



NAVY NEWS

October 2016



Game of drones

● HMS Archer accompanies Bladerunner – a robotic boat put through her paces on the Thames as the Royal Navy prepares to host a showcase of potential future naval warfare (see page 3)

Picture: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban

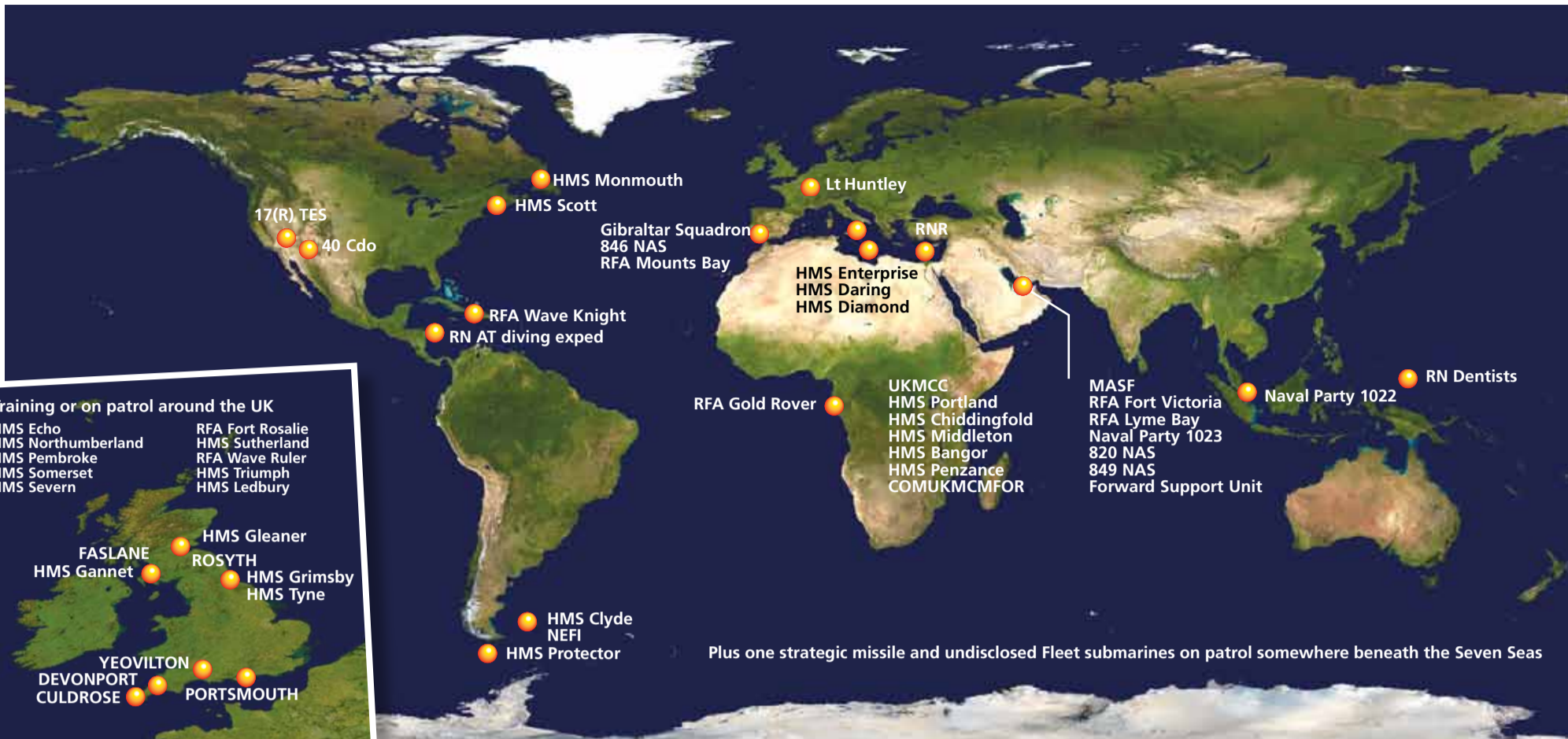
First bite

Marines kick off Black Alligator

Top gums

RN dentists join international effort





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

ROYAL NAVY FLEET FOCUS Protecting our nation's interests

NAVY NEWS offers a tantalising glimpse into the future this month, beginning with the unique showcase **Unmanned Warrior** (see opposite page) taking place in Scotland.

Part of Joint Warrior, the exercise provides defence companies the chance to show off innovative unmanned vehicles able to operate in the skies, on the water and below the surface – signalling new possibilities in maritime warfare.

Readers can also meet the newest member of the Naval family – **HMS Forth**, the first of the River-class Batch 2 ships (see page 9). The patrol ship was lowered into the water for the first time at BAE Systems' shipyard on the Clyde.

Back to the present and Royal Marines from **40 Commando** have been in the Mojave Desert (see centre pages) for Exercise Black Alligator. Working with the USMC, the green berets have been enjoying some live firing exercises at Twentynine Palms.

Also 'enjoying' some warmer weather are personnel from **HMS Portland** and **RFA Fort Victoria** (see page 4) as the ships took part in an anti-submarine warfare exercise with submarine USS Dallas in the Gulf of Oman.

Heading east is **HMS Daring** (see page 7) as the Type 45 deploys for a nine-month stint in the Gulf.

The Sea Kings of **849 NAS** have totted up more than 1,000 sorties in the heat of the Gulf trying to root out terrorists and smugglers (see page 6).

Further east, to Vietnam and Palau, and a group of **Royal Navy dentists** treated thousands of patients as the UK took part in Pacific Partnership for the first time (see pages 18-19).

In cooler waters, **HMS Monmouth** broke off from war games to help save the life of a Canadian fisherman in the North Atlantic (see page 5).

In much colder waters was **HMS Protector** (see page 13) as she visited the Chilean port of Punta Arenas as she made the 500-mile journey from the South West approaches to the North Sea.

HMS Sutherland represented the Royal Navy for the first Islands Regatta in the Isles of Scilly (see page 11), while **HMS Ledbury** acted as guardship for the Dartmouth Regatta (see page 11) and **HMS Grimsby**, **Tyne** and **Explorer** attended the four-day North Sea Ships Regatta in the small Northumbrian port of Blyth (see page 11).

In Rosyth, the smallest vessel in the Royal Navy **HMS Gleaner** sailed past the largest **HMS Queen Elizabeth** (see page 14) as the survey ship gathered vital information ahead of the future flagship's maiden voyage next year.

In Portsmouth the centenary of **Coastal Forces** was celebrated with a sail-past (see page 20), featuring four historic vessels, escorted by **HMS Smiter**.

This month the spotlight fell on **Maritime Reserves** (see pages 16-17) for the annual Reserves Day. The RNR also feature as more than 100 of them travelled to Cyprus for **Exercise Helios Encounter** (see page 22).

Finally, some fun as Royal Navy personnel explored the pristine coral reefs of **Belize** (see page 21) during a scuba diving expedition to the Caribbean.



RFA's role in chemicals mission Libya escort duty

A WILDCAT buzzes past a merchantman laden with chemical agents as British sailors and Royal Marines help rid the world of the final remnants of Col Gaddafi's chemical weapons programme.

RFA Mounts Bay escorted a transporter carrying 500 tonnes of substances which could be used to manufacture weapons.

The support ship joined a Danish-led force off the port of Misrata, where the potentially-lethal materials were loaded on to merchantman Ark Futura ready to be shipped to Germany for disposal.

Libya's stockpile of chemical weapons – chiefly mustard gas and sarin – was destroyed by the international community back in 2014.

But a quantity of chemicals which could be made into chemical weapons remained, prompting the Libyan government to ask for assistance in ridding their country of the substances.

Keen to prevent the chemicals falling into the hands of terrorist groups such as Daesh, Whitehall joined forces with Copenhagen – as it did ridding Syria of similar substances in 2013 and 2014 – and assigned Mounts Bay to Operation RECLIB (Removal of Chemical weapons from LIBYA) alongside Danish command ship HDMS Absalon.

Task Force Commander Cdre Torben Mikkelsen said there were a few nervous personnel as the Ark Futura prepared to load the shipment, but their fears were assuaged

when they saw the security measures in place in Misrata – and with Mounts Bay on stand-by just a short distance away. He said the auxiliary's presence made "a huge difference" to the delicate operation.

"Mounts Bay showed the absolute best example of professionalism and smartness and I am grateful for that," he added. "Each crew member can be proud of their contribution."

In addition to escorting the final shipment of chemicals, Britain contributed around £500,000 to the overall destruction effort, and conducted expert analysis of samples of the substances at the government laboratories at Porton Down.

The chemical agent mission provided a break from the painstaking task Mounts Bay has been conducting recently – building up a picture of illegal activity along the Libyan coast.

Whilst survey ship HMS Enterprise has been focusing chiefly on the humanitarian mission, hand-in-hand with that operation is the lower-profile intelligence-gathering mission to help enforce the UN Security Council Resolution prohibiting the trafficking of arms to Libya.

After RECLIB, Mounts Bay is taking a maintenance break of a couple of months; taking her place is HMS Diamond, which sailed from Portsmouth on the last day of August ready to deal with the human smugglers and arms traffickers who endanger the lives of innocent people (see page 11).



Helston's pride in Culdrose ties

THE good folk of Helston lined their steep main thoroughfare – Coinagehall Street – to show their appreciation for their air station.

Some 150 men and women from nearby Culdrose – which has been a part of the tight-knit community now for 69 years – exercised their right to strut through the small town with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, bands playing and Colours flying at the annual Freedom parade.

Helston's mayor Cllr Gillian Geer and the air station's commander Capt Dan Stembidge took the salute having earlier inspected the massed ranks of fliers and sailors in a nearby car park as they mustered for the march.

"Helston places a great value on family and indeed Culdrose and the Town are one big family," the mayor said. "Over the years we have been proud of your work since 1947 and are proud to work, to live and play with you in our community. The freedom of our town confirms it."

With 3,000 military and civilian personnel working at the station on a daily basis, Culdrose is the largest military establishment in Cornwall – and by far the largest single employer in the southwest of the county.

The Freedom of the Borough of Helston was bestowed on HMS Seahawk in 1958 with personnel choosing to exercise that right each year.

"Culdrose is an operational Air Station at the forefront of our nation's defence," said Capt Stembidge. "I would personally like to thank Helston for the warmth and unprecedented support shown to all Royal Navy and civilian personnel."

"Many of our people cannot be here to enjoy today as they remain on call 24/7 defending our nation's borders or deployed overseas protecting UK interests."



Spy boat offers glimpse of hi-tech future of naval warfare

Mission possible: Crew's control

A ROBOTIC speedboat dubbed Bladerunner zooms along the Thames as the Royal Navy prepares to showcase the future of naval warfare.

The 32ft 'spy boat' was put through its paces on the busy waterway – accompanied by patrol boat HMS Archer – as forerunner of this month's Unmanned Warrior exercise.

Bladerunner wasn't the only futuristic vessel on the Thames – as she went under Tower Bridge she and Archer passed one of the world's largest super yachts – the £225m Motor Yacht A owned by Russian tycoon Andrey Melnichenko, once referred to as the King of Bling.

His 320ft vessel, which is said to have three swimming pools and a helipad, and has an 'upside-down' hull, was moored alongside HMS Belfast.



The yacht has an opulent lounge with floor-to-ceiling windows, wood and leather furniture, and a spacious owner's cabin with a revolving bed.

With a total living space of 24,000sq ft it is more than 20 times larger than that of an average semi-detached house in Britain.

Built in 2008 and designed by Philippe Starck, the yacht is fitted with bomb-proof windows. It was reportedly used by actors Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher as they celebrated new year in the Caribbean.

That's enough about superyachts. Bladerunner, officially known as Maritime Autonomy Surface Testbed (MAST), can operate via basic remote control right up to autonomous navigation.

Although it is capable of navigating and avoiding collisions autonomously and can be operated via remote control, Bladerunner had a coxswain on board to take control if needed because of Port of London bylaws, which also limited the speeds at which it could travel.

The boat doesn't carry weapons but is designed to be used for reconnaissance missions.

She drew admiring glances from tourists as the sleek boat made her way up river – weaving between pleasure boats and goods barges – towards the Houses of Parliament before returning to Tower Bridge, which was raised to accommodate the HMS Archer as it was high tide.

The Royal Navy's Fleet Robotics Officer Cdr Peter Pipkin said: "This is a chance to take a great leap forward in maritime systems – not to take people out of the loop but to enhance everything they do, to extend our reach, our look, our timescales, our efficiency using intelligent and manageable robotics at sea."

MAST is being developed by ASV Ltd of Portchester in Hampshire, under funding from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL).

Bladerunner is among 40 unmanned systems, including aircraft, below water and above water

drones, taking part in Unmanned Warrior – part of the twice-yearly Exercise Joint Warrior, this month off West Wales and Scotland.

The Royal Navy is providing the 'playground' for the biggest autonomous warfare event of its kind, with the aim of exploring ideas which will help shape the future of naval warfare. Many of the new systems are designed to take personnel out of the danger zone.

"The growing scale of Unmanned Warrior is a clear demonstration of the Royal Navy's ambition to lead and win through technological innovation," said First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones.

"Unmanned maritime systems will change how we operate, but they're just the start. Our pursuit of new technologies and ideas – from big data to 3D printing – will ensure we remain one of the most capable and successful navies in the world."

Sales and marketing director for ASV, Vince Dobbin, said: "Bladerunner will be demonstrated at Unmanned Warrior to showcase the UK's position at the forefront of delivering revolutionary technology."

Unmanned Warrior will involve Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUVs) and Unmanned Surface Vehicles (USVs) conducting a number of challenging scenarios across different themes.

For more information see the Royal Navy website www.royalnavy.mod.uk/UW16



Pictures: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban





HMS PORTLAND LEADS THE HUNT FOR THE SUBMARINE WHICH LED

OK, Tom Clancy's title was more attention-grabbing.

Plus his Cold War page-turner was snapped up by at least six million readers And 20 million cinemagoers saw Sean Connery (with his non-existent Russian accent) wrestle to defeat with his state-of-the-art boat, all the time chased by the USS Dallas.

Whereas GASWEX (Gulf Anti-Submarine Warfare EXercise... known by the Americans as SHAREM (Ship Anti-Submarine Warfare Readiness and Evaluation Measurement)) was played out largely in secret over a few days in the Gulf of Oman.

And the 'star' of the classic submarine thriller, USS Dallas, was foe, not friend, the target of four Allied warships, among them Britain's premier sub hunter, HMS Portland, while 'Big D' tried to take out the prize asset in the Coalition formation: supply ship RFA Fort Victoria.

It's been a while since the RN was involved in a GASWEX – but it's an opportunity not to be missed. For a start there are real assets to play with: a real submarine, real aircraft (French maritime patrol aircraft peppering the Gulf of Oman with sonobuoys), real hunters (HMAS Perth, two American Arleigh-Burkes USS Mason and Nitze) and a real 'high value target' to protect.

Then you have the climatic and hydrographic conditions to contend with. It's not the North Sea. Or North Atlantic. Each one is different for submarine and the warships hunting them.

But other elements of the hunt are the same the world over.

Hunting submarines is 'a whole ship evolution', demanding every one of the 200 souls aboard play their part.

The guys in the ops room, to be sure. And on the bridge. And in the engine room. But also those off duty. "They are expected to move around the ship silently, not play loud music and avoid doing anything that might give Portland's position away," explained weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Adam Robertson.

"The chance to operate with our allies in challenging conditions with a 'live asset' is invaluable – the team had some valuable 'in contact' time with a live submarine," said PO Stuart McLaughlin, one of Portland's underwater warfare specialists.

"These chances are few and far between, so the whole team from the commanders down relished the opportunity – and the challenge."

The 30-year-old from Glasgow continued: "It's important that we learn how to work with our allies in all spheres of warfare to ensure that we can act with minimal effort should the occasion ever arise."

"At times, the exercise was a challenge, but the underwater team have all taken away some valuable experience."

With a captain, rather than a commander, in charge, Portland is the senior submarine hunter in the Type 23 flotilla.

She faced some serious competition in the form of the Mason, a destroyer assigned to protect the mighty carrier USS Eisenhower – and a ship which prides itself in finding the enemy below.

"It's no secret that we've been one of the better, if not the best ship in the Atlantic Fleet for a long time," said Command Master Chief Ronn Shasky, pointing to the anti-submarine warfare 'Bloodhound' trophy the Mason holds. Never someone to rest on his laurels, he adds: "We love training. We love showing how much we've learned, how much we've absorbed, and continuing Mason's great legacy as submarine fighters."

So when other ships – mostly strangers – joined the hunt, it wasn't too hard for like-minded sailors to collaborate.

"We started out as four ships that have never worked together," said Lt Cdr Thomas Hobbs, Portland's XO. "We came together using a whole series of common tactics and procedures we learned from our home navies and we put them into practice in a difficult area of the world for anti-submarine warfare. We improved on them and accomplished what we set out to do."

Fort Vic wasn't just bobbing around waiting either to be torpedoed or spared such a fate thanks to the intervention of a defending warship.

She's the floating home of Bagger Sea Kings flying surveillance missions (see page 6) and a floating warehouse/filling station/ammo dump for coalition warships tackling terrorism/piracy/trafficking in the Indian Ocean.

In the most complex replenishment of Portland's deployment to date, the frigate topped up her fuel tanks and loaded ammunition and stores simultaneously.

So while one line between the two ships – just 40 metres apart – carried the fuel hose and probe, a second supported a steel wire for a jackstay transport of pallets. Some 85 shells – 25kg apiece, or over two tonnes in all – were shipped across to Portland for her gunbusters to store in the magazine, carried into the bowels one-by-one.

Meanwhile, the frigate's fuel tanks were filling with 180,000 litres of fuel – enough to fill the tanks of more than 3,200 family cars... and enough to sustain Portland for just under ten days or about 3,000 miles at a regular cruising speed of 11 knots.

Which is her normal rate moving around the myriad vessels using what are among the busiest waters on the planet (two fifths of the world's shipping passes through the three choke points in Portland's domain: Suez, Bab-al-Mandeb at the foot of the Red Sea, and the Strait of Hormuz).

Tankers and container ships carry the bulk cargo over huge distances, but far more numerous are traditional dhows making shorter hops between the many countries bordering the Indian Ocean.

While the craft are the smuggler/terrorists 'vehicle of choice' for making illegal shipments, far more are used for perfectly legal purposes.

Hand-in-hand with the security/policing mission comes reassurance and support for the good guys, the ordinary fishermen and merchantmen, courtesy of 'approach and assist visits' – boarding teams popping aboard dhows, chatting with crews, even sitting down over food and drink. Nothing quite beats the personal touch.

"It was great to actually board and chat to the guys out in the Gulf," said 24-year-old Mne Tim Hodgett. "They were all very welcoming and pleased to see us."



THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER



● RFA Fort Victoria is flanked by HMS Portland (left) and HMAS Perth, with USS Nitze and USS Mason behind while USS Dallas lurks somewhere below. Picture: AB Richard Cordell, RAN



Extra help off Halifax from HMS Monmouth

HMS Monmouth broke off war games and dashed to help save the life of a Canadian fisherman in the North Atlantic.

The Plymouth-based frigate was taking part in Canada's largest naval exercise in two decades, around 100 miles east of Nova Scotia, when she picked up an SOS – while her board and search teams were working their way through a training ship as part of the exercise.

The crew of the trawler Double Mischief reported that one of their shipmates had fallen badly and was suffering possible heart problems as a result.

The boarding teams abandoned their search of their training vessel, the MV Leeway Odyssey, and raced at top speed in their boats to the fishing vessel which was ten miles away.

Within minutes a small medical team was sent over to the fishing vessel and Monmouth's doctor Surg Lt Elizabeth Walters was able to stabilise the casualty, a 34-year-old Canadian, but determined he was in urgent need of hospital treatment.

The fisherman was carefully carried by one of Monmouth's boats (pictured) back to the frigate, while a Seahawk helicopter was scrambled by another participant of the exercise, the American supply ship USNS Robert E Peary.

It landed on Monmouth, collected the casualty and flew him to a waiting ambulance at Halifax's Stanfield International Airport. Surg Lt Walters



accompanied the injured man throughout the long flight back.

The rescue added some real-world drama to the opening few days of the fortnight-long Cutlass Fury (where there were no cutlasses or fury...) involving some 3,000 sailors from the host nation, plus France, Spain, the USA and the UK, 11 warships, three submarines – among Monmouth's 'foes' was HMCS Windsor, the former HMS Unicorn, one of the last traditional diesel boats built for the Royal Navy – and more than two-dozen aircraft.

Although the focus was on submarine hunting, boarding operations and air attacks were also thrown in for good measure.

The exercise began at a relatively gentle pace in Halifax – the Royal Canadian Navy's Atlantic home – with conferences, talks, presentations, an industry day where Monmouth showcased

much of the kit installed during her refit last year, such as the Artisan radar and automatic 30mm gun (both of which will be fitted to the successor class of Type 26 frigates).

The Black Duke's sailors managed to sample some of the delights of Halifax, tried their hand at sea kayaking and watched the local ice hockey team, the Halifax Mooseheads, in action.

And under glorious clear skies, and with the waterfront crammed with Haligonians, all 11 surface ships taking part in the exercise sailed into the Atlantic in procession.

Dressed in their tropical white uniforms, Monmouth's sailors lined the frigate's upper deck to salute and cheer the Governor General of Nova Scotia aboard veteran supply ship HMCS Preserver, which acts as a floating 'petrol station' for warships in Halifax harbour.

Triumph on target

FIRMLY in the cross-hairs of HMS Triumph, destroyer HMS Diamond sails along the Devon coast blissfully unaware of the threat beneath her.

A few seconds later a flare burst into life on the surface of the English Channel spewing green smoke (bottom right) – a signal to every observer that the submarine had successfully made a torpedo run and sunk its foe... without actually firing a Spearfish.

The 'attack' on Diamond – and other warships operating in the South Coast Exercise Area off Plymouth – marked the climax of 12 months of intensive training as the 25-year-old boat emerged from maintenance, upgrades and revamps.

The 130 souls aboard have gone through every test and assessment imaginable – from the absolute basics of operating a nuclear-powered submarine safely all the way through to launching missile strikes and playing cat and mouse with surface ships.

The deeps were assessed by Flag Officer Sea Training in the simulators in Faslane, then at sea in 'peacetime' conditions – could they cope with small fires, breakdowns, hydraulic failures? (Yes, they could.)

From peace to war. Half a dozen dummy torpedoes were loosed at dummy targets – on and below the surface – on the range, before Triumph was given a genuine 'foe' to deal with: a live submarine for the sonar operators and control room team to locate, classify and neutralise... while the other, unnamed, boat was doing exactly the same in reverse.

The lessons from all this training were required for the T-boat's final phase of assessment when the crew were called on to do everything they might be required to perform on a deployment: simulated Tomahawk cruise missile strikes, gathering intelligence on passing ships, photographing installations ashore.

After 'sinking' Diamond et al, the senior assessor from FOST declared the submarine officially ready for a front-line patrol again.

As the youngest of the four remaining Trafalgar-class boats in service, Triumph is expected to conduct her hunter-killer/intelligence gathering duties until 2022.





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JDAM good effort from F-35 team

TOP. Bombing. This is a double ripple. Two 2,000lb smart bombs leave the belly of the beast, an F-35 Lightning II high above a test range on the Western Seaboard of the United States.

The stealth fighter – whose jump jet version is flown by Royal Navy aviators training to operate from HMS Queen Elizabeth – has come through its most intensive and successful month of weapons tests to date.

Over the past four weeks, 30 weapons have been dropped, launched and fired by the F-35 Integrated Test Force at legendary Edwards Air Force Base in California.

Typically, just a handful of such tests are carried out each month given the complexity of the planning beforehand; the F-35 record to date was a mere three live tests back in November last year.

But with new software installed on the jet and the Lightning II already being declared operational by the US Air Force (who fly a traditional, non-jump jet version), there's been a surge in firepower testing by the fliers at Edwards.

They've been unleashing fire and fury at the Sea Test Range – a patch of the Pacific crammed with instrumentation 50 miles west of Los Angeles – as well as the weapons ranges at China Lake in California and White Sands in New Mexico.

In addition to the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) 2,000lb bombs, GPS-guided 250-pound small diameter bombs, AIM-120 AMRAAM and AIM-9X Sidewinder air-to-air missiles were released as part of the concerted effort “to put steel on target”, as Lt Gen Chris Bogdan, executive officer of the F-35 programme, put it.

The jump jet version bought by the UK for the RAF and Fleet Air Arm, the F-35B, is due to begin trials with HMS Queen Elizabeth in 2018. Although its payload is slightly smaller, the weaponry and software and sensors behind it is largely identical to the other variants.

Picture: Lockheed Martin

WW2 torpedo found in harbour

DREDGING to accommodate HMS Queen Elizabeth in Portsmouth Harbour unearthed a WW2 torpedo.

Some ferry and rail traffic was disrupted while divers from Southern Diving Unit 2 moved it to waters off the Isle of Wight where it was safely blown up after a 16-hour operation.



Brock out of dock

EVER wondered what a Hunt-class minehunter looks like out of the water undergoing an overhaul in a massive shed?

Well, thanks to engineers at BAE Systems, here's that particular (and rather unusual) itch scratched.

In the Portsmouth ship hall built to construct the bow sections of Type 45 destroyers (about 400 tonnes heavier, but ten metres shorter) and extended for gigantic segments of carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, HMS Brocklesby receives the most substantial revamp in her 33-year history.

She's the latest ship in her class to receive the year-long overhaul which will help extend the life of the Hunts well into the 2030s.

Her sisters received the mid-life upgrade exposed to the elements, but with the hall now turned into part of BAE's 'Minor War Vessels Centre of

Specialisation', Brocklesby escapes the vagaries of the British weather.

That said, it will still take 190,000 'man hours' – that's the equivalent of one person toiling round the clock for more than 21 years – to carry out all the work required to return the ship to fighting order (some 9,000 maintenance tasks in all).

The biggest change comes in the engineering department; the Deltics which have powered the ship for more than three decades have been hauled out and new Caterpillar power plants (much more fuel efficient) installed.

With new engines comes new propellers, an improved chilled water plant (it struggles to keep crew and machinery cool in the broiling heat of the Gulf) and improved living quarters and refurbished galley, Brocklesby's deep maintenance is due to be completed next year.

Tyne's double tsar turn

SPEWING thick black smoke as it makes its way up the Channel, this is the Russian warship Minsk – as seen from HMS Tyne.

The Portsmouth-based patrol ship sailed with the Minsk – a Ropucha-class landing ship used to move military equipment from Russia's northern ports to its bases in the Mediterranean and Black Sea – for more than 500 miles, from the South West Approaches all the way through to the North Sea.

It's the second time in a month the offshore patrol vessel has monitored the progress of a Russian vessel past the UK.

In August, Tyne accompanied the Minsk's sister ship Alexander Shabalin as it headed in the opposite direction, bound for the Mediterranean.

In the case of the Minsk's passage, Tyne broke off fishery protection enforcement in the North Sea and sailed at top speed for nearly 500 miles to the gateway to the Channel.



There her bridge team used sophisticated navigation software and radars to successfully locate the Russian transporter before following the Minsk's progress through one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

The Ropucha class can carry ten tanks and nearly 350 troops – or a cargo of up to 500 tonnes –

steaming along at a top speed of 17½ knots. They are armed with two twin 57mm guns.

“I am incredibly proud of the way our ship's company reacted to this rapid activation – and with the professionalism they showed in this escort duty,” said Lt Craig Clark, Tyne's Executive Officer (Second-in-Command).

Baggers in Gulf pass major milestone

CULDROSE fliers have completed more than 1,000 sorties in the punishing heat of the Gulf trying to root out terrorists and smugglers.

The Sea Kings of 849 Naval Air Squadron are helping international military leaders build up a crucial picture of ordinary life – so that anything untoward sticks out like a sore thumb.

Three Flights (detachments of two Sea King Mk7 helicopters, plus air and ground crew) from the Cornish squadron take it in turns to spend a few months at a time monitoring seafaring activity in the region.

Since switching to the Gulf from Afghanistan at the end of 2014, the veteran helicopters – the last Sea Kings in front-line service with the Armed Forces – have completed 1,000 missions, totaling

more than 1,800 hours airborne (that's at least 35 whole weeks – or eight months)

The Sea Kings were designed to act as 'eyes in the skies' of the Invincible-class carriers, spying incoming aerial threats so the Harriers could intercept.

But in their current incarnation, their radar is equally adept at tracking ground movements – a feature used to effect against Saddam Hussein's armour outside Basra in 2003 and for five years over Afghanistan tracking insurgents and drug runners.

The radar – rotating inside the large dome or bag which gives the aircraft its nickname, but more importantly protects the multi-million-pound equipment from the harsh Gulf elements – can detect

between 180-240 contacts of all shapes and sizes, from oil rigs down to jet skis.

It's down to the observers to filter these contacts, deciding what is part of the normal pattern of life, and what is not.

If the latter is detected the entire machinery of the Combined Maritime Forces – the two-dozen-plus nations committed to keeping the sea lanes of the Gulf, Arabian and Red Seas and Indian Ocean open to lawful seafarers while stopping criminal activity at the same time – can come into play, with warships directed to intercept.

Given the size of the area which lies within CMF's domain – nearly 15 times the size of the North Sea – and the small number of ships, helicopters and patrol



Gunners meet SAM

SOLDIERS who shoot down enemy aircraft were given an insight into the RN's new anti-air missile when they visited HMS Westminster.

The frigate is in the closing stages of a major overhaul in Portsmouth Naval Base which has seen her become one of the first ships in the Fleet to receive Sea Ceptor, the new short-range shield against air attack.

The weapon and its supporting radar system will gradually replace the tried-and-tested (but also ageing – a version saw action in the Falklands) Seawolf missiles fitted across the Type 23 frigate flotilla.

In its place, the vertically-launched supersonic Sea Ceptor, which is slightly heavier than its predecessor and has a much greater range – more than 25km (15 miles), two-and-a-half times the distance of Seawolf.

The gunners of 16 Regiment Royal Artillery, based at Thorney Island – just along the coast from Portsmouth – currently use the veteran Rapier missile to provide their infantry and armoured comrades with cover on the battlefield.

Rapier is on the verge of retirement... in favour of a ground-based version of Sea Ceptor (short for interceptor).

Officers and senior non-commissioned officers from 16 Regiment, led by Lt Col James Mardlin, made the short trip to Portsmouth to hear both from the ship's company and from the new missile's developers MBDA about progress with the Surface-to-Air Missile system to date and what the future might hold in store for Ceptor.

“We are excited about being

able to work together over the next few years,” said Lt Cdr Chris L'Amie, Westminister's Senior Naval Officer.

“The introduction of Ceptor is a real opportunity for both us and 16 Regiment to learn from each other. We will continue to foster a strong working relationship with our closest military neighbours.”

His ship will return to the Fleet next year once the fitting of Sea Ceptor, a new medium-range radar and an improved computer system have been completed, among scores of improvements. The new-look Westminister will be the Royal Navy's premier submarine hunter.

Brow wow wow for QE

TWO enormous brows for the Navy's biggest warships have been delivered to Portsmouth Naval Base to allow the ship's company and civilian workers easy access to the carriers.

With HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales more than three times the size of their predecessors, the existing walkways between ship and shore are no use.

Unique gangways have had to be designed and built instead, courtesy of Dutch specialists Verhoef, as part of a £100m revamp of the harbour and jetties to accommodate the 65,000-tonne ships.

Weighing 12 tonnes each, the brows with telescopic gangways capable of extending 19 metres (60ft) can cope with up to 3,000 people an hour (although the ship's companies are under 700 strong).

One will serve the crew, extending to a reception point level with the flight deck, while the second will reach up to the aircraft lift brow for use by the 500 or so civilian engineers and technicians expected to be working aboard when the carriers are alongside in the naval base undergoing maintenance.

Base staff and sailors will undergo training to use the brows before using them for real for the first time next year when Queen Elizabeth makes her debut in Portsmouth. ■ Gleaner surveys Forth estuary for carrier's maiden voyage, page 14

“Contributing to the UK's maritime security is something the Royal Navy does day in, day out around the world.

“HMS Tyne is an incredibly versatile ship, one which is ideally suited to operating around the UK and in European waters to support our security.”

Tyne is one of four River-class patrol ships, three – Tyne, Severn and Mersey – conduct fishery protection and other duties around the UK, while HMS Clyde is permanently deployed to the Falkland Islands.

Stonehouse for sale

THE Royal Marines' historic Stonehouse barracks in Plymouth will be sold for redevelopment under plans by Whitehall to rid itself of 13 sites across the UK – and raise nearly £8m in the process.

Airfields, barracks and the golf course at the former HMS Dryad will also be sold as part of a move intended to reduce the

MOD's footprint by one third.

Stonehouse is home to 3 Commando Brigade and 30 Commando IX Group – around 750 green berets, sailors and supporting staff.

They will be relocated in the Plymouth area; a final decision has not been taken as to where, but Stonehouse itself is not expected to close before 2023.

aircraft involved, it's a difficult task.

Now add the challenges of the Middle East climate.

“We fly around five hours a day and have trips lasting up to three and a half hours,” explained Normandy Flight's Operations Officer Lt Dan Bassett.

“Being a single-pilot aircraft, the pilot obviously cannot get out of their seat, and have their hands on controls for the entire flight.

“That's very taxing considering there is no air conditioning in the aircraft and temperatures on the ground can reach over 50°C plus (normally 30-35°C while flying).

“The crew have to thoroughly prepare before the longer trips, taking toilet bags, water and food (sweets). We get bag meal for flights over meal times, which usually end up being a little wilted...”

More than four years after making her maiden entry to Gibraltar, HMS Daring has once again appeared in the shadow of the Rock.

The Portsmouth-based Type 45 destroyer stopped off in the sunny harbour as she prepares to head east of Suez on maritime security operations.

It was a busy day in the port as Daring met up with sister ship HMS Diamond and RFA Mounts Bay, who were also alongside.

But Gibraltar was not awash with battleship grey for long as Diamond sailed shortly after Daring's arrival, heading off to join an operation in the Mediterranean aimed at countering arms trafficking. Mounts Bay meanwhile has been assisting with the removal of potential chemical weapons materials from Libya.

"Having worked incredibly hard over the last few days to get ourselves into the battle rhythm required for operations, it was a real reward for me and my ship's company to sail into Gibraltar," said Commander Philip Dennis, Daring's Commanding Officer.

"It was great to see another Type 45 destroyer – HMS Diamond – and RFA Mounts Bay also on brief stops alongside as they continue, like us, to work tirelessly protecting Britain's interests at sea.

"We now look forward to the next stages of our deployment, supporting international partners as they launch strikes

against Daesh and ensuring maritime security in some of the world's busiest shipping lanes."

HMS Daring made the most of the short time alongside to take on supplies, set up some sporting fixtures and fulfil the naval tradition of running the Rock.

The Governor of Gibraltar, His Excellency Lieutenant General Edward Davis, said:

"As ever, Gibraltar is delighted to see a Royal Navy warship visit the Rock, particularly in the run-up to National Day, and particularly when it's a ship that is a world leader in terms of maritime air defence capability. I wish HMS Daring and its crew every good fortune during their vital mission to the Gulf."

No visit to Gibraltar is complete without the Royal Navy's traditional Rock race, from the dockyard to the top of the Rock of Gibraltar.

Under cover of early morning darkness, the ship's company gathered at the naval base entrance to begin the challenge, spurred on by Leading Physical Trainer Mat Phillips.

Following the twisting, steep, turns of the roads up to the top of the Rock, the sailors and Royal Marines gave it their all to pound the tarmac and complete the Royal Navy rite of passage as the lights of Gibraltar twinkled below.

Lance Corporal Shaun Reeves, 21, from Liverpool, was the first member of Daring's ship's

company to reach the finish line, after 25 minutes and 58 seconds.

Hot on his heels was 21-year-old Lieutenant Jack Denniss, from Swansea, Daring's Officer Commanding Royal Marines. Lt Denniss chased L/Cpl Reeves to the finish line but was beaten by one second for a time of 25 minutes and 59 seconds.

"It was great to come first out of the ship's company and beat my boss at the same time," said L/Cpl Reeves. "It's just running but it's still fairly hard going with all the twists and steep roads. You don't get much space on board a warship to run unless it's on a treadmill, so it was nice to get the chance to go ashore and do it properly."

Lt Denniss added: "Of course I had to let L/Cpl Reeves come first as a selfless way of boosting my team's morale – or at least that's the story I'm going with. It was a good route and watching the sun rise while racing up the side of the Rock was a sight to behold."

In third place was Able Seaman (Writer) Philip Green with a time of 26 minutes and 4 seconds. Sergeant Dan Silman was fourth (29 minutes 23 seconds) and Lieutenant Commander Ben Kadinopoulos came fifth (29 minutes 37 seconds).

AB (Writer) Green, 32, from Bournemouth, said: "The Rock race was an emotional experience but it was very satisfying once I had crossed the finish line overlooking the beautiful views of the sunrise

over the harbour.

"I'm glad I was the first Royal Navy member of ship's company to finish, I set out to be in the top five as I've been training for it for the last few months so I was well happy to have come third. Everyone did well to finish because it was an incredibly tough course."

On wobbly legs, those who took part enjoyed a much more sedate saunter down to the bottom of the Rock, pausing to admire the scenery and take selfies with Gibraltar's famous population of Barbary Apes. Then it was back to the ship to make final preparations for sailing a few hours later.

"One of the main reasons I joined the Navy was to see the world so I was pretty excited about my first port visit with HMS Daring," said AB (Chef) Amy Hanlon, 20, from Liverpool.

"I've never done anything like running the Rock before and I had an amazing time. We've worked really hard since leaving Portsmouth and it was nice to have a short bit of time ashore."

HMS Daring left Gibraltar later the same day to continue her journey towards the Middle East. She sailed from Portsmouth on 2 September for the nine-month mission.

The Type 45 destroyer and her 250-strong crew, including an embarked Royal Marines boarding team and flight from Yeovilton-based 825 Naval Air Squadron, are preparing

for their task to use the ship's sophisticated radar and missile systems to protect US aircraft carriers as they launch strikes against Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

The deployment follows that of her sister ship HMS Defender, which carried out a similar role earlier this year.

"I could not have received a simpler explanation. We need a guardian or at least a nightwatchman with a whistle, like FPS."

Chris Henwood, FPS Member



Chris had left the Forces and was drawing his pension when he decided to consider an FTRS contract and needed to understand how that would impact on his pension and his voluntary redundancy payment.

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JDAM good effort from F-35 team

TOP. Bombing. This is a double ripple. Two 2,000lb smart bombs leave the belly of the beast, an F-35 Lightning II high above a test range on the Western Seaboard of the United States.

The stealth fighter – whose jump jet version is flown by Royal Navy aviators training to operate from HMS Queen Elizabeth – has come through its most intensive and successful month of weapons tests to date.

Over the past four weeks, 30 weapons have been dropped, launched and fired by the F-35 Integrated Test Force at legendary Edwards Air Force Base in California.

Typically, just a handful of such tests are carried out each month given the complexity of the planning beforehand; the F-35 record to date was a mere three live tests back in November last year.

But with new software installed on the jet and the Lightning II already being declared operational by the US Air Force (who fly a traditional, non-jump jet version), there's been a surge in firepower testing by the fliers at Edwards.

They've been unleashing fire and fury at the Sea Test Range – a patch of the Pacific crammed with instrumentation 50 miles west of Los Angeles – as well as the weapons ranges at China Lake in California and White Sands in New Mexico.

In addition to the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) 2,000lb bombs, GPS-guided 250-pound small diameter bombs, AIM-120 AMRAAM and AIM-9X Sidewinder air-to-air missiles were released as part of the concerted effort “to put steel on target”, as Lt Gen Chris Bogdan, executive officer of the F-35 programme, put it.

The jump jet version bought by the UK for the RAF and Fleet Air Arm, the F-35B, is due to begin trials with HMS Queen Elizabeth in 2018. Although its payload is slightly smaller, the weaponry and software and sensors behind it is largely identical to the other variants.

Picture: Lockheed Martin

WW2 torpedo found in harbour

DREDGING to accommodate HMS Queen Elizabeth in Portsmouth Harbour unearthed a WW2 torpedo.

Some ferry and rail traffic was disrupted while divers from Southern Diving Unit 2 moved it to waters off the Isle of Wight where it was safely blown up after a 16-hour operation.



Brock out of dock

EVER wondered what a Hunt-class minehunter looks like out of the water undergoing an overhaul in a massive shed?

Well, thanks to engineers at BAE Systems, here's that particular (and rather unusual) itch scratched.

In the Portsmouth ship hall built to construct the bow sections of Type 45 destroyers (about 400 tonnes heavier, but ten metres shorter) and extended for gigantic segments of carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, HMS Brocklesby receives the most substantial revamp in her 33-year history.

She's the latest ship in her class to receive the year-long overhaul which will help extend the life of the Hunts well into the 2030s.

Her sisters received the mid-life upgrade exposed to the elements, but with the hall now turned into part of BAE's 'Minor War Vessels Centre of

Specialisation', Brocklesby escapes the vagaries of the British weather.

That said, it will still take 190,000 'man hours' – that's the equivalent of one person toiling round the clock for more than 21 years – to carry out all the work required to return the ship to fighting order (some 9,000 maintenance tasks in all).

The biggest change comes in the engineering department; the Deltics which have powered the ship for more than three decades have been hauled out and new Caterpillar power plants (much more fuel efficient) installed.

With new engines comes new propellers, an improved chilled water plant (it struggles to keep cool and machinery cool in the broiling heat of the Gulf) and improved living quarters and refurbished galley, Brocklesby's deep maintenance is due to be completed next year.

Tyne's double tsar turn

SPEWING thick black smoke as it makes its way up the Channel, this is the Russian warship Minsk – as seen from HMS Tyne.

The Portsmouth-based patrol ship sailed with the Minsk – a Ropucha-class landing ship used to move military equipment from Russia's northern ports to its bases in the Mediterranean and Black Sea – for more than 500 miles, from the South West Approaches all the way through to the North Sea.

It's the second time in a month the offshore patrol vessel has monitored the progress of a Russian vessel past the UK.

In August, Tyne accompanied the Minsk's sister ship Alexander Shabalin as it headed in the opposite direction, bound for the Mediterranean.

In the case of the Minsk's passage, Tyne broke off fishery protection enforcement in the North Sea and sailed at top speed for nearly 500 miles to the gateway to the Channel.



There her bridge team used sophisticated navigation software and radars to successfully locate the Russian transporter before following the Minsk's progress through one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

The Ropucha class can carry ten tanks and nearly 350 troops – or a cargo of up to 500 tonnes –

steaming along at a top speed of 17½ knots. They are armed with two twin 57mm guns.

“I am incredibly proud of the way our ship's company reacted to this rapid activation – and with the professionalism they showed in this escort duty,” said Lt Craig Clark, Tyne's Executive Officer (Second-in-Command).

Baggers in Gulf pass major milestone

CULDROSE fliers have completed more than 1,000 sorties in the punishing heat of the Gulf trying to root out terrorists and smugglers.

The Sea Kings of 849 Naval Air Squadron are helping international military leaders build up a crucial picture of ordinary life – so that anything untoward sticks out like a sore thumb.

Three Flights (detachments of two Sea King Mk7 helicopters, plus air and ground crew) from the Cornish squadron take it in turns to spend a few months at a time monitoring seafaring activity in the region.

Since switching to the Gulf from Afghanistan at the end of 2014, the veteran helicopters – the last Sea Kings in front-line service with the Armed Forces – have completed 1,000 missions, totaling

more than 1,800 hours airborne (that's at least 35 whole weeks – or eight months)

The Sea Kings were designed to act as 'eyes in the skies' of the Invincible-class carriers, spying incoming aerial threats so the Harriers could intercept.

But in their current incarnation, their radar is equally adept at tracking ground movements – a feature used to effect against Saddam Hussein's armour outside Basra in 2003 and for five years over Afghanistan tracking insurgents and drug runners.

The radar – rotating inside the large dome or bag which gives the aircraft its nickname, but more importantly protects the multi-million-pound equipment from the harsh Gulf elements – can detect

between 180-240 contacts of all shapes and sizes, from oil rigs down to jet skis.

It's down to the observers to filter these contacts, deciding what is part of the normal pattern of life, and what is not.

If the latter is detected the entire machinery of the Combined Maritime Forces – the two-dozen-plus nations committed to keeping the sea lanes of the Gulf, Arabian and Red Seas and Indian Ocean open to lawful seafarers while stopping criminal activity at the same time – can come into play, with warships directed to intercept.

Given the size of the area which lies within CMF's domain – nearly 15 times the size of the North Sea – and the small number of ships, helicopters and patrol



Gunners meet SAM

SOLDIERS who shoot down enemy aircraft were given an insight into the RN's new anti-air missile when they visited HMS Westminster.

The frigate is in the closing stages of a major overhaul in Portsmouth Naval Base which has seen her become one of the first ships in the Fleet to receive Sea Ceptor, the new short-range shield against air attack.

The weapon and its supporting radar system will gradually replace the tried-and-tested (but also ageing – a version saw action in the Falklands) Seawolf missiles fitted across the Type 23 frigate flotilla.

In its place, the vertically-launched supersonic Sea Ceptor, which is slightly heavier than its predecessor and has a much greater range – more than 25km (15 miles), two-and-a-half times the distance of Seawolf.

The gunners of 16 Regiment Royal Artillery, based at Thorney Island – just along the coast from Portsmouth – currently use the veteran Rapier missile to provide their infantry and armoured comrades with cover on the battlefield.

Rapier is on the verge of retirement... in favour of a ground-based version of Sea Ceptor (short for interceptor).

Officers and senior non-commissioned officers from 16 Regiment, led by Lt Col James Mardlin, made the short trip to Portsmouth to hear both from the ship's company and from the new missile's developers MBDA about progress with the Surface-to-Air Missile system to date and what the future might hold in store for Ceptor.

“We are excited about being

able to work together over the next few years,” said Lt Cdr Chris L'Amie, Westminster's Senior Naval Officer.

“The introduction of Ceptor is a real opportunity for both us and 16 Regiment to learn from each other. We will continue to foster a strong working relationship with our closest military neighbours.”

His ship will return to the Fleet next year once the fitting of Sea Ceptor, a new medium-range radar and an improved computer system have been completed, among scores of improvements. The new-look Westminster will be the Royal Navy's premier submarine hunter.

Brow wow wow for QE

TWO enormous brows for the Navy's biggest warships have been delivered to Portsmouth Naval Base to allow the ship's company and civilian workers easy access to the carriers.

With HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales more than three times the size of their predecessors, the existing walkways between ship and shore are no use.

Unique gangways have had to be designed and built instead, courtesy of Dutch specialists Verhoef, as part of a £100m revamp of the harbour and jetties to accommodate the 65,000-tonne ships.

Weighing 12 tonnes each, the brows with telescopic gangways capable of extending 19 metres (60ft) can cope with up to 3,000 people an hour (although the ship's companies are under 700 strong).

One will serve the crew, extending to a reception point level with the flight deck, while the second will reach up to the aircraft lift brow for use by the 500 or so civilian engineers and technicians expected to be working aboard when the carriers are alongside in the naval base undergoing maintenance.

Base staff and sailors will undergo training to use the brows before using them for real for the first time next year when Queen Elizabeth makes her debut in Portsmouth. ■ Gleaner surveys Forth estuary for carrier's maiden voyage, page 14

“Contributing to the UK's maritime security is something the Royal Navy does day in, day out around the world.

“HMS Tyne is an incredibly versatile ship, one which is ideally suited to operating around the UK and in European waters to support our security.”

Tyne is one of four River-class patrol ships, three – Tyne, Severn and Mersey – conduct fishery protection and other duties around the UK, while HMS Clyde is permanently deployed to the Falkland Islands.

Stonehouse for sale

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Now add the challenges of the Middle East climate.

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“That's very taxing considering there is no air conditioning in the aircraft and temperatures on the ground can reach over 50°C plus (normally 30-35°C while flying).

“The crew have to thoroughly prepare before the longer trips, taking toilet bags, water and food (sweets). We get bag meal for flights over meal times, which usually end up being a little wilted...”

HMS Scimitar shepherds HMS Daring out of Gibraltar as the destroyer begins her first deployment in two and a half years.

After a major overhaul following her exertions on a round-the-world tour in 2012-13 (including helping thousands of Filipinos in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan), D32 went through an extensive period of training...

...which continued on the 1,000-mile journey from Portsmouth to Gib as FOST staff made sure the 200 men and women aboard Daring were ready for the exertions of a nine-month stint in the Gulf.

Fire, flood, injuries, the gruelling routine of six hours on duty, six hours off – all were inflicted on the ship's company.

The team from Flag Officer Sea Training pull no punches – but it pays off, says PO(MA) Michele Trotter, who served in Daring on her previous

deployment.

"If it wasn't for the training we receive, we wouldn't have been able to make such a difference to the communities in the Philippines left in ruins by the typhoon," she said.

"I'd never seen anything like the scenes I saw."

There should be no repeat of Haiyan – hopefully – on this tour of duty as Daring is dispatched east of Suez to support ongoing air strikes against Daesh forces launched from the decks of Allied carriers, and support the wider security effort in the Indian Ocean region (which HMS Portland is also engaged with – see page 4).

For both her maiden and third deployments, Britain's first Type 45 destroyer made the Rock her first port of call, briefly linking up with her sister ship HMS Diamond and RFA Mounts Bay, which were also berthed near The Tower.

No visit to Gibraltar is complete

without the traditional Rock race, from the dockyard to the top of the Rock of Gibraltar.

Under cover of early morning darkness, the ship's company gathered at the naval base entrance to begin the challenge, spurred on by Leading Physical Trainer Mat Phillips.

Following the twisting, steep, turns of the roads up to the top of the mountain, the sailors and Royal Marines gave it their all to pound the tarmac and complete the Royal Navy rite of passage as the lights of Gibraltar twinkled below.

First to the top of the 1,250ft peak was 21-year-old L/Cpl Shaun Reeves, a member of the destroyer's Royal Marines detachment.

He posted a time of 25m 58s... one second ahead of his boss Lt Jack Dennis (who claimed he let his subordinate win for the sake of team morale...).

"It was great to come first

out of the ship's company and beat my boss at the same time," said L/Cpl Reeves. "It's just running but it's still fairly hard going with all the twists and steep roads."

"You don't get much space on board a warship to run unless it's on a treadmill, so it was nice to get the chance to go ashore and do it properly."

Lt Dennis added: "Watching the sun rise while racing up the side of the Rock was a sight to behold."

Having marched, well run, to the top of the hill, in fine Duke of York fashion, they marched back down again (on slightly wobbly legs), pausing to admire the scenery and take selfies with Gibraltar's famous population of Barbary Apes.

Then it was back to the ship to make final preparations for sailing a few hours later.

"One of the main reasons I joined the Navy was to see the world so I

was pretty excited about my first port visit with HMS Daring," said 20-year-old CH Amy Hanlon.

"I've never done anything like running the Rock before and I had an amazing time. We've worked really hard since leaving Portsmouth and it was nice to have a short bit of time ashore."

For CO Cdr Philip Dennis the brief pit-stop in Gib was a welcome break after a some hard work.

"Daring has been through intense training to be in a position to take on this deployment and I am proud of my ship's company for all their hard work in getting to this state of readiness," he said.

"We are sailing to support of an important task and we take up the reins of this mission from a host of Royal Navy ships which have gone before us. We look forward to following on from their hard work and success." Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones, FRPU East



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Chris Henwood, FPS Member



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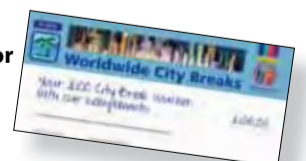
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Image by iStockphoto.com/Markus Spiske



pictures: bae systems



The Forth Dimension

MEET the newest member of the Naval Family.

For the first time the waters of the Clyde lap the 90-metre hull of Her Majesty's Ship Forth after a delicate operation to roll her out of a construction hall, transfer her to a special barge which ferried her 1¼-mile before 'sinking' – allowing the patrol ship to simply float off.

Just shy of two years since steel was cut on the first of five planned new vessels (to date three have been ordered: Forth, Medway and Trent), engineers at BAE Systems' shipyard at Govan on the Clyde had completed their work on Forth, they handed her over to colleagues at Scotstoun, just downstream, to complete the fitting out process ready to hand the ship over to the Royal Navy in 2017.

A 160-wheeled flat bed low-loader, which is operated by remote control, gently moved Forth from the shed where she was built and on to a special barge which then ferried the duck out of water at a mere half a mile per hour.

The patrol ship, which displaces 1,800 tonnes – the equivalent of 120 London buses – was then lowered into the water, with the barge beneath it, for fitting out at BAE's Scotstoun yard, all watched by Rachel Johnstone-Burt, Forth's sponsor and the wife of Vice Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt CB OBE, currently Master of the Household to the Queen.

Also watching was the head of BAE's Naval Ships division, Iain Stevenson. "Forth is the first complex warship to benefit from the new technologies and methods that we are introducing to further bolster our ability to be the best supplier to the Royal Navy.

"Forth has already benefitted from a safer and more efficient



Displacement: 1,800 tonnes
Length: 90 metres
Beam: 13½ metres
Max Speed: 24 knots
Range: 5,500 nautical miles
Endurance: 35 days
Ship's Company: 58
Extra beds for Embarked Force: 50
Helicopter: Wildcat HMA1/ Merlin Mk2
Armament: 1 x 30mm Automatic Small Calibre Gun,
Boats: 2 x Pacific 24
Other facilities: 16 tonne crane for self loading
 2 x abeam replenishment stations

build process that enabled much of the work to take place under cover, and as a result she left our Govan facility at a much higher rate of completion."

The Forth story begins back in 2013, when a decision was made to build replacements for the first generation River-class ships (Tyne, Severn and Mersey), then ten years old.

Rather than design a new class of ships from scratch, the RN decided to fall back on the well-proven River-class family, using the Brazilian Navy's three Amazonas – built in Pompey by BAE – as the blueprint (they were souped-up Rivers).

And thus, with some minor tweaks and changes, was born the River-class Batch 2. They mark a big step up from their Batch 1 predecessors – even the enhanced

HMS Clyde. So what do you get for your £116m (the cost per ship, plus spares and support)?

Well, you get a large flight deck capable of carrying a Merlin (although there is no hangar), and an air search radar will greatly increase the ship's surveillance range. Self-defence is provided by the 30mm automatic and crew-operated miniguns.

It's in the accommodation area where the big change comes; aside from the 60 bunks for the ship's company, there's a separate mess for up to 50 embarked forces (helicopter flight, RM detachment, boarding teams). There's also a dedicated operations room... and room for operations (aka sickbay).

With a 16-tonne crane Forth can move heavy stores or equipment without any support and routine operations are supported by two Pacific 24 seaboats.

For sustained operations there are two stations for replenishment at sea.

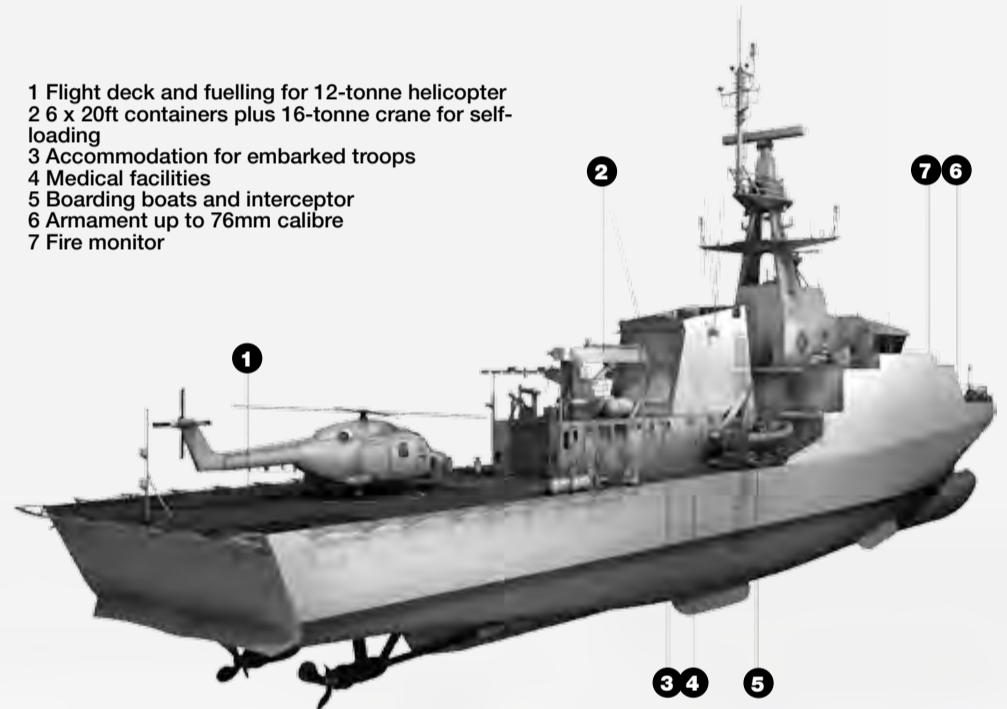
And all of this is crammed into a vessel just ten metres longer and a mere 200 tonnes heavier than the first-generation Rivers.

So that's what Forth (and Medway and Trent) have got. What will they do?

Well, as they're offshore patrol vessels (you guessed it), they'll patrol offshore, like their predecessors; so mostly fishery protection, but also act as the RN's principal eyes and ears in home waters on a daily basis... as well as doing some generic flag flying for the Senior Service in ports not normally visited by the White Ensign.

The crews also have a key role in maritime security, liaising with Border Force and other agencies to counter illegal activity and, most critically, supporting routine national security tasking and training with Special Forces

- 1 Flight deck and fuelling for 12-tonne helicopter
- 2 6 x 20ft containers plus 16-tonne crane for self-loading
- 3 Accommodation for embarked troops
- 4 Medical facilities
- 5 Boarding boats and interceptor
- 6 Armament up to 76mm calibre
- 7 Fire monitor



in support of the UK's Marine Counter-Terrorism operation.

In recent years, the original Rivers have broken the chains binding them with the mother country and sailed to the Caribbean for counter-drugs/disaster relief deployments.

Their successors will be expected to perform these same 'low-risk' deployments, the rationale being that they free up destroyers and frigates for operations in more dangerous locations around the globe.

"The Batch 1 Rivers have proved their worth as capable, reliable and versatile ships which enjoy exceptional levels of availability, but HMS Forth

and her sister ships will offer even more," said Cdr Will Peters, Commander of the Fishery Protection Squadron and currently in charge of HMS Mersey in the Mediterranean.

"As well as the enhanced surveillance capability provided by a new state of the art radar, the addition of a flight deck and increased accommodation capacity will allow these ships to conduct a wider range of missions."

When these spaces aren't being used by embarked forces, they'll be home to trainees getting invaluable at-sea experience.

In the longer term, the extra space and mission bytes built into

Forth and her sisters allows for the potential use of unmanned systems.

Some of Forth's ship's company have already been nominated and are getting ready to bring her under the White Ensign next year. They have about 12 months to get to know their new ship and complete trials and training before Forth is declared operational in the first half of 2018.

Medway and Trent are both at various stages in the construction process with the sisters due to be ready for front-line duties from mid-2019. As for ships four and five – not yet ordered – one is intended to replace HMS Clyde in the South Atlantic.



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Reggattas des Grises

STREAKING white and red vapour trails over St Mary's Anchorage – and over **HMS Sutherland** – the Red Arrows bring the curtain down on the inaugural Islands' Regatta.

The frigate was invited to be the RN's presence in the Isles of Scilly for the three-day celebration of island life, gig racing and sailing – one of several high-profile end-of-summer maritime events to enjoy a sizeable RN presence.

After using her saluting guns to start the 'Round the Island' race (the island being St Mary's), Sutherland invited local dignitaries and VIPs aboard for a reception and demonstration of what the ship and her crew can do.

A heavy Atlantic swell on the second day of the event in the exposed anchorage prevented any boat transfers (several abortive attempts were made) to either bring visitors aboard or ferry sailors ashore for a planned Ceremonial Sunset.

But the waters were rather more settled for the closing day, allowing the 150 people who'd requested tickets for a guided tour to be shipped aboard for a look around the weapons systems, hangar and Merlin helicopter, sick bay and forecabin where seaman specialists explained their trade.

The regatta was capped by Sutherland providing the backdrop for a performance by the RAF's legendary display team.

And talking of the Red Arrows, regattas and things battleship grey... 125 miles along the south coast and about a mile from the mouth of the Dart, **HMS Ledbury** dropped anchor to act as guardship for the Dartmouth Regatta (unlike the Isles of Scilly, this one is in its 172nd incarnation).

And like proceedings in St Mary's, there's the mix of the serious (yacht, dinghy and rowing races, plus a road race ashore), as well as the more light-hearted (barrel rolling and the waiter and waitress race – carry a drink on a tray as quickly as possible without spilling it).

The minehunter's crew put teams in for some of the challenges (triumphant in the barrel roll, less so in the rowing) when not hosting a succession of visitors as the ship anchored off Town Quay.

Some 360 members of the public came aboard over the weekend for a look around. Even more impressively, the sailors hosted 90 guests – that's twice the size of the ship's company on a vessel with very little in the way of space – for a reception and capability demonstration.

With their ship having recently emerged from a major refit in her native Portsmouth, Ledbury's crew were keen to show off the veteran Hunt-class vessel.

"It was thrilling to be front and centre on the river, moored in a natural amphitheatre," said CO Lt Cdr Tom Trent. "For me, returning to the Dart in command of this fine ship a few years after leaving Britannia Royal Naval College is such a proud moment.

"My team worked hard and played hard throughout the visit. With their exemplary conduct and enthusiasm they were the perfect representatives of the Royal Navy."

Ledbury sailed straight from the Dart into being put through her paces on Operational Sea Training before conducting patrols around the UK.

Popular though these events were, they didn't draw in 350,000 people, unlike the small Northumbrian port of Blyth as it hosted the first leg of the Tall Ships Race, where **HMS Grimsby**, **Tyne** and **Explorer** helped the majestic vessels on their way.

The three warships were part of a substantial Royal Navy contingent at the four-day North Sea Tall Ships Regatta, which drew tourists from as far away as Birmingham and Leicester, and matelots from as far away as Gosport.

Engineers from Sultan made the 720-mile round trip with three veteran helicopters – a recently-decommissioned Search and Rescue Sea King, Lynx and Gazelle – which were surrounded by lengthy queues throughout the event, despite never leaving the ground.

Students helped to bring P2000 HMS Explorer up the coast from Hull, then manned the Gazelle.

And reservists from HMS Calliope, just down the coast in Gateshead, set up a recruiting stand and were active ambassadors for the Senior Service throughout the 'naval village'.

Their efforts helped drum up 30 potential spare-time sailors, while the local careers office proved nearly as successful with its recruiting efforts – more than two dozen genuine candidates for the Armed Forces.

A diving tank is always popular and Northern Diving Group's water-filled glass box provided entertainment throughout.

"I can still hear the squeals of delight from splashed down children. It's amazing the joy a little water splashed around can bring," said WO1 Terry Miller, from HMS Calliope.

Those who didn't fancy getting soaked could watch the divers show off their bomb disposal skills and share their advice and guidance with members of the public considering a diving career.

A display of survival equipment also drew the crowds – thanks chiefly to the ability to don the kit, which always works with youngsters.

Other young people were providing the entertainment: cadet units from Ashington/Whitley Bay and Fenham performed music, drill and hornpipe dancing.

Grimsby's sailors had to cope with 150 visitors flowing through her passageways every hour during the three days she was open to the public – and continued giving tours when not, this time to cadet groups and members of the RNR.

Her gangways were closed on the fourth day of the festival for she, Tyne and Explorer acted as guardships for the 'parade of sail' as the tall ships left British shores for Gothenburg in Sweden.

The line of 19 sailing vessels – with Tyne and Grimsby at the front and Explorer at the rear of the line – stretched for more than six miles along the coast, watched by an estimated 60,000 spectators.

"As well as being a hugely popular spectacle, the event also allowed the warships to hone their skills in tactical communication as they led the parade out of Blyth," explained Tyne's navigator Lt Cdr Mike Rydiard.

With the elegance of the parade over, the sailing ships lined up on the start line – the passage to Sweden is actually a 500-nautical-mile race, with the first vessels arriving in Gothenburg barely two days later (fittingly it was the Swedish 107-year-old schooner Vega Gamleby).

Tyne and Grimsby took up position at the pivot point of the start line, while Explorer then took up position to indicate the 'No Go' Zone to make sure none of the ship's had an unfair advantage.

With the race director aboard Tyne, it was that ship's job to signal the start of the race, which she did with several blasts on her siren.

"The whole day was fantastic," said Tyne's Executive Officer Lt Craig Clark, who took part in the 2005 Tall Ships Race.

"It was a real privilege to be on the other side and lead the parade with Tyne representing the Royal Navy. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience which I am very fortunate to have been a part of."



IN A MONTH when we remember the 100th anniversary of small, fast coastal boats and salute their accomplishments (see page 20), here's a brutal reminder of what they are capable of – courtesy of the Germans.

Our roll back through time with the help of the Imperial War Museum's magnificent photographic archive takes us to Dover in the autumn of 1916.

From the outset of war, the Kentish port was the focal point of an ever-growing naval force with a dazzling assortment of vessels, all assembled under the banner of the Dover Patrol.

This was a place for small ships – no dreadnoughts here, nor glamour: monitors, destroyers, armed trawlers and drifters (like the ones pictured right in the shadow of Dover Castle), paddle minesweepers, armed yachts, motor launches and coastal motor boats.

Their goal: to safeguard the crossing of Allied vessels ferrying men and materiel from England to France; and, above all, to prevent the breakout of German warships and submarines into the Channel – and beyond – where they would attack Britain's vital sea lanes.

Fundamental to this effort was the Dover Barrage – a (supposedly) impenetrable barrier of mines and steel netting between Britain and France which would trap U-boats.

And it did. Occasionally. But British mines were less than effective. And the steel net was far from continuous. After a year's hiatus from attempting to break through the barrage, U-boats began to slip through regularly from the spring of 1916 – some running the gauntlet on the surface, others evading the net below.

Above the waves, the forces at the disposal of Reginald Bacon – one of the founding fathers of the Silent Service, first commanding officer of HMS Dreadnought, and now in charge of the Dover Patrol – were inadequate.

For the area of sea Bacon was expected to dominate he simply didn't have enough vessels – destroyers especially. He did, however, possess good intelligence. On October 26, air reconnaissance reported lively activity around Ostend – in German hands – with armed barges in the canals, trains carrying troops and more destroyers than normal in port.

If that suggested an imminent raid, Bacon took no special measures; guarding the eastern gateway to the Dover Strait over the night of October 26-27 was an aged destroyer, HMS Flirt, and a few drifters – armed with a solitary rifle each.

Speeding west down the Channel coast were five groups of German destroyers, 23

warships in all, intent on raising havoc. The commander of the Flanders Flotilla, Ludwig von Schröder, had recently been given 20 new torpedo boats. He intended to make good use of them.

They ran into the drifters covering the anti-submarine nets first – and opened fire, which drew the attention of the Flirt. The destroyer was confused when the Germans responded in English to its challenges. Convinced the drifters were the victim of U-boat attack, she launched a boat to rescue survivors.

The men in it would be the only Flirts to survive the night, for the Germans now blasted the sitting duck out of the water, before dispatching half a dozen drifters, and the trawler/wireless ship H E Straud.

The chaos east of Dover had roused Bacon, who ordered six destroyers to intercept the attackers.

HMS Nubian ran headlong into a German half-flotilla, made the same mistake as Flirt in confusing enemy ships for friendlies and was subjected to heavy fire as a result. Her response? To ram the last vessel in the enemy line... except that a German torpedo blew off her bow.

The remaining British destroyers barely fared any better. HMS Amazon suffered repeated hits which knocked out two of her boilers. The transporter HMS Queen was first boarded, then sunk by the Germans, while HMS Mohawk took several hits as she ran into a half flotilla of enemy destroyers scurrying back to base.

By first light on the twenty-seventh, one destroyer and six drifters had been lost, three destroyers damaged and 45 British sailors were dead, while another ten were taken prisoner by the Germans who had suffered damage to a solitary destroyer.

Bacon was remarkably sanguine about what became known as the Battle of Dover Strait, dismissing the Germans' hit-and-run tactics. "Anyone can run round a corner, throw a stone and then make off," he wrote – although he did acknowledge that, flush with success, the enemy would be back.

So would Nubian. Beached under Dover's famous white cliffs and eventually towed into port (after weathering a couple of storms), her mostly intact midships and stern were attached to the bow of HMS Zulu, which lost her stern to a mine, and HMS Zubian was born.

■ This photograph (Q 18227) is one of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs, or by calling 0207 416 5333.



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BUT when you're honouring great Antarctic adventurers, a spot of rain isn't going to stop you.

Sailors and Royal Marines from HMS Protector braved the cold, wet conditions in the southern Chilean port city of Punta Arenas as both nations celebrated the achievements of a skilful and determined tug captain exactly a century earlier.

Captain Luis Pardo is something of a national hero in his native land, hailed as the saviour of the majority of Sir Ernest Shackleton's trapped party of explorers from the ill-fated Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914-16.

Following the loss of their ship *Endurance* in the ice of the Weddell Sea, all 28 men reached Cape Valentine on Elephant Island after an ordeal on drifting ice floes.

Realising there was no chance of rescue, Shackleton and five of his men set sail for South Georgia in the modified open lifeboat *James Caird*.

The perilous 800-mile voyage across mountainous seas took them 16 days. When they arrived Shackleton took two men on a 36-hour trek across unmapped mountain ranges to the small whaling station at Stromness on the northern side of the island.

And that's where some accounts of the epic journey end. The hard work done, everything else was a formality.

Except it wasn't.

It would take four months and three failed attempts before an appeal to the Chilean government, which offered the use of a small navy tug, the *Yelcho*, commanded by Capt Pardo.

The successful rescue of all 22 stranded men saw Pardo receive a hero's

welcome, promoted to Pilot 1st class and given several civilian medals and naval honours.

Pardo Ridge, the highest point on Elephant Island, was named after him, and a cape on the northern tip of the island was named *Yelcho*, while the bow of the tug herself was preserved and is on display at a Chilean Naval base at Puerto Williams. A bust of Captain Pardo rests at the site of the *Endurance* crew's camp on Elephant Island.

One hundred years later and Protector's crew joined platoons from the Chilean Navy and marines for a parade through the heart of rainy Punta Arenas (summer is the dry season – you're only likely to get wet one in every three days, rather than every other day...)

watched by the Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Navy, Admiral Enrique Larrañaga Martin, and members of the

public.

PO(AWW) Ollie Colman, who spent weeks preparing Protector's men and women for the parade, said: "It was a challenge not knowing what to expect from the parade and slowing the marching pace down to keep everyone in step with our hosts was tricky, but in pretty cold and wet conditions the crew managed to put on a great show."

During their visit, Royal Navy personnel saw historical displays produced by the Scott Polar Research Institute and the local Naval Museum.

Protector hosted a number of dignitaries, including the British Ambassador to Chile, who were entertained by drummers from the Royal Marines Band.

Protector's Commanding Officer Capt Angus Essenhigh said: "Protector was proud to represent the UK and

support Chile's centenary celebrations of the rescue of Sir Ernest Shackleton's expedition by Captain Pardo and the crew of the *Yelcho*.

"The heroic efforts of Captain Pardo and his men undoubtedly saved the lives of 22 members of Shackleton's expedition and were vital in preventing the endeavour ending in tragedy."

Protector left Devonport in October last year and will shortly depart the relative warmth of South America and head south to begin her first Antarctic work period of the 2016-17 season.

In the coming months the ship will sail to some of the most remote and inhospitable regions of the planet to provide support to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, conduct hydrographic survey work as well as delivering vital supplies to the British Antarctic Survey bases on the ice.

JEF bridges gap left by Cougar

ARRIVING off the Albanian coast about the time you read this are Britain's two leading warships, ready to begin the first major amphibious exercise of the autumn.

Assault ship HMS *Bulwark* and UK flagship/helicopter carrier HMS *Ocean* head the first run-out of the new Joint Expeditionary Force (Maritime) – aka JEF(M) (pronounced 'jeff'em') – successor to *Cougar*, which has been running since 2011.

Cougar was an amphibious deployment run through the autumn months, led by *Ocean* and *Bulwark* (in its 2015 incarnation), working with Allies and involving several set-piece exercises...

...Not to be confused with JEF(M), which is an amphibious deployment run through the autumn months, led by *Ocean* and *Bulwark*, working with Allies and involving several set-piece exercises.

Actually, there are some distinct differences with the 2016 variant; last year the emphasis was on co-operation with the French (*Corsican Lion*) and NATO (culminating in a large-scale exercise in Portugal).

This time around, Albania and the Adriatic are the initial focal points for the task group – the ever-popular *Albanian Lion* kicks things off – before the emphasis shifts east of Suez as far as the Gulf.

Supporting the two capital ships will be landing ship RFA *Mounts Bay* and military ro-ro ferry MV *Eddystone Point*.

Over the course of the deployment, British, American and French ships will take their place in the task group, while an air group of Royal Navy *Merlins* (CHF green), Army Apache gunships and RAF *Chinooks* – based on HMS *Ocean* – provides the aerial firepower and support to the lead Commando group, 42 from Bickleigh.

Spread across the task group are 750 Royal Marines, soldiers, RAF personnel and civilians and officers from a range of nations, landing and raiding craft, Viking armoured vehicles, trucks, tankers – basically everything needed to support a landing strike force.

All their actions will be choreographed by the Commander Amphibious Task Group, Cdre Andrew Burns, and his staff aboard HMS *Bulwark*.

"Having such a wide array of amphibious shipping, and a fully embarked commando group, provides the government with numerous options in a dangerous world," said Capt Theo Hogg RM.

"As we have always done, the Royal Marines and Royal Navy are standing by to do what is required."



Terrific effort to stop traffic

WATCHED from the ship's *Wildcat* helicopter, Royal Marines from HMS *Diamond* scramble up the side of a merchant ship off the Libyan coast – their first act in enforcing a UN ruling.

The destroyer has been dispatched to the Med to support Operation *Sophia*, the international mission responding to the migrant crisis in the region and Libya in particular.

There are two strands to *Sophia* – the highly-publicised rescue of migrants trying to cross from North Africa to southern Europe on overcrowded and unsafe craft; and the much-less-publicised prevention of the flow of illegal arms to Libya by sea.

The latter was authorised over the summer by UN Security Council Resolution 2292.

Working with other warships in the central

Mediterranean, *Diamond's* mission is to build an understanding of trade patterns in the region and board merchant ships to validate their documentation and verify their cargo contains no illegal weapons – searches which can take many hours. No arms were found in the search above.

The final practice run for the ten Royal Marines (the green team) and 15 sailors (blue) in the boarding party was to use HMS *Enterprise* as an example.

"*Diamond's* deployment on this mission demonstrates just how versatile the Type 45 is," explained Commanding Officer Cdr Marcus Hember.

"We are able to monitor the airspace and situation over the entire Libyan coast, whilst at the same time conducting boarding operations to stop the flow of illegal arms into the country."



New head of carrier task group

THERE'S a new face directing the future course of RN carrier operations with Cdre Andy Betton taking the reins of the battle staff in Portsmouth.

He takes over from Cdre Jerry Kyd – who has his hands full over the next 18 months or so as Commanding Officer of HMS *Queen Elizabeth*.

It's the task of the staff, based in Victory Building in Portsmouth Naval Base, to look at the big picture of returning to fast jet carrier operations, plus the work of the wider air group – *Merlins*, *Wildcats*, possibly *Chinooks* and *Apaches* – and the rest of the carrier task force (destroyer, frigate, hunter-killer submarine, tanker) when *Queen Elizabeth* sails on her maiden deployment planned for 2021.

A significant part of the preparation for that and future missions is the close working relationship established with the US Navy and Marine Corps – both of whom have decades of experience in 'big deck ops' and operate the F-35 *Lightning II*, like the RN and RAF.

The Carrier Strike Group, which began life in the spring of 2015 and has now grown to 22 men and women, will work with their US counterparts to forge an organisation capable of commanding a naval task group around the world in operations ranging from full-on conflict to providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

"It is an exciting challenge and one that I am greatly looking forward to," said Cdre Betton.

"Cdre Jerry has done a sterling job in what was a mammoth task to create the UK Carrier Strike Group from a blank piece of paper.

"I now aim to ensure that these foundations are built upon and that my staff are ready to conduct operations at the same time as the *White Ensign* is hoisted on HMS *Queen Elizabeth* in 2017."

LITTLE, meet large.

The smallest vessel in the Royal Navy sails past the largest in Rosyth dockyard as tiny launch HM Survey Motor Launch Gleaner paves the way for the maiden voyage of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Nineteen times longer, 15 times wider and a staggering 3,000 times greater displacement, the new carrier dwarfs the small survey craft as she crosses the huge inner basin at Rosyth Dockyard on the Forth, where Queen Elizabeth is in the final stages of completion.

The future flagship – the largest vessel ever to fly the White Ensign – is due to begin trials in the North Sea next spring ahead of her debut in her home base of Portsmouth.

But with data on the Forth estuary 60 years old, Gleaner and a specialist team of military surveyors were dispatched to Scotland to gather information on the tides, river bed and the three crossings – one rail, two road – to ensure the carrier's first departure passes without a hitch.

HMS Queen Elizabeth has already been fitted with a special main mast which can be lowered to allow the ship to safely pass beneath the bridges.

But leaving nothing to chance, Army surveyors from 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) from RAF Wyton in Cambridgeshire used the latest theodolites to measure the bridge heights, while Gleaner's crew did the same using a new laser scanner.

Beneath the surface, Gleaner's sonar looked down at the main channel into Rosyth dockyard which will need dredging before the carrier sails, and scanned the inner basin itself – 11.8 metres deep and about 32 times the size of the pitch at Wembley.

Despite the high-tech equipment crammed into Gleaner's tiny 15-metre hull, it's still taken the boat several months to gather the information needed – not least because the new Forth Road Bridge, due to open around the same time as the carrier sails, has affected the flow of the Forth and silt accumulating in the shipping channels.

"The use of modern multibeam sonar and precise satellite positioning should make the survey straightforward, but the environment of an estuary rarely makes it that way," said the launch's Commanding Officer Lt Marc Taylor.

"Still, we've finished the job and shown how the Royal Navy's smallest ship can provide a vital service to its largest."

Queen Elizabeth's first Commanding Officer Capt Jerry Kyd took the helm of Gleaner for some of the work inside the basin to see the accuracy of the data being collected for himself.

"The excellent work carried out by Gleaner over the past few months is hugely important to me as Queen Elizabeth's captain," said Capt Kyd.

"There's an absolute need to understand the hydrographical issues that will impact on the safe navigation of the carrier when we sail from Rosyth next spring."

The future flagship will deliver a punch with force previously unknown in any Royal Navy surface ship – she'll be the UK's ultimate 'big stick'.

But there are advantages in being small.

You can visit ports and places off limits to larger vessels in the RN.

Like Basel.

Yes, Basel. Or Basle. Or Bâle.

That's Basel. 800ft above sea level. As the crow flies, 335 miles from the sea. A couple of miles inside Switzerland. Which doesn't have a Navy (although its Army does patrol the lakes in small craft).

Gleaner became the only commissioned RN vessel to visit the land of yodelling, banks and Toblerone back in the summer of 1988 when she completed the 460-mile odyssey up the Rhine.

But beyond a curt entry on Gleaner's Wikipedia page – and we know 110 per cent of the information on the internet is correct... – there are few actual physical reminders of the visit (we did find a cutting from NN but, remarkably, no photographs).

As a result, the visit has not so much earned legendary status, more mythical, dare we say even apocryphal.

So Lt Taylor was delighted when the CO at the time of the Swiss visit – the now retired Cdr Trevor Horne – unearthed a pewter plate (*inset*) presented in July 1988 by those in charge of safe navigation of the Rhine.

The item of tableware takes pride of place aboard the Plymouth-based launch, having been formally presented to Gleaner by the Rev Andrew Allcock, Chaplain to the Hydrographic and

Meteorological Squadron, as the boat took a break from surveying the approaches to the port at St Helier in Jersey.

"She may be small, but the whole ship's company is very proud of her tremendous contributions to both the history and folklore of the Royal Navy," said Lt Taylor.

"Many times I've heard people voice their doubts about the Switzerland story but here is solid proof of that achievement."

"Given that next year will be Gleaner's last in commission – she is due to be replaced in early 2018 – it was poignant that this symbol of one of her great adventures was returned."

Back in 1988, Gleaner was based in Portsmouth. It took her seven days to reach the Swiss city for a river festival, having passed under 45 bridges during her lengthy transit.

With plate handover duties done, Rev Allcock spent the day at sea, conducting a church service at anchor off St Brelade's Bay.

Having thoroughly scanned the waters around Rosyth, the boat has switched her attention to the approaches to St Helier to improve the quality of existing charts – most of which are based on 50-year-old data – using her state of the art multibeam sonar. That, combined with precise GPS navigation and motion sensors, has created the most accurate depiction of the seabed off Jersey.

"The images obtained from the approaches to St Helier show the sunken rock beds amongst fine sand with remarkable resolution," Lt Taylor explained. "Any discrepancies with the chart that are considered a danger to navigation are reported to the UK Hydrographic Office where they will be published as updates to the existing charts."

As well as heavy civilian traffic such as Channel Island ferries, the waters are also used extensively for navigation training by the Royal Navy.

The large tidal range, strong tidal streams and numerous passages between rocky outcrops make it a perfect training area.



● The captain of the RN's largest vessel, Queen Elizabeth's Capt Jerry Kyd, manoeuvres the smallest in Rosyth's inner basin, observed by Gleaner's CO Lt Marc Taylor... who is pictured below receiving a commemorative plate celebrating his launch's near-mythical visit to Basel in 1988, a memento feared lost to time



Measuring up...

Family mourn pioneer Peggy

Chief Officer Margaret Isabel Cooper

CHIEF Officer Margaret Cooper proudly wears her naval uniform during her career in India.

Her military service was one of a number of highlights of her career, with Peggy passing away just two months after celebrating her 100th birthday.

In 1941 Peggy served with the Women's Army Corps (India) at the military headquarters in Quetta.

She was commissioned in July 1942 and the following year was promoted to assistant technical recruiting officer in Bombay, where she was responsible for the recruitment of women for all three Services.

In September 1943 she became the Regional Commander, in charge of women employed in naval offices in India. Her rank was Lt Col, later known as Chief Officer and deputy director of the Women's Royal Indian Navy (WRIN)

She was responsible for the organisation of the WRINS throughout India, including regulations, recruitment, training and courses for officers and ratings, welfare, discipline and general administration, including accommodation.

At that time the WRINS comprised of some 1,500 women of many nationalities, creeds and customs all living and working together. They assisted in secretarial, communications and administrative work and were based at naval establishments in Karachi, Bombay, Cochin, Madras, Calcutta, Vizagaputan and Kalinpong.

Two thirds of those serving were Indian, many of whom were young girls from schools and colleges joining with high hopes and ideals for an improved status for women in India.

In the early days the uniform was khaki, but in February 1944 a naval uniform (including saris) was adopted in blue and white and gold braid.

The WRINS crest represented the Ganges Tern; the bird was a feature of the Indian river scenery and is associated with water but does not go to sea.

Peggy wrote that she covered 55,543 miles travelling to the various Indian naval bases, mostly by air, to ensure the WRINS in all offices and departments were happy and well treated. The officers and ratings were proud to have such smart women and girls working for them in their naval uniform, she said.

As deputy director, Peggy worked with Admiral J H Godfrey (at the time Flag Officer commanding the Royal Indian Navy). She stayed in Admiral House, Delhi, and dined with well-known guests such as Generals Wavell and Auchinleck, Cecil Beaton and Peter and Ian Fleming (the latter later based his Bond character 'M' on Admiral Godfrey with whom he had worked in Naval Intelligence)

In 1945 together with two other WRINS officers she travelled to the UK to tour the WRINS establishments in Britain. In honour of their visit a dinner was held at the Berkeley Square Club, attended by Lady Mountbatten and Dame Laughton-Matthews.

Peggy left the service in 1946 to return to England to join her husband. She attended many farewell functions including in Bombay, where she was presented with an album containing photos of all the WRINS activities throughout the years. The album is now displayed at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

In 1946 at the age of 30 Peggy was awarded the OBE for her leadership in the WRINS.

Born in Shillong, India, Peggy was the eldest of four children of Sir Athol and Lady Marion Perkin.

Her father was Inspector General of Police in Orissa, while her brothers and sister served in India during

WW2. Sqn Ldr KA Perkin commanded No 9 Squadron in the Royal Indian Air Force; Major RA Perkin was awarded the MC for leading the 19th Punjab Regiment to victory at Wadi Akarit and Peggy's sister Beryl served in the Intelligence Corps.

At the age of five, Peggy was sent to England to live with her grandparents, completing her education at Oxford High School and going on to do an apprenticeship with fashion house Lanvin.

She returned to India in 1934 and accompanied her parents to functions in Delhi and Ranchi, where her future husband Lt Col RAB Cooper, of the East Yorkshire Regiment, was awarded an OBE for services during the Mzaffarpur earthquake.

At the end of WW2, Peggy returned to England and was employed by MI6 in recruitment until 1948 when she accompanied her husband to Austria.

The following year the couple moved to Camberley in Surrey.

In 1959 they moved to

Malta where Lt Col Cooper took up a post at Army HQ. They bought a former harbour defence motor launch, which had served as a hospital ship, and converted it into their home.

While in Malta Peggy met Lt Col JP de Skipwith, whom she became her second husband and they retired to France and later Javea in Spain.

Her husband died in 1981 and Peggy remained in Spain.

Through the Heroes Return scheme Peggy travelled to India in 2005, accompanied by her daughter Carol, visiting Madras and Cochin, where she was entertained by the Indian Navy.

In 2013 at the age of 97, Peggy returned again to India with Carol – this time to Delhi where she once again visited Naval HQ before travelling on to Kashmir.

In her 100th year she was still pursuing her life-long hobby of oil and watercolour painting, while still swimming, playing bridge and attending Javea's various local societies. On her 100th birthday she was made an honorary member of Javea Golf Club, where she played her last round a few months before her death.

She is survived by her sister Beryl Westray, daughter Carol, grandson Jeremy Collin, daughter-in-law Sharon and great-grandson Lucas.

■ Margaret Cooper, born October 12 1915; Died December 7 2015.



New plaque remembers origins of HMS Hood

A CEREMONY has been held in Clydebank to mark 100 years since construction began on one of the Royal Navy's largest ships of the 20th Century.

The laying of the keel for HMS Hood got under way at John Brown Shipyard in Clydebank on September 1 1916.

Known as the Mighty Hood, the ship was the pride of the Royal Navy. She was sunk by the German battleship Bismarck in the Denmark Strait on May 24 1941.

There were only three survivors from the 1,418 crew on board.

The event commemorating the laying of the keel was organised by the HMS Hood Association and held at West College Scotland in Clydebank.

A plaque was unveiled in front of representatives of the association, along with officers of the Royal Navy.

Family members of those involved in the ship's final action also attended, along with two sailors who served in Hood before the outbreak of WW2 in 1939.

HMS Hood was the final battlecruiser built for the Royal Navy. She was the only one built out of the four originally planned.

Battlecruisers were similar in size and offensive capability to battleships but usually carried less armour so they could reach higher speeds.

HMS Hood was struck near its ammunition magazines which subsequently exploded, causing the ship to sink.

The sinking was the worst loss of life from a single British warship.

It sparked a huge Royal Navy pursuit of the Bismarck, which was destroyed three days later. The German death toll was more than 2,000.

Earlier this year, on the 75th anniversary of the sinking of HMS Hood, the ship's bell was handed over to the National Museum of the Royal Navy for permanent display.

Hood Association Chairman, Cdr Keith Evans, 97, served onboard Hood, and is now one of the last surviving veterans to have done so.

He said: "I am proud to have served in Hood, because the ship is so important as a part of Britain's naval history."

"Even as a young midshipman serving in her in 1938, I was aware that she was an iconic ship, not just as a military asset but also as a symbol of British national prestige."

Coin tribute to VC hero

A ROYAL Navy descendant of a hero at the Battle of Jutland has been presented with a commemorative coin marking the centenary of the battle.

The Royal Mint has issued 'the Boy Hero of Jutland' on a commemorative UK £5 coin.

Jack Cornwell is depicted in a portrait-style design at his post, as the last surviving gunner aboard the stricken HMS Chester.

The coin's edge lettering reads 'mother, don't watch for postie' a quotation from *The Ballad of Jack Cornwell* by Charles Causley.

The coin, struck in sterling silver, was unveiled at the Imperial War Museum at a ceremony attended by Cornwell's great-great-nephew AB Alex Saridis, who currently serves in HMS Iron Duke.

AB Saridis, 23, said: "It is a great honour that Uncle Jack has been recognised in this way. I am glad



● The new coin rests on the plinth bearing Cornwell's VC, British War Medal and Victory Medal at the IWM

to see his sacrifice and courage is remembered all these years on."

Cornwell enlisted in the Royal Navy without his father's permission. He

was in HMS Chester at Jutland when the ship came under intense fire from four *Kaiserliche Marine* cruisers.

At the end of the battle Cornwell was the sole survivor at his gun, shards of steel penetrating his chest, looking at the gun sights and still waiting for orders.

He was taken to hospital in Grimsby and died on June 2 1916. Three months later he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

The museum currently has the gun from HMS Chester on display, as well as Cornwell's VC.

The Royal Mint has been making official military campaign medals since it was commissioned to make awards for soldiers who fought in the battle of Waterloo in 1815.

The Jack Cornwell coin is one of a series of six being issued by the Royal Mint in collaboration with the Imperial War Museum to mark the centenary of WW1.



● AB Saridis shows off the new coin as he stands at the rear of HMS Chester's gun, with his cap set in tribute to his great-great uncle
Pictures: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban



Picture: George Katsoulis

Freddie's on top of the world

A ROYAL Navy officer has got her name in the history books, helping to set both world and European records in the skies over Holland.

Lt Freddie Huntley, along with Army Maj Lucy Mason, were among skydivers from 15 nations to set 12 records in ten jumps at Teuge.

The Women on Wings jumped from three aircraft flying at 17,000ft, meeting up at speeds of around 120mph to build a series of butterfly formations. They then 'flapped' the wings by moving to different formations.

Forty six women completed a three-formation jump to qualify as a women's European and world record.

The following day 50 skydivers

made a two-formation skydive and then 53 jumpers went on to build four formations in a single dive.

The records continued to fall as 56 women broke the European record with a two-formation dive.

Lt Huntley is the Royal British Legion Women's Section 'Ambassador of the Skies', and now concurrently holds three world records and a European record for large formation skydiving.

She and Maj Mason, who is also an RBL Women's Section member, hope to encourage other British military women to join them at the event next year where they hope to break their own records again.



● Lt Freddie Huntley took part in the sky dive Picture: Rob Lloyd



Hats off to the fast-trackers

THE Royal Naval Reserve has 31 new officers as Midshipmen from the accelerated officer programme passed out at HMS Excellent.

The eight-week intensive training programme included time at Britannia Royal Naval College, Commando Training Centre, RFA Argus and Portsmouth Naval Base.

The programme, which was trialed in 2015, trains Officer Cadets, composed of a mixture of new recruits and current ratings, from a variety of backgrounds.

Once they return to their units they will continue their training and choose a

specialisation to get them to trained strength as quickly as possible to deploy as part of the Royal Navy, joint or international operations.

Head of the course Lt Col Neil Watkinson said: "The training for officers in the Royal Naval Reserve usually takes two years on a part-time basis. By committing to this intense programme these young Midshipmen have done it in eight weeks."

"They should all be very proud of what they have achieved and I look forward to working with them in the future as they take up their place as officers in the Royal Naval family."

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

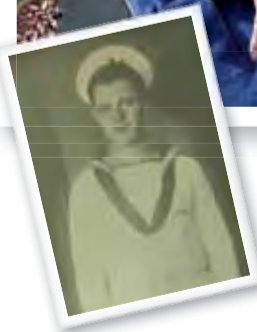
Derek Banham, Resident of The Royal Star & Garter Homes

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.

Today, Derek receives specialist nursing and therapeutic care so he can retain his mobility and independence. However, as a charity, The Royal Star & Garter Homes can only continue to care for Derek with your help.

Derek's story of courage and loss is just one of many that make our residents so deserving of the respect and care we give them. Please show your support for veterans such as Derek and others like him at this time of Remembrance by leaving a gift in your Will to acknowledge those who gave so much for us.

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John Ingram on 020 8481 7694 (Quoting RM16)
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Spotlight shines on Reserve Forces



● Above, the Midshipmen celebrate; Below, Mid Charlotte Kertrestel beams as she passes out at HMS Excellent
Pictures: LPhoto Sean Gascoigne



AMBULANCE drivers, bank staff, nurses, telephone engineers, postmen and pilots – Maritime Reserves were in the spotlight for the annual Reserves Day.

The day honours the work and commitment of Servicemen and women who make up the UK's Reserve Forces – accounting for one sixth of the Royal Navy, Army and RAF.

This year saw the 1,000th signatory from the private sector to the Armed Forces Covenant, which promises flexible and supportive commitment to reservist staff.

Reservist PO Natalie Corney is a communications manager at Brent Council in London.

“Being part of the Reserves has given me so many opportunities to challenge and stretch myself to develop and gain confidence,” she said.

“Most importantly for me though, being part of the Reserves has given me the belief that I can achieve almost anything if I put my mind to it.”

Nursing Sister Katherine Pink celebrated Reserves Day by swapping one uniform for another. Katherine, who works as neurological rehabilitation nurse at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth, serves as a PO logistician in the RNR in HMS King Alfred.

She has just returned from Djibouti, where she provided supplies to ships deployed on military operations worldwide.



● CPO Jeffrey and AB Larkin are both deployed to UKMCC



CPO ‘Jeff’ Jeffery, a reservist attending HMS King Alfred, is currently taking five weeks out of his civilian role as a waterfront support engineer at defence specialist Ultra Electronics to serve in the Royal Navy’s Fleet Support Unit at UKMCC.

Having completed a full 22-year engagement in the Royal Navy, ex-Regular Chief Jeffery decided to rejoin as a reservist 18 months ago.

“I wanted to get back to the camaraderie of working in the Naval Service,” he said.

“It’s the people, the opportunities you get, and the places you visit, that were major factors in my decision to rejoin.”

AB Matthew Larkin, from Nottingham-based HMS Sherwood, is also serving in Bahrain.

The warehouse assistant, who mobilised for six months, has been in the RNR for 15 years and is currently on his third deployment as a reservist.

“My service allows me to blend my experiences working in civilian employment with the training I receive as a member of the Naval Service.”

London-based Royal Naval Reserves and Royal Marines Reserves from HMS President and RMR London marked Reserves Day with a reception for key employers at HMS President, in the shadow of Tower Bridge.

📄 **Helios Encounter – page 19**
📄 **Maritime Reserve – page 26**

Matron at Stroke and Rehabilitation Services Marion Moffatt said: “Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust hosts a large Medical Defence Unit and has a proud history of supporting Service personnel in substantive and reserve roles.

“Kathy is a positive role model for other staff, demonstrating that it is possible to balance a career in the NHS with a role in the Naval Reserves.

“Kathy’s leadership qualities are mutually beneficial to both roles and she engages in these roles with both gusto and enthusiasm.”

Further afield, Reservists currently deployed on operations in the Middle East were recognised for their contributions to operations in the Gulf by Deputy Commander Combined Maritime Forces (DCCMF),

Cdre William Warrender.

A civilian by day and a part-time member of Bristol-based HMS Flying Fox, Leading Hand John Orzel is currently serving at the United Kingdom Maritime Component Command (UKMCC) in Bahrain.

John, usually a commercial officer at MOD Abbey Wood and mobilised for six months service in Bahrain, has been in the Royal Naval Reserve for six years.

He has used his Communications Information Systems skills gained from his Naval Service to manage communications from the HQ.

“I wanted to do something outside of my normal day job,” he said. “I enjoy being in the Royal Naval Reserve, meeting new people and making the most of the leadership and management skills training I receive.”

No one works harder to support Officers through life



The Officers’ Association, founded in 1921, is an independent charity proudly supporting those who have held a commission in HM Armed Services and their dependants. This can include helping officers transition into civilian life with our employment services and supporting them and their dependants through retirement, including the provision of grants and advice about wellbeing.

In July this year we were proud sponsors of the Inter-Services Triathlon where the participants demonstrated the same characteristics that represent the values of The OA - endurance, focus, leadership and discipline. Congratulations to all those who took part.



Proud sponsors of the Officers’ Association Inter-Services Triathlon 2016

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● Left, DN Lawrence Miller treats a child, watched by dentists Capt Atsumi and Capt Fumiwa of the Japanese Defence Force; Above, Surg Lt Francesca Warwick talks through the treatment of a patient with Capt Fumiwa; Right, four of the RN team at work

Building bridges...

...and all other kinds of dentistry for RN team in Pacific

DA NANG, Palau and Peleliu. Names engraved into United States' military history.

But now it is peace that draws the US Pacific Fleet back to these hallowed sites.

For the past ten years the US has led annual disaster-relief missions to the areas – scenes of bloody battles during WW2 and the Vietnam War – after a devastating series of typhoons caused havoc.

This year's Pacific Partnership exercise was boosted by the arrival of a five-strong Royal Navy dental team – the first time UK Armed Forces personnel have taken part.

Along with medical teams from the US, Japan and Australia, Royal Navy personnel spent five weeks in Vietnam and the remote western Pacific Ocean Republic of Palau – an archipelago of more than 500 islands, including Peleliu.

Led by Surg Cdr Karl Drummond, of RNAS Yeovilton, they began their work in the Da Nang community in Vietnam, where they helped treat more than 700 patients over 13 days – and attend a multinational dental summit.

"I cannot believe the number of patients that have come for treatment," said Dental Nurse Lawrence Miller of 45 Cdo.

"Providing training on cross-infection control measures has allowed the local support staff to improve their standards and we hope this will reduce the risk of contamination in their clinics.

"Working with dentists from the Japanese Defence Force has been fascinating. They are amazing people and I have enjoyed talking about their clinical techniques and life in the JDF."

This year's exercise also saw the Vietnam People's Navy hospital ship *Khánh Hòa* take part, with the Royal Navy dentists holding clinics on board.

Surg Lt Francesca Warwick, who treated a number of children from a Vietnamese orphanage, said: "These clinical sessions are exactly what PP is all about – nations learning from each other, exchanging professional expertise that enhances relationships and cooperation and most of all provide essential dental care to groups of unbelievably brave children.

"I have been so impressed with the level of care that I have been able to provide on board the *Khánh Hòa*, and to see children who are so grateful for the treatment they have received has been a truly moving experience."

It wasn't all fillings, filing, brushing and extractions though. The RN team took part in an international football tournament and visited orphanages

and schools to read stories, play Frisbee and take part in some face-painting – and demonstrate the Japanese martial art of Kendo, which involves bamboo swords.

Naval Nurse Teresa Long said: "To see children smile as soon as you get out of the bus was overwhelming.

"I was a bit nervous when I was asked to take part in a Kendo demonstration with our Japanese colleagues but the children absolutely loved it. The visit to the orphanage was a humbling experience."

After a brief layover in Tokyo visiting the city and the British Embassy, the team made the 1,900-mile journey west to the Pacific island nation of Palau, population just under 18,000.

Operating from a school hall at Palau Community College on the main island of Koror, they faced challenging conditions very different to their typical UK working environment, including using basic medical equipment and working in the stifling 40°C heat.

Palau has just four permanent dentists serving a population blighted with severe tooth decay.

The resident dentists were keen to observe the work of their Royal Navy counterparts, who passed on specialist knowledge regarding advanced dental procedures.

As well as treating hundreds of patients, many with complex and demanding conditions, the team also spent time educating children and parents about oral health.

Palau resident Marieel De La Costa was grateful for her treatment after waiting years to sort out a badly-damaged tooth.

"The treatment was very scary but the team made me feel calm," she said. "I have had this problem for a long time and just didn't have the time to go and find a dentist."

"I'm very grateful to everyone who has come to help us in Palau."

Dentist Dr Beatrix Taime said: "We have a shortage of dentists in our community, so the waiting time for treatment can be three to four months long.

"The dentists with Pacific Partnership are helping with this, and are exposing us to new techniques which we will take on and use in the future. We are learning all the time we spend with the UK team."

Cdr Ozawa of the Japanese Ministry of Defence Joint Medical Staff said: "The Royal Navy team have taken a leading role during our cooperation in Palau and we have learned a great deal from each other.

"I am proud of our achievements together and have been very impressed with their professionalism. My team leave Pacific Partnership 16 looking forward to working together again."

Group Capt Tim Below, the UK Defence Attaché to Vietnam, said: "The Royal Navy team under Commander Karl have totally taken the dental engagement bull by its horns to make an exceptional contribution to PP16 which has drawn the praise of our partner nations."

During their time in Palau the Royal Navy team lived alongside their colleagues on the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force vessel *Shimokita*, which was accompanied by the USNS hospital ship *Mercy*.

The team travelled by boat to their clinics each day and during their downtime got to play in a softball match and take a snorkelling tour of the archipelago, which is rated among the world's top diving spots. They also enjoyed a skin-softening 'mud bath' in the fine powder mud of Rock Islands.

Before leaving for home, the team travelled 25 miles south to the five-square-mile island of Peleliu

(population less than 1,000) for a memorial service to the American and Japanese forces who lost their lives during the Battle of Peleliu from September to November 1944.

The service on the island was the first attended by UK Armed Forces personnel, as well as a military contingent from Japan.

Gun placements and the remains of aircraft serve as poignant reminders of the battle that cost the lives of 10,695 Japanese troops and 2,336 Americans.

"I am extremely proud of what my team have achieved," said Surg Cdr Drummond. "This has been a fantastic opportunity for the UK to demonstrate our professional capability in a testing environment.

"We have enjoyed learning new cultures and it has been fascinating to discuss the differences between our clinical practices."

Surg Capt Richard Norris, Director of Naval Dental Services, said: "The Royal Naval Dental Services has been carrying out deployed dentistry for almost 100 years and Pacific

Partnership 16 is the latest in a long line of associations with other national defence dental teams that share experience, improvements and build lasting professional links. This significant partnership has clearly been a great success."

Capt Charles Ashcroft, from the British Embassy in Tokyo, said: "Surgeon Commander Drummond and his team should be proud of the contribution they have made during their time with Pacific Partnership 16. "Their hard work and skill will have an enduring impact on the communities they visited, demonstrating and developing the UK's ability to work alongside their Japanese colleagues.

"The reputation the team has built among the nations of Pacific Partnership 16 is a credit to the United Kingdom and the Royal Navy."

Pacific Partnership 16 also includes participants from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Timor Leste, Malaysia, Singapore, Republic of Korea, the Philippines and Vietnam.





● Left: LDN Lesley Hailey has fun an orphanage in Vietnam; Above, some of the work proved very challenging for the dental team



● Captain Suzuki, CO of the Shimokita, with the Royal Navy dental team, from left, NN Teresa Long, Surg Lt Francesca Warwick, Surg Cdr Karl Drummond, DN Lawrence Miller and LDN Lesley Hailey



● Left, Surg Cdr Drummond joins in the smashing the Saki barrel ceremony aboard the Shimokita; Right, the team bathed in the mud of Milky Way Bay at Palau's Rock Islands



Fast and furious

Brits launch Harriers on ops again

THE centenary of a small but illustrious division of the Royal Navy was celebrated in Portsmouth Harbour with a sail-past.

Thousands of these "Spitfires of the Seas" were built, but just a handful remain – and four of them, along with a current Royal Navy patrol ship, paid tribute to the craft and the sailors who manned them.

Coastal Forces trace their history back to the creation of Coastal Motor Boats (CMBs) in 1916, a year after a group of young Royal Navy officers at Harwich approached their superiors with their ideas.

Their concept of small, fast attack boats armed with torpedoes set the pattern for decades to come – and created a force that was exhilarating and terrifying in equal parts.

The idea of dashing into battle in a heavily-armed, streamlined speedboat appealed to the adventurer, but the craft were usually built of flimsy wood, and they were packed with a combination of high-octane fuel and explosives.

They quickly earned the nickname 'the Suicide Club'...

These craft came of age in 1919 when three 40ft CMBs under Lt Augustus Agar attacked a Bolshevik force in the Baltic, sinking a 7,000-ton cruiser and gaining a VC for their leader.

But they arguably reached their apotheosis in World War 2 when their young crews – many were barely out of their teens – stormed into hundreds of actions in home waters as well as overseas, winning scores of decorations for bravery.

The sail-past in Portsmouth, which featured World War 2 boats, began from the pontoon



● Four of the five boats which took part in the sail-past in Portsmouth Harbour gather around the pontoon at Boathouse 4. In the distance is HMS Smiter, and in the foreground are (from left) HSL 102, Medusa and MGB 81

Pictures: Paul Jacobs/pictureexclusive.com

next to Boathouse 4, where a Forgotten Craft exhibition celebrates the role of small vessels in the Royal Navy.

And looking on were Coastal Forces war veterans Robin Coventry, who served in Motor Gun Boats, and Peter Bickmore, who served in Motor Torpedo Boats in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic.

Peter spoke of the strong camaraderie between members of the crews, while Robin recalled the quirky nature of some of the

officers who led by example.

The historic boats were Medusa (formerly HDML 1387), a navigational guide at D-Day; MTB 102, which saw service at Dunkirk and Normandy; rescue launch HSL 102, which picked up aircrew who dived into the sea when their aircraft were shot down; and MGB 81, which took part in D-Day operations.

Shepherding these vessels was Archer-class patrol boat HMS Smiter, the current version of the small-boat concept.



● World War 2 Coastal Forces veterans Peter Bickmore (left) and Robin Coventry

ROYAL Navy aircraft handlers have been launching Harriers on front-line operations – once more.

Six years after Britain retired its jump jets, a team from Culdrose have been directing the movements of the US Marine Corps' version of the legendary aircraft, the AV8-B, on and off the deck of the USS Wasp.

Six Brits are aboard the assault ship – a sort of hybrid of HMS Bulwark and Ocean on steroids – the latest group to sample the Long Lead Specialist Skills Programme with our US cousins.

The programme has helped keep alive the flame of carrier operations, ensuring the difficult skill of safely moving fast jets and helicopters around a hectic flight deck is not forgotten.

That real experience – the Wasp is presently conducting air strikes against Daesh forces in Libya – sits alongside training the Brits receive at the School of Flight Deck Operations back in Culdrose.

There, old Sea Harriers trundle around a mock-up flight deck to recreate the sounds and smells of a real carrier – but the jets remain firmly on the ground.

Not so in the US Marine Corps where the Harrier continues to provide air support to troops on the ground (it'll be in service till 2025).

"Working on US decks and experiencing their aircraft can only help us on future operations when we are alongside each other," explained one chief petty officer.

"This is the first group of guys who are straight out of training. Some of them have never been on a ship before, so for the younger ones this is a fantastic experience – living with one another is good for integration."

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Navy divers have a blast in Belize

Ocean's 12

ROYAL Navy personnel explore the pristine coral reefs of Belize during a scuba diving expedition to the Caribbean.

The group, consisting of sailors and Royal Marines, collected their stores and kit from the British Army Training Support Unit in Belize (BATSUB) before taking the fast boat Flasse Wrasse through a maze of reefs to our first island, South West Caye on Glovers Reef, writes LAET James Rogers, of RNAS Culdrose.

It is named after the 17th century pirate John Glover, who used the area as a base from which to raid Spanish merchant ships laden with riches plundered from the New World.

Nowadays the attractions found within the atoll are a number of islands where visitors can explore marine life, and a popular site for sea kayaking, snorkelling and scuba diving.

The island was a tropical paradise with white sand and palm trees with coconuts you could drink from.

We set the tents out under the palms by the sea and spent the next three days diving and looking at some of the most spectacular reefs in the world.

We ate some very tasty food, cooked by our local chef Bol, and relaxed at the local bar on the pontoon watching the odd shark and ray swim past.

On our fourth day on the reef we went for a day visit to Long Caye Island, which is a pretty eco resort, and the place to start progressing our depth during the dives.

While here the group encountered a large amount of nurse sharks, turtle and

some very friendly remora (sucker fish), which seemed to think the divers were as good as anything to stick to.

It was then farewell to Long Caye as we started to pack up, in order to head back to the mainland for a short while.

We went back on the fast boat, with a short visit to Tobacco Caye island for a spot of lunch.

Once back on dry land we made our way to the jungle for some land-based adventures, starting with a night walk, where we spotted some fresh jaguar prints and a very hungry tarantula.

After a good night's sleep in the Bocawina jungle resort, we embarked on a trek into the jungle.

We stopped at the top of a waterfall for a dip in the natural pools and took in some outstanding views over the canopy, followed by some zip lining.

Finishing our jungle visit we headed back to BATSUB in preparation for the next day's activity of visiting a Mayan sacrificial cave system known as the ATM caves, a popular tourist spot.

We made our way to the Mayan sacrificial cave on foot, crossing the river flowing from the cave on a number of occasions.

We finally swam through the mouth of the cave to enter the sacrificial chamber. The Mayan Cave was a twisting, turning maze of natural tunnels that we squeezed swam and climbed through, to end up a kilometre into the cave.

The cave floor had skulls and bones entombed into the calcium as it was a site where Mayans sacrificed food, blood and

humans to the gods.

We had a quick obligatory visit to the Belize Zoo/reserve on the way back from the Mayan Cave, to see some of the local wildlife and the work they are doing to help protect it.

Once back at BATSUB we picked up some more bits for our next island visit. Once ready we jumped on to the boat and blasted out to the reef.

We stopped to dive at Turneffe Atoll to ensure that we dived all of the reefs in Belize.

Finally we stopped at Half Moon Caye on Lighthouse Reef, followed by a nice barbecue and a night sleeping in hammocks.

The following day was the big dive in the Great Blue Hole. We got to the Blue Hole in the morning, with the first divers in the water nice and early.

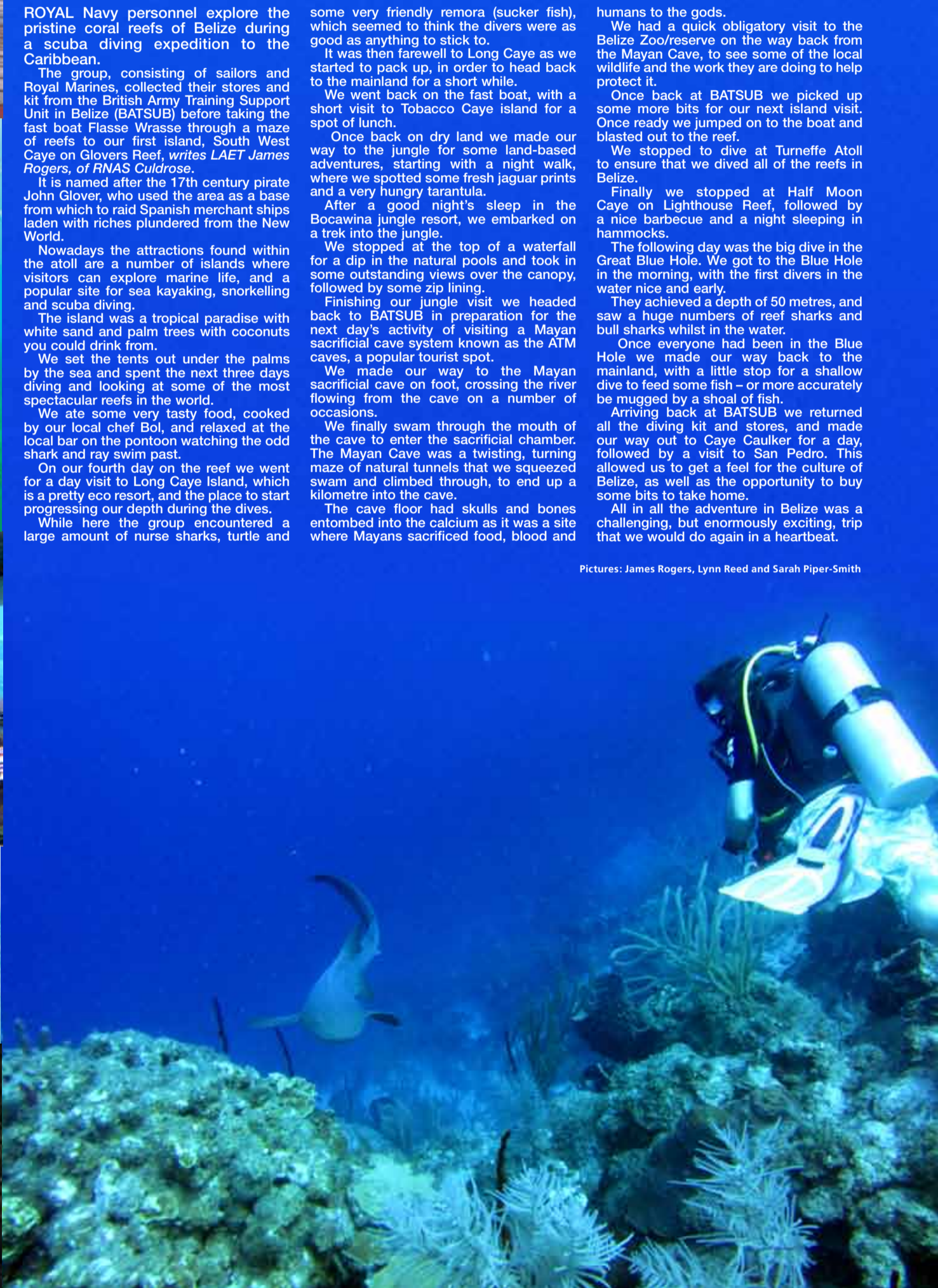
They achieved a depth of 50 metres, and saw a huge numbers of reef sharks and bull sharks whilst in the water.

Once everyone had been in the Blue Hole we made our way back to the mainland, with a little stop for a shallow dive to feed some fish – or more accurately be mugged by a shoal of fish.

Arriving back at BATSUB we returned all the diving kit and stores, and made our way out to Caye Caulker for a day, followed by a visit to San Pedro. This allowed us to get a feel for the culture of Belize, as well as the opportunity to buy some bits to take home.

All in all the adventure in Belize was a challenging, but enormously exciting, trip that we would do again in a heartbeat.

Pictures: James Rogers, Lynn Reed and Sarah Piper-Smith





Pictures: Lt Mark Bannister, RNR

Reservists pick up new skills in Cyprus

Solar power

CYPRUS in July. One of the hottest months with temperatures soaring into the high 30s.

A mecca for sun worshippers who flock to the eastern Mediterranean island to bake on its beaches.

This summer's visitors were boosted by more than 100 Royal Navy Reservists for an exercise simulating extreme hot weather conditions.

Dhekelia Station east of Larnaca was the base for Exercise Helios Encounter, featuring reservists from warfare and logistics branches, along with medics.

Several courses ran during the two-week exercise to assess a number of candidates for future career and promotion courses, as well as completing first aid courses.

AB Danielle Holmes, from HMS Sherwood in Nottinghamshire, is an information operation rating and took part in the exercise to gain further training outside of her specialisation.

"The exercise allowed me to experience how other personnel from the RNR and Royal Marines Reserve operate and to further develop working relationships," she said.

AB Holmes spent the first few days completing a weapons course with the SA80 A2 rifle before moving on to the 9mm general service pistol. The three-day course began with theory on safe handling, before moving on to cleaning and maintaining the weapon and the principles of marksmanship. The course ended with live firing on the range.

The next course for AB Holmes was the first aid level 2, building on her knowledge gained from level one at HMS Raleigh.

"I now feel a lot more confident in my ability to deal with a medical issue if I should come across an incident both within the Service and in a civilian environment," she said.

Helios Encounter then headed west to RAF Akrotiri, 110km away, for a 24-hour exercise testing personnel on what they had learned.

AB Holmes's role was to provide a scenario briefing to all the personnel taking part, with a particular mention of significant cultural aspects and the state of the country they were operating in.

"This was a great opportunity for me as I was able to brief a wide range of ranks and rates from a variety of backgrounds with a product I had produced, not long having qualified," said AB Holmes.

"I had a fantastic time, both with the training and meeting personnel from other branches of the Maritime Reserve.

"I was able to utilise my knowledge and skills as an information officer for the consolidation exercise, which gave me a great deal of satisfaction and contributed to the realistic experience of the exercise. I would encourage all RNR personnel to attend."



New team can certainly hack it

NAVAL Service personnel are pictured taking a drone apart during the first hackathon held by a new information warfare team.

Part of the RN's Information Warfare Programme, the new MarWorks team comprises Royal Navy and Royal Marines information warfare specialists charged with delivering innovative technical solutions to the Naval Service.

The hackathon – in which groups of people meet to solve or better understand technical problems – saw 20 Service personnel work together for two days.

Supported by DSTL and attended by representatives from both defence companies Antillion and CISCO, the hackathon focussed on topics seen to present a challenge to the Naval Service.

"The first MarWorks

hackathon was a fantastic success with drones flying overhead and radios buzzing in the background," said Alistair Bradbrook from Antillion.

"It was a privilege to be invited to be part of the first event and we are looking forward to seeing how MarWorks shapes and takes these hacks forward."

MarWorks will be heavily involved in Unmanned Warrior this month, providing a number of demonstrations on information warfare.

The team work closely with Navy Information Warfare and 3 Cdo Bde as well as their counterparts in the US Marine Corps and Navy, industry and academics.

A second hackathon is planned for later in the year. Anyone interested in taking part should contact Lt Cdr Dave McInerney at navyinnovationso2b@mod.uk



● Shyloe Wilson shows her before and after hairstyles

Shyloe's short cut

AN eight-year-old girl has had 17 inches of her hair chopped off to raise money for two charities.

Shyloe Wilson, who comes from a Navy family, went for the chop to raise funds to help find a cure for her life-long condition, Type 1 diabetes.

As well as supporting JDRF, which funds research, she will also support a second charity as her locks were sent off to the Little Princess Trust to be made into a wig for children undergoing cancer treatment.

"She has made us so proud," said mum Victoria. "Shyloe is really excited to have a new hair style as well."

Shyloe, who had her hair cut by family friend Lianne – who is also in the Royal Navy – has so far raised more than £600.

You can still donate to the fund by visiting <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Victoria-Wilson-shyloe-8>

Stickleback move

COLD War midget submarine HMS Stickleback made the 500-mile journey from Portsmouth to her new home on the Clyde.

The 37-ton boat is on loan from the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) to the Scottish Submarine Heritage Centre, a new visitor attraction at Helensburgh near the RN submarine base at Faslane.

Stickleback entered service in 1953. With a four-man crew, the diesel electric submarine was very similar to those that operated from Scotland during World War 2.

NMRN's Head of Collections Bob Mealings said: "We are really excited about this fascinating submarine going on permanent display in Helensburgh."

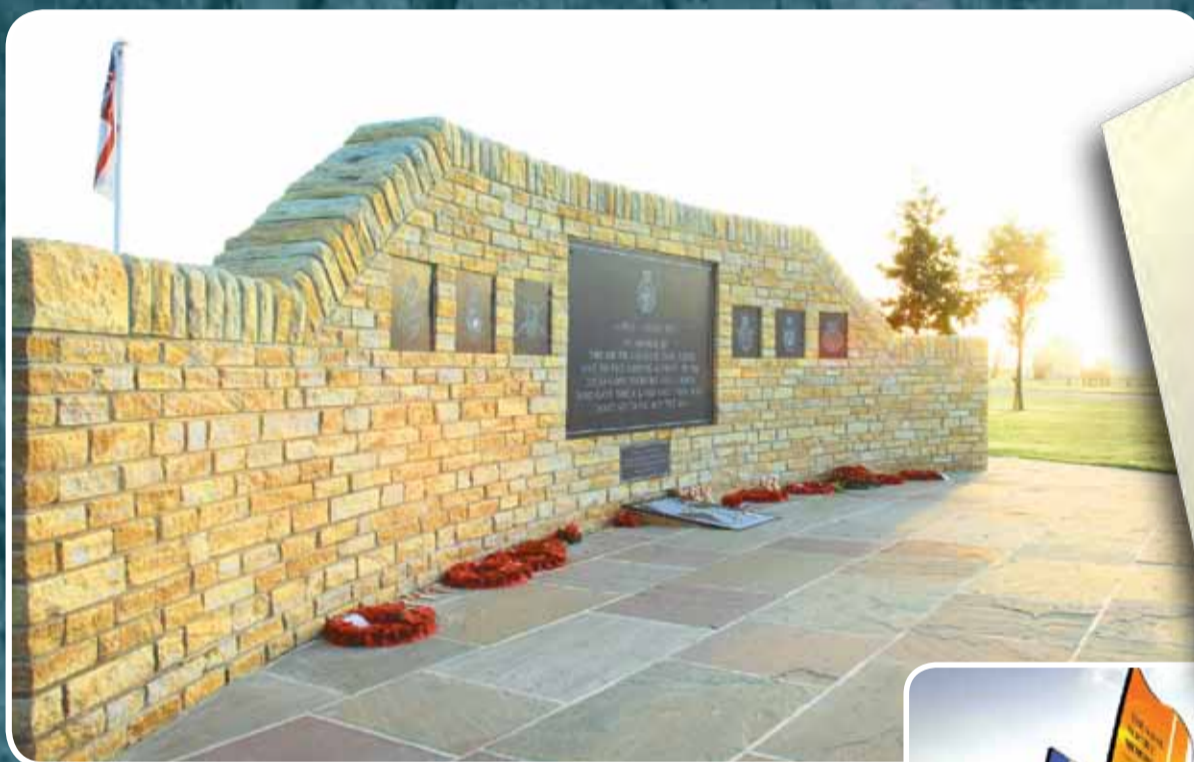
Brian Keating, Chairman of the Scottish Submarine Trust, said: "We are delighted that after three years of work by volunteers here in Helensburgh, we have secured this X-craft to present to the public as part of our new submarine centre in Scotland."

"As the main exhibit at the centre we hope Helensburgh will be Stickleback's home for the next 100 years."



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From Taunton to the Mojave Desert,

Sweaty palms



IT's hot. It's dusty. It's home to the black widow spider and the sidewinder rattlesnake.

It's heaven... if you are a Royal Marine that is. Taunton is a long way from Twentynine Palms but that's the journey the men of 4 Commando made for Exercise Black Alligator.

For seven weeks the Royal Marines, bolstered by Royal Marines Reservists, hone their war-fighting skills in the sweltering temperatures of California's Mojave Desert – the daily average for September and October tops 30°C.

Black Alligator is played out on the US Marine Corps' 1,100 square mile all-terrain exercise area near the town of Twentynine Palms – a space eight times larger than Salisbury Plain – to allow unparalleled use of firepower in training.

The full range of the Royal Marines' firepower – Viking and Jackal armoured vehicles, 105mm field guns, mortars, heavy machine-guns, Javelin anti-tank missiles and combat engineers – are also tested. Alongside US marines, the commandos take part in live firing, perfect their urban combat drill and conduct a battlegroup-sized live-fire Commando raid.

Lt Ben Cook, commander of 5 Troop, B Coy, 40 Cdo, said: "We are training with foreign tanks and learning in real time how to take down a building.

"In one scenario we had a high-value target and our role was to kill or capture Objective Hawk, a man who has been supplying groups with IEDs.

"For me and my troop, who have never worked with foreign armoured support, we discussed how they would be best utilised.

"Once you get towards the building the idea is you want to cover any threats posed.

"We got some good feedback from the exercise, both from the tank commander and the range safety staff; the lads did really well. We've been focusing on communication and aggression and both were outstanding from the lads."

Black Alligator forms part of the multi-environment training package that the Commando Group takes part in to ensure they remain at high readiness.

Next year will see the men from Norton Manor take over the nation's high-readiness Lead Commando Group – a contingency force able to deploy anywhere in the world at very short notice.

The British elite marines have also been joined by the US Marine Corps' own troops, who bring their own artillery, engineers and battle tanks to create a large allied force.

"This is my first time working with the Royal Marines and it is great," said USMC Staff Sgt Myron, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Tank Battalion.

"The benefit of Twentynine Palms is that it is a wide, open area and we are able to facilitate a lot of live firing ranges using high explosives, tanks, artillery, mortars.... We don't have a lot of restrictions of what we can shoot and what we can't shoot.

"I've worked with a lot of different forces in my career but working with the Royal Marines is an experience. I love it."

Also taking part in Black Alligator is a selection of Royal Marines Reservists from units across the UK. The majority of Reservists have careers outside of the Corps and give up their time to support UK amphibious forces.

Mne Tim Williams, from RMR Bristol, who runs a small building company in Cardiff in his civilian life, said: "Out here the training is different, we are using a lot more assets and weapons – tanks, mortars – than we usually get exposure to."

"The main challenge of this environment is the heat. It's not my first time in the desert but it's the first time with a rifle, trying to keep that clear of dust."

Mne Simmo Simpson said: "Twentynine Palms is hot, a different climate to operate in and it's quite hard to adapt. Here the ranges are a lot bigger and there's a lot more scope for using different weapon systems."

The tri-Service exercise begins with testing individual marksmanship on the ranges, working up to troop attacks and company attacks before a full assault on a replica town.

"We are not training for warfare in the desert, we are training for warfare in a challenging environment and this place is pretty challenging," said 40 Cdo CO Col Andy Watkins.

"Black Alligator is an opportunity for us to deploy abroad, which is essential for the Lead Commando Group to practise its expeditionary warfare capability.

"This is an austere environment and so it is tough training. The area is of such a scale it can take a number of types of live firing, which adds to the complexity of the exercise."

To retain their annual marksmanship qualification, the commandos have to undergo Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX), the final part of the live-fire training package. This consists of a full-on assault of Combat Town, a two-acre village, complete with an IED alley and other realistic warfare scenarios.

Hot stuff – just how the Royals like it.

Pictures: LPhoto Joel Ro



the men of 40 Cdo take a bite out of Black Alligator





Toughest of tests helps charities

TYNE Detachment Royal Marines Reserve Scotland and members of Northumbria Police conducted 30-mile walk to raise funds for charity.

Eighteen people took part in the event, the final commando test on Dartmoor, to raise money for the Care of Police Survivors and the Royal Marines Charity.

All the participants carried 30lb packs, starting from Kirknewton and ten managed the complete course, finishing at Clennell Hall.

Ian McAllister from Felton, who recently completed the 100km St Cuthberts Way Ultra, said the 30 miler was the hardest thing he had ever done.

The groups went in teams, with both teams completing the 30 miles in around ten-and-a-half hours, which was longer than the eight hours that is allowed for Royal Marines in training but still a remarkable effort.

One of the main challenges was the weather and wet feet, with a number of policemen having to stop because of blisters.

The event, which raised over £3,000, was the brainchild of Simon Guilfoyle and Lee Gosling, both serving police officers.

It was organised by Capt Andrew Dyer RMR and supported by 20 ranks from Tyne and elements of the headquarters, including C/Sgt Terry Hislop and Maj Sandy Wood.

Further details can be found at www.cops30miler.org

Sherwood duo lead way

TWO reservists from HMS Sherwood have begun their initial officer training with the regular Royal Navy.

Sub Lts Chris Cotterill, 21, and Simon Elmore, 30, are at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

Both took part in an intensive training programme, known as the Accelerated Officer Programme (AOP), last summer condensing two years' reservist training into eight weeks.

Chris, who is to specialise as a warfare officer, said: "The AOP was a first of its kind in terms of intensive training programmes for the RNR, and I am so grateful to my employer for allowing me to take an extended period of leave so I could further my RNR career."

Simon, who worked as a teacher, previously used the school holidays to complete his fast-track training.

He said: "It was great to be able to have enough free time over the summer to take part in the pilot of the AOP."

"It allowed me to further my leadership abilities as well as developing my team-working skills."

"I originally joined Sherwood in 2011 so am delighted to be now going on to be a HM officer in the Royal Navy, full time."



Naval Service stars of show

ROYAL Marines storm the beach during one of the highlights of Bournemouth Air Festival.

The green berets were among a wide range of Service personnel who demonstrated naval craft and helicopters.

Demonstrations included reservists from RMR Bristol, Viking vehicles, the Royal Marines unarmed combat display team and Wildcat and Merlin helicopters, with the Black Cats wowing the crowd with their aerial acrobatics. The Band of HM Royal Marines Collingwood conducted a concert on the opening evening and each day played Beating Retreat on the clifftop.

Hawks from 736 NAS at RNAS Yeovilton flew over at the start and end of the beach assault.

Capt Si Smith, Officer Commanding the Commando Recruitment Team, said: "The demonstration has gone down incredibly well with spectators – placing the Corps front and centre and enabling engagement with a younger audience who can see for themselves the unique capabilities of a Royal Marine Commando."

Mne Ben Jones, a Combined Services boxing champion, added: "It's been good to talk with local people about the unique offer that serving with the Royal Marines provides, including the opportunities to play sport at every level of competition."

The beach assault was also watched by Rear Admiral Alex Burton, Commander UK Maritime Forces, who said: "It's been a great few days focussing on the Royal Navy's capabilities at



● HMS Monmouth and Smiter off Bournemouth

the Bournemouth air show. Hundreds and thousands of members of the public got to see us in the air, at sea and on the shore."

Also attending were fishery patrol vessel HMS Tyne, P2000s Smiter and Ranger, RFA Argus and Type 23 frigate HMS Monmouth.

HMS Grimsby, which worked with the French Tripartite-class minehunter Sagittaire, rafted up with RFA Fort Rosalie in order to refuel and redeploy reservists during the festival.

The four-day festival, which attracted 702,600 visitors despite poor weather, provided invaluable training for more than 180 RNR and RMR personnel.

Lt Martin 'Gunny' Heighway, from HMS King Alfred, said: "We have a long and growing association with the Bournemouth Air Festival and it's a really enjoyable way to get the Royal Navy firmly focused in the public eye."

PO Ian Lane, also from the Portsmouth reservist unit, added: "The festival is great fun for friends and families. After 23 years of service I can see the real benefits of the Royal Navy taking a major role in contributing to the

success of this event here in Bournemouth."

The expected bad weather which hit Bournemouth failed to stop the large contingent of regulars, reserves and cadets from taking part in the festival, with multiple training opportunities on show.

HMS Monmouth provided simulated naval gunfire support to the amphibious demonstrations, which included raiding craft from 1 Assault Group Royal Marines.

Commanding Officer of RMR Bristol Lt Col Richard Maltby said: "The amphibious demonstration provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to the public the impressive assets the Royal Navy and Royal Marines have and how we link all elements of air, sea and land."

Naval Regional Commander Wales and Western England Cdre Jamie Miller said: "It's been a hugely successful air festival and the weather has helped to show the capability, flexibility and adaptability of the Naval Service."

"Once again Bournemouth has proven to be the perfect location and perfect hosts for showing the very best of the RN, RM, RNR, RMR and the Fleet Air Arm."



Pictures: LPhoto Paul Hall, Richard and Sarah May

Eight deeps rewarded for their long service

DEDICATED reservist Royal Navy submariners have been rewarded for their excellence at a ceremony in Plymouth.

Eight long-serving submariners were presented with the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (VRSM) by Captain Scott Bower, Captain Submarines aboard HMS Talent at Devonport Naval Base.

The VRSM was instituted in April 1999 and is awarded to Reserve Forces

personnel in recognition of ten continuous years' efficient service in a full time reserve service (FTRS) assignment where individuals must be above reproach in respect of conduct and performance.

The warrant officers and senior ratings, whose total service numbers 303 years, qualified by virtue of their conduct and performance being 'above reproach'.

Recipients were: WO1 Jim Griffiths,

WO2 Dave Kingston, CPOs Phillip King, Ian Larkin and Andy Metcalf, and POs Dawson Kenny, Charles Payne and Carl Wetherall

The sailors have served on the full range of classes of submarines, including decommissioned classes to those currently in service, including HMS Otter, Onyx, Dreadnought, Valiant and Upholder, and all the Swiftsure and Trafalgar-class

submarines.

PO Kenny, who has been in the Navy for 36 years, said: "I feel proud to have been able to serve extra years as FTRS in Devonport, relieving the work load on regular submariners."

"The most memorable trip for me was a global tour on HMS Swiftsure in 1986 which covered places you can only dream about."



PROJECT FIREFLY

Transfer from Regular and Ex-Regular Entry into the Maritime Reserves

THE MARITIME RESERVES – are a force of highly trained civilian volunteers who are readily available to support any of the Royal Navy's wide ranging operational commitments.

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THE JOURNEY DOES NOT HAVE TO END!



● LCH Sandy Young gets a soaking in the dunk tank

Dunking delivers

SUBMARINERS from HMS Clyde got a soaking at a families day to raise funds for the Coming Home Centre and the RNRMC.

Members of the public were urged to make a donation to have a go at throwing a ball which, if it hit the target, dunked the sailors into a pool of water.

PO Joe McGrath, CPO John Boyle and LCH Sandy Young organised the dunk tank for the BAE Systems family day at Glasgow.

PO McGrath, who is Faslane's RNRMC charity champion, said: "We did this last year so were very keen to return. The reaction we get is great, especially from the younger children who can't get enough of it."

So far the team have taken the dunk tank to Ayr Armed Forces Day, Helensburgh Fair and the BAE event, raising £750 for the RNRMC.

The submariners also work with the Coming Home Centre at the Pearce Institute at Govan, which provides support to Armed Forces veterans in the Glasgow area.

Jane's winning quote

A COMPETITION to mark the RNRMC reaching 10,000 likes on their Facebook page has been won by Jane Dua.

Jane has won two free tickets to see the Bear Grylls live spectacular Bear Grylls Endeavour in London this month.

When asked what her favourite thing about the adventurer and RNRMC ambassador was, Jane said: "his enthusiasm and passion for life."

Thanks to everyone who has helped us reach over 10,000 Facebook likes. Here's to the next 10,000.

Get your kit on...

A RANGE of promotional marketing and fundraising kits in support of the RNRMC has been distributed to Royal Navy and Royal Marines establishments, crews, ships, submarines and air stations across the country and around the world.

Kits include everything that any willing fundraiser will need to help promote their event, such as pull-up banners, feather banners, fundraising pots, buckets and pin badge boxes to help raise cash for their charity.

The kits have been rolling out to locations around the world over the last 12 months, from RNAS Culdrose to HMS Collingwood, HMS Nelson to HMS Neptune, the Royal Naval Reserve units in-between, and a number of international units, such as those in Gibraltar and Germany.

Kits also include posters and flyers to remind everyone about the vital work the charity does for them, their oppos and families, when in uniform and when out of it.

Alasdair Akass, Director of Marketing and Communications, said: "This is the most ambitious messaging project we've ever conducted within the Royal Navy, having taken nearly a whole year to put in place, with an aim of reaching our key beneficiaries and most passionate fundraisers within the serving Navy."



"We're already seeing the positive effects of the kits, with a huge increase in minor grants enquiries and offers to fundraise, so the project has well been worth the effort."

The arrival of the kits could not have come at a better time for the charity, as it prepares to celebrate its tenth birthday next year.

"With all the tools now in place, we can't wait to see what great fundraising challenges, events and initiatives our Royal Navy and Royal Marines beneficiaries set themselves next year," Mr Akass added.

To request new kit, replace old kit, or send in your photos and stories using the kit, please email mystory@rnrmc.org.uk

URNU peaks on climb challenge

A GROUP of 16 from Southampton University Royal Naval Unit and two Mountain Leaders took on the Three Peaks Challenge to raise funds for the RNRMC.

Lt John Parker (FOST(N)) and Lt Mike Smith (Cambridge URNU TO) led the team, which included the Commanding Officer Lt Tim Bateson, the coxswain CPO Jason Dumbleton and ten students.

Four drivers were spread across the two vehicles to maintain the tempo required and to allow some sleep.

The ascent of the first peak, Ben Nevis saw the team begin the journey in good time as high morale pushed them to the top of the 1,345m climb.

The descent into poor weather took its toll but the first challenge was completed in just over five hours before a treacherous journey to the Lake District and Scafell Pike.



● The team members who completed the Three Peaks challenge

The scaling of England's tallest peak of 978m began in the freezing cold and pouring rain.

The darkness allowed a slight detour from the original planned route and the descent was even slower due to a team member's strained knee.

The last ascent, Snowdon, began at midday in the wettest of the conditions. At this point in the challenge, the chance of completion within the 24-hour

window was impossible.

The gruelling challenge took 26 hours and raised £1,147 for the RNRMC.

Lt Bateson said: "It was a fantastic opportunity to see my students outside their comfort zone, requiring teamwork and sheer determination to motivate each other through what can only be described as the worst 24 hours of 'summer' we had ever seen."



Harbour quest success for sailors

TWO teams of ten sailors braved the hazards of Portsmouth's busy harbour for a 24-hour sail.

They set off in two Bosuns and ended up covering 84 nautical miles, raising more than £1,500 for the RNRMC.

The sail was the brainchild of Lee Bichard,

a civilian employee who helps run the Royal Navy Sailing Centre, on Whale Island.

He said: "I wanted to organise a charity event this year and knew that a 24-hour sail in Portsmouth Harbour had not been attempted before by the RNSC. The RNRMC does some fantastic work so I wanted to help them."

Long wait will be worth it

THE Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines are set to make a triumphant return to Liverpool this month, debuting their famous Mountbatten Festival-inspired show, more than 15 years after they last played the city.

The Massed Bands – comprised of over 100 musicians from six nationwide bands – will demonstrate their outstanding precision and versatility when they perform at the world-class Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on Saturday October 29, backed by spectacular lighting and big screen imagery.

They will be joined by special guests which include the city's very own Danielle Thomas, a mezzo-soprano, who will perform Puccini's *Nessun Dorma*, and legendary broadcaster and Classic FM presenter John Suchet, who will host the concert.

"I am delighted to be presenting this exciting concert at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall with this world famous Band," said Mr Suchet.

"I have worked with the Royal Marines for many years now and I am always amazed at their musical virtuosity and versatility. There aren't many concerts where, on the same programme, you can enjoy the music of Edward Elgar and Michael Jackson, but it works. The audiences, young and old, absolutely love it and come back year after year."

All profits from the concert will be donated to the RNRMC.

Lt Col Nick Grace, Principal Director of Music Royal Marines, said: "The programme of music is based on our very successful Mountbatten Festival of Music that we perform every year in London's Royal Albert Hall. Liverpool has such a proud musical heritage as well as an enduring relationship with the Naval Service and I know that everyone who attends the concert is in for a very special evening."

Tickets are priced £15-£25 and are available from www.liverpoolphil.com or by telephoning 0151 709 3789.

THE MASSED BANDS OF HER MAJESTY'S ROYAL MARINES IN CONCERT

Saturday 29th October 2016

7.30pm

Tickets: £15, £18, £20, £25

Liverpool Philharmonic Hall



Box Office: 0151 709 3789

www.liverpoolphil.com





Damien's dozen for fallen comrades

LINING UP 12 demanding physical challenges over nine months is veteran submariner WO Damien Holloway – all in memory of a friend and shipmate killed aboard HMS Tireless.

The 41-year-old from HMS Raleigh is running, trekking and cycling with the goal of raising at least £1,000 for the Paul 'Tinny' McCann Fund for Needy Children.

The charity was set up following the death of the submariner, killed with fellow rating Anthony Huntrod when an oxygen generator candle exploded aboard Tireless as she sailed under the Arctic ice on an exercise.

In the nine years since the tragedy, the charity set up in Paul's name has handed out more than £50,000 to individual youngsters or groups such as the Sea Cadets in his native West Midlands.

Back in 2007, Damien was Paul's line manager on the T-boat and the two men were also close friends.

"When the anniversary of Tinny and Tony's death comes around we normally hold a two-minute silence or something like that in their memory, even at sea, and in the Submarine School we have an award dedicated to them.

"I come from the same area as Tinny. We were in the same school year too, although he joined the RN a lot later than me.

"Tinny was very close to his family and I know he wanted children himself.

"I'll be thinking of Tinny and also Tony during every event. I set myself a target of £1,000 and with the help of my friends and family, I want to raise as much money as I can. I'll never forget either of them."

Anyone wishing to sponsor Damien – who'd smashed his £1K target by the end of August – can do so at www.justgiving.com/Damien-H.

In the pink for Cancer Research

JAYNE Bowater of Cancer Research visited the Sports and Recreation Centre, HMS Collingwood to receive a donation from the establishment's first Race for Life event.

She collected more than £700 from the event, which saw 317 military and civilian personnel run or walk 5km.

CPO(LPT) Jimmy Forwell, who organised the event, said: "The atmosphere was buzzing with the Collingwood Royal Marines Band playing for the duration of the race whilst also dressed in pink."



Frogmen join fight against prostate cancer In at the deep end

NAVY divers took part in a gruelling six-hour physical challenge in and out of the water to raise awareness of prostate cancer.

Some 43 frogmen from across the Fleet Diving Squadron leapt into Horsea Lake in Portsmouth – their main training pool – from a 7.5m diving board, used their fins to propel them for 100 metres on the surface, then clambered out of the water, removed the fins and ran 400 metres.

And they repeated it 25 times. Each. So that's 2½ kilometres in the water and the equivalent of a 10km run per diver – or 100km swim and 400km on foot in total.

Three circuits, as they are known, are a mainstay of training at the diving squadron's headquarters near Port Solent.

"It was less about raising money – although we'll gladly take donations – the real aim was to raise awareness of prostate cancer," said Leading Diver Lewis 'Soapy' Watson.

"Three circuits alone are gruelling. To do 25, that really was tough."

On average, divers completed their individual dive-swim-run in about two hours.

The divers were aided by a strong support-team, with an Army Lynx putting in an appearance during the event.

The divers completed 1,060 circuits in five hours and 45 minutes, raising a total that currently stands at £1,120.

You can make a donation to support prostate cancer research via <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/RN-Fleet-Diving-Squadron>



Pictures: LPhoto Sean Gascoigne

Brothers reunited by charity On their bikes

TWO brothers who have not been in the same room for 14 years have been reunited by the charity that has supported both of them since losing their sight.

Royal Navy veteran Dennis Peel, 88, and his brother Arnold, 86, in Nottinghamshire, were reunited at Blind Veterans UK's training and rehabilitation centre in Brighton.

Both brothers have severe vision impairments and have received help and support from Blind Veterans UK since 2014.

Dennis lives in Worthing with his wife Ruby, while Arnold and his wife Ann are based in Nottinghamshire, so, although they regularly keep in contact over the phone, it is not easy for the brothers to meet.

The brothers were keen to see each other again so the charity's welfare officers were happy to arrange it so that both of them could visit the Brighton centre at the same time for a holiday.

Dennis said: "We always talk a couple of times a week on the phone but it was wonderful to meet up again in person. I'm so grateful that Blind Veterans UK



● Dennis Peel, left, with his brother Arnold as they met face-to-face for the first time in 14 years

were able to arrange this."

Dennis joined the Royal Navy in 1945 and served in Portsmouth before being discharged as a supply assistant in 1948. After his vision started to deteriorate due to age-related macular degeneration Dennis was put in touch with Blind Veterans UK.

Dennis said: "I went for a week at the centre in Brighton and was introduced to a lot of amazing equipment which I

still use today.

"By far the best piece of equipment I have is the one which can blow up any document to a huge size. This means that I can still read the paper."

When Dennis' brother Arnold lost his sight Dennis encouraged him to get in touch with Blind Veterans UK too.

Find out how Blind Veterans UK could help by calling 0800 389 7979 or visiting www.noonealone.org.uk

RIDERS onboard RFA Argus took charity bike riding to another level with a 14-hour session in the ship's gym.

RFA personnel along with their Royal Navy colleagues as well as RN Reservists and Officer Cadets who were embarked, set themselves a target of 252 miles – equivalent to the distance from RFA Argus's base port of Falmouth to Bournemouth, where they were working during the annual Bournemouth Air Festival.

However, the target was smashed as a total of 55 riders eventually clocked up a staggering 645 miles.

"It's a monumental effort from everyone who decided to spend their Sunday in the gym balanced on a small uncomfortable saddle, rather than look at the airshow going on around them," said Maritime Aviation Support Force's (MASF) CPO Dave Maitland.

The £520 raised will go to the Mermaid Centre at Treliske Hospital in Truro, a specialised unit for breast cancer that helps screen and rehabilitate patients."

The ship's CO, Capt Karl Woodfield and Senior Naval Officer on board, Lt Tony Harrison, were the first to add their miles.

Eventually by the close they clocked up 645 miles – equivalent to the distance from Lands' End to Lerwick in the Shetland Islands.



● Frank Hopps with Uves Wood in the Furka Pass; the riders who took part in the epic journey

No mountain too high

A ROYAL Navy officer joined 24 riders on a 650-mile, 90,000ft ascent in the Alps and Dolomites to raise funds for research into a rare disease that has struck a former Fleet Air Arm colleague.

Cdr Uves Wood was among the party who cycled through Crans Montana, Andermatt, St Mortiz, Stelvio, Bormio, Merano and Cortina. The party cycled for around ten to 12 hours a day.

The aim of the trek was to raise funds for research into Kennedy's Disease, a rare inherited neuromuscular disorder which causes progressive weakening and wasting of the muscles.

They were joined by Frank Hopps, who served as a pilot on 800, 801, 899 and 820 NAS, and suffers from the disorder.

"It was over 30°C each day," said Cdr Wood. "Although, as we went through the Dolomites we got rain, wind and hail."

"The climbs were massive. Frank, using his

electric bike, climbed the Furka Pass with me on day two."

The epic cycle ended in Venice, where the riders were greeted by family and friends.

The eight-day trek was to raise funds for Kennedy's Disease UK (KD-UK), a charity set up by Frank's wife Kate. The disease is passed on by female carriers of the gene and the couple have two daughters.

Research into the disease is currently carried out by a small team at University College London.

"We've currently raised £87,000, with a target of £100,000. This precious money, along with other donations, provides much-needed funds for UCL to continue their research and find a cure to hopefully prevent Frank's girls, as well as many others, passing on this awful disease."

Anyone wishing to help can find more details at <https://www.justgiving.com/Uves-Wood2>

Marathon effort Courting success

A ROYAL Navy physical trainer and his wife completed the New Forest Marathon to raise funds for charity.

LPT Ian Cole, who serves at the Outdoor Leadership School Talybont in Wales, and his wife Melanie raised more than £1,000 for the RNRMC and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund.

The couple, pictured right, chose the two charities as they supported them when their five-year-old son Aedan died in March 2014 from sudden unexpected death in epilepsy.

The couple's daughter Amber also has epilepsy and the charities purchased a much-needed monitor for her.

You can still donate to their fund at <http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/thecoleclan>



THE Royal Navy has been thanked for helping a netball player to teach the game in Ghana.

The RN Netball Association donated a kit, a netball post and balls to Regional Performance Academy athlete Sophie Gardiner, who spent two weeks in Ghana teaching the sport.

Sophie spent her first few days in a rural part of the country helping to rebuild a school that had been destroyed by fire.

"It was a huge culture shock for the first couple of days," she said. "The living conditions are just so far from what we are used to at home but the people are lovely and the thing that really struck me was just how happy the children were."

Sophie then went to a netball camp in a village near the capital Accra.

"For our first session we had about nine girls signed up, but once people saw us playing we ended up with around 40 children joining in," said Sophie.

"The children were so enthusiastic and were thrilled with their netball posts and kit as they mean they will be able to play tournaments next term."

"A huge thank you to everyone who supported us, especially the Royal Navy. It was an amazing experience and one that I hope to repeat next summer."

for 14 hours Award for deeps



● Lt Tony Harrison cycled the first miles

ROYAL Navy submariners from attack submarine HMS Astute were recently awarded a trophy for their performance during an annual walking challenge.

The Richardson Trophy is given for the best performance by a team from the Armed Services and was presented to HMS Astute's Marine Engineering Department for their efforts during the 42.65 mile Keswick to Barrow walk on May 7 this year.

The team, who actually ran the course, did it on behalf of Wirral children's hospice, Claire House, raising over £2,000 for the charity.

Presenting the trophy was Commander Neil Botting, Commanding Officer of HMS Asute, along with Mike Scott, Managing Director of Lockheed Martin UK – Strategic Systems.

Captain of HMS Neptune, Captain Craig Mearns, who also took part in the event, said: "It was a wonderful to experience the team spirit and determination of everyone involved and also to have the opportunity to raise money for some well-deserving causes."

The Keswick to Barrow walk (K2B) began in 1966 when the first Royal Navy Polaris Submarine, HMS Resolution, was under construction at the Barrow shipyard.

The event was prompted by a statement made by then US President John F Kennedy who said that "every American should be capable of walking 50 miles a day." Plans for the walk were soon underway, helping to build relationships between the submarine crew and the shipyard workers.

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Goodbye, FIC Hello, MIXG

AS PART of the Royal Navy's ongoing Information Warfare Programme, the Fleet Intelligence Centre has grown and been renamed.

Now including all elements of the former Maritime Intelligence Support Group, the Maritime Information Exploitation Group – housed in Collingwood's Leydene – consists of 145 Regular, Reserve and civilian personnel.

In time, the goal is to expand the organisation to enhance the exploitation of information from a variety of current and future sensors and sources.

This broad effort can then be fused together into intelligence and understanding to support decision-making at all levels.

"This is an important event that will engender a cultural mind-set that recognises and embraces the importance of information and intelligence in war fighting," said the new organisation's CO Cdr Roger Noyce.

"The MIXG will support the development and delivery of information/exploitation capabilities, but primarily generate and operate information/exploitation functions in support of defensive and offensive effects.

"It also provides the RN's essential link into the 'single intelligence environment' allowing close collaboration with wider UK Defence, partners across government, and allies."

2016DIN05-027 (Formation of the Maritime Information Exploitation Group) provides more detail.

Helpline for malaria drug

THE Ministry of Defence has launched the Mefloquine single point of contact for current and former Service personnel who have concerns about their experience of anti-malaria drug Mefloquine (commercially known as Lariam).

Announcing the launch, an MOD spokesman said the department took the health and well-being of its personnel seriously and acknowledged its duty of care to provide the best possible support to them.

This service provides information and signposting to a range of services to address their concerns.

Calls to the line – 0306 770 5059 – are confidential and no personal details are retained.

Lines are open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, except bank holidays.

Full details are available online on www.gov.uk

Where to look

Galaxy Briefs

16-2016 – Rebranding of Navy Command Information Superiority Staff to Information Warfare Division

RNTM

281/16 Warrant Officers' Conference 2016
271/16 Naval Service Annual
Apprenticeship Awards 2017 nominations
266/16 WRNS100 in 2017 – Centenary to celebrate women in the Naval Service
262/16 Warrant Officer 1 Engineering Technician Weapon Engineering (General Service) pre-selection and pre-promotion requirements
258/16 Low voltage safety rescue station allocation
252/16 Removal of annual ops check as a pre-promotion requirement for General Service ET(CIS) personnel (non-Faraday trained)

DINS

2016DIN01-134 Changes to TV Licence requirements to include BBC iPlayer
2016DIN04-149 Declaration of Obsolete Equipment – Floodlight Mobile Hylite Mk1 and 2
2016DIN07-111 2017 Scapa Flow AT Diving Expedition

BR

BRd 9374 Royal Navy Identity Rules



Seven seas, six Cs

CONGRATULATIONS to three crew members of HMS Portland who learned of GCSE successes while they patrolled the Indian Ocean with the frigate (see page 4).

RPO Scott Cantillon (left in the photo taken on the frigate's forecandle), 40, from Nuneaton, earned Cs in maths, English and history and is now hoping to be commissioned as an officer via the Senior Upper Yardman scheme.

"I would not have thought this possible 15 years ago, joining as a chef with no formal education qualifications," he said.

"The Royal Navy is helping me to achieve this ambition by providing free access to coursework, tutors, and support from the ship's education officer and shoreside education facilities."

PO(Logs(CS)) Russell Keitch (right) achieved a C in English language. Like his shipmate, the 29-year-old from Lanner, Redruth, also hopes to use his grades to progress his career and become an officer.

"Finally getting grade C in English after putting it off for numerous years gives me a sense of achievement and relief," he said.

"This is all down to the opportunities and support the Royal Navy gives individuals to complete education courses. It is also down to the support and assistance from other people on board that are more confident or competent in these subjects."

Completing the trio is LS(AWT) Luke Grove, 26, from Taunton in Somerset, who has Cs in maths and environmental management to his name (centre).

Almost 500 GCSE exams were taken by RN personnel this year.



Faslane folk fight flab

NEARLY 400 military and civilian personnel attended Faslane sports facility for the site's Navyfit Festival.

The event, which was organised by physical training instructors from HMS Neptune, introduced personnel to the huge variety of sporting and leisure activities available to Clyde personnel/workers, as well as providing advice on how to eat healthier and look after their wellbeing.

There were 18 different clubs, organisations, and health advice stalls to choose from at the inaugural festival.

Chefs were on hand with healthy snacks and smoothies which participants had to mix themselves using a blender powered by an exercise bike.

Other activities included Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, the field gun

run, golf, diving, fly fishing, indoor rowing and Telemark skiing.

Sixteen teams, including representatives from submarines, small ships and HMS Queen Elizabeth, took part in an outdoor five-a-side competition, which the carrier crew won.

Also represented was HMS Neptune Sailing Centre, which has been on the go at Faslane since the 1950s and offers Naval Base personnel and their families the chance to experience sailing and power boating.

Weight and blood pressure checks were being carried out throughout the day as well as oral hygiene advice courtesy of the Medical Centre's dental department.

Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Shread, FRPU North

Big White Wall can help

MENTAL health charity and support service Big White Wall says the RN is under-represented when it comes to the wider military family – so it's pushing to raise awareness.

The charity offers help to people who are stressed, anxious, low or not coping.

At its heart is its community of members, who support and help each other share what's troubling them in a safe and anonymous environment, with the guidance of trained professionals, who are

online 24/7.

More than half the Armed Forces personnel have made use of the service and shared an issue or feelings on Big White Wall.

The mother of a Royal Marine, who was injured by an IED in Afghanistan for example, found Big White Wall to be an "absolutely brilliant" help while she was caring for her injured son.

Learn more about the charity and the services it offers at www.bigwhitewall.com.



Ibrox rocks to the 'true heroes in life'

IN AN arena normally reserved for heroes of the sporting variety, 300 Servicemen and women from across the Armed Forces were hailed by 48,000 fellow countryfolk as Glasgow Rangers paid tribute to the nation's military.

Back in the Scottish Premier League after a four-year absence, the world-famous club showed their support for the troops by signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

The club, long-time supporters of the Services, cemented their commitment to the military by putting its name to the covenant ahead of their home clash with Ross County (a 0-0 stalemate as it turned out).

Members of the RAF Regiment abseiled from the roof of the Govan Stand to present the match ball while Megan Adams, the daughter of Lt Cdr Billy Adams, performed a rousing acoustic version of *Still The One*.

At half-time, the Band of HM Royal Marines performed on the hallowed Ibrox turf, joined by 12 representatives from each of the three Forces – all to a standing ovation from a 48,000-strong

crowd, as the public address system declared: "The club is proud to be able to recognise the sterling work of the Royal Navy, Army and RAF and we are honoured to be able to show our appreciation for those who are the true heroes in life."

Rangers helps veterans into employment, backs Service charities and gets involved in community projects which target serving and veteran personnel and their families.

Serving members of the Armed Forces who present their military ID at the ticket centre will now receive 25 per cent off tickets for home fixtures (subject to availability).

The covenant was signed on what 'gers termed Armed Services Day, with collection buckets taking fans' donations on behalf of the Rangers Charity Foundation's Armed Forces Partnership, Erskine, PoppyScotland, Combat Stress and The Rifles Regimental Trust's Care for Casualties appeal. A donation of £1 from every matchday programme sold also went into the buckets.

Picture: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald, FRPU North

RFA makes their day

The best and the brightest in the Royal Navy's crucial auxiliary force were singled out for praise at the second annual RFA awards.

Hosted in HMS Nelson's wardroom by the head of the Service, Cdre Duncan Lamb RFA, the ceremony was attended by VIPs and families of RFA personnel.

Just embarking on a career with the RFA is 3/O Caroline Waldie, named Cadet of the Year for maintaining the highest standards throughout her training – the first female officer to earn the title, who won the Richard Jones Quaich (a small drinking cup, pictured).

CPO(Chef) Lee Brooker and CPO(Steward) Richard Cook (RFA Chef and Steward of the Year 2015) each received three

awards for their time spent on board RFA Argus during Operation Gritrock in Sierra Leone over the winter of 2014-15.

"Whilst I am very proud to receive these awards, I feel they also reflect the hard work, team spirit and professionalism displayed by the catering department throughout this vital operation and I thank them for their support," said Lee.

Worthy of note was 2/O Ian Mason, who was not only presented with an engraved retirement vase, but also a 40-year clasp to add to his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. "Throughout an eventful and challenging career at sea, I have seen many changes," he said. "But I have, in the main, thoroughly enjoyed my time in the RFA."



UTC is the place to be (from September)

THE RN-backed University Technical College Portsmouth is taking admissions for Year 10 and Year 12 entries from September 2017.

The UTC is a new type of school in the Solent region, aimed at 14-19-year-olds interested in science, technology, engineering and maths; it will combine academic and technical learning to develop the technical and workplace skills that local employers want and need.

The RN, in conjunction with the University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth City Council, and Salters Academy Trust, is leading the way in opening the UTC and is projecting the majority of full-time members of the project team.

Other large and small regional employers are also involved, including BAE Systems, QinetiQ, and DSTL. All are convinced that UTC Portsmouth – and UTCs more widely – can provide children with

an education that makes them more employable and work-ready, while providing business with a qualified workforce of the future.

Involving employers allows learning to be contextualised and, through an exciting enrichment programme, will create work or university ready individuals. A longer 'business' day gives students the time to get involved in a wide range of enrichment activities such as sailing, AutoCAD qualifications, Formula 1 Challenge, cadet programmes and sports teams. Any 'homework' will be completed in independent study periods.

The UTC will be free to attend and have a large catchment area, including the Isle of Wight, Winchester, Southampton and Chichester, and the admissions policy gives specific priority to Service families. For more information, including how to apply, see www.utcportsmouth.org.



Bavaria: it's for life, not just Christmas...

BECAUSE it's worth remembering that the Naval Outdoor Centre Germany (older readers may remember it as Bavarian Surprise) is not solely for lovers of winter sports.

Far from it. It's open all year round (apart from a couple of weeks in November and December).

As a key part of the adventurous training/lifestyle package offered to RN and RM personnel, the RN hires an Alpine hotel in the village Bad Oberdorf, a couple of hours' drive southeast of Munich, from where Lt Col Martin Price and his team provide a string of activities to as many as 60 personnel every week. The Royal Marine reminds each one of them: "We have an outstanding reputation in this area of Bavaria which every sailor and marine has a responsibility to maintain."

The summer offering provides as comprehensive a package as the winter one in testing the RN's core values (courage, commitment, determination, respect for each other, integrity and loyalty.)

Taking advantage of the summer activities was a substantial group from HMS Sultan: LAET James Poskitt, LAET Nick Tracey, LAET Matt Turner and LAET Laura Benfield. There was also

a strong female presence with AB Gemma Baldy, AB Amey Mullen, AB Helen Taylor and AB Jade Convery (HMS Richmond), AB Laura Thompson and AB Charlie Godfrey (MET Branch), OC Holly Esson and OC Claire Gent (Southampton URNU).

Leading them through the week, Lt Cdr Joe Wood, Sultan's executive officer... and former boss of the outdoor centre, who believes the challenges of a week at the centre steels men and women far more than anything taught in the classroom.

"Although many of the activities were new to most of the women, all the group rose to the challenge and maintained a positive attitude though out the week," said Lt Cdr Wood.

"With individuals supporting each other at times of adversity they, form a bond and achieve more than they thought they would by helping each other – becoming a team and growing in confidence."

For more information on what NOCG can offer you at no personal cost check out the website at www.nocg.co.uk (and yes, we're aware of the irony of plugging summer activities as winter begins to blanket the Alps once more...).

Familiar family questions

MANY thanks to all of you who completed our childcare survey over the summer; you've provided us with some extremely valuable feedback which will assist in the development of the childcare policy by the Naval Service. We have published our findings on our website www.nff.org.uk – click the Your Say tab.

The autumn edition of *Homeport* is now out, with some great features including our cover story about Royal Naval chefs, a celebration of 100 years of women in the Naval Service and a useful guide to the emotional cycle of deployment. We're also running some great readers' offers including a chance to win a two-night stay in London for the whole family. Email editor@nff.org.uk with your details or alternatively visit our website and click on the Homeport tab.

Moving on to some questions we've received recently:

My partner is on HMS Richmond. We are three months away from our wedding and are starting to think about what we will do about Navy housing. We live in Gosport, have no children or pets, though we would like a dog. I work in Gosport and we both have family and

Naval Families FEDERATION

commitments here. We have several questions on Service Family Accommodation (SFA): Will we have to go to Portsmouth? Are we likely to get a flat? Do you know if there is much Navy housing available in Gosport? Are we allowed pets? When can we apply?

Most of the properties available in the Portsmouth area are actually in Gosport (Rovner and Brockhurst). You would most likely be allocated a two-bedroom maisonette. Permission must be sought from CarillionAmey for pets to be allowed in the property. You can apply for Service Family Accommodation up to four months before your wedding. You will generally be allocated a property up to two weeks prior to your wedding date but you will not be allowed to occupy until the date of your marriage. Your partner applies for SFA on an e-1132 form that he can access via the MOD intranet

under the admin tab.

We are not married and have been privately renting for six years but have been given two-months' notice. Are we entitled to SFA?

Under the current guideline, unfortunately you will not be entitled to SFA as you are not married, but this is currently under review. Full details of entitlements can be found in Joint Service Publication JSP 464 available via www.gov.uk.

I am leaving the Royal Navy soon. I have £3k outstanding on my LSAP (Long Service Advance of Pay) and have no money to repay. Are there any schemes where I can pay in instalments?

If anyone leaves the Royal Navy and has an outstanding LSAP then the balance will be taken from your terminal grant.

Contact us on 023 9265 4374 or email admin@nff.org.uk.

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For more information contact:
PSTN- 01929 403172 Mil 94374 3172
E-mail-
navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.uk





How you going Dave? 'Trigger' calls time

DOCKYARD Wharfmaster David Trigger reached a milestone in his career by notching up 45 years at the Ministry of Defence.

A well-known and popular figure to all ships and submarines from all ports across the Navy, Dave, or 'Trigger' as he is known throughout Devonport Naval Base, began his career as a 17-year old when he walked through the gates of Royal William Yard in 1971, then a major victualling depot of the Navy.

Born and bred in Plymouth, Dave is the fifth generation of the Trigger family to have worked in the dockyard. His son, Brecon, 25, is currently carrying on the tradition.

"I'm responsible for three-and-a-half miles of river frontage making sure that the berths and jetties are clean and tidy and safe to work," said Dave.

"I've seen quite a few changes over the years but Devonport has always been, and will always be, the home for the Royal Navy in the West Country. I have experienced a lot of different things over the last 45 years.

"I can remember measuring Prince Charles and Prince Andrew for their Naval uniforms, and working long hours to support the loading of ships heading for the Falklands in 1982, as

well as supporting all Naval operations over the decades. It's a team effort, and the people that make this place."

His boss Malcolm Pollock, Devonport's Base Services Manager, said: "Dave is a Devonport living legend. He is known throughout the Royal Navy but what many people do not see is his dedication. If a submarine is sailing in the early hours, Dave will be there; if a ship is arriving late at night, Dave will be there. If you need the difficult or the seemingly-impossible done, then just ask Dave Trigger – he makes good things happen."

Dave said: "Seeing crew members coming home from deployment and being reunited with their loved ones is very emotional. When a ship deploys, invariably I am the last person they see standing on the jetty as they leave and I'm the first person they see when they return. One of the highlights of my whole career was being awarded the MBE by the Queen for services to the MOD in 2006."

A former vice-president of Ivybridge Rugby Club and a South Hams councillor between 1995 and 1999, Dave also served as a Devon County councillor and has been a union man for 45 years, being a senior rep for Unite.



Westminster go to Westminster

PERSONNEL from HMS Westminster visited Westminster Abbey.

They attended the annual civic service to welcome the incoming Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Steve Summers.

Members of the ship's company served as the Guard of Honour at the Great West Door.

The Lord Mayor of Westminster has been an affiliate of the ship throughout the many years of its operational service, and will continue to support the ship upon its return to active duty in early 2017.

The Lord Mayor of Westminster is pictured flanked by Lt Cdr Simon Charnock and WO1 Peter Johnson and members of HMS Westminster's ship's company.

Rating baptised on deck of Protector



SUNSHINE, a Royal Navy ship's inflatable boat, and a chaplain.

All the ingredients needed for a baptism – if you are aboard a Royal Navy ship, that is.

AB Luke McGuinness was received into the Christian faith during a service in Cape Town.

HM Squadron chaplain Rev Andrew Allcock, who led the service, donned his shorts for the ceremony, held while the ship was in South Africa for a routine maintenance period.

One of Protector's rigid inflatables was turned into a 'baptismal pool' for the service, which included prayers before AB McGuinness was immersed in the cold water.

"It was a really enjoyable day," said AB McGuinness, who has been a member of the ship's company since March this year and will be sailing into the Antarctic ice with the ship for the first time later this year.

The ice patrol ship left the UK in October, travelling via the Mediterranean and Red Sea and down the Indian Ocean towards Australia.

During her last ice season she

completed an historic patrol in the Ross Sea.

HMS Protector travelled through storms and gales to reach the US Antarctic Base on Ross Island, in the Ross Sea, the first time that a Royal Navy ship has visited McMurdo.

McMurdo base is the largest area of human habitation on the Antarctic continent and is a hub for stores and support to a number of other bases in the region, including the South Pole base and the New Zealand Antarctic Scott base 3km away.

After departing the Ross Sea in February, Protector completed her circumnavigation of Antarctica, a first for the Royal Navy, before sailing to Cape Town for a deployed maintenance period.

HMS Protector sailed solo and was at times more than 1,000 nautical miles away from any other ship or human settlement in Antarctica, and over 2000nm from both South America and New Zealand.

Protector has now left Cape Town for South America.

She will then return to Antarctica for the upcoming ice season.



● Admiral Woodcock spoke to apprentices working on the school garden



Pictures: LPhot Ken Gaunt

Personnel spruce up garden at hospice

A TEAM of 14 sailors and marines from Clyde Naval Base helped the Robin House Children's Hospice get ready for its garden open day.

The Faslane team headed over the hill to the hospice in nearby Balloch, and spent a whole day carrying out garden maintenance – weeding and clearing away leaf litter.

Submariner Able Seaman Logistician (Steward) Danielle Skinner said: "Robin House carries out brilliant work, allowing families with terminally ill children to have fun and enjoy being together at a very difficult time in their lives – it was a humbling and positive experience and an absolute pleasure to help out in this small way."

Scotland's second children's hospice, Robin House, was opened in 2005. Like Scotland's first children's hospice Rachel House, the hospice offers a purpose-built 'home from home' with accommodation for eight families from across Scotland at any one time.

Clyde Naval Base is Scotland's largest military establishment, and is home to the UK Submarine Service.

BZ for MOD apprentices

SECOND Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock has congratulated MOD apprentices on their school community project.

The Admiral was a guest at Drake Primary School in Plymouth, where the apprentices are rebuilding a wildlife garden.

"Apprentices are fundamental to the Royal Navy's future," he said. "I'm delighted to meet the apprentices at Drake School, where they are broadening skills and helping the community. I am sure they will be a great asset to the MOD and Navy in the years ahead."

Twelve Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) apprentices from HMNB Devonport carried out their community project as part of their formal training prior to taking up placements within Devonport to continue their apprenticeships as support engineers, working alongside Royal Navy ships and submarines.

The school project benefits their science education and gives the apprentices experience of teamwork, leadership and project management.

They designed the area's improvements, budgeted for the materials and worked out the logistics and divided the labour.

One of the team leaders, James Cooke, 27, said: "This is very rewarding. You only have to see the faces of the children when they see what we've done – that's gives us all a lot of job satisfaction. The teachers are also very appreciative."

"This tests our leadership skills and how we work together. It's very much hands-on and we literally get our hands dirty, which is great."

School headteacher Joe Roberts said: "I'm very pleased with the work of the apprentices. They've worked very hard and are a pleasure to have on the premises. The children can't wait to make the most of the environmental area which they have transformed. We don't have the funds for the labour, so they have done that for free, for which we are very grateful to the MOD."

"This is a small school with minimal green area which is on a slope. They have built a path and steps, a bug hotel and a rotting wood habitat."

Eddie the Eagle drops in for taste of Navy life

FORMER Olympic skier Eddie 'the Eagle' Edwards soared into Portsmouth to sample life with the Royal Navy.

The British ski jumper, who became a household name and charmed the world after finishing last at the 1988 Olympics, was guest speaker at a Portsmouth Naval Base mess dinner, and was given a quick tour of the base before the formalities got under way.

Eddie, whose life has been featured in the recent biopic film *Eddie the Eagle*, spoke to trainees at the Royal Marines School of Music before heading to Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless.

He said: "I could not believe the vast variety of exciting things that happen within the Naval Base. The standard of music I heard from trainees at the school of music was amazing.

"And the capabilities of the Type 45 destroyers are awesome.



● Eddie went aboard HMS Dauntless and met trainees at the Royal Marines School of Music

It is good to know we are in very safe hands. I was also delighted to meet and have a good chat with some of the sailors – there was great camaraderie on board."

Musician James Evans, 20, said: "I was obviously too young to have seen Eddie at the Olympics but I found the film inspirational, so to meet him in

the flesh was very exciting." ET Ricky Loxley, 28, added: "I have not seen the film as I was serving on board HMS Defender in the Gulf when it was released. But I have read good reviews about it, so when I heard Eddie was coming on board it was quite surreal – we don't often get celebrities on board."



● Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock chats with recruits at HMS Raleigh

Question time for new recruits

TRAINEE sailors at HMS Raleigh were given the chance to put their questions to one of the Royal Navy's most senior officers.

The group of recruits in week six of their ten-week initial naval training course met Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock.

Admiral Woodcock, a former CO of the base, asked the trainees about their training and invited them to ask him questions.

Topics ranged from further details on the Royal Navy's new ships and equipment to how Admiral Woodcock achieved his current position.

Royal Naval Reservist Ben Lewis is taking advantage of an initiative to fast-track his training by undertaking his induction alongside those destined for a full-time career in the Service.

Ben, from Wigan, who is a part-time lifeguard and also works in the Royal Navy Careers Office

in Liverpool, said: "The Admiral gave us a good perspective of what officers working at that level are actually like and how they approach us as trainees at HMS Raleigh. We really enjoyed his company.

"He gave us an insight into what the wider Navy is like, especially the new aircraft carriers. I'm considering becoming an aircraft handler."

Admiral Woodcock told the trainees that around 40 per cent of the officer corps started their career as ratings at HMS Raleigh.

During his day at the Torpoint base Admiral Woodcock was updated on the latest developments, and took the salute at the passing-out parade.

He said: "It is an honour to be here on this very special day, which marks an important culmination of huge amounts of effort and hard work

"Congratulations to all of you on your great success today."

Brightest spark



● CPO Martin Rowley

A CHIEF Petty Officer from Clyde Naval Base has received a prestigious award for his "wealth of knowledge" and "drive" in the field of weapon engineering.

CPO Martin Rowley was presented with the Rear Admiral Bateson Prize at HMS Collingwood.

The prize, which is named after the admiral tasked with implementing the Electrical Branch in 1946, is presented to the weapon engineer who has made the most significant contribution to operational capability, innovation, engineering excellence and branch development over the last 12 months.

The award consists of a cheque for £300, a certificate and trophy. The winners also have their names immortalised on the honours board at HMS Collingwood.

Marvellous Mavernne

A LEADING Hand based at HMS Raleigh has been recognised for her resolute determination and ability to adapt.

LStd Mavernne Samuel-George (right) is currently working as an instructor within the Initial Naval Training school, guiding recruits as they make the transformation from civilians into sailors.

Her loyalty and commitment to