagan Island in the Philippines



Making a real

TRAINING is the bedrock on which the success of the Royal Navy is founded.

Get it right and it can give you an unbeatable edge.

Get it wrong and... well, these days you just cannot afford to get it wrong.

Initial training. Specialist training. Advancement training. Top-up training. Pre-deployment training. Sailors and marines are trained to cope with so many eventualities.

So when disaster strikes, British politicians have no qualms about sending a Royal Navy warship to help put communities back on their feet.

A disaster like a typhoon. A warship like HMS Daring. And a community like Naburot Island in the Philippines.

Events in the Far East in mid-November exemplified why the Navy sends ships such as Type 45 destroyers on major overseas deployments.

Daring was gearing up for Bersama Lima – a major air defence exercise conducted alongside the navies of Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia – where she was ready to demonstrate her world-beating ability to track and destroy airborne missiles.

Then Typhoon Haiyan scythed through the region and crashed ashore in the Philippines – the world's most battered country, with up to nine tropical cyclones making landfall every year.

The city of Tacloban was a high-profile victim of the 145mph winds, with the authorities, charities, military and the media gathering in the aftermath to assess the damage.

But in a country of numerous byways and backwaters, some of the outlying islands remained cut off from help, requiring access by sea.

Which is where Daring entered

● Daring's Lynx delivers aid to Hagdan on Guintacan Island



the picture. She made her excuses and left Bersama Lima as the government ordered her to take on supplies and make best speed to the Philippines.

And while the general effort had switched from lifesaving to humanitarian aid, there were still many communities unaccounted for – her ship's company had to be prepared for anything, from creating a desalination plant for a contaminated well to repairing engines damaged when the storm drove boats ashore.

Which is where the training kicked in – particularly for those who were on their first major Royal Navy deployment.

People such as AB (Sea) Sam 'Robbo' Robinson, who admitted he was "lucky that I am sailing around the world and going to some amazing places along the way."

"To actually be involved in helping people and doing something for real – it's great to be involved in humanitarian disaster relief operations," he said.

"We spend a lot of time doing exercises and preparing for every eventuality, and I am just glad we were able to put all that training into practice and make a real difference.

"To be able to help people rebuild and provide support in the form of shelter and aid – to get them in a position to support themselves – made me incredibly proud.

"It was a real eye-opener, as you see these things on the TV and are so detached from it that you easily forget about it and don't really understand the scale of the problem and suffering.

"Being part of the deployed boat teams that have gone ashore to provide aid, water and shelters gives you a real sense of achievement.

"From the guys onboard to the supply chains to the boats and helicopters transferring stores and personnel ashore to the guys rebuilding houses and clearing

● Villagers, aid workers and sailors from HMS Daring pause for a picture



debris, you realise how much of a close-knit team we really are and how all that training when put into practice makes sense."

Part of that vital supply chain was another first-timer, Logs(SC) Mat 'Whiskey' Walker.

"Op Patwin [the codename for the Philippines relief effort] was non-stop for us since it started," he said.

"We first arrived at the port of Cebu late at night; the following morning it was a very early start to go ashore and load nearly 20 tons of aid, shelter packs and water carriers, and then sail again.

"We didn't finish till gone 11pm, then up early again the next day to come to anchor amidst some island that had not been reached.

"We then spent the next three days ferrying the supplies, shelters and fresh water to the many islands around us by our sea boats and helicopter.

"It was a really good experience to be able to make a difference to the lives of the people that had been affected by the typhoon.

"I was responsible for the logistics of the humanitarian aid going ashore, so it was important to make sure that we gave the shore teams the exact aid that was needed.

"I was also sent ashore to distribute aid to the local people and make sure that everyone got what they needed to get

● (Far left) Sailors from HMS Daring create a temporary roof for a damaged school on the island of Naburot



● (Left) Two facets of the Royal Marines work together to help stricken islands in the Philippines

Challenging, satisfying and fulfilling – but s



● AB(CIS) Phil Booth

NEW countries, new experiences – and new careers. For some of Daring's ship's company the global deployment has been a steep learning curve.

Amongst those on their first deployment is ET(WE) Chris Moore (below), who works with radars and weapons systems, making sure they function properly – ranging from detailed technical work to greasing mechanisms to guard against rust.

"This deployment is an amazing way to start my naval career – people wait their whole career for a deployment like this one, and to walk straight out of training into this I couldn't have asked for anything better," said Chris.



He continued: "The best thing about being on a deployment like this is going around the world to places you wouldn't usually go to and experiencing the night life with some of the best mates you'll ever have."

Chris said Australia was outstanding, and not just because of memorable runs ashore – he was part of the Royal Navy's ceremonial platoon, and "the march through Sydney was the icing on the cake, with everyone cheering you on around you – there isn't a greater feeling."

Another engineer, ET(ME) Callum Paterson, said that some adjustment was needed for a long deployment – "especially being away from family and friends" – and life in a metal box in close proximity to so many other people seemed strange at first, though he soon got used to it.

Callum, who works on the sewage treatment plant, salt water



plant and general ship upkeep, spends spare time on board keeping fit in the gym, playing darts or watching films on his laptop.

AB Amy Gocher (above) also likes to keep fit when off-duty, either in the gym or doing circuits on the flight deck.

This is the longest Amy has spent away from home, but the attraction of foreign lands – such as Hawaii – kept homesickness at bay.

It is all a far cry from her previous job in a supermarket: "The Navy is a lot more tiring with long days and nights but I've experienced so much in just six months away."

As a seaman specialist Amy is

involved in replenishments at sea and boat operations as well as bridge watchkeeping – though she admits she prefers the hands-on side: "Going out in the boat is my favourite part of the job as it gets you off the ship and can be good fun – especially when the sea is a bit rough."

ET(ME) Leanne Kelland (below right) studied as an aircraft engineer ("a much cleaner job") but opted for marine engineering as a career.

"My job involves rounds of machinery spaces, daily checks on my sections equipment, topping up fuel oil and grease and generally finding faults and rectifying them before they begin to cause problems," said Leanne.

"I enjoy what I do – the only down point is a lack of sleep while watch-keeping."

Sydney left its mark on Leanne too – she was part of the team showing visitors round her ship:

"Overall I think it went really well, and I would love to do something similar in the future," she said.

Logs(SC) Mat Walker agreed that the working day could be long and tiring – especially when holding official functions on board, which reduces the chance of local sightseeing – but runs ashore such as San Diego would last long in the memory.

The supply chain specialist also said it was also tough being away from his wife and daughter for such a long period.

The destroyer's visit to Hawaii last year was a dream come true for Jade Powell.



A difference

ors
ure



themselves back on their feet.”

Many of the 200 or so on board did not go ashore as part of the rescue operation, but still felt they played their part.

One such sailor, ET Chris Chappell, said: “My role during the operation was part of the ship’s duty personnel, ensuring that the ship remained in working order and performing general maintenance.

“I ensured that the ship was properly manned so that others could go ashore and assist the local population, so I felt happy to assist in the operation though not directly.”

His colleague, ET(WE) Chris Moore, was frustrated at being based on board the ship, but could see it was all for the greater good.

“Whilst on board it was slightly frustrating at first, because all you wanted to do was get ashore and help out in any way possible,” said Chris.

“But you realised that the people ashore would be useless without everyone onboard doing their jobs by supplying them with food, water and shelter to give to the suffering.

“All those water bottles didn’t fill up magically – everyone was working late filling them up to ensure they were ready to go the following morning.”

AB Amy Gocher had to hoist and lower the sea boats so that essential stores and personnel could be moved around.

“I and the rest of the ship’s company feel immensely proud to have been a part of it as it is one of the reasons that most of us joined the Navy – to make a difference,” said Amy.

“So everyone was very keen to

Pictures: PA(Phot) Paul A’Barrow and LA(Phot) Keith Morgan

help as much as they could.”

Although operations like Patwin may appear to be ad hoc and improvised, there is a great deal of administration and organisation to ensure maximum effort and minimum waste.

Wtr Jade Powell, part of the administrative cadre, said: “It felt really good that we were helping people who were in desperate need of food, water and shelter.

“My job was to make sure we knew exactly who was on board and ashore at all times, so I was there for all the boat transfers and helicopter transfers.”

AB(CIS) Phil Booth’s main role was as a communications specialist, linking the various shoreside teams with each other and the ship as well as sorting out technical problems.

“In addition I also contributed to helping repair a school building and managing the flow of stores from the landing zone to the shore HQ,” he said.

“It was a very fulfilling experience being able to help these people, and it feels good to be able to give something back and be able to put the training we go through into practice in a real-life situation.”

ET(ME) Leanne Kelland helped collect stores as well as distribute them to local people.

“I am glad our ship has been involved in this operation – hopefully it will be an eye-opener to those who think they have it hard,” said Leanne.

“It was good to be able to really help out with the relief effort both on board and ashore.

“Due to my training I was in a position to be put ashore to help fix fishing vessels and buildings, which was really important to the local communities because these fishing vessels were their livelihoods.”

Part of the destroyer’s pre-deployment training was a spell at the DISTEX (disaster exercise) site at Bull Point in Devon, where artificial mayhem provides a glimpse of what may lie ahead.

AB Robinson said: “Being in the Philippines was a completely different experience from a DISTEX, but Bull Point did prepare us for the worst-case scenario as it makes you realise how busy and focused you have to be whilst on the ground.

“It wasn’t as intense in the Philippines as we had more time, but you had to remain just as focused as these were not just actors who we were helping but real people who had lost nearly everything.”

Daring’s Executive Officer Lt Cdr Steve Wall went ashore every day to coordinate the relief operation at Shore HQ – the same role he assumed during the exercise at Bull Point.

“Before deploying, HMS Daring conducted a disaster relief exercise as part of Operational Sea Training,” said Lt Cdr Wall.

“For this, the ship’s company deployed to a fictional island which had been devastated by a hurricane.

“The team conducted search and rescue operations, dealt with numerous casualties and helped repair water, sanitation and other infrastructure whilst providing food, water and shelter for the survivors.

“This was an excellent preparation for Daring’s disaster relief operations in the Philippines.”

A crucial element of Daring’s response to the disaster was her Lynx helicopter, which clocked up some impressive statistics.

In five days the aircraft was airborne for 32 hours, and required 128 man-hours of maintenance – often through the night to ensure the helicopter was ready for the following morning.

The Lynx flew a distance of 1,400 miles during surveying sorties, and shifted 8.5 tons of stores ashore in 21 vertical replenishment manoeuvres (vertreps), as well as transferring 150 people to and from islands.

Between them the ship and Lynx managed to survey an area of 42,000 square nautical miles, encompassing more than 50 islands and 1,400 nautical miles of coastline.

As soon as Daring arrived in the Philippines the Lynx, of 200 Flight, 815 Naval Air Squadron, was launched to take imagery of islands, with the pilot flying at his maximum of eight hours a day.

This accurate, rapid assessment, impossible to achieve on the ground, allowed the ship’s command team to determine the areas that most needed help – the most remote, or those cut off by



● A lighter moment ashore for a member of Daring’s aid teams

aid coming from any other means of transport.

The aircraft can lift up to 500kg of aid and carry personnel on board, so was the ideal piece of kit to send the right people and right supplies directly to the right place within minutes, bypassing broken bridges, fallen trees and fractured roads.

Flight Commander Lt Cdr Joe Harper said: “In my 38 years service there have been only two other occasions that have felt as satisfying and rewarding as this humanitarian aid operation.

“The first was the Falklands campaign, when I was doing exactly what we are trained for, and the second was in the Caribbean on counter-piracy operations.”

Daring’s two sea boats also proved their value; each can carry a tonne of aid as well as six people, moving them swiftly ashore.

At the first island of Hogdan the boats could approach the beach; other locations, such as Calagnaan, were surrounded by coral which kept them 20 metres offshore.

There the sailors waded into the sea to offload the stores in a human chain, often assisted by the villagers themselves.

● (Above right): Daring’s sea boat returns to the ship after delivering supplies – sailors had spotted the message ‘we need tarpaulin please’ inscribed in the sand; (right): A sign of appreciation as aid is distributed to Naburot Island



ome don’t half miss mum’s home cooking...

“It is the place that I have always wanted to go. While there I got to go skydiving and swimming with dolphins, which are both things I have never done before.

“This is the longest time I have ever been away from home – before this deployment the longest was ten weeks, which was during Phase One training.

“I am a Writer so I do all the pay and allowances for all personnel onboard.

“It is completely different to before, because I used to work in a cafe and then in a toy shop – this job is a lot more serious.”

Life in a dark blue suit has proved to be quite a change for AB Sam Robinson as well.

“My old job was working in a warehouse and working a bar job in the evening,” said Sam.

“I loved going home every night and being close to my family.

“Although being on board you do not get the same comforts



as being at home, I do get to be involved in all sorts of amazing things that many people will never get to experience.”

As a Seaman Specialist Sam (below right) has a wide range of jobs on board, from preparing and manning the sea boats to protecting the ship.

ET Chris Chappell (above) had a similar career path pre-Navy to that of Sam: “Thinking about my previous employment of factory and bar work, I truly feel like I am in a career that has a future.

“I am a weapon engineer on board; my work routine involves general day to day maintenance, cleaning, defect repairing and

secondary training about the systems on board.

“Compared to my previous employment of mundane tasks and boring labour, being a WE is much more challenging and engaging.

“There are some days where we are overloaded with work, or where you just clean or grease, but it is a good feeling to be depended on.”

Off duty at sea you could well find Chris in the mess complex, sometimes with a beer, or working through his task book as he prepares for promotion.

A dramatic change in career led to AB(CIS) Phil Booth enjoying a tour of exotic locations.

“I have loved seeing all the amazing places we’ve visited up to now,” said Phil.

“It took a bit of time to adjust being away from home and loved ones, but after the first few months I settled into life at sea and away from home.

“I was a supply teacher at a

secondary school in my previous job, so compared to that this job is amazing – I wouldn’t want to do anything else.

“My job entails operating and maintaining all communications equipment onboard, such as radios and satellite comms, and also providing IT support such as email service and onboard computer networking.

“The thing I like most about this job is getting to use a variety of equipment that I would never get the chance to use as a civvie.”

Food is a major issue on board any ship, and the general consensus from the first-timers on



board Daring is that the chefs are doing a good job – though it isn’t quite like home.

Chris Moore said he missed fresh fruit and veg at times, and was looking forward to a “nice big roast dinner”, while Callum Paterson missed Indian takeaways – as does Phil Booth, who specified “a super hot curry from my local Indian”.

Amy Gocher said: “The food on board is very good – I think the chefs do very well, considering they cook three meals a day for nearly 200 people,” although she does miss her mum’s stew and dumplings, while for Leanne Kelland it is home-made spaghetti bolognese she is looking forward to, though she appreciates the wide choice of food available, including full cooked breakfast.

Mat Walker said the switch to UHT when fresh milk runs out at sea is a bit of a downer, but thinks the chefs do a good job with what they have available – though “I



am most looking forward to a properly-cooked roast dinner.”

Mum’s roast dinner is the favourite of Jade Powell (above), though she also gives Daring’s chefs the thumbs-up, as does Sam Robinson, who looks forward to eating on board the destroyer, despite the fact he is anticipating “a huge beef lasagne my mum makes” on his return to the UK.

Chris Chappell said: “The food onboard is usually pretty good, but there are times when I just want a takeaway or something new and different.

“I am most looking forward to a nice Sunday dinner back at home with my family.”

A Year In
FOCUS





Picture: PO (Phot) Paul A'Barrow



Picture: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald

Boots on the ground



Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones

SAY 'Royal Navy' to the man on the Clapham omnibus and he will probably think of ships.

And while that is true, he would also be quite a way off the mark, because there are plenty of land-based activities that the Royal Navy also does very well – as 2013 proved.

Royal Marines, for example – regarded by most as one of the finest fighting forces in the world.

And as the focus of their attention has shifted away from Afghanistan it has allowed the Corps to slip back into their more

traditional role as sea soldiers and extreme-weather specialists.

The build-up to the Cougar 13 deployment saw bootnecks storming ashore on British beaches during Joint Warrior in the spring, in anticipation of further such assaults on the coasts of the Mediterranean and the Middle East as they trained alongside allied nations.

Elements of the Corps also found themselves in the baking heat of the Mojave Desert in America and the steamy jungles of West Africa as well as the deep snow of northern Norway as they battled the environment and 'hostile' forces.

The Navy ashore is no fish out of water either.

Operation Patwin, the humanitarian mission in the wake of the devastating Typhoon Haiyan, saw sailors from destroyer HMS Daring and helicopter carrier HMS Illustrious landing supplies, fixing buildings and equipment and getting communities back on their feet.

The year just ended was also a chance for the Naval Service



Picture: LA (Phot) Dean Nixon



to don its best uniform and commemorate the sacrifices and victories of previous generations.

Sailors paraded at the Armed Forces Day event in Nottingham and Battle of the Atlantic ceremonies in Derry/

Londonderry, London and Liverpool, while the traditional November remembrance services were that little more poignant this year as the nation prepares to mark the centenary of the start of the Great War.



Picture: PO (Phot) Dan Rosenbaum

● Clockwise from top: marines from 43 Commando on exercise in Scotland; veterans are interviewed by Matt Baker, Alex Jones, Eddie Izzard and Dan Snow during a transmission of BBC's The One Show from HMS Illustrious; Remembrance Day parade at Plymouth Hoe; marines launch a beach assault during Joint Warrior; veteran Rex Ayers with a member of HMS Bulwark's company during a Battle of the Atlantic reception in Liverpool; sailors parade in Nottingham for Armed Forces Day; Lt Cdr Andy Reeves, HMS Illustrious's First Lieutenant, talks to villagers in the Philippines; snow blankets Portsmouth Naval Base. Previous page – pictured by CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald: HMS Defender arrives in her adopted city of Glasgow for the first time



Picture: LA (Phot) Dean Nixon



Picture: PO (Phot) Paul Punter

Picture: LA (Phot) Arron Hoare



Picture: LA (Phot) Dan Rosenbaum



Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Weatherston



Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell



A global outlook

IF NOTHING else, 2013 proved that the Royal Navy still proudly boasts a truly global reach, as well as offering sailors the mix of challenges and adventure which is hard to match in any other organisation.

Cougar 13 saw the UK Response Force Task Group, which toured the Mediterranean and Gulf, again prove its worth when HMS Illustrious broke off to provide succour to storm-hit islands in the Philippines.

She took over from destroyer HMS Daring, allowing the Type 45 to resume her high-profile round-the-world deployment.

Although these missions stole the headlines, other ships were getting on with their tasks in home waters and overseas, whether nipping a piracy threat in the bud or enforcing the rule of law at sea for the good of the seafaring community.

September saw a flotilla of warships in London promoting maritime affairs, reflecting the support Royal Navy ships give to British trade and industry around the world.

Last year also saw the demise of a much-loved class of ship – the final Type 42 destroyer, HMS Edinburgh, paying off in the summer.

But the successor Type 45s have started to put in

appearances in traditional Royal Navy haunts such as Gibraltar and Malta, ensuring continuity while providing a huge advance in capability.

The past year has also seen significant developments in one of the Royal Navy's most cherished projects – HMS Queen Elizabeth, as she will be christened, now looks like an aircraft carrier as work gathers pace in Rosyth.



Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins





Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson



Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee (RNPOTY x3)

All set for take off

THE Fleet Air Arm is constantly evolving, introducing new aircraft or wringing the best value out of existing airframes.

But once again, as we look back to 2013, WAFUs were very much looking forward to the dawn of a new era of Naval aviation.

Development work carries on apace in the US on the new F35B fighter, the Wildcat and Merlin Mk2 are ever closer to joining the front line and the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) got its hands on the Junglie Merlin Mk3.

The Lynx and Sea King continued to provide sterling service – including helping communities in the Philippines recover from Typhoon Haiyan.

Training exercises saw aviators working out in challenging conditions, whether its the snows of Norway or the sands of Jordan.

But there was also a chance to

● *Clockwise from top left: The Swordfish as seen from HMS Bulwark in Liverpool; CHF personnel train with Royal Marines in Norway; Sailors on RFA Wave Knight on landing drills with HMS Lancaster's Lynx; commandos work with a Merlin in the Mojave desert; the F35B undergoing trials on USS Wasp; Search and Rescue Sea Kings at HMS Gannet*

glance back during the year.

The heroics of the Royal Navy's Search and Rescue community were highlighted as the country marked 60 years of airborne military SAR.

And the venerable Swordfish of the RN Historic Flight also enjoyed a year in the spotlight at Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary events.



Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen



Picture: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald



Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee (RNPOTY x3)



Picture: Andy Wolf, Staff Flight Test Photographer



Airman's Punch is knockout comedy

I EXPECT that we all enjoy our memories of Service life, no doubt some more enjoyable than others.

My last commission on HMS Albion 1966-68 provided some of the best.

In particular, when in a visiting port, during which the ship would invite underprivileged children to a fun afternoon and a party.

Every department of a ship's complement provided men to entertain and look after the children. What a great time we had, especially the crew!

I well remember the Air Department putting on a 'live cast' Punch and Judy show in Fremantle.

It was so popular that when the ship went to Brisbane a few weeks later, Captain M Ollivant asked that the show be delayed until he flew back from a meeting ashore.

It was good to see him coming from the lift into the hangar deck



Each month Pussers Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Nobby Clarke.

still in flying kit to enjoy the kids' Punch and Judy show.

What memories, 45 years ago – it seems like yesterday, (and at 84 I remember yesterday too!).

– P G (Nobby) Clarke
North Walsham
Norfolk



Maidstone's torpedomen

HAVING read the *Navy News* for quite a few years now, leaving the Royal Navy in 1946, I wondered if the enclosed snap of us guys, the 'Torpedomen' aboard HMS Maidstone, may awake the memories of some of the guys. We were part of the Far Eastern Fleet.

I recall the guy pictured front right caught the phone exchange alive with his cigarette.

I am front left. This was taken in Hong Kong dockyard; we'd just cleared the Japanese out in 1945 – no lives lost.

– Sid T Tiffen
Kingston, Surrey

Hampshire's heavy loss

FOLLOWING the report in the latest issue of *Navy News* regarding next year's commemorations of the 350th anniversary of the Royal Marines, and the 100th of the commencement of the First World War, I would like to remember my uncle, Gilbert Sandom Royal Marine Light Infantry.

Together with Lord Kitchener, and all but 26 of his shipmates, he was lost in the sinking of HMS Hampshire on June 5 1916.

The date subsequently became my birthday in 1932.

I have been twice to the beautiful islands of Orkney to pay my respects to those lost on Hampshire and also to lay a wreath on behalf of the Netley branch of the RNA on the wreck of the Royal Oak.

I was ably assisted in this by the RNA Orkney and their chairman David Hughes.

I hope to go again in 2014 on

June 5 which will be the 98th anniversary of Hampshire's loss and my 82nd birthday.

– Brian Sandom
Netley Abbey
Southampton
Hants

CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGS



Invest in the capable Osprey

I HAVE worked in the commercial sector of the maritime security industry for a number of years and have watched the decline of the Royal Navy with some trepidation.

We still rely on the maritime industry for 90 per cent of our exports and imports, which have been protected by the Royal Navy for the last 500 years, but will struggle to do so over the next 500 days, let alone another 500 years.

At the moment the capacity of the RN (and the British forces in general) seems to be slashed with every pen stroke of Parliament.

We are now trying to save money at every turn and get 'more bang for our buck', so instead of investing in these massive new design and builds (as the F35) why not adapt tried and tested airframes?

We have two new large carriers coming online in the next few years, but they will not have an adequate radar system until at least 2022/2024.

Both carriers are to be equipped with the F35B only (as proposed at the moment).



