



NAVY NEWS

NOVEMBER 2015



● Royal Navy diver Jeremy Osborne surfaces in front of the Icelandic Coastguard ship Thor during Exercise Northern Challenge which tested bomb disposal techniques. See centre pages.
Picture: L(Phot) Iggy Roberts

COOL CASE



LAST light in the Mojave Desert. On a rocky summit some 3,000 feet above sea level, Royal Marines Commandos take up position overlooking 'Twenty', a sprawling town of 1,000 buildings.

We attack before dawn.

It has taken eight days to get to this point. On day nine, Twenty will fall and six weeks of intensive training will reach their fiery climax.

There will be the crack of small arms fire. The thud of shells. The wumm-wumm-wumm of mortar rounds. The rumble and clatter of caterpillar tracks. The wocca-wocca of Chinook rotors spinning furiously. The ground will shake. Men will shout, yell, scream. Sweat will carve rivers on dust-encrusted faces.

And the troops will love every minute of it.

For there is nowhere, *nowhere* you can experience more intensive combat away from the true field of battle.

Which is why pretty much every autumn the Royal Marines decamp from their bases in the UK and fly 5,000-plus miles to Twentynine Palms in California, home of the US Marine

Corps Air Ground Combat Center.

Accepting the invitation to the 2015 incarnation of Black Alligator were around 1,200 Royal Marines Commandos, Royal Marines Reservists, commando gunners of 29 Regiment Royal Artillery, battlefield engineers of 24 Commando RE, the wings of the green berets - 845 Naval Air Squadron - plus Dutch and American marines.

For 845, this was their first Black Alligator with Merlins rather than Sea Kings. They brought three battlefield Merlins, supported by 100 air and ground crew, all the way from RAF Benson in Oxfordshire via Marchwood military port on Southampton Water to Sunny Point in North Carolina...

...which, as the more astute among you will realise, is not Twentynine Palms. Or even California. Or even the west coast.

From there, they faced a four-day journey of more than 2,000 miles across ten US states to reach Twentynine Palms.

"The flight across the States proved a lot of work at times for us," said CPO Stephen Stopforth, the senior engineer

accompanying the detachment.

"We faced a few challenges we weren't expecting - having to change an engine at the midway point was certainly one of them, although the help we received from the Mississippi Air National Guard was more than anyone could have asked for."

Many 845 personnel either had never operated in the desert before - or were out of touch with the dry, dusty, hot environment: outdoor temperatures were in the high 30s Celsius.

For the aircrews, that meant perfecting dust landings and operating the aircraft in the 'hot and high' conditions of the Mojave before moving on to more complicated training such as formation and night flying, and finally working with the men of 42 Commando.

Working with the Bickleigh marines offered a good variety of flying, ranging from troop insertions alongside RAF Chinooks, through to completing dummy drops to act as a diversion for mechanised companies rolling through the Mojave, and providing an airborne observation post for the

commanders of each assault.

And the California detachment also offered the Junglie fliers a unique opportunity to fly with the US Air Force.

Twentynine Palms is about as bleak, barren and arid a place as you could imagine.

But just 150 miles away - barely an hour's flying time in a Merlin - is the party capital of the planet, the glitz and glamour of Las Vegas.

You're thinking the bright lights of the strip. *Ocean's 11*. Elvis. Frank Sinatra. That big fountain which dances in time to Debussy. Maybe a spot of *CSI*.

You're probably not thinking Nellis Air Force Base and Pavehawk helicopters.

The Commando fliers were. They had only one thought when presented with two weeks in Vegas: to practise battlefield casualty extraction.

As well as F-15s, F-22s, A-10 tank-busters, the base is home to the 66th (Jolly Greens) Rescue Squadron, who can draw on six decades of experience of picking up wounded men under

fire; they're generally regarded as the world leaders in what the military call Joint Personnel Recovery.

The US military formed a dedicated unit to do just that based on their experiences in Korea at the beginning of the 1950s.

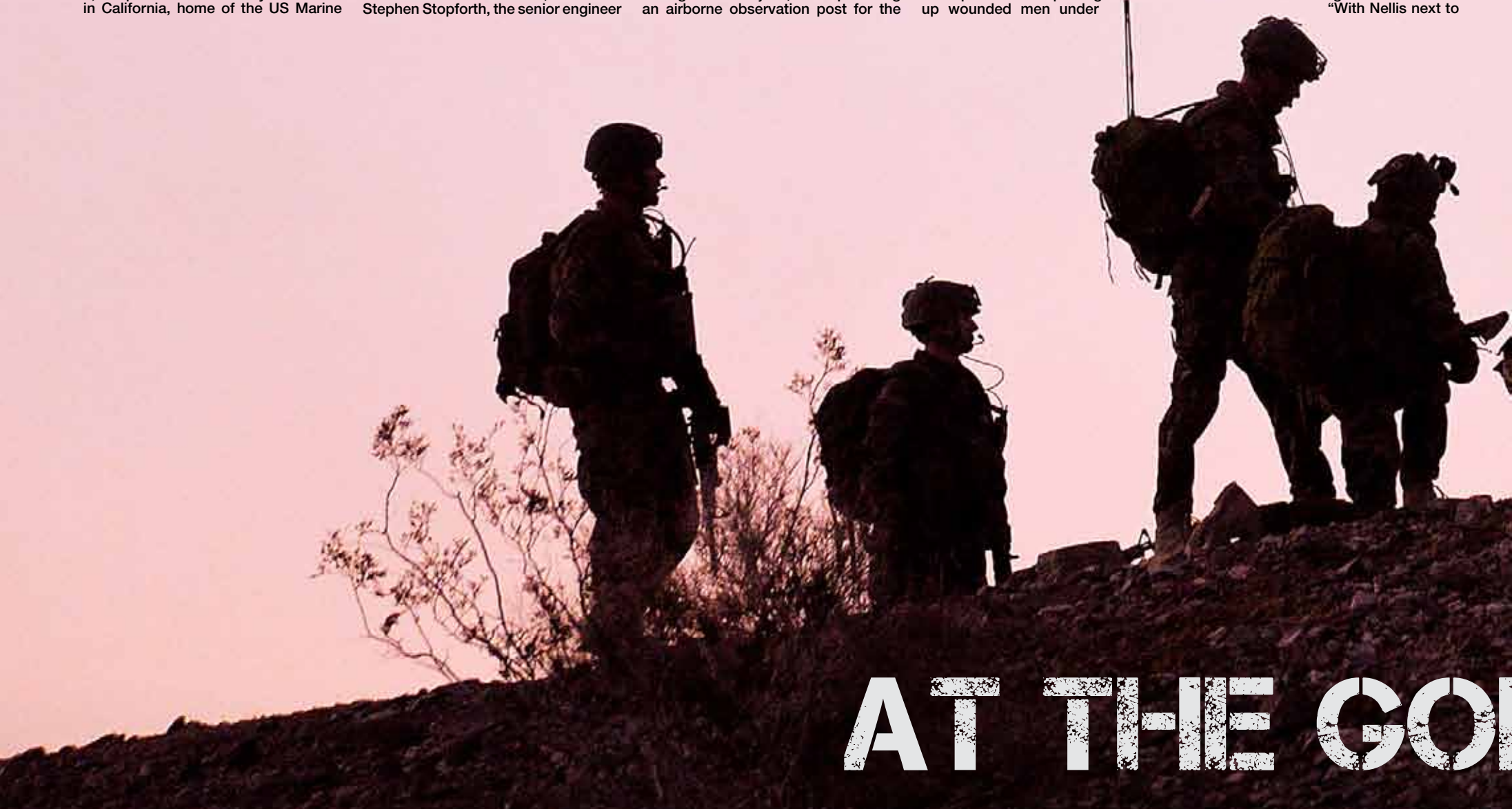
Today the Jolly Greens - motto *haec ago ut alii vivant* (this I do so others may live) - operate a specially-modified Blackhawk helicopter, the HH60 Pavehawk.

While the Jolly Greens have (a) shedloads of experience (b) a pretty decent battle-proven helicopter with plenty of firepower (.5 calibre machine-gun or a Minigun) to keep the enemy pinned down while casualties are being picked up...

...they don't have a ramp-mounted machine-gun... which the Merlin does... to keep the enemy pinned down.

"The introduction of new tactics gave a fresh way of viewing recovering personnel - and the opportunity to work side-by-side with our Allies was invaluable," said pilot Flt Lt Tim Thorogood.

"With Nellis next to



AT THE GO



Las Vegas, flying the helicopters over the famous bright lights of the 'Vegas Strip' is something I'll never forget!"

After the inaugural exercise, the commando fliers are hoping to build on the training in 2016 with a view to becoming the UK Armed Forces' experts in battlefield casualty recovery.

Before then there was the Battle of Twenty to win.

The nine-day tubthumping grand finale – the official name is the Combined And Live Firing EXercise (or CALFEX) – opened in the rocky terrain outside the replica town.

Rounds from US Marine Corps Abrams M1 tanks and 105mm shells from the guns of 29 Commando came crashing down on 'enemy' positions in the hillsides as they were stormed by the men from 42 and 12 Company Royal Netherlands Marines Corps.

Among those unleashing hell was L/Cpl David Nash of 42's Juliet Company who put an end to the activities of enemy armour with a Javelin anti-tank missile.

He won the chance to unleash the 40lb missile – which can knock out a

tank at ranges up to 2,500 metres – in a (very typically Royal Marines) game of rock-paper-scissors.

"It was a great privilege to be able to fire the only Javelin on this exercise – it's such a rare opportunity," David said.

It's this 'money can't buy' experience of live firing which, says 42 Commando's Commanding Officer Lt Col Rich Cantrill, is crucial should the men from Bickleigh be sent into battle.

"The experience of feeling the ground shake from the impact of a live 81mm mortar bomb shortly before moving forward on foot to clear the remaining enemy is not a feeling that these marines are able to experience often, but it's vital that it's a familiar one when they're called upon by their country to fight in anger," he said.

After tearing up the desert, the troops moved into what the US Marines call Range 220 – shortened in Californian drawl to 'Twenty' – the 1,000-building urban complex (34°24'24"N, 116°16'25"W on Google Earth).

It features buildings as tall as five

storeys, grocery stores (complete with plastic fruit), bookstores, pharmacies, schools, hotels, hospitals and clinics, sports stadia, even a parliament and diplomatic quarter.

The buildings are made of specially-absorbent concrete which can take the hammering it receives from the marines.

All four companies from 42 Commando – Juliet, Kilo, Lima and Mike – plus the Dutch flying in by Chinook helicopter were involved in the two-day 'battle' for the town, supported by US Marines in Amtraks (amphibious armoured personnel carriers) and our own green berets in their Vikings (...which are also amphibious armoured personnel carriers).

The Vikings carried Juliet Company into action – sparing the men's legs, providing some armoured protection under fire and extracting wounded comrades, while also pouring down machine-gun fire on the enemy.

"Having never used Viking before, I'm a complete convert," enthused WO Noel Connolly, Juliet's Sargent Major.

"I firmly believe we should be seriously looking at using these machines as much as possible."

And if you can't ride into battle by Viking, you can always take the helicopter. 845's Merlins flew companies of Royal Marines into action as troops, artillery, mortars and main battle tanks moved in – all under the cover of darkness.

The helicopters were also expected to scramble at 30 minutes' notice as 'flying ambulances' to collect simulated casualties.

"Having been on several tours flying in Afghanistan, and undertaking the training before we deployed, it's amazing how well Twentynine Palms would prepare somebody for overseas operations," said aircrewman Cpl Jay Whitehouse RM.

"Not only is the area far larger than anything we have in the UK, but the environment is perfect too. It was ideal for people who've not been to the desert before – and also for those who haven't been for a while."

Cdr Matt Punch, 845's CO, said by the close of Black Alligator the men and women of his squadron were

feeling "well worked up".

He continued: "Overall, our deployment was a success – there was a vast amount of training carried out and experience gained for a squadron which was little more than a handful of weeks old when it deployed to the United States."

As the sounds of battle from more than 600 personnel involved in the final assault died down, Lt Col Cantrill had come to a similar conclusion.

He praised good 'ol American hospitality which had allowed his commando group to 'play' on the US Marine Corps' ultimate training ground.

"We have been so lucky to have been provided with all the range access, infrastructure and attached arms that we have needed, but it is the wrap of goodwill from the US Marine Corps that has made the greatest impression on me," he said.

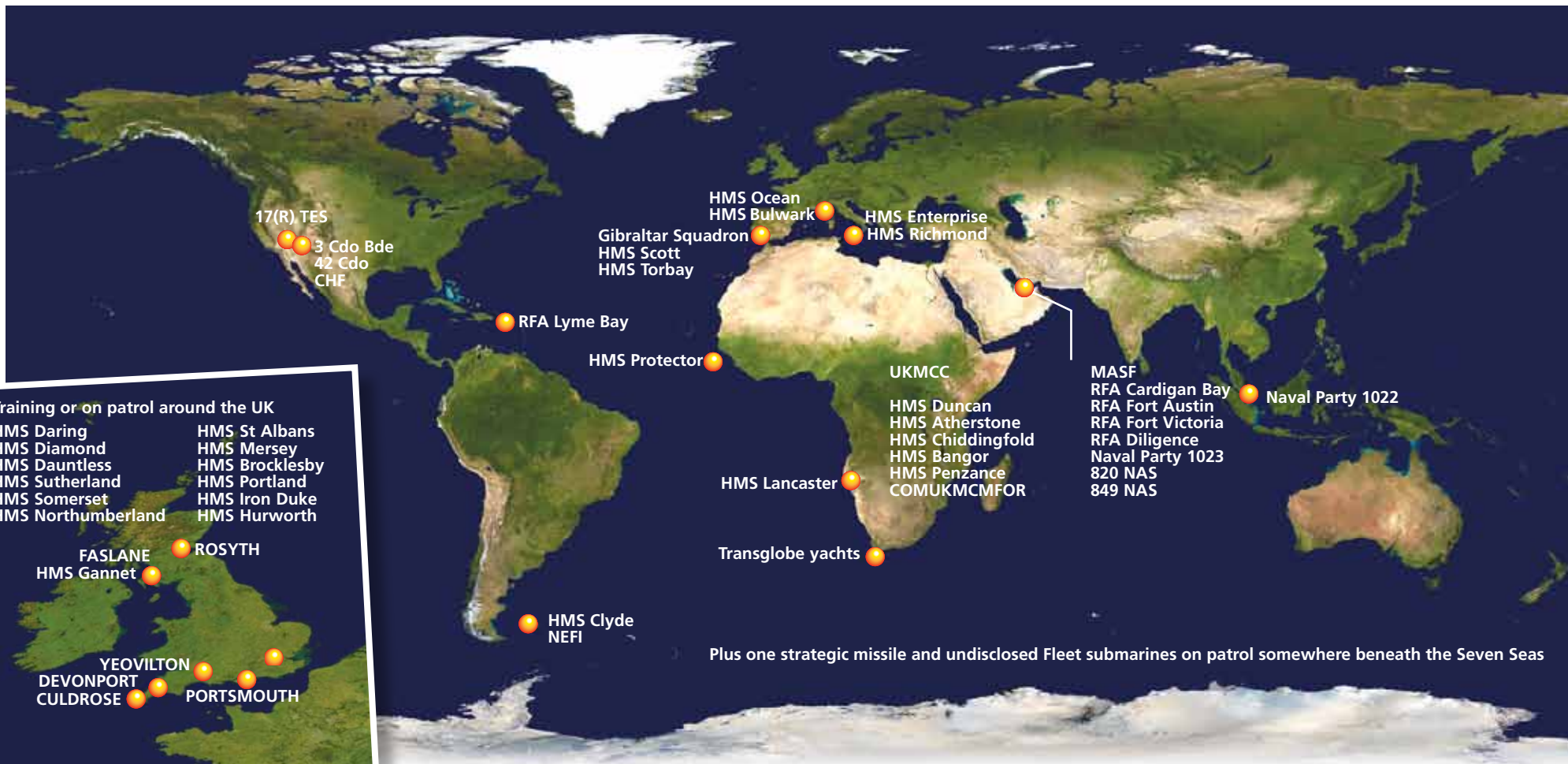
"And I am delighted to know that some of my mountain leaders will be returning the favour, in a very small way, by assisting US Marines to train in the high Arctic of Norway in the new year."



ING DOWN OF THE SUN...



pictures: po(phot) mez merrill, chf, and la(phot) joel rouse, 42 cdo


Training or on patrol around the UK

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| HMS Daring | HMS St Albans |
| HMS Diamond | HMS Mersey |
| HMS Dauntless | HMS Brocklesby |
| HMS Sutherland | HMS Portland |
| HMS Somerset | HMS Iron Duke |
| HMS Northumberland | HMS Hurworth |



- 17(R) TES
- 3 Cdo Bde
- 42 Cdo
- CHE
- RFA Lyme Bay
- HMS Protector
- HMS Ocean
- HMS Bulwark
- Gibraltar Squadron
- HMS Scott
- HMS Torbay
- HMS Enterprise
- HMS Richmond
- UKMCC
- HMS Duncan
- HMS Atherstone
- HMS Chiddingfold
- HMS Bangor
- HMS Penzance
- COMUKMCMFOR
- HMS Lancaster
- Transglobe yachts
- HMS Clyde
- NEFI
- MASF
- RFA Cardigan Bay
- RFA Fort Austin
- RFA Fort Victoria
- RFA Diligence
- Naval Party 1022
- Naval Party 1023
- 820 NAS
- 849 NAS

Plus one strategic missile and undisclosed Fleet submarines on patrol somewhere beneath the Seven Seas

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

FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

THE clocks have gone back as the weather takes on a chilly feel – but many Royal Navy personnel are enjoying much warmer climates.

Six weeks of intensive training came to a head for Royal Marines on **Exercise Black Alligator** (see pages 2-3). The Mojave Desert has been home to around 1,200 Royal Marines Commandos, Royal Marines Reservists, commando gunners of 29 Regiment Royal Artillery, battlefield engineers of 24 Commando RE and 845 NAS, as well as Dutch and American marines.

HMS Ocean and **Bulwark** were in the Mediterranean for the first major exercise – Corsican Lion – of their Cougar 15 deployment (see pages 16-17).

Also in the Mediterranean was **HMS Torbay** (see page 18) as the submarine called in at Gibraltar.

Over to the Caribbean and sailors, soldiers, Royal Marines and airmen from **RFA Lyme Bay** helped remote communities devastated by Hurricane Joaquin (see page 9).

The crew of **HMS Lancaster** continue their African odyssey (see page 22) with a visit to Angola where the ship's engineers helped make a village school much safer for its pupils.

In the Gulf, **HMS Duncan** (see page 6) provided urgent medical help to an injured Iranian fisherman.

Over to the Indian Ocean and **RFA Fort Victoria** carried out a replenishment at sea to enable **HMS Richmond** to continue her duties (see opposite page).

Feeling a different type of heat were chefs and stewards from the **Naval Service Culinary Arts Team** as they took part in Exercise Joint Caterer (see page 20).

Out in the cold were Royal Navy personnel from the **Southern Diving Group** as they decamped to Iceland for Exercise Northern Challenge (see centre pages). The divers worked with 14 NATO and Partner for Peace nations displaying their explosive expertise.

Also 'in the north' – but this time Scotland – were personnel from **815 NAS** as they took their Lynx Mk8 helicopters to Edinburgh to be hunted by Eurofighter Typhoons from 6 Squadron RAF for Exercise Iron Sky (see page 7).

We take a glimpse at how the Royal Navy of the future may look as personnel from the **Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team** took part in an international demonstration of potential minehunters of tomorrow (see pages 14-15).

More than 150 military and industry leaders and experts converged on **RNAS Culdrose** in Cornwall to look at how autonomous systems can be used on the battlefield of the future (see pages 14-15).

The home of carrier aviation makes a second appearance (see pages 26-27) as we look at a typical day at **HMS Seahawk**.

HMS Protector is heading for waters no Royal Navy vessel has visited in 80 years on a marathon deployment to Antarctica (see page 6).

The very last Royal Navy Type 42 destroyer still afloat – Gulf War veteran **HMS Gloucester** – was towed out of Portsmouth to meet her fate: the breaker's yard in Turkey (see page 13). The RFA also said farewell to the last of the Leaf-class tankers as **RFA Orangeleaf** left service (see page 13). The single-hulled tanker is making way for the double-hulled RFA Tidespring and her three sisters, Tiderace, Tidsurge and Tideforce, which will enter service from 2016.

Finally, a group of Normandy Veterans were taken back in time to **Operation Neptune** as they viewed the sole surviving British landing craft from D-Day (see page 19). Many of the veterans served on landing craft similar to LCT 7074, which is now in the hands of the National Museum of the Royal Navy.



No beating about 'Bush

IF ONLY finding submarines was this easy...

Britain's newest operational boat – hunter killer HMS Ambush – makes a rare appearance on the surface of the Mediterranean as forces arrayed for NATO's biggest submarine exercise of the autumn get under way.

Over 11 days, five surface ships and seven maritime patrol aircraft and helicopters pitted their wits against seven submarines – five conventional diesel boats, two nuclear – in the Ionian Sea.

Dynamic Manta was billed as one of the most demanding submarine hunting workouts above, on and below the Seven Seas.

Throwing the hat into the ring on behalf of the UK, the Mighty Bush, out on her second deployment... but first operational patrol since joining the Silent Service.

Ranged against her and boats from the US, Spanish, Turkish, Greek, French and Italian navies were NATO's Standing Maritime Group 2, led by the German frigate FGS Hamburg.

After a couple of days in Catania in Sicily to discuss the hunters-hunted exercise, the warships and submarines put to sea for the active phase, while the aircraft lifted off from Sigonella Air Base in Sicily – which earlier this year served as the hub for Merlin operations involved in rescuing migrants crossing from Africa.

Throughout Dynamic Manta, the air station, just outside Catania, was also home to an international team of anti-submarine warfare experts who followed the progress of the daily 'battles' in real time – then provided feedback and advice to all participants.

The exercise was the last significant act of

this maiden patrol (Ambush's 2014 Atlantic deployment was more trials/training/flag-flying than pure operational).

"Ambush has proven her capabilities as one of the most advanced submarines in the world and this successful deployment is proof that the Astute-class can operate anywhere in the world," said her captain, Cdr Alan Daveney.

His hunter-killer provided operational experience for 25 trainee submariners who had joined Ambush as part of the process of earning their dolphins, the final step in being awarded the unique badge which signifies their hard-won status as fully-qualified deeps.

One of those trainees was ET Aidon Bale, who joined the Mighty Bush as part of his Marine Engineering Fast Track to Leading Hand programme ahead of his first draft in the Royal Navy.

"My training time deployed with Ambush was a great experience," he said.

"We were fully tested both practically and academically during our time on board. I am very proud to have been awarded my dolphins and become a fully qualified Royal Navy submariner."

Aidon will now enjoy a period of leave with his family before deploying again in 2016.

Ambush also made port visits to Gibraltar and Soudha Bay in Crete, and became the first UK nuclear submarine to visit Limassol, where she hosted the Cypriot Defence Minister, several key Cypriot military leaders and the CO of the UK Sovereign Base Area.

During her time in Cyprus the crew had a well earned break, enjoying a range of adventurous training events including off-road driving, karting and kite-surfing.

Diamond cuts a fine shape

AT SEA for the first time since the summer of 2014, is the new-look, souped-up HMS Diamond.

Some 15 months of work by BAE Systems have gone into the third of the Royal Navy's Type 45 destroyers in Portsmouth Naval Base to help her down the road to her third operational deployment.

Since returning from a Mediterranean deployment last year, during which she helped with the removal of chemical weapons from Syria, the ship has gone through a Capability Upgrade Period (CUP), basically beefing her up with the latest communication satellite systems, internal computers and weapons systems as well as Harpoon anti-ship missile system installed in distinctive launchers on the forecastle, just behind her Sea Viper silo.

Having been out of action for more than a year, the ship's company has changed extensively – indeed, one in five of the 200 souls aboard had never served at sea before the destroyer left Portsmouth at 2.30pm on October 8.

"It's incredibly exciting to be going to sea for the first time and doing the job that I have been trained for. We have had a lot to learn but the crew are more than ready," said Wtr Rosie Williams.

The destroyer is now undergoing an intensive period of sea trials in the Channel proving her systems and allowing the ship's company to get to grips with the new or enhanced kit.

"It is wonderful for Diamond to be back in her natural environment," said Cdr Marcus Hember, the destroyer's commanding officer.

"The upgrades ensure the ship remains at the forefront of the Royal Navy's surface flotilla and is the jewel in the Naval crown.

"The crew can sharpen their knowledge and increase their experience in readiness for Operational Sea Training and future operations in an ever-changing and dangerous world."

Pictures: LA(Phot) Luron Wright



Dark knights

UNDER the dull glow of night lights, the crew of RFA Fort Victoria prepare to transfer fuel and supplies so HMS Richmond can continue her duties in the Indian Ocean.

A replenishment at sea is among the most challenging of evolutions for any mariner. A nighttime RAS notches things up a bit. "Although we are experts at RASing, undertaking the serial in darkness adds a new dimension to it," said Fort Vic's navigator 2/O Mark Bongartz.

"We have to be extra careful with the safety and the seamanship at night."

Chief Officer Angus Bissell said the orchestrated manoeuvres in the dark (sorry) were excellent training for some of the apprentice RFA seafarers aboard the oiler. Nothing beats hands-on experience.

"It's good for them to see the hazards for themselves and to learn to work safely under the supervision of our training team."

And if you can RAS by night, then RASing by day is a doddle. Even if the ship isn't British. Like the Indian frigate Betwa.

Richmond paired up with the Commonwealth warship off Goa for some joint manoeuvres and training – both navies are committed to smiting terrorists, smugglers, pirates and drug-runners in the Indian Ocean.

Though a little newer than Richmond (2004 rather than 1995), the Betwa largely performs the same duties and carries roughly the same firepower (anti-ship, surface-to-air missiles, similar calibre main guns, Gatling guns, torpedo launchers, helicopter).

After RASing, the two ships carried out officer-of-the-watch manoeuvres – played out under the observant eyes of Richmond's Lynx crew, whose helicopter was buzzing about (technical term) overhead.

"This was a great opportunity to work with a very competent and professional navy," said Lt Thomas Loxton, Richmond's navigator.

"Working with the INS Betwa was rewarding; she is a very capable ship."

His Executive Officer Lt Cdr Alexandra Pollard added: "Conducting this type of exercise is important – we need to demonstrate

we can work closely with our allies wherever we are."

After all that work, it's nice to have a break. And there are few better places on the planet to let your hair down (figuratively) than Goa.

The visit brought smiles to the faces not just of the 200 sailors and Royal Marines aboard the Portsmouth-based Type 23.

A contingent from Richmond volunteered to help smarten the school and grounds of a school used by some of Goa's orphans.

The Mango Tree Trust school in Altinho is a popular visit for Royal Navy sailors; earlier this year the crew of survey ship HMS Enterprise tackled repairing some of the basic services to the Mango Tree, such as water and electricity supplies.

Richmond's sailors found their skills were required restoring school desks, fixing electrical wiring and cutting down trees in the garden.

"It's really great to be able to help the children," said Sue Steele, who runs the ship's canteen. "I was really touched by their enthusiasm; it was a long day repairing equipment and they kept our spirits up."

Richmond's doctor, Surg Lt Rob Arrwoodward, who helped with much of the repair work, added: "The ship's company have a diverse skill range – everyone has brought something different to the table. I'm just glad we could help."

As well as performing repairs to vital equipment and improving the school's surroundings, the sailors organised various sports and activities from pass the parcel and a sack race (in bags which had been used to deliver parcels and letters from families to the ship) through to cricket.

CPO Tim Cox, who works in Richmond's operations room, described the day at the Mango Tree as "a thoroughly rewarding experience".

He continued: "I was very proud of the way the team from Richmond worked hard to make it an enjoyable day for the children."

Richmond is in the closing stages of a nine-month patrol of the Gulf and Indian Ocean region to protect the sea lanes and tackle illegal activity. She's due home in Portsmouth shortly before Christmas.



Look i in the sky

ON A very wet day in Somerset, the first of seven next-generation Merlins which will carry Royal Marines into battle arrives at its new home.

This is Merlin iMk3 – 'i' for interim – better suited to supporting the green berets on amphibious operations than the 'basic' Mk3.

The Merlin is taking over from the venerable Sea King as the workhorse of the Commando Helicopter Force.

A big step forward from its predecessor (it's 30 years more modern), battlefield Merlin Mk3 – which has been transferred to the Fleet Air Arm from the RAF – prefers operations over land than sea, whereas the Royal Marines operate in both environments.

The iMk3 plugs the gap between the Sea King bowing out of service at the end of March and the arrival of the 'fully marinised' Merlin Mk4 in late 2017, when the first of 25 fourth-generation helicopters join the force at their base in Yeovilton.

The interim model features a folding main rotor head, strengthened undercarriage and communications upgrades – but outwardly looks pretty much the same as a normal Mk3.

The Mk4 goes further – enhanced avionics suite, automatic folding main rotor head and folding tail, making it perfect for operations at sea.

For the time being, however, the iMk3, delivered by the Merlin's constructor AgustaWestland in Yeovil, fills the Sea King's

boots quite nicely.

"Today marks another key milestone in the history of the Commando Helicopter Force. With more iMk3s due to arrive soon, we'll be well on our way to delivering real capability to our primary customer – the Royal Marines," said Lt Cdr Ben McGreal, 846 Naval Air Squadron's Merlin Flight Commander.

"It's also not often that you can say that you're the first to fly a new type of aircraft in the Royal Navy, so today is a very special day."

Those 846 folks still flying the Mk3 joined HMS Ocean before she headed off on Cougar (see pages 16-17) so they could regain their sea legs – it had been three years since some of the aircrew had been on a pusser's grey war canoe.

After a week making use of RFA Argus's deck, when five crews re-qualified in day/night landings, the Merlins hopped across to the Mighty O.

A challenging week followed with a busy deck: Army Apache gunships, battlefield Wildcats of 847 NAS beginning their first deployment at sea, three RAF Chinooks of 27 Squadron earning their initial deck qualifications.

Alongside the aircrew training, an equally important part of the fortnight was introducing (or re-introducing) engineers to life at sea.

"It was a great opportunity for the Commando Helicopter Force's Merlin to go 'feet wet' and begin to prove ourselves back in the maritime role," said aircrewman Sgt Chris Lodge, 846 NAS.



Picture: LA(Phot) Dan 'Damp' Rosenbaum



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Hurworth a great host

YOUNGSTERS from the village of Poolewe enjoyed a look around HMS Hurworth when the ship popped in to stock up on fuel and supplies during the biggest war games being run in the UK this autumn.

The Portsmouth-based warship was one of four minehunters taking part in the international Joint Warrior, hosted in western Scotland each spring and autumn and testing the ability of naval, air and ground forces to work together.

Loch Ewe, about 50 miles northwest of Inverness, was a staging post for Arctic convoys back in WW2 and is a regular haunt for smaller Royal Navy vessels in particular during exercises in Scottish waters.

Hurworth led her Hunt-class sister Middleton and Sandown-class minehunters Pembroke and Ramsey through The Minches and into the loch to ensure the 'vital port' remains open to trade as part of the exercise.

Hurworth's clearance divers scoured the sea bed around the jetty at Drumchork.

Once they declared the structure safe, the minehunter came alongside to receive food, fuel and stores, and two groups of youngsters aged five to 11 from Poolewe Primary School.

They were treated to a look around the 196ft ship, made themselves at home in the captain's chair on the bridge and had a go at firefighting before being treated to cakes.

"Sailors on all Royal Navy ships are incredibly proud of the job they do 24/7/365, so they relish the opportunity to show visitors what they do on board, which is their home whilst at sea," said Lt Cdr Steven White.

Mine found near lido

HOMES on the southern shore of the Clyde were evacuated while RN divers dealt with a decayed mine offshore.

Experts from the Northern Diving Group were called in when the S Mk6 mine – dating from the '40s or early '50s – was discovered by a civilian diver just off Gourock Lido.

While Scottish police and Inverclyde council officials cleared homes within 200 metres of the device, the Faslane frogmen inspected the mine and decided that, due to its age and uncertainty about the quantity of explosives it still contained, it would need to be destroyed.

The divers moved the mine further out into the Clyde estuary and detonated it from a safe distance. The blast carved a crater five metres by three on the river bed.

Duncan delivers

Medics answer call to assist fishermen

HMS Duncan provided urgent medical help to an Iranian fisherman injured in the Gulf.

The Type 45 destroyer was on a routine day at sea when crew heard a MAYDAY call and immediately turned to help the dhow OLI-1.

Less than an hour after the emergency request was made, the ship's doctor was transferred to the dhow using one of Duncan's sea boats.

The doctor and a trained medical first-aider were able to treat the man's head injuries and provide assistance to another sick fisherman.

A helicopter evacuation to hospital was organised for one of the fishermen, but as a result of the treatment he received from Duncan's medics, the patient was stabilised enough to enable him to remain on his vessel for the three-day

journey home.

To assist the crew's journey back, the dhow's medical kit was replenished from Duncan's medical supplies.

The ship's medical officer Surg Lt Laura Morrow said: "When you are many miles from land even minor injuries can rapidly escalate into very serious and scary emergencies.

"It is fantastic that we were able to help fellow mariners in their time of need. Making sure mariners can lead their lives freely and safely, is exactly what the Royal Navy goes to sea to do."

Duncan, which left her home port of Portsmouth in March, recently visited Qatar to support the elite Joint Command and Staff College which trains officers from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman.

The Royal Navy's newest warship also met up with RFA Fort Victoria for a replenishment at sea by Merlin helicopter.

The aircraft from 820 NAS delivered stores from the RFA to the destroyer in a

manoeuvre known as a Vertical Replenishment (VERTREP).

Flight Commander Lt Cdr Simon White said: "It's always a pleasure to work with the RFA and it's great training for us."

Fort Victoria's XO, Chief Officer Angus Bissell, said: "What we have achieved today demonstrates not only how well the Solid Support team have integrated into the RFA, but also how our RFA and Royal Navy teams can work together to deliver a short-notice VERTREP requirement to keep a warship at sea on operations."

Fort Victoria CO Capt Stephen Norris said: "It is very satisfying to know that because of the fuel and the stores we have provided, HMS Duncan is able to continue her current operations without interruption."

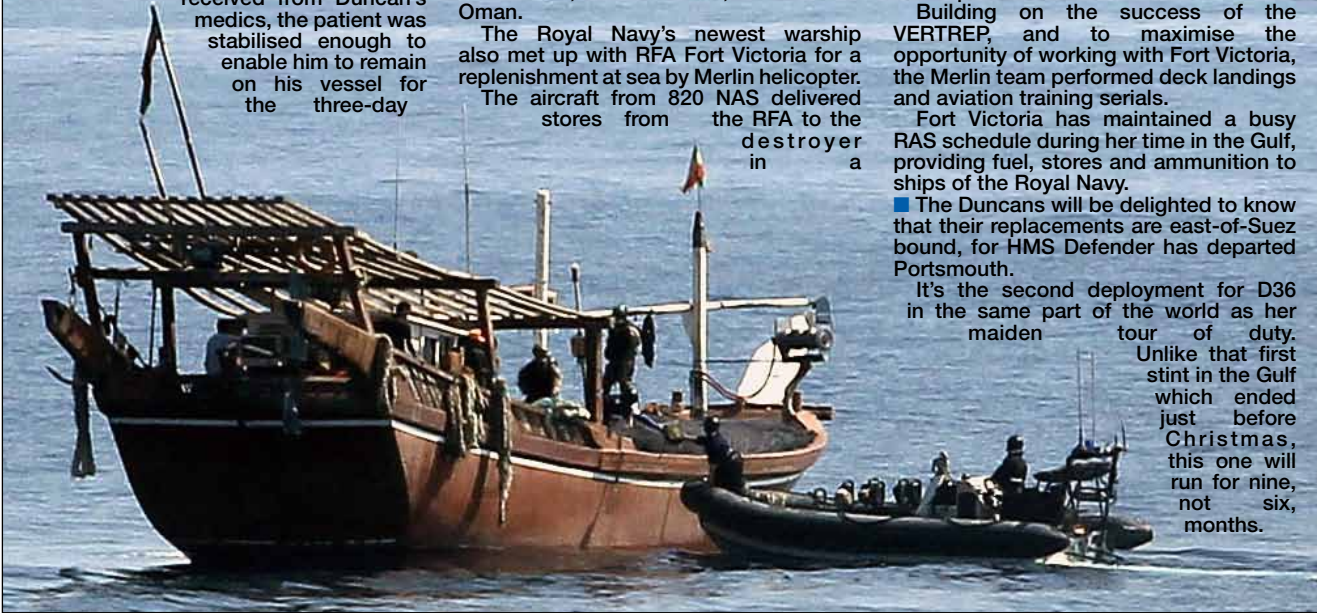
Building on the success of the VERTREP, and to maximise the opportunity of working with Fort Victoria, the Merlin team performed deck landings and aviation training serials.

Fort Victoria has maintained a busy RAS schedule during her time in the Gulf, providing fuel, stores and ammunition to ships of the Royal Navy.

The Duncans will be delighted to know that their replacements are east-of-Suez bound, for HMS Defender has departed Portsmouth.

It's the second deployment for D36 in the same part of the world as her maiden tour of duty.

Unlike that first stint in the Gulf which ended just before Christmas, this one will run for nine, not six, months.



Clyde is put to the test in the Falklands

SOLDIERS and airmen were given a taste of what life is like as a sailor in the harsh environment of the Falklands.

HMS Clyde took 100 personnel and civilians from Mount Pleasant to sea – not for a day's cruising, but to give them a greater insight into what her crew do, and what the patrol ship is capable of.

The weather for the demonstration day was remarkably benign for this part of the world.

Guests watched as dummy Ruth (Fred's accident-prone sister) was fished out of the water – the South Atlantic around the Falklands at the end of winter/beginning of spring, a mere 2°C (the air temperature was a balmy

7°C) – by a yellow Sea King of the RAF's 1564 Flight rather than Clyde's sea boat.

Barely had the helicopter disappeared than Typhoon jets raced in to 'attack' the ship, prompting a response from the upper deck gun crews – assisted by a running commentary by the RAF pilots (an enemy isn't quite so helpful...).

The visitors were also treated to fire-fighting, flood repair and casualty treatment demonstrations from the sailors, before the chefs showed what they can do courtesy of top-notch scran.

Proceedings closed with the disembarkation of troops

from the Roulement Infantry Company before Clyde returned to her home at Mare Harbour.

The ship is into her 17th turnover (*mmm, turnover*) of crew since she arrived in the Falklands eight years ago.

Unlike her sisters performing fishery protection duties around the UK which change some of their sailors every few weeks, Clyde does it wholesale every six months.

To ensure the 40 men and women are ready for the rigours of patrolling the Falklands and their myriad of small islands, a hit squad of assessors flew the 8,000 miles from Blyth.



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● Lt Cdr Martin Pickles checks an aerial map of the terrain; A Lynx flies over the Scottish Highlands; Lt Anthony Finnie

Lynx funnels its wild side

BIG-GAME hunting.

In the Cairngorms.
Yes, you read that correctly.
The hunted: Lynx Mk8 helicopters from 815 Naval Air Squadron.
The hunter: Eurofighter Typhoons from 6 Squadron RAF.

And the winner is...*drumroll please...***BOTH OF THEM.**

Crews of both types of aircraft were successful in making life as difficult as possible for each other during aerial chases through the moody-looking Scottish mountain range.

Three aircraft from Yeovilton decamped to Spadeadam Ranges in Cumbria and Redford Barracks in Edinburgh for Exercise Iron Sky (nothing to do with the Nazi sci-fi comedy film of the same name...).

The aim was to prepare and refresh the skills of crews in electronic warfare, mountain flying and fighter evasion.

First stop was RAF Spadeadam, home of the 9,000-acre Electronic Warfare Tactics Range, making it the largest RAF base in the UK.

It is also the only site in Europe where aircrews can practise manoeuvres and tactics against a variety of threats and targets that they face in contemporary warfare, hence it attracts not only UK forces but also those from other NATO countries.

The Lynx Defensive Aids Suite was put to the test against real equipment to ensure it can respond and defeat a variety of infrared threats, while the radio frequency missile launches tried to 'lock' on to the aircraft to enable crews to practise



break-lock manoeuvres and deploy chaff to successfully defeat incoming missiles.

Having proved both systems worked, aircrews combined their skills – including low-level flying – and undertook a variety of navigation serials to avoid detection from missile sites.

The Lynx, along with 28 personnel, then headed north to their base for the second phase at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh.

Lt Rob Dixon, 207 Flight commander, said: "The techniques taught will be applied all over the world, whether it's avoiding radar detection whilst flying low level or providing a search-and-rescue ability on foreign shores."

Lt Matt 'Jack' Leonard 208 Flight pilot said: "It was great to fly the manoeuvres we're taught against a modern foe and even better to see how effective they are in practice."

Lt Mark Hoar, 215 Flight pilot added: "The Lynx remains a proven capability, operationally ready and equipped to face square-on the modern threat and the demands of the surface fleet."

Two of the helicopters headed into the Cairngorms, which has four of the five highest mountains in the UK – Ben Macdui (1,309m), Braeriach (1,296m), Cairn Toul (1,291m and Cairn Gorm (1,244m) – to go into battle against the Typhoons of 6 Sqn, based at RAF Lossiemouth.

The Lynx flew in low-level battle formation, attempting to navigate a route along the valley floors, while being hunted by the RAF aircraft, which made spectacular viewing for those enjoying a quiet ramble in the Cairngorms, which means blue hills from the blue crystals found there (in Gaelic it translates as pink hills from the pink granite).

Having successfully completed the fighter evasion training in the UK's largest national park, the squadron made the long trip home to Somerset.

The Lynx helicopter force is moving to the new Wildcats, with the remaining Lynx fleet due to be phased out by 2017.

Commanding Officer of 815 Cdr Phil Richardson said: "Be under no doubt that it is business as usual for 815 Squadron, even during the busy tempo of transition."



Pictures: LA(phot) Dan Rosenbaum

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Islanders' joy as aid arrives



SAILORS, soldiers, Royal Marines and airmen helped evacuate three dozen people from a Bahamas island devastated by Hurricane Joaquin.

Inhabitants of a remote community on tiny Crooked Island – 250 miles from the Bahamian capital Nassau – were flown to safety, just one strand of the relief effort led by amphibious ship RFA Lyme Bay in the wake of the 130mph storm.

Lyme Bay broke off her patrols looking for drug traffickers in the Caribbean and, packed with emergency supplies and a specialist disaster relief team who've already helped out after mudslides caused havoc in Dominica, headed for the Bahamas.

On the way, the ship's Lynx helicopter – normally based at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset with 815 NAS – scoured the sea for the container ship El Faro. The US Coastguard asked the fliers to investigate a field of debris on the surface – wreckage which was confirmed as belonging to the missing vessel.

The helicopter was airborne again over Crooked Island – about four times the size of Portsmouth but home to just 350 people – to allow Lyme Bay's Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) Troop to plan what to do and where.

Among the first tasks was evacuating around three dozen people – including four people with disabilities, one an elderly woman in a wheelchair – from Landrail Point on the west coast, flying them to Crooked Island's airport so they could be evacuated to Nassau.

After that the Royal Engineers and Royal Marines of HADR troop were put ashore by the Mexeflote – a self-propelled pontoon – with stores, vehicles including a JCB and plant equipment to begin restoring basic supplies, fixing the wrecked houses, and handing out water and food.

"The Mexeflote is normally the first ashore and it means a lot to be one of the first to offer help to the survivors," said 20-year-old Pte Dale McIlduff of 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, which runs the Mexeflotes.

Capt Chris Swanwick RE, commanding the troop, added: "We proved what we could do in Dominica and although the situation in the Bahamas is very different, that previous success meant my team were more experienced and even more ready to go."

Lyme Bay then moved to Acklins Island to assist people hit by Joaquin there. The helicopter flew six tonnes of supplies while Lyme Bay's boats put four tonnes ashore.

The ship then sailed 50 miles to Long Island which has fewer than 3,000 inhabitants. The Lynx flew stores to the civilian airfield so light aircraft could then ferry them around the 80-mile-long island.

Surg Lt Cara Swain and LMA Lauren Armour visited the clinic in the settlement of Clarence Town (population 350) to offer their assistance and expertise.

RFA engineers restored the island's command centre, repairing generators and fixing the internet supply, while Capt Swanwick's team cleared blocked canals which meant flood waters could subside.

Prime Minister David Cameron visited the ship in Jamaica where he thanked the 176 men and women on board for their "really extraordinary" efforts in Dominica after the country was hit by a tropical storm.



FIGHTING FOR THE FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES

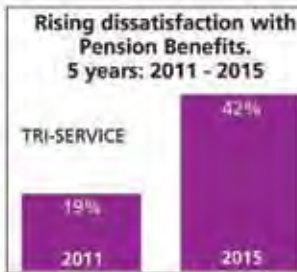
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Generating the Navy's DNA

THE Royal Navy of the mid-21st Century is fast taking shape, whether physically or in cyberspace.

Visitors stand in awe of the new carriers under construction at Rosyth, and the F-35 fighter programme continues apace in the United States.

Meanwhile, Type 26 and Successor submarines are starting to take shape on the screens of designers around the country and Europe.

But there is a second, equally-important, set of initiatives being undertaken, to ensure that the right people with the right training are in place to make the most of the cutting-edge equipment.

And at the centre of that particular conundrum is COMCORE, or Commander Core Naval Training and Recruitment – a post recently taken up by submariner Cdre Bob Fancy.

Cdre Fancy is one of three one-star officers who, since 2012, head up divisions of the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) empire, the others being COMOT (Cdre Operational Training, currently Cdre Toby Williamson) and ACOS(T) (Assistant Chief of Staff Training – Cdre Steve Dainton).

This organisation is relatively new and not widely understood across the Service.

COMCORE's area of responsibility has, until recently, included everything from the point at which an individual expressed an interest in joining the Naval Service through to completion of Phase 1 training and in some areas Phase 2 and 3.

But recently responsibility for Youth Training and Cadets has been added to his portfolio.

Cdre Fancy said: "I see this

as a really exciting opportunity to bring greater coherence to recruiting and training whilst adding real value to the development of a key area of the nation's youth by providing and supporting opportunities for them to develop their team work, leadership and citizenship potential in an environment which is bounded by the core values and ethos of the Naval Service.

"There are clear synergies with the rest of COMCORE's area, which includes University RN Units [URNUs], and care will be taken to ensure that career opportunities for young people are appropriately heralded at unit and national levels."

But that is just one part of the jigsaw.

"Captain Naval Recruiting [CNR] has the extraordinarily complex and challenging job of finding the right level and quality of manpower to deliver to the Navy's front door for training," said Cdre Fancy.

"We are increasing the number of people into the Navy at a time when the outflow is higher than we would like, and the environment in industry is very competitive.

"CNR's job is very, very demanding."

So, two parts of the job down, and the potential officers and recruits have yet to walk through the gates at Dartmouth, Raleigh or Lympstone for their Phase 1 training and, in the case of officers and marines, Phase 2 training.

Once in uniform, recruits enter careers that are shaped and defined by a training regime that is extensive and exhaustive.

The bailiwick of COMCORE extends beyond Phase 2 with leadership and professional



courses delivered at the RN Leadership Academy, the Commando Training Centre (CTCRM), 1 Assault Group Royal Marines and the Royal Navy School of Seamanship.

"COMCORE represents a diverse mix of training but essentially it is all about delivering individual rather than collective training," said the commodore.

"It also means ensuring best practice is shared over the Royal Navy's three Phase 1 training establishments, and that the training is delivered cost effectively in challenging financial conditions.

"To deliver all this requires personnel of the highest calibre – and I am very lucky to have high-quality people in training roles, which is exactly what the Royal Navy needs.

"We are blessed with that across the board."

The Naval Service's expertise and reputation is built on the success of its training – but 'training' is a rather bland term that fails to reflect the complexity of the operation.

"It is important because we are in the van of delivering the Royal Navy of the future," said Cdre Fancy.

"Without recruiting and training success, the Navy would be neutered in years to come.

"My area delivers the potential for the future Navy and generates its DNA.

"In a nutshell, that's our job."

● (Above) First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas meets recruits in their third week of training at HMS Raleigh as they learn military field craft skills; (Below) Officer Cadets complete their MARL training at Dartmouth



Golden in Guernsey

THE sun sets over HMS Daring during her fleeting visit to the Channel Island of Guernsey.

The Portsmouth-based Type 45 destroyer spent a weekend meeting friends old and new during the trip to her affiliated island – the ship's first for three years.

On arrival Daring hosted a reception and capability demonstration on board and the following day, over lunch, Commanding Officer Cdr Phil Dennis updated local dignitaries and business leaders on the ship's activities.

He said: "Daring is proud to be affiliated with Guernsey and, having visited the island several times in my tenure, I was delighted to return with the ship.

"We have, over the years, built up a fantastic rapport with the people and organisations and our affiliation is known far and wide."

Daring also opened her gangway to the Guernsey public for tours and 450 visitors took

up the offer. Among them were Andy and Mel Torode, who brought their children Amelie, seven, and Jack, five.

"It was really enjoyable. The children had fun with the water cannons and enjoyed holding empty shell cases," said Mr Torode.

Nine cyclists from the ship found time to complete a '70 for 70' challenge in aid of Guernsey Headway, completing 70 miles to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the island's liberation.

The team were guided round the island by members of Guernsey Velo Club and raised more than £400 for the charity which supports islanders and their families living with the long-term effects of a brain injury.

On the sports field Daring narrowly lost out to Guernsey under-18 footballers and the Mauwawii Warriors Rugby side.

Next up for the ship is several months of training ahead of an overseas deployment next year.



Picture: Jon Le Ray Photography



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THERE is a wry look of bemusement, almost embarrassment on the face of Richard Bell-Davies – typical of one of the Royal Navy’s greatest aviators.

Bell-Davies was the epitome of understatement – certainly when it came to the written word. At the end of his sortie on November 19 1915, he recorded in his log:

Dropped three 20lb bombs at st[atio]n at Ferijik. Com[man]d[er] and Smylie in comp[an]y. One bomb burst on line. Returning, saw Smylie’s machine burning in marshes. Landed and picked him up.

Thus did the 29-year-old airman describe the Royal Navy’s first SAR mission (long before the term was coined) exactly 100 years ago this month.

With the curtain about to come down on formal RN search-and-rescue duties after more than six decades, our canter through the photographic archives of the Imperial War Museum takes us to the birth of naval fliers saving lives.

By mid-November 1915, the Gallipoli campaign was winding down – and not just because winter was setting in; War Minister Lord Kitchener had recommended the peninsula be evacuated, but the Cabinet had yet to agree.

Failure in the Dardanelles did not, however, bring the curtain down on the war with Constantinople. And Bulgaria’s entry into the war on the side of the Central Powers offered a raft of glittering new targets along the northern shore of the Aegean – many of them within striking distance of the Royal Naval Air Service and its aircraft based on the island of Imbros.

No target was more enticing – or accessible – than the railway line linking Bulgaria with Turkey. And nowhere was it more vulnerable than its span over the Maritsa river, close to the important rail junction of Ferijik.

The bridge and the junction were subjected to repeated attacks from No.3 Wing of the Royal Naval Air Service and its potpourri of biplanes.

Throughout November, the wing’s colourful commander Charles Samson (he rode around on a charger captured from the Germans during the RNAS’ stint on the Western Front) launched waves of attacks against the bridge (nine times) and tracks (five), but the trains continued to roll east and west.

On the evening of November 18, as his men sat down to supper, Samson handed out his instructions for the coming day: Ferijik

junction again.

Rather less than impressed by the orders was Richard Bell-Davies, a career officer who’d dipped into his own pocket to learn to fly and was eventually accepted into the fledgling RNAS shortly before the war.

After 15 months of combat, the 29-year-old Londoner was among the air service’s most accomplished fliers, wounded in action while bombing U-boats in Zeebrugge (for which he earned the DSO).

It wasn’t the enemy he feared, rather the near-futility of the latest mission he’d been asked to carry out. He didn’t think the 20lb bombs his Nieuport Scout fighter carried “could do much harm” against the railway junction. His day, he reasoned, would be much better spent supervising the construction of winter quarters for the wing.

The Bulgarians didn’t take too lightly to the British continuously trying to wreck their railway infrastructure – and promptly installed a good smattering of anti-aircraft guns.

The ‘Archie’ – as Brits dubbed the guns fire (flak came a generation later) – this Friday was particularly ferocious, crippling the Henri Farman of one Flight Sub Lieutenant Gilbert Smylie, though only after he dropped most of his ‘eggs’.

The biplane was forced down in the rutted floodplain – still bone dry after the Mediterranean summer. Smylie torched his Farman and blew up the remaining bomb by firing his pistol at it.

All of which was witnessed by Bell-Davies, leading the attack. He’d been circling overhead, looking for a stretch of dried mud or gravel to land his Nieuport.

The explosion gave him a jolt – physically and metaphorically. But then he saw Smylie clamber out of a hollow and wave.

That was the signal to Bell-Davies to land... which he did, oblivious of Bulgarian troops closing in on the two aircraft.

What the 29-year-old aviator was acutely aware of was the lack of space in his Nieuport. Where once there had been a seat for a second crewman, there was now a cowl, fixed firmly in place.

Smylie removed his jacket, slipping a note into the pocket for any Bulgar who found it: *Please return my coat, which I have had to leave, to No.3 Wing.*

Then, he climbed over Bell-Davies, slid under the cowl and – all six feet of him – crouched on all fours between the rudder bar and the engine, his head resting against the fuel tank.

With his colleague uncomfortably, but

safely, aboard, Bell-Davies decided it was high time to leave Bulgarian soil – especially as enemy soldiers were closing in. He sent his biplane down the dry watercourse and after a good run, lifted off and set course for Imbros, where he landed 45 minutes later.

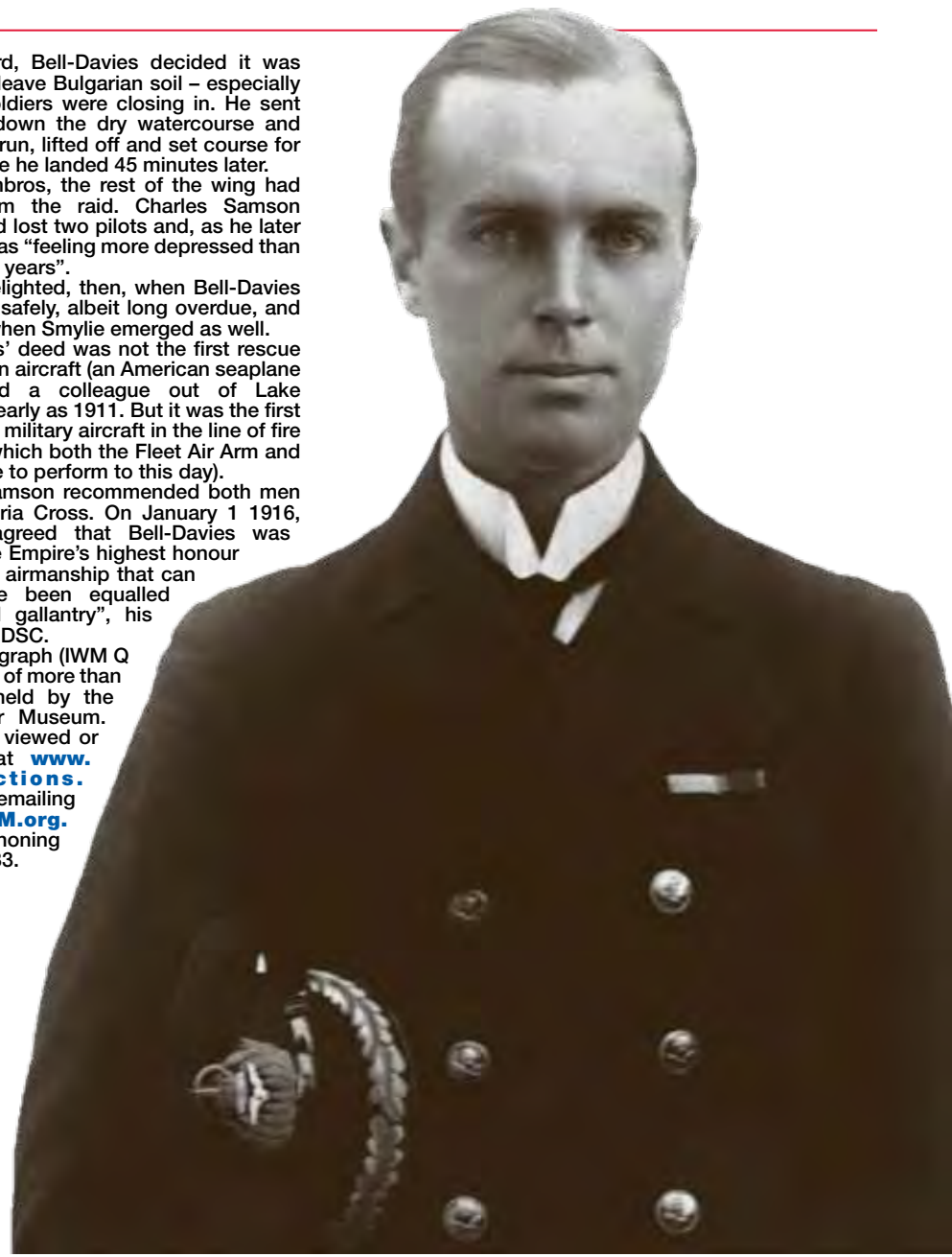
Back in Imbros, the rest of the wing had returned from the raid. Charles Samson feared he had lost two pilots and, as he later conceded, was “feeling more depressed than I have felt for years”.

He was delighted, then, when Bell-Davies landed back safely, albeit long overdue, and astonished when Smylie emerged as well.

Bell-Davies’ deed was not the first rescue effected by an aircraft (an American seaplane flyer plucked a colleague out of Lake Michigan as early as 1911. But it was the first effected by a military aircraft in the line of fire (something which both the Fleet Air Arm and RAF continue to perform to this day).

Charles Samson recommended both men for the Victoria Cross. On January 1 1916, George V agreed that Bell-Davies was worthy of the Empire’s highest honour for “a feat of airmanship that can seldom have been equalled for skill and gallantry”, his comrade the DSC.

■ This photograph (IWM Q 69475) is one of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@IWM.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



“From Admiral to Seaman Gunner, we were all shipmates – once Navy, always Navy.”

Derek Banham
Resident of The Royal Star & Garter Homes

Derek Banham entered the Royal Navy in 1943, aged 18. He later joined HMS Loch Craggie, and took part in the Battle of the Atlantic. On Churchill’s orders, his ship found and sank a German U-boat responsible for the torpedoing of seven Allied ships. The memories of this are still with him.

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Farewell Fighting G ...



Picture: LA(Phot) Iggy Roberts

THE haunting sound of the Still echoed through Portsmouth Naval Base on a sullen autumn day as the ships of today paid tribute to a stalwart of yesterday.

The very last Royal Navy Type 42 destroyer still afloat – Gulf War veteran HMS Gloucester – was towed out of her home to meet her fate: the breaker's yard in Turkey.

Veterans of the 14-strong class of ship – which served the nation and Navy with distinction for nearly 40 years – gathered on Round Tower for a final look at the Fighting G.

From the mid 1970s until 2013, the 42s provided the aerial umbrella to the Fleet, defending task groups from aircraft and missile attack using her Sea Darts.

Two – HMS Sheffield and Coventry – made the ultimate sacrifice in doing so, sunk in the Falklands in 1982.

The careers of the remaining 12 vessels in the class – all named after great British cities – thankfully ended rather less brutally, with the vessels eventually broken up after long, dutiful lives.

Gloucester wasn't the last to head to the shipbreaking yard in Turkey.

She famously downed an Iraqi Silkworm fired at the American battleship USS Missouri – the first time one missile had destroyed another in battle.

Her Commanding Officer that day, Cdr Philip Wilcocks, went on to be in charge of HMS Liverpool as Captain of the 3rd Destroyer Squadron and is today, as a retired rear admiral, president of the Type 42 Association.

They have now handed over the responsibility of providing effective air defence to the Type 45 destroyers, designed to counter the threats of the 21st Century.

Perhaps as many as 30,000

... hello to the newest 'Type 42'



● The NEFI team with the new Type 42 weather vane, now in position at West Jetty where HMS Clyde is pictured arriving alongside

A GROUP of Royal Navy personnel in the South Atlantic have ensured the Service still has a Type 42, albeit rather smaller than the destroyers.

ET(ME) Ross Smith was tasked with replacing the weather vane at Mare Harbour West Jetty in the Falkland Islands.

It was decided to honour all of the Type 42s which took part in the 1982 conflict and the deployments which

followed.

Ross produced the new weather vane with other members of Naval Engineer Falkland Islands, a group which also maintains the memorials to HMS Sheffield at Sea Lion Island and HMS Coventry on Pebble Island.

The new vane was placed on the jetty in time for the arrival of patrol ship HMS Clyde, which was escorted by a duty tug. Many of the members of NEFI have

sailors served aboard 42s – ship's companies ranged between 240 and 280 through the destroyers' lives – from the first, Sheffield in the mid-70s, to Edinburgh, which paid off in 2013.

"There is barely a UK operation that has not involved a Type 42 – perhaps with the one exception of the Afghanistan land campaign – and that was probably not for the want of trying..."

"Our country has had huge value for money for the investment made in these

remarkable ships," said Admiral Wilcocks. "These fighting ships – greyhounds of the ocean – have seen active service around the world in times of peace, tension, combat and war.

"All but 40 of our comrades have returned in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land with the fruits of our labours.

"Those of us who have served in these wonderful ships can be justly proud of our achievements – of our service to our comrades, our Navy, our Allies, our Queen and to our country."



● A Type 45 in the background as Gloucester leaves Portsmouth



Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan



Red-hot send off

PORTSMOUTH-BASED HMS Iron Duke blasted through five different weapon systems – her General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMGs), the Minigun, 30mm Cannon, 4.5" Medium Range Gun and the Seawolf missile system – in the English Channel.

Starting in the morning with target tracking runs on the Seawolf missile system, the ship then moved into a gunnery shoot against an inflatable target, finishing with firing a Seawolf missile.

A spectacular and deadly sight – if you could catch a glimpse – Seawolf can strike a target at two-and-a-half times the speed of sound at a distance of up to six kilometres.

Iron Duke's Missile Director PO(AWW) John 'Arthur' Lowe is in charge of the Seawolf system from the operations room and, as the close range weapon instructor, he oversaw the close range guns from the upper deck.

Recently selected for promotion to CPO, PO Lowe left the ship, with the successful firings a fitting send-off.

"Being in the seat as missile director is always a great experience for a live missile firing," he said. "Getting to do this in my last week onboard was a real thrill and a fantastic way to end a really enjoyable time in Iron Duke."

Wee dram

ORDINARILY we'd say: "What a waste of whisky..."

But on this occasion smashing an 18-year-old bottle of single malt against the side of a warship is perfectly acceptable.

To welcome HMS Sutherland formally back into the Naval family after 18 months out of action undergoing a revamp, Cdr Stephen Anderson re-christened his frigate with one of the world's best selling whiskies streaming down her hull.

The Devonport-based Type 23 has gone through an extensive mid-life overhaul which effectively doubles her life.

It's all over for Orangeleaf

THE last of the RFA Leaf-class support tankers has left the Naval Service.

RFA Orangeleaf, built in Birkenhead and launched in 1975 before being commissioned for service with the RFA in 1984, completed her service in the port where she was built 40 years ago.

The single-hulled tanker will make way for the double-hulled RFA Tidespring and her three sisters – Tiderace, Tidesurge and Tideforce. These will enter service from 2016.

RFA Capt Duncan Lamb said: "As a former Commanding Officer of Orangeleaf, I will personally be sad to see the old girl leave the Service, however, Orangeleaf's departure makes way for the new Tide-class tankers. I have been given the honour to command the first Tide-class, RFA Tidespring."



Orangeleaf was one of four original Leaf-class tankers – together with Appleleaf, Brambleleaf and Bayleaf – with RFA Oakleaf chartered later, but which differed considerably. Built originally for commercial owners, the ships were chartered by the Ministry of Defence and fitted with accommodation and replenishment-at-sea capabilities.

Two years before she was formally renamed and chartered by the MOD, RFA Orangeleaf sailed from Portsmouth for the Falklands Conflict after being requisitioned for service under Operation Corporate.

She supported HMS York following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, HMS Cardiff and Campbeltown off the West Indies and HMS Monmouth off Congo and Sierra Leone.

In 2011 RFA Orangeleaf was the first RFA to hold a light jackstay transfer (light load) with the Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon.

As well as the history books, Orangeleaf is also consigned to a series of children's books called *Mrs Orangeleaf and Friends*, written by a former shipmate-turned author and vicar, Pierre Cornlauer.

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Now it's HMS Westminster

THE waters lap the hull of Britain's 'capital ship' for the first time in 11 months as HMS Westminster passes a milestone in a major overhaul.

Since November last year, the frigate has been sitting on blocks in the recently-refurbished No.15 dock in Portsmouth Naval Base while engineers from BAE Systems worked on her hull and machinery systems – including applying 'go faster' paint (it's less easy for marine life to stick to it, reducing friction and resistance).

With the outer work on and below the waterline done, the engineers gradually opened the sluices in a day-long operation to flood the dock and refloat the Type 23 frigate.

Throughout the revamp, which will help keep Westminster on the front line until the replacement Type 26 ships enter service next decade, the frigate has retained a core ship's company which is now gradually growing to prepare the warship for trials and ultimately her return to duties next year.

"Now the 'flood up' has been completed, the full 'set to work' phase will begin – the ship's company can start taking responsibility for Westminster's equipment in preparation for moving onboard," said Lt Cdr Tim Ciaravella, the frigate's Senior Naval Officer.

"The ship is now afloat which sets the context for the intensive training programme ahead and is a significant milestone in this joint venture between the Royal Navy and BAE."

Among the improvements and enhancements to the 23-year-old frigate are a revamped command system and the new 3D Artisan radar which is quickly becoming the standard 'eyes' of the Fleet.

The new Black is back

WHILE Westminster is still in the throes of her revamp, her older sister Monmouth has completed her similar overhaul in her native Devonport.

The Black Duke was out of the line for 20 months receiving her makeover, but is now on the long road back to operational duties after sea trials off the South Coast.

Monmouth entered Devonport's frigate shed at the beginning of last year, since when she's received 17 tonnes of steel covering 220 square metres, upgrades to Seawolf missile system, her 4.5in gun, machinery, command and sensors systems, and an Artisan radar.

She emerged from the shed, said her CO Cdr Philip Tilden, "materially world-class".

He continued: "To get this far on time and ready for future tasking has taken a significant effort from not only the skilled and motivated people that I am honoured to work alongside, but also from our partners in this enterprise, most notably Babcock Marine."

Progress by Anne's Albion

THE Princess Royal paid her first visit to 'her' ship since HMS Albion began waking up from hibernation in Devonport.

The assault ship, launched by Princess Anne in Barrow back in March 2001, was mothballed following the 2010 Defence Review.

Since last April, life has slowly been breathed back into Albion so she can trade places with her sister Bulwark.

Princess Anne visited the 19,000-tonne warship in the dry dock where she's undergoing an extensive two-year refit and upgrade courtesy of sailors and defence firm Babcock.



Go Forth into the world in peace...

THIS is a glimpse into the very near RN future – say about 24 months hence.

HMS Forth leads her sisters Medway and Trent, all three third-generation River-class patrol vessels.

Work is now under way on the third and final ship in the trio, Trent, at BAE's yard in Govan after defence procurement minister Philip Dunne pressed the button to start a plasma cutter at work on sheets of steel.

Forth is already more than 50 per cent assembled in the neighbouring ship hall – her engines and pipes have now been fitted – and will be complete outwardly by the year's end. Work piecing together Medway will begin in the same building before 2015 is out.

Despite the River-class title, the trio are much closer to patrol ships BAE built for the Thai and Brazilian Navies

than Tyne, Mersey, Severn and Clyde – although there are 28 enhancements, such as a stronger flight deck (so a Merlin can use it) and installing BAE's new command system.

The 800 or so shipwrights and engineers involved with the trio are using lessons from the construction of blocks for carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

And work on the three ships will act as a stepping stone towards building the Type 26s, the successors to the Type 23 frigates, which begins next year.

"It doesn't matter whether we are building one of the biggest ships we have ever built, or the smallest – pride seeps through all the team. People in this business are very proud to be building warships," said Iain Stevenson, overseeing the construction of all three River-class ships.

Picture: BAE Systems

Anchor ma'am

THE mighty anchors on Britain's biggest warship have been tested for the first time.

Nearly as heavy as the jets which will operate from HMS Queen Elizabeth, the 13-tonne anchors (one is pictured, right, in case you were wondering...) were lowered on the carrier and into the huge basin in Rosyth where she is being completed.

The trial involving engineers from the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, who are building the 65,000-tonne leviathan, and the ship's seamanship specialists who'll be in charge of anchoring and mooring Queen Elizabeth, was the latest in a series of tests gradually preparing the future flagship for sea next year.

Engines have been fired up as have the generators, radars have been installed and flashed up, and soon the aircraft lifts – designed to take two F-35B Lightning II jets from the hangar to the flight deck – will be put through their paces.

For the seamanship team, however, observing the anchors at work was the highlight of Queen Elizabeth's trials so far.

To raise and lower the two anchors, the ship relies on even heavier cables of shackles – huge metal links.

The port cable is more than 1,300ft long – 400ft longer than the carrier herself – and weighs around 90 tonnes (more than six Merlin helicopters).

The starboard chain is slightly shorter and lighter (a mere 1,125 ft and 75 tonnes – or the weight of about five London buses).

"At 65,000 tonnes, everything about these ships is on a larger scale and the anchors are no different," explained CPO Jay Early, Queen Elizabeth's bosun, responsible for seamanship.

"Moving the anchor for the first time is a huge milestone in the programme and it was fantastic to watch it in motion as it was lowered into the water and back up again.

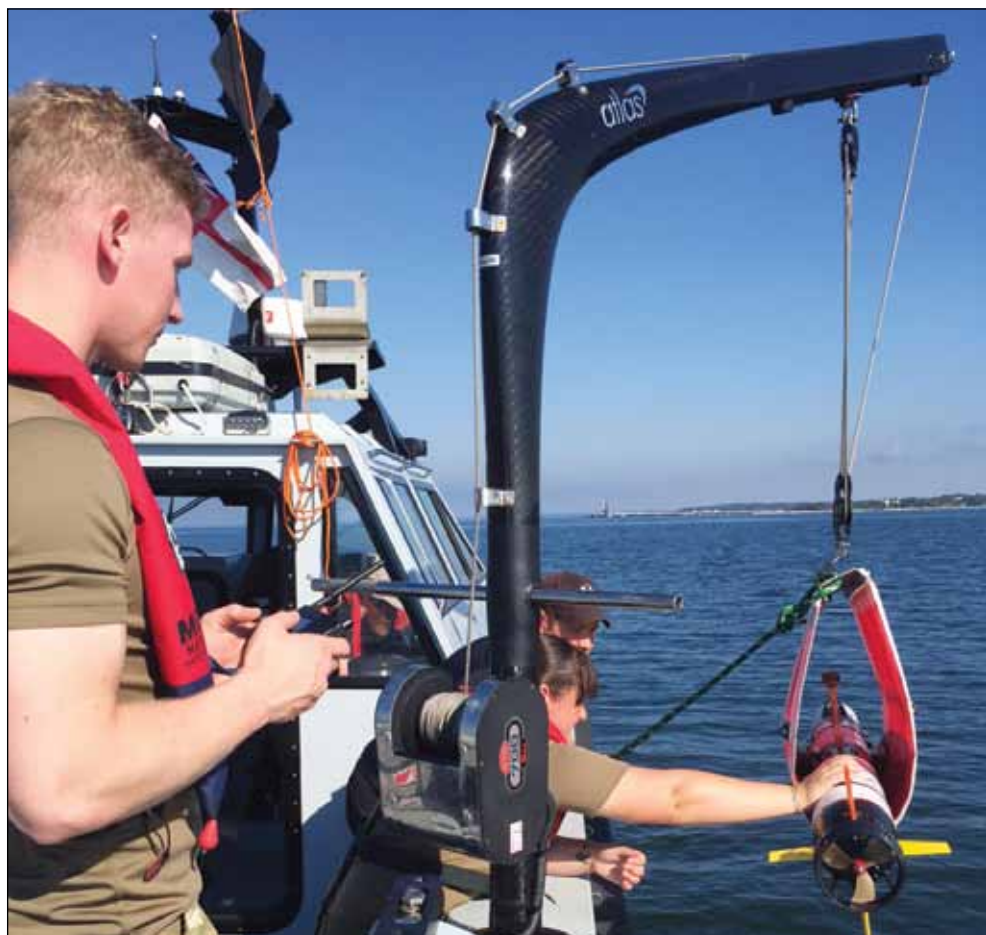
"For the newest joiners in my team, this was the first time they have actually seen the kit and there is no better way to learn than by doing.

"This is a great step forward as we continue to prepare the ship and make her ready for sailing next year."

And talking of steps forward... QE can now see the world in 3D as the latest radar was painstakingly craned into place 100ft above the flight deck.

It took the ACA team a full day to install Artisan on top of the aft island of HMS Queen Elizabeth, from where it can see objects as far as 200 kilometres away... or as close as 200 metres (125 miles and 650ft for those who prefer imperial). It can track up to 800 potential targets simultaneously (including a tennis ball travelling at Mach 3 15 miles away) and cut through radio 'clutter' generated by the equivalent of 10,000 mobile phones.

New system passes test



● Above: LS Coleman, AB Tapp and PO Wettini (RNZN) launch the IVER3 from Hazard
● Below: AB Tapp and PO Foggin discuss a Remus mission on the operating laptop



WELCOME

THE Royal Marines could use tiny nano drones to help them fight their way through buildings occupied by the enemy – one leap into the unmanned aircraft of tomorrow outlined at the Navy's first conference on the subject.

More than 150 military and industry leaders and experts converged on RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall – the home of the Royal Navy's sole unmanned aircraft squadron, 700X – to look at how autonomous systems can be used on the battlefield of tomorrow.

The Royal Navy is staging its first 'robot wars' off Scotland in October 2016 to test the latest tech in a realistic work-out during the twice-yearly Joint Warrior exercise.

Ahead of that – and with the world of unmanned systems and small aircraft especially moving at lightning pace – the team at 700X (X for 'xperimental') invited the best and the brightest from across the civilian and military technological world to see how the two can tap the latest kit to the advantage of the UK's Armed Forces.

Over the past couple of years, the RN has delved into the unmanned world: there's the remote-controlled minehunting systems (above); during the summer, the first 3D-printed aircraft was launched from a British warship, HMS Mersey and since the beginning of last year, the 'flying eyes' of ScanEagle have been used extensively in the Gulf region on board Type 23s.

Under the banner of 700X, the Boeing-built aircraft has been almost constantly in use in the Middle East since the beginning of last year. It was originally introduced to provide RN vessels with an extra pair of eyes – it beams back live camera footage by day or night to an operations room – to support boarding operations.

It did that – and much more. "We took a new toy and tried to do everything possible with it," said Lt Cdr Rudi Lorenz.

"From 3,000 or 4,000 feet you can monitor dhows by day and night, following them without them knowing you're there – and with the warship still 20 or 30 miles away. The quality of the picture means you can watch crews passing items from one

dhow to another. "ScanEagle is very difficult to spot – once you launch it, it disappears from view and audio range very quickly. It does the dull, dirty and dangerous work and it doesn't put any of our people in harm's way."

ScanEagle is small – 4½ft long, 10ft wingspan – but dwarfs the 3kg SULSA 3D printed aircraft tested on board HMS Mersey earlier this year off the Dorset coast.

The brainchild of experts at the University of Southampton, the aircraft is made of nylon, printed in four major parts and assembled without the use of any tools.

Controlled from a laptop on board, it cruises at nearly 60mph and is all but noiseless thanks to its tiny engine. Each one costs no more than £7,000 – cheaper than an hour's flying time by a Fleet Air

at international display of future mine warfare Neptune's out of this world

MACHINES which can think for themselves passed a key test when the Royal Navy took part in an international demonstration of potential minehunters of tomorrow.

The software which guides remote-controlled vehicles proved more than up to the task – and will ultimately make the dull, dirty and dangerous work of mine clearance safer.

A team from the Royal Navy's Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team (MASTT) took part in Hell Bay 3 – a series of trials for unmanned vessels – at Pax River in Maryland.

The robotic showcase saw the team conduct trials of Hydroid Remus 100 and Ocean Server IVER3 autonomous underwater vehicles.

Both are fitted with the latest SeeTrack Neptune autonomy software and were launched from the RN's motorboat Hazard, which acts as a 'mother ship' to robot submersibles.

Collectively, they can hunt for mines faster than the Royal Navy's Sandown and Hunt-class ships – and have the added benefit of keeping the handful of sailors required to operate them out of harm's way.

The work at Pax concentrated on the performance of SeeTrack, which has been fitted to all of the autonomous underwater vehicles operated by MASTT. The software allows unmanned systems to share data and determine a course of action.

Operators set pre-programmed objectives for up to six unmanned vehicles – either underwater, surface or air – to conduct a search of the seabed with the software able to design a plan on how to achieve this – and react to any obstacles it faces.

If any of the vehicles are unable to take part because of a defect, the remaining vehicles divide the tasks up to ensure the overall objective is completed (think of sharing the workload if a colleague goes sick).

"The key thing with this software from a mine-warfare perspective is to get the man out of the minefield but not out of the loop," said MASTT Officer in Charge Lt Cdr Jacqueline McWilliams.

"This allows the ship to stand off at a safe distance, send in a number of off-board systems to do the search without the constraints of over-

engineering a seabed search plan.

"It allows the system to do on-the-spot thinking and then return with data. The operators can then analyse the data and deal with any threats."

The MASTT team operated Hazard, which is capable of speeds up to 30kt, on the Potomac River for the US Office of Naval Research (ONR) event.

More than 150 participants from government, academia, industry, and military took part with over 26 technology teams and unmanned systems demonstrated.

Dr Jason Stack of the ONR said: "We have and will continue to receive an extremely large benefit from this event – from the relationships made and/or strengthened, from the lessons learned in operating our systems, and from the huge amounts of data collected."

The MASTT role at Pax was as the UK's military representative for DSTL which has led the Ministry of Defence's involvement in The Technical Collaborative Programmes (TTCP) involving Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK and USA.

The trials enabled each nation to share knowledge and equipment.

The MASTT team's achievements included the first successful solo Neptune mission using Remus and a multi-vehicle mission involving IVERs.

The team then took part in a mission with Canada and one involving two UK IVERs, one UK Remus, two Canadian IVERs and the UK unmanned surface vehicle MV Halcyon operated by ASV/Thales.

Lt Cdr McWilliams said: "We came to test a theory and we did it. How good does that feel? Brilliant!"

She added: "It was hard work with long days in very warm humid conditions. The team were learning a lot on the go getting to grips with new systems and new software but as ever everyone just got stuck into the job, and in true Naval spirit fought through to overcome any obstacles."

"LET(ME) 'Ken' Dodd, the only engineer in the unit who was watch on stop on, never complained and was always happy to be involved and ABs Sarah Tapp and Ryan Macphail continually rose to any challenge. The whole team were exceptional and I can't praise them enough."

During the event five members of the New Zealand's MCM Team led by WO(D) Johnson were temporarily

loaned to MASTT by their CO, Lt Cdr Yvonne Gray RNZN (ex RN), to give them the opportunity to see the developing software and new unmanned systems at work.

The final act of Pax 15 was to participate in media and VIP technology demonstration days at the main Pax base, both of which were a resounding success.

And after packing all the equipment away ready for shipping back to the UK the MASTT team took a well-deserved free final day to visit Washington DC.

The MASTT team at Pax also included CPO(MW) Antony 'Pinta' Beer, PO(MW) David 'Foggy' Foggin, LS(MW) David Steven and Sam 'Smokey' Coleman, LS(HM) Sarah Burns and Andrew 'Slats' Slater, LET(ME) Chris 'Ken' Dodd, AB(MW) Sarah Tapp, Ryan MacPhail, Aaron 'Shucky' Shuckford and William 'Wes' Clayton.



● Royal Navy motorboat Hazard sails from Webster Field

TO THE MACHINE(S)

Arm helicopter.

Prof Andy Keane said that after the success of the flight from Mersey, three of the printed aircraft would join HMS Protector for her deployment surveying the Antarctic over the austral summer.

Each one will spend 30 minutes flying over the frozen continent and ocean, recording video footage on a minuscule camera, before setting down in the icy waters or on the snow and ice where it will be picked up by Protector's ship's company.

"The battery and engine should not suffer too much in the cold and once it's airborne, it can fly in surprisingly rough weather."

Three kilograms is light. But it's way too heavy for the requirements of the Royal Marines' Surveillance

Reconnaissance Squadron, which sends six-man recce teams to size up potential landing sites for the lead body of the Corps.

The men are dropped off discreetly by Zodiac RIB, Land Rover or can parachute in, then observe goings on on the ground in any

environment – jungle, desert, urban, Arctic, sometimes even temperate.

If the squadron is to exploit the latest unmanned technology, the kit – said Maj Oliver Denning, the squadron's officer commanding – "must be portable, but also able to survive the rigours of Royal Marines operations like RIB insertions and parachute drops."

His unit has been testing Black Hornet, a minute 'helicopter' just ten centimetres long and weighing only 16 grammes (pictured left); the British Army used it in the later stages of the campaign in Afghanistan.

"Hiding in a bush", his men launched the Norwegian-made device during exercises on last year's Cougar deployment, flying it up to 1,500 metres away "showing what is on the other side of that hill, hedge or wall." The squadron has also tested using automated cameras left on the ground, feeding back "very high quality imagery."

The next step being considered by MOD and industry experts is going even smaller than Black Hornet, weighing just five grammes, which can fly between rooms inside buildings, sending

imagery back to its controllers.

The trials and training – not to mention the operational use – of many of these devices have all largely been played out away from prying eyes.

Not so the biggest showcase for robotic and autonomous systems the RN has ever staged.

Lt Cdr Pete Whitehead, the RN's deputy robotics officer, likens Unmanned Warrior – incorporated into next autumn's Joint Warrior war games in and off north-west Scotland – to a 21st-Century version of the sensation caused by Charles Parsons and the Turbinia at the 1897 Diamond Jubilee Review.

Unable to persuade the Admiralty that his steam turbines were far superior to the engines of the day, Parsons gatecrashed the review and raced up and down the lines of capital ships, leaving a picket boat trailing in his wake. Eight years later, HMS Dreadnought became not only the first all-big-gun battleship, but also the first turbine-driven one.

Unmanned Warrior is not a competition and won't lead to orders being placed and contracts being signed. But it will highlight

the technology that is out there and how it might affect the naval operations of tomorrow.

"We have the sandpit, you bring the toys, let's play together," Lt Cdr Whitehead says.

"We need to be able to prove that these devices work for real. This is not about a utopian future of flying cars, jet packs and the like."

As things stand at present, the emphasis in this first 'Game of Drones' will be on gathering hydrographic data in the waters off the Scottish west coast, locating mines with automated devices, and using pilotless aircraft to help build a radar picture.

In the future, there's no reason why a drone couldn't drop sonobuoys over the ocean to help locate submarines, or one day even deliver stores to a ship's flight deck, rather like Amazon is looking into for some of its customers.

Rear Admiral Keith Blount, the head of the Fleet Air Arm, believes the world of unmanned aerial vehicles presented at the conference "an intoxicating mix of opportunities."

He continued: "We have moved

from a world where unmanned aircraft really were a pipe dream to those on the front line to one where they are transforming our daily business.

"When I was in command of our operations in Bahrain, I watched in awe as we worked with ScanEagle. I was amazed by the potential offered by one small unmanned aircraft."

As for Culdrose, it wants to be the go-to place for all unmanned aircraft in the Royal Navy, with the intention of turning the satellite airfield at Predannack into an important test site for the technology.

More than 60 years ago, legendary inventor Sir Barnes Wallis tested supersonic and swing wing technology here using unmanned scale gliders – the launch ramp still stands.

"It would be a fantastic place to foster unmanned technology – and not just because of that history," says Cdr Jason Phillips, Culdrose's Commander Air.

"Predannack offers us unique airspace: you only have to fly 500 yards and you're over the sea, the skies are not crowded, and in Mounts Bay we have one of the Navy's major exercise areas."



It's time to put t

AUTUMN.

Check.

Assault ships.

Check.

Royal Marines.

Check.

Helicopters.

Check.

Landing craft.

Check.

Mediterranean.

Check.

Must be Cougar time again.

Check.

Indeed it is. The annual autumn work-out for the Commander UK Amphibious Task Group and the ships, helicopters, landing craft and men and women under his direction is on once more: three months of prowling the Middle Sea...

...which, naturally, began on a less-than-sun-kissed Cornish beach not two hours' sailing from Devonport.

The force – flagship HMS Ocean, assault ship HMS Bulwark, military ferry Hartland Point – spent a week off the Cornish coast honing basic amphibious skills, skills last practised in earnest in the autumn of 2014 on the previous run-out for Cougar (the major exercise pencilled in for Bulwark after Gallipoli was erased thanks to her migrant mission).

Skills fade. A lot of ship's company have changed. The lead commando group has changed (45 taking over from 40). The Mighty O was only sporadically available 12 months ago, whereas now she's fully ready to take her place in the line (and will be the NATO flagship during the massive Trident Juncture exercise which concludes this month).

Which is why the two warships are mustered in Whitsand Bay, poised to 'invade' the beach at Tregantle.

On satellite images it looks a rather inviting stretch of sand. A good 1,200 metres wide, 150 or so deep.

And maybe it is at low tide. Today it's shallow, narrow, not especially deep (it's approaching high tide) and has a single track leading up the steep Cornish coast, and is dominated by cliffs on both sides. It's somewhat reminiscent of the beaches Bulwark sat off for Gallipoli centenary commemorations (even if the weather was not).

Marines like it (1) because it's a beach they can invade (2) it's a beach they can invade without going too far (3) it's southward facing so weather and sea conditions make it more demanding than the more genteel Pentewan Sands, another favourite workout spot, near St Austell.

"Tregantle is a good beach – its size,

width and the fact that we can operate here in relative freedom," says Lt Col Jim Fuller, Bulwark's amphibious operations officer.

True, this isn't touristy Cornwall. A public footpath does cross the beach (red flags signal it's off limits when the military is using it) but on a windy early autumn weekday, there aren't many folks looking for a stroll or surf.

By day, it's all relatively easy. Thirty commandos apiece spill out of three smaller landing craft vehicle/personnel on to the beach, forming two large semi-circles 50 metres up the sand from the 'surf zone', before pushing inland. Beach secure, in come the heavies on the larger landing craft utility: Vikings, trucks, a JCB capable of laying a corduroy road.

"The reality is this would be at night. So not only are the guys bounced around in the boats as they come in to land, but all they will be able to see ahead of them will be blurred and confusing lights," Lt Col Fuller explains.

What was not at his disposal 12 months ago supporting any landing was the amphibious task force's new aerial eyes, Wildcat.

The fliers and engineers of 847 NAS have spent a good year converting to the battlefield Lynx's successor – during

which time they've tried to persuade the world and his proverbial dog that Wildcat is NOT a Lynx (their maritime Wildcat counterparts in 825 NAS have faced the same battle).

Because it looks like a Lynx, there's a perception away from the non-Wildcat world that the new helicopter isn't vastly different from its forebear.

Cougar gives the fliers (four Wildcats, 63 air and groundcrew have deployed with Ocean) a chance to prove otherwise.

The mission remains the same: BRH in the wonderful world of military acronyms – Battlefield Reconnaissance Helicopter.

But whereas crews spent a lot of time flying the Lynx physically flying it – paper charts, not digital were the norm, for example – rather than fighting, that's turned on its head with the fully digital Wildcat. There's more time to monitor and understand what's on the ground – and feed the information back to the marines.

"We have far more capacity to deal with information, to understand what is going on. It means we're more able to help the commandos with what's happening on the ground, so they can make better-informed decisions.

"For us the goal on Cougar is to really



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he cat out again

get to grips with Wildcat. We've done the theory. Now we find out how it works with the Royal Marines for real.

"And we'll find out how it performs on a ship - we've done our deck landings on Argus and the Bay class. But we've not spent a prolonged period at sea."

For a short while, the Wildcats shared the 200-metre-long flight deck of the Mighty O with the US Marine Corps' remarkable Osprey (half helicopter, half fixed wing) which was getting used to Britain's biggest warship after a five-year absence.

Call sign 'Elvis' dropped in as a precursor to heavier use of Ocean by the MV22 later in the deployment.

Ospreys can carry two dozen marines (32 at a push) into battle at a time - jolly useful if you're expected to put 400 troops - the equivalent of four companies - ashore, and as far as 80 miles inland, inside six hours...

...which is exactly what is demanded of the amphibious task group, which this year draws upon 45 Commando in Arbroath, the lead commando group, to provide its men of steel.

Those green berets are expected to execute missions as varied as: combat, humanitarian aid, evacuation of civilians, carrying out raids and the destruction of

enemy infrastructure.

As for their steed, Bulwark was last seen saving thousands of migrants in the Mediterranean. For some in the ship's cavernous operations room, the mission hasn't changed markedly. The picture compilers are still looking for tiny contacts on their radar displays. Then it was overcrowded migrant vessels, now it's anything which might disrupt a landing operation or, worse, pose a threat.

"Looking for migrant vessels was actually really good anti-surface warfare training - without the fighting," said Lt Cdr Rubin Nash, Bulwark's ops officer.

"The only difference is the endgame. Then we were saving migrants, here we'd be destroying the enemy."

And whilst Bulwark's galley will probably be busier than in the Med - the 17 chefs will be expected to produce four meals a day at the height of the exercises - it will be easier to cater for the 600 or so souls aboard.

For while there were fewer people on board off Libya, the chefs suddenly found themselves with hundreds of extra mouths to feed every few days with each rescue - all fed separately, and with very different dietary requirements than the sailors and commandos.

"On an operation, the Royal Marines

love everything," says PO(Caterer) Nick Pryers.

"They pump in the calories because they know they are going to be using them."

Like, say, swarming up a beach in Corsica.

The Mediterranean island was the setting for the first true exercise of the Cougar deployment - and a test of the ability of the navies of France and Britain to work side-by-side.

For one week, more than 2,000 British and French sailors, soldiers, airmen and marines were engaged on Corsican Lion, played out on and off the north and south coasts of the island.

It served as the latest step down the road towards the creation next year of a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, an amphibious task group which the British and French military can form to respond to international crises, dealing with anything from conflict to humanitarian missions.

The latter was the scenario behind Corsican Lion, last run in 2012.

A force (or is it pride?) of four ships - Ocean, Bulwark and Hartland Point, plus French assault ship FS Dixmude (which is a sort of hybrid of both Ocean and Bulwark) - spent three days training, before Corsican Lion shifted to the active

phase.

Some 130 Royal Marines were airlifted ashore in waves from the Dixmude - British Apache gunships, Chinook and Wildcat helicopters were among those supporting the effort - so they could secure the evacuation site...

...where 40 British and French sailors playing the part of evacuees were waiting to be saved. With the perimeter secure, the 'civilians' were brought back to Dixmude and Bulwark by helicopter and landing craft.

Aboard Bulwark they were received by a well-honed team offering food, water, clean clothes and medical assistance, exactly as the ship did with migrants back in the spring.

Like many things on Cougar, Corsican Lion was a taster of the shape of things to come. Next year there will be the much larger Griffin Rise which will put the concept of the Anglo-French task group to a fuller test.

More pressingly, the landings on Corsica were a precursor to Trident Juncture, billed as the largest maritime exercise in the world this year with ten different NATO task groups committed between Lisbon in the west and Sardinia in the east.

Pictures: LA(Photos) JJ Massey, Ben Shread and Des Wade



Officer Employment Symposium Opens for Registration

The OA's Employment Symposium returns to Deloitte HQ in London on November 26th and will once again offer an exciting range of sessions aimed at officers in transition, or who have recently left the Services. The days learning will be followed by an evening of networking with employers that have a proven track record of hiring military talent.

OA
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Register now...

Registration has only just opened, but already there has been huge demand for places at this unique officer focused event.

The main plenary sessions will cover job seeking essentials such as Networking, How to Negotiate a Salary and the Role of Recruiters. The day will also offer delegates the opportunity to attend break-out sessions on popular sectors such as Project Management, Professional Services and Security/Risk Management.

To register visit:
www.officersassociation.org.uk/events

The OA welcomes the further commitments of WYG to officers in transition

The Officers' Association have announced that they will be working in partnership with WYG to support officers' transition into civilian roles including several that are currently listed on the OA's Executive Jobs Board.

WYG is a global project management and technical consultancy with a diverse number of roles. The breadth of the skills and knowledge available to WYG allows them to provide a unique integrated approach to projects whatever their

size, complexity or geography, and the skill set of former officers is highly regarded by WYG.

There are currently a number of vacancies suitable for officers with WYG across the UK including Planning Director, Principal M&E Asset Management Consultant, Facilities Manager and multiple Project Management roles.

For more details, please visit the OA Executive Jobs Board:
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Submarine racks up impressive list of successful training

Welcome to sea school

A ROYAL Navy warship versus a periscope and a stopwatch.

Doesn't seem that fair a battle but ten submariners proved they were up to it as they passed their Perisher course in HMS Torbay.

The Submarine Command Course involves the students – armed with stopwatch, periscope and their maths skills – taking on a vital 'eyes only' role where they have to keep the boat safe from being

charged by a warship – in this case the Type 23 frigate HMS Somerset, pictured through the periscope bottom left.

The high-pressure course tests students' decision-making and submarine-driving instincts, demonstrating to their teacher, Cdr Justin Codd, that they have what it takes to be the future Executive Officer and ultimately Commanding Officer of one of the Royal Navy's submarines.

Perisher is one of the most intense military training and assessment courses in the world. Only 70 percent of the officers

undertaking the course succeed, while those who fail can never serve onboard submarines again.

The UK Submarine Command Course is in four phases, mixing practice ashore on high-tech simulators with practical experience at sea onboard submarines.

At the end of the course the students are put through their paces at sea during realistic exercises designed to test them to the very limit.

It is the third time in two years that Torbay has been tasked with Perisher.

Since sailing from Devonport in late July, Torbay has awarded numerous qualifications: 23 newly-qualified

submariners, 19 nuclear watchkeepers, three ship controllers, two ship control panel operators, two Petty Officers qualified for Chief, seven engineering technicians and eight tactical weapon system boards.



Before leaving Gibraltar to continue her deployment, the Trafalgar-class submarine also undertook a stores load.

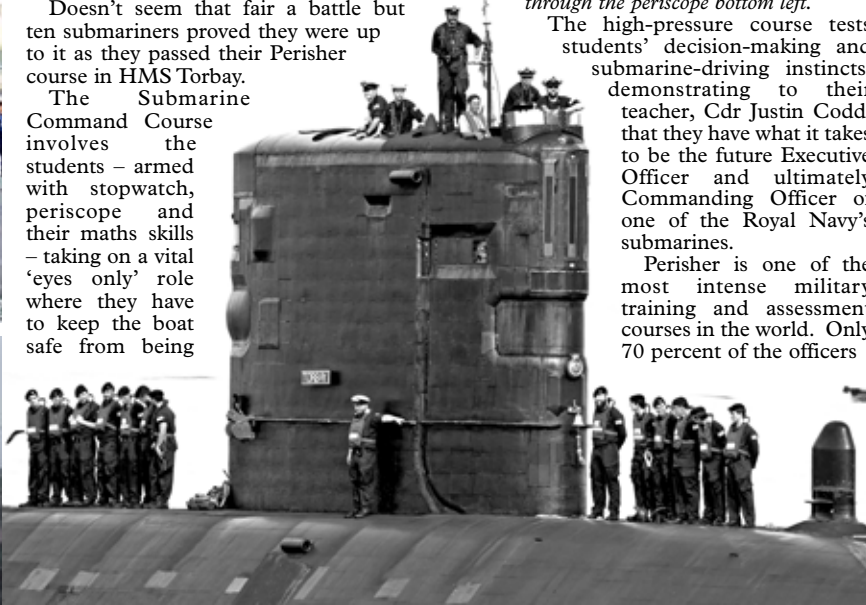
There was also time for some of the crew to undertake the Gibraltar Rock Run to raise £800 for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Eight of the boat's keenest runners were met in the early hours by LPT Mat Phillips, based at Devil's Tower Camp in Gib.

Std 'Charlie' Drake took the honours with the fastest time of 29 minutes.

"It's always good for us to complete a challenge together, it's what sets the military apart from other walks of life," he said. "My only aim now is to get back and try and beat my time the next opportunity we get to return to Gibraltar."

The rest of Torbay's crew spent their leisure time more leisurely – taking in a tour of the WW2 caves and attending a barbecue.



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THE JOURNEY DOES NOT HAVE TO END!

Normandy veterans view survivor of Operation Neptune Craft stirs D-Day memories

NORMANDY veterans went back in time to Operation Neptune as they viewed the sole surviving British landing craft from D-Day.

Many of the veterans served on landing craft similar to LCT 7074, which is now in the hands of the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

The vessel, which landed nine Sherman tanks on Gold Beach in 1944, was raised from Liverpool Docks last year and transported to Portsmouth Naval Base.

Veterans were given the chance to look over the rusty craft, complete with barnacles, which currently occupies a corner of the giant Ship Hall B.

"Memories immediately came flooding back as soon as I saw her," said Ron Smith, a wireman on LCT 947.

"Her size, two feet longer than HMS Victory apparently, struck me. We were thrilled to get a chance to see her and can't wait to see her restored."

Normandy veteran Dave Jefferies, 90, who served in LCT 2442, said: "This brings back memories. My craft was smaller, just three tanks. I was on Gold Beach at H-Hour and watched the Mulberry Harbour being built."

Professor Dominic Tweddle, Director General of the NMRN, said: "LCT 7074 is enormous, bug ugly and smells strongly of eau de Birkenhead but is one of the last of these vital workhorses known to have participated in D-Day."

"Ordinary vessels, they performed an extraordinary task;



● Normandy Veterans gather in front of LCT 7074 with Col Mike Tanner, Captain of HMNB Portsmouth

carrying up to ten Sherman tanks, and transporting almost all the heavy artillery and armoured vehicles that landed in Normandy.

"It is exceptionally moving to welcome the veterans, to share in their memories and ensure they are recorded forever."

"We will make a successful future for LCT 7074. She will be open to the public and serve as a memorial to you."

Fiona Talbott, Head of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which gave a £916,149 grant to enable the NMRN to lift the ship from her watery grave, said: "Set up as a memorial to those who have given their lives in service to this country, it's fitting that the National Heritage Memorial Fund has helped safeguard this remarkable survivor from the D-Day landings."

"She will now help future generations understand one of the most significant military campaigns in world history."

Built in 1944 by Hawthorn Leslie and Company in Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, the Mk3 LCT 7074 was part of the 17th LCT Flotilla during Operation Neptune, the Naval part of Operation Overlord.

The craft was decommissioned in 1948 and presented to the



● Above, how LCT 7074 used to look and, below, how she is now



Master Mariners' Club of Liverpool to be used as their club ship and renamed Landfall.

She was later converted into a floating nightclub before being acquired by the Warship Preservation Trust in the 1990s and moored in Birkenhead, where she sank more than ten years ago.

More than 800 LCTs took part in Operation Overlord on June 6 1944, each capable of

carrying ten tanks or other heavy armoured vehicles into battle. Operation Neptune, the largest amphibious operation in history, saw more than 7,000 ships and craft of all sizes and over 160,000 soldiers on the beaches of Normandy.

Of this fleet, fewer than ten are believed to survive, including LCT 7074 which is understood to be the only vessel of this kind left in Britain.

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OA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
Life beyond the Services



Naval chefs show off their pedigree...

LAMB. Lots of lamb.

And chicken and steak.
Amazing-looking cakes in the shape of a carousel, a popular medical game and a dog in a designer handbag. It can only mean one thing. Exercise Joint Caterer.
Naval Service chefs and stewards were cooking up a storm in their bid to retain their Inter-Service crown.
Fifty-one personnel from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the US Navy competed at the Defence Capability Centre at Shrivenham.

The competition, which takes place over three days, is aimed at developing culinary skills as well as building team spirit.

The Naval Service Culinary Arts Team (NSCAT) won the trophy for the first time in 14 years last year but this year lost out to the RAF.

NSCAT still picked up 36 awards – two golds, two best in class, 12 silver, 15 bronze and five certificates of merit.

Personnel competed in a range of classes, including in the live theatre where they had the added pressure of completing a dish to a set time in front of hundreds of spectators.

Steward PO Bruce Ewen, of HMS Westminster, took part in the open lamb dish, where six competitors, two from each Service, had 30 minutes to prepare, cook and plate a meal.

“That was so nerve-wracking,” he said after serving up his lamb cannon wrapped in chicken and garlic. “Now it’s finished I am absolutely buzzing.”

Also competing for NSCAT in the same class was CH Scott Page of HMS Artful, who opted for citrus reduced rump cannon of lamb with Harissa yoghurt on a bed of Moroccan mixed bean cassoulet.

Teams of three, two chefs and one steward, from HMS Daring and HMS Montrose competed in the open cook and serve, preparing a three-course meal for two lucky diners. The teams were rewarded with two silver and two bronze medals.

The competitors’ biggest challenge is overcoming their nerves, according to NSCAT team manager CPO Bill Bailey, of the Defence Maritime Logistics School at HMS Raleigh.

“We know they can do it, they know they can do it but with the judges watching every move nerves can play a part.

“You can be the most confident person and produce the dish perfectly in practice, but when you are up there on the stage anything can happen.”

One such example was in the open lamb class when one of the RAF competitors dropped one of his completed plates of food as he was about to present them.

Expecting the unexpected can also prove testing. The team from HMS Montrose – LCH Debbie Cole, CH Mark Sindall and LStd Lisa Ryan – were forced to abandon plans for a coconut ice cream to

accompany their soft chocolate pudding with plum compote when their ice cream machine blew up.

CPO Bailey added: “We had a junior team this year but it’s been a great experience for them.”

The Blue Riband event, the *Parade de Chef*, saw a team of seven create a three-course meal for 80 diners. The NSCAT team – LCH Andrew Durham, PO Ollie Dugmore, LCH Ryan Ashall, LCH Stephen Stokoe, CH Thomas Andrews, CH Paul Moran and CPO Matt Rowberry – picked up a bronze medal with their maritime-inspired starter of Atlantic cod and pickled mussel with samphire, edible sand and shells and a mussel *velouté*.

The main course was pistachio-crusted loin of lamb, lamb belly, crispy sweetbreads, pistachio puree, autumn vegetables and lamb sauce.

Dessert was a chocolate orange cake, basil ice cream, orange meringue, chocolate shard, orange gel and basil shoots.

The Parade team tested their menu on diners at PL1 Restaurant at Plymouth City College, where former NSCAT manager Chas Talbot now works.

“We have a great relationship with the college,” said CPO Bailey. “It is an important part of learning new skills.”

Other highlights included the Defence Influence Challenge, where a team of two chefs prepare, cooked and served a buffet lunch for 40 diners, picking up a bronze medal.

The Open Buffet Team, captained by LCH Shane Rixon, collected a gold medal for their muster piece.

The Open Field Team Challenge – held in a car park – saw three Royal Marines chefs produce a two-course meal for 20 covers from a ten-man operational ration pack, picking up a gold and two silvers, while in the display salon, decorative cakes, sculptured lard carvings and buffet platters were on show. Clare Broadbent, an instructor at DMLS, was awarded a silver medal for her dog in a designer handbag cake.

Awards are given according to creativity, workmanship, composition and presentation – including taste.

Team captain CPO Si Geldart said: “We’ve held our own and the team have put the graft in back at Raleigh. A lot of the group haven’t competed before but it is all about the fantastic experience.”

NSCAT team director 1/O Pat Prunty said: “Even though we did not retain the Challenge Trophy we can look forward to building on our strengths and would encourage more catering service personnel to take up the challenge in 2016.”



Pictures: LA(Phot) Paul Hall



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Work, rest and play for frigate's crew in Africa

Lancaster leaves lasting impression

THE spectacular coastline of Cape Town provided a dramatic backdrop for Royal Navy frigate HMS Lancaster as she took part in an exercise with a South African submarine.

The Type 23, along with RFA Gold Rover, sailed from Simon's Town for a four-day exercise with the Type 209 diesel electric submarine Queen Modjadji.

The two British ships then pitted their wits against the submarine in a series of intermediate and advanced anti-submarine exercises.

Throughout the exercise Lancaster's Wildcat Helicopter 'Voodoo' from 825 NAS maintained an eye in the sky, helping the surface vessels locate their elusive underwater foe and then simulate the dropping of stingray torpedoes onto the submarine's location.

Lancaster had a number of South African Navy submariners embarked who relished the opportunity of observing the training from a surface perspective.

Submariners aboard the Queen Modjadji also had time to photograph Lancaster as viewed through the periscope, *top right*.

Lt Tom Johnson, one of Lancaster's Principal Warfare Officers, said: "The training was a fantastic opportunity to hone our anti-submarine warfare skills against a very capable opponent and further enforce the strong relationship between the Royal and South African Navies."

Both Gold Rover and Lancaster were in Simon's Town for a leave and maintenance period.

Many of Lancaster's crew returned to the UK for a break with the ship's Executive WO Pete Jones using the opportunity to pay a visit to the ship's charity, Unique Kidz.

Based in Morecambe, Unique Kidz and Co was founded in 2009 by two Lancashire mums Denise Armer and Jane Halpin. They set up the charity because they were struggling to find suitable childcare or social activities for their disabled children.

WO Jones travelled to the new home of Unique Kidz to present Denise with a cheque for £1,500 – the sum that the ship's company has raised to date.

Of those who remained in South Africa, four of Lancaster's crew headed off on a three-day expedition to the remote village Kodumela in the north east of the country.

LStd Des Mukungurutse, LMA Jonny

Gray, Std Jarabun Sivaligam and CH Kevin Williamson made the 3,700km round trip to visit Reinelwe Mogale, an 18-year-old girl who has been sponsored by LStd Mukungurutse for the past 12 years.

The trip involved a flight from Cape Town to Lanseria and a six-hour drive to Tamboti where they stayed the night. The following day they were met by a child sponsor co-ordinator and driven an uncomfortable 50 miles in the back of a pick-up truck, stopping *en route* for food, clothes and sporting equipment for the local orphanage in Kodumela.

The team were given a very warm welcome by Reinelwe and her family and were soon joined by the neighbours, including the local vicar, who drove a considerable distance to show his gratitude for their support.

The group visited the local secondary school to meet the children and presented them with a set of England football shirts donated by the ship.

"The children were very excited to meet us and have their photographs taken with us," said LMA Gray.

Next was a visit to the orphanage, the Moshate Drop-in Centre, where village children can go after school for more education, food and play.

Following the visit to the school, the group were taken on a trip into the mountains to a local souvenir stall to buy some traditional gifts.

"It was exciting to finally meet with Reinelwe after all these years of correspondence," said LStd Mukungurutse.

"I never imagined I would actually get the opportunity to visit her and her family and I am very grateful to my shipmates who accompanied me on this adventure."

LMA Gray added: "It was a journey not without its difficulties, but I feel privileged to have helped Des fulfil this dream. To see how his help has benefited the family first hand and what the World Vision Charity does for the local community will be something I will never forget."

After their maintenance period, Lancaster and Gold Rover moved on to Cape Town, marking their arrival with a 21-gun salute, which was returned by the South African Navy from their gun battery on Signal Hill.

Lancaster berthed in the heart of the city at the Victoria and Alfred waterfront. More than 2,000 members of the public took advantage of the public holiday

Heritage Day to tour the frigate.

Visitors were able to look around the upper deck, see the ship's Wildcat helicopter and watch a Royal Marines boarding team in action.

Lancaster also hosted a live screening of the Rugby World Cup match between South Africa and Samoa with the spectators including the British High Commissioner Judith Macgregor, admirals from the South African Navy and World Cup sponsors Land Rover.

The event was also attended by SuperSport TV Broadcasting Company, who recorded live interviews and footage from the reception, which were screened during the match build up and at half time.

The ship's commanding officer Cdr Peter Laughton said: "It has been a tremendous honour and privilege for me to bring HMS Lancaster into Cape Town and this visit provides a terrific opportunity to engage with the public."

"The warmth of reception we have received here has been fantastic and the excitement of the Rugby World Cup has added a special edge."

During their time in Cape Town, Cpl Liam Eley – the first Royal Marine chef to serve at sea – received a commendation from the Commandant General Royal Marines.

"It is a great honour to receive this commendation; my time in Lancaster has been hugely rewarding and I look forward to the remainder of the deployment," said Cpl Eley, who was given the commendation by Col John McCardle, defence attaché in South Africa.

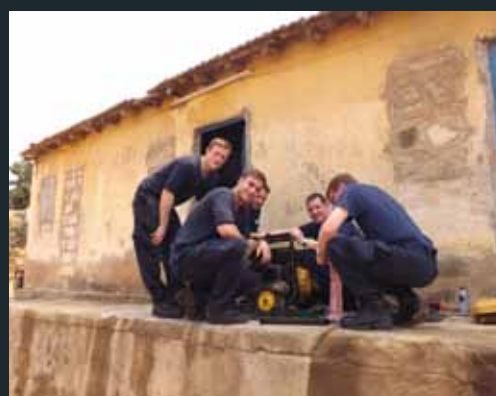
The ship's rugby team, captained by LET 'Chuck' Norrish, took on a formidable team from False Bay Rugby Club, with the hosts running out winners by 48 points to seven.

Lancaster's football team enjoyed better times as they played Table View FC, thumping them 11-0 with hat-tricks from both AB Joshua Bennett and ET Sonny Wilson.

Both the rugby and football teams completed their appointments with end-of-season barbecues, known as *Braai*.

The ship's basketball team also got in on the sporting action, playing a five-a-side mixed team game.

Lancaster is now in the final third of her nine-month deployment, which will see her visit a number of ports as she transits the west coast of Africa during her busy schedule of maritime security and defence engagement.



Class act as engineers work at school

MAKING school safer was the task for personnel aboard HMS Lancaster during a visit to Angola.

WO1 Neil Hill and LET Jason Comerford visited the 5th June Primary School in the borough of Catumbela, about five miles south of the port of Lobito.

"The tour was certainly eye-opening," said LET Comerford. "I was shocked at the state the school was in – walls were half built, the roof was falling apart and, worst of all, the electrics were in a dangerous state."

The ship's company raised more than £160 to pay for electrical supplies, while crew also donated caps, notebooks, pens, and chocolate.

The British Embassy chipped in with football kits.

Fifteen members of the marine engineering department flocked to the school to carry out essential work.

CPO Frank Burns and WO1 Hill led teams working on the lighting while CPO Glen James and PO Phil Shields led a team working on the generators. Six of the team spent a second day at the school to finish some tasks.

During Lancaster's time in Lobito, the ship played host to 180 trainees and instructors from the Angolan navy, army, marines, air force and police schools.

Their tour included the bridge, operations room, 4.5in gun and a demonstration on how boarding operations are conducted by members of the ship's boarding team.

The highlight of the visit for many of the trainees was the comprehensive and informative tour of the Wildcat Helicopter taking pride of place on the flight deck.

Lancaster's gunnery officer Lt Matt Taborda said: "It was a pleasure to host so many Angolan military personal from across all services. Sharing our experiences has further strengthened our relationship with the Angolan armed forces."

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Land of geysers, hot springs, waterfalls, glaciers and black-sand beaches.

Land where the majority of population believe in elves.

Land which gave us the singer Björk, TV host Magnus Magnusson and chess grandmaster Fridrik Olafsson.

Land of volcanoes.

So you'd be forgiven for thinking the images on this page are of a volcanic eruption.

Land where the majority of population believe in elves, deliberately detonated by Royal Navy divers to demonstrate the power of explosives.

For it was to Iceland that a team of 12 bomb disposal experts from the Royal Navy's Southern Diving Group decamped to display their explosive expertise.

The team joined around 200 Tri-Service colleagues from 14 NATO and Partner for Peace nations to take part in Exercise Northern Challenge in Keflavik.

A two-week exercise in its 14th year of operation, it provided 22 teams with a variety of challenges both on land and in the water, with each task increasing in difficulty to test the operators and their teams.

Commanding Officer of Southern Diving Group Lt Cdr Al Nekrews was also chosen as the CO of the Multi-National Explosive Ordnance Disposal Co-ordination Cell for the exercise due to his extensive knowledge of bomb disposal operations on land and at sea.

He said: "Exercise Northern Challenge takes these multi-national teams and brings them together for a realistic threat-based scenario which develops rapidly on land and in the water.

"Iceland is an excellent place to train as we can use live weapons and explosives; so it is an opportunity to make the training as realistic as possible."

Iceland's population of 329,100 – slightly more than that of Nottingham – is mainly concentrated in the capital Reykjavik, leaving the rest of the 40,000 square-mile country virtually empty.

Teams taking part in Northern Challenge all had to work to NATO procedures, while ensuring they also

kept to their own national standard operating procedures.

For the Royal Navy it meant that once the two IED disposal operators, PO Sam 'Nobby' Clark and CPO Simon Crew, had decided how they would tackle the device, they must radio through to Lt Cdr Nekrews to get his approval.

CPO Crew said: "We have a strict set of procedures that we have learned from historical bomb disposal operations in Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan so many of the teams here look to us in order to learn from our experiences.

"We have a very stringent process – and one of these is to call into the CO to describe exactly what we are seeing and our plan to disable it."

One of the main aims of the exercise is to ensure that the operators and their teams focus on retaining the device – or parts of it – for forensic testing. The idea is to target the bomb makers directly – a tactic that proved successful on Operation Herrick, resulting in a number of high-profile arrests.

Teams have to bag their evidence and take it to a lab at the headquarters where a Danish forensic expert examines the parts to report back his findings to the main briefing each morning. Here the teams receive feedback from the previous day's activities and are then given their tasks for the day – usually with one in the morning

and one in the afternoon.

"A team of over 30 people coordinate the exercise and prioritise the tasks – acting as the tasking authority for the teams," said Lt Cdr Nekrews. "We also provide a national point of contact who is a subject matter expert and understands each country's standard operating procedures."

The exercise is not only testing for the IED disposal operators but also the rest of the diving team from Southern Diving Group, who are usually split between Portsmouth and Plymouth bases and cover land and sea bomb disposal operations in the UK.

"The Royal Navy are capable of operating on land and at sea, but our niche capability is the underwater EOD capability," added Lt Cdr Nekrews.

As such all of the Royal Navy's tasks for the exercise involved the water with scenarios including a boat rigged up with an IED on board, a limpet mine attached to a coastguard vessel and a 'suicide' diver with explosives attached to his air cylinders.

PO Andrew 'Snowy' Davies of the Danish Navy – a former RN diver – was one of the exercise assessors. He said: "On

land there are a lot of actions you can take to ensure that you never have to expose an operator to an explosive device by using the robots for example, but in the maritime environment, and particularly in these scenarios, someone must be sent in to observe and disable it.

"This can be a very long, slow operation because these devices are designed to be unpredictable.

"Plus here in Iceland the conditions mean that the operators and the team are all very cold and wet and yet they must keep on going – it is extremely challenging for them."

Once the teams receive their tasking and head to their area of operations they must decide how they will proceed – and this often means sending in a robot known as Pac Bot.

A small vehicle with a long arm and camera attached, the Pac Bot is operated remotely and sent in to assess a device with the operators looking for wires, power supply and switches and then making the decision on how best to deal with it. Yet when the device is in the water the complexity of the task – and therefore the danger to the divers – increases.

"It is extremely complex when negotiating in and around the waterways because there are a lot of access issues," said PO Clark.

"Some of the devices in the exercise have been attached to underwater structures or even to the hulls of ships which require us to dive. We can get an 'eyes on' in terms of visibility because of the water and due to tidal currents generally one of us will go into the water."

As the scenarios became more complex the teams were then made aware that the bombmakers were targeting the operators by observing them disabling previous devices and then learning their procedures. This was another lesson learnt directly from the battlefields of Afghanistan where the operators had to be aware of this, and ensure they adapted their strategy to avoid further risk to their lives.

"We started the teams at a very basic level where they were tackling

fairly simple devices," said Lt Cdr Nekrews, "and then worked up that scenario so that the devices became more complex. A key element of this is that they were targeting the operators."

As well as the tactical lessons from Afghanistan being played out on the ground – the strategic elements also took their procedures directly from Herrick. One large part of this was the headquarters which was set up like an ops room from Bastion – complete with a battlematch captain and all the mission managers who tasked the teams in the morning and are experts in the field.

One mission manager and the head of the German Army team Capt Florian Hanol of the German EOD Operations Company, said this was the second year he had attended Northern Challenge.

"This is a really good opportunity to meet everyone working in the same field and to share experience and see how the different teams operate," he said. "The German team have been doing really well – this is the first time that the team has worked together so I am very pleased with the result."

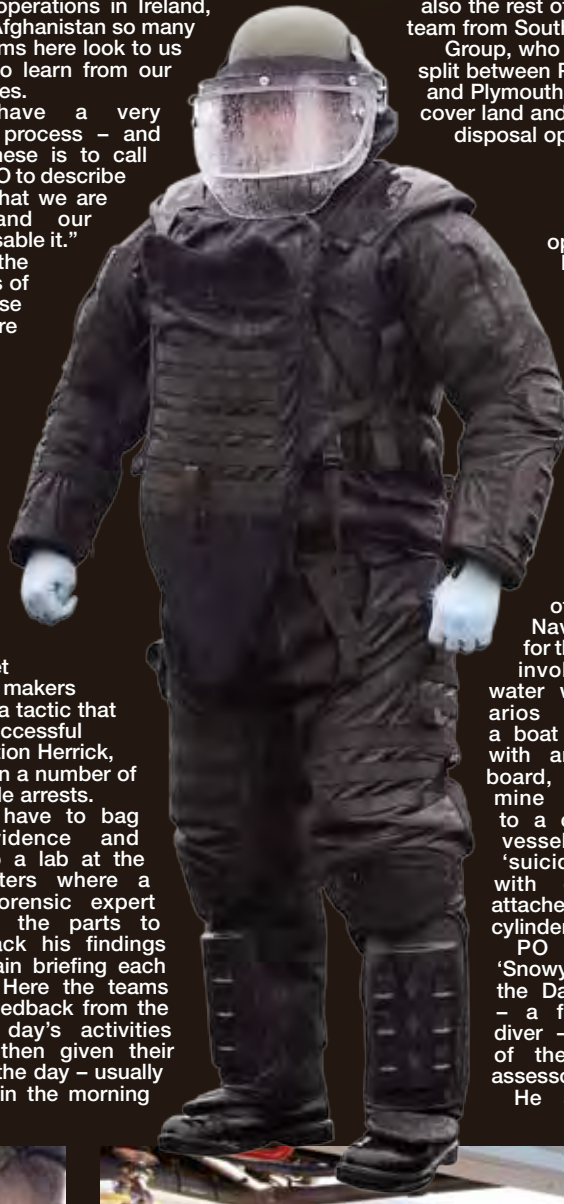
As well as the international teams getting the chance to learn each other's processes, the Royal Navy divers were a mixture of Southern Diving Unit 1 (Plymouth) and Southern Diving Unit 2 (Portsmouth), who also had to learn to work together as one team.

To help them treat the exercise as a real-life scenario all their equipment – bar the specialist bomb disposal vehicles – was also flown out to Iceland by the RAF to ensure that the teams had all their usual tools at their disposal.

Leading Diver Matt O'Brien said: "It's been really good to work with the guys from Plymouth as we don't often get the chance so it's been a good opportunity for us all.

"And if we get the chance to do it again I think it would be a great idea – we all do the same job back in the UK so it's a chance to mix with other people."

**Words: Samantha Chapman
Pictures: L(Phot) Iggy Roberts**



Iceland...





Picture: Ian Harding (Air International)



THE pipe for Colours echoes around Culdrose as the White Ensign is hoisted into a cold blue autumn sky, writes Mike Gray.

A stiff breeze causes the flag to whip and crack as cars file into the Cornish air base at the start of another working day.

Or, rather, at the start of another cycle in a ceaseless rhythm – Culdrose is open all hours, and there is activity on site 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

So, as the ensign rises above the guardroom – at around 8am on this particular morning – preparations for the day ahead are already well under way.

Back in the dark hours, the first meteorological brief of the day has been created on the second floor of the control tower, and will be taken to squadrons as they gear up for the day's flying activities.

The bespoke service is adapted for each squadron depending on what they fly – fixed wing or rotary – when they are flying and where they are flying.

If the atmosphere is particularly volatile, interim forecasts fill the gaps between the two main daily outputs.

The station met office is constantly manned with at least two personnel, one a forecaster, the other a rating recording hourly observations and feeding them into a national stream of data that helps the UK Met Office in Exeter forecast for the country.

Apart from a local forecast, based on Met Office models, Culdrose also produces forecasts for Raleigh, Dartmouth, Plymouth and Flag Officer Sea Training areas.

"If the Search and Rescue helicopter is needed we will tell them what we expect over the next couple of hours," said Lt Rupert Cash, on his first shift as Deputy Senior Met Officer at HMS Seahawk.

"We do forecasts for a 100-mile radius, but in a lesser degree of detail we can do most of England and the Channel, and will do dedicated briefs for individual aircraft flying to Europe."

Radar and sonar predictions are also produced – part of the team's remit to provide 'tactical exploitation of the environment'.

And despite the occasional 'Professor Fog' jibes, the status of their art – the met brief is the first item on every command agenda, and their advice helps shape the flying programme – puts the team in a pivotal position on the base.

Long before sunrise catering staff have also started their day, preparing breakfast for those who stayed on site overnight – possibly up to 1,000 people – as well as early arrivals.

Chefs are firing up ovens and grills in the wardroom and messes by around 6am, and 'front-of-house' personnel are on duty shortly after.

Back at the tower, Airfield Support Manager Paul Ludlam is sheltering from the breeze while he awaits a colleague who will



accompany him on his morning airfield inspection.

Paul drives his yellow pick-up on an 11-mile route, leaving shortly after 7.30am and criss-crossing the site, taking in runway thresholds and squadron aprons.

At each set of traffic lights controlling access to the runways and taxiways, Paul's passenger radios in their position, allowing tower personnel – in this case Air Operations Assistant Chris McQuie – to flick the lights from green to red and back again.

The runways – the longest is 6,000ft – and taxiways are checked for debris and faulty lights, and the collapsible crash barrier at the touchdown end of the live runway is checked to make sure it is isolated, preventing it from deploying unexpectedly if there is an electrical fault.

The inspection is repeated before a night-flying programme.

A road-sweeping lorry can also be seen out on the tarmac every morning, clearing FOD (foreign object debris) to prevent damage to aircraft.

Once a month this daily check is supplemented by Operation Cleansweep, when personnel from across the base scour the runways, removing FOD.

As Paul makes his tour, he drives past handlers hauling aircraft onto aprons ready for the day's activities – fixed-wing Avengers and Hawk jets at C Site at the eastern end of the main runway, Merlins and Sea Kings further west at D and E Sites.

Also out on the airfield is a fire engine preparing to support the flying programme – but more from the firefighters later.

As Paul finishes his patrol the tower – which also contains the radar room – is gearing up for the announcement that the airfield is open for business.

As with the Colours broadcast, this comes from the Guardroom – and is now couched in terms that will chime with operations on board HMS Queen Elizabeth when she enters service.

The thinking is that "Hands to Flying Stations" and the like will make the experience that much closer to life at sea – the same principle has been adopted by Yeovilton – and helps cement

Culdrose's status and role as the home of carrier aviation.

Daily routines kick in as the morning wears on.

There might be anything up to 3,500 people on the base during a normal day, with much activity directed towards front-line operations and to training, including aircraft handlers, observers, engineers and drivers.



The Merlin Training Facility, with its cutting-edge simulators, training rigs and teaching aids, is a particular source of pride.

The captain of the base, Capt Ade Orchard, also welcomes visitors –

RAF Typhoons were based there earlier in the year while they worked with Type 45 destroyer HMS Defender, adding the light-blue element that will be apparent when the sister Services work together in the new carriers.

Indeed, so important is the base to Helston and beyond (an estimated £100m annual contribution to the local economy) that Capt Orchard will often, as *de facto* mayor of this little town, find himself afforded the kind of invitations that are extended to civic leaders.

Housing, industry, schools and shops all thrive as Culdrose thrives.

The skies over the Lizard are not always buzzing with aircraft, but that can be deceptive.

On this particular day, aircraft from 736, 814, 820, 824, 829 and 849 Naval Air Squadrons were

deployed at home and overseas, supporting operations or training exercises, while the red-and-grey Sea Kings of 771 NAS were on call for emergency missions.

So while parts of the sprawling airfield might have appeared quieter than usual, it was only because aircraft and personnel were on operations elsewhere.

More than 100 members of MASF – Maritime Aviation Support Force – covering a range of specialisations were also deployed to support operations across the globe.

In the south-east corner of Culdrose is W Site, a mini-industrial estate where workshops, stores and offices minister to the needs of the base and its tenants – the AgustaWestland-run Merlin Deep Maintenance Facility is here, along with hubs for IT and waste management.

The School of Flight Deck Operations HQ is also here, though the busy 'Dummy Deck' is at A Site on the north side of the airfield.

There, a clutch of Sea Harriers – some with working (though limited) engines to add a noisy touch of realism – trundle around under the control of taxi pilots.

The Harriers and helicopters are directed, towed and shunted across an area which represents the flight deck of an Invincible-class ship.

The outline of a Queen Elizabeth-class flight deck has yet to be marked out – though if a handler can marshal successfully within the confines of a CVS the wide-open spaces of the Navy's new carriers should present few problems.



11 hours



More training is done at Predannack, Culdrose's satellite airfield just five miles south on the Lizard Peninsula, where fire crews and aircraft handlers have the use of a classroom and a range of old, evocative airframes, including a Canberra jet bomber.

Predannack was the site of supersonic jet trials by bouncing bomb boffin Sir Barnes Wallis in the 1950s (the ramp and track can still be seen), and Culdrose continues to look to the future by hosting 700X Squadron, testing unmanned aerial vehicles.

But Predannack is not just a back-up landing site.

The field is also used for training tyro helicopter pilots and aircrew in airmanship techniques and protocols while keeping clear of the busy runways at Culdrose – there might be just under 100 air movements on an average working day at the mother site.

With Predannack in regular use, there is a need for air traffic control – staff from the Culdrose tower drive over to cover squadron training serials – and a three-strong duty fire crew is on hand when aircraft are operating.

The field has also recently seen Royal Marines Commandos training, and cadets hold gliding camps there.

Daytime Culdrose has all the support facilities and amenities you would expect of a small town.

Food is available in messes, and in the Costcutter shop and coffee bar on L Site, the accommodation enclave, linked by a bridge over the A3083 to the airfield itself.

Food is also available near the

hangars, including a fast-food outlet at 771 called 81-Bun.

Elsewhere there is a mail room, battery facility, fuel dump, health and safety offices, stores and the station buffers – the Mr Fixits of the base.

Back on L Site there is a medical centre (open late when there is a night-flying programme), a gym and sports facilities, a (part-time) barber, a nursery ('Helitots'), a church complex (with two full-time chaplains and a visiting Roman Catholic priest) and Culdrose's very own cinema, which doubles as a briefing hall and theatre, although the facility is currently closed for roof repairs.

A dedicated graphics team (supported by a two-strong reprographic office) handles everything from signs and posters to complicated training manuals, there is a well-equipped learning centre, and the Culdrose PR team keep the communities of South-West England abreast of events at the base – the largest helicopter station in Europe.

They are supported by Naval photographer PO (Phot) Paul A'Barrow, whose work also supports technical and air safety staff (providing photographic evidence in incidents such as the Sea Fury crash landing, pictured at foot of the opposite page), and he also trains aircrew in camera use.

Most of the images on these pages are PO A'Barrow's work.

Culdrose also has its own utilities, including a boiler plant, electricity sub-stations and an off-site sewage works; radar installations also sit in secure compounds beyond the perimeter.

With the afternoon drawing on, the workforce is starting to contemplate the commute home.

On this particular day the airfield closed at 5pm; aircraft are returned to hangars, simulators are shut down, workbenches and computers are secured and the day's training serials end.

As the Sunset ceremony approaches the tempo and focus might change, but Culdrose is far from shutting down.

The glue holding all these nocturnal activities together can be found in the Guardroom – the SOOD (Standing Officer of the Day) and ESCOs (Emergency Support Communications Officers), who work in the room

next door.

This team acts as reception desk and liaison cell for incoming calls or queries, day or night.

Whether it be a simple query, a late-arriving unexpected guest (they have access to accommodation databases) or a fast-evolving incident, they are prepared for anything.

"If anyone needs recalling we have all the duty and contact numbers for the base, which we keep updated," said Sharon Williams, who with Sam Bateman was looking after the small hours on this particular night.

"We do get some really obscure calls – 'I have just seen a UFO, who should I talk to?'"

"There could be an unexploded bomb found on a beach; someone rang and said 'I have a buzzard at the bottom of my garden – is it yours?'"

"We get lots of press calls – we let the media team know if the SAR helicopter is scrambled, and we have to be detectives sometimes, tracking down someone on base who 'works on helicopters' for a member of their family."

The SAR aircraft can take off when the base is closed for flying, but the airfield has to be 'open' when the Sea King returns.

Or there may be a need to open for an aircraft carrying a transplant organ, or for a police helicopter to refuel – all the co-ordination falls to SOOD and the ESCOs.

It is not all emergency work; the welfare side is just as important.

Recently a young sailor, helping a member of the public in Plymouth, missed his last train back and had no mobile phone.

The ESCOs identified a late-night bus alternative and arranged for a mate to pick him up, while the SOOD sorted out his fare directly with the bus driver, who could not take cash.

Other alerts involve machinery break-downs – on this night it was a pot-washing machine, at other times an alarm in a lift, requiring the services of an engineer – or handling complaints from the public about low-flying aircraft ("even when it wasn't us – we take calls long after the airfield had closed," said Sam).

Lone workers on site call in to confirm all is well, instructors do rounds of their charges and ring in regularly, as do guards doing patrols of the airfield perimeter.

"We are the central hub

for Culdrose – but we drop everything when the emergency phone goes. Partly because it makes such a horrible shrieking noise," said Sharon.

There is also the inevitable admin – all calls and details are logged, as ESCOs may be required to provide statements for police or official inquiries.

"This job is a conduit – everything feeds in to here and you feed out to everyone who needs to know about a situation," said the duty SOOD Paul Oliver, one of five such civil servants who provide round-the-clock cover.

He reports directly to the First Lieutenant when necessary at night as the duty CO is not required to be on base.

"It might be something practical like a tree coming down and damaging the fence, but welfare is a big part of the job."

Typically that could mean checking with a squadron duty officer before allowing a sailor a little leeway after his wife became ill and he had to arrange emergency child-care, or finding out-of-hours dental cover.

SOOD also has colleagues to call on – a duty watch of a senior rate and two able rates who check bars are closed and buildings locked, while additional staff such as writers are on call at home.

Members of the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) are on duty day and night at Culdrose, providing security, guarding gates (two are open 24 hours, the third, at W Site, is daytime only), patrolling fences and monitoring alarm panels.

And members of the RN Police are just a phone call away after dark to deal with incidents.

Cpl Rob Hoare of the MPGS said: "We have a mixture of Army, RAF and Royal Navy backgrounds, and a lot of us are from this part of the world."

"The ESCOs let us know if a call is for us, and I will get a couple of lads to investigate."

"Anything suspicious we will take a look at."

Over at C Site the lights are on through the night at the fire station.

"When the airfield is open for flying we have to have fire cover, but we also cover the sleeping accommodation over at L Site," said LA Richie Fisher – the fire crew are all trained RN aircraft handlers, with some further trained in HGV driving.

"I have had a shift when we had 16 shouts, and on other days as little as one."

"But we are very unlikely to do a 12-hour shift and not get a single call."

The bar is set high for the Naval firefighters – in the case of a survivable aircraft crash they are required to reach the site of the incident within two minutes, and have a further minute to 'create survivable conditions'.

To maintain that level of professionalism the teams train

constantly. When they are called upon for real, as with the Sea Fury crash at last year's air show, that investment in training becomes apparent.

"You could spend 22 years and never get a State 1 crash [a crash on or seen from an airfield]," said LA Fisher. "I have seen one State 1 crash in 12 years."

"But then you have to remember that the Royal Navy are very good – they look after their aircraft very well and the pilots are brilliant."

"AFDs (automated fire detection alarm calls) are pretty regular – young lads and lasses burning toast, that sort of thing."

"But we do get fires every now and then – there is a lot of welding, painting and fuelling of aircraft going on around the site."

"But again, the Fleet Air Arm has a very good reporting culture and that helps make it so safe."

Not far from the fire station is W16, Culdrose's main store, which is also manned through the night by Naval ratings, ready to react to a request for essential kit from a Culdrose squadron on-site or deployed overseas.

And further round the perimeter road are the Motor Transport offices, which also provide a 24-hour service.

There is a wealth of experience amongst the multi-skilled staff, who handle everything from cars to coaches, cranes, ambulances, fuel bowsers and fork-lift trucks.

The daily rota might include lifting jobs (perhaps a helicopter rotor head), picking up personnel on an official visit or unloading stores.

But the night shift brings its own range of duties, often unexpected and at short notice.

Duty driver Peter Gray said that compassionate duties were amongst those that cropped up suddenly.

A recent example saw a member of staff with an acute eye condition being driven to Bristol for short-notice treatment the following morning as he could not drive and there was no public transport alternative, so a driver was lined up for a 5am rendezvous.

And so, as the night fades into daylight, the pipe for Colours echoes around Culdrose as the White Ensign is hoisted into the cold blue autumn sky, and... well, you know the rest.



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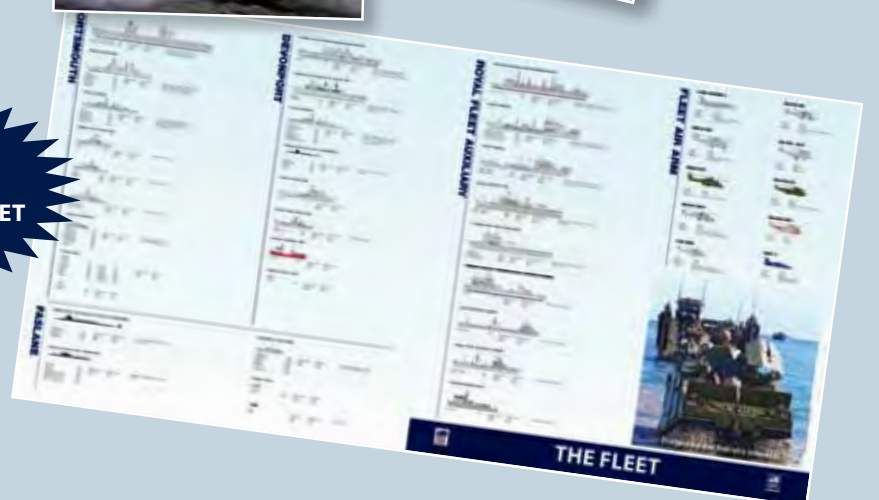
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Deep needed for PhD

I AM hoping for some help with my PhD – The Development of Nuclear Engineering in the Royal Navy 1946-1975.

- I am looking at five key areas:
- The political and military decisions to proceed with nuclear submarines.
- The research and development of PWR without US assistance due to the limitations of the US McMahon Act.
- The engineering and quality challenges that had to be overcome by industry in order to build a reactor.
- The 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement, Rickover, and the purchase of S5W for HMS Dreadnought.
- Experience gained with S5W and integrated in the development of PWR1, Dounreay and RN training.

It is in this area I am looking for 'back-afty' volunteers who served during this time.

GM Jones
 gareth.jones@plymouth.ac.uk or Gareth.M.Jones@babcockinternational.com

Little left of camp

I REFER you to an article on page 33, headed 'Boys honoured' in September's *Navy News*.

I was a boy seaman and did my training at HMS St George, Isle of Man.

We were all boy seamen until we were 18.

I was out in the British Pacific Fleet in WW2 when I got made up and when I joined a main mess I was subjected to a lot of verbal abuse by most of the others in my mess who were, of course, hostilities only.

Some years ago I went back to the Isle of Man with my wife.

I went to the site of the upper camp and all that was there relating to St George was a small brick pillar in memory of all the boys who were killed during the war.

George Bennett
 Warwickshire

End of an era

THE Hole in the The Wall pub in Gibraltar, popular with visiting Royal Navy personnel, closes its doors in January after 44 years.

The pub, run by Charles Trico, is marking the end of an era with a party on Saturday January 16.

RN memorabilia will be auctioned on the night as Charles heads for retirement.

Steve Greenwood
 Cornwall

Popular pig photo produced pennies

I WAS lucky enough to get a posting in 1963-1966 as CPO Instructor to the Portsmouth Barracks Instructional Technique School under Lt Cdr Leslie Cave.

It was the joining together of several smaller instructional technique units, my original unit being HMS Collingwood.

We were later joined on staff by a CPO shipwright Jevons, who sometime previously had served in HMS Sultan, where he had taken the photograph, *pictured right*.

As we liked to provide a teaboard it was suggested we could probably enhance the fund with a few contributions from the students, mainly senior non-commissioned officers and officers, including a Surgeon Rear Admiral, on one of the courses.

During the lesson on aids to teaching, when demonstrating the use of the epidiascope, we would flash up the photo with the note: "available to all at sixpence each."

Amazingly they were most popular with the officers, as far as I know no one took offence.

I wonder how many are still around today – photos or students?

CPO(Air) Nobby Clarke
 Norfolk



So pleased to see Somerset arrive



ON September 1, I was diving off the Falmouth coast when the shot line became detached from the wreck.

We deployed delayed surface marker buoys to complete our decompression.

When I surfaced I found myself to be separated from the dive boat which was some distance away.

There was a series of events that followed which resulted in my being lost at sea.

I was carrying a personal locator beacon which I turned on.

I was able to see that the lifeboats and helicopters were looking for me but were having trouble locating my exact position.

Some two-and-a-half hours passed before I was very lucky to have been spotted by the crew of HMS Somerset, *pictured left*.

Shortly after this the helicopter and lifeboats came to my rescue and I was taken on board the dive boat and later winched on to the helicopter.

I was taken to hospital and relieved to find that no real damage had occurred.

I consider myself to be very lucky indeed to have had

such a network of support and expertise at my disposal.

I have since reflected on what the outcome would have been if I had been diving anywhere other than off the coast of the UK. I may not have been so lucky.

I now also carry an AIS transmitter, smoke flares and use larger surface marker buoys.

I have learned a lot from this experience and would recommend these safety devices to anyone that goes to sea.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the crew of HMS Somerset and in particular to officer Cameron Fisher who, I believe, was the first to spot me on their radar.

The joy and relief I felt when I saw the ship's bow coming straight for me is impossible to express.

It was so heart-warming to see your sailors waving and cheering to me from the side of the ship.

I will be indebted to you always.

Paul Gibson
 Essex

Editor's footnote: Mr Gibson's letter has been forwarded to the captain of HMS Somerset

Silly sailors not so silly after all

I CERTAINLY remember the film *Seven Silly Sailors* recalled by Doug Andrews in September's *Navy News*.

It was often shown, mainly to new entrants, and intended to illustrate the importance of correct procedures in damage control.

It demonstrated the loss of a ship in battle due to a series of careless mistakes, such as leaving articles of clothing lying about on messdecks that would block a pump in the event of flooding, and making sure that clips on water-tight doors were put on properly, closing of hatches etc.

Regular practices of damage control were carried out on my first ship, HMS Chequers (1953/4), in the form of evolutions in harbour and at sea.

During one such event I was involved in the rigging of emergency cables when one of the inspecting officers stopped me and tied a label to my arm marked 'casualty' and told to me sit down and take no further part in the exercise.

I parked myself down in a passageway but soon found I was impeding the progress of the chief stoker and his merry men, on their way to repair a 'hole' in a bulkhead.

On attempting to explain my new-found disability he very rudely told me that if I didn't move a bit sharpish I might very well end up as a real casualty.

Frank Clayforth
 North Shields



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tippie to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Frank

Sins referred to ship damage

WITH reference to the letter entitled *Recalling silly sailors*, in September's issue of *Navy News*, I believe it ought to be pointed out that the cardinal sins committed by the six ratings and one officer were not in the biblical sense but in a Royal Navy damage control sense.

In the film, the seven silly sailors did commit damage control sins which were deadly, and, resulted in the deaths of some of their oppos.

Their ship, a cruiser about the same size as HMS Belfast, was also so badly damaged that it was unable to go into action.

The film was produced in February 1944 and was still relevant in the 1960s.

For anyone who wants to view this film, it is part of a DVD box set called *The Royal Navy At War*, which can be obtained from the Imperial War Museum. The relevant DVD is called *Naval Instructional Films* and the item is called *Ship Safety*.

Rick Richmond
 Hertfordshire

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Two vessels appeared as one



● The photograph of HMS Middleton and her "auxiliary propulsion system" in August's edition of *Navy News* reminded me of operations off Sierra Leone in 2006 and a photograph of RFA Mounts Bay and Wave Knight "rafted up" and presenting as a conjoined and 'new' type of RFA vessel.

Les Yeoman (Ex-CPOMA), Plymouth



LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and full 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.

Freedom parade for Astute crew

SUBMARINERS from one of the Royal Navy's newest super-sub's paraded through the streets of the Wirral when they were granted the Freedom of the Borough.

The parade, which was organised by Wirral Borough Council, was in honour of the 98-strong crew of HMS Astute and to celebrate the close links between the area and the Royal Navy.

Crowds of well-wishers lined the parade route on Sunday which ran through Marine Promenade and Victoria Parade.

Adding pageantry to the occasion was the band of the Royal Armoured Corps, who accompanied the submariners with flags and standards flying.

Joining the crew of Astute in receiving the honour were Cadets from Wallasey Sea Cadet Unit, the oldest unit on Merseyside and one affiliated to the submarine.

PO Karl Williams said: "I feel so proud to be marching through my hometown with my family watching. It feels like recognition for all of the hard work that we have put in over the last few years deploying all around the world."

Commanding Officer of Astute Cdr Gareth Jenkins said: "It is heartening to see so many members of the public, from the very young to the very old, here today supporting your Royal Navy and for that we are extremely grateful."



Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies

Family's deep ties

THE arrival in Gibraltar of HMS Torbay was a poignant moment for WO1 'Mac' McLoughlin, whose son (ET) Conor was ready to be presented with his 'Dolphins'.

Commander British Forces Cdre Ian McGhie awarded ET McLoughlin his Dolphins.

WO1 McLoughlin, who is currently based in Gibraltar, joined the Royal Navy in 1981.

"I've sailed round the world twice backwards and every way in the last 34 years and have been to sea on every submarine there is except for Artful," he said.

WO1 McLoughlin and his wife Gloria were delighted to be present when Conor received his Dolphins.

He said: "This is the first time that I am not the one on the gangway and the first time we had to wait for Conor to come off."

ET McLoughlin, who joined the Royal Navy in November 2013, said: "I was always proud that my dad was a submariner, it really is something to be proud of. I felt so proud when I was on the bridge coming in."

Fan called into action

A ROYAL Navy rating stepped in to help officiate during Pompey's League Two victory at Newport County.

LET Mike Hurdle, 28, responded to a request over the tannoy at Rodney Parade after referee James Adcock suffered an injury during the first half.

LET Hurdle, who serves in HMS Trenchant, is a qualified ref and acted as the fourth official.

"Going from refereeing on Wednesday nights to a League Two match was a bit of a jump," said the Pompey fan. "But at the end of the game the referee told me 'well done' and they were all impressed with the way I performed."

"I went to watch a game of football and ended up being part of the game... it was brilliant."

Pompey won the match 1-0 courtesy of a Matt Tubbs goal in the first half.

In the picture

ONE year to the day after 846 NAS reforming as a Merlin squadron, Commanding Officer Lt Col Derek Stafford was presented with a commissioned painting.

The painting, by Yeovil artist Chris Shaw, depicts a Merlin Mk3 and a Sea King Mk 4 and was commissioned by WO Steve Woods and CPO Al Wilson.

Chris said: "I have loved painting and drawing aircraft from a young age, especially as my father worked at Yeovilton, so I was excited to receive this commission from 846 NAS."

Crew teach children about life in warship Navy lark lessons

SAILORS from Portsmouth based Type 23 frigate HMS St Albans have been to Solent Infant School in Farlington to tell pupils what it's like to live and work on board a Royal Navy warship.

The children have been learning about all things maritime in their topic called 'Ahoy There' and were keen to hear about the Royal Navy directly from the experts.

The school has close links with the Navy as over 30 of its pupils come from Service families.

Ninety excited pupils learned about the Navy's role providing security at sea by patrolling the busy international sea lanes vital to keep trade routes flowing, the fight against modern-day pirates and how personnel are trained to respond to natural disasters like Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

The crew took along Naval uniforms and life-saving equipment for children to try on, taught them how to tie knots used on board ship and answered lots of questions about their jobs as navigator, marine and weapon engineers and seamanship specialists.

Lt Ed Smith, Navigating



Officer in St Albans, said: "It was a really fantastic opportunity to give back to our local community and talk to the youngsters about the job we do when we are away. "In this area where so many of the children have serving family members or friends, it's great to be able to talk to them on their level and allow them to ask questions."

Assistant Headteacher Emma



● Clockwise from left: LET Kirsty Pattison helps Charlie Boswell try on firefighting kit; LET Pattison and LS Daniel Hambling with pupils Anjali Patel, Charlie Boswell, Livia Rudman and Victoria Clark; Right: Anjali Patel dons a cap

Pictures: LA(phot) Nicky Wilson



inspiring for the children. It's a fantastic way to start the new school year."

Solent Infant School pupil Roman Sloev, six, said: "It was really good. The Navy showed us photos and videos all about the ship and how they catch pirates. They told us all about being firefighters on the ship too."

The ship is due to deploy for nine months later this year.



YOUNGSTERS at a nursery school heard about life in the Royal Navy from an officer.

Lt Anthony Booth visited The Seahorse Nursery in Southfields, London, to talk about helicopters and ships.

Early years teacher Harriet Wolfe said: "Our focus this term is to look at different modes of transport and understand how they can be used in the world."

"The visit really helped to broaden the children's knowledge and understanding of the world."

During a workshop Lt Booth taught the children how to stand to attention and salute as well as letting the youngsters try on his combat jacket, cap and beret.

The children also watched a video of helicopter training and personnel marching.

Sons join dad in Service(s)

DOMINIC Anderson made it a family hat-trick when he joined the RAF earlier this year.

For his father Andy is a Lt Cdr in the Royal Navy and younger brother Cameron joined the Army last year.

"I am so proud to see them all in their uniforms," said Caroline Anderson, who is currently based with husband Andy in the USA.

Lt Cdr Anderson, 50, who joined the Senior Service more than 30 years ago, is currently based at NATO in Norfolk, Virginia.

AC Dominic Anderson, 20, is with Trenchard Squadron at RAF Cosford, while Sig Cameron, 18, is in Dorset with the Royal Signals.



● Andy Anderson with sons Dominic, left, and Cameron

Trio of transport for CO

A FAST car, a gun carriage and an historic aircraft were all methods of transport used by Cdre Jock Alexander as he bade farewell to RNAS Yeovilton.

His last day saw him tour the station in a McLaren 12C supercar before riding a field gun carriage through the base and finally sitting in a Swordfish from the historic flight.

"This has been a brilliant way to bow out after 38 years in the Royal Navy," he said before handing over command of the air station to Cdre Jon Pentreath.

The new CO joined the RN in 1984 and flew the Sea King with Commando Helicopter Force. He qualified as a Lynx pilot in 1995 and became CO of CHF.

"Having served here for much of my Naval career, it is both an honour and a privilege to be appointed to command the base," he said.



Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum

● Cdre Jock Alexander rides a field gun carriage

Charity chief says thanks for efforts

SAILORS who took part in the international fight against Ebola received their operational medals at a ceremony at RNAS Cudrose.

Aviators and engineers from 820 NAS who served on Operation Gritrock, were recognised for their efforts at a medal parade.

The squadron, who deployed at very short notice, were away for six months. As well as flying 300 sorties, delivering aid to the communities of West Africa, they also managed to raise nearly £70,000 for the EducAid charity.

Three Merlin MK2 helicopters and 80 personnel from 820 NAS joined RFA Argus on its deployment to Sierra Leone in October 2014.

During the mission, the team supported the construction of six Ebola treatment centres by delivering much-needed stores, people and medical supplies to inaccessible areas.

Also, to enable RFA Argus to deliver medical cover for personnel working in the country, the squadron provided an alert aircraft for casualty evacuation.

Another success was the delivery of food relief to the isolated Sherbro Islands which had been cut off from the mainland due to strict infection control laws – subsequently the inhabitants were facing starvation. Over two days, the



● Miriam Mason-Sesay shares a joke with CPO(ACMN) Rich Griffith

Picture: POA(Phot) Paul A'Barrow

820 team delivered in excess of 200 tonnes of food aid by flying over 100 under slung load missions. As a result enough food aid was provided to feed the 16,000 inhabitants for over a month.

Cdr Ross Spooner, Commanding Officer of 820 NAS, said: "Every person deployed should be incredibly proud of what they have individually contributed to the fight against Ebola. It was a

rollercoaster of a deployment, but we made a real difference to communities in West Africa."

The squadron invited Miriam Mason-Sesay, principal of EducAid Schools, to present the 75 medals.

She said: "Sierra Leone is currently the fifth poorest country in the world, and I work with some of the poorest and most vulnerable people, arguably due to their lack of education."

"To have people coming to

help when most of the world was shunning us was vital. I greatly appreciate all that the Royal Navy did for Sierra Leone.

"In particular, I am sure that the children will never forget the visit that they received from Father Christmas and his elves who were all delivered to us by a Merlin helicopter."

"It was fantastically exciting for them – some of them have lost everything and it was a welcome distraction."

Picture: LA(Phot) Joel Rouse



● PO(Phot) Carl Osmond with younger brother Toby

Fancy meeting you here, bro

TWO Dorset brothers were recently reunited thousands of miles away from their home.

Royal Navy photographer PO(Phot) Carl Osmond and Mne Toby Osmond, both from Dorset, found themselves working alongside each other in the Mojave Desert on Exercise Black Alligator.

Mne Osmond, a member of J company in Plymouth-based 42 Cdo, was deployed to the desert for two months to take part in various training exercises.

PO Osmond was deployed as part of the Royal Navy's Mobile News Team to cover the exercise through video and stills photography.

They were reunited on the Close Quarter Battle range during a training exercise.

PO Osmond said "It was great to see my little brother – but not great to see he had a better tan than me. We are often deployed at different times so we don't get to see each other as much as we'd like to."

Mne Osmond said "I am looking forward to the final exercise, and, of course, San Diego for a hoofing run ashore and some surfing too."

PO Osmond added "Our other brother Mne Jason Osmond, the least best looking, is currently on board HMS Ocean and looking forward to being a driver at CTCRM."

Next year 42 Cdo will take over the nation's high readiness Lead Commando Group – a contingency force able to deploy anywhere in the world at very short notice.

Garden joy for RM

FORMER Royal Marine Jason Burns is finally enjoying his garden – thanks to a group of volunteers.

Jason, 45, who was injured in a rocket attack in Afghanistan in 2011, hadn't been able to use his garden in Tyneside because it wasn't level.

After hearing about Jason from the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund, the company Artificial Grass Ltd got together with a group of volunteers to transform the garden.

"It has really made all the difference. It is such a joy to come out here now, for both myself and the family," said Jason, pictured left with wife Andrea.

The father of three walks slowly with the aid of a stick over short distances, but needs a stair-lift in his specially-adapted house. Outside the house he uses a wheelchair or mobility scooter.

"Having fun with the kids in the back garden has put a smile back on my face that I'd lost," said Jason. "And we have learned that there are good people out there. I can sit out here in our garden now and see a new future for us."



Picture: Ian Forshaw

Cool view for the squirrels



THREE aircraft from 705 NAS fly over the massive cooling towers at the world heritage site at Ironbridge.

Eleven personnel from the squadron made the flight from RAF Shawbury to Weston Super Mare to visit the Helicopter Museum.

The museum is the world's largest dedicated helicopter museum, housing over 80 displayed aircraft.

Personnel from 705 NAS were given a tour of the museum with a number of the more senior aviators reminiscing fondly over aircraft they flew in the past.

The squadron's new CO Lt Cdr Scott Hughes said: "It was an excellent opportunity for developing and honing staff skill sets, and flying the flag for the Defence Helicopter Flying School while taking advantage of the superb facilities available to us at Weston Helicopter Museum. A great day out."

New paint job for Buccaneer

CONSERVATION work continues on a 1950s Royal Navy aircraft.

The Blackburn Buccaneer S1 XN964 has had its old paint removed at Newark Air Museum.

New paint is to be applied, which will see XN964 painted in the markings it wore with Fleet Training Unit 736 Squadron, at RNAS

Lossiemouth in 1965.

The Royal Navy originally procured the Buccaneer as a Naval strike aircraft capable of operating from carriers.

The aircraft served with the RN and RAF until it was retired from service in 1994. It was replaced by the Sea Harrier.



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Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WOs, Senior Rates and SNCO Service leavers and ex-regulars, (those that left service under 2 years), to work in Armed Forces Career Offices around the UK.

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FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH



Team Fan-y-Big

A TEAM of sailors completed a challenge set by adventurer Bear Grylls to raise cash for the RNRMC.

The group completed a 30km survival race in Trent Park, North London, during which they faced a number of obstacles, such as jumping over fire, climbing walls, and running while carrying jerry cans full of water.

"We all had issues with cramp, tiredness, destroyed feet, back pain – but would we do it again? Probably," said CPO 'Moz' Morris, who serves at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth.

"It's the most physically demanding challenge I have

ever taken part in but the sense of achievement when crossing the line, combined with raising in excess of £2,000 for the RNRMC, was well worth it."

The Bear Grylls Survivor Race saw the adventurer, TV presenter, former SAS reservist and honorary Royal Marine set challenges for a series of mud/obstacle runs around the park.

The Navy racers – Team Fan-y-Big (named after a mountain climbed by sailors attending the Senior Service's outdoor training at nearby Tal-y-bont) – are still taking donations via uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/Fan-Y-Big



● RNRMC President Admiral Sir Jonathan Band greets the Princess Royal at HMS Excellent

Plaudits from Royal patron

THE Princess Royal paid tribute to the efforts of staff at the RNRMC during a visit to the charity's headquarters at HMS Excellent, Whale Island, Portsmouth.

The Princess, who is patron of the charity, met members of staff across the charity's departments.

"The work of the charity makes a real and significant difference and, as patron, I encourage all who have an interest in the Naval Service to provide whatever help you can to ensure our continued success," she said.

RNRMC Chief Executive Robert Robson said: "It is a privilege to have our Patron with us on Whale Island.

"It means a great deal to all of us in the group, who work tirelessly to deliver an efficient and effective charity that puts our beneficiaries at the heart of what we do."

Safe travels to the 'Bird in a biplane'

That's the spirit

PUSSEY'S Rum presented a cheque for £20,000 to the RNRMC, the latest sizable donation the company has made to the charity.

Gary Rogalski, president and CEO of Pussey's Rum, said: "We have made annual contributions to the RNRMC since 1998, and will continue to do so for many more years to come.

"The donation always gets put to very good use so it is our pleasure to once more be passing over a generous cheque to support the charity's efforts towards supporting Royal Navy and Royal Marines communities."

RNRMC head of community fundraising Lauren Wileman said: "We are grateful to Pussey's Rum for its continued support.

"This generous donation will have a significant impact on helping us to achieve our vision of a world in which our sailors, marines and their families are valued and supported for life."

Concert will remember them

A REMEMBRANCE charity concert takes place at HMS Collingwood, Fareham, on Saturday November 14 at 7pm.

Tickets are £12.50 (concessions £10). Call 01329 332553 or e-mail navyoptrg-cwdcharityconcert@mod.uk

ADVENTURER Tracey Curtis-Taylor has reached Cyprus on a journey to Australia in aid of the RNRMC – and has gained a Naval rank into the bargain.

The self-styled 'Bird in a biplane' left Farnborough in Hampshire in her classic 1942 Boeing Stearman Spirit of Artemis.

The intrepid British aviator's expedition will include 50 legs as she crosses 23 countries on her trip across the globe.

And as she prepared to fly south, she was granted the rank of honorary lieutenant commander in the Royal Naval Reserve.

Ms Curtis-Taylor is undertaking the flight to celebrate the pioneering days of early aviation, especially the achievements of Amy Johnson, who became the first woman to fly solo from Britain to Australia in 1930 and tragically died in mysterious circumstances during World War 2 whilst flying for the Air Transport Auxiliary.

Having flown across Africa in 2013, experienced pilot Ms Curtis-Taylor is no stranger to stick-and-rudder flying with basic period instruments in some of the most beautiful, challenging and dangerous places on the



● Tracey Curtis-Taylor with Judy Chilvers and in front of her plane the Spirit of Artemis



planet. "For my whole life I have been moved by the achievements of pioneers like Amy Johnson," she said.

"My own flight to Australia is the realisation of a burning desire to fly my beloved Boeing Stearman around the world following in their footsteps."

A group of more than 150 friends and supporters gathered to bid her farewell, including Prince Michael of Kent, Dame Diana Rigg, Amy Johnson's niece Judy Chilvers and Rear Admiral Ben Key.

Lauren Wileman, head of community fundraising at RNRMC, said: "We're thrilled that Tracey is choosing to support us as part of her expedition. It is one of the most ambitious adventures that we've been a part of, and certainly one of the most global, which is fitting considering the work of the Royal Navy and its Fleet Air Arm around the world."

During the flight Ms Curtis-Taylor will be stopping in a number of cities to engage with the local communities, with a particular focus on women's

issues. Commemorating the fact that Amy Johnson was the first President of the Women's Engineering Society, Ms Curtis-Taylor will be working with her partners to promote the achievements of women in every sphere around the world.

She is expected to arrive in Sydney on January 6.

To follow Ms Curtis-Smith during the flight and learn more about her route, visit: www.birdinabiplane.com, www.facebook.com/birdinabiplane or on Twitter: @biplanebird

Gift Aid is so worthwhile

DID you know that a £1 donation can be worth £1.25 to us without anything more from you? If you are a UK taxpayer and complete a Gift Aid declaration, we can claim a further 25p back from the government for every £1 donated.

All you need to do is tick the box on giving platforms such as Virgin Money Giving or, if paying by cheque/BACS similarly tick the box when asked. You can find our donation options online at rnrmc.org.uk/support-us

There is one caveat to Gift Aid however; the money donated must be from you personally and not a company cheque or a collection of sponsorship monies.

This also means that in order to claim Gift Aid we need you to specify a home address when choosing to raise money in sponsorship

for the charity, not a work or military address.

Gift Aid allows us to claim money back from the government on donations made as far back as four years ago, so Gift Aid forms are worth completing even if you haven't made any recent donations.

Please consider doing this next time you donate or sponsor your friends, family or colleagues' fundraising challenges.

Thank you for all your support to date. In 2014 the RNRMC group claimed an additional £129,000 in Gift Aid which all goes to support our beneficiaries' needs.

Next time you give to charity please consider signing a Gift Aid form.

Jessica Knight
Finance Manager
RNRMC

Kitchen comforts

AS many as 500 children and partners of personnel near RNAS Yeovilton can more comfortably enjoy a snack or cuppa following the refurbishment of a crèche's kitchen.

Nearly £2,000 has transformed the tired space at the tri-service Tall Trees Community Centre at Taranto Hill, Ilchester, which is commonly used by the dependents and staff of the nearby Fleet Air Arm base.

From wall tiles and taps to paint and flooring, nothing was left out during the revamp.

For more information about the centre, contact the RNRMC Welfare Information Support Office on 01935 840333 / 01935 455214.



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THE BIG GAME 19.30

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www.medicsrugbychallenge.co.uk

Gift Aid is so worthwhile

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Jessica Knight
Finance Manager
RNRMC



● Caroline Dinenage and Capt Trevor Gulley, front right, with representatives from charities

Picture: L(Phot) Dave Jenkins

Show results worth checking out

WE don't normally publish cheque presentations but we have made an exception as representatives from charities gathered at HMS Sultan to receive cash raised from the base's summer show.

Presented by Sultan's CO Capt Trevor Gulley and Gosport MP Caroline Dinenage, a total of 39 different charities and good causes gained from the show's charity chest by £26,000.

Capt Gulley said: "As always, I am so very proud of every one of my personnel who were involved in supporting the community at the

summer show. We are delighted to celebrate the money raised and its distribution within our community."

The recipients were: 1st Alverstoke Guide Unit, 1st Gosport Scouts, Brockhurst Junior School, Brodrick Hall Alverstoke roof appeal, Brune Park School Lego innovation studio, Children's Honeypot Bus, Elson Youth Orchestra, Goshawks Gymnastics Club, Gosport District Explorer Scouts, Gosport Heritage Open Days, Gosport Lions, Gosport Marine Scene, Gosport Partners Through Pain, Gosport Shed, Gosport Stroke Club, Harbour Cancer Support Centre, Haslar Bosom Buddies, Headway Portsmouth and South

East Hampshire, HMS Sultan Blind Veterans Camp, HMS Sultan Central Amenities Fund, HMS Sultan Local Pensioners Christmas Lunch, HMS Sultan Steam Lorry, HMS Sultan Volunteer Cadet Corps, Kis Family Centre Fareham, Kitbags and Berets Dementia Support Group, Loud and Proud, Marine Engineering Museum, Mayor of Gosport Charity Appeal, Naomi House, Oakley Waterman Caravan Foundation, Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association, Provincial Bus Company, RN Medical Services Memorial, Rowans Hospice, Rowner Junior School, Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, Solent Scorpions Wheelchair Basketball Club, The Historical Diving Society and TS Hornet.



● The walkers are welcomed in Gosport

Warm welcome for wounded walkers

THE Institute of Naval Medicine welcomed a team of wounded veterans during their walk of Britain.

Walking with the Wounded's latest endeavour started in Scotland and will end in London.

The Alverstoke-based institute hosted a welcome reception for the team which was attended by the Mayor and Mayoress of Gosport, Cllr Keith Farr and his wife June.

The Gosport 7th Beaver Group were also present and they were invited to participate in a competition to design Walking With The Wounded flags, with a prize awarded to the best entry. The Beavers waved their specially created flags in a welcome gesture when the Expedition Team arrived at the institute.

The Medical Officer in Charge of the institute, Surg Capt Michael

Howell, said: "The enduring working association between us and Walking With The Wounded is highly treasured by all here and we were particularly pleased that the Mayor and Mayoress of Gosport and the Gosport 7th South Beaver Group joined us to greet the team during their epic journey."

Taking part in the walk was Alec Robotham, 29, from Portsmouth.

He is an ex-Royal Marine who sustained severe injuries inflicted by a suicide bomber on a patrol in Afghanistan in 2010.

He said: "I am still not sure of what path to take in life or who I want to be - but it felt great to be part of WWTW and felt good to have purpose and to be part of something special again."

Further details can be found at www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk/walkofbritain2015/

Hospice focus of Triumph's efforts

HMS TRIUMPH has used her time alongside in her maintenance period to undertake visits with her affiliates and raise money for her affiliated charity in Blackpool.

Brian House Trinity Hospice provides palliative care for children and HMS Triumph's ship's company has visited to carry out work in their grounds twice already this year.

With the submarine in her maintenance period in Faslane rather than her home port of Plymouth, personnel have been able to visit Blackpool much more easily.

Personnel from Triumph organised a charity triathlon, starting in Faslane and ending in Blackpool, in an effort to raise money for Brian House.

The race consisted of a one-mile swim across the Gareloch, a 230-mile cycle through the Lake District and a half marathon through Blackpool.

The triathlon started on a calm but grey morning early on the Gareloch to catch the

slack tide. With a police launch in place as a safety boat and kayaker on hand to lead the way for the swimmers, the event was on. CPO Andy Turton was the only member to have ever participated in an open water swim and led the way from the beginning.

All swimmers were clear of the water after a mere 45 minutes, with those who were going onto the cycle rapidly being transported to HMS Neptune for a hot shower and a change into cycling gear.

PO 'Digger' Gardner said: "An open water swim across the Gareloch is definitely one of the bigger challenges I've taken on in the RN."

"I've never taken part in an open water swim before and this is one that not many people will have ticked off."

With the swim over, the cycle team assembled outside HMS Neptune's supermess. They set off eagerly to make their way south.

After an arduous journey through the Lake District (enjoying the view as much as they

could) they made their way into Blackpool with the weather treating them kindly all the way.

The final stage of the triathlon saw the saddle-sore members of the team running 13.1 miles through Blackpool town centre and along the seaford.

The run ended outside the Town Hall where they were received by the then Mayor of Blackpool, Cllr Valerie Haynes.

Despite the runners not being at their most presentable, they were invited into the council chambers for refreshments.

Triumph returned to the town of Blackpool for Armed Forces weekend to attend the town's parade. They then managed to continue their work in the gardens of Brian House.

Currently, HMS Triumph is taking part in Brian House's Corporate Challenge, where companies are given money by the hospice to 'grow' into as much money as they can.

This brings the total raised by Triumph for the Hospice to almost £2,000 this year and the submarine looks forward to raising more money for the charity in the future.



Pilots opt for road Galas aid fund

FOUR trainee pilots from 703 Naval Air Squadron and their CO switched their Grob Tutors for road bikes to take part in the historic London to Brighton cycle race in aid of Chanctonbury Community Playscheme for special needs children.

Lt Cdr Adam Jones, Lt Sam Kingdon and Sub Lt Leon Halliwell were joined by Flying Officers Ali Fell and Luke Cushen, to take part in the race, which covers 54 miles from Clapham Common through the country lanes of southern England, crossing over Box Hill, Turners Hill and finally the Tour De France-classified climb over Ditchling Beacon.

The main 'Peloton' finished the course in 4hrs 3mins with Flying Officer Luke Cushen finishing in 3hrs 30mins.

Together they raised a total of £655 for the charity.

Sub Lt Halliwell said: "I'm very proud of what we've achieved. It's a bit of a change from aerobatics and it was hard work but this is an excellent charity."

For further details about Chanctonbury Community Playscheme visit www.ccps-sussex.org.uk

PLYMOUTH Royal Navy/Royal Marines Swimming Club held a series of events to raise funds for the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund.

The first event was distance swimming undertaken by the Service children who attend sessions at HMS Drake.

The next event was an annual gala between HMS Drake and HMS Raleigh. The gala always ends in a draw between the two clubs and the evening concludes with a party and a soft drink. Money was raised by running a raffle on completion.

Swimmers at HMS Raleigh challenged HM Royal Marines Band Plymouth to a 1664-metre relay swim.

It was a close race, but the club's swimmers, mainly youngsters, were able to use their honed technical skills to see a victory.

RM Band Cpl Cathy Thompson was the driving force behind the event and over £1,000 was raised.

The annual presentation evening was held at the China Fleet Club. For the four to eight-year-old swimmers a presentation morning was held within HMS Drake and a Christmas party was organised at HMS Raleigh.

The club raised £2,447.48 for the RMCTF.

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App helps in time of need

The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre has created a mobile phone app to help sailors, marines and their families access their services at the touch of a button.

The centre – often referred to in the RN as ‘the casualty cell’ – is a one-stop shop for helping families and Service personnel in the very worst of times such as family crises, medical emergencies and deaths.

It acts as a focal point for casualty administration and notification and requests for compassionate travel for personnel serving overseas.

You can find the app – for Android and iPhones – via the store at www.defencegateway.mod.uk.

And hand-in-hand with the new app, which provides a very simple ‘click-and-call’ facility linking users with the most relevant organisation in the event of an emergency, there are a couple of short online films explaining the JCCC’s work.

See www.gov.uk/guidance/joint-casualty-and-compassionate-centre-jccc for details.

Engineering update

THE first phase of Faraday is coming to a close and the second is beginning to take shape. What does that mean?

Phase 1 workstreams are: Individual Competence Framework (ICF) and Career Development Journals (CDJs), ICF-based career courses, Fast Track, WE/CIS Integration, streaming and new branch badges. The ICF has reached version 5.4 and work on version 5.5 is under way. ICF-based courses continue to be developed with the introduction of the new LET(ME) course from September. The CDJ for ET(ME)s has been formally updated to version 1.1 and is now in use as graduates of the ETICC ET(ME) course enter the Fleet. ET(WE) and ET(WE(CIS)) courses also began in September, with development of the other ICF-compliant courses continuing with new courses scheduled to come online throughout 2016.

Provisional Exam (PE)s guidance and how it works in the ICF framework has been issued in RNTM 271/15. This explains what the PE is, how it works and who it applies to.

Faraday

Finally – and probably the largest update – is the publication of how the General Service Fast Track system will function in the future in RNTM 282/15.

Fast-Track selection will take place only in the training establishments during Phase 2 for ET to LET, with a second FT selection point for LET to POET during LETQC.

Embedding workshops have already begun in Portsmouth and Faraday champions are being created in engineering departments in all PORFLOT areas. Work is under way to do the same in Devonport as well and discussions about Faslane will be held shortly. If your unit has a nominated Faraday champion engage with them and find out about the opportunities embedding has for all of us.

If you have any questions or comments on Programme Faraday, contact WO1 Robbie Robson on 93832 7441 or via e-mail NAVY_ENG_SPT-HUM_CAP_WO1A and the Faraday Intranet site can be found via the A-Z.

Better access to credit

A CREDIT union scheme has been launched by the MOD to help military personnel access safe and affordable finance.

The unions will offer them an easy alternative to banks, building societies and payday lenders.

In the past, some personnel have struggled to get approval for credit, partly due to moving regularly and not being able to build up a good credit rating. Some troops have also been targeted by payday loan companies.

Armed Forces personnel will now be able to save with – and pay off loans from – the credit union through payroll deduction. The payment will come directly from an individual’s salary or pension at source.

Three credit unions (PlaneSaver Credit Union, Police Credit Union and London Mutual Credit Union) will work together to offer the best service for personnel.

For more information see 2015DIB/35.

Make the French

A FEW weeks ago, Paris was the setting for the annual meeting between Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock and his French counterpart, the Director of Naval Personnel (*Direction du Personnel Militaire de la Marine*) Vice Amiral d’Escadre Christophe Prazuck.

As always this is an opportunity to discuss and compare manning issues in our two navies and to develop the bonds that are now well established between the Royal Navy and the Marine Nationale, writes Cdr Gary Criddle.

Our two navies are similar – although the Marine Nationale is larger (39,000 personnel to just over 30,000 in the RN) – but our structures are surprisingly different.

The RN has the classic pyramid manning structure; a ‘bottom-fed’ system with all sailors starting as ABs, progressing through the ranks.

The French Navy favours a ‘sideways entry’ structure akin to the former artificer system and has a substantial senior rate cadre of 15,000 compared with just 6,500 in the RN. So, although our navies have

almost identical capabilities (less Carrier Aviation and Maritime Patrol Aircraft), from a manning point of view, we go about our business very differently. That said we both face the same manning challenges, recruitment, retention (particularly of niche skills), work life balance and high operational tempo.

This year’s meeting focused on the Permanent Exchange Programme between our two navies. The number of permanent navy-to-navy exchanges is increasing to 13 with the addition of an officer

Paris is full of supplies surprise

Logistician Lt Cdr Malcolm Smye is serving with the *service de soutien de la flotte* (fleet support service) in Paris.

“FAR removed from the high-profile operational co-operation, the engineering and logistics support exchange officers work towards improving and harmonising in-service support.

With one Royal Navy exchange officer in Paris, and a Marine Nationale counterpart at DE&S Abbey Wood, information, best practice and spares are regularly exchanged between the two navies.

The exchange officers are employed in the same way as any other officer of the host nation giving the advantage of complete immersion. The Briton regularly visits the naval bases of Toulon and Brest and the French officer visits the UK naval bases of Portsmouth and Devonport.

While both navies do not operate a great number of the same systems, we do operate many *similar* systems, in similar ways and in similar environments. We are also bound by common European standards and legislation, and it is the comparison and bench marking of maintenance policies and practices where real benefits can be achieved. The introduction and development of information systems also provides an opportunity for discussions to establish best practice in system architecture and design.

One recent significant example of these exchanges was the provision of access and information to members of the UK Ship’s Acquisition Team, who are responsible for defining the maintenance policies of the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers. The team met ships’ companies and shore-based support personnel and learned from French experience with both the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle and the very modern, high-voltage, lean-manned Mistral-class amphibious ships, which have many similarities to the Queen Elizabeths.

The French on the other hand have benefitted from considerable UK experience of preparing ships for extended readiness, or reserve, something with which the Marine Nationale is unfamiliar. In preparation for either disposal or storage of a particular vessel, the UK has provided advice and guidance to enable all factors to be considered and an effective cost/benefit analysis carried out and a final decision taken on the ship’s future.

The UK and France are partners in developing the future mine-hunting capability demonstrator. Ultimately a common platform would be the ideal opportunity to optimise support arrangements and spares provision between the two nations, but these projects take time.

The existing minehunting capabilities of both countries may require extending until the new systems enter service and this is an area where ship-life extension experience and obsolescence management is being shared between the two in-service support organisations.

I’m avio

Lt Cdr Adrian Hill (pictured right planning a mission) is a veteran ‘Bagger’ who’s flown operations over Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo, as well as on counter-piracy off the Horn of Africa in Airborne Surveillance and Control Sea Kings. He’s using those experiences on a three-year exchange with France’s flagship.

“THE common misconception of an exchange tour in Toulon is of endless sunny afternoons cycling around the beaches and vineyards of the south of France with a beret and a baguette, regularly stopping in the shade of a palm tree to tuck into some more cheese and wine.

The reality of Charles de Gaulle’s operational schedule has somewhat interrupted this dream, and having completed the second four-month deployment in the French flagship, I am now hard at work planning the next, which leaves at the end of this year.

So by the spring of next year I will have completed three ‘missions’ with the CDG – two of them operational.

The increased military co-operation since 2010 has seen an increase in the number and importance of UK exchange officers; here in Toulon alone we have nine (if you include the helicopter pilot on exchange down the road in Hyères).

From my point of view, fully embedded in the French staff, I couldn’t be closer to the coalface.

Planning for the next CDG mission, I am liaising with her crew, the French military hierarchy, other nations’ Armed Forces for small-scale exercises during the work-up phase and transit to theatre, booking ranges for the air wing to conduct their essential pre-deployment training and a myriad of other little jobs in preparation for the next trip.



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French connection

of the watch and principal warfare officer exchanges.

In addition to these permanent exchanges, there are currently a number of short and non-reciprocal exchanges, the most notable of which are on board the Charles de Gaulle where three RN officers form part of the permanent ship's company. On this side of the Channel, three French engineers will serve aboard RN warships.

The current financial climate means that opportunities to create additional permanent exchanges are currently very

limited but there is very clear intent from both 2SL and DPMM that we must continue to identify opportunities to forge ever deeper links between us.

Both navies are aiming at short exchanges across a range of ranks and branches. Obviously, these will require participants to have a good level of French. To help identify suitable opportunities, CNPS is building a database of all French speakers. If you have a formal qualification or a good level of French from another means such as Rosetta Stone

– or maybe you are half-French and grew up on the other side of the Channel – then email your name, rank, service number and contact details to Cdr Pierre Pellerin (NAVYPERS-CNPSPINTEL501@mod.uk) and myself (gary.criddle.etr@intradef.gouv.fr).

UK/French commitments to the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force and future aircraft carrier co-operation means that if you haven't yet experienced the RN/MN working relationship at first hand, it will certainly be a feature in years to come.

It's a good time in Toulon



arrived and so was already comfortable operating in such a busy air environment, but the process of integration needed to start afresh.

This tiny 'flying camera' was eventually a fully-integrated part of the team, providing the intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance picture that supported the carrier group. It was particularly valuable during choke-point transits and in monitoring the line marking territorial waters – never far away during operations in the Gulf.

Kent did exceptionally in all areas and made a very positive impression on Rear Admiral Eric Chaperone, strengthening the trust and respect between our two navies that is so important as the foundation of our new working relationship as brothers in arms.

So, in a mission that saw the French carrier group operate in support of American-led operation, a British frigate in support of a French carrier group, and four Royal Navy officers serving aboard the Charles de Gaulle supporting operations from the inside, it's fair to say that this truly was a multinational effort.

The last deployment, Operation Arromanches, was the French Navy's contribution to the American-led Operation Inherent Resolve.

We conducted dual carrier operations with USS Carl Vinson, flying missions deep into Iraq. The challenges of operating two large carrier strike groups in such a relatively small seaspace were not inconsiderable, and the missions were flown at range from their 'homeplate', adding a further layer of complexity to the planning process.

But after conducting more than 400 missions over Iraq in both the venerable Super Étendard and the modern Rafale, the mission was declared successful and we all returned to Toulon for pastis and medals.

Arromanches was also unusual in that the CDG was escorted for the majority of the deployment by a British frigate. HMS Kent, ably assisted by her Lynx flight and ScanEagle,

operated under the tactical command of Combined Task Force 473 – the French carrier strike group commander – and later Combined Task Force 50.3 once we integrated into the US command structure.

The mission saw Kent perform a variety of roles from anti-submarine warfare commander to plane guard, where she would trail behind the carrier at nerve-wracking close ranges during the launch and recovery of jets to rescue pilots in the event of an ejection.

In another first for the CDG, the carrier group operated alongside an unmanned aerial vehicle in ScanEagle. Kent had been working with the USS Carl Vinson in the Gulf before we



NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION



The NFF is your federation – we represent the views of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines' families to the chain of command, Government and service providers.

Here's a quick round up of what our staff have been up to over the past month:

■ Our director, Anna Wright has had a busy schedule with visits and meetings up and down the country including Faslane, Rosyth and Yeovilton with marked success and leaps forward in considerations for Naval Families as well as changes in policy.

In addition, Anna gave evidence at her first Armed Forces Pay Review Body, and has attended a broad range of policy meetings in which issues discussed have included mobile phone contracts, pay and allowances, council tax, spousal employment and service pupil premium.

■ We have welcomed two new members of staff: Mick Malone as office and enquiry manager and Frances McCreesh as marketing and communications manager. Mick has jumped straight into the array of enquiries that come into the office, using his 38 years of Naval knowledge with great

Contact NFF

■ 023 9265 4374/admin@nff.org.uk/Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

Or visit www.nff.org.uk for news, our free, quarterly Homeport magazine and monthly e-update.



effect. Working with Ali, our information executive, it is fair to say that they are already a formidable double act.

Frances is managing our social media platforms and working on plans for the NFF's website. She has broken her duck on probably the most terrifying aspect of working for the NFF – by recording her first piece on BFBS which will be broadcast to ships, establishments and units around the globe.

■ After careful planning, the aspiration to appoint three regional posts has become a reality after the funding stream announced by the Chancellor during his visit to our offices in the spring. It will mean our

regional representation will vastly increase; excellent news for Naval families living across the UK.

Jenny Ward and Nicola Thompson who make up our regional team at the moment have been doing a fantastic job up and down the country and are looking forward to welcoming the new additions to their team.

■ Bridget Nicholson, whose work previously has been focused on research and communications for the Armed Forces Covenant, has begun work on the NFF's strategic review, an area which will play to her strengths and really focus our objectives as an organisation.

■ Sarah Woods, editor of our magazine Homeport, has been busy with the creative aspect of her role with plans in full swing for a new look to the publication which will incorporate RMA contributions. Look out for the winter edition.

■ Jane Williams, our deputy director, has been helping our new team members get settled, assisting in a variety of enquiries and even jet-setting over to SHAPE in Belgium to meet families who are located with EJSUE or NATO.

Where to look

RNTMs

RNTM 264/15 Update to flexible working patterns and introduction of additional leave options
RNTM 266/15 Shore Service in ships undergoing long-term maintenance/upkeep
RNTM 267/15 Introduction of the Divisional Officer and Troop Commander dashboard and guidance on the requirement for 3RO on SJARS
RNTM 273/15 Logistics Branch promotion eligibility for CPO (all specs) – temporary adjustment of seniority required for consideration by the 2015 Logistics Branch CPO Promotion Board
RNTM 272/15 Engineering Technician

(Weapon Engineer Submarines) Updated interim Fast Track Selection for LETQC Including Source Branch CISSM Personnel (supersedes RNTM 213/14)
RNTM 271/15 Faraday – Guidance on the use of Provisional Examinations within the Individual Competence Framework and revised career progression for Engineering (General Service)
RNTM 270/15 Faraday – Revised Promotion Flowcharts for ME and WE (General Service)
RNTM 282/15 Faraday – Introduction of Engineering General Service Fast Track Scheme
RNTM 290/15 HM Forces BFPO Christmas Families Free Mail Service (CFFMS)

RNTM 292/15 Deployment Welfare Package

Galaxy briefs

21-2015 2SL Rebalancing RN manpower 19-2015 New Employment Model (NEWM): Update to flexible working patterns and introduction of additional leave options
18-2015 Compass: The Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Network of the Naval Service

DINS

DIN 2015DIN01-188 Administrative Sanctions following a security breach by RN/RM personnel



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American exchange for Jess

A SEA Cadet from Sheffield unit spent part of her summer representing the UK Corps at an international exchange in the United States.

Jessica France (above) flew to Rhode Island, on the Eastern Seaboard, where she met up with local cadets as well as youngster from, *inter alia*, Canada, Sweden and New Zealand.

Over the course of the two weeks cadets went kayaking, took part in team-building exercises and even got the opportunity to visit New York.

Jess threw herself fully into the exchange, fully participating in activities and getting to know colleagues from other countries – so much so that she received the ‘Honor Cadet Award’ for the UK contingent.

Jess said: “I would recommend the exchange to all cadets.

“In the two weeks I was away I visited and lived on US naval bases, I learned about different cultures, and most importantly I matured as a person.

“On the trip I had to make sure I was always on time, looking smart and prepared for anything.

“These are skills I can take with me when I join the Royal Navy in the coming years.

“The exchange is something I will never forget.”

Torbay chief feted by unit

TORBAY unit have paid tribute to their CO as he prepares for a new role within the Corps.

Lt (SCC) Stephen Skingle RNR was feted at an event at the unit’s HQ in the Paignton Army Reserve Centre.

The officer is standing down after 17 years in charge, and will be succeeded by Lt Cdr (SCC) Derek Payne RNR.

During his time in command, more than 400 young people have benefited from Lt Skingle’s unceasing commitment and dedication to the Sea Cadets.

He has escorted cadets countless times on voyages on the Sea Cadets’ offshore vessels, and has developed the unit’s band into a much sought-after outfit for parades and carnivals in Torbay.

Lt Skingle is moving on to offer his training expertise to other units in Devon District.

Phoebe ceremony

FORMER Royal Yachtsman (or ‘Yottie’) Rodney Coffin is to be ordained as a priest this month – and is in line to become padre for Bournemouth unit.

The Open Episcopal Church ceremony, conducted by Bishop Jonathan Blake, the Archbishop of Greater London, will take place on the quarterdeck of TS Phoebe on Saturday November 7.

Rodney, who served in HM/Y Britannia from June 1971 until July 1979, has been asked to consider becoming chaplain for Bournemouth when the present incumbent retires – “this I have deemed an honour and will increase my ministry in a church without walls,” he said.

Capital appeal backs replacement yachts

THE Sea Cadets have received a huge boost towards their target of raising £1m to replace the charity’s two offshore yachts.

The incoming Lord Mayor of the City of London, Alderman Lord Mountevans, has confirmed that Sea Cadets is one of the two main beneficiaries of his 2015-16 Appeal.

Fundraising will start in earnest after the Lord Mayor’s Parade through the City of London on Saturday November 14.

For several years hundreds of London Area Sea Cadets have taken part in the parade with a float, marching band and platoons.

Other beneficiaries of the appeal have seen £1m raised over the 12 months, and whatever is raised will help to replace the charity’s two Tradewind 35ft yachts, as they are approaching the end of their serviceable life.

The two yachts have, over the past 16 years, given 4,600 young people a transformational voyage

at sea, offering a unique learning experience as they work together as a team to navigate Britain’s coastline.

With Sea Cadets, young people can earn accredited nautical qualifications and build up practical, nautical experience through courses and training.

This can help young people to both access a career in the maritime sector, of which there are currently 263,000 people in the UK employed in the industry that contributes £32bn to the country’s economy, or support them in other work options through the life-skills set they will achieve as a cadet – confidence, self-belief, self-discipline, team working and leadership.

Martin Coles, CEO at Sea Cadets, said: “Thank you to the Lord Mayor Elect and his wife for choosing Sea Cadets as one of the beneficiaries for this year’s appeal.

“This is a monumental step forward for the charity to achieve our dream of offering 14,000 Sea Cadets, including the 1,705 cadets from London, the opportunity to experience a life-changing voyage on one of our

new modernised yachts.

“It’s not just a sense of achievement an offshore voyage brings, but the gradual and long-term sense of confidence and belief it brings. This lays foundation for future success in whatever career path they choose.”

The Lord Mayor of the City of London is one of the oldest continuously elected civic offices in the world with the first Lord Mayor being inaugurated in 1189 – Lord Mountevans is the 688th.

The Lord Mayor Elect was educated at the Nautical College Pangbourne, as it was originally known.

He joined shipbrokers Clarksons as a graduate trainee in the early 1970s, and is a member of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers.

More recently he chaired the government’s Maritime Growth Study, which examined how the UK should maintain and enhance its position as a leading maritime centre.

He has been Chairman of Maritime UK since 2014, and is Chairman of Maritime London.



● Capt Phil Russell at the helm of an ASC dinghy

Captain oversees trophy transfer

BARROW-in-Furness welcomed Capt Phil Russell to their unit, where the Captain Sea Cadets formally presented a prestigious award to representatives of the host unit and a visiting group.

The Cleverly Award for the Best Junior Section was a joint win by Ashington unit (Northern Area) and Barrow

RNA visitors

THE branch committee of the City of Glasgow Royal Naval Association were invited to the Clydebank unit for their inspection and prizegiving.

The inspecting officer was Capt Peter Adams, accompanied by Cdr Hugh Barris (HMS Scotia).

The evening ended with the prizegiving and the RNA trophy was presented to the cadet of the year. S/M Brian Mackenzie presented a cheque to Lt Cdr George Troupe for cadet funds.

unit (North West).

A joint Juniors weekend was held at Barrow’s residential facility, the Sir John Fisher Sailing Centre.

The weekend also marked the occasion when the trophy was transferred from Barrow to Ashington.

Over the weekend cadets took part in sailing, powerboating and other activities, while fun activities – including a disco – were just as important.

Capt Russell blew the cobwebs off his dinghy sailing skills and helmed one of the ASCs.

A formal presentation of the trophy took place where the Captain presented the trophy to CPO Alwyn John, OIC of the Junior Section at Barrow unit, and CPO Pauline Finlay, CO of Ashington unit.

The Cleverly award is presented annually to the unit which is considered to have the best Junior Section nationally.

Ground-breaking cadet

SEA Cadet Bethany Molyneux helped Dame Penelope Keith break new ground for a national Remembrance Centre in Staffordshire.

Ten-year-old Beth was on duty at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, part of the Royal British Legion.

The new centre is required as a result of the arboretum’s rapid growth in popularity, its increased national significance and a desire to attract new visitors.

During the event Dame Penelope, a member of the arboretum’s Fundraising Appeal Council, read out a message of support from the patron of the project, the Duke of Cambridge, which spoke of how this development provides an exciting new addition to a

“very special place”.

In front of an audience of supporters, trustees and the project team, Beth shared her moving poem explaining why she wears a poppy in memory of her father.

Lt Cdr Ian Molyneux was shot and killed on board HMS Astute while the submarine was berthed in Southampton in April 2011.

Having successfully raised £10.7m towards its £15.7m fundraising goal, the arboretum is starting construction work in order to complete the project by late 2016.

The Remembrance Centre is designed to inspire, inform and educate up to 500,000 visitors per year, including up to 25,000 schoolchildren on organised visits.

Trio attend island carnival

THREE members of New Romney Sea Cadet Band spent a week in Jersey enjoying the company of local cadets and joining in activities.

The highlight was performing during the ‘Battle of Flowers’ carnival – and their performances have won them return invitations.

Following their RN Inspection in the summer, New Romney has been awarded a pennant for progress made by the unit in the past year.

The pennant was presented to the Officer-in-Charge, PO (SCC) Mark Godden, by unit president Alderman Wood-Brignall.

PO Godden then made two presentations, one to a Junior Cadet of a Commodore’s Broad Pennant, and the other to Civilian Instructor Steve Denney who was appointed Petty Officer; Mr Denney recently completed a training week in Portsmouth.

Festival success for Weymouth



SEA Cadets from Weymouth unit helped visitors stay safe at Waterfest 2015 across the town’s harbour.

Thousands of people soaked up the sunshine and atmosphere at the weekend festival, which celebrated Weymouth’s maritime heritage.

Along with staff from the Sea Cadet Training Centre, Weymouth youngsters assisted organisers by providing safety cover afloat for waterborne displays.

The unit’s new marketing gazebo was on display, while teams of cadets undertook a rowing machine challenge (pictured left), completing

the length of the Suez Canal (194km) within the two days and featuring regularly on media broadcasts.

The Minions tombola was manned by Junior and NECs, and a lucky dip for small children proved so popular they eventually ran out of prizes.

Offshore training ship TS Jack Petchey was berthed in Weymouth Harbour and the CO permitted tours of the vessel, escorted by Weymouth cadets, which proved a popular attraction.

And to top it all, the weekend’s activities raised not just the profile of the unit, but a grand total of £1,350 for unit funds.



● Lt (SCC) Phil Pether (right) receives his medal from Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell

Medal is reward for 50 years

A SEA Cadet stalwart has been rewarded for his contribution and loyalty with a Captain’s Medal for 50 years of service to the Corps.

Lt (SCC) Phil Pether RNR joined Oxford unit in 1964 following 15 years of service with the British Army.

‘Fenders’, as he is affectionately known by all, spent 30 years there, 12 of them as First Lieutenant, before moving to open Abingdon unit in 1993, spending 20 years in command.

He then handed over the reins and moving into a district position within Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

In 2013 Phil transferred to 800 NAS SCC in Kettering, and now assists with the band and afloat training.

Capt (SCC) Marc Pether RMR, Commanding Officer of 800 NAS – Phil’s son – said: “It is a great honour to see my father receive the medal today from the Captain.

“Having spent all my life seeing my father give so much to the Corps it was a fitting way to reward him for his efforts.”

Best yet by Salisbury

SALISBURY unit recorded its best year to date at the National Combined Regatta, with 14 of the 23 competitors returning with gold medals.

With six teams progressing through Wessex District level and then Southern Area level to get to the National Finals, the cadets could be seen practising hard at Churchill Gardens on the River Avon in recent months.

And the hard work paid off when four of the teams – the Rowing Boat Handling squad, Open Mixed Yole pair, Junior Mixed Yole pair and Junior Boys Rowing team headed back to Wiltshire as national champions.

The Open Girls Cross Stream Challenge team were also on the podium, bagging silver medals, while the Junior Girls Rowing squad came fourth.

Stratford gold

STRATFORD-on-Avon unit finally struck gold at the National Combined Regatta in London – believed to be a first for the unit, and the first in 40 years for Warwickshire district.

Representing South West Area at the Docklands regatta, the unit took a silver in the Open Girls Kayak Cross Stream, then the boys won all three of their tough rowing races to gain gold medals.

What made it special was that the team finished on a high – after three years of rowing together one member has left to join the Army so a new crew will take up the challenge next year.

Pulling together for event

SEA Cadets from across Northern Ireland were at the forefront of the international stage with the European tug-of-war competition being held in Belfast, while Sea Cadets were the official charity for the 2015 Belfast Tattoo.

The European Tug-of-War competition attracted 1,500 competitors from 16 countries, and the Sea Cadets were there to assist with the medal, opening and closing ceremonies.

Event organiser David Wilson said: "Words wouldn't do the Sea Cadets justice – every one of them was fantastic."

"They looked the part and did a great job, and even got lost sometimes in the occasion. Outstanding."

The cadets from Northern Ireland were constantly on the go over the weekend, and when not at the tug of war, the cadets were at the SSE Arena helping with the collection.

They took the opportunity to watch the 2015 Belfast Tattoo, which included performances from the Royal Marines Band.

Development worker Neal Somerville said: "To have the Sea Cadet Colour being paraded through the SSE Arena in Belfast with the cadets watching on was a great achievement, and gave all a real sense of pride."

"We cannot thank the Belfast Tattoo enough for allowing us to be apart of this major event in the heart of Belfast."

"To see so many young people getting involved with the Sea Cadets, and getting the opportunity to be involved with major events, gives them a sense of being involved with the local community, and allows them to gain new skills, and all while challenging themselves to do new things and make new friends."

Admiral back at former unit

A RAINY evening did not spoil the enthusiasm of Loughborough cadets when Rear Admiral John Kingwell officiated at the unit's RN Parade.

Parents and friends turned out in force to celebrate the achievements of the cadets, who put on displays of catering, stewarding, meteorology, navigation, communications and first aid.

At the end of the evening the Admiral, a former Sea Cadet himself, who attended Loughborough unit as a volunteer staff member while at university in the town in the 1980s, presented awards and promotions and then addressed the ship's company and guests, saying how much he appreciated the Sea Cadets and the work put in by the volunteers.

District date

GOSPORT unit Sea Cadets and staff supported the annual District Parade at Caffyns Field in Littlehampton.

Gosport hosted the event themselves last year, at the Royal Marines Museum at Eastney in Portsmouth.

Among the VIPs who inspected the cadets were Surg Capt Walsh and Town Mayor Cllr Marian Ayres.

LC Ben Barry, who was awarded his Gold Wings qualification on the day, said how proud he was of all the Cadets as marching on grass is never easy and everyone managed to keep in step.



That's our boat!

RS SAILING has unveiled its innovative new Quest dinghy – and Sea Cadets played their part in the final design.

The dinghy (above), revealed at the Southampton Boat Show in September, was designed by Jo Richards and RS Sailing in conjunction with Sea Cadets.

The Corps were looking for

a more modern answer to their training programmes, with less maintenance and provision of more versatility across all levels of sailing.

And RS Sailing were seeking an opportunity to create a smaller vessel that would encourage family sailing and get more young people on the water.

Together they created a vessel

that matches both ambitions.

"Working with the Sea Cadets to develop a new boat to replace the ageing fleet has been great," said Alex Southon, MD Technical & Operations at RS Sailing.

"I really believe the RS Quest will be an excellent addition to the Sea Cadet fleet."

Cadets were involved in all

aspects of development and gave first-hand feedback to help shape the design of the dinghy.

That included making sure it is light enough to manoeuvre with confidence, can hold up to four people, and offers a simple yet effective symmetric spinnaker for versatile use in enclosed waters.

The boat may also be sailed with an asymmetric spinnaker.

At just over 14ft long, the Quest sits between the award-winning and internationally-recognised RS Feva, predominantly sailed by youth for training and racing, and the larger family dinghy, the RS Vision.

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell said: "RS Sailing are leaders in boat development and products."

"It's a great honour and achievement for Sea Cadets to have been part of the team that developed this boat, which will go on to be sold across the world to sailing schools and organisations, and an incredible opportunity to put to the test what we know about sailing – getting the chance to develop from the ground up to testing it in trials on the water has given us, and the young people we support, an incredible learning opportunity."

The RS Quest, which is also aimed at the recreational sailing market, is sold ready-to-sail at just over £5,000.

www.rssailing.com/en/explore/rs-quest

Millwall support local hero

BACK in the 19th Century, on the sea wall on the south-west Isle of Dogs in London, seven windmills were built to handle grain transported along the Thames, and the area became known as Millwall.

The local football club – originally Millwall Rovers – moved across the river in 1910 to the Den, in New Cross, and more recently (in 1993) relocated nearby to a new Den in South Bermondsey.

The closest Sea Cadet unit to the League 1 club is Southwark, and Sea Cadets from the unit were invited, together with personnel from HMS Collingwood, to assist at a fundraising event at the Den for the planned Albert McKenzie VC memorial, to be erected in Tower Bridge Road, a short distance from the unit HQ.

The party, led by PO Joshua McBride, raised over £2,200 on the day, and stayed to watch the league match between Millwall and Southend United as a reward for their efforts (the Lions lost 2-0).

Albert Edward McKenzie was born on October 23 1898 and lived in Shorncliffe Road, Southwark – the family were known to be regular followers of Millwall.

He joined the Royal Navy as an Able Seaman during World War 1.

On April 23 1918 – St George's Day – the Royal Navy mounted a raid to block the Belgian port of Zeebrugge – a route to the sea for German

submarines – and Albert was in charge of a machine gun in a storming party.

Despite being severely wounded in the bloody action, McKenzie's bravery, courage and fortitude, along with his comrades, ensured the mission became a huge morale-booster in Britain, though the outcome was far from successful – German U-boats were hindered for a matter of days at most.

After the raid, sailors from HMS Vindictive and HMS Daffodil were balloted (the first time this happened) and chose McKenzie to receive a Victoria Cross.

He received his medal from King George V, but while recovering from his wounds McKenzie died of flu in October 1918 during the pandemic.

Scout Hall decorated

A TEAM of eight members of 217 Flight from Yeovilton air station travelled to the Scout Hall of the 11th Barry Sea Scout Group under the Help in the Community scheme, thanks to an initial approach by the Barry branch of the RBL.

The sailors helped decorate the hall, and boosted the youngsters efforts to join the three other Sea Scout groups who hold official Royal Navy recognition.

Glorious reward for Muddy Race helpers

THE Muddy Race for Life, in aid of various cancer charities, took place in Cardiff's Cooper's Field, earlier this year.

And having assisted at the main event a few weeks previously, by rapidly and efficiently distributing drinks, snacks and medals at the finishing line, Cardiff Sea Cadets were requested by the event's organisers to reprise their performance, and of course they did so with their usual enthusiasm.

As the event's title implies, one of the features of the Muddy Race for Life is a slide, just prior to the finishing line, with a large pool of muddy water at the bottom where the participants get free beauty treatment in the form of a rather large mud pack.

So, after the event was concluded, the cadets were invited to partake of this "wonderfully invigorating experience" for free – the result of which pictured right...



Hectic period for Avonmouth

THE Cadets of Avonmouth unit are drawing breath after a very busy and successful summer.

Despite being one of the smaller Sea Cadet units in Bristol, the cadets travelled across the country learning new skills, gaining qualifications and taking part in high-profile events.

In just six weeks they managed to achieve nearly 30 qualifications between them, including two at an advanced level in seamanship and first aid.

Looking back over the summer, the cadets have (deep breath...) been rowing, kayaking, power boating, sailing, had a Junior Sea Cadet training day, been camping in Chelwood, improved their tennis skills, held a family fun day, visited the Portishead RNLI station, attended two VJ Day parades, spent some time with the Royal Navy, saw some blue sky and sunshine (briefly!) walking in the mountains in North Wales, went on offshore voyages on yachts and tall ships, did seamanship training and built a giant for the Goram Carnival.

Two of the younger cadets spent a week at HMS Raleigh learning how to sail, drive a power boat and go rowing.

Combined with some specialisation training, they gained eight qualifications between them over the summer.

The unit is also celebrating the award of a pennant on their annual inspection.

The Officer-in-Command, PO (SCC) Steph Morris, said: "It is a huge achievement for the unit to move from being near to closure at the start of the year to being only a few points off a burgee."

"With cadet numbers almost doubling in the past six months, we're now looking to recruit more adult volunteers to get involved."

Cheque given to Gosport

GOSPORT unit has taken delivery of a cheque for £1,350 thanks to their efforts at a social event.

Cadets acted as waiters, waitresses and general helpers at the annual berth holders party at Haslar Marina – and the berth holders were so pleased with the cadets' performance that they decided to make a donation.

Ben Lippiett, Haslar Marina Manager, handed the cheque to AC Harry Salmon at the Southampton Boat Show in September.

Unit president Capt Gavin Pritchard said they were very grateful for the support.

No decision has yet been made on how the money will be spent, but one option is to purchase a Yole so that the cadets could learn sliding seat rowing techniques.

Veteran mourned

A WAR veteran who dedicated himself to a Scottish unit has died at the age of 89.

Lt Cdr Jim Atkinson RNR joined the Navy during World War 2 – he was drafted just a day after getting married – and left in 1946, switching to the Reserves.

His first association with the Sea Cadet Corps came in 1959, and in 1962 he assumed command of Methil unit.

He retired in 1993 but remained involved with the unit in the role of president.

Methil cadets were on duty at Lt Cdr Atkinson's funeral service, including the folding of the flag that covered his coffin.

Arctic Star for Tubby

ONE of the highlights of the 28th HMS Ocean Association reunion in Stafford was the posthumous award of an Arctic Star campaign medal to the family of Stanley Guise.

Stanley – affectionately known as ‘Tubby’ to his shipmates – joined the Royal Navy in 1942 at the age of 17 and served in carriers until his demob in 1950.

During the war Tubby, who died in 2012 aged 87, completed 14 Arctic convoys in escort carriers HMS Vindex and Campania.

Post-war he served in Ocean from 1947-49 as an armourer with 816 Naval Air Squadron.

The Arctic Star was presented to Tubby’s son Adrian by guest of honour Capt Bob Turner, the first CO of the current Ocean.

The reunion, at the Tillington Hall Hotel, was well-attended, and members and guests enjoyed a bus trip to Liverpool waterfront in glorious weather.

EVERY year, in late September, members of the Charybdis and Limbourne Association travel to Guernsey to remember their shipmates and relatives, lost at sea in October 1943, when the two ships were attacked by Germans off the French coast.

This year was no exception when on the last weekend of September, 55 Association members, including a handful of survivors, attended the memorial service.

Of the nine known survivors five attended this year’s gathering – all now in their 90s but still quite active.

The bodies of 21 sailors from the ill-fated Charybdis were washed up around the island and are buried at Le Foulon Cemetery, St Peter Port, in designated war graves.

At 3pm on the Sunday afternoon of their remembrance weekend, association members gathered together with Guernsey

people, for a memorial service.

Several of those attending remembered being at the original funeral as children in November 1943.

At that time the island was occupied by German forces who forbade locals to attend the funeral – but 5,000 islanders ignored the order and attended.

The subsequent gathering, hosted by the Guernsey Association of Royal Navy and Royal Marines, has been taking place annually since 1947, when the association was formed by former wartime Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel who had served in the war.

Following the first memorial service a pledge was made by the association’s president to the island’s Bailiff [chief justice] that the service would be held annually for as long as people wanted it.

In the early 1970s the Charybdis and Limbourne Association was formed, and members have been attending

the weekend ever since.

GARN&RM will continue to hold these weekends, as has been done for over 70 years, for as long as people want to remember.

For anyone who would like to know more about the loss of these ships, there is a recommended book called *HMS Charybdis & Limbourne Chronicle, Channel Islands 1943*.

Part 1 was the work of Sam

Clapp, who died before he could complete it.

Sam’s friend and colleague, local maritime historian Capt John Wallbridge MN, completed and produced the book and copies are available.

For more information on how to obtain a copy please email David Amory, President GARNRM, at daba@cwgsy.net

Memory lives on



● Lauren Parsons, of Victory Squadron, is reunited with Garth Wright, 95, whom she met during the Dunkirk crossing event in May

Belfast rendezvous

A GROUP of Britons who were interned in Shanghai as children during the war gathered on board HMS Belfast in London – thereby recreating a party hosted by the ship in the Far East 70 years ago.

After years of living in Japanese-run camps, where hunger was a daily struggle, on October 1 1945 the young internees were welcomed aboard the cruiser to celebrate the end of the war, and treated to jellies, cake and chocolate, as well as the chance to play on swings and slides constructed by the crew.

Director of HMS Belfast Phil

Reed said: “We are honoured to welcome back these internees to the decks of HMS Belfast in the year we’re commemorating the end of the Second World War.

“Seven decades ago these children were welcomed with a party aboard HMS Belfast, bringing laughter and celebration after years of internment in Shanghai.

“We felt it was important to reunite a group of these internees to share and preserve their stories, which illustrate the scale and impact of the Second World War on British civilians beyond stories.”

Veterans cruise on Thames

FIVE members of staff and 20 ratings from Victory Squadron (VS), the warfare training squadron at HMS Collingwood, attended the annual Association of Dunkirk Little Ships’ (ADLS) Veterans Cruise hosted by the Thames Motor Yacht Club.

The Collingwood team assisted with erecting a marquee and other preparations for the weekend, then helped host more than 75 veterans from more recent conflicts such as Korea and the Falklands.

After a short blessing by ex-Naval Chaplain Revd Gordon Warren, and an address by Charlie Ramsay (grandson of Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, who was responsible for the successful execution of Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of Dunkirk) the veterans embarked the ADLS for a cruise down the Thames to Teddington and back.

After a reception buffet the ratings of VS performed a version of a Ceremonial Sunset.

The following day veterans from theatres including Dunkirk, D-Day, Arctic Convoys and Bomber Command were hosted, sailing upriver to Weybridge Mariners Club for a 1940s entertainment and themed lunch before returning in vintage cars.

WO1 Mark ‘Fish’ Fisher said: “The individuals I have met this weekend are a benchmark of all that is great about our Armed Forces.

“Once again the Victory Squadron motto ‘Inspired by history to train for the future’ has been more than fulfilled.”

Victory Squadron has been affiliated with ADLS since 2007. In May 1940 the little ships were predominantly manned by Royal Navy ratings from Chatham and Portsmouth throughout Operation Dynamo.

Taranto raid remembered

WAFU veterans, Naval aviators and air stations are this month marking the 75th anniversary of the Fleet Air Arm’s most revered action – the Battle of Taranto.

The action saw 21 Fairey Swordfish flying from HMS Illustrious on the night of November 11-12 1940 and attacking a battle fleet in the port of Taranto in the south-east of Italy.

The biplanes, between them carrying torpedoes, bombs and flares, attacked in two waves; two aircraft were lost with two crewmen being captured and two

dying in the wreckage of their Swordfish.

But the Italians paid a heavy price – almost 60 men died as one battleship was sunk, two more severely damaged, and further damage done to two heavy cruisers.

The raid – the first carrier-launched attack on warships using aircraft alone, and designed to help protect Allied convoys from Italian attacks – demonstrated the superiority of air power over naval big guns, and has become the red-letter day in Fleet Air Arm calendars.



Lunch on a liner

MEMBERS of the Southampton Royal Naval Officers Association celebrated the group’s 50th anniversary with a tour and lunch on board Cunard liner Queen Mary 2 (pictured above).

The 70-strong association, which welcomes as full members all RN and RNR officers serving or retired, including WRNS, QARNNS and RM, holds two dinners a year at the Southampton University Officers’ Training Corps HQ in Carlton Place and monthly evening lecture meetings during the winter at the Royal Southampton Yacht Club.

The origins of the group date back to 1947, when the Southampton Unit Royal Naval

Supplemental Reserve was reformed after the war and met in HMS Wessex.

At that time it held lecture meetings combined with a social programme.

It was announced in March 1965 that due to Defence economies the RNSVR would be closed down, and suitable officers were to be transferred to the RNR.

Some refused to accept the reality of being disbanded, and with the support of the CO of HMS Wessex, the Southampton Royal Naval Officers Association was formed – the first such association.

The inaugural meeting was held in Wessex in May 1965. www.srnoa.org.uk



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This year marks the 150th anniversary of The Royal Alfred Seafarers’ Society, a maritime charity based in Banstead, Surrey.

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● S/M Lucy Lawson

Ely mourns S/M Lucy

CITY of ELY branch has lost one of its most senior members with the death of S/M Lucy Lawson at the age of 97.

Lucy, who died in August, was a former member of the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service (RNXS) between 1971 and 1983.

She was also a war widow – her husband, a leading seaman, was lost in the submarine HMS Snapper in 1941.

Lucy was a former member of Sheerness and Sittingbourne branch and latterly a member of City of Ely.

Christmas cards on sale

RNA CHRISTMAS cards are available from HQ in two different designs, featuring either HMS Victory or a snowy RNA Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Packs of ten cards, including envelopes, at £5 each can be ordered from Semaphore Tower; orders should be accompanied by a cheque or payment details for the total value – see the online circular at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk for details.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our September edition (right) was ordered as HMS Bittern, but saw war service as HMS Enchantress.

The correct answers were provided by Mr M Thomson, of Fife, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's mystery vessel (above), was launched in Belfast in September 1954 as a fleet replenishment tanker for the Royal Australian Navy, but events conspired to put her in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary until 1962, when she was commissioned by the Australians.

She served with her new masters until paying off at the end of 1985, being scrapped in Taiwan in early 1987.

1) What was her name when she served in the RFA, and 2) under what name did she serve in the Royal Australian Navy?

We have removed her name from the image.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building,

Plaque is in place – 55 years later...

A BRASS plaque which commemorates links with a former Royal Navy air station has finally been placed in Winchester Cathedral – 55 years after it was first

proposed.

The White Ensign of HMS Ariel was laid up in the cathedral in 1960 when the establishment was relocated to Lee-on-the-Solent.

Ariel (or, strictly speaking,

Abbey service

A SPECIAL choral evensong service in Pershore Abbey was organised by Pershore and District branch of the Royal British Legion to commemorate the 70th anniversary of VJ Day.

Supported by the local branch of the RNA, Sea Cadets and a number of veterans, the service included the laying of a special poppy wreath at the war memorial in the abbey by World War 2 veteran Phil Cummings, escorted by two cadets.

During the reading of the Exhortation the standards of the ex-Service associations were dipped in honour of all those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the 1939-45 conflict.

Guests then enjoyed afternoon tea in St Andrew's Parish Hall, where they were entertained with music from the 1940s.

Local RBL chairman Ken Tallis said: "This has been a very moving and poignant end to all our commemorations in Pershore to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War."

He added: "It has been a privilege to attend all these services and I hope that those

who lived and served during the atrocities feel that their efforts have been remembered with dignity and honour.

"I would like to thank all the stalwart members of both the Royal British Legion, Women's Section and RNA for all their continued hard work and the support they give to Remembrance services year in, year out."

Ariel II) was the last of three Naval establishments on the site starting with HMS Kestrel in 1939 – which itself was the Naval version of RAF station Worthy Down, an airfield for the Royal Flying Corps and RAF since 1918.

Kestrel was put into care and maintenance in 1950, and took the name HMS Ariel in 1952, when it took over the role of air electrical school from its predecessor in Warrington.

The final few months of its life, in 1959-60, were spent as Ariel II as the main school moved to the Hampshire coast.

When the ensign was handed to the cathedral a plaque was planned to commemorate the link, but there the matter lay

until 2011, when the scheme was resurrected.

A plaque has now been placed on a pillar next to the White Ensign, noting that the flag had been presented to the Dean and Chapter by the ship's company of Ariel on October 21 1960 "in gratitude for the goodwill accorded by the citizens of Winchester to all who served at Worthy Down."

One former member of the ship's company, ex-CAEA(R) David Lee, said: "Thanks are due to all members of cathedral staff who made this plaque possible and, in particular, Mrs G Jarvis, Personal Assistant to the Dean, who co-ordinated efforts throughout the procedure."



● Peter Allen with the ashes of his father, also Peter, stowed in the fuselage of the Fly Navy Historic Trust's Sea Vixen at Yeovilton

Last wish fulfilled by jet flight

THE last wish of a Navy veteran who died in August was realised in the skies over the Channel Islands.

The last wish of former CPO Electrician Albert 'Peter' Allen, who died at the age of 85, was to fly in a Royal Navy aircraft – and the Sea Vixen team at RN Air Station Yeovilton were happy to oblige.

Peter's son – also Peter, who is also a former matelot – travelled to the Somerset air base with his wife Sharon and his father's ashes.

Thanks to the efforts of Steve Collier, pilot Simon Hargreaves, Brian Johnstone, Terry Witt, Keith Copus, Will and Max Bond, the ashes were loaded into the fuselage of the de Havilland Sea

Vixen of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust.

Then, as Peter and Sharon watched from Yeovilton's control tower, Sea Vixen FAW2 XP924 soared into the air and headed across the Channel to put in a display at the Jersey Air Show.

The couple were also given a tour of the hangar of the Royal Navy Historic Flight, which the Trust helps to support, and made a donation to the Trust in recognition of their co-operation.

Peter Senior had worked on Sea Vixens – the Fleet Air Arm's distinctive twin-boom carrier-borne fighter which served between 1959 and 1972 – during the 1960s.

Seminar list

SPEAKERS at the next Welfare Seminar will include the RNBT, the White Ensign Association and Seafarers UK.

The seminar will be held on March 18 at the Crown Hotel in Weymouth.

The correct accommodation booking form can be found at the end of the September Circular – all applications need to be made through the method shown on the form, and not to Headquarters.

Free offer

A REVIEW of costs means that there will be no charge for Headquarters Open Days next year.

Shipmates are advised to keep an eye on the Circular for the 2016 dates, which should be finalised shortly – and also to book early, as the places go like hot cakes.

Paper circular is finished

DISTRIBUTION of the paper version of the RNA Circular is to end in March next year – and those branches who fail to provide an email address are likely to miss out in future.

National Council members have been gathering branch secretary or branch contact email details, and so far around 90 per cent are covered.

The association is now in a period of parallel running, with hard copy and electronic versions distributed up to and including the March 2016 edition.

If all goes well it will switch entirely to electronic, saving the association £15,000 a year in production and postage charges.

The new electronic communications system will not only be cheaper, but should be more efficient and quicker, and can be used to let members know about important news and information, such as the recent change in the payment arrangements of war pensions.

HQ staff will work with branches (and their Area officers in the first instance) which have problems to see what can be done to help them go online.

Those worried about the cost of printing the Circular at branch level are advised that the best option is to send it to branch members electronically, or only print the parts that are needed.

The Circular is always published on the RNA website first so shipmates can read, download or print it themselves.

If printing costs are a concern, contact HQ, and National Council Members can offer advice.

Instructors' dinner date

A DINNER is to be held this month to mark the 60th anniversary of the Anti-Submarine Warfare Instructors Association.

The meal will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel in Southsea on Saturday November 14.

The group's annual general meeting will be held earlier the same day.

Further details about the dinner, and the association, can be found at www.aswi.co.uk

↓ 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

MYSTERY PICTURE 249

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

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South West gathering

CHRISTCHURCH and District hosted a meeting of more than 50 shipmates representing 19 branches from South West Area.

Staged at the Pokesdown and Southbourne Ex-Servicemen's Club, the gathering was endorsed by the presence of the mayors of Bournemouth and Christchurch. Shipmates of Christchurch branch were congratulated on the 50th anniversary of the branch, and the success of their recruitment efforts – they have more than doubled their membership in the past three years.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Christchurch, Cllr Fred and Barbara Neale, stayed for the whole meeting, and after helping draw the raffle enjoyed tea and cakes.

Derek bows out

THE chairman of Warwick branch might have a little more time to devote to RNA matters, now that he has retired after 36 years of civic duties.

S/M Derek Fletcher joined the town council as Assistant Mace Bearer in 1979, and on the retirement of the main man Derek assumed the responsibility.

Former Ganges Boy Derek served in battleships HMS Howe and Anson, and went on to serve in Malaya and Korea as a seaman gunner in HMS St Brides Bay.

Appropriately for a weapons specialist, Derek also represented the Royal Navy at Bisley on several occasions.

See you in 2017...

IN 2011 a small group who had served with Cdr Hames in HMS Plymouth and HMS Berwick (1974-75) decided to try to organise a reunion.

Their efforts were rewarded when, two years later, 38 members of the ships' companies

– Plymicks – accompanied by 19 wives, came together again. – in most cases, 38 years after they had last met.

This was such a popular event that another reunion took place earlier in the autumn at the Toorak Hotel in Torquay.

On arrival, Peter Hames was

reminded of his last visit to the town in 1953 when the Home Fleet gathered at Torquay to welcome home the Queen at the end of her world tour in the Royal Yacht.

On that day, 5,000 sailors were marooned ashore when a sudden storm cancelled all boat traffic, but the people of Torquay responded magnificently and not one had to spend the night on the street and nobody paid a penny, not even for breakfast.

This year numbers increased to 44 ship's company and 23 partners – among them Peter and Janet Gosling, who met via the *Navy News* Pen Pals column during HMS Berwick's 1975 nine-month global deployment.

The two met on the ship's return and married in 1978.

A highlight of the reunion was a conducted tour of Dartmouth – a first visit for Peter, who, due to enter the College as a cadet in January 1943, was diverted to

Eaton Hall in Cheshire after a Luftwaffe attack in 1942 led to evacuation for the rest of the war.

The popularity of the reunion, organised by Isle of Wight Tours, can be judged by the attendance of three from Australia, two from Antigua, two from Saudi and two from Sweden.

Another Plymwick attending was Andy Vanes, who featured in the August edition of *Navy News*.

Andy, a cook, became interested in Berwick's Wasp, leading to his transfer to aircrew – and he recently logged 9,000 flying hours.

The article mentioned a shipmate who made the same career change – he now captains jumbo jets, and had to leave the reunion early to fly the next day.

At the end of the reunion a meeting was held to determine Plymwick's future, and it was finally decided to meet again in June 2017, providing the opportunity to discover more missing shipmates.



Bench for George

MANY people knew or had their lives affected by George Toomey.

As an ex-Sick Berth Attendant he founded the Pearl Harbour Destroyer Association and the HMS Cossack Association which from its inception in 1991 to the present day has had contact with over 600 people

who had either served in or had association with either the Tribal-class warship, of Almark fame, or her successor D57. It was in D57 that George served from

1947 to 1949.

George died in May 2014 and the Cossack Association arranged the placement of a granite bench, suitably inscribed, at the National Memorial Arboretum, close to the Cossack tree and plaque which George had been instrumental in having planted.

Almost 40 association members and partners gathered at Alrewas in pouring rain (*above*) for a brief ceremony to recall the life of George and of those who served in either of the Cossacks.

Point of (new) order

STANDING Orders Committee chairman S/M Paddy McClurg has decided to step down.

S/M Paddy has been active in the association at a national level for the past eight or nine years, including stints as General Secretary and more recently as chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, an often thankless task as officials choose a path

through a maze of protocols, by-laws and procedures.

He remains an active member locally – he is branch president at **Netley and District**, and is a staunch supporter of the local Sea Cadet unit.

S/M Keith Crawford is also standing down as National Vice Chairman this year to concentrate on his health – Keith is recovering from the stroke he suffered in December.

He is one of the longest serving National Council Members, and has been Vice Chairman for five years.

Keith also clocked up 26 years as chairman of Spalding branch.

Wartime hero is honoured

POPIES scattered across a harbour, a flypast by a vintage aircraft and a parade of war canoes – a special day was staged to mark the secret war service of Cdr Harold Goulding.

The event, which was organised around the unveiling of two blue plaques, was staged at Hayling Island near Portsmouth – the wartime base for a number of undercover organisations, including the Combined Operations Pilotage Party.

Cdr Goulding's war record was a mystery to his own family until his granddaughter, Jill Goulding, discovered a file of secret papers in her mother's attic in 2010 documenting his efforts.

It turned out that Goulding, who won the DSO in 1941, had carried out more landings on enemy-occupied coasts than any other officer of any Service, and had a crucial role in the planning of D-Day in June 1944.

Furthermore, his reputation as the man called upon in the most urgent operational situations meant that his exploits were kept under wraps long after the activities of others were lauded.

One plaque was unveiled on a stone monument on Langstone foreshore looking towards Hayling Island Sailing Club, the other at Moss Rose cottage, where Goulding lived during the war.

The day's activities included a fly-past by a Dakota aircraft and a parade of cockle canoes, similar to those used in the raid on Bordeaux on Operation Frankton (the 'Cockleshell Heroes'), accompanied by the wartime harbour defence motor launch Medusa, ML1387.



Memorials are unveiled at farm

THE dedication and unveiling of RNA and RN memorials have taken place at the Living Memorial, Whitehouse Farm, Rettendon, Essex.

The design and planning for this event went back to October 2014, and from a patch of grass has risen a memorial in honour of Naval personnel killed in conflicts and wars since World War 2.

Some 140 shipmates, guests and families were in attendance, and the parade of 24 standards was led by the Dagenham Girl Pipers in front of shipmates from RNA branches all over East Anglia, and other military organisations.

Also in attendance was 90-year-old Doug Shelly, who served on the Russian convoys.

The ceremony was conducted by the Revd Canon Mike Lodge, padre to **Rayleigh** branch, and the guest of honour was RNA National President Vice Admiral John McAnally (*pictured above*).

In 2003 Frances and Peter

Theobald, owners of Whitehouse Farm, gave ten acres of their land to set up memorials for members of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in conflicts around the world.

When four members of Rayleigh branch paid a further visit in January 2015, Peter and Frances had released a further ten acres of land, so the shipmates decided to set up both RNA and Royal Navy memorials.

Apart from the gift of land, Peter and Frances also did the manual work and local displays on the site.

This project is very much a work in progress, with plaques and so on to be added, and should any branch wish to take advantage of this, contact should be made through Rayleigh RNA either through chairman S/M Jim Hammond (01268 414616, email j.hammond@inh-int.co.uk) or secretary S/M Alan Boorn (01268 743545, email alanrna.sec@outlook.com)



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Pictures: Master Sgt Chad McMeen, USMC

43 Cdo swap training tips with USMC Smashing work

MAKING a grand entrance are Royal Marines and US commandos as they blast their way through a state-of-the-art training site.

Personnel from Faslane-based 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group hosted the United States Marine Corps Security Force Regiment for Exercise Tartan Eagle.

Both British and US units are responsible for protecting high-value Naval establishments and assets, in particular the nuclear deterrent.

The Brits are responsible for ensuring the depot at Coulpport on Loch Long is secure, while their American counterparts do the same at bases such as Kings Bay in Georgia and Bangor in Washington State.

The 21st Tartan Eagle saw 43 Cdo, who are also the Royal Navy's experts in board-and-search operations, host their US counterparts.

After some mountain training, which saw the commandos climb Ben Nevis, it was off to Britain's most advanced shooting range...in a business park...in Gateshead.

For as well as the obligatory cash and carry and Mister Twisters children's indoor playground, the sprawling industrial site is also home to Northumbria Police Operational and Tactical Training Centre.



Indoors it features two 60-metre firing ranges and a 'judgmental suite' – a CGI simulator at which the shooter and the target can react to each other's movements.

Outdoors, there's a 'tactical training area' – a mock-up of a street with blocks of flats and terraced houses which you can smash your way into, fight your way around and the like.

Under the watchful eyes of RM instructors, the US commandos forced their way into a building (three whacks with a battering ram and they were in) and searched it, killing a number of the enemy – two-dimensional cut-outs, in this case.

Sgt David Brodowicz, platoon weapons instructor with 43 Cdo said: "We focused on four areas of training, starting off on the live firing and close-quarters marksmanship with both the SA80 rifle and the Glock pistol.

"We've also done tactical training in entering rooms and how to take down rooms and different spaces.

"We've done judgmental training in the simulator and different scenarios on how the guys react to the different threats posed to them.

"We've done quite basic techniques of breach involving sledgehammers or enforcers to more advanced techniques such as using shotguns to shoot out locks and hinges.

"This centre is a one-stop close-quarter battle shop.

"I think the guys have really enjoyed it. The instruction is really top drawer.

"All the guys have attacked it with effort and enthusiasm to get the most out of this training facility."

Cpl Kyle Carpenter, of the USMC Security Force Regiment, said: "I used to be a police officer

back in the States and this facility is really state of the art.

"I've never experienced anything like this before, working with the British Royal Marines has been amazing. We have very similar tactics and it's been great working together.

"The mountain training is not something we do as much back in the United States so that was a great experience. The training here has been as realistic as you can get."

USMC Capt Eric Stein said: "This combined partnership with our cousins across the sea sees the same training, a lot of the same procedures. This allows us to build up a partnership that we have had for so long."

After a fortnight in the UK, personnel from 43 Cdo decamped to the USA for two weeks to learn how the USMC operates.



Help wanted with Jutland pictures

MEMBERS of the public are being asked to help reunite a number of photographs of Royal Naval personnel with their descendants.

A collection of pictures of some sailors and Royal Marines who died at Jutland have been given to HMS Calliope, the Royal Naval Reserve unit at Gateshead.

Around 20 photos were donated but only seven of the sailors and marines were named.

Those identified were WF Rowlingson, TJ Hagan, W Fletcher, Thomas Trish, Frederick Thomas Horsfall, William Collins and Thomas Edward Sutcliffe.

Calliope's heritage officer Lt Cdr Duncan Young is hoping relatives of the men will come forward before the Battle of Jutland centenary commemorations next year.

"Sadly, we don't know who left these photos at our gatehouse and as such there is a gap in our understanding of who they were and indeed if they have any family still living in the region," he said.

"We'd like to be able to show the families the photographs and invite them to take part in HMS Calliope's remembrance events for the Battle of Jutland and wider maritime campaign next year."

The North East has a proud association with the Royal Navy. Notable examples are Lord Collingwood from Morpeth who fought in the Battle of Trafalgar, the WW2 submarine base at Blyth and the hundreds of ships built on the Tyne, including HMS Ark Royal, HMS King George V and HMS Newcastle.

One hundred years ago HMS Calliope was a light cruiser that took part in the



sea battle at Jutland.

She received a number of hits from the German fleet during the battle and ten of her crew were killed in action.

There has been a Royal Naval Reserve presence on Tyneside since 1905, when Tyne Division of the RNVR was formed.

For its first training ship, the Division chose the famous HMS Calliope, veteran of the Samoa Hurricane, which was berthed at Elswick in Newcastle upon Tyne.

In 1951, the original HMS Calliope was replaced by HMS Falmouth, which was renamed Calliope. This new ship kept the same moorings at Elswick. The unit moved ashore in 1968 to its current location, retaining the name HMS Calliope.

Anyone with information about the photographs is asked to email yuncandoung2@yahoo.co.uk or write to Unit Heritage officer, HMS Calliope, South Shore Road, Gateshead NE10 8WH.

■ Jutland Centenary plan, see page 43

Flag duty for duo

TWO Naval Reservists from HMS King Alfred based in Portsmouth acted as flag raisers for the Rugby World Cup.

AB Harnish Patel and AB Ben Roberts represented the Reserve Forces on duty for the match between USA v Samoa at the Brighton Community Stadium.

One of the highlights of Harnish's Reserves career was to be mobilised for the Paralympics in 2012, where he was a flag bearer representing the RN, raising the Union Flag in the opening ceremony.

He gained more experience while undertaking ceremonial duties at the NFL

at Wembley in 2013. Since joining the Reserve Forces Harnish has also spent time training at sea with the minehunter HMS Grimsby.

Harnish also has a full-time career as a chartered surveyor working for Hughes Ellard in Fareham.

He is a competitive runner with Victory Athletics Club in Hampshire and has run two London Marathons as well as many half-marathons, ten mile, 10k road races and Duathlons.

AB Ben Roberts is a keen rugby player and was one of three reservists from HMS King Alfred selected to train for the Royal Navy rugby squad in 2014.



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Deaths

Maj Gen John S Chester. Joined Royal Marines 1963, served with 40, 41, 43 and 45 Cdo. Troop commander in Borneo (Indonesian-Malayan confrontation), then signals officer in 41 Cdo deployed to Northern Ireland 1968-70. Two years as aide-de-camp to Gen Sir Ian Gourlay, then 2ic 1972-74 of HQ Signal Sqn 3 Cdo Bde, then three years at HQ Allied Forces Norway and 1979-82 with 45 Cdo. Headed staff loading war stores for Falkland Islands Task Force in 1982 and played a leading role in their recapture with meticulous planning, quick thinking and decisiveness. Mentioned twice in despatches. Assistant Director RM Ops in the MOD 1985-87 and appointed Deputy Director Special Forces 1988-91. Commanded HQ Training & Reserves RM Poole 1991-93, member of senior directing staff RCDS. Sept 10. Aged 71.

Capt Peter J Stickland. HMS Tiger, Yarmouth, St Angelo, Newfoundland, Warrior, London, Vernon, Collingwood, Excellent. HM Dockyard Singapore, Capt Fleet Maintenance, University RN Unit and Naval Party 2010. Sept 5.

Capt Gerard A Thwaites. HMS Glory, Vulcan, Tyne, Ocean, Phoebe, Lion, Excellent, Nelson, President, MOD Ord

Ask Jack

HMS Hood: On May 24 1941 HMS Hood, the most iconic and loved ship of the Royal Navy, was lost after a brief engagement with German battleship Bismarck and heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen. Her loss and that of 1,415 men touched the nation. Readers may have noted the recent recovery of the ship's bell which, after restoration, will go on display. Members of the HMS Hood Association are seeking to present, in May 2016, 1,000 photos of the ship's crew. We currently have 898 – if any of you can help we would be most appreciative – maybe family or friends were crew and their photos remain part of private collections. Contact James Stanley at jamesstanley401@btinternet.com or tel 07861 762227.

HMS Hornet: I served with Coastal Forces at HMS Hornet from January 1957 until September 1958. A short cut to Hornet and Haslar from Gosport was over a hump-backed toll footbridge known as 'Pneumonia Bridge'. At the foot of this bridge, near the entrance to Hornet, was an old wooden patrol boat mounted on chocks. Does anyone know the name of this boat and what happened to it after Hornet closed down? If anyone can help, contact Mike Brady at jrem937224@tiscali.co.uk or tel 01159 291045.

HMV Enchantress: A photograph of this vessel, the first Admiralty Yacht to carry the name, in period 1934 to July 1935 is required by a visitor to this yacht in this period. Contact Mr A Clayton, 43 Ford Lane, Farnham, Surrey GU10 3NB.

The D Boats Association was formed to bring together those Royal Navy personnel who served during World War 2 in Defender-class destroyers or, post-war, in Daring-class and Type 45 destroyers. We are a thriving organisation and keep in touch with our old shipmates throughout the world through our newsletter and website. We also hold social gatherings. If you are a former D-boat veteran and would like to know more please contact me at enquiries@d-boats.co.uk or write to Ray Goodwin, 10 Cherry Grove, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 4NA, or tel 01732 773756.

Board, DG Ships, Director Gen Weapons. Sept 20. Aged 89.

Cdr Richard A Harrison. HMS Conqueror, Courageous, Dolphin, Wasperton, Service Attaché Brazil, MOD Warship Support Agency, Torpedo Integrated Project, Defence Procurement Exec, RNEC Manadon. RMCS Shrivernham and Exchange Australia. Sept 24. Aged 61.

Lt Cdr John 'Maurice' Hepworth. HMS Falcon, Gannet, Centaur and Phoenicia. Sept 24.

Lt Cdr David G Norman. HMS Sparrow, Caprice, Howe, Black Swan, Crane, Pembroke, Defender, Excellent and Mercury II. Sept 20. Aged 90.

Sub Lt Edward G B Peacock RNVR. RNAS Crail. Sept 20. Aged 90.

Lt Cdr Arthur Pringle. HMS Pintail, Rodney, Glasgow, Owen, Sea Eagle, Pembroke, Aphrodite, Woodbridge Haven, Mercury, Superb, Daedalus, Centurion, President, Naval Hospital Malta, MOD DGNM and Ghana Navy.

Lt Peter R Brett. RNEC Keyham. Sept 19. Aged 91.

Sub Lt Thomas S L Reid RNVR. 1945-47. July 20.

Sub Lt Russell Ball RNVR. 1943-46. Aug 7.

Reginald 'Reg' Cooper FAA Pilot. Served 1943-1949. Great Yarmouth branch of Fleet Air Arm Association. Aged 89.

Ronald 'Bernie' Scrivens WO1 (SR). Served 1959-93. Joined St Vincent as Junior Seaman RP; later qualified as RP for the Boom Defence branch, transferred to SR branch early 70s. HMS Solebay, Malcolm, Victorious, Mohawk, Laymore, Woodlark, Hecla, Enterprise, Fawn, NP1008 and Gleaner. Founder member, vice chairman of Survey Ships Association. Sept 27. Aged 71.

Albert Clapp CPOMA. Served 1948-71 at RN Hospitals Plymouth, Portland and Bighi (Malta), also 848 NAS, HMS Maidstone, Simbang, Tyne and Osprey, RN Medical Branch Ratings & Sick Berth Staff Association. August. Aged 84.

George W England C.ReI(A). Served at St Vincent and in Ariel, Daedalus, Victorious, Heron and Osprey. 2014.

David 'Dave' Jennings LRO(G). Served 1964-76 HMS Ganges, Caprice (68) Round World, CinC Portsmouth (69), RAF Tangmere (70), Terror (71), CinCNAVHOME (72), FOCAS (73), Fife (74) and Yarnton (75). Member of HMS Caprice 1968 Round World Association. Sept 18. Aged 66.

Donald MacDonald GI. Served 1950-mid 60s. Korean War (50-53), Far East in Motor Minesweepers (51), HMS Cambrian, Charity, Fife, Leopard, Excellent, Osprey and FOST Staff. Chairman of the Cambrian Association and archivist of the 8th Destroyer Association. Sept 24. Aged 82.

Ronald 'Ron' Day LME. Served 1954-63 in HMS Roebuck, Meon, Apollo and Centaur. RN Engineer Association. Sept 16. Aged 79.

Gwyn Jones AB(M). Served 1962-84. HMS Raleigh, Osprey, Royal Arthur, Drake, Eagle, Londonderry, Blake, Eastbourne and Endurance. August 25. Aged 73.

Bryan Booker POME. Served 1948-72 HMS Royal Arthur, Santes as LME (49-51) and POME (55-56) also Raleigh, Armada, Theseus, Vigo, Surprise, Albion, Osprey, Ranpara, Terror, Sultan, Ausonia, Dampier and Ark Royal. HMS Santes Association. Sept 19. Aged 85.

Michael 'Johnno' Johnson AB. Served 1960-62. Commission on board HMS Santes then HMS Excellent. HMS Santes Association. July 15.

Dennis Adey. Served HMS Morecambe Bay in Korea and a member of the association. September.

Dennis 'Den' Woods AB. Served in HMS indefatigable on Arctic convoys and in the Far East Fleet until the ship was paid off. Member of HMS indefatigable Association. Aged 89.

Ivan Coburn AB. Served aboard HMS Liverpool 1949-52 (fo'c'sle part of ship), also HMS Finisterre. HMS Liverpool Association. Sept 20. Aged 85.

Leslie C Maynard AB. Served aboard HMS Liverpool 1945-46 (quarterdeck part of ship). HMS Liverpool Association. Sept 20. Aged 90.

Derek Tolmie. Served 1964-71 HMS Raleigh, Cambridge, Collingwood, Diamond, Defender and Blake. D Boat Association. Aged 70.

Paul J Franklin Elec. Served 1947-52 HMS St Vincent, Impregnable, Theseus as the coxswain of the boat, Battleaxe and Chatham. Sept 16. Aged 84.

Royal Naval Association

Lucy Lawson RNXS. Served 1971-83. Former member of Sheerness and Sittingbourne branch and latterly a member of City of Ely. August 27. Aged 97.

Harry Allen LTO/Radar. Sea Cadet at TS Mermaid from ten, joined the RN in 1943 at HMS St George (Isle of Man). Served in HMS Jamaica at battle of North Cape, Russian convoys, D-Day, and detached to the Pacific. Took King George VI to Channel Islands for liberation celebrations. Maintained links with Mermaid, which changed name to TS Jamaica in his honour, as their president. Chairman Margate branch and life member of RNA in 2013. October 4. Aged 88.

Association of RN Officers/RNOC

Adm Sir Peter C Abbott CinC Fleet. SACLAN. FOF2. MOD DN Plans, DCDS. Also HMS Ajax, Bulwark, Ambuscade, Malabar, Chawton, London, Minerva, Puma, Mercury, Excellent. Sept 28. Aged 73.

Rear Adm Frederick B Goodson. HMS Diana, Adamant, Invincible, Lion, Sheba, Saker, President, Seahawk, BRNC Dartmouth, RNC Greenwich, RCDS, Centurion, CinC Fleet, CINCNAVHOME, MOD Nav Sec, DGS&T, DNCP. Sept 13. Aged 77.

Col John C Coke. HMS Royal Prince, Vanguard, Superb, Saker, MNBDO2, RM Deal and Plymouth. Joint Services Amphib Warfare Centre, 40 Cdo. Sept 25. Aged 98.

Capt Richard A 'Andy' Highton. HMS Invincible, Ark Royal, Heron, Victorious, Fulmar, Osprey, Seahawk. 892, 893 and 737 NAS. FOF3. FONAC. NATO. RNEC Manadon. Service Attaché Montevideo. Sept 26.

Capt Brian C Hutchings. HMS Undaunted, Rodney, Tartar, Forth, Maidstone, Adamant, Tapir, President, Dolphin, Porpoise, Stoken, St Brides Bay, Scorchers, Solent, Turkey. MOD Tactical Weapons Policy. Sept 11. Aged 89.

Capt Michael C Lilley. HMS Newcastle, Bulwark, Collingwood, Warrior, Seahawk, Mercury, Dryad, NATO, CinCFleet, MOD DN Weather Service, Dir Met and Oceanography and RN College Greenwich. Sept 17. Aged 87.

Cdr John M Bird. HMS Glory, Magnificent, Triumph, St Angelo, Phoenicia, London, Troubridge, President, Sutan, Neptune, Victory RNB, Chief Polaris Exct Bath. Sept 2. Aged 88.

Cdr Aubrey J R 'John' Pegler. HMS Ajax, Hornbill, Kestrel, Blackcap, Ariel, Daedalus, President. Aircraft Maintenance

and Repair Depot, RNAY Donibristle. MOD Dir of Quartering, Dir Naval Service Conditions. Sept 28. Aged 95.

Cdr John H Stanley. HMS Vanguard, Centaur, Gambia, Corunna, Phoenicia, Osprey, Dolphin, Daedalus, President. BRNC Dartmouth. Sept 4. Aged 87.

Cdr John P T Torr. HMS Scorpion, Urchin, Coniston, Starling, Hawea, Bellona, Ocean, Belfast, St Vincent, Centurion, Cochran. Naval Attaché Oslo. Iranian Project Man Team, Ghana Navy and NATO. Sept 17.

Cdr Peter A Woolings. HMS Victorious, Eagle, Loch Fada, Seahawk, Terror, President, Mercury, Daedalus, Adm Commanding Reserves, 824 NAS and NATO. Sept 29. Aged 86.

Lt Cdr Alfred R J Rees. HMS Springer, Forth, Adamant, Birmingham, Centurion, Collingwood, Vernon, Osprey, HM Dockyard Rosyth, MOD Dir Gen Weapons. Asst Defence Attaché Lagos. Sept 16. Aged 87.

Lt Cdr Pauline L Jones RD RNR. Fleet CMR Gateshead and HMS Calliope. Sept 28. Aged 60.

Lt Cdr M W White RNR. SW Div RNR. Sept 18. Aged 89.

Lt K W Webster. Sept 17. Aged 81.

Submarines Association

John Oakman CPO TASI. Served 1950-69 in HM Submarines Seraph, Andrew, Token, Explorer, Porpoise and Alaric. Dolphin branch. Aged 85.

Graham Wynn CCMEA. Served 1960-85 in HM Submarines Dreadnought (61-65) (82-83), Resolution (66-68), Courageous (71-72) (78-82) and Superb (74-76). Barrow in Furness branch. Sept 13. Aged 73.

Terry Soar POM(E). Served 1959-65 in HM Submarines Tally-Ho, Tapir, Anchorite, Tactician and Narwhal. Hull branch. Oct 6. Aged 75.

Tex Ranger CPO WEM(R). Served 1967-89 in HM Submarines Andrew (68-69), Rorqual (69-70), Finwhale (70), Grampus (73-75) and Odin (75-79). Dolphin branch. Oct 6. Aged 69.

Lt Jeffrey Rubynthon. Served 1961-70 in HM Submarines Cachalot and Rorqual. Eastern States branch. Oct 8. Aged 85.

Algerines Association

Geoffrey 'Geoff' Percival AB. Served HMS Plucky 1953-54. July 15

Eric R Margetts AB RP3. Served HMS Lioness 1945-47. Sept 11.

Sub Lt (E) Ivan A Way RNVR. Served HMS Thisby, Stormcloud and Coquette (1946). August 16. Aged 91.

Derek Hoyle PO. Canteen Mgr. Served HMS Circe 1944-45.

Ronald 'Ron' B Hamilton SA. Served HMS Recruit 1944-46. July 18. Aged 88.

HMS Illustrious Association

John 'Jack' Collings Aircraft Mechanic FAA. Served 1942-46 and on board HMS Illustrious 44-45 in the Far East. June 12. Aged 90.

Norman Richardson FAA 1943-47. Associate member of HMS Illustrious Association and social secretary of Bolton branch FAA. June 23.

Jeffrey Thompson. National Service 1948-50 and served on board Illustrious 1949. July 12.

John Stephens Cook. Served on board Illustrious 1951-53. July 22.

Douglas Rylatt CPO. Served 1942-59. On board Illustrious as a L/Air Mech (L) 1944-45. A founder member of HMS Illustrious Association in 1985. August 7. Aged 90.

Reunions

December 2015

846 Naval Air Squadron: The senior rates are holding their 33th annual mess dinner in the WO's and SR's mess at RN Air Station Yeovilton on Friday December 4. Tickets at £40 and further details available from CHF-846-SR-ANNUAL-DINNER2015@MOD.UK. Apply by November 27 at the latest.

January 2016

HMS Caledonia Apprentices (Anson Division): Anson Division passed out of HMS Caledonia in December 1965. Anyone from that time who would like to get together for a reunion after 50 years is asked to get in touch with Gerry Wood at gerrywood5@aol.com or tel 01225 852209; or by letter to 75 London Road West, Bath, BA1 7JE.

March 2016

HMS Hermes, Cooks 1968-70: The annual get-together will take place at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, from March 19-20. For more details contact Scouse 'Ruby' Enright at scouseenright@hotmail.co.uk or tel 07884 040041.

April 2016

RN Shipmates Association: Has your Association hung up its banner? Are there now too few to have a reunion? There is no need to miss out on the camaraderie we are all used to and there is no need to 'forget' your old shipmates. An RN Shipmates Reunion will take place at the Tillington Hall Hotel, Staffordshire, from April 8-11. Friday and Saturday will see you finding old and new shipmates with a lot of lamp-swinging. Sunday will include a trip to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas where you can lay your own wreath to past shipmates. Reunion enquires and booking forms from enquiries@iowtours.com or send a stamped self-addressed 9x6 inch envelope to RN Shipmates Reunion, 7 Heath Road, Sandown, IOW PO36 8PG. You don't even need to have belonged to an association – all the planning has been done for you. Just come, swing the lamp again and... remember.

HMS Phoebe Association, Cruiser (C43) and frigate (F42) hold their annual reunion from April 29 to May 2 at the Parkbury Hotel, Sandown, Isle of Wight. All cruiser/frigate shipmates are welcome to join them. If you are interested please contact Bob Hobbs at Roberts1949@sky.com or tel 01983 864508 for more information.

Sports Lottery

September 12: £5,000 – LH S Mills; £1,800 – AB G Jones; £800 – AB J McGrath; £600 – WO1 S Mortimer; £500 – CPO A Pead; £400 – PO J Hinchcliffe.

September 19: £5,000 – LH E Hindle; £1,800 – Cdr C Shepherd; £800 – Mne J Meredith; £600 – Mne J Morley; £500 – WO1 J Palmer; £400 – Mne D Smythe.

September 26: £5,000 – PO N Howse; £1,800 – AB C McKeown; £800 – AB S Crawford; £600 – PO P Robertson; £500 – Sgt L Sutton; £400 – LH V Waller.

October 3: £5,000 – AB A Robson; £1,800 – Cpl C Williams; £800 – Capt A White; £600 – Mne S Greening; £500 – LH G Leaver; £400 – AB D Johnson.

NATO command changes hands

A SENIOR NATO command has passed from one Royal Navy officer to another at Northwood.

Vice Admiral Peter Hudson handed the reins of MARCOM – NATO's Allied Maritime Command – to his successor, Vice Admiral Clive Johnstone.

Both admirals offered insights into the development of the West's most enduring security alliance, while Vice Admiral Hudson reflected on events during his tenure that have helped shape the future structure and direction of the Maritime Command HQ.

Vice Admiral Hudson said: "We need to recognise that the Alliance has undergone a major restructuring across Europe.

"MARCOM is now returning to an era of hard exercising, at scale, visible currently with a major NATO exercise Trident Juncture now under way aimed at stretching our command and

control nodes."

Since February 2013, Vice Admiral Hudson has commanded NATO's counter-piracy Operation Ocean Shield and NATO's counter-terrorism Operation Active Endeavour, and held overall command of four Standing Naval Forces.

Admiral Hudson explained that the organisation of MARCOM has evolved rapidly to meet present-day security challenges, adding that whereas once there may have been a perception that it was either NATO or the national interest when generating force elements from limited resources, he insisted that today there is no binary choice.

"No nation, not even the United States, will fight without the coalition," he said.

"We've worked hard to make sure NATO is the fulcrum of energy and excitement generating

new ideas.

"Now is the time for real innovation, celebrating and tapping into the diversity of talent available, encouraging new ways of conducting business and importantly building on our partnerships, with our military commanders working alongside academia and think tanks."

Vice Admiral Clive Johnstone acknowledged that he was taking over during an extraordinary time: "It's a sobering but simultaneously exciting moment – the feeling of command is very real and I will approach my role with the thoughtfulness and determination you would expect as we seek to deliver the will of multiple nations."

He continued: "We need to de-mystify NATO Forces and demonstrate the real, tangible value of being part of NATO.

"We must be more ambitious and hungry for resources and then demonstrate the benefits back to nations in the way that the recent Baltops exercise focused the mind and gave certain clarity of meaning to the commanders taking part.

"I have no doubt that the maritime voice is being heard – the maritime domain links – the maritime domain links – the maritime domain links does and we are well aware of our responsibilities.

"I am deeply appreciative of what Admiral Hudson has achieved within the Maritime Command – he's created a powerful living organism built on multiple components and together with his team, the MARCOM HQ achieved full operational capability while he



● Vice Admiral Clive Johnstone is congratulated by Gen Philip Breedlove, watched by Vice Admiral Peter Hudson

was also wrestling behind the scenes with the big agendas of the moment."

He continued: "While I am aware that world events will inevitably determine our direction of travel, we will continue to reframe the architecture to ensure the Maritime Command will be a headquarters with a hard-edged focus on delivery and operational effect.

"We will bring assurance, operational capability, deterrence and training to the table."

Both admirals affirmed that

the strength and resilience of the Alliance lies in the quality and diversity of the people within the organisation.

Addressing guests at the ceremony, Admiral Hudson said: "Together we've forged a headquarters that is strong, purposeful and resilient, providing a genuine voice for the maritime community.

"Our company's name has the Atlantic at its heart and salt oozes through its veins. We will continue to champion the utility of Maritime Power. Our largest ever exercise, Trident Juncture, is presently under way, with ships ranged across 1,500 miles of ocean. It's what we do."

The guest of honour at the ceremony was NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe Gen Philip Breedlove, who paid tribute to the Admiral's impressive service to NATO: "Under the command of Vice Admiral Peter Hudson, Allied Maritime Command have kept their fingers on the pulse of all threats and risks to maritime security, wherever they occurred.

"His extraordinary strategic vision, insight and leadership took this command to new operational levels under challenging and emerging security threats.

"I am grateful for his wise counsel over the past two years and it has been my honour and privilege to serve with him."

Vice Admiral Johnstone said: "I want to develop further and explore how we connect within organisations, and across national boundaries – how we can create and build on the unified maritime voice with our partners."

Jutland centenary plans are unveiled

EVENTS on land and sea – and beneath the waves – will mark the 100th anniversary of the greatest naval battle of World War 1.

A national day of commemoration involving descendants, enemies turned allies, military and political leaders will remember the Battle of Jutland.

There will be services of thanksgiving in the Orkneys, an Anglo-German sail past and ceremony over one of the vessels lost, the unveiling of cruiser HMS Caroline in Belfast as a museum ship and living memorial to the Grand Fleet, plus ceremonies at the Naval memorials in Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth, where the names of most of the 6,094 sailors and Royal Marines killed are listed.

The battle fought on May 31 and June 1 1916 was the only time in the Great War that the battle fleets of the two largest navies in the world met.

During the clash 250 warships locked horns – 151 British, 99 German – 80 miles west of Jutland in Denmark, which gives the battle its English name (Germans call it the Battle of the Skagerrak).

The Royal Navy lost 14 ships – including three battlecruisers which blew up – the Germans 11 vessels, but only one capital ship.

Germany claimed victory, but fled the field of battle and never seriously threatened British naval superiority in the North Sea for the rest of the war.

The 100th anniversary will be the Royal Navy's key Great War centenary commemoration.

On Orkney, a national service of remembrance will be held in St Magnus' Cathedral, before proceedings move to Lyness RN Cemetery overlooking Scapa Flow for a simpler ceremony.

One in four attendees at both events will be relatives of men who fought at Jutland – the Department for Culture, Media and Sport will announce details before the year's end.

Royal Navy divers intend to visit the wreck of battlecruiser HMS Invincible to place a White Ensign in memory of the 1,020 men killed when she blew up.

There are also plans for events in Rosyth, the battlecruiser base in 1916, and paving stones remembering the four VC winners will be dedicated in the men's respective home towns.

"World War 1 remains characterised by imagery of the trenches of the Western Front. Yet the sea was Britain's lifeline and the supremacy of the Royal Navy was crucial to national survival," said First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas.

"It is right, a century after Jutland – the largest and last clash between dreadnoughts – that we join together to remember those lost from both sides."

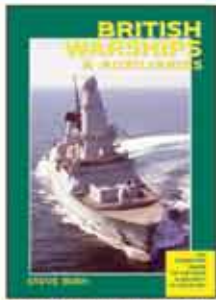
Memorial service

A MEMORIAL service for Admiral Sir Peter Charles Abbott will be held in Portsmouth Cathedral on Wednesday January 20 2016 at 2pm.

Admiral Sir Peter, who was CinCFleet in the mid-90s before serving as Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, died at the end of September aged 73.

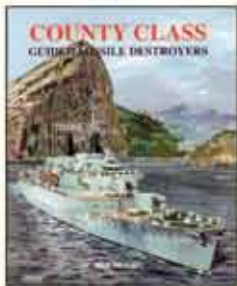
Those wishing to attend the service should apply to Mrs Nicky Lee, Navy Command HQ, MP G-2, West Battery, Whale Island, Portsmouth, PO2 8DX or nicky.lee855@mod.uk by November 27.

Applications should include full names and addresses. Tickets will be despatched by post no later than January 8.



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How they RAN WW1

THE Royal Australian Navy decided it would commemorate World War 1 by commissioning its head of history in the Sea Power Centre, Dr David Stevens, to write a new, comprehensive account and analysis of the RAN in that conflict.

As well as consulting a wide range of Australian sources, Dr Stevens spent much time based at the Naval Historical Branch in Portsmouth, as it is impossible to separate the RAN's story from the rest of the Imperial Navy, writes Prof Eric Grove.

The result – **In All Respects Ready: Australia's Navy In World War One** (Oxford University Press, £29.99 ISBN 978 0 19 557858 4) – is a magnificent work, one of the best books on the naval side of the war ever published. The previous official history published many years ago was unsatisfactory in many respects and, more generally, Australia has interpreted its contribution to World War 1 in purely land terms.

The RAN therefore recognised the need for a first-class history that Dr Stevens has written. As my old friend Rear Admiral Goldrick (in my opinion at least first equal as Australia's leading naval historian), wrote on the dust jacket: "*In All Respects Ready* is a remarkable book that combines scholarship with a deep understanding of naval operations with warm sympathy for the individual experience of the war at sea. The Royal Australian Navy's story between 1914 and 1918 is an aspect of Australian history during the Great War that has too long been overshadowed by the campaigns in the Dardanelles, France, Belgium and Palestine, but which has its own significance for our evolution as an independent nation and our identity as Australians."

The author begins by setting the scene with the origins of the RAN and the background to the arrival of the Fleet Unit led by the battle-cruiser Australia in October 1913. There was some Anglo-Australian conflict over the best place to deploy the modern Australian ships – in Europe or in the Pacific. The war soon began in the Antipodes, when a German

GROVE REVIEW

merchant ship was stopped by a shot across her bows as she tried to leave Melbourne just over four hours after the expiry of the British ultimatum and news of the declaration of war had just been received. The author explains clearly how the various parts of the Australian naval service were organised and mobilised.

The main preoccupation at first was attacking Von Spee's quite powerful German Asiatic squadron that it was thought might have been at the German coaling station at Rabaul. Much to the Australians' disappointment, Spee was nowhere to be found. Operations were carried out to take German Samoa and German New Guinea, before the Australian cruisers were used as part of the escort covering the great troop convoy that took the Anzacs to Egypt.

As part of this effort, HMAS Sydney caught and sank the German cruiser Emden in a famous action. Australia then served as the core of a force in the Pacific that acted "like to jaws of a vice," forcing Spee round Cape Horn to his end at the Falkland Islands. HMAS Australia was then moved to join the Grand Fleet, arriving in Devonport for repairs after travelling 37,320 miles since leaving Sydney on the first day of the war.

Australians, notably those aboard the old cruiser HMS Pioneer, were involved in operations off East Africa which saw the end of the cruiser Königsberg. The Navy also played its part in the Dardanelles offensive, the submarine AE2 famously penetrating the strait, an action that maintained morale at Anzac Cove, encouraging the troops to dig in rather than face evacuation. The 1st Royal Australian Naval Boarding Train also played a key role, building harbour facilities at Suvla Bay.

Australia's arrival allowed the creation of a battle-cruiser fleet of three squadrons. The book traces the career of the battle-cruiser,

soon followed by the two modern Australian light cruisers in the activities of the Grand Fleet, first under Jellicoe, then Beatty. Those who think the fleet just swung around buoys at Scapa, Cromarty and Rosyth may be surprised at the amount of sea time its ships had. These are listed in a seven page appendix.

The Australian units were not at Jutland, as the battle-cruiser had been damaged in a collision and the two cruisers were still looking after British interests and hunting commerce raiders off North America and in the West Indies. After Jutland, they were ordered to join Jellicoe.

Two of the most interesting chapters covers activities on the China Station in 1915-16, where enemies included Indian Nationalists and German attempts to foster colonial revolts. Australian ships were deployed to strengthen the Imperial position and help cover South East Asian waters.

A separate chapter covers the Australian contribution to the air war, the author correctly assessing the Royal Naval Air Service as an autonomous organisation. Australian assets, including the new cruiser Brisbane built in Australia, (with some difficulty and at considerable expense) hunted raiders in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific in 1916-17. Australian destroyers then came to the Mediterranean, largely being based in the Adriatic to support the Otranto barrage in 1917-18. Australians volunteered to take part in the Zeebrugge Raid, of whose result the author takes a rather optimistic view. Finally, there was the armistice, the surrender of most of the major units of the High Sea Fleet (an event in which HMAS Australia played an important part) and continued operations against the Bolsheviks.

The book is beautifully written and illustrated with clear maps and both coloured and monochrome pictures. It is a real triumph of historical writing. No one interested in the maritime side of World War 1 should be without it.



Interbellum perspective

FOR a young man in the late 1920s a career in the RN must have seemed very enticing – a heady combination of prestige, adventure and exotic locations.

A second global war casting a grim shadow over the activities of the Senior Service would have been far from the thoughts and plans of young John Hornabrook 'Smiler' Smith when he signed on in 1928 as a Tiffy.

But the two sides of his career are present in **All Parts Bearing An Even Strain** (Christie Books, £20 ISBN 978-1-873976-71-5; email raymondjbatkin@gmail.com) – the title is apparently Smiler's standard cheerful response to anyone asking about his health.

Raymond Batkin's book relies heavily on Smiler's notes, photographs and illustrations from his pre-war career, all neatly annotated and boxed up and unearthed after Smiler's death in 1987.

His service included spells in HMS Kempenfelt, Hermes and Obdurate, though his comments on his wartime experiences, including Arctic Convoys, were extremely brief – Batkin notes that Smiler was a modest man "and hardly a raconteur..."

But the spirit of the wide-ranging interbellum Navy is demonstrated in numerous photographs – particularly of the Far East during aircraft carrier HMS Hermes' 1934-37 deployment. Although not as crisp and clear as one might wish, they still convey a sense of the wonder of travelling to the far corners of a world not yet subject to the accessibility of jet travel.

Trincomalee – a classic RN frigate

TUCKED into the arms of a recreated 18th-Century seaport in Hartlepool is the beautifully-restored Georgian frigate HMS Trincomalee.

Built in Bombay of Indian teak – the oily nature of which helped preserve her hull and fittings – the Leda-class vessel was launched in 1817, making her the second oldest warship afloat in the world.

Now part of the National Museum of the Royal Navy family, Trincomalee (older readers may remember her as the Portsmouth training ship Foudroyant) gives visitors a similar (albeit smaller-scale) experience to those who step aboard HMS Victory.

And HMS Trincomalee, Frigate 1817 by maritime heritage specialist Wyn Davies and photographer Max Mudie (*Seaforth*, £11.99 ISBN 978-1-848322-21-9) is the ideal companion for such visitors, setting her in context, outlining her history, then providing an in-depth and lavishly-illustrated guide to the frigate.

Even if you do not plan a visit to County Durham in the near future, the book is an attractive and detailed snapshot of the high-water mark of the Royal Navy sailing frigate.

One last look at Lusty

THUMBING through the almost 300 pages of **HMS Illustrious (V), 1982-2014**, one can't help sensing a feeling of loss.

Every page is a reminder of just how important an aircraft carrier is. Not just as a military machine. It's 20,000 tonnes of sovereign British territory. Not merely for launching air strikes or Royal Marines assaults (which they have done repeatedly). It's a floating ambassador for the UK – as are its men and women. It's that unquantifiable. The lump in your throat. The bristles down the back of your neck. Hell, I want a miniature Union Flag right now and I want to wave it furiously.

With their passing, we – as a newspaper (we have relied heavily on their input down the years), Navy and nation – lost something special. The Queen Elizabeths have very big figurative boots to fill.

The other striking reminder on every page of Richard Johnstone-Bryden's beautifully-produced volume is that this Harrier carrier led a far more varied life than her creators ever envisaged. Indeed, very rarely did she do out-and-out anti-submarine operations with her jump jets flying combat air patrols.

The book is reminiscent of a similar tome produced for Invincible back in 2005 – a chapter dedicated to each phase in the ship's life under specific commanding officers, each one lavishly illustrated (mostly full-colour from the mid-90s) with images from the RN photographic branch's rich archive.

It also draws on interviews with former commanding officers from first (Jock Slater – like a good few carrier COs a future head of the RN) to last (No.18,

Capt Mike Utley), as well as ship's company and shipwrights and senior officers involved with Illustrious' design and construction at the end of the '70s and beginning of the '80s.

The name Illustrious was picked not in honour of the WW2 carrier – the ships' names committee set out to title this new class of anti-submarine 'cruisers' after Great War battle-cruisers and was looking to avoid the carrier connection. They found many names no longer suitable or relevant, plumped for Invincible and Indomitable (later renamed Ark Royal thanks to the popularity of the latter name courtesy of *Sailor*) and Illustrious, having decided to break the shackles the 'no carrier names' restriction placed on them.

Which was no bad thing because when then Capt Jock Slater joined Lusty in build on the Tyne, he found lively interest from Old Illustrians proud of the wartime carrier – and keen to foster relations with the new one.

He was due to oversee the formal acceptance of the ship into the RN on September 2 1982 – after which months of trials and training would ensue before Illustrious could deploy.

The Falklands threw all that out of the window. The carrier was handed over to the RN on June 17 (with 11,000 defects needing solving, most of them minor). She was in Portsmouth four days later, carried out five weeks of intensive work-up, and was off to the Falklands to relieve Invincible on the afternoon of July 26.

There's nothing quite as dramatic – certainly not in the early years of Illustrious' career – as that maiden deployment (143 days at sea, 43,560 miles steamed, race against the clock to finish Stanley's airfield so

Phantoms could take over air defence of the Falklands).

She did end her active life with a bang: the Philippines relief mission in late 2013 provided instant aid and fostered a generation of goodwill in islands wrecked by Typhoon Haiyan; the operation, codenamed Patwin, features *in extenso* here.

The Pacific archipelago is just one exotic destination visited by Lusty in her 32 years under the White Ensign.

It joins Singapore, New York, The Falklands, Sri Lanka, Sydney, Taranto, The Gulf, Normandy, South Korea, Sierra Leone, The Adriatic and, of course, Malta. Amazingly, given that the ship and the country are inextricably linked (thanks in good part to the deeds of the wartime Illustrious), it was 1995 before the fifth Lusty visited.

And after a triumphant debut, the ship was in action just a few days later providing air cover during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

She was in Malta too on September 11 2001, bound for Oman and the biggest RN task force deployment since the Falklands (24 ships, two submarines, 8,000 personnel).

The exercise, Saif Sarea, took place not so much half-heartedly, but with at least one eye on what was happening in Afghanistan in light of the terrorist atrocities in the USA – rightly, for within days of the work-out ending, the carrier was committed to Operation Veritas, the curtain-raiser to what would turn out to be more than a dozen years of operations in the war-torn country.

The flight deck was emptied for ops in Afghanistan and five Chinooks flew onboard (two more than the rulebook said). "The rules said 'no'," recalled her



Top title for Tom

WINDSURFER Tom Eskdale powered to a title at the Inter-Service windsurfing championships.

The ET(ME) from HMS Somerset took the individual title and the Royal Navy was named champions for the first time in eight years.

Tom won four of his seven races in tough conditions at the two-day event hosted by the RAF Sailing Association at Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy.

Tom has a pedigree of sailing in the Olympic RSX class and has trained with some of the GB Team sailors in the past.

The Royal Navy dominated

the competition, with five of the six-strong team finishing in the top eight of the 23-strong field.

Royal Navy Sailing Association Rear Commodore Cdre Nic Dodd said: "This is an encouraging time for Navy windsurfing."

"We have a strong squad and a renewed focus on attracting and then developing future racing talent and recreational windsurfers."

The other Royal Navy team members are: Cdre Dodd, WO1 Dave Strudwick, CPO Johnny Walker, Lt Cdr Paul Morris and Capt Adrian Wallis with Cdr Tom Joyce in reserve.



● L/Cpl Colin Francis, LH Ronda Crampton-Reid and WO John Thacker attended the World Veterans' Judo Championships

New veteran scoops silver at world event

JUDO exponents from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines took part in this year's World Veterans' Judo Championships in Amsterdam.

First Dan LH Ronda Crampton-Reid took part in the over 78kg category in her first competition outside of the UK – and her first veterans' contest.

She beat Hungarian Cecilia Reiner and ended up with the silver medal after losing to Nicole Hehemann of Germany.

"I've put a lot of hard work in and this year I was aiming just for a British ranking," said Ronda.

"I never imagined I would be ready this year to compete at the worlds never mind medalling."

Second Dan L/Cpl Colin Francis, of 40 Cdo, beat Frenchman Stephan Trillot in the under 66kg category to reach the quarter-finals where he met Cyrill Rocton of France.

Colin faced a tough fight against Rocton, who is a lot taller and has a longer reach, and lost

the encounter, leaving him with the mammoth task of winning three fights to secure a bronze.

Colin won his first game against Marat Tabaldiev of Kyrgyzstan but then lost to current European Champion Ramil Gelendinov of Russia to finish seventh overall.

Fifth Dan WO John Thacker competed in the under 90kg.

He secured his first victories against Italian and Portuguese opponents. His third opponent proved too strong and he was left to qualify for the bronze but ended up in seventh spot.

Anyone interested in taking part in the sport can contact: Royal Navy Judo – Lt S P Watson at CHF-HQ-CDO MAOT1 or Stephen.watson951@mod.uk or phone 93510 5806 or 01935 455806.

Royal Marines Judo – Sgt Lee Douglas at NAVY TRG CTCRM-SW PT SCH02 or lee.douglas802@mod.uk or phone 93785 4150 or 01392414150.

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Raiders target sailors

PLYMOUTH University Raiders took time out from their preparations for the new season to run a basketball coaching session for trainee sailors at HMS Raleigh.

The players and their coaches spent an afternoon at the training base in Torpoint teaching ball skills and sharing their knowledge of the game.

Around 60 recruits, who are undergoing their specialist training at Raleigh, attended the session, held in the establishment's gymnasium.

Raiders assistant coach Matt Hatchell said: "This year we have a really good group of guys within the team. Part of our programme is the Community Schools Coaching Programme, so when we're recruiting we are looking for good guys to become part of that as well."

The session was part of Raleigh's grass-roots training programme which aims to give the recruits the chance to experience different sports with a view to recruiting players for Navy sports teams.

Most of those taking part had little or no previous experience of basketball.

Trainee Seaman Specialist Chris Evans, 20, from Plymstock, said: "I'm completely new to the sport. This training session has been really interesting, learning the basics from the professionals."

Fellow recruit, trainee submariner Jack Clarke, said: "You need to be pretty fit to play basketball because you're up and down the court all the time."

Pilot lands VX ranking

A ROYAL Navy officer bid to become the first player to win youth and senior world championship titles in the sport of VX.

Sub Lt Dan Raper, pictured, found himself in the biggest ever senior category, with players competing in four groups ahead of the quarter-finals, semi-finals and final.

VX, a type of hand ball, can be played by people of all ages and abilities. The VX Games consist of the annual V2 World Championships and the VX World Cup that takes place every four years.

Dan qualified second in his group to take on Carl Alsop in the quarter-finals. The match was fast and furious but Carl edged a victory, leaving Dan with a world ranking of six.

"I take comfort from the fact that I lost to the eventual runner-up," said Dan. "I just love this sport and I've thoroughly enjoyed the tournament. I can't wait for us to be able to compete in a three-Services championship."

Dan was selected to play for England in the VX Games but Royal Navy duties prevented his participation. England beat India to take the World Cup.

For more information contact the England VX Association www.vxengland.org

Reminder

SUBMISSIONS to Navy News for December's edition should be sent by Friday November 13 and for January's edition by Friday December 4.



Aye pod!

Reservist king of vegetable throwing

HE was the last to compete and his pea was defrosting... but Royal Navy Reservist Graham Butterworth overcame the odds to be crowned World Pea Throwing Champion.

The Officer Cadet from HMS King Alfred in Portsmouth managed to hurl his garden pea 28.67 metres to lift the golden hand-holding-a-pea trophy.

The championships, which began 15 years ago, are held outside the Lewes Arms pub in Mount Place, Lewes, Sussex.

"We had to use peas provided by the pub - Birdseye garden peas. They were frozen but I was the last to throw so it was very squidgy," said Graham, 33, a father of four, who was cheered on by members of his family.

He revealed there is a scientific method to his success.

"My friend and fellow competitor showed me some information from his physicist friend which explained the laws of motion, highly boring but I remembered one point - I chose a pea that had minimal indents to ensure least resistance.

"It was a fantastic and thoroughly random day out for the family, Lewes is a lovely town.

"I shall be competing again next year to retain my crown - the event is suitable for any sportsmen that use their arms for throwing - cricket, boxing etc."

Graham started entering eccentric British competitions around the country along with another Naval Reservist - former Navy diver Ginge Fullen, who he had competed with as part of the Maritime Reserves Field Gun team.



● Graham with his trophy

The pair have both competed in the annual Tetbury World Wool Carrying Championships, while Ginge also took part in a UK Pooh Sticks contest.

They both intend to take part in the World Conker Championships, bog snorkelling and cheese rolling in the coming season.

"It's nice to get involved in obscure, eccentric British events - they are a cracking day out for the whole family, the boys think their Daddy is very funny, albeit a bit silly," added Graham, who works for a brick company.

He was selected along with two other Reservists for the RN Rugby squad this year - he is also representing HMS Collingwood in Boxing Championships.

The pea-throwing championships raised money for the Sasha Roberts Scholarship Fund, set up in memory of a regular customer killed in a road accident in 2006.

Get a grip, we've a team to select



HOPING to floor the competition, Royal Naval personnel threw themselves into the RN Judo contest hoping to win a place in the Inter-Service Judo Championships.

The RN Championships, held at RNAS Yeovilton, acts as a selection process for the Inter-Services. If personnel are away for operational reasons and they deserve a place in the team this will be taken into account.

Sub Lt Stephen Watson from Commando Helicopter Force said: "It has been a superb day for the RN Judo Team and we look forward to the Inter-Service Championship at RAF Cosford where we hope to surpass our medal collection from last year."

Sub Lt Watson picked up gold in the masters category.

The sport of judo is derived from Jujitsu; although it is not a real martial art it has many similarities and was designed in the late 1800s.

The name Judo means the 'gentle way'.

Pictures: L(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum



FOST team take golf honours

A TEAM from Flag Officer Sea Training won the Navy Cup - the largest inter-establishment golf competition held in recent times.

The tough 36-hole stableford contest was fought through ever-changing weather on exceptionally soft ground at Southwick Park Golf Club.

Twenty teams took part, representing 15 units from all five regions.

The morning round saw the four-man team from FOST South take the lead with 109 points, with HMS Neptune's A team close behind on 106 points.

In the afternoon a steady return of 104 points saw FOST maintain their lead to take the cup.

RNAS Culdrose Sea King team finished second with 110 points while HMS Sultan were third with 106 points.

In the individual competition, PO Matt Whitehead (MISG) and WO1 Shaun Matthews (FOST) both recorded a first round score of 37 points with PO Whitehead scoring a second round of 40 points to win overall.

The next three places were decided on countback with CPO Chats Harris (RNAS Culdrose), WO1 Shaun Matthews and Whisky Walker (HMS Collingwood) all finishing with 72 points.

Shot of the day was achieved by Mne Lee Murphy as he got a hole-in-one on the Par 3 15th hole.

The winning team of WO1 Paul Shiel, LS Jon Cousins, WO1 Shaun Matthews and PO Billy Lale received the cup from Rear Admiral John Clink, president of the Royal Navy Golf Association.



Five-star display

Haul of medals for newly-formed team

GYMNAST Aaron Wilding certainly had his eyes on the prize as he scooped five medals at the first contest for the newly-formed Royal Navy Gymnastics Team.

CPO(MA) Wilding grabbed gold on the floor, silver on the rings, parallel bars and pommel and a bronze in the vault.

Fellow debutant AB Alisha Heads also grabbed glory as she took two golds – for her floor and beam performances – and a bronze medal in the vault.

The two gymnasts, who started training in May, took part in the Hawth Gymnastics Competition at Crawley in Surrey, along with competitors from across the country.

The adult-only contest was designed to encourage adults new to the sport or those who had given up.

"I was very nervous,

this was not only my first gymnastics competition but also the first time wearing lycra in public," said CPO Wilding.

"I opened the competition on floor and had an immense sense of achievement when they announced me as the Royal Navy."

AB Heads said: "It was a really friendly competition with a great atmosphere."

"I am looking forward to next year's competition season, representing the Royal Navy and having more RN participants."

The Royal Navy Gymnastics Team is looking to recruit more members for next year's competition season.

Anyone wishing to give the sport a go or return to it should contact Lt Jamie Weller at Jamie.weller218@mod.uk

You can keep up to date with the team at www.facebook.com/royalnavygymnastics

Pictures: Lt Jamie Weller



On course for trophy victory

KARTING driver Lt Sam Harris powers his machine around the track for the Royal Navy Kart Team.

The team emerged victors to take the station trophy at Fulbeck in Lincolnshire. The win came during the Inter-Service endurance championships, which consists of six rounds held over six months.

The RN had four teams in the 45-strong championships, with kart 98 – driven by Lt Harris, HMS Trenchant, and LAET Day of 848 NAS – and kart 45 – driven by POAET Myhill of 1710 NAS and LET Grier, of HMS Vigilant – both owned by the MOD.

Two other karts, 97 – driven by Lt Nash of 846 NAS and Lt McLauchlan of 847 NAS – and 44 – driven by Lt Bateson of MCTA Portsmouth and Lt Lacey of MOD Corsham – are owned by the drivers but race under the RN banner.

During the season kart 98 finished in the top ten in all rounds apart from one. Kart 44 finished ninth after the first round. Kart 97 finished 12th in their only round while kart 45's best finishing position was eighth.

Trophies are awarded in each round for outright finishing positions with the top two teams from each Service scoring points towards the station trophy. The Honda-powered Prokarts, which can reach speeds of up to 80mph, saw the RN team finish fifth overall during the season.



● Members of the victorious RNRMAA

Naval anglers net promotion

ANGLERS from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines netted promotion to Division 1 of the Angling Trust at a rain-lashed River Trent.

Months of meticulous planning, numerous practise sessions and endless preparations enabled the team to come up with a winning formula in the 29-team competition.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Angling Association had a ten-man team doing battle with some of the country's top outfits. Some eight hours later

they returned to the Newark headquarters, some happy, others not so as bad weather put paid to fishing the long pole at 13 metres.

The RN team fished tactically for the team rather than for individual glory.

Many of the team finished in the top five of each section, enabling the team to secure promotion.

Anyone wishing to get involved with the angling association should email David.Wellavize432@mod.uk

Change of goalkeepers fails to stop RAF onslaught

THE Royal Navy Lacrosse team faced the RAF in the Inter-Service competition at Burnaby Road after the Army were unable to field a team.

A revitalised RN side met for two days of training prior to the event and included two newcomers, AET Edwards of 1710 NAS and Lt Moloney of HMS Collingwood.

Blazing out of the starting blocks, A/Sgt Ravenscroft (45 Cdo) dominated at face off and scored the first goal of the game taking the RAF by surprise.

The RAF came back strongly and identified the RN's inexperience in defence making ETWE Trevorrow (HMS Collingwood) and Lt Cdr Weil (1710 NAS) work hard for the ball.

With ETME May (HMS Diamond) and Lt Currie (HMS

Sultan) driving the midfield, the team settled into a good rhythm working the ball from defence into attack, however the lack of substitutes began to tell.

Going into half time 7-3 down, the Royal Navy changed goalkeepers to see if Sub Lt Tymms (HMS Bulwark) could be supported more in attack with a view to recovering the deficit.

Unfortunately the RAF had got into their stride and were controlling the slow attack well.

Despite goals from Currie and Tymms, the RN defence was unable to keep out the disciplined RAF team so the final score ended up 11-5.

Future Royal Navy lacrosse events include tours to Manchester, Bath and Holland so anyone interested in participating should get in touch via info@rnlacrosse.com

Airsoft pair's Paris practice

TWO Royal Navy officers are this month taking part in an international airsoft competition.

Airsoft, a form of extreme paintball, sees competitors use realistic imitation firearms.

Lt Max Sloper of 814 NAS and Lt Matthew Johnson of 825 NAS beat around 2,300 competitors in a time trial at the UK National Airsoft Festival.

The pair completed a timed five-x-five shooting target, followed by a small close-quarters battle assault course to record an overall time of 38 seconds, qualifying for the international championships in Taiwan this month.

The officers have practised for the event in Paris, where they were allowed to use an official version of the course. Lt Johnson made a short video of one of the practice sessions which can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3Pa0DapyXQ

For more details on the competition in Taipei visit www.guay2.com/wsc



● Lt Max Sloper and Lt Matthew Johnson

Great Scott, what a performance

AET Scott Langridge flies high over the final jump at the annual Inter-Service Downhill Mountain Biking Championships.

Ten riders competed for the recently-reformed Royal Navy and Royal Marines Cycling Association Downhill Team at Revolution Bike Park in north Wales.

Heavy rain turned the course into a mud bath, with several riders crashing on the steep, wet and muddy track, including Cpl John Bennett, who required stitches for a shin injury.

For the first time the championships were a team event, with the six best times being

aggregated – a state-of-the-art laser-timing system was used which counted down to a hundredth of a second.

AET Langridge, of 824 NAS at RNAS Yeovilton, finished sixth in the senior category, while Peter Edmunds was fourth.

In the veterans' category C/Sgt Sam Shields finished third.

The Royal Navy finished in third overall behind the Army and RAF.

Anyone interested in getting involved in downhill racing should contact C/Sgt Shields at NAVY.1AGRM-LOG.ES.OBM



Double delight as Royal Marines teams triumph Magnificent seven up

THE Royal Marines football team secured the Inter-Regional Football Championship for a record seventh time.

First day of the competition at Burnaby Road in Portsmouth saw a group one match between the Royal Navy Under 23s and the Eastern Region.

The game presented plenty of goal-scoring opportunities for both teams, but concluded in a 1-1 draw.

Under the competition rules, the match went to penalties. It was Eastern Region which came out on top with a slim 5-4 advantage.

Next it was the turn of current champions the Royal Marines versus Western Region. In a typically combative Service match that looked like it was heading the same way as the first game, a late Sgt Simon Bochenski goal for the RM secured a 2-1 victory.

Day two and it was the turn of the other teams in the groups to play their first games against the losers from day one.

It would be the U23s and Northern Region from group one that started the day. A fresh Northern Region proved too much for the U23s and they shut the game out to win 2-0.

In the group two game Western Region played the Fleet Air Arm in

a thrilling 3-3 encounter.

Day three would decide who would be in the final. In the group one game Northern Region took on Eastern Region.

It was the Northern Region who secured their place in the final after a tense match, winning 3-2.

The Royal Marines played the Fleet Air Arm in the group two game.

It wasn't long before the Royals broke the deadlock with a goal on 14 minutes from Mne Andy Hall. This was swiftly followed by another goal on 15 minutes from Cpl Shea Saunders. With a further two goals, the Corps were 4-0 up in 20 minutes.

A FAA penalty gave the airmen a burst of resurgence, but another RM goal before half time knocked the fight out of them.

The Royals began the second half where they left off the first half, eventually securing a resounding 9-3 victory.

The final of this year's competition was played under the floodlights at Victory Stadium.

With the Northern Region in their first final appearance since 2008, and the Royal Marines, set on continuing their dominance of the competition, both teams tried to take control.

It was the RM that struck the first blow with a quick break

and a resounding shot from Cpl Saunders on ten minutes beating the Northern Region keeper. Despite having some gilt-edged opportunities to strike back, Northern Region couldn't find a way past the RM goalkeeper Mne Tony Baxter, who was in top form.

Two quick goals from RM forward Cpl Ben Hebditch sealed the fate of the Northern Region, with the Corps side going in at half time three goals to the good.

The second half saw both teams pick up where they left off, with chances at both ends being denied by either the goalkeepers or the frame of the goal.

It was on the 80th minute that the Northern Region were rewarded for their persistence with a well-worked goal from Mne Ben Goodge to make it 3-1.

Five minutes later the Royals secured the game, and a record-breaking seventh consecutive win, with a second goal from Saunders, fitting as he has appeared in all seven of the RM finals.

After the final whistle the officials and the man of the match POPT Danny Kerr, having been presented with their mementoes, all that was remaining was for the chairman of the RNFA, Capt David Vanderpump, to hand the Inter Regional Cup to RM skipper Sgt Adam Fowler.



● Man of the match Mne Andy Kay

Brothers retain title

THE Royal Marines Rugby League Brothers retained the Senior Inter-Service title for the first time, condemning the Army to their first wooden spoon.

The main match at Burnaby Road was preceded by a thrilling game between the respective Academy sides, with the Army emerging 26-16 winners.

The main event was for the Jack Harrison VC trophy played for annually by the Royal Navy and the Army named after a Rugby League-playing school teacher who lost his life in the trenches during WW1.

This year there was even more to play for, as a win or draw for the RN would see them retain the IS trophy, a loss would save the Army from the wooden spoon and give the trophy to the RAF on points difference.

First blood went to the Brothers with Mne Tom Loxam rounding off his first full season with a try. AB Darren Bamford converted to give the RN a lead of 6-0 in the first eight minutes.

The Army hit back with a penalty to leave the game 6-2 at half time.

During the second half, a well-taken try by AET Luke Cooper stretched the RN lead to 10-2, which proved to be the final score.

Celebrations began with RN Skipper LAET Mark Robinson accepting the Inter-Service Trophy from Second Sea Lord Admiral Jonathan Woodcock.

Home Inter-Service debutant Mne Andy Kay – who transferred from the Army to the Royal Marines – received the man-of-the-match award from Maj Jack Duckitt, Chairman of RMRL.

The victory also had special significance for not only those players who retired from the game on the night but for WO(PT) Wayne Okell who was the driving force behind getting the sport recognised in the Service.