● A visiting Osprey MV22 lands on the flight deck of HMS Illustrious during Operation Patwin, the UK's humanitarian aid mission in the Philippines.

Picture: POPhot Ray Jones

The USMC are landing the MV22 Osprey on any capable platform that is willing to have them on board (in September one landed on HMS Illustrious).

To make HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales more effective would it not be better to have a detachment of Ospreys on board equipped with Airborne Surveillance (as the aging Sea Kings ASaC 7).

We could buy the airframes and fit them out in the UK, also the Osprey would make a

good anti-submarine platform giving the two carriers a lot more capacity having both the F35Bs along with the MV22.

The MV22 would be a good addition to the Royal Marines with a faster airspeed and longer range than the Merlins and Sea Kings, it would be money well spent on a tried and tested airframe that we could adapt for our own use.

– Alfie Rake
Hunstanton
Norfolk

Toad in the hole

ALONGSIDE in Singapore dockyard a young stoker brought onboard a large squashed toad that had dried out in the sun.

After the evening meal I borrowed the toad and placed it between two slices of bread.

Carrying it with a mug of tea, I took it to the top of the hatch that led down to the air conditioning plant.

I knocked on the side of the hatch and my opposite watchkeeping oppo came up the ladder. I handed the sarnie down to him and then stood back.

After a couple of seconds I heard a scream and a thump as my oppo hit the plates below.

My oppo shouted up to me but the sound of the air conditioning plant made it hard for me to make out what he was saying.

But it sounded like "Look off, you warped custard!"

So I shouted back down to him: "Do you want this mug of tea or what?"

– Pete Childe
Deepcar
Sheffield

Banking on Ruby's help

SOME years ago, up until 1970 Royal Navy personnel used to get paid once a fortnight, cash in hand.

Once the money was gone in the first week we had a blank week, asking our mates for loans until we got paid again.

The Royal Standard pub in Portsmouth was particularly helpful in those days with a friendly landlady called Ruby.

Ruby was like a bank, she used to loan money to sailors she knew and she always got it back.

– Bryan 'Tiny' Height
Gosport, Hants

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.



Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*, nor can we reply to every one.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.

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Escape to the Antarctic



FANCY a challenge? Then look no further – the Antarctic awaits.

Exercise Antarctic Endurance 2016 is a three-year research programme looking at team dynamics and performance, centred on a six-week sailing and mountaineering expedition to the Antarctic and South Georgia in January/February 2016.

A century on from Sir Ernest Shackleton's extraordinary recovery from the Weddell Sea, the aim is to inspire a new generation of sailors and marines.

It will celebrate both the achievements in 1914-16 of Shackleton and his men, and the raw grit and determination evident in the young men and women of today's Naval Service.

The research programme will be used to educate the Naval Command, Ministry of Defence and industry in key aspects of team dynamics and leadership.

The final team, consisting of qualified yachtmasters and mountaineers with a crew of six RN and RM personnel in

the first five years of their careers, will join Xplore, a chartered 67ft steel yacht, in the Falkland Islands on January 9 2016, setting sail for the Weddell Sea.

Teams will make landfall on the eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula to collect environmental and hydrographical data, before moving to Elephant Island (pictured here with the Shackleton team) to collect further data.

The yacht will then be sailed across to King Haakon Bay in South Georgia to land the main mountaineering party, who will cross to Stromness, to be met

by the Xplore before returning to the Falklands, arriving on February 30 2016.

Shackleton's granddaughter, the Honourable Alexandra Shackleton, has agreed to be the principal patron.

Rear Admiral Duncan Potts said: "Antarctic Endurance 2016 is just the sort of expedition I am delighted to be associated with. For those who participate they will return to the Service with determination, resilience and leadership to inspire others."

Volunteers to take part are now

being sought, with the selection process taking place this year, before the selected squad of 18 trains in 2015.

Regular members of the RN and RM who joined after January 2009 and are interested in taking part should complete the application form available on the Exercise website.

Qualified yachtmasters and mountaineers serving in the RN and RM are invited to apply using the rear-guard form on the website.

Application forms are available at www.antarcticendurance.co.uk



● Attendees at the memorial service for the wartime cruiser HMS Neptune, which took place at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire

Tribute to men who perished off Tripoli

PERSONNEL from Clyde Naval Base travelled to Staffordshire to take part in a memorial service at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Captain of shore establishment HMS Neptune, Capt Alistair Willis, CPO Steve Losh, LWtr Susan Cochrane, LReg Charlene Groves and Wtr Lee Kearney were there to honour the 837 Service personnel who lost their lives during the sinking of HMS Neptune and HMS Kandahar in 1941 off the coast of Tripoli.

The arboretum, which describes itself as "not a cemetery but a place of life", features more than 200 dedicated memorials, as well as 50,000 trees planted throughout its 150 acres.

A remembrance service was conducted by the Chaplain of the Neptune Association, Archdeacon John Green, who was accompanied by a bugler and two standard bearers.

The service was organised by the Neptune Association, founded in 2002 by relatives of the ship's companies of both Neptune and Kandahar.

"For many years there has been a close link between HMS Neptune at Clyde and the Neptune Association," said Captain Willis. "I am pleased that Royal Navy personnel currently wearing the Neptune cap tally were able to attend this service."

The association aims to unite all those with an

interest in the ships and to commemorate those who died in the wartime tragedy, one of the worst losses suffered at sea by the British during World War 2.

Neptune was part of Force K, a squadron of ships given the task of intercepting and destroying Axis convoys on their way to Libya to supply Rommel's Afrika Korps.

On December 19 1941, Neptune encountered an Italian minefield off Tripoli and struck two mines and then a third as she attempted to reverse out of the danger area.

This third mine left the ship dead in the water, with HMS Kandahar and HMS Lively going to her aid. Kandahar also struck a mine, then Neptune hit a fourth mine and capsized.

Of the 767 crew on board the Leander-class light cruiser only 30 survived the sinking. After five days adrift in the Mediterranean, only one survivor remained.

Twenty-year-old AB Norman Walton, who put his survival down to his physical fitness, was picked up by an Italian torpedo boat. In 1943 he was released and went on to take part in the Russian Convoys and service on board a minesweeper before being demobbed in 1946.

He died on April 20, 2005, aged 84.



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● Lt Cdr Steve Toone (left) and Lt Russ Say take note of a local warning sign in South Africa

Lectures go with a bang

TWO officers from HMS Collingwood's Explosives Training Unit travelled to Simon's Town to run an explosives safety course for the South African Navy (SAN).

Under the RN International Defence Training Scheme, Lt Cdr Steve Toone and Lt Russ Say met relevant staff – including the SAN Inspector of Naval Ordnance, Capt Klaas Steyn – visited warships and toured naval base facilities to gain an understanding of safety issues and the SAN's management of explosives.

The British officers then staged a bespoke four-day Explosives Responsible Officer course for a diverse audience which included 25 personnel from captain to CPO as well as civilian ammunition custodians.

The SAN will use the knowledge gained from the course to help review their own practices and procedures of explosives handling at sea.

The visitors were also able to see some of the local wildlife, including penguins and whales, but despite the warning signs were unsuccessful in spotting any of the infamous baboon population of Cape Province.

Where do you read us?

IN a year of anniversaries, *Navy News* is set to claim its own modest landmark.

The first edition of *Portsmouth Navy News* – 'the Official Newspaper of the Portsmouth Command' – appeared in June 1954.

Little over a year later it also became the official newspaper of the RNA as well, in January 1956 the Home Air Command was added to the list (the Sea Cadet Corps also came into the fold), and by the end of that year *Navy News* had given up listing particular affiliations on the front page as it essentially covered all activities of the Naval Service.

Over the years – as it still is in 2014 – the paper has been distributed and read around the world. Sometimes in some very strange places and situations...

If you have a picture of someone reading *Navy News* in an unusual place, send it to us with a brief description – there are one-year subscriptions up for grabs as prizes for the best, which we will feature in our June edition.

Try to keep them clean... Closing date is April 25 2014, and you can post your entries to Where Do You Read Us?, *Navy News*, Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email a high-resolution image to us at editor@navynews.co.uk

Twins celebrate brace of clasps



● CPOs Glenn and Warren Newcombe celebrate their awards in a hangar at Culdrose

Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Herron

TWIN brothers who joined the Royal Navy together are celebrating after 31 years of service was recognised with clasps to their Long Service & Good Conduct (LS&GC) Medals.

CPOs Glenn and Warren Newcombe enlisted together as artificers at HMS Raleigh in 1982 before moving to HMS Daedalus for air engineering training.

Serving together at the start of their careers, they joined 826 Naval Air Squadron in 1984 at RN Air Station Culdrose to work on Sea King anti-submarine helicopters at a time when the squadron was embarking on RFA ships operating in the South Atlantic as part of the Falkland Islands contingencies.

A move for Warren to HMS Illustrious in 1986 saw the brothers parted, and their respective careers thereafter saw them serve separately throughout the Sea King community, both at sea and ashore on operations in the Gulf, the Balkans, off Libya and in Afghanistan.

"I've enjoyed every minute of my career, and serving alongside Warren has

made it all that more special," said Glenn.

"It's a rare and great achievement which we are very proud of."

For twin brothers to achieve such a feat is indeed a rare event.

Glenn is currently serving in the HQ at Culdrose while Warren is still on the frontline with 857 Naval Air Squadron conducting operations in Afghanistan.

"I'm older by ten minutes but Glenn has the senior number by one digit," said Warren.

"Some of the best times I've had in the Navy so far were on operations in Afghanistan with the Sea King Force. It's been a wonderful career."

The LS&GC medal is awarded to personnel who have completed 15 years of dedicated, professional service to the country. Those who manage 30 years – a significant milestone that very few achieve – receive a clasp.

Assistant Chief of Staff Carrier Strike and Aviation Cdre Graeme Mackay presented the brothers with their awards.



● Adam Trennery pops the question to Lauren Robinson for the second time

Lauren says yes – again

A ROYAL Navy recruit from Oldham celebrated the end of his basic training by reaffirming his commitment to his fiancée.

Trainee Engineering Technician Adam Trennery, 22, joined the Royal Navy in September to undergo ten weeks of intensive training at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

The course ends with the passing-out parade attended by families and friends – which is when Adam decided to go down on one knee to pop the question to his girlfriend Lauren Robinson, surrounded by his classmates.

Adam said: "I first asked Lauren to marry me two years ago when we were on holiday in Corfu, but I wanted to do it again properly and replace her engagement ring."

"I thought what better time to ask than at the end of my passing-out parade."

"I bought the ring during an afternoon's leave at the end of week seven of our course."

"I wasn't sure how she would react, because she doesn't like to be the centre of attention."

Fortunately Lauren, also 22, accepted his proposal for the second time.

Taken completely by surprise, she said: "I am shaking and very happy."

Adam met Lauren, who hails from Rochdale, at his brother, Craig's wedding; the couple have been together for more than four years.

Before joining the Royal Navy Adam worked as a van driver and in sales.

He said: "I joined the Royal Navy for the great career prospects and to travel the world."

"It's been great meeting so many new people and I'm feeling a whole new level of fitness – I'm hoping to try out for the Navy football team."

Big sea – but a small world

THE Naval community is a pretty tight-knit bunch, and the chances of bumping into an old friend are fairly good.

The odds start to stack up if you have lost touch with that old friend.

And they get very high indeed when that old friend emigrates to the other side of the world, and you are working in a ship on a vast expanse of water – such as the Gulf of Aden, an area slightly larger than Spain and twice that of the UK.

But LStd Helen Ing defied those odds – and it was all down to a chat her mother had while shopping back home in Devon.

Before steaming thousands of miles east to assist in the relief effort in the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan, Portsmouth-based amphibious helicopter carrier HMS Illustrious met up with the Royal Australian Navy ship HMAS Melbourne whilst participating in the international effort to tackle piracy off the Horn of Africa.

Eight sailors from each ship had the opportunity to cross-deck, via Sea King helicopter, from one to the other to experience life from a different perspective for a day.

LStd Ing, 28, from Beer in Devon, had a special reason to be excited about her visit to the Australian ship.

Helen, who has been with Illustrious for four months, had been surprised to receive a

● Mathew Smith and Helen Ing meet up on board HMAS Melbourne off the Horn of Africa

Picture: LAC Oliver Carter



message from the Australian ship.

"An old school friend works on board the Melbourne," she explained. "I didn't know he was out here until I got a message via the ship-to-ship communications."

Helen, who was born in Exeter, attended Manor House School in Honiton, Devon, with Mathew Smith, 29.

Helen, who is a keen rugby player, joined the Royal Navy in 2001 as a steward.

Mathew is an Engineering Technician, specialising in

weapons, with the RAN.

"Apparently our mums met shopping in Seaton the other day," said Helen. "If it hadn't been for Mathew's mum telling him I was on board Illustrious we would never have known we were out here working together."

"Mathew asked the ship's operation room to contact me – we haven't seen each other for 17 years."

Lt Gemma Radcliffe RN said of her visit: "It always surprises me how small the world's naval community is and how closely we

work together."

"During our visit to the Melbourne even their executive officer, Lt Cdr Andrew Hough, recounted memories of the Royal Navy and specifically serving in HMS Manchester, where he spent time as a Principal Warfare Officer."

Frigate HMAS Melbourne is on a seven-month deployment which will see her returning home in March – she is the 56th rotation of an Australian warship to the Middle East since the first GulfWar in 1990.

Driver tries his hand at controls of VC10



WORKING as a driver, mainly for the two-star Director (Operations) within the Military Aviation Authority, LS JJ O'Neill readily accepted an invitation to drive the Director in his preferred mode of transport – one of the fastest subsonic airliners ever built (left).

Initially bought by the RAF as a transport aircraft, with the first aircraft arriving at 10 Squadron in 1966, the VC10 was used to fly mixed loads of cargo and passengers.

Three decades later the entire fleet was converted for air-to-air refuelling, and last September marked the end of 47 years of continuous service with the RAF.

With Director (Operations), Air Vice Marshal Paul Atherton – a former VC10 pilot – as his boss, and through gentle persuasion and reminders of his

being a member of the Senior Service, LStd O'Neill finally managed to coerce the RAF into 'letting him have a go'.

With an illustrious gathering of senior ex-aircrew to attend the VC10 simulator's final mission, the pressure was on to demonstrate bravado and derring-do, and it is thought JJ sought the latest Flight Reference Cards and spent countless hours on laptop flight simulator programmes so as not to discredit the Royal Navy's reputation.

Lined up on Hong Kong airport's notorious runway, JJ was coached through take-off by his boss, resulting in a smooth flight for all 'on board'.

With a circuit or two over the city, it was time to put his staff-car driving skills to the test. Cautiously approaching Hong Kong bridge, JJ's flight simulator practice was stretched to its full.

Completing a pass underneath the bridge, he was unfortunate enough to suffer a double engine failure.

Quickly passing back control – and all blame – to his boss, he was well-positioned to witness AVM Atherton perform the simulator's final landing and close a chapter in RAF history.

LStd O'Neill said: "It was extremely realistic – even the feeling of the take-off and everything," adding it was "an amazing opportunity, a real once-in-a-lifetime experience."

He thanked Thales staff at RAF Brize Norton for their assistance in providing him with this unique opportunity, in particular Paul Cross.

Despite the AVM's influence, JJ still hasn't been called for aircrew selection and it is clear his boss feels much safer with him driving the staff car.

Enterprising initiative by ex-sailor

A FORMER Royal Navy sailor from Truro has been awarded the 10,000th start-up loan by MP Vince Cable and Dragon's Den star James Caan.

A few months ago Allen Martin got in touch with X-Forces, a social enterprise founded to support military veterans and their spouses set up their own businesses.

X-Forces provided business mentoring, advice and help to write a business plan before helping him to secure the funding to establish Eclipse Property Management Cornwall, which will officially be launched this month.

Allen lives in Truro with his wife Gayle and three children, Lauren, 15, Harrison, 7 and Aston, 3.

"To have been given the opportunity to start a new life running my own business is an amazing feeling," said Allen.

"This money will prove invaluable with my business during its first year, and X-Forces have helped me to fulfil my ambitions of being my own boss after leaving the Armed Forces."

Allen joined the Navy in 1991 as an aircraft engineering mechanic and rose through the ranks to become a petty officer, but an accident left him with seborrheic dermatitis – which led to a reaction when dealing with fuels and oils. He was medically discharged in July this year.

"I needed a game plan and realised that with three months of resettlement and no chance of working in the aircraft industry I had to try something new," said Allen.

"Even before I left I knew in my heart that I wanted to be my own boss."

During his 22-year career Allen worked predominantly on Sea Kings.

His completed three tours in Bosnia, and also served in the Gulf conducting air operations over Iraq and anti-piracy patrols, Kosovo, and two tours of Afghanistan.

During his last tour of Afghanistan in 2009, Allen led a team which recovered a stricken aircraft from behind enemy lines – they had to repair a technical fault within an hour in dangerous conditions in order to recover the aircraft.

Had they failed, they would have had to destroy the aircraft to prevent it from falling into enemy hands.

Naval briefing for attachés

THE Foreign Defence and Naval Attachés of 19 major nations visited Portsmouth Naval Base for a briefing by the Royal Navy Presentation Team.

The 26 representatives from across the globe included senior officers from the Russian, Brazilian, Chilean, Chinese, Indian and American armed forces.

All were assembled to hear the strategic messages of the Royal Navy, as delivered by Cdr Jim Perks and Lt Cassie Staveley, prior to visiting HMS Defender.

The presentation aims to educate and refresh an audience as to the relevance of the Naval Service at a time when around 95 per cent of UK trade is moved by sea – including vital food and fuel.

If you are part of an organisation which would like to hear from the RN Presentation Team, contact Lt Dan Marsden, Events Director, on 023 9272 7466 or email NAVYFORF-RNPTEd@mod.uk

Passing-out parades – at the double

IT'S not every day you get to proudly attend your son's passing out parade – but one couple faced the complication of two boys graduating on the same day and miles apart.

Royal Navy couple Janette and Howard Cooper were determined not to let anything hold them back from welcoming their sons into the navy family.

But with one passing out as a Royal Marine in Lympstone, Devon, and the other a few hours later at HMS Raleigh, in Cornwall, they had to move fast so as not to disappoint either son.

For mum Janette, a Lieutenant Commander Naval Nursing Officer, and dad Howard, who recently retired after 27 years as an RN PT Instructor, it was a challenge – but they managed it.

Janette, who just days before had been given the all-clear after battling ovarian cancer, said: "I can't even take it in, I'm just so very proud of them both."

"I can't believe we made it to both parades."

"A few months ago I didn't think I would make it to either let alone both pass-outs."

Lewis, 20, and Jack, 23,



● Lewis (left) and Jack Cooper with proud parents Howard and Janette

Picture: PO(Phot) Si Ethell

grew up in a Portsmouth navy household where one or the other parent was often deployed on duties around the world.

But this instilled a sense of pride in the boys, with Lewis now graduating as a member of 162 Troop, King's Squad, ceremonially receiving the coveted green beret at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines after 32 weeks

on the physically demanding commando training course.

Lewis said: "Training was hard, with lots of highs and lows. But I'm a lot more independent now than when I joined up."

"I'm more mature and I value things at home more now – and I'm a lot better at ironing."

Meanwhile, down at HMS Raleigh, older brother Jack was preparing to march out onto the

parade ground having completed his ten-week Initial Naval Training the day after his 23rd birthday.

He said: "I was pretty amazed to find out that Lewis and I were both passing out on the same day."

"Initially I was disappointed that I would miss seeing my little brother getting his green beret, but the fact that I eventually got to see him on the day made up for that."

"I'm really glad that the family was all here. It was a really special day with mum in uniform after all she has been through."

Both sons were Sea Cadets before Lewis transferred to the Portsmouth RM Cadet unit.

Janette said: "Our sons never thought of doing anything else but joining the family business; since toddlers they've grown up in our military family."

"To be honest, it feels like they've already been in the Navy for 20 years!"

With the first phase of his training now complete, Jack is ready for his specialist course to qualify as a clearance diver, while Lewis has now been offered his first choice of appointment, to serve at 40 Cdo in Taunton.



● Surg Lt Cdr Helen Evans inspects some of Nelson's signal flags with the Afghan tailor at Camp Souter, Kabul

England expects in Kabul

THIRTY Naval personnel gathered in the Afghan tailor shop of Camp Souter for their Trafalgar Night dinner at the headquarters of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul.

And being Trafalgar Night, Nelson's famous signal was hoisted – with the help of the local tailor.

Guest of Honour at the event was Australian Cdre David Scott, while the USA, Canada, Germany, Norway, Romania and France were also represented.

Sadly, a Spanish Naval representative was unable to attend the function, but everyone made the sole Frenchman very welcome.

The dinner was organized by three new arrivals to Kabul: Surg Lt Cdr Helen Evans, the 'doc' based at Camp Souter, together with Lt Cdr Mike Forrester and CPO Dave Britchford, who work at HQ.

It was Helen's idea to get the local tailor to make up a set of 'England Expects' signal flags.

"Explaining the purpose of the flag hoist was not easy, but in the end they turned out brilliantly," said Helen.

"Everyone loved them, and I've now got a very personal naval souvenir from Kabul."

She continued, "Once the tailor realised he had to use the colours shown on the card, and not any old material, he flew into a fit of cutting, sewing and applying eyelets."

"The task was finished barely an hour before the dinner started – but it was worth every stitch, and everyone loved them."

Pre-dinner entertainment was provided by piper Maj Bryan Brotherton, who entertained guests under the Afghan stars, before leading them in for dinner.

Having 'piped for his supper', Bryan – serving with the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards – accepted an invitation to join the all-Navy dinner.

CPO Britchford put the finishing touches to the table plan, by making boat napkins, with each boat flying the naval or national flag of the guest.

He also produced the special menus, HMS Victory place mats and name cards.

Lt Cdr Forrester said: "Admiral Lord Nelson was a man of huge vision, but I don't think that even he would have envisaged his famous signal being raised in landlocked Afghanistan, 208 years after his famous battle."

Since then, the flags have been flown twice more – once on a Hercules down to Camp Bastion in Helmand province, and then hoisted at a delayed Trafalgar Night dinner held in Camp Bastion.

Textbook effort by PTI reading hands

ROYAL Navy sailors from HMS Raleigh have gone back to the classroom to share their love of reading with the children at Antony Church of England Primary School, Torpoint in Cornwall.

Four members of Raleigh's physical training department and Sister Nicky Thornhill, who is part of the establishment's chaplaincy team, were among those invited to the school for Children's Book Week.

They gave up an hour of their time to read a range of stories to the children, aged between five and seven years old.

Teacher Jake Imrie, who is Antony School's literacy subject leader, said: "Book Week takes place once a year to promote a love of reading and to get the children really excited and engaged in lots of different types of texts, to get them used to seeing different authors, different types of books and to read with different people and groups."

"We also tell the children that reading books can improve writing."

"Having different people coming in to school keeps reading exciting for the children, especially for the younger ones."

"Just having a new face or someone from a different place, who they haven't met before or who does a different job, just makes the whole week more interesting."



● LPT Dan Threlkeld shares a book with some of the children at Antony School in Torpoint

Picture: Dave Sheffield

WO Natasha Pulley, HMS Raleigh's Physical Training Officer, said: "The PT staff volunteered to take part to put something back into the community."

"This seemed an ideal

opportunity where we could be involved."

"The children were great fun, enthusiastic and very inquisitive."

"We all read a wide range of books that the children chose,

and encouraged them to talk about the stories and characters."

"The staff all thoroughly enjoyed the hour and, being young at heart, felt totally at home in that environment."

Time finally called on Ruby's era



A FAMILY which has run a renowned Naval pub in Portsmouth for more than half a century have called time on their tenure.

The Royal Standard in Edinburgh Road has welcomed matelots through its doors since 1887, and in 1961 the pub was taken over by Ruby Wood and her husband Jack, who had recently left the Royal Navy.

Over the decades the pub – which came to be known as Ruby's – was decorated with ship's badges, Naval artefacts and memorabilia such as hats and scale models (pictured left).

Ruby's son Steve Wood took over from his mother (who died in 2003 at the age of 83), and

by the time the family ended their stewardship late last year Ruby's granddaughter Sarah Erridge was helping her father run the place.

The end of the family's involvement was delayed until after Remembrance Sunday, when the pub was packed with serving and ex-sailors.

The badges which covered every wall are being sold off and the proceeds going to the pub's charity, Guide Dogs for the Blind.

As *Navy News* went to press pub owner Punch Taverns was advertising for a new landlord for the Royal Standard.

■ Royal Standard bank – page 28

Veterans gain new support

A NEW support service in the Surrey Heath area offers veterans and their families the chance to meet up and discuss some of the issues facing them in civilian life.

Surrey Heath Veterans & Families – Listening Project (SHV&F-LP) will be establishing a peer support/coffee morning, bringing together former Servicemen and women, as well as their families, in a secure environment, allowing them to talk openly about common social problems including loneliness, adjusting to civilian life, social isolation and difficulties with new or existing relationships.

The group will collaborate with other agencies such as Royal British Legion, Soldiers, Sailors, Air Force Association (SSAFA), Community Mental Health Teams, SAdAS, MccH Wellbeing, Combat Stress and other local community support agencies.

There is currently no provision in the Surrey Heath area for former Service personnel to meet, and give support to each other, as well as access other important agencies – a similar group exists in Hampshire, and appears to be succeeding in its aims.

The first gathering of the group, which will meet at the Camberley Sea Cadets (TS Diadem) in Gilbert Road, Frimley, is due to take place on Tuesday January 14 between 10am and 2pm.

Thereafter it will meet on the second Tuesday of the month except in March, which will be on the first Tuesday.

The exact dates are: January 14, February 11, March 4, April 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14, November 11 and December 9.

For more details email surreyheath.veterans@yahoo.com or telephone: 07837 172492.

Farewell to Peter

WANSBECK branch celebrated Trafalgar Night with a dinner at the Portland Hotel, Ashington – a new venue, as an aging membership and very few new younger members joining meant the normal dinner dance was no longer cost-effective.

The address was given by S/M Peter Wilson – sadly the last time members were to see their vice president, as he succumbed to a chest infection and died at the age of 87 in hospital two weeks later.

S/M Peter had been an AB Torpedoman from 1943 to 1948, working for the Post Office on his return to Civvy Street.

Fremantle closes

FREMANTLE branch has now officially closed, according to the last chairman S/M Roy Sankey

A lack of members made it impossible for the branch to continue to function, so the branch standard was laid up with the local Australian Sea Cadet unit TS Cockburn, who have been invited to parade it on appropriate occasions.

The balance of unit funds have been donated to their near neighbours in Western Australia, Rockingham and District branch.

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

Family plans service for lost boat

THE 100th anniversary of the loss of HM Submarine A7 will be marked this month by members of the boat's commanding officer – and they would be very pleased to hear from any other relatives of the crew who could join them.

A7 was on exercise in Whitsand Bay, south-west of Plymouth, when she failed to surface after a dive.

Since she had no escape hatch and the

nearest salvage lighter was at Sheerness in Kent, she and her ship's company of 11 lie there still.

At 3pm on Saturday January 18 members of the family of Lt Gilbert Welman plan to gather on Rame Head, overlooking Whitsand Bay, for a simple, informal act of remembrance for Gilbert – 'Gibby' and his shipmates.

If any families of the other members of

A7's crew have similar plans to commemorate the loss they are asked to contact Pamela-Jane Shaw on 07731 883566.

The sailors lost with their boat were PO John Crowley, AB Ernest Dyer, AB Frank Harris, AB Frederick Jewell, Sub Lt Robert Morrison, ERA Robert Nagle, A/Ldng Stoker John Northam, AB Charles Russell, ERA Richard Venning, Ldng Stoker Lancelot Wagstaff and Lt Welman.

Glass and stone are focus of attention

FINISHING the elements of the Naval Service Memorial was the main focus of attention as 2013 came to a close.

All the constituent parts – the foundations, pavement, sculpture and glass panels – have to be prepared before they can be brought together at the National Memorial Arboretum.

The creation of the glass panels threw up the odd challenge, until a recommendation from a leading supplier of architectural glass led General Secretary S/M Paul Quinn, National Chairman

S/M Chris Dovey and artist Graeme Mitcheson to Proto Glass in November.

Proto Glass oversaw the cutting and screen printing of the panels at their premises; they are then heated to 650 degrees in a furnace so that the printing melts into the glass, preventing it from fading.

A mirror piece of glass is then placed on top with a filling that looks like grey chewing gum, but which melts into a gel and brings the two pieces of glass together into one laminated panel.

It is then heat-soaked for six

hours at 250 degrees to ensure that there are no 'inclusions' – small crystals that could cause the panels to shatter.

The panel can then be edged, polished and finished.

Meanwhile Graeme is investigating the stone to be used on the pavement.

The Arboretum said that white limestone is too soft for the high water table, so the search began for light granites, allowing the shadow ship to be seen clearly.

The Kilkenny limestone for the figure has been ordered, and Graeme was due to start the

process of carving the figure – which should take around eight weeks – after Christmas.

Planning is now under way for the dedication event, parade and a small VIP reception.

Current thinking is that there will be a march of standards and the RNA from the Armed Forces Memorial Hill to the site of the Naval Service Memorial.

A Royal Marines Band will keep everyone in step, and shipmates will be joined by Royal Navy regulars from HMS Sultan and HMS Collingwood.

The Chaplain of the Fleet is also working on aspects of the dedication ceremony, on June 15.

For planning purposes, shipmates are advised they should aim to be at the Arboretum no later than 11.15am to give time to get from the car park to the muster point for 11.30am or so.

Those attending Conference in any of the Britannia hotels will be able to travel in coaches; those branches bringing their own transport are asked to make their own way to the Arboretum.

Coach schedules will allow time before or after the service to look around the Arboretum.

More details will be available soon, and send questions to the General Secretary if they would assist planning for the day.

And donations are still welcome – contact S/M Quinn at paul@royalnavalassoc.com; the General Secretary has also thanked those generous branches who have supported the project.

Algerines return to Maltese base

A GROUP from the Algerines Association has made an all-inclusive memorial visit to Malta, thanks to the Big Lottery Fund.

The veterans, many accompanied by their partners, visited their old stamping grounds (including Strait Street, aka the Gut), and joined a coach tour of the island by night, as well as taking short sea trips to Gozo and Comino.

Their final outing was to a wreath-laying service at the Commonwealth War Memorial in Valletta.

Algerine-class minesweepers were part of the 12th Minesweeping Flotilla, which cleared channels for Allied invasion forces as well as making sea lanes safe after the war.

The flotilla cleared more than 2,700 mines and obstructions in the three years up to 1946 – a record unsurpassed by any other such force.



Members of the Algerines Association and their partners take a break during their tour to Malta

Pershore pay their tributes

VETERAN organisations in Pershore participated in five services during the remembrance period.

On Friday, Pershore branch, the RBL and the Women's Section attended Pershore High School's service to join pupils in their act of remembrance which included the reading of the Roll of Honour.

This year saw a record attendance, including guests from Worcestershire County Council and Wychavon District Council.

On Saturday, Pershore members travelled to Rowney Green for the 70th anniversary service to remember the five Canadian crewmen of Wellington X3932, who died when their bomber crashed onto the village green on November 9 1943.

This annual service is organised each year by Alvechurch Ex-Services Association.

Sunday saw the traditional town Remembrance parade, for which the RBL and Women's Section were joined by the RNA, cadets, Scouts, Guides, Brownies and St John's Ambulance.

After a service of remembrance in Pershore Abbey, crowds lined the streets as the parade marched back through town.

Despite dismal weather, the five schools in the town held their first service of remembrance at Pershore Commemorative Garden in the presence of the veterans and civic guests.

More than 240 children paid their respects and each school took part in readings and laid a wreath at the Commemorative Stone in honour not only of those who have died in conflict but also to those who have served or are

still serving in the Forces.

This event was masterminded by S/M Trudy Burge of Pershore branch, who was instrumental in the creation of the Commemorative Garden.

The last date was the traditional RBL Armistice Day service, held at the Cross of Sacrifice in Pershore Cemetery.

More than 70 Commonwealth Servicemen are buried in the cemetery, 42 of them Canadian.



Frederick Williams-Freeman DSO in 1916

Wartime honours saved

BRAVERY medals awarded to a British Great War submariner have been saved and donated to the Royal Navy Submarine Museum in Gosport.

Relatives of Frederick Williams-Freeman donated his Distinguished Service Order (DSO), the Bar to the DSO and the French Croix de Guerre.

Bob Mealings, curator at the museum, said: "We are incredibly fortunate to have been given these medals – a lasting memory of a heroic man, and saved for future generations."

At the outbreak of war Williams-Freeman was first lieutenant of submarine E6, in which he won his DSO for action in the Heligoland Bight.

When E6 surfaced to try to lure the enemy to the west, he and an able seaman managed to release a mine that had become caught between E6's hydroplane and its guard – a hair-raising half-an-hour of tricky boat-hook work to dislodge the deadly cargo.

Between June 1915 and May 1917 he commanded submarine H9, a period that saw him patrolling the Eastern Approaches at the time of an attempted German High Seas Fleet incursion in August 1916.

He was then appointed to the command of submarine E12.

Between December 1918 when Williams-Freeman was promoted to lieutenant commander, and July 1919 he was employed on 'Special Service' in the Mediterranean.

In March 1919, he was in command of several motor launches of the Inter-Allied Disarmament Commission when the Bolsheviks seized power in Budapest.

He was lucky to survive a visitation from a Red Guard boarding party – he and his men escaped after a daring cutting-out sortie mounted by British and Allied seamen manning ex-Austrian river gunboats.

Eventually he returned to Budapest, where his work to organise the withdrawal of Allied civilians 'under the most difficult circumstances', won him plaudits.

The Royal Navy Submarine Museum is currently planning a series of events, talks and a new exhibition to mark the centenary of World War 1.



No let-up for busy Falmouth

A BUSY summer for Falmouth branch became a busy autumn – with the prospect of an equally-busy 2014.

In June, at the invitation of the Town Council, the branch played a prominent part in the organisation of the Cornwall Armed Forces Day.

Around 250 veterans and an equal number of cadets from across Cornwall marched to Events Square, where the Lord Lieutenant presented Arctic Star medals and Bomber Command clasps to nine recipients.

The Lord Lieutenant was accompanied by his cadet, and he insisted that the cadet should personally present the first of the Arctic Stars – to the cadet's grandfather.

For the 30th successive year, the branch organised and coordinated the annual Sea Sunday parade.

One member, S/M Alan Polley, was so disappointed that the Secretary failed to return from Conference in Liverpool with the rum tub that he went out and obtained one, which he presented to the branch at their July meeting – the tub was 'christened' at the Trafalgar Dinner, with Alan being invited to draw the first tot. Trafalgar Night was a resounding success, with almost 70 members and guests enjoying a speech by Cdr John Lea, Executive Officer of RNAS Culdrose.

Another highlight of the evening was the usual auction of a bottle of Pussers, kindly donated by the Senior Rates' Mess at Culdrose.

This year promises to be another busy year, with the programme of speakers and events rapidly taking shape.

Perhaps the three most important are the St Nazaire Memorial Parade on March 15; Sea Sunday on July 20 and our Trafalgar Dinner on October 17.

Arctic Convoy medal will be Peter's 16th

SHIPMATE Peter Tucker, who has just turned 90, has been a member of Chichester branch for a number of years.

Brought up on a farm in Kent, he went to the Lancashire and National Sea Training School at 13 and joined the Royal Navy in March 1939 as a Seaman Boy 2nd Class.

In 1943 Peter was onboard HMS Wild Goose, a Black Swan-class sloop which was in the 2nd Support Group – part of the renowned Captain Johnnie Walker's U-boat killers.

Peter was 'skipper' of the depth charge team onboard Wild Goose, one of the most illustrious anti-submarine ships in World War 2, helping to sink six U-boats in just ten days.

For his part in this success Peter was awarded the DSM in June 1944 for leadership, outstanding skill and enterprise.

Sent to HMS Woolwich in the Far East, Peter was actually on leave in UK when hostilities ended in Europe in May 1945.

However, when he returned after leave to Chatham Barracks he was posted to HMS Norfolk – and on his way back to the Far East, where the Pacific war raged on until August.

Peter was involved in a mission off the coast of Sumatra prior to the end of the war in the Pacific.

He returned to the UK via Simon's Town, where he bought a motorbike with his war gratuity and went off on a sightseeing tour of South Africa.

Peter was then sent to HMS Collingwood, and at the end of a tour as an electrical instructor he was posted to HMS Belfast and spent two years onboard during

the Korean War, where the ship was involved with bombardments and landings.

He returned to the UK on Belfast, which then went into reserve.

Peter now had a dilemma – whether to sign on for another ten years with the RN or face going back to Civvy Street.

Just in the nick of time, an Admiralty Fleet Order advertised for senior electrical instructors to join the Royal New Zealand Navy for ten years.

Peter signed on and served in various ships of the RNZN, including being Chief Electrician on board HMNZS Rotoiti during the H-bomb tests on Christmas Island.

He stayed in New Zealand for a further four years when his RNZN service ended, entering the world of the Ministry of Works and assuming responsibility for mechanical and electrical upkeep of schools and



government buildings.

On his return to the UK in 1967 Peter (above) took on similar responsibilities within Whitehall, Downing Street and later Royal palaces, then Royal Armanent and Research Development Establishments, and finally all government buildings in north Sussex.

S/M Peter attended the 75th anniversary celebration of HMS Belfast's launch on board the ship last year, and returned to his old ship in October when his family organised a big 90th birthday party.

Over his Service career, Peter collected the DSM, the 1939-1945 Star, Atlantic Star with France and Germany clasp, Africa Star, Burma Star, 1939-1945 War Medal, Naval General Service Medal, SE Asia 1945-1946 Medal, Korea UK Medal, UN Korea Medal, NZ Special Services Medal, Royal Navy Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, NZ Operational Medal, Russian Arctic Convoy Medal 40th Anniversary, Arctic Convoy Medal.

He is also awaiting a Russian Arctic Convoy Medal – and when he receives it he will have 16 medals.

His shipmates at Chichester wonder if anyone at another branch can top that?



New title for Korea visitor

A MEMBER of Beccles branch made a nostalgic visit to South Korea – and returned with a medal and a new title.

S/M Roy Hull (above) returned to Incheon during ceremonies to mark the 63rd anniversary of the landings behind the front line of invading North Korean forces.

He was serving in Colony-class cruiser HMS Kenya which had deployed in October 1949 for a two-and-a-half year commission based in Hong Kong.

The ship was at sea between Singapore and Hong Kong in June 1950 when news broke that the North Koreans had invaded their southern neighbours.

HMS Kenya increased speed and embarked troops of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers for passage to Pusan.

After landing the soldiers the ship headed up to the Yellow Sea and, with directions from an American spotter aircraft, bombarded columns of enemy troops along the coast.

In the following months Kenya operated along the west coast.

S/M Roy recalled how a little girl of about five or six had been caught in crossfire ashore and was brought to the ship for treatment along with an injured woman.

"Surg Lt Cole, one of our medical team, operated on both," said S/M Roy.

"He had to amputate the little girl's leg but, regrettably, she died during the night.

"Next day our sailmaker sewed up her body in a hammock and off-duty crew were invited to attend the burial at sea on the quarterdeck.

"The Royal Marines Band, our chaplain and the South Korean naval liaison officer we always carried were there, and after prayers were said her tiny little body slid from under a South Korean flag into the sea.

"I recall looking around and seeing so many sailors with tears in their eyes."

S/M Roy said of his return to Asia that the South Korean ceremonies were memorable – and the crowning glory was a farewell banquet, and the presentation of a Korean Peace Medal and a framed citation declaring him an 'Ambassador of Peace', given to him by a retired South Korean vice admiral.

Homage to Norfolks

IN MEMORY of all those who lost their lives in the Battle of North Cape on December 26 1943, the Old Norfolks Association remembers shipmates Charles Harris, Douglas Kiddle, William Lynch, John Michel, Philip Nightingale, Charles Parini, Leslie Squire, Harold Tozer and Micky West of the cruiser HMS Norfolk.

Patron mourned

MEMBERS of the Isle of Man branch have formally offered their condolences to the family of their late patron S/M Alan Bridson – Captain MN (Retd), who served with the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company and crossed the bar on July 29 2013.



● The Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Cllr Vivien Pengelly (in pale blue) with members and guests at the Plymouth branch annual dinner and dance

Warm welcome at Plymouth dinner

MORE than 200 members and friends gave a warm welcome to Lord Mayor of Plymouth Cllr Vivien Pengelly and her companion Mrs Judith Marks at the Plymouth branch annual dinner and dance, held in the Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess at HMS Drake.

Sea Cadets from Plymouth units TS Golden Hind and TS Manadon created a ceremonial ambience to initial proceedings, further enhancing the close relationship that exists between branch and units.

Branch president and Naval Base Commander Cdre Graeme Little, before proposing a toast to 'Our Guests', spoke about the importance of the new amphibious base – 'Royal Marines Tamar' – within Devonport, the vibrancy of the branch and

the respect in which it is held within the worldwide association.

Secretary S/M Arthur Gutteridge proposed the toast to the City of Plymouth, the Lord Mayor responding with typical light-hearted humour.

Cdre Little then presented branch treasurer S/M Bob Shaw with the award of RNA Life Membership for long and honourable service to the Association.

Associate members S/Ms Soraya Lewis-Coleman and Janette Whiteman received Certificates of Appreciation to recognise their contribution to the work of the RNA.

Excellent cuisine and dancing to Eclipse made for a memorable evening.

Smaller detachment

BRENTWOOD branch was down to a marching detachment of just three, including standard bearer, for Remembrance Day.

Fortunately TS St Vincent provided two smart cadets to escort the standard – ACs Shantelle Betts and Daniel Mellins.

The remaining file of two was then augmented by an ex-submariner, creating a full file.

Led by the Youth Band of the Royal British Legion, Brentwood, the parade marched from the Town Hall to the War Memorial, where wreaths were laid and a service of remembrance held.

The main service was held at the parish church of St Thomas a Becket.

Members also paid their respects at a memorial service at the Royal Anglian Regiment's chapel in Brentwood.

After the service about 80 of the congregation, including a good contingent from the RNA, attended a lunch at the Army Reserve Centre, hosted by Chelmsford branch of the Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Essex).

Brentwood branch RNA has for many years had a close relationship with the Essex Regiment Association, which is now part of the RARA.

Their annual re-affirmation service for the branch standard is held at the regimental chapel.

Memories of D-Day

WERE you involved in D-Day, the preparations or the first few days after the landings?

Navy News plans to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Europe by recounting the experiences of Naval Service veterans in June 1944.

Please send your first-hand accounts – and any images if you have them – to D-Day 70, Navy News, Mail Point 1.4, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email them to dday70@navynews.co.uk

Please let us know if you want material returned – and if possible please send copies rather than valuable original documents or pictures.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our November edition (right) was boom defence vessel HMS Layburn, and D Nairne, of Portsmouth, wins £50 for identifying her.

This month's ship (above) could be regarded as the first of her class – though she was never technically one of that class...

She was chartered by the Royal Navy in the mid-1970s for a couple of years for evaluation, as a result of which seven patrol vessels were ordered from the Aberdeen shipyard which designed and built her and her younger sister.

(1) What was her name, and (2) what was the name of the shipbuilder?

We have removed the pennant number from the image.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building,



HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. The closing date for entries is February 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 March edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 227

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

Be prepared for Command

IN DECEMBER's *Navy News* the Warfare Officers Career Managers updated Warfare Officers on General Service opportunities, and the Fleet Air Arm cadre. January's column addresses the remaining specialist cadres and provides an updated Warfare CM contact list for your convenience.

Intelligence

The Intelligence cadre continues to grow in strength (people) and liability (jobs) since its reinvigoration three years ago.

The only route into the branch is by sideways entry, usually from the GSX plot (but not exclusively) or as a SUY.

Given the increasing OpTour requirement for Maritime Intelligence Specialists both at SO3 (UKMCC, Jordan, Libya, Afghanistan) and SO2 (UKMCC, Afghanistan, Yemen) and the fact that over 60 per cent of the SO3 cadre are in deployable positions, there is no room for those who see intelligence training as a route for easy shore time – the reality is far from this.

Assignment areas include PJHQ, NCHQ, MIFC (North and South), JFC, N2 Northwood, Battle Staffs and a variety of LFS posts from Washington to Izmir, Naples to Stavanger.

A valid career path to OF4 has been established and work is ongoing to support the OF5 requirement. In short, there are opportunities for high-calibre officers to transfer to the Int cadre at several points of their career or to continue a mainstream GS X career path gaining Int experience along the way.

For more advice and help on the Int plot contact CM OF WAR INTSO2.

Mine Warfare and Diving

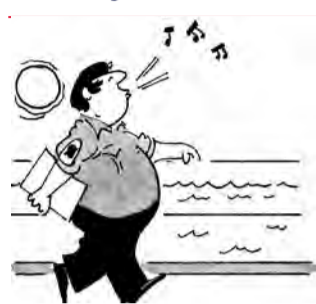
The UK commitment to a permanent MCM presence both East of Suez and in the Mediterranean has, if anything, strengthened.

One significant event has been the introduction of the combined UK/US Surface Mine Countermeasures Commander (SMCMC) which reached Initial Operating Capability in November 2013.

Such is the high esteem in which the RN's MCM cadre are held by the US and other coalition nations that the DCOM to the US CTF52 is a RN Captain MCDO and afloat, the commander of the nine ship UK/US Surface MCM flotilla is a Royal Navy Commander.

Another small development

Drafty's corner



opening up a significant opportunity has been the move to allow officers to go straight from the Initial Warfare Officer (IWO) Course to Diving and EOD training.

While the challenges of conducting and supervising 60m diving, compression chambers and leading an EOD element in a first compliment assignment (as an MCMV Navigating or Gunnery Officer) should not be underestimated, it certainly marks out officers with maturity and capacity beyond their Service years.

Their additional diving and EOD experience will also serve them well when competing for those highly-sought-after diving unit OIC and DDS jobs.

MCD/MWO remains the quickest route to becoming second-in-command of a warship in an operational theatre.

For more advice and help on the MCD/MWO plot contact CM OF WAR MCDSO2.

Specialist Navigating Officers

The 'Spec N' cadre continues to offer a stimulating opportunity for successful FNOs, PWOs, submariners and RFA officers. The arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth (QNLZ) in the next couple of years sees N2 (Lt Cdr) specialist navigator N to be assigned early in 2015 with a Cdr N joining later that year.

Notwithstanding the exciting opportunities presented by these new aircraft carriers, our current capital ships continue to offer unique professional challenges in a variety of operating environments, and the NO QNLZ will have already navigated one of these ships.

Furthermore, having bridge conduct of one of the RN's largest warships is an ideal opportunity to build and demonstrate command credentials for the future.

On top of these key challenging positions at sea, the plot continues to offer attractive opportunities



● There are plenty of opportunities out there in 2014 for warfare officers to develop their careers. Lt David Williams is seen here on the bridge of HMS Hurworth

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson

for foreign exchange jobs teaching navigation in both the US and Australian naval schools.

For more advice and help on the N plot contact CM OF WAR USO2.

Growing Communicators for Joint CIS Command Positions

There is an increasing drive to improve the career path of communication specialists such that the RN can compete strongly for the more challenging command positions in the joint arena, whether they are a PWO(CIS) or from an SUY(C) background.

Combine this with the growing importance of cyber security and the ever-increasing reliance on information it is clear to see how the CIS community is presenting more and more career opportunities.

The career management of both the PWO(CIS) and SUY(C) plots now fall under the oversight of the same career manager (CM OF WAR USO2), which allows for better cross-pollination of expertise between both plots.

The PWO(CIS) course has been split into two modules, the first designed for those proceeding to seagoing billets and the second for those moving into battlestaff, joint and staff assignments in the comms arena.

The course is open to SUY(C), WE Officers and anyone involved in the IS field, as well as PWOs, with the aim to develop a stronger cadre of communication specialists.

Submarine Specialisation

Submarine Warfare Officer manning continues to progress

in the right direction and career opportunities will improve further at every plot level as hull numbers increase from 2014.

There is an unprecedented number of JOs at sea to grow the future COs of our A Class SSNs and Successor SSBNs.

These officers are beginning to alleviate the pressure on the Navigator plot as they progress to IWC and FNO Courses and positive effect is already being felt with three JOs having been released to broaden in OpTours and staff roles ashore. Similar effects are noticeable in the PWO(SM) plot and with the increased flow, candidates will be released to one of the two SMCC courses per year as soon as they are ready.

The headmark remains to tailor individual careers so that officers arrive at SMCC as broadly experienced junior Lt Cdrs ready for timely promotion following an XO assignment. 2014 is going to be a terrific year to be at sea; the opportunities to develop careers are there for the taking, but the onus must remain on the individual. Navigators should aim to achieve CQ1 early in assignment so they can be considered for P2000 Command or XO MM/PP assignments. PWO (SM)s must achieve CQ2 to demonstrate early merit for MM/PP Command post-XO assignment and provide early indication of their merit for FF/DD Command. For more advice and help on the SM plot contact CM OF WAR SMSO2.

HM Specialisation

HM Officers are specialists

in the exploitation of the environment (both above and below the water), and provide geospatial intelligence to the warfighter.

HM Officers are embedded in the Battlestaffs, Navy Command HQ, amphibious platforms and air stations as well as providing support to deployed FF/DD.

The Hydrographic flotilla is world-renowned for gathering bathymetric and oceanographic data to support the UKHO production of charts and environmental briefing documentation for military and civilian use.

There is a misconception that becoming a HM precludes many roles in the RN or limits career progression. We need those that wish to navigate (two FNOs per H unit) as well as those that want to forecast in frontline squadrons and Battle Staffs.

There are opportunities to become a PWO and clear opportunities to command for those that pursue the sea command route – the bespoke HM command qualification is now fully implemented.

Looking ahead, there will be a strong HM presence in the QEC and we have recently re-established a HM presence with the fixed-wing community in preparation for JSF, with the creation of three posts at RAF Marham.

For more advice and help on the HM plot contact CM OF WAR HMSO2.

Operational Tours

OpTours are a good opportunity for warfare personnel to gain broader operational experience, and are an excellent addition to the career CV, improving future employability.

The Warfare division manages a large OpTour plot across the operational theatres around the world, providing additional personnel for events, short notice ops and exercises.

Excluding those personnel already in frontline units, jobs which are in direct support to operations or in positions which are dual-assigned to contingency and augmentation roles, the size of the manpower pool which can be called upon to supply personnel to fill OpTours is relatively small.

There remains a high likelihood that a six-month OpTour will be required at some stage. Please be mindful of this and manage expectations accordingly so ensure you are prepared to contribute to this high demand on warfare officers.

Command Qualifications (CQ)

Achieving command should be the aspiration of every warfare officer, regardless of specialisation. The Command Competency Framework (CCF)

(2012DIN01-244) and CQ DINs (2012DIN01-243/245/246) brings together a number of initiatives aimed to improve the 'Route to Command'.

The flotillas have continued their mentoring initiative for those looking to achieve CQ and MWS will support this with simulator familiarisation.

For officers not employed in a flotilla, Squadron Executive Officers stand by to offer advice on how to take advantage of the mentoring process. CQ Board places are now more frequent to provide more opportunity within taut operational and ship programmes.

Future Availability Date (FAD)

FADs are used by the CM to plan your move-on date and can be amended to suit unit programmes. If you are due to leave your ship shortly after a work-up period, or halfway through a deployment, inform your chain of command and ensure that your CM is aware.

Developed Vetting (DV)

A number of posts require DV clearance. The process is conducted electronically initially and requires a civilian email address and access to the internet to fill in the e-form. Incorrect or incomplete forms will delay the DV process.

DVs can take up to six months to complete, so if you know that your DV is about to expire or that your next assignment requires a DV, then bring this to the attention of your CM. Extensions to DVs are considerably easier to arrange when you currently hold one, as opposed to after it has expired.

Voluntary Outflow (VO)

Please discuss your intentions with your CM before submitting a Voluntary Outflow request on JPA.

Your CM will attempt to accommodate your leaving aspirations, which may include a request to leave the Service within a reduced notice period, but it should be noted that the norm remains completion of the full 12 months statutory notice.

RNFT

You must be in date for RNFT at all times. If you are unable to take your RNFT for Service reasons or medical reasons, you must get a valid extension or waiver at all times: 2012DIN01-229 refers. Temporary extensions for overseas assignments should be sought from HMS Temeraire see RNTM 25/12.

Leave

Excessive leave balances hamper assignments and may prevent you being considered for a particular job. Make sure that you take your leave entitlement and that it is correctly recorded in JPA.

Future for aviation

PERSONNEL from the Fleet Air Arm have attended a conference on 'Future Challenges: The Next 50 Years for Aviation, Aerospace and Space.'

Delegates were addressed by Dame Julia King, Vice Chancellor of Aston University, an advisor to the Committee for Climate Change, who outlined the contribution of aviation within the context of global climate change.

An impressive line-up of

speakers considered the impact of ground-breaking developments such as 3-D printing and the future for business jets and supersonic flight.

Isabelle Montet-Guerin, an Airbus test pilot, gave an insight into the demands of flight-testing across multiple aircraft types.

The audience heard about what could be done to encourage girls into STEM (Science, technology, engineering and maths) careers.

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) NAVY MEDIACOMMS-IC-TL
(External) NAVYMEDIACOMMS-IC-TL@mod.uk

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CM OF WAR JOSO2	Lt Cdr S Banfield (Steve) Tbrb Lt Cdr O Slight (Oilly)	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR JOSO2	navypers-cmofwarjoso2@mod.uk	230	8866
CM OF WAR USO2	Lt Cdr G Palin (Giles)	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR USO2	navypers-cmofwaruso2@mod.uk	230	8978
CM OF WAR ASO2	Lt Cdr J Howe (Jools)	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR ASO2	navypers-cmofwaraso2@mod.uk	230	8864
CM OF WAR INTSO2	Lt Cdr K Rackham (Katharine)	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR INTSO2	navypers-cmofwarintso2@mod.uk	224	8976
CM OF WAR HMSO2	Lt Cdr A Jacob (Andy)	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR HMSO2	navypers-cmofwarhmsso2@mod.uk	210	8973
CM OF WAR P1SO2	Lt Cdr M Scott (Mark) Tbrb Lt Cdr I Fraser (Ian)	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR P1SO2	navypers-cmofwarp1so2@mod.uk	210	8979
CM OF WAR P2SO2	Maj P Manson RM (Pete)	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR P2SO2	navypers-cmofwarp2so2@mod.uk	210	8840
CM OF WAR OSO	Lt Cdr A Laycock (Ant)	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR OSO2	navypers-cmofwaroso2@mod.uk	210	8842
CM OF WAR COORD	Miss Debbie Urry	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR COORD	navypers-cmofwarcoord@mod.uk	230	8867
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CM OF WAR A3E1	Miss Pauline Strange	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR A3E1	navypers-cmofwara3e1@mod.uk	210	8839



Single rate for warrant officers

Silver gift for prince

TO MARK the baptism of Prince George, the Royal Navy has presented a unique silver cup to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

The antique silver trophy bears the name of the Royal Navy's Majestic-class battleship HMS Prince George and is engraved with the date 1898, three years into the ship's Victorian-age commission, marking the date officers from the Wardroom presented it to the ship.

The trophy had been carefully stored by the Trustees of the RN Trophy Fund at the Naval stores in Portsmouth since 1921, when the ship decommissioned.

Prince William sent a personal letter of thanks to First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas remarking on the 'extraordinarily special gift' and extending the Royal couple's warmest thanks and best wishes to the men, women and families of the Royal Navy following their 'profound' and 'joyful' royal christening day.

The Trustees of the Royal Navy Trophy Fund were delighted to source and refurbish the antique silver cup that bears the name of the ship that was named for the future King George V (the Queen's grandfather), who entered the Royal Navy at the age of 12.

The death of his elder brother in 1892 effectively ended Prince George's naval career as he was destined to become heir to the throne.

The sterling silver cup stands 36cm high and was crafted and hallmarked in 1898 by William Hutton and Sons Ltd, a long-established Sheffield company with a London showroom.

A perfect gift for a future heir to the throne, connecting six generations of the Royal Family, the heirloom also highlights the Royal Navy's significant links throughout the centuries with the monarchy.

THERE has been much debate in recent years about the WO2 rate within the RN and the associated pay cap for technical Senior Rates.

As part of work within the RN people strategy and also as a strand within Project Faraday, an extensive study was conducted with widespread consultation, including Fighting Arms as well as wider focus groups, career managers and branch managers and most importantly, feedback from individuals.

Consensus was achieved and after careful consideration the Second Sea Lord directed the start of a transition away from the WO2 rate, with the exception of the Royal Marines, commencing in April 2014.

This will be a transition over a number of years, with bespoke measures in place to recognise that each cadre (EGS/ SM / AE, CTs and Med Techs) and rate directly affected (CPO/ WO2/ WO1) will see slightly different benefits in this change.

The Second Sea Lord has sent all individuals affected a personalised letter to explain the decision. He said: "I am absolutely determined to ensure that the correct reward and recognition continues to be provided to all who serve."

"This change is just part of my programme to ensure that all our personnel have the best possible



● The WO presentation at HMS Collingwood Picture: Keith Woodland

career opportunities, properly rewarded and recognised."

The WO2 rate will be around for a number of years to come, and although we will stop creating new WO2s from April this year, with the exception of Royal Marines (and technical submariners for a short transitional period), no existing WO2 will be required to give up their warrant and they will remain WO2s until they are either promoted or leave.

No one will be financially disadvantaged. Technical CPOs will see their previously-imposed pay cap lifted as of April 1 2014; the hurdle of WO2 will be removed for promotion to WO1 and, following ongoing job evaluation, there will be an overall increase in jobs at WO1.

Where a job does not move up

to WO1, a combination of rank-ranging posts and careful career management will be used to protect promotion prospects.

The Second Sea Lord is clear about maintaining the current status of WO1s so the level of merit for promotion will not change.

To reinforce the letters sent to all CPOs, WO2s and WO1s, a Galaxy and DIN have been published. A number of presentations were given at major establishments.

Teams also covered the smaller branches affected, visiting the Communication Technicians and Medical Technicians in each of their locations.

Over three days of presentations some 1,300 people attended and were given the opportunity to ask questions of

the teams.

While there may not have been a joyous reception of the news, there was at least recognition that it was necessary and timely.

The main presentation team was led by Cdr Steve Smith of RNPS, who was tasked with assessing the feasibility of the proposed measure and then delivering the project.

At the end of three days of travelling and briefing he said: "Having conducted a series of road shows I was very encouraged that the vast majority of personnel recognised and understood that the measure would have benefit for the organisation as well as the individual."

"The CPOs saw the removal of the pay cap as immediately beneficial and could see prospects for promotion were increasing in due course."

"The WO2s recognised that the measures would provide stability for the engineering branch as well as increased opportunities for themselves and their successors."

Any individual wishing to find out further information can do so either direct to their career manager, through the divisional chain or by sending a query to: NAVY_PERS-BM_WO_TRANS@dii or Navypers-bmwotrans@mod.uk. The supporting information is available through the Helm portal, Galaxy 38-2013, DIN01-245: Transition to a Single WO rate in the RN.

It's OFFICIAL SECRET - New rules

THE MOD has signed up to implementing a new Government Security Classifications (GSC) policy by April 2 2014, in line with all government departments.

The new policy is being introduced to support better information security behaviours and align processes now that staff are all working more with computers across government. It recognises that all information has inherent value to the department and needs to be looked after properly.

The new system has three rather than six tiers.

Under the new system all information and physical assets will continue to be afforded the necessary levels of protection.

The new policy places

greater emphasis on individual responsibility for managing information securely and recognises that all information has value, however it is classified.

The current six levels of security classification are: Unclassified, Protect, Restricted, Confidential, Secret, Top Secret.

These will be reduced to three: Official, Secret and Top Secret.

This change is part of a wider government programme of security modernisation that will strike an appropriate balance between security and business needs; it places greater emphasis on individual responsibility.

The Defence Intranet has the latest guidance and Powerpoint presentation relating to GSC.

Cutting abuse fears

INTERNATIONAL Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women saw the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) RN Police at RNAS Yeovilton working in partnership with the local community.

Together with Somerset County Council, Naval Personnel and Family Services, Naval Chaplains, HIVE (Information Service for Military Community), and Avon & Somerset Police, CHF's Royal Naval Police helped to raise awareness by getting out and about in the local community to offer advice about the help and support available to victims, witnesses and others who may have come into contact with domestic abuse.

Support is also available to those who recognise and want to change their behaviour.

Regulating Petty Officer

Oonagh Maguire of the RN Police said: "The Service community occupy a large number of homes in and around the Yeovil area and we are all a reflection of civilian society and therefore must accept and understand how Service personnel and their families could become victims of domestic abuse."

"Domestic abuse is much more common than most people realise - it affects all, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender or sexuality. Even if you are not experiencing domestic abuse yourself, you may know someone who is."

The aim of this partnership is to reduce domestic abuse and the fear of domestic abuse through prevention, detection and education, focusing efforts in giving people the options available, including a range of organisations that can help you in the Somerset and wider area.

Where to look

GALAXYS

38-2013 - Warrant Officer (WO) Transition - Transition to a Single Warrant Office Rank in the Royal Navy

37-2013 - Entitlement to the Early Departure Payment or Resettlement Grant on Aggregation of Service

36-2013 - Re-invigorating Defence Security Culture Reinforcing Defence Security Culture Survey

35-2013 - Revised Terms of Service on the Introduction of Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 - Naval Service offer to extend Career/Commission

DIBS
DIB 61/13 - Lord Levene's second annual review of Defence Reform

DIB 60/13 - PUS writes to staff about the MOD Your Say 2013 results

DIB 59/13 - Standard Learning Credits scheme - extension of eligibility to Reserve personnel

DIB 58/13 - Revised Terms of Service on the introduction of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015

RNTMs
RNTM 250/13 - Changes to ShipHaz Policy and Procedures

RNTM 251/13 - Basic Alcohol Education Courses (BAEC) 2014 Dates

RNTM 252/13 - Pension Liberation

RNTM 253/13 - Publication of Revised Safety, Health & Environment Manual for Ships and Submarines (BRD 167)

DINS
2013DIN01-248 - Fuel Subsidy Scheme Charges for UK SFA - Entitlement and Reconciliation

2013DIN01-245 - Transition to single Warrant Officer (WO) rate within the Royal Navy (RN)

2013DIN01-242 - Scottish Independence Referendum - Guidance for Service personnel wishing to vote

2013DIN01-241 - Royal Navy Fitness Test (RNFT)

2013DIN01-236 - The Firmin Sword of Peace Awards 2013

Premium pupils

SERVICE personnel with children in state schools in England have until January 16 to notify schools of their children's eligibility for the Service Pupil Premium.

The premium is part of the Armed Forces Covenant and provides extra funding to help schools support the unique challenges children with parents in the Armed Forces can often face.

The premium is currently £300 per Service child. Parents serving in the Armed Forces should ensure their child's school is aware of their Service status. For details: DIN 2013DIN01-233

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION



Share your views on the NEM proposals

FIRST things first, the NFF would like to wish all readers a very happy new year. 2013 was a big year for the Naval Service and the NFF, and we know that 2014 will be busy, busy, busy, writes Emma Prince, Marketing and Communications Manager.

We introduced two Armed Forces Covenant co-ordinators, celebrated our tenth anniversary, and received a prestigious commendation from the Chief of Naval Personnel and Training and Second Sea Lord.

The coming year will be another significant year for Royal Naval and Royal Marines families. Following two rounds of consultation with personnel and families, the report on the New Employment Model (NEM) is due in the spring. The NEM

programme is the most thorough review of Terms and Conditions of Service in a generation. Information on the NEM is available on our website: www.nff.org.uk.

The NFF is involved in the NEM process and is working to ensure that the impact on the whole family is considered. If you have any feedback, e-mail: admin@nff.org.uk.

The NFF diary is filling up fast as we continue to represent families at top-level meetings. NFF Chair is attending the Navy Board this month, briefing senior personnel, including the First and Second Sea Lords, on the issues families are talking to us about.

The Families Forum at the end of January is an opportunity to discuss the

issues with the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans.

We really do take your concerns to the top; so let us know your views. Visit: www.nff.org.uk from January 3 to complete our short web poll, which is collating feedback ahead of the meeting with the Minister.

The NFF's Armed Forces Covenant Co-ordinators have launched their 2014 visit programme and in the coming weeks will be having meetings with representatives from Derby City Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Broxtowe Borough Council and the Royal British Legion.

The team will also be attending a Covenant Workshop in Kent, a Service

Children in State Schools Conference in Harrogate, and meeting with Royal Navy personnel studying in Birmingham.

Highlights in our latest magazine include an update on the Armed Forces Covenant and a review of the way the Navy delivers welfare and support.

Read *Homeport* online: www.nff.org.uk or e-mail editor@nff.org.uk to join the mailing list and we will post you a free copy.

You can contact the NFF by calling 023 9265 4374; email us at admin@nff.org.uk. You can visit our website: www.nff.org.uk. Subscribe to our monthly e-update at: info@nff.org.uk.

You can also find us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter or join us on LinkedIn.





● **LS Matt Day (left) gains an insight into RN navigation training**

Realistic view on the bridge

OFFICERS and ratings from HMS Eaglet, HMS Flying Fox and HMS President have taken part in leadership, teamwork and navigation skills development at the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood in Fareham.

The scenario-based training allowed each reservist to execute navigation plans in the realistic bridge simulator. The navigation training unit is housed in the Endeavour Building, and consists of the main simulated bridges Consort and London, which are responsible for training future generations of navigators for the Royal Navy.

Organised by London-based Lt Martin Shouler, the weekend put trainees through their paces learning the fundamentals of mine warfare and general navigation at sea.

"The weekend gave me the chance to act as part of a bridge team, something that will be important to me when I go to sea for real as a junior RNR Mine Warfare officer," said Sub Lt Fai Lee, from London.

LS Matt Day, from Liverpool, added: "The bridge simulator is so realistic. This was one of the best RNR weekends I've had so far."



● **LS Andy Westlake, his wife Michelle and her parents Mike and Carole Davey in Malta (left), while Michelle's grandfather, submariner Petty Officer Arthur Davey, is pictured (right)**



Submariner Arthur honoured by family

TRAVELLING to Malta for the first time, Leading Seaman Andy Westlake from HMS Flying Fox took his wife Michelle and her family to carry out a fitting act of remembrance for Michelle's grandfather, who was killed in Malta during 1942.

PO Arthur Davey was part of the 10th Submarine Flotilla, nicknamed 'The Fighting 10th', based on Manoel Island in Lazzaretto Creek.

HM submarine P39 was heavily damaged by enemy action and Arthur was being brought home on HMS Olympus when it struck a mine about six miles from Valletta, with heavy loss of life. Most perished trying to swim back to shore, but around a dozen made it ashore.

The RN was protecting the convoys as they re-supplied UK and Commonwealth forces in the Mediterranean disrupting Axis supplies to forces in North Africa.

During their visit, Andy and his family visited the memorial site at St Paul's Anglican Cathedral in Valletta, which overlooks the site of HMS Talbot – the base of 'The Fighting 10th'.

Andy said: "It was the first time my father-in-law, Michael, has visited Malta. I hope it was a fitting tribute to his dad, who he was too young to have known when he was still alive."

Andy recently completed a tour of duty in Gibraltar and has

previously mobilised to Iraq.

He added: "My grandfather served in the Fleet Air Arm during World War 2 and reading his diary led me towards joining the Naval Service."

Flying into Brer Fox's lair

MILITARY siblings Dave 'Dibs' Bucknell and his RAF pilot brother Sqn Ldr Andrew Bucknell were reunited at HMS Flying Fox where Dave is presently in command of the RNR unit.

Andrew was tasked to fly high-ranking British Army officer Lt Gen Nick Carter to the Naval HQ in Bristol for a fact-finding tour during a routine aircrew training sortie.

General Carter has just taken over as the Commander of the Land Forces and was on a whistle-stop tour around the region when the two brothers realised that they would both be in the same place, at the same time, with the same mission.

The naval brother was able to provide a quick tour of the facilities, which is also host to a detachment of the 6th Rifles Army Reserves.

Dave said: "We don't meet up much with busy lives so I was genuinely delighted when I found out my kid brother was flying the General in to HMS

Experiencing our way of life

ACROSS the nation, RNR and RMR training Units are throwing open their doors to enlighten those dipping an adventurous toe into the life of a Maritime Reservist.

In case you have missed the news headlines, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines want to grow their reservist trained strength across most specialisations in the Future Reserves 2020 programme.

Every Reserve unit in the country has stepped up to the challenge to swell their numbers and, over the course of the next year, expect to see much more in your local news about what exactly our people are doing in support of the Service and the country.

More importantly, RNR Live gives interested applicants the opportunity to find out more about the lifestyle, what sort of training is available and the qualities required by speaking directly to those people who have already joined and are excited to share their experiences first hand.

That's the point of the RNR Live events – meeting representatives from each of the specialist branches that you might be interested in. They'll help guide those thinking about whether they are suited to the RNR or RMR lifestyle with their honesty and enthusiasm.



● **A potential reservist takes to the water at HMS Flying Fox**

Picture: OC Claire Rossiter

There are dynamic displays and the new Navatar recruiting tool offers fun challenges in maritime scenarios to test your decision-making abilities and leadership skills.

You can also get hands on with naval equipment and insights into military first aid training.

More RNR Live events are coming in the new year.

Check the events diary on the Royal Navy website to find out more: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/News-and-Events or call 0845 6003222 to book a place.



● **RN Reservists at HMS President lay on an armed search display**



● **Sqn Ldr Andrew Bucknell (left), Lt General Nick Carter and Cdr Dave "Dibs" Bucknell**

Flying Fox."

Andrew added: "Dibs and I have a healthy sense of inter-Service rivalry, however this is the first time we have met on duty since 1996!"

"He added some extra value to our visit and the General certainly saw the nautical side of Bristol that he wasn't expecting."

HMS Flying Fox is no stranger to helicopter operations, with

several RN 'cabs' visiting last year.

Cdr Bucknell is planning to receive a Naval Merlin helicopter early next year when he hopes to be able to fly employers of reservists as part of ongoing engagement to ensure they are kept fully aware of the work of the Royal Navy, part of the unit's campaign to recruit new sailors from the Bristol area.



Patrick helps in Philippines

HELPING to deliver humanitarian aid in the Philippines is Marine Patrick Hoey from Nottingham RMR Unit.

Deployed in August with J Company, 42 Cdo RM, he transferred across from RFA Mount's Bay to Illustrious to support the new tasking, first collecting 500 tons of emergency aid relief stores in Singapore.

Patrick said: "A lot of the stores had to be lifted onboard manually. It was a back breaking job but I can't overstate how motivated the men were to get it done."

Patrick went ashore to assist in the remote Sicogon, Calagnaan and Binuluangnan Islands. He said: "There is real hope here now. It is quite an incredible thing to have been a part of."



Bootneck Bear

RECENTLY the proud recipient of an honorary green beret, adventurer Bear Grylls marked the occasion by visiting the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone.

As a newly-appointed Royal Marines Reserves Honorary Lieutenant Colonel, he was among the VIPs at the Kings Squad pass-out of 162 Recruit Troop, taking pride of place in front of the new marines and their families.

"It's a total privilege and for me it's about encouraging marines in all their endeavours," said Bear when asked about his new appointment.

"Especially down here at Lympstone where it's pretty daunting for recruits and young officers when they start training, but they're on the path to something special. Worthwhile things in life don't come easy."

"For me it's just about encouraging them to stick with it. Go for it, and really embrace those Corps values that mean so much in life – like cheerfulness in adversity and humility and all that stuff that really matters in soldiering but also in life."

Whilst at CTCRM Bear took part in a photo shoot on the assault course for a civilian photographer whose task was made harder by Bear's enthusiasm to run off and start tackling the assault course.

Recruits from 164 Troop on the practice Tarzan Assault course run were more than surprised to encounter the new Lt Col on top of the 12ft wall.

Bear was finally unleashed on the notorious regain obstacle which he completed repeatedly without breaking into a sweat.

"My father was a bootneck,

he's no longer around now but I'd like to think he'd be smiling down – especially as I now outrank him!"

During his time in the Territorial Army, Bear suffered a parachuting accident which almost left him paralysed.

Fortunately he made a good recovery and reached the summit of Everest aged 23.

He has also made a paramotor flight near the summit of Mount Everest and completed a crossing of the Atlantic in an inflatable boat. He was made the youngest ever Chief Scout at the age of 35 in 2009.

Bear is due to return to CTCRM in January 2014 where he hopes to meet more of the recruits and tackle some more of the Royal Marines physical tests.



INFORMATION affecting Maritime Reserves will be featured from time to time on these pages. Visit your RNR/RMR unit to access these important announcements from the permanent staff:

CMR Temporary Memoranda

45-13 – RN Alpine Championships
46-13 – Management of the RNR Initial Naval Training Instructor
47-13 – Maritime Reserves Entitlement to Paid Leave

DIBs

2013DIB/59 Standard Learning Credits scheme - Extension of eligibility to Reserve personnel from April 1 2014



● Divers.... Enter the water!

DIVERS LEAP IN TO SUPPORT NEW ROLES



● Cdre Andrew Jameson, Commander of the Maritime Reserves, is advised on the RNR dive equipment by diving supervisor, Lt Adam Bolton



● Add a few circuits of the lake to warm up...

“TWO MINUTES, 35 seconds...! Not bad, in fact - not bad at all for a first attempt!” The diving supervisor checked his stopwatch, acknowledging the energy of the six panting men before him with a nod.

Not bad indeed but also not quite good enough, not yet...

A biting wind whistled across the lake as the six men tore off their uniforms, with some comedy hopping as they tugged at their shoelaces, finally pulling the tight seals of the drysuits over their shivering frames. Two minutes is the expectation but it is early days yet for these would-be Naval divers.

The Royal Naval Reservists were conducting timed pre-joining tests; changing for diving duty ‘at-the-rush’ on a wintry Saturday morning at Horsea Island’s enclosed lake in Portsmouth Harbour.

These determined men have one collective ambition: to join the Royal Naval Reserve Diving Branch, a specialist cadre of the Maritime Reserves.

The six men joined a diving training weekend alongside qualified Naval Reservist divers drawn from RNR units across the country from as far away as HMS Scotia in Rosyth and HMS Vivid in Plymouth.

Commander of the Maritime Reserves, Commodore Andrew Jameson and Command Warrant Officer for the Maritime Reserves, WO Annette Penfold visited the Horsea Island site to observe activity and meet the divers.

They received a presentation on the RNR Diving Branch from Lt Nick Foster, with Branch Manager Lt Cdr John Herriman answering detailed training and policy questions.

The Commodore was briefed on the Diving Branch’s role to deliver a Homeland Defence underwater search capability in the UK, providing underwater force protection and supporting harbour searches in strategic UK ports.

The Diving Branch also generates reservist diving teams to support the UK’s Explosive Ordnance Reconnaissance operations, backfilling the Fleet Diving Squadron’s teams when personnel are deployed overseas.

More recently, the RNR Diving branch has been tasked to generate manpower to support the NATO Submarine Rescue System.

The two senior HQ officers spent the morning observing the course and joined the would-be divers afterwards for lunch, tucking into bag meals inside a cosy heated cabin to escape the lakeside chill.

It takes a special type of person to enjoy being underwater, to be prepared mentally for conducting engineering tasks under the hulls of warships or submarines, searching jetties and pontoons, often in daunting conditions.

These divers might find themselves taking part in a hunt for military ordnance; using the latest hi-tech remote equipment but could equally find themselves exploring underwater anomalies



● Reservists who hope to become RNR divers leapt from the high board in pre-joining aptitude tests at the Defence Diving School while qualified RNR divers acted as mentors and provided safety cover

Pictures: Stewart Turkington and LA(Phot) Maxine Davies, FRPU East



● On completion of the punishing circuits – the divers give the thumbs up sign



● Lt Cdr John Herriman briefs Command Warrant Officer WO Annette Penfold on the diving equipment



● Continuation training for the qualified divers included a fingertip search for a hammer dropped in the muddy silt at the bottom of the lake

both for our personnel and for operational efficiency. We are proud to say some of our divers have been able to qualify on the bomb disposal course alongside the regulars and in recent cases have come top of the course.”

AB Tony Cassidy from HMS Eaglet can vouch for the level of integration he saw between Reservist and regular RN divers during his three-month mobilisation during the 2012 Olympics.

Tony, an offshore steward working on the North Sea oil rigs voluntarily mobilised to Operation Olympics, providing military support to London 2012.

He worked alongside a group of RN divers inspecting the Port of London and protecting underwater security in the River Thames and adjacent Olympic arenas while also paying particular attention to the force protection safety zones around the warships in the capital, providing accommodation to the troops carrying out security duties at the 2012 Games.

The new naval tasking to be opened up to RNR divers will provide direct support to the NATO Submarine Rescue System (NSRS).

The RNR aims to train up to 36 reservists over the next five years to meet the operational requirement. A pool of 12 NSRS trained divers will then be at 24 hours standby notice to move to deploy to assist with the recovery and rescue of personnel from a submarine in distressed circumstances.

As the weekend drew to a close Lt Cdr John Herriman said: “This weekend was a great opportunity to show CMR what the Diving Branch is about and how well we are integrated into the Royal Navy.

“We were also able to show him how stringent our selection and training procedures are which is critically important for our branch because of the safety considerations with diving and bomb disposal.

“It also means that we can operate with confidence alongside our regular Royal Navy Diver colleagues.”

The branch is open to anyone, male or female, who has previous military service and holds a RN or Army diving qualification. Candidates should be UK citizens with at least five years residency and be between the ages of 17-40 although ex-military candidates may join beyond the age of 40.

It is also open to those who have no military diving background but who possess a recognised civilian diving qualification.

This can be either commercial (HSE) or recreational (BSAC/PADI.)

The minimum requirement is for 1000 minutes spent under water, these must be recorded in a diving log book. The branch recruits both commissioned officers and ratings.



● CPO Chris Dello from HMS King Alfred is the first reservist to undertake the NSRS training. A former Submariner he left the RN to become an Engineer Surveyor. In his NSRS role he has a high readiness commitment to operate the Transfer Under Pressure (TUP) element of the rescue phase bringing the submariners safely back to surface pressure in a special chamber as part of the rescue process



● AB Natasha Senn from HMS King Alfred is the only female diver in the RNR and recently became the first female reservist to qualify on her Explosive Ordnance course.

A lab scientist at DSTL in her day job, Natasha manages to juggle her work and family responsibilities to pursue her RNR diving ambitions and has a passion for an active lifestyle



● AB Mark Armstrong from HMS Dalriada conducts continuation training during several weekends over the year ensuring he is ready to deploy to support RN diving tasks.

FIND out more information about a career in the Royal Naval Reserve.

Visit the website at www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navyreserves or call 08456 00 32 22.

Successful first steps Sailing academy launched

WELBECK Defence Sixth Form College is one of the UK's leading full-boarding educational establishments – and it's where motivated, ambitious students from all backgrounds take their first steps towards rewarding futures as engineers and technical officers in the Forces or as civilians within the MOD Civil Service.

Based in Leicestershire, the state-of-the-art facilities would be enough to make it unique.

But the superb teaching, outstanding pastoral care and opportunities for adventurous expeditions have also earned Welbeck a reputation for providing an unrivalled quality of education.

And though the academic focus is on maths and science, a truly rounded education is offered through a unique programme of intellectual, physical and personal development.

Welbeck's principal purpose is to develop the engineers and technical officers of tomorrow –

whether that's in the Royal Navy, Army, RAF or Civil Service.

It's a career path that leads on to one of nine highly-regarded universities where the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS) provides a £4,000-a-year bursary.

Graduates then move on to Initial Officer Training with the Services or to the Defence Engineering and Science Group (DESG) Graduate Programme with the MOD Civil Service.

Last year, 99 per cent of Welbeck students were offered a university place, and the College achieved a 100 per cent A-level pass rate, 89 per cent at A* - C – an impressive achievement considering every student studies Maths A-level and 80 per cent of students take Physics to A2.

Find out more and book a place on an open day: www.dsfc.ac.uk; tel: 01509 891700; Facebook: Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College.

THE Royal Hospital School overlooks the beautiful Stour Estuary and is adjacent to a large reservoir and sailing club.

As a result of this watery location, and a unique 300-year maritime history, it has become a centre of excellence for sailing.

Most recently the School has launched its RYA-accredited Sailing Academy, with a fleet of more than 50 dinghies catering for every level of sailing – from beginner boats like RS Teras to team racing Fireflies and Olympic pathway craft such as the Laser 1 and 29ers.

On joining the School, all 11-year-olds take part in a week-long sailing course where they are taken through the basics up to RYA level 2.

Pupils joining in other year groups have the opportunity to learn to sail in afternoon activity sessions and those in the sailing

squad can sail up to four times a week during the summer months.

Pupils under the Elite Sailing Programme are provided with intensive competition training including the use of GPS tracking and video analysis, individual fitness programmes, specific dietary advice and transport to competitions.

They are also well supported in their studies by a personal tutor to ensure that they carefully balance their academic and sailing commitments.

The School has regular team and fleet fixtures against other schools and the elite sailors compete at both National and International level.

Most recent inter-school successes have included winning the BSDRA Hoard Shield and Kings Challenge Cup.



As a recognised RYA Training Centre, the highest levels of safety and tuition are maintained and pupils can work towards sailing qualifications as well as qualifications in power boating, windsurfing and dinghy sailing instruction. There is also a fleet of Cornish Shrimpers for coastal cruising at weekends.

The Royal Hospital School is a coeducational boarding school for 11 to 18 year olds offering Sailing Scholarships to outstanding sailors for entry at 11+, 13+ or 16+.

For more information please contact the Admissions Office on 01473 326210 or admissions@royalhospitalschool.org

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Perrott Hill's Independent Schools Inspectorate Report October 2013 was outstanding, with the top mark of 'Excellent' awarded in every category.

We encourage you to read the *Tatler Schools Guide 2014* and the *Good Schools Guide* reports which capture our values and ethos.

Academic success at Perrott Hill is measured by 100% Common Entrance results and a record number of scholarships



awarded to senior schools in 2013.

Sport plays a large part in school life taking place five days per week; all children will perform on stage every year and the majority will also play one or more musical instruments.

Perrott Hill Spring Term Open Mornings Friday 24th and Saturday 25th January 2014;

Perrott Hill Scholarship Day Friday 7th February 2014.

Academic, Sports, Art, Music, Drama and All Rounder Scholarships available.

For a scholarship information pack, to arrange a visit or find out more, please contact the school on 01460 72051 or admissions@perrotthill.com

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Loud and proud at Twickenham

THE Duke of York's Royal Military School Band was proud to open the international rugby match between England and Argentina at the Twickenham ground in November.

Invited to play the two national anthems along with *Jerusalem*, *Swing Low* and *Jupiter*, the school group of 75 students aged 13-18 were thrilled to play at such a high profile and patriotic event. Taking their position in the middle of the pitch, the band put on one of their best performances, accompanied by loud pyrotechnics and the 80,000-strong singing crowd.

The National Anthem was sung by Laura Wright and Josefina Achaval sang the Argentine Anthem.

The Duke of York's Royal Military School is sponsored by the Ministry of Defence and has adopted a military ethos for over 200 years.

Throughout its history the band has played an important role in the life of the school.

Marching band members are recruited from Years 9 to 13 and many have never played an instrument before joining the school.

Students rehearse three times

a week and lead the school's regular Sunday parades.

Rugby enthusiast and Drum Major Ieuan Bevan, 17, commanded the students throughout the Twickenham performance (pictured right on the stadium screen).

Ieuan said that he was "the proudest person in the stadium to be on such hallowed turf on such an occasion."

Jack Wilson, a Year 11 tuba player, said: "Despite being very nervous about taking part it was one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life which I will never forget."



The staff and students were honoured to be part of the opening entertainment.

"The band has risen admirably well to all the challenges that this prestigious event has brought," Director of Military Music Maj David Cresswell (Rtd) concluded.

"This might be a routine event for many other professional musicians, but considering the average age of the band is 16, each and every one of them can take great pride in their achievement and I am proud to be their Director of Music."

Home from home at Prebendal

BOARDING at The Prebendal School is an extremely rewarding experience where children become self-sufficient, independent and passionate learners.

As the oldest school in Sussex, we are proud of our history and tradition, combining our established reputation in the South of England with a modern approach to teaching and preparing our pupils for a range of leading senior schools.

We are a family-orientated school that caters to every child's individual needs, and boarding can be full, weekly or flexi.

There are ample opportunities for our boarders to visit many breathtaking city, country and coastal attractions, while Chichester is a beautiful city renowned for its heritage.

As an exclusive boarding community, we have the flexibility to arrange outings and trips for either the day or the weekend.

We provide a safe and secure boarding environment for Armed Forces children with first-class pastoral care and a broad and challenging curriculum.

Every year a large proportion of our Year 8 pupils achieve an academic or music scholarship to a leading senior school, and we have an impressive 100 per cent record of all our 13-year-olds achieving a place at their first-choice school.

Please contact us to receive our prospectus, arrange a visit or answer any of your questions.

Admissions Secretary Lesa Burchell can be contacted on 01243 520970, or email secretary.prebendal@btconnect.com

You can also find out more by visiting our website at www.prebendalschool.org.uk

Ceremonial side provides unique dimension



QUEEN Victoria School (QVS) is a co-educational boarding school fully funded by the Ministry of Defence to provide stability and continuity of education for the children of UK Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, or who have served in Scotland or who have been members of a Scottish regiment.

QVS is tri-Service, and most of its pupils have at least one actively serving parent when they enter the School.

Our main intake is into the Scottish Primary 7 year; there is no exact equivalent with the English system, but the majority of our P7 intake are aged ten or eleven when they join us. That said, there is a wide age range within the year groups.

Many pupils come from educationally-disrupted backgrounds as they have moved from school to school, according to family postings.

Pastoral care is given a high priority, along with careers guidance and personal and social education. QVS aims to promote the welfare and happiness of each individual child and develop their self-esteem.

In addition, there is a very full programme of sporting, cultural and spiritual development.

QVS is a unique boarding school which seeks

to achieve the best for its pupils, priding itself on developing them in the widest possible sense and aiming to achieve success academically, in sport, music, drama and many other areas.

A special and unique dimension of this school for military families is the ceremonial side.

Marching on one of its six Parade Sundays a year, and on Grand Day – the final day of the academic year – is one of the proudest moments of a Victorian's life (as well as that of the parents).

The pipes, drums and dancers of QVS are internationally-renowned, having played at tattoos both at home and abroad.

Set in 45 acres of beautiful countryside, QVS is easily accessible by road, rail or air. There is no substitute for visiting a school, meeting its pupils and staff.

If you would like to know more before travelling to Dunblane to visit us, however, and to request a DVD, please contact our Admissions Secretary on +44 (0) 131 310 2927.

Alternatively, write to: Admissions Secretary, Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 0JY, or visit our website www.qvs.org.uk

Please note – admissions deadline is Wednesday January 15 2014.

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Queen Victoria School

Admissions Deadline
Wed 15 Jan 2014


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All places are fully funded for tuition and boarding by the Ministry of Defence.

Families are welcome to find out more by contacting Admissions on +44 (0) 131 310 2927 to arrange a visit.

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Goodwill visit puts Ledbury in spotlight

MINEHUNTER HMS Ledbury spent four days in Swansea to give the people of South Wales an insight into the workings of the Royal Navy – and to help city folk honour their fallen.

The Portsmouth-based warship sailed into Swansea Docks for a series of public engagements, from hosting civic leaders to helping the Royal Naval Reserve both train and find fresh blood.

The visit opened with a reception and demonstration for more than 50 guests drawn from local government, civic organisations, charities and the ship's affiliated organisations in Ledbury.

They witnessed several demonstrations, including minehunting and disposal procedures, the self-defence reactions of the ship's gunnery team, firefighting teams responded to a minor fire and mine clearance diving techniques.

The evening was rounded off with Ceremonial Sunset, aided by Cpl Bartlett, a bugler from the Royal Marines Band Lympstone.

During her stay, the Hunt-class ship hosted several groups of people from schools, colleges and cadet organisations.

And there was a day working closely with the RNR, supporting recruitment activity and conducting seamanship training, including preparations for anchoring, davit driving and launching and recovering Ledbury's sea boat.

The final day of the visit saw Ledbury open her gangway to the public to offer an insight into life at sea in the Royal Navy.

More than 360 people took that opportunity, chatting with sailors and getting hands-on experience of clearance diving equipment, weaponry and firefighting kit.

The visit to Swansea coincided with the rededication of the city's war memorial to mark the addition of two names: Fusilier Jonathan Burgess of the 1st Battalion Royal Welsh and Cpl Matthew Thomas of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, both killed on duty in Afghanistan.

Ledbury's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Simon Pressdee, and four other members of the ship's company including the ship's Operations Officer Lt Nathan Pitsch, a US Navy exchange officer, laid a wreath at Swansea Cenotaph.

Lt Cdr Pressdee said: "HMS Ledbury has enjoyed a very warm reception during our visit to Swansea.

"It was a pleasure to host local schools and colleges to offer them an insight to life at sea as well as provide realistic practical training for the local reservists from Tawe Division."

Golden days for Iron Duke

THERE were Gold Stars all round for the crew of HMS Iron Duke when she hosted airmen from her twinned RAF squadron.

Eight personnel from 31 Sqn – which flies Tornados out of Marham in Norfolk – joined the Portsmouth-based Type 23 frigate as she carried out trials off the South Coast.

For many members of the squadron, nicknamed the Goldstars, this was their first experience of the Royal Navy and the way they operate and live at sea.

They hope to invite the sailors up to East Anglia to see them at work in due course.



P stands for pride at final parade



THE short – but extremely useful and busy – life of one of the Navy's force protection squadrons drew to an end with a parade through the heart of their home base.

Since 2010 the men and women of P Squadron have helped to safeguard the vessels of the Royal Navy and RFA in some of the most dangerous waters in the world, working alongside colleagues from 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group.

Men and women from the 167-strong squadron – many of whom are reservists – took part in a final ceremonial divisions at Clyde Naval Base, with the establishment's CO Cdre Keith Beckett taking the salute to mark the passing of P, whose force protection duties officially ended on December 31.

Those 167 personnel are drawn from all branches and specialisations of the Naval

Service.

The squadron was established in April 2010, its formation driven by a number of different aspects, including the need to protect ships from piracy.

Since then, the squadron has had personnel deployed on operations for a total of 1,095 days – one of the longest periods of any unit within the Armed Forces.

The squadron's force protection duties will now be fulfilled by Royal Marines from the standing tasks commando unit, currently 45 Commando based in Arbroath.

The commandos will take over where P Squadron left off, protecting Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships, minehunters, strategic roll-on/roll-off vessels and survey ships.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Tam McDonald and LA(Phot) Will Haigh



Explorer sheds light on life in the Royal Navy

AS ONE of the Royal Navy's smallest vessels – not 21 metres long, 49 tonnes – it's unusual for HMS Explorer to dwarf anything.

But here she is ploughing the (rather murky) waters of the Humber alongside an inshore patrol boat from Humberside Police.

Based up the Humber in Kingston-upon-Hull, Explorer acts first and foremost as the training vessel of Yorkshire Universities Royal Naval Unit, covering centres of higher learning in Hull, Leeds, Sheffield, York and Bradford.

With the autumn term in full swing, Explorer has been holding various 'sea days' to showcase what the RN does in a part of the UK major warships don't visit too often.

"Building links with the local community is an important aspect

of URNU activity – it offers an opportunity to re-affirm the naval ethos among our Officer Cadets and to engage with interesting personalities," said Explorer's Commanding Officer Lt Dafydd Bryden.

Guests have included the Admiral of the Humber (aka the Lord Mayor of Kingston-upon-Hull), the High Sheriffs of both East and West Yorkshire as well as a selection of business leaders and the RN's Regional Commander for Northern England, Cdre Dickie Baum.

"P2000s are excellent vessels for showcasing the Royal Navy in the public eye," said Cdre Baum.

"Quite often they can access small ports that would be impossible for larger naval vessels.

"Their regional presence throughout the United Kingdom is invaluable

when it comes to developing a wider understanding of the Royal Navy."

Joining Explorer for the link-up with the launch was Sub Lt Chris Hughes, a former leading regulator in the RN who joined the RNR upon leaving the Service – and Humberside Police, with whom he serves as a constable in the force's port and maritime protection group.

"Instructing URNU cadets as a reservist training officer is a real pleasure and has complemented my career with Humberside Police," said Sub Lt Hughes.

"I joined the Maritime Reserve as an URNU Training Officer – the access to instructional training I have received has been excellent.

"I have achieved maritime qualifications such as RYA Cruising Instructor that I use with both with my day job and instructing URNU cadets."



Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell

Gorilla in Brazil-a as plastic mascot goes on tour

WHAT'S that you say? Do we have any photographs of a sailor and Royal Marine aboard HMS Protector holding a plastic gorilla in front of Sugar Loaf Mountain?

It's funny you should ask... Meet PEG (he's the one in white in the middle...) with AB (HM) Sally Owen and L/Cpl Leon Brunning, part of the Royal Marines' detachment aboard Protector, as the survey ship departs Rio.

PEG – Polar Explorer Gorilla – has joined the icebreaker as part of a public arts campaign in the West Country. Some 50 such ersatz gorillas were

produced for the Great Gorilla Project, with decorated great apes popping up in schools, parks, streets and open spaces in Devon and Somerset.

One 80cm-tall model was donated to Protector by Paignton Zoo, which also has close ties with the Royal Marines at CTCRM, who rebuilt the gorilla climbing frame earlier this year (no jokes please...).

Anyway, the challenge for the ship's company is to pose with PEG in as many different locations as possible during Protector's 18-month stint

south of the Equator, surveying the waters around Antarctica during the Austral summer before retreating further north when winter sets in.

Since sailing from Portsmouth in October, PEG (also known by the ship's company as Alan for reasons beyond our comprehension) has visited Cape Verde and 'Crossed the Line' under the watchful eye of King Neptune.

He follows a long line of stuffed, furry or plastic mascots shown the sights of the world by matelots, including HMS Newcastle's Salty the Bear.



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Deaths

Rear Admiral Ted Thorne, New Zealander who travelled to the UK and accepted as a cadet at Dartmouth. Sent in HMS Devonshire to convey troops from Australia to the Middle East. Aged 21 embarked in HMS Lamerton operating in the Adriatic carrying supplies and special forces and bombarding enemy positions, returning 1945 to join the Harwich force defending coastal convoys. Served in the Med with RN 2nd Minesweeping Sqdn, and in New Zealand served in Taupo, Bellona and Kanieri. Attended the Imperial Defence College in London then commanded Waikato on trials, work up and delivery voyage to NZ. Head of NZ Defence Liaison Staff, promoted rear admiral and Chief of Naval Staff of the RNZN 1972. Appointed CBE 1972 and CB 1975. October 23. Aged 89.

Stanley 'Stan' Gilbert M(E)1. Served 1954-61 HMS Raleigh, Adamant and Solebay, Nov 9 in NSW Australia aged 76.
John Phimister PO AH1. Served 1956-81 HMS Victorious, Ark Royal, Bulwark, Engadine, RNAS Gamecock, Daedalus, Seahawk, Portland, HMS President, Nelson. Aircraft Handlers Association. Aged 72.
John Greenwood Air Mech. Served 1943-46, joining at Chatham then HMS Daedalus, Heron, Gosling, Oct 28. Aged 87.
John 'Jack' Frost PO (Artisan). Served in HMS Anson, Defiance, Dunkirk and Eagle. November 4. Aged 84.
John Brackenridge L/Air AH2. Served 1964-75 at Gamecock, Seahawk, Fulmar and Condor, also HMS Hermes, Bulwark and Ark Royal. Aircraft Handlers Association. October 6. Aged 84.
Warwick 'Jan' Luke L/S Gunnery. Served 1958-70 in HMS Hartland Point, Forth, Ark Royal, Loch Fada, London and Maidstone. St Vincent Association. November 16. Aged 70.

Jack Greeves SBPO. Served 1940-46 Sick Berth units at Chatham, South Africa, Mombasa, Pietermaritzburg, Klandi, Indian Ocean Relief Posts, Burma and Gibraltar. RN Medical Branch Ratings & Sick Berth Staff Association. November 20. Aged 92.
Peter Roberts SBPO(D). Served 1946-79 HMS Excalibur, Highflyer, Urania, Ark Royal, Rooke, Osprey, Terror, Ganges, RNH Plymouth, Portsmouth and Hong Kong, HMS Drake and Victory. RN Medical Branch Ratings & Sick Berth Staff Association. November 26. Aged 84.
Alan Green PO RO. Served 1951-59 HMS Collingwood, Defiance, Drake, Cadiz, Rooke, Vigilant and Centaur. HMS Wizard and HMS Cadiz Association. Aged 81.

Lt Norman 'Rocky' Craggs. Served 1930-58. He was a diver and specialised in anti-submarine work. Seconded for a time to RAN he served through WW2 including Atlantic convoys; he survived the sinking of HMS Salopina (ex-Shropshire) when torpedoed by U-98 off Iceland. HMS St Vincent Association. November 28. Aged 98.

Royal Naval Association
Donald 'Don' Caddock. Merchant Navy 1952-63, latterly with the Pacific Steam Navigation Co as Navigation Officer and 2nd Mate. Associate Member of Harrogate

& District branch. Nov 12. Aged 78.
David Girt POGI. Served 1966-81 St Vincent, Wakeful, Ulster, Excellent, Cambridge, Drake, Leander, Aurora, Devonshire, London, Invincible, Harrogate & District branch. Nov 23. Aged 73.

Gordon 'Peter' Wilson AB Torpedoman. Served 1943-47 Home and Mediterranean Fleets. Past chairman Wansbeck & District branch, vice President and Life Member. November 8. Aged 87.

Ernest 'Ernie' Robertson AB. Served 1940-46 HMS Sweetbrier North Atlantic convoys and HMNB Portsmouth. Sutherland branch. October 31. Aged 92.

Dorothy Berreclough WRNS. Served HMS Hornet, Gosport, Chatham, Portsmouth, D-Day Landings and briefly at Windsor. Founder member of Bexhill RNA and member of the Association of Wrens. November 17. Aged 89.

Frank Howard Wireman. Served 1942-46. Trained at HMS Royal Arthur then volunteered for Combined Ops and drafted to LCs training at Troon. Joined HMLCT 903 then 496 Flotilla 'L' Squadron landing at Gold Beach, Normandy (D-Day) but vessel was hit by shell and had to undergo repairs in Belfast. Served LCT1100, LC1130 (Walcheren), HMS Beagle. Member of Cleethorpes RNA and the Landing Craft Association Yorks & Lincs branch. Sept 14. Aged 88.

Eric Morgan Smith AB. Served 1941-46 DEMS and Iceland. Founder member of Uttometer RNA and prolific writer of articles for in-house magazine under the name 'Globetrotter'. October 9. Aged 90.

Submariners Association
Lt Cdr O B 'Olly' Sharp. Submarine Service 1949-68 in Tactician, Astute, Thorough, Solent, Thule, Tiptoe, Seneschal, Aurochs, Walrus and Ocelot. Dolphin branch. Aged 85.

G J E 'Jeff' Westwood CERA. Submarine Service 1960-68 in Scotsman, Narwhal, Oracle, Taciturn, Tabard. Eastern States. Australia branch. Aged 76.

S C 'Sydney' Hill L/Sea TD3. Submarine Service 1946-53 in Amphion and Sturdy. Dolphin branch. Aged 85.

C 'Chris' Hazell AB ST. Submarine Service 1943-46 in P555 and Truncheon. Royal Berks branch. Aged 93.

J 'John' Godkin CC MEA(P). Submarine Service 1964-85 in Anchorite, Tiptoe, Churchill, Valiant and Courageous. Plymouth branch. Aged 69.

Algerines Association
William Heptinstall L/Sea. Served in Coquette. August 7. Aged 82.

George Neal AB. Served in Coquette. November 6. Aged 77.

Arthur Felton AB. Associate member. Lyme Regis. November 8.

John Murray PO. Served in Orestes. November 11. Aged 92.

Mike 'Hutch' Hutchins Seaman. Served HMS Glasgow, Redpole Barrosa, Rattlesnake, Jewel, also Combined Ops. HMS Glasgow and Algerines Associations. November 17. Aged 80.

Promotions & Assignments

Capt I J P Bisson to be promoted Cdre and to be Head of Military Operations and Development within Service Personnel and Veterans Agency from January 13 2014.

Surg Captain (D) A M Jordan to be OF5 Rest of the World within Defence Primary Health Care from Dec 16 2013.

Capt J P Kyd to be promoted Cdre and to be Commander UK Task Group from February 2014.

Capt D P Reindorp to be Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff Lessons within Joint Force Command from December.

Capt N R Griffin to be CO Cdo Helicopter Force from December.

A/Capt R A Lovegrove to be promoted Captain and to be Assistant Head Defence Logistics Capability (Core Acquisition) December 3 2013.

Lt Col M J Tanner RM to be promoted Colonel and to be Captain of the Base (Portsmouth) from December 16 2013.

Cdr K W Seymour to be promoted Captain September 2 and to be N98 Carrier Strike within British Defence Staff Washington from December.

Cdr I G Breckenridge to be promoted Captain and to be Head Capability Plans within NATO SACT from January 2014.

Cdr D A Bassett to be promoted Captain and to assume command of HMS Bulwark January 2014.

Cdr P C Carroll to be promoted Acting Captain and to be Deputy Chief of Staff UK National Component Command (Afghanistan) from January 2014.

Lt Cdr A R Knight to be CO of 857 NAS from December 20.

Lt Cdr D A Gillett to be CO of HMS Mersey from January 6.

Lt Cdr M J Headley to be CO MCM2 Crew 4 from January 14.

Lt Cdr Sarah E Oakley to be CO of HMS Clyde from January 23.

Reunions

March 2014
HMS Surprise Association annual reunion from March 21-24 at the Hadleigh Hotel, Eastbourne. Contact Geoff Prentice by end January 2014 at geoff.prentice@virginmedia.com or tel 01394 274813.

April 2014
HMS Raleigh Class of 9 June 1964 reunion planned for April 5 at 1700 at the Premier Inn, Ricknall Lane, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham DL5 6JG. Contact Andy Gregory at andrewmgregory@yahoo.co.uk or tel 07885 317906.

May 2014
Combined Field Gun Reunion (all divisions) from May 16-19 at the Parisienne Hotel, 240-244 North Promenade,

Blackpool FY1 1RZ, tel 01253 752424. Cost £99, DB&B. Contact Jim Finch at finchjmid@aol.com or tel: 01772 434140.

HMS St Vincent, Duncan 186, May 4 1954 to May 4 2014. We are trying to arrange a 60th anniversary get-together. Contact Fred Waite at jim.waite1@talktalk.net or tel 01329 230039, or Paddy Joyce on 01983 872098.

June 2014
 The RN Football Association celebrate their 110th anniversary with a reunion in the Royal Maritime Club Portsmouth on June 21 2014, open to all past and present committee members, players, match officials, volunteers and partners. Contact Ian Rees at nssam@btconnect.com or tel: 023 9286 1860.

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Heritage lottery fund monitors progress

THE only surviving British ship from the Gallipoli campaign of World War 1 is to be brought back to life in time for the battle's 100th anniversary thanks to a conditional promise of nearly £2m of lottery funding.

Monitor HMS M33 once shelled Turkish positions in the Dardanelles during the ill-fated campaign to advance up the peninsula, seize Constantinople and knock the Ottoman Empire out of the Great War.

For nearly 20 years, the gunship has been slowly undergoing restoration work in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

That work can now be completed - allowing the public to go aboard M33 for the first time - as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has earmarked £1.79m for the restoration project.

It means that in principle the fund supports the plans drawn up by the historic ship's owners, Hampshire County Council, and the National Museum of the Royal Navy, believing it will provide value for its lottery cash injection.

But the grant will not be confirmed until a detailed bid is drawn up in the new year, and that plan meets with HLF final approval.

Should that succeed, it means work can be carried out in time for the centenary of Gallipoli in 2015.

The 100th anniversary of



● HMS M33 in dry dock, close to another historic warship undergoing restoration - HMS Victory

the campaign is one of two key events the Royal Navy intends to commemorate as part of the centenary of the Great War between 2014 and 2018, the other being the clash of dreadnoughts at Jutland in May 1916.

M33 is one of only two Royal Navy warships left from World War 1; there are substantial plans to restore the other, Jutland veteran cruiser HMS Caroline, which is in Belfast.

Prof Dominic Tweddle of the National Museum of the Royal Navy said the monitor - basically

a floating gun platform built to pound targets ashore - was "a precious part of our national naval heritage".

He added: "We're absolutely thrilled. We've long seen M33 as both culturally and historically important, and this symbolises the start of a new era for her."

Ordered, built and commissioned in barely three months, M33 served in the latter stages of the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign, including the Suvla Bay landings, and spent the rest of the war in the Mediterranean.

After that she was dispatched to Russia as part of the campaign to support anti-Bolshevik forces.

She was later converted to a minelaying training vessel as HMS Minerva, served on the Clyde in World War 2 as a floating workshop for boom defences and finally became a floating office supporting the RN's victualling yard in Gosport.

The Navy decided it no longer required her in the 1980s and she was eventually bought by the county council in 1990, to begin the slow restoration process.

Sports lottery

November 9: £5,000 - Lt B Timpson; £1,500 - AB R T Jones; £500 - WO2 D Jones.

November 16: £5,000 - LH D B Slee; £1,500 - CPO P Fidler; £500 - AB2 R Williamson.

November 23: £5,000 - AB2 S McEwan; £1,500 - AB1 C Hill; £500 - Cpl R Thomson

Stop press: With effect from January 1, weekly RNRN Sports Lottery prize money will now be: first prize - £5,000, second prize - £1,800, third prize - £800, fourth prize - £600, fifth prize - £500, sixth prize - £400.

Monthly Extra Draw cash prizes (ten in number) will increase from £50 to £100.

You can be in to win or increase your number of tickets by phoning (Mil) 9380 28028 or 02392 573028.

Tickets will remain at just 75p per week per ticket.

Every week there is £7,600 in prizes and more than £80,000 every month in grants to ships, establishments, units and sports organisations - you have to be a member to benefit.

Ask Jack

Engine Room Artificers and Shipwrights, S50 entry: The named group of ex-artificers will be holding a 50th anniversary-of-joining reunion in Edinburgh on April 13, and would like to make contact with Phil Burnden, Pete Emery, Barry Rose, Bob Stewart, Vince Palmer, Mike 'Sam' Thurbon, David 'Scouse' Wallace, Charlie Warburton and John Rodwell. Contact Don Fawcett at donald.fawcett1@ntlworld.com or write to: 15 Devon Road, Copnor, Portsmouth PO3 5ET, tel: 023 9269 2964.

Winners

Four readers have won DVD box sets of the World at War, having correctly answered that Sir Laurence Olivier was the narrator - picked at random, they are Mr J J Brennan, of Bradford-on-Avon; WO Dave Bryan, of Nottingham; Nick Dunsford, of Torquay and Keith Jackson, of Bognor Regis. We also picked three winners of minicasks of Swordfish Ale, having correctly identified the firm who built Swordfish torpedo bombers under licence as the Blackburn Aircraft Company. They are T J Hughes, of Lockleaze, Bristol; M D Grubb, of Hordforth, Leeds, and Eric Norman, of Burton, Hampshire.

Chatham is a winner

THE Historic Dockyard at Chatham has won a grant of more than £4.5m to support a major heritage project across the site.

The grant will boost the £8.75m Command of the Oceans initiative, which dockyard trustees say will, in simple terms, "unlock the value of Chatham's world-class heritage."

The grant - £4.53m - was made by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and will help secure the repair and preservation of a range of the dockyard's scheduled ancient monuments and its 18th Century ship's timbers archaeological find, the remains of Second Rate ship of the line HMS Namur, discovered under the floor of a workshop in 1995.

Command of the Oceans will create new galleries (dedicated to the Age of Sail), interpretation and visitor facilities to reveal the story and significance of the dockyard and its defences during the age of sail, and "deliver an appropriate sense of arrival for visitors" - not only to the dockyard itself, but also the defence sites of the wider Chatham area.

Plans include a new 'discovery centre' putting defence sites around the city in context, and a network of 'discovery trails' will be developed linking navigation marks at each of the key sites - Fort Amherst, Great Lines Heritage Park and Lower

Lines Park, Royal Engineers Museum Library and Archives, and Upnor Castle.

It is hoped that work can begin on the project early this year, with completion in around two years.

Increase in visitors

THE lure of the new Mary Rose Museum has given a massive boost to visitor numbers at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The new £27m museum, housing Henry VIII's warship, attracted more than 300,000 since last May, helping push figures for the whole dockyard to over 560,000 - a 40 per cent rise.

And the steep rise has not gone unnoticed - the site took the gold award for best large attraction in the South East at the Beautiful South Awards for Excellence.

Fittingly Paul Griffiths, the Mary Rose Museum's operations manager, helped collect the gold award from tourism chiefs at a ceremony in East Grinstead.

Winning gold now means the dockyard will go on to represent the South East on the national stage at the Visit England Awards for Excellence this year.

Entries for the Deaths column and Swap Drafts in February's Noticeboard must be received by **January 13**

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in Reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event.
- There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

The Times they are a reprintin'

NEWSPAPERS are all too often overlooked as a crucial source when it comes to studying history.

Not because they're always an accurate document of what was happening (because quite often they're not, especially in wartime), but because of what they fail to report (or get wrong) or because they capture the mood of the moment.

A new compendium of articles from the *New York Times* covering the war years does just that – and shows that the newspaper's correspondents (especially those on the ground) were remarkably well-informed about the goings-on in the world.

Prof Richard Overy has rummaged in the paper's archives and selected more than 500 articles for *The New York Times Complete World War II 1939-1945* (*Black Dog and Leventhal*, £26.95, ISBN 978-1-57912-9446).

The book would be worth the asking price alone; that it comes with a DVD featuring more than 90,000 articles pertaining to the conflict makes it indispensable for anyone interested either in newsgathering, or World War 2, or both.

The scope of the NYT's coverage was impressive. It was not American-centric, as today's reporting of world events in the United States tends to be viewed. The paper's correspondents were spread across the globe.

And for the first two years of war, it was in a far better position than its broadsheet counterparts across the Pond to give a more comprehensive view of the war; its correspondents only left occupied Europe in December 1941 when Hitler declared war on the USA after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor.

Being there, however, didn't mean unfettered access to the front. American correspondents, such as the great William L Shirer, were allowed access where it suited the Nazis (such as the French surrender in 1940).

And at others, they were left fumbling in the dark. On May 21 1940, the paper was very vaguely reporting on the fighting in France – "Confusion marks battle: lines cannot be drawn" – when the campaign was already decided.

Other accounts – such as a comprehensive one of the demise of the Bismarck – are both stirring and remarkably accurate. The very day Hitler's flagship sank, the NYT was describing "a tale of gallantry and courage at sea", of "Hood avenged" and her destroyer turned into a "helpless blazing wreck" at the end.

The inaccessibility of the war at sea meant that coverage was rather more prosaic than many of the other campaigns. But occasionally, a *New York Times* reporter was granted access to the men and machines keeping the sea lanes open.

In the autumn of 1941, a correspondent visited Iceland and talked with merchantmen involved in the Battle of the Atlantic: "Theirs are terrible stories: of men who went insane and leaped into the sea from lifeboats; of tongues that swell for lack of water; of nights when waves break over the frail lifeboats and half of the crew bails while the other half rows; of horrible minutes when the smoke of a far-off convoy dies on the horizon; of hours in biting cold water that numbs the body and senses before it drags men to the bottom."

If you're perplexed by some of the (punny) headlines in *Naval News*, well, you'll find the titles in the *New York Times* no less baffling at times: 'British girls here excited by butter – silk is also thrilling' or: 'Blondes may aid in war: undyed, unwaved hair needed for airplane instruments'.

Perhaps the biggest surprise is the amount of speculation, observation and comment in news articles – journalists should stick to the facts as they know them.

But with the Wehrmacht bearing down on Moscow, the paper's correspondent in the Soviet capital – now transferred to Kuibishev in view of the danger – warned of the dangers posed by the Russian winter and apocryphal tales of packs of wolves devouring ill-prepared travellers. "Winter," he warned, "comes early here and it stays long."

Yet it's observations like this, and especially eyewitness accounts, rather than the terser reports of battles and day-to-day goings on, that are the real gems in this outstanding volume.

On the last day of August 1945, Frank Kluckhohn visited Tokyo and found a mostly unrepentant people.

"This nation in defeat is bitter," he wrote. "Everyone is 'so sorry'. The Japanese did not lose the war. That nasty contraption [!], the atomic bomb, did the job. They want to know why we ripped Tokyo to pieces. They even want to take us on sightseeing trips to show us how unsportsmanlike we are."

In Berlin Joseph Grigg – one of the first two US journalists into the capital after its fall – was invited to witness Germany's capitulation, signed in a suburb of the capital; the enemy delegation was haughty and arrogant even in the face of crushing defeat and the unmasking of the Nazis' crimes.

By the time of the German surrender, the world was only just beginning to grasp the scale of the Holocaust and the brutality of the concentration camps.

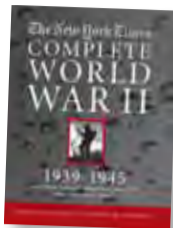
'Oswiecim [the Polish name for Auschwitz] killings placed at 4,000,000' the newspaper reported on May 8 1945. "This slaughter exceeds in barbaric intention and method not only the greatest brutalities of such infamous conquerors as Genghis Khan, but also surpasses even Germany's own record in her previous prize exhibitions at Maidanek, Dachau and Buchenwald," foreign correspondent Cyrus Sulzberger observed.

Within a few months, Sulzberger's colleague Gladwin Hill was warning that Oswiecim was back in business, under new owners, the Soviets, that a "near reign of terror" was the order of the day in Poland with political opponents of the communist regime arrested or even murdered, and attempts to report the first signs of what would become the Cold War suppressed.

As well as the adeptness of the NYT's reporters, what's striking is the erudition and prescience of the newspaper's editorial columns.

In June 1940, with Hitler at the height of his power after rapidly dispatching France and the Low Countries, the *New York Times* opined: "But, soon or late, for each of the little band of conquerors with whom Herr Hitler not unreasonably classifies himself – for Caesar, for Alexander, for Napoleon – the curtain has fallen on tragedy. Each has had a part of a generation, not one a thousand years."

Sic semper tyrannis...



A Harrier homage

WHEN the last Sea Harrier was withdrawn from service in the spring of 2006, a senior rating who maintained the jump jets provided a fitting epitaph: "It's the last of British – and the best of British."

Such sentiments are evident throughout Jonathan Glancey's *Harrier: The Biography* (*Atlantic*, £20 ISBN 978-1-84354-8911), a homage not just to the aircraft and those who flew it, but to British ingenuity.

The Royal Navy came late to the Harrier game – the jet had been in service a dozen years with the RAF by the time it became operational in Fleet Air Arm colours.

The author's focus on the jump jet in Naval service is largely anchored to its role in the Falklands conflict.

In doing so, Glancey elevates the aircraft to the status of the Spitfire in the Battle of Britain 42 years earlier. It was flown in a struggle by a handful of young men – far fewer than 'The Few'. And it was flying to protect British soil.

"The Harrier," he writes, "became a potent symbol of a fight against a nasty tyranny that had very many connections with Hitler, his technicians and minions, as well as an empathy with the Führer's aberrant views on democracy, freedom of speech and the rule of law."

Such prose crackles on every page of a book which

is both stirring – and depressing. For *Harrier* is a celebration of British industry – and an indictment of it. In the 1950s and '60s the nation was at the forefront of technological advancement – nowhere more so than in the field of aviation.

By the time of the Harrier's demise in 2010 the nation had all but ditched industry, "stupefied by an ever-greater flow of ever-cheaper consumer geegaws unloaded from container ships that have made the long journey from the Far East".

Which is particularly galling because the Harrier has been very much a British success story – far beyond this sceptred isle.

It flies still with the Indians. And the Italians. And the Spanish. And the US Marine Corps.

If there is a positive to take into the future from the Harrier story it is that the basic concept – the ability to take off and land vertically – remains both sound and highly useful, as embodied by the Anglo-American F35B Lightning II which will be the mainstay of Fleet Air Arm and

RAF fast jet operations into the second half of this century.

"Whether the F35B proves as successful remains to be seen. The Harrier has certainly set the bar high," Glancey muses.



A short, sharp education

HMS GANGES elicits a strong response from sailors who passed through the East Anglian establishment's gates.

Often a mix of pride and stoicism, accompanied by a shudder at the recollection of the hardships that trainees were often required to undergo.

There are plenty of accounts of life at Shotley Gate, from various perspectives.

So what does Peter Broadbent's paperback *HMS Ganges Days – From Nozzer to Dabtoe in 386 Days* (*Chaplin Books*, £10.99, ISBN 978-1909183-13-1) bring to this particular Naval party?

Well, it is a tremendously engaging read, for a start.

The author begins in February 1989, on his 45th birthday, picking his way along a particularly rutted and unkempt memory lane as he surveys what has become of his old stamping ground.

The narrative then flies back to the 1950s, and the author's wish to see the world – and his arrival at Ganges in 1959.

There follows a description of just over a year as the author was transformed from wide-eyed 15-year-old schoolboy to fledgling 'dabtoe' or seaman.

The book seamlessly weaves vignettes and anecdotes into the overall passage of a year and a bit, memories that will no doubt raise a smile (knowing or otherwise) on the lips of other former Ganges boys.

The fate of 'Maggie', a serial dry-towel offender who was subjected to a public scrub-down with stiff brooms, cold water and foul-smelling soap was perhaps typical (the shivering, snivelling, scratched and naked teenager never saw his oppo again – by the next day his locker was empty and his bed cleared).

Doubling up and down Faith, Hope and Charity – three unforgiving flights of steps seemingly created to punish trainee sailors – was one of the unhappier memories of the establishment, but punishments came in various shapes and sizes, as did skylarks, scams and lessons in life.

Knowledge of some Naval terminology (and outlook) helps in some parts of the book, but even for those of us who do not have the privilege of calling ourselves Ganges Boys, there is plenty of entertainment to be garnered from this amusing and poignant memoir.

RN's National Biographic

THE GROVE REVIEW

COMMANDER Alastair Wilson is well known for his erudite commentaries on modern Naval history and his many contributions to the activities of the Naval Review.

A brave man, he has taken upon himself the absolutely formidable task of producing a biographical dictionary of senior officers of the 20th Century to match the earlier such works on officers of the Royal Navy published in the 19th Century, writes Prof Eric Grove of *Liverpool Hope University*.

Modern technology allows the bulk of the work to be on a compact disc with a slim volume of 88 pages providing the introduction. After *A Biographical Dictionary of the Twentieth Century Royal Navy: Volume One Admirals of the Fleet and Admirals* (Seaforth, £30 ISBN 978-1-84832-0688-8) we are promised five further volumes on officers down to lieutenant commander and selected lieutenants.

The task is, in most ways, extremely well carried out. The author's use of the available documentary sources is very thorough and more than competent and the overall result is a very important contribution to the history of the Royal Navy. The book containing the CD is probably the best guide to the 20th Century RN senior officer corps available and, together with the CD containing 336 entries, should be an essential part of any naval historical collection.

The printed introduction contains important material on entry, training, officer structure and honours and is most useful and informative. It is not, however, the last word on all points.

Although it is not very important for those who achieved flag rank in the 20th Century, the introduction is not completely accurate on the university entries in the 1970s. University Cadet Entries (UCEs) were emphatically not "graduates who had decided during, or after their time at university that they would join the Royal Navy". Those graduates who joined after graduation, as the following page correctly states, were 'Direct Graduate Entries

(DGEs)'. UCEs were those who had achieved a cadetship to be supported through university; some were 'deferred', and came to Dartmouth before they went up to their chosen institutions. The latter became the preferred option as time went by.

Deferred UCEs were similar to but distinct from 'nominations'; those who had joined Dartmouth and had, as Cdr Wilson says, been selected to go to University. Such lucky officers (who had full naval allowances while at University) are best known as 'Noms'. The first to become First Sea Lord was Sir Jonathan Band, a candidate for the next volume on more junior admirals of the late Twentieth Century.

Another surprising mistake is saying that the George Cross is a 'civilian award' not awarded to Servicemen. The medal was created for VC-like gallantry not in the face of the enemy, in such deeds as bomb disposal. I once had the great privilege of shaking the hand of an Army holder of the GC I happened to come across in Whitehall who was wearing his medals for a function. He had won it for bomb disposal in Northern Ireland. Naval personnel were certainly potential recipients of the George Cross, not least for their activities disposing of sea mines used as blast bombs by the Luftwaffe.

My final quibble over the introduction is over discussion of the vexed question of the separation of Engineer Officers from the rest that culminated in the so called 'Great Betrayal' of 1925. The process had been a rather longer one than discussed in the text, having begun during WW1 and confirmed by measures taken in 1920 and 1922. I am also not entirely sure that the original Selborne-Fisher scheme was intended to achieve a US Navy-type of interchangeability between specialisations. The RN had – and still has – higher expectations of specialist officers, unlike the generalists of the USN who rely heavily on their elite chief petty officers.

I have not read all the entries in the discs (which have the odd formatting errors) but they seem to be a remarkable achievement of research and compilation. I did access a few favourites,

however and was a little troubled by two things.

Most surprisingly, the entry on Lord Chatfield seems not to reflect first hand use of his memoirs, which are easily available.

I wonder how many other entries could have been so informed.

Secondly, I think there is a little confusion between appointments to the Dartmouth Training Squadron while the officer was still effectively at BRNC and more substantive later ship appointments, eg as Murray scheme sub lieutenants in their second year of training.

None of these are 'show stoppers' however for work that should be the starting point for anyone who wants to obtain a reference for the most senior officers of the Royal Navy in the last eventful century. The career profiles are themselves important guides to the evolving career development of the best naval officers of the period.

No naval library is complete without it. One looks forward to future volumes with anticipation and increasing admiration for the author.



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Duo take Irish Sea Challenge

TWO Whitehaven Sea Cadets took up the Irish Sea Challenge when they spent a week on board the Ocean Youth Trust's 21m steel-hulled ketch James Cook.

Along with 12 other young people, cadets Luke Grears, 17, and Lucy Kennett, 13, joined the ship in Whitehaven, when they were shown around and issued with their equipment.

After a thorough safety and operational briefing and more familiarisation with the vessel, James Cook left Whitehaven that evening en route for Bangor, County Down.

"We didn't know where we were going when we joined the ship," said Lucy. "We all got together during the afternoon and made the decision between ourselves, with advice from the crew."

During the next six days, the young crew members learned how to navigate, set sails and take the helm as they sailed across the Irish Sea to Bangor and on to Peel in the Isle of Man before returning to Whitehaven.

"Coming on an Ocean Youth Trust North voyage is about much more than just learning to tie knots or taking the wheel for a short time – it's about stepping out of your comfort zone and pushing yourself a little," said skipper Grace Metcalfe.

"It's also about making great friends and seeing incredible sights like dolphins riding the bow wave and the sun setting over the sea."

The cadets' trip was organised by CPO (SCC) Maureen McEuan, who contacted the Trust when she heard about the challenge.

"Although Sea Cadets are able to go offshore for a week in either a sailing or powered vessel, the voyages are very popular and there are never enough places to go around," said Maureen.

"This was far too good an opportunity to miss and we were very fortunate to get two of our cadets on board."



● **WHEN** Lamborghini offer you a freebie, it would be foolish to refuse, which is how the footballers of **Leith** unit came by their new playing kit. **Andy Canning**, general manager of **Lamborghini Edinburgh** (right of picture), presented the cadets with the clothing, saying the company was delighted to support a local youth organisation. The initiative came about as a result of efforts by the unit's parent support committee. And no, in case you were wondering, the car was not part of the deal...

Portuguese date for Sutton band

AT THE request of Rear Admiral Tim Lowe, Deputy Commander Strike Force NATO based in Lisbon, Portugal, a band from Sutton unit performed for the British community at a Trafalgar Night dinner.

The Portuguese Naval Officer's Wardroom – the Messe de Cascais – was a fitting venue to celebrate the 208th anniversary of Admiral Lord Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar.

The small Royal Naval party at NATO Striking Force decided to celebrate by inviting local members of the Royal British Club

Lisbon, the Royal British Legion and the Royal Society of St George (Lisbon Branch) to dine with them.

Rear Admiral Lowe, the senior British officer on the Iberian peninsula, led the celebrations, which had all the traditional marks of this historic celebration – including the band leading the singing of sea shanties.

Quite rightly – being a Royal Naval event – the band performed with great gusto, including renditions of Heart of Oak, A Life on the Ocean Wave, and Anchors Aweigh – the

official song of the US Navy – along with a number of old favourites as the finale.

The Trafalgar Night performance was not the only band engagement the young London cadet musicians were requested to undertake.

During a hectic week the band performed at St Paul's Church, Estoril, the British Retirement Home, Sao Pedro and, at short notice, were also asked if they would play at STRIKFORNATO's Headquarters in the Officers' Mess, with the Portuguese Chief of Defence Staff in attendance.



Swindon stalwart honoured

SWINDON unit hosted the presentation of the Arctic Star medal to their Life Vice President, 94-year-old Richard Jagger (pictured above).

The presentation was conducted by unit president Rear Admiral Nicholas Wilkinson RN (Rtd).

Richard has talked to cadets, staff and parents, describing in vivid detail his experiences and the conditions faced by the crew of HMS Royalist during the Arctic Convoys of 1943-44, including the following observations:

"I commissioned in 1943 and my first ship was the cruiser HMS Royalist, flagship for the Rear Admiral Escort Carriers.

"Escort carriers were large merchant vessels that were converted to aircraft carriers by the removal of the superstructure and installing a full-length wooden flight deck and steam catapult – they were nicknamed 'Woolworth Carriers'.

"Their primary purpose was to fly light aircraft for reconnaissance against U-boats while the convoy was on its way to Russia.

The worst convoy conditions were during the winter when the sea spray landing on the ship froze and had to be hacked off to reduce the extra top-weight.

"Apart from the rough sea, I remember condensation adding to the muggy atmosphere and the smell of dirty bodies, damp clothes and fuel oil.

"Apart from face and hands, it was not safe to undress to wash or have a bath in case of a panic attack by the enemy.

"Eating in heavy weather needed a special technique to keep food on the plate and the plate off the floor.

"The sun never rises in the Arctic from November to February and the Northern Lights are no substitute – weird gold and green flickering curtains in the sky.

"From April to September the sun never really sets so constant daylight gave persistent air attackers the advantage. Needless to say, U-boat attacks continued throughout.

"The Navy had bridges open to the sky and you needed special clothing to stand a four-hour watch, often below 20 degrees Celsius of frost.

"When the ship hit an oncoming roller, the shock was severe and felt throughout the ship – 'hitting a milestone', the crew called it.

"The heavy foam fell over the bridge more often than not and you needed the sou'westers, oilskins and thick scarves.

"Even so, at the end of your watch the seawater would be running down your neck and well down your back.

"In the Naval Prayer, the sailors pray for protection against the raging of the sea and violence of the enemy. We got both.

"I regard this medal as a souvenir to our lost youth – when we were fit and strong enough to stand the hardships of Arctic seagoing convoys."

New minibus – and new name for boat

DOVER and Deal unit have taken delivery of their new minibus.

Many months of fundraising by the Unit Management Committee, and in particular Lt Cdr Robert Steer RN (Rtd), resulted in the unit being able to present a new Ford Transit minibus to the cadets.

Donations received from the National Lottery, Roger De Haan Trust and Kent County Council secured the funds needed.

And by way of a finishing touch, the vehicle was adorned with signs and logos by Absolute Graphix, based in Dover, who gave much of their time for free.

On the evening the unit was also presented with a cheque for £500 from the Kent Police Property Fund, which will go towards a new trailer.

On the same evening the unit's new Trinity 500 boat, bought after the Parents and Supporters Association raised the funds required, was officially named.

Honorary patron Mrs Eileen Wiggins, a staunch supporter and fundraiser, was there to see the name unveiled – Ted Wiggins, after Eileen's late husband.

Eileen said: "I am genuinely touched by this – I certainly did

not expect such a kind gesture and it came as a very nice surprise, and I am not afraid to admit it brought a tear to my eye.

"I support all the cadets and staff at the unit, and truly believe they do a fantastic job."

Unit CO CPO (SCC) Sarah Butler said: "Dover and Deal Sea Cadets are very lucky to have a

very proactive Unit Management Committee and Parents and Supporters Association.

"Their efforts over the past 12 months will mean lots of opportunity for the cadets for many years to come – and all cadets are very thankful for their efforts."

Dover and Deal Sea Cadets

recently changed their name to reflect the number of young people that now attend the unit from the surrounding villages of Dover and also from Deal.

They received a Burgee this year in recognition of the improvement the unit has made over a period of three years.



● CPO(MEM) Stephen Todd explains the mechanics of a Perkins diesel engine to Southern Area Sea Cadets at HMS Sultan
Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool

World-class engineering

A TEAM of specially-selected Sea Cadets from all over the South represented their units on an engineering acquint within the Defence School of Marine Engineering (DSMarE) at HMS Sultan.

The cadets, who had travelled from as far afield as Milton Keynes, had a week at

the establishment in order to complete a module towards their Foundation BTEC in Marine Engineering – the equivalent of up to four GCSEs.

The week saw the completion of the penultimate section of their course – the students had already completed the first two parts of the course within their units – as they went about key tasks including soldering, electrical tests and calibrating different aspects of diesel engines.

PO(MEM) Stephen Todd, one of the instructors, said: "The kids have been brilliant and into absolutely everything.

"All of the instructors who have supported them this week have had nothing but praise for the group.

"It's been great to see the next generation taking such a keen interest in engineering."

As well as the key tasks for their qualification the students were briefed on gas turbines and submarines, and treated to tours of the Royal Naval Air Engineering and Survival School and the establishment's museum.

Lt (SCC) Stephen Wilks RNR said: "The engineering facilities at HMS Sultan are probably the best for marine engineering in the world, so it's a real privilege for our students to come in and be

here.

"We have been looking to offer the course for around 10-15 years now but haven't had access to any facilities which could cater for it.

"The students are leaving here with so much enthusiasm for engineering.

"At least three or four of them have specifically told me that they would like to join the Royal Navy as marine engineers."

AC Jacob, 14, from Milton Keynes, said: "Testing the electrical side of engines has been a real challenge, but the support and training from the staff here has really helped me to understand.

"We have looked at everything really quickly and seeing everything here shows just how hard Royal Navy engineers work.

"The whole week has been great and I am really hopeful of joining the Royal Navy as an engineer when I finish school.

"Whatever happens now, I believe that experiences like this will help me stand out from other students when I finish school."

All students passed the course with a score of 75 per cent or higher.

The trainees will now go on to the Sea Cadet Training Centre in Weymouth for the final phase of their course.

Health firm funds Trinity purchase

KEIGHLEY unit have been awarded a donation of £2,500 from Sovereign Healthcare, Bradford, to enable them to buy a new Trinity 500 boat.

It means cadets can now get outside on the open water, exercising and learning new skills.

The unit currently use Ponden Reservoir for boating activities but, due to lack of equipment, time spent over the last year has been restricted.

The Trinity 500, only available to purchase from the MSSC, has now been ordered and they expect delivery by the end of the year – a brilliant Christmas present for the cadets.

The Trinity 500 has a maximum crew limit of ten and is actually known as a stable fixed seat rowing boat, purpose-built for the Sea Cadets to deliver the full SCC rowing scheme.

British Rowing have approved this boat, which was designed by Olympic medallist Jo Richards; it can also be used to partake in their Explore Rowing Scheme.

Keighley's target over the next year is to attract more cadets to the unit, and apart from attracting youngsters to activities on the water it is also hoped the new Trinity 500 can also be used in other ways, such as sponsored events to raise much-needed funds to support the unit.



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Orkney celebrate 50 years

ORKNEY, the most northerly unit in the UK, have celebrated their 50th anniversary.

TS Thorfinn has helped thousands of cadets to have thrilling adventures at sea for 50 years.

Previous and current cadets, volunteers and staff from TS Thorfinn celebrated with an anniversary parade, including a marching band led by the Corps of Drums of the Band of the Royal Marines on Orkney Island, a prestigious concert at St Magnus Cathedral and an evening reception at Orkney Sailing Club.

The daughter of Lt Cdr Erland Clouston, the first Commanding Officer of TS Thorfinn, attended the celebrations.

The Royal British Legion was also there to celebrate, and presented the unit with a new Colour.

Sparky and spooky...

CADETS from Northampton unit took the opportunity to reflect on their achievements over the past year – then it was straight on with the good work.

The unit celebrated its outstanding members at the annual prizegiving evening, at which the guest of honour was the Mayor of Northampton, Cllr Les Marriott.

But the following day a group of cadets attended the Marie Curie Twilight Walk held at Althorpe House, where they threw themselves in to the important task of keeping morale high by encouraging the walkers with cheers and, in some cases singing.

And as a break from drill practice and training, the unit hosted a Hallowe'en evening, which began with a fashion show, where cadets glided down the catwalk to scary music whilst sporting elaborate spooky fashion.

Prizes were up for grabs for the best dressed male and best dressed female, and there were also traditional Hallowe'en games.



Children of Chernobyl enjoy a day's boating

TEWKESBURY cadets and staff put on a Try Boating day for 12 children from Belarus who still suffer from serious health problems as a result of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in 1986.

They are brought over to Britain for a holiday each year and stay with British families for a month. The cadets worked hard and showed initiative to teach the visitors – with a little help from the interpreter – to crew sailing dinghies and also to row the four-man Trinity 500 boat.

Some considered them good enough to have entered a regatta.

Those waiting their turn were out with staff members in the safety boat shouting encouragement to their friends.

After a good lunch provided by host families the

London cadet joins Hong Kong exchange

A MEMBER of Tooting and Balham unit, LC Jonathon St Clair-Smith, took part in an International Sea Cadet Exchange hosted by the Hong Kong Sea Cadets.

Here is his account of his time in the Far East:

"We spent an exciting and amazing week participating in activities with Sea Cadets from Hong Kong, Singapore, Sweden and South Korea.

After landing in Hong Kong we proceeded to the opening reception of the exchange, held at the top of one of the tallest skyscrapers in the city, giving us spectacular views of Kowloon and Hong Kong Island.

Here we met our fellow cadets from around the world and our escort officer, Lt Sinclair from Coventry, gave a brief introduction on the UK Sea Cadet Corps.

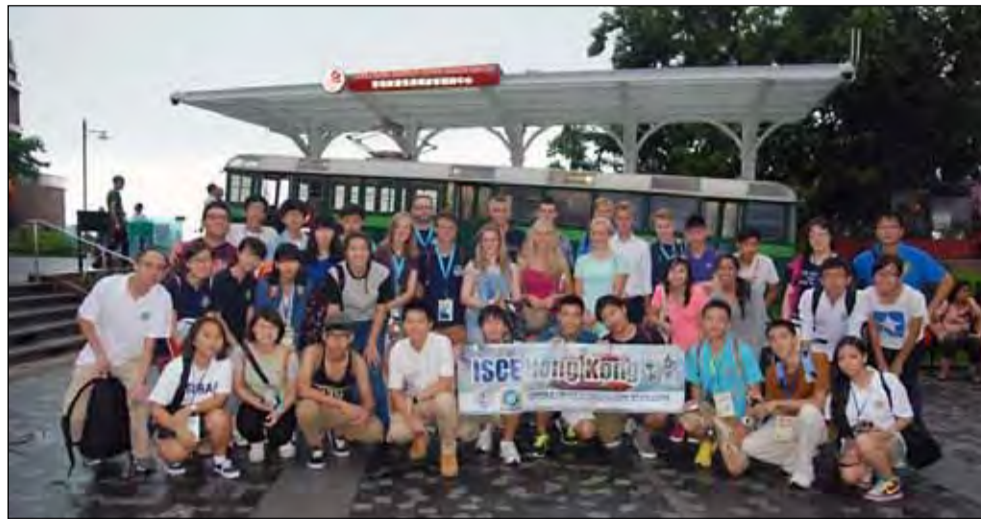
The following day, our first full one in Hong Kong, we took the ferry across the harbour and went to the Maritime Museum which contained exhibits on the city's rich maritime history, stretching from the Middle Ages, and some that looked to the future and the challenges facing Hong Kong.

Unfortunately a cyclone was due to hit the islands that day and the weather became stormy, which prevented us from doing some of the intended activities such as dragon boating.

Instead we travelled to Kowloon and went to the famous Ladies' Market. Here the Hong Kong cadets taught us how to haggle properly – I'm sure we'd have been overcharged without their help.

On our third day in Hong Kong our plans were once again disrupted by the cyclone.

However the public transport network was still running, so we made our way to the Hong Kong Sea Cadet headquarters, where the cadets of each country present gave short presentations about the things their cadets do and the many qualifications available in



● Visiting international exchange cadets with their Hong Kong hosts at Victoria Park

each corps.

We then took it in turns to lead the other cadets in leadership and team-building tasks. That afternoon the weather began to clear so we took the Peak Tram to the top of Victoria Peak.

Here there are fantastic views of the entire city, especially so when it became dark.

Many of the modern skyscrapers in Hong Kong put on light shows where the exterior of the building is lit up in particular patterns or shows things such as sailing boats travelling around them.

Fortunately by the next day the cyclone had fully cleared so we made our way to one of Hong Kong's national parks – this particular one was home to one of the reservoirs that provide the city with fresh water.

Following a lengthy walk we went by coach to the Maritime Training Institute, where students are prepared for life in the merchant navy, an important aspect of Hong Kong's economy and history.

Here we watched students

learning how to tackle fires and were able to have a go at using their state-of-the-art shipping simulators.

That evening was also the first day of the Hong Kong Sea Cadet Annual Camp, which we joined in the afternoon.

Here the cadets of Hong Kong all gather for a week to take part in different activities, much like our annual Summer Camp.

On the fifth day of the exchange we travelled by boat to one of the outlying islands, where they follow traditional fishing methods and the islands are famous for their fish stores.

The island was also home to a traditional Chinese temple where worshippers can dedicate prayers to their ancestors.

Our escort officer had his future read in the traditional Chinese way – although it was told in Cantonese so we didn't hear what it was, the Hong Kong officers translated it for him later.

We then travelled back to the camp and took part in the variety show being held by the Hong Kong cadets – each district had their own act and it was a fun evening for everyone.

On our final full day we competed against the other

countries in an orienteering challenge where we had to find and photograph as many famous landmarks in the city as possible.

It was a fun and tiring day – however, we saw most of Hong Kong as a result and travelled on the famous double decker trams.

Despite being footsore by the end we managed to get in 24 different landmarks, from the old British Supreme Court to the new China Bank Tower.

We also came first, with the closest to us being Sweden with just 11 landmarks.

That evening was the leaving party, which was an emotional event for everyone – we were very sad to be leaving.

We all gave speeches thanking the Hong Kong officers and cadets for their help, and for making us feel welcome.

We then swapped small gifts brought by each cadet from their own country.

The exchange was a fantastic experience, and one that I'll never forget.

I hope many more Tooting cadets take up the opportunity and apply for the exchange in the years to come as it is a truly memorable and fun-filled experience."

Farewell to the Chief

NEW Romney and District held a ceremony at their TS Veteran HQ to say thank you and farewell to CPO (SCC) Alan Bell, who steered the unit to the success it enjoys today.

In the presence of a number of guests and well-wishers unit chairman Lt Cdr Don Davies RNR presented Alan with a large ship's wheel in recognition of all his work and efforts on behalf of TS Veteran during his six years dedicated service, adding that he would be greatly missed.

Retirement cards were also presented to Alan from the staff, committee members and cadets.

The unit president, the Hon. Alderman Fred Wood-Brignall, then thanked Alan for all he has done as officer-in-charge, and stated the unit has gone from strength to strength since he took over that role in 2007. He also wished him well in the future.

Good wishes were also extended by the president and chairman to PO (SCC) Mark Godden, who took on the role of officer-in-charge in November.

The evening concluded with guests and staff enjoying a buffet supper provided by members of the PSA Committee.

Aberdeen agenda

GRAMPIAN District's Junior Sea Cadets enjoyed an action-packed, fun-filled adventurous training weekend in Aberdeen.

The Juniors were treated to a number of activities as part of their training programme – with some additional treats lined up by the Course Officer in Charge, PO (SCC) Peter Ritchie, including a trip to Petrofac's hi-tech training facilities and a visit to the Aberdeen Harbour Control Tower at Footdee.

Whilst at Petrofac – an oil industry services provider – the juniors were appropriately dressed for the conditions, with hard hats and survival suits, before they went onboard the boats that are used to train offshore personnel.

They also toured the control tower, seeing the equipment used to ensure shipping uses the harbour safely.

Driving and climbing

CHATHAM Royal Marines Cadets had a busy, inspiring day driving down to Portsmouth to visit the Area Office and the Royal Marines Museum before heading back to Chatham for rock climbing.

L/Cpls Honour and Foster, MC1 Brown and MC2 Mitchell visited the museum with CO C/Sgt Stuart Carpenter and Sgt Alf Champion; all had a great time learning about the Corps' history and some of the deeds and legends that have made their history such a proud one.

Then whilst in town they popped in to Southern Area Office and were greeted by Deputy Area Officer Maj Andy Henderson RM Rtd.

Having spent some time having a chat they then met Area Officer Cdr John Greene before decamping back to unit HQ in Kent where C/Sgt Carpenter made them a piping hot curry lunch with his secret recipe.

Full and rested, the cadets then headed for the Royal Engineers' gymnasium in RSME Brompton for some indoor rock climbing on their traversing wall.

C/Sgt Carpenter said: "It was just another good day at the office for the Chatham Royal Marines Cadets."



● The Chatham Royal Marines Cadets with CO C/Sgt Stuart Carpenter (left) and Sgt Alf Champion (right) at the Royal Marines Museum in Portsmouth

Anglers end seven years of heartache

A SEVEN-YEAR wait for victory over the other two Services finally came to an end for the RN team when they triumphed in the Inter-Service Shore Angling competition.

The last time the RN were victorious was 2006, with the Army retaining the trophy for the past five years.

It was the turn of the RAF to host the event, and they chose Liverpool, fishing the River Mersey over two days.

At the end of the first day, the Army had a slender lead of four points over the RN.

With everything to fish for, the RN team incurred a 15-point penalty for being an angler down.

But WO1 Mark Duncan, WO2 Michael Robson and LCPL Rob Shiel comprehensively beat the other two Services, with a total of 78 points. The RAF finished second and the Army third.

LAET Mark Williams took the 2013 Inter-Services Individual title.

Quorn takes fitness title

BAHRAIN-based sailors from the Mine Countermeasures (MCM) Squadron proved their fitness by competing in their own Iron Man.

The first Plastic Man competition – the MCMVs have glass reinforced plastic hulls – took place while Quorn, Atherstone, Shoreham and Ramsey were all alongside in Minia Salman Port, Manama.

The teams of ten from each ship took part in pull-ups, press-ups, a rowing machine speed row, a squad sprint, 20kg kettlebell swings, a 40k push-press and a rope pull involving a four-wheel drive along the jetty.

HMS Quorn's team were crowned the victors.

Seahawk overcome defiant Devonport

THE Royal Navy Rugby Union Plate Final at HMS Drake saw HMS Seahawk's scrummage provide the platform upon which they built a 31-15 victory.

Behind the scrum both sides were evenly matched, with Devonport's fly half Croft proving particularly effective off scraps of possession.

However the biting breeze ensured there were a number of handling errors, and the resultant scrums were relished by the Seahawk pack, who squeezed the life out of the home side's forwards.

The game kicked off late due to HMS Seahawk's delayed arrival at Plymouth. However, with the breeze on their backs they were quicker into their game than the home side.

It wasn't long before a deft cross-field chip kick from fly half Horton was re-gathered by Rob McIntyre for the opening score. Horton converted for a 7-0 lead.

From the restart HMNB Devonport started to exert pressure themselves and were rewarded with a try of their own when centre Worboys took a neat inside pass and crossed wide out on the right for a well-taken try. Croft was unable to convert.

It wasn't long before Seahawk extended their lead.

With HMNB Devonport unable to clear their lines, Kava was able to run the loose ball deep into the home side's defence.

The ball was recycled and eventually came to Callum Davies. The Seahawk No 8 was to have an impressive match, and thoroughly deserved to crash over for the try. Again Horton converted.

It wasn't long before Seahawk were crossing for their third try of the half.



● Rob McIntyre crosses for Seahawk's third try

PICTURE: Geraint Ashton Jones, Alligin Photography

Having conceded two soft penalties, the first for a high tackle was missed by Croft but immediately afterwards he punished Seahawk for hands in the ruck.

Eventually Cox darted right to find Kava who in turn timed his pass superbly for McIntyre to score a well-taken try.

Another successful kick from Horton and it was 21-8 to HMS Seahawk as the referee blew for half time.

To have any chance of turning the game around Devonport needed to score first in the second half.

Unfortunately for them they were unable to keep possession as

playing into the wind the Seahawk pack tightened up their game and drove repeatedly into the heart of the Devonport defence.

Though Devonport tackled tenaciously they were unable to get hold of the ball and the pressure continued to mount.

Eventually it was Davies who made the decisive break and put Matt Horton clear with a simple but well-judged pass.

Horton was unable to convert his own try from the wide left, nor the fifth Seahawk try, scored by Bobby shortly afterwards.

Beaten but not bowed, Devonport then started to play their best rugby of the match and in turn put the Seahawk defence

under some pressure.

A couple of half chances went begging and it looked as if Seahawk would be able to weather the storm before Tom Croft stepped off his left foot, broke the tackle and went under the posts.

Converting his own try he brought the score back to 31-15.

He certainly deserved the try and also made the scoreboard reflect some of the enterprising play that Devonport had produced.

However, overall HMS Seahawk were well deserving of their win. They had relinquished their hold on the Cup but the Plate win will prove a little compensation.

Trainer ready for strong contest

A PETTY Officer from Plymouth, who stands 6ft 4in tall and weighs in at over 21 stone (135 kilos), was the Royal Navy's only representative at the Forces Winter Strongman Competition.

PO Matthew Geldard finished third in the contest against 30 other Armed Forces strongmen.

The contest involved six strength tests; from lifting a small car as many times as possible in 75 seconds to carrying a 90-kilo log in each hand along a 20-metre course in 90 seconds.

The 32-year-old Seaman Specialist, who is currently serving as an instructor at HMS Raleigh, took up the Strongman challenge six months ago.

PO Geldard said: "I needed something to train towards after completing my Senior Rates Leadership Course. I normally play rugby, but Raleigh doesn't have a team.

"I saw Strongman on the TV one day, looked it up on the internet and found that there was a gym in Plymouth which specialised in the event, so I went along and had a go.

"Then someone told me that the Army organised a competition so I thought I'd enter."

PO Geldard (below - in beret...) joined the Royal Navy in 2000.

He is due to leave HMS Raleigh in the New Year to join HMS Ocean.



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Bug's life on top of the world

WITH his ice pick raised in triumph, former Royal Navy commander and engineer Bug Wrightson celebrates becoming one of the first two climbers to ascend a Himalayan peak.

Until November, no-one had stood atop the 5,640m-high (18,503ft) summit of Chhuhobhe.

But on his 56th birthday Bug, a freelance outdoor activities leader and trainer from Hayling Island, and expedition leader Brian Jackson, director of Expedition Wise (www.expeditionwise.com) did just that, supported by Pasang Sherpa and Tendi Sherpa. (A third member of the team, Ian Foster, an outdoor equipment retailer, remained at base camp due to illness.)

Having trekked for seven days into an area known as the Lost Valleys – part of the Manang Region, which has only recently opened to Westerners due to the Maoist troubles – the team established base camp in a very remote location at 4,600m (15,091ft).

To climb the mountain, Bug and his fellow mountaineers had to contend with temperatures of -20°C, appalling snow conditions, and finally an exposed jump across to the summit block.

They began their ascent at 5am and returned to Base Camp just before 4pm on November 16.

In addition, the retired naval officer had to overcome illness on the days leading up to the summit attempt.

Bug is a member of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines' Mountaineering Club, which supported him on the expedition, and was raising money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines' Charity.



Highland games give Montrose a taste of home

HMS MONTROSE marked her Scottish connections with a flight deck St Andrew's Day celebration while on deployment to the Gulf.

The Type 23 Plymouth-based frigate has long-standing ties with Scotland.

To celebrate, the ship took a few hours out from maritime security operations in the Middle East to mark the festival day for Scotland's patron saint with a ship's company Highland Games.

To kick off the event, crew members formed a Saint Andrew's cross, or saltire, on the flight deck.

HMS Montrose was built at Yarrow on the Clyde, launched by Lady Rifkind in 1992, named after the Dukes of Montrose and is affiliated to the region of Angus.

Dozens of her sailors are Scottish-born, and the Graham of Montrose tartan adorns passageways and cabins throughout the ship.

The ship's Logistics Officer, Lt Cdr Elaine Boyd, who studied economics at the University of St Andrews before joining the Royal Navy, said: "During my four years at Scotland's finest institute of learning, like most students I looked forward to the traditions of Raison Weekend and the St Andrew's Day holiday.

"This year marks the University of St Andrews' 600th



● CPO Pete Garwood tosses the caber on the flight deck of HMS Montrose
Picture: LA (Phot) Alex Knott

anniversary and graduates from the furthest corners of the globe have sent birthday messages as part of the Postcard Home campaign."

The Highland Games included a caber toss, tug-o-war and obstacle relay, all carried out wearing tradition-inspired tartan dress.

It was organised by the ship's LPT Kier Woodhead, who said: "Putting an unusual spin on some flight deck sports is a fantastic opportunity to break up the arduous routines of our current operations.

"The tug-o-war was my particular favourite and I am

astounded by the enthusiasm of all involved. It was a great success."

With cabers tossed, and tug-o-wars tugged, the ship's company were treated to some traditional Scottish fare of 'stovies', a dish made from potatoes, and 'cranachen', a dessert of oats, cream, whisky and raspberries.

Cdr James Parkin, Montrose's Commanding Officer, said: "With the numerous Scottish affiliations and interesting connections we have it is only appropriate for the most Scottish ship in the Fleet to show her pride in our shared heritage."

Chance to star at Lord's

IF YOU play or have played cricket for the RN at senior or under 25 level – or would like to – then there is a chance to put your case for selection.

The RNCC will be holding three trials and training sessions at the Ageas Bowl, home of Hampshire Cricket Club, on January 29, February 26 and March 19.

The chance to represent your Service sells itself, but coupled with the chance to play at Lord's in the Inter Service T20 this is a fantastic opportunity.

Due to a change in eligibility criteria RNR personnel will also be considered for selection.

For information contact Cdr Simon Morris on

93832 5465 or Lt Mark Toogood on 93825 3841.

■ The Royal Navy Cricket Club, in conjunction with Hampshire Association of Cricket Officials (HACO) and Combined Services Association of Cricket Officials (CSACO) will be running an ECB Level 1 Umpires and Scorers course from February 10-12 at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth. No previous experience is necessary.

For further details, please contact Lt Andy Stancliffe, RNCC Director of Cricket (Officials) on 02392 573067 / 9380 28067.

For those within the Service, SLC may be used subject to prior authorisation.

Seniors hold on to take three points from opening fixture

AFTER 13 years at the helm Steve Vasey has handed the RNFA Secretary mantle to Steve Johnson.

Mr Johnson, the former RNFA Football Development Officer, takes over with the organisation in fine shape.

Capt Steve Dainton, Chairman of the RNFA, said: "I am extremely grateful for Steve's endeavours over a number of years of loyal service."

RN Seniors

Keen to bounce back from November's defeat to Devon FA the RN took on the Amateur Football Alliance (AFA).

Played in blustery conditions at the Victory Stadium, this was the first game of the Southern Counties Cup (SCC).

The AFA had the best of the play in the early encounters, and on 30 minutes their persistence was rewarded.

POPT Dave Berry received the ball from the RN keeper but gave it away to the AFA frontman; the ball was played to his strike partner, who coolly curled the ball in off the far post to give LAET Roy Emerson no chance in goal.

This summed up a disappointing half for the RN.

Following the management's half-time 'hairdryer treatment' the Servicemen



ONSIDE with Lt Mark Toogood, RNFA

came out for the second half with real sense of purpose.

With momentum on their side, the RN earned a corner on 54 minutes which was expertly delivered by Berry.

The in-swinging corner kick was met powerfully by the head of NA Hugh Howlett, who hit the back of the net from seven yards to level the scores.

On 70 minutes Mne Liam Campbell lost his marker on the right-hand side and drove a right-footed cross to an unmarked Saunders, who made it 2-1.

Six minutes later LET Rob Lakin nodded the ball home to put the RN in a commanding position.

With the opposition down to ten men following an injury, the decision was made to bring on RN and CS veteran (and current RN Coach) WO1 Paul Willetts to steady the ship.

The switch appeared to have worked until the 89th minute when AFA pulled one back.

The RN managed to hold on for an impressive 3-2 victory and three points from their opening SCC fixture.

RN U21

Under the stewardship of new management team WO1 Marty Wallace and LPT Ben Medlin, the U21 season began with a match against United Services youth team at Victory Stadium.

Fielding a significant number of debutants, the team took some time to gel.

After 25 minutes the RN started to dominate their youthful opponents, with captain ET Batiszovsky, ET Hunter and ET Evans linking up well through the middle of the park.

On 32 minutes applied pressure led to the award of a free kick just outside the box.

Batiszovsky, a free-kick expert with the wind behind him, brilliantly placed the ball into the bottom right-hand corner for a deserved 1-0 lead.

On 55 minutes the first change was made as ET Fountain made way for CH Binks, who moved to left back, freeing debutant CH Hilder to push forward.

Man-of-the-match ET Evans was causing the opposition problems, and on 60 minutes he shot just wide of the goal.

Another half-chance fell for Evans on 67 minutes, following a good cross from the left by Hilder, but was headed just wide by the irrepressible forward.

The away side had clearly run out of ideas and energy, with the RN defence rarely called in to action.

The knockout blow was delivered by Andrews who, on 85 minutes, capitalised on a mistake, ran to the edge of the box and calmly slotted the ball in to the bottom corner to claim a 2-0 win.

RN Ladies

The RN Ladies' second game of the season was a West Country affair, hosted at HMS Drake with a new squad embracing the challenge posed by the Marine Academy Plymouth (MAP).

A neat sweeping midfield passage of play provided the perfect opportunity for AB(WS) Holly Cole to make a blistering

Oarless but awesome in Cardiff

THE Royal Navy team of 12 proved successful, winning five medals, at the British Indoor Rowing Championships (BIRC) held at the Welsh National Sports Centre in Cardiff.

Races were held over 2,000m for a wide range of age categories covering men, women, heavyweights (Hwt) and lightweights (Lwt).

With nearly 500 rowers competing, the event was a welcome return to the fixture calendar.

Pride of place went to CPOET(MESM) Collin Leiba (Drake), who won the Men's Mat 50+ race by 0.4 secs in a time of 6 mins 28.8 secs, just short of his personal best.

'Mr Plymouth 1992' is a known powerhouse over shorter distances up to 1,000m, but here showed the value of increased application to aerobic endurance training as he narrowly beat the acknowledged World No 1.

LPT Ollie Osborne recently won the RN Championships in a time of 6 mins 07.6 secs to set a personal best. He gave his all in a brutal Men's Hwt 30+ race to finish a close second in 6 mins 11 secs.

Sgt Tim Hughes (CTCRM) finished third in 6 mins 32.4 secs.

LPT Julie Stroud (NAS Culdrose) was runner-up in the Women's Lwt 30+ in a time of 7 mins 55.3 secs, five seconds slower than her win in the RN Championships.

Paul Winton (MCTA) gained his first medal at BIRC after ten years of trying as he finished third in the Men's Hwt 55+ in a time of 6 mins 46.0 secs.

Top ten finishes were also recorded by: Lt Cdr Maxine Ashby (NAS Culdrose) 8 mins 43.3 secs/5th in Women's Lwt 45+; WO1 Andy Patience (Collingwood) 6 mins 55.6 secs/6th in Men's Hwt 50+; Lt Mark Grandy (MCTA) 7 mins 20.9 secs (pb) in Men's Lwt 30+; Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol) 6 mins 32.7 secs/8th in Men's Hwt 35+;

Lt Cdr Chris Hutchinson (FOST HM) 6 mins 47.8 secs pb/10th in Men's Hwt 45+; PO Rich Galpin (Sultan) 6 mins 49.4 secs pb/12th in Men's Hwt 35+. Lt Cdr Derek Powles (NCHQ) 6 mins 51.8 secs was 16th in the Men's Hwt 40+ category.

run down the right wing and slot the ball past the MAP keeper to take the lead.

With ten minutes of the first half remaining the RN again pressed forward, and NN Hannah Philimore scored her second goal in two games to give the RN a two-goal advantage at half time.

The second-half whistle blew and the RN had their backs to the wall almost immediately.

Again the MAP No 9 ran at the RN defence, but this time she made no mistake as she brought the opposition back into the game at 2-1.

MAP maintained the initiative to score their second goal.

With the score now at 2-2 and with 25 minutes left on the clock the RN coaching staff decided to make some changes and trial some of the newer players.

The RN defence were now firmly on the back foot and when MAP slotted home their third goal the game appeared dead and buried.

But with RN captain LCH Helen Kingscott rallying the team, they equalised with eight minutes to go.

MAP secured their fourth and final goal to cruelly take the game in the closing moments.

Instructors at their peak



● Picture: LA (Phot) Ian Simpson

A SPECTACULAR display of strength, courage and agility marked the end of a gruelling course which trains Royal Navy instructors in keeping sailors fit to fight. Six physical trainers marked their passing out in style at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth – the Navy's School of Physical Training – in front of 200 guests. They have just completed the arduous six-month course and will now be

dispersed among ships and shore establishments as Leading Physical Trainers. The display included many of the traditional skills taught on the course, including club swinging, rope climbing, gymnastics, the hornpipe and performing at height on a window ladder. Also proving a hit with the audience was a hilarious short film featuring the six singing *Build Me Up Buttercup*. Most of the footage was filmed

during breaks in their four-week adventurous training leadership in north Wales. Student LPT Luke Steele, 29, who will take up a post at HMS Collingwood, Fareham, said: "The course has been extremely challenging but I have developed my character and look forward to starting my new career." The other students were Tim Scrivener, Kriss Young, Liam Short, James Best and Sarah Rushton.

Rugby veteran takes the top sports honour

A RUGBY-PLAYING Air Engineer has been named Sportsman of the Year 2013 at the annual Royal Navy Sports Awards.

Fending off tough competition from fellow athletes, Chief Petty Officer (Air Engineering Technician) David Pascoe took the trophy for his contribution to Royal Navy rugby.

CPO Pascoe, who works in 771 Naval Air Squadron, the front-line Search and Rescue unit based at RNAS Culdrose, first played for the Royal Navy Rugby Union senior XV in 1999 and has never missed a season since.

He is the second most capped RN player of all time and is the longest-serving captain in the senior XV's history.

He was presented with his award by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel, who also presented trophies to the Best Sportswoman, Best Sports Official, Young Sportsman of the Year as well as the Best Sports Team.

"It's been an honour and a privilege to be captain for such a length of time," said CPO Pascoe, aged 34, from Truro, of his eight-year tenure as captain of the Royal Navy's 1st XV.

"I've been very lucky to be injury-free. I still enjoy my sport – so as long as I am fit, I will keep going."

Also receiving an award was Sportswoman of the Year, Lt Rachel Cunningham, who proved herself as an outstanding female strength athlete.

Working at Navy Command Headquarters in Portsmouth, she has competed in the British Powerlifting Championships.

"Powerlifting is a growing sport in the Service and a lot of girls are not afraid to lift weights," she said.

"It's a solo sport, but also a very friendly one.



● Above, CPO David Pascoe receives his award from Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel

Left, Lt Rachel Cunningham

Right, WO Sean Childs

Pictures: LA(Phot) Maxine Davies



"When you go to competitions, yes it's competitive, but everyone is also encouraging you. Everyone wants you to lift as much as you can."

Young Sportsman of the Year was awarded to snowboarder AET Ross Taylor, while the Top Team went to the Royal Navy male fencing team and the Sports Official of the Year was Warrant Officer Sean Childs for his commitment to Royal Navy cycling.

Athletics Secretary and Royal Navy Sports Award organiser Lt Cdr Ginge Gough said: "This has been another exciting year for all of our Royal Navy sportsmen and women.

"We have seen our rugby team go from strength to strength under the captainship of CPO

Pascoe while Lt Cunningham has been an inspiration for our female athletes.

"Keeping fit and healthy are integral to life in the Royal Navy and these awards acknowledge our athletes for their ongoing successes."

Vice Admiral Steel said the Royal Navy had a wonderful wealth of athletes.

He added: "It is incredible that an organisation as busy as the Royal Navy, and with only 30,000 people, can still compete not only against the other Services but also at a national level.

"Not only are our men and women representing themselves or their teams on the sports field, they are also ambassadors for the Royal Navy both at home and abroad."

Duo secure team slots

A SMALL team of RN orienteers, Cdr Jim Buck (NCHQ), Lt Andy Beverley (DES ISS, Northwood) and Lt Megan Ashton (MOD CECT), travelled to Penhale Sands in Cornwall to take on the Army and RAF at the Inter-Services Orienteering Championships, hosted by Cornwall Orienteering Club.

Despite not having a full team of ten men and six women, the three runners performed well over the very technical and challenging terrain. Lt Andy Beverley and Lt Megan Ashton's runs secured them both places in the Combined Services orienteering team.

They will compete alongside the Army and RAF team members in a match against the British Universities in March.

The RN orienteering team is on the look-out for new runners.

If you are an orienteer, or wish to learn and develop both your physical fitness and navigation skills, contact the Secretary, Lt Megan Ashton, (megan.ashton371@mod.uk, 0207 708 0970).

Power performance to find the best bootneck

THE ROYAL Marines Strongman event took place at Commando Training Centre RM, when competitors from around the country came together in an effort to find the strongest bootneck.

The competition was organised by the RN Powerlifting Association (RNPA), and two RNPA officials were present to run and referee the event, which consisted of three lifting disciplines.

The first discipline was bench press – a classic powerlifting discipline.

This was followed by the overhead lift. This could be a simple push/press for those with little technique, or for those with some form, it could be an Olympic-style lift, either clean and jerk or snatch.

The final event was the dead-lift, another of the three powerlifting disciplines (the other being the squat).

In the deadlift the competitors have to lift the weight from the floor to an upright position.

Twenty-four lifters representing each Cdo unit and CTCRM contested the three individual disciplines, and trophies were also available for the overall best lifter taking body weight into account and finally an overall best



● Action from the Strongman competition

Picture: LA (Phot) Ben Shread

total regardless of body weight.

"Some of the guys here are pure powerlifters and some focus on cross-fit, which also includes the Olympic lifts," says Maj Steve Congreve.

"This event is designed to cater for a wider range of lifters to get more marines involved in the sport of weight lifting."

"We're all in the open-age category today, but we take body weight into

account by applying specific formula against each lift which gives you an overall points total.

"So it's power-to-weight ratio that counts," Maj Congreve added.

The competitors applied the principle of 'less talk more chalk', and when the dust had settled, the CTCRM team were victorious, with 42 Cdo runners up.

Alongside the mutual support among lifters was huge competitive spirit, and many personal bests were set with brute strength and determination overcoming any lack of skill.

The individual awards were in many cases extremely close-fought, with the lighter lifters often gaining the advantage.

For those interested in taking part in the sport of powerlifting, details can be found on Facebook at Royal Navy Powerlifting.

The individual results were: Best Bench: Cpl Aston Yelland, 40 Cdo, 152.5kg; R/U Bench: Mne Darren Biggs, 45 Cdo, 140kg; Best Overhead: Cpl Aston Yelland, 40 Cdo, 125kg; R/U Overhead: Cpl Ash Palmer, CTCRM, 112.5kg.

Best Deadlift: Cpl Adam Baird CTCRM, 252.5kg; R/U Deadlift: Mne Joseph McGarry, 30 Cdo 215kg; Best total (adjusted for body weight): Cpl Aston Yelland, 40 Cdo, total lifted 507.5kg; Best total (unadjusted): Maj Steve Congreve, CTCRM, total lifted 510kg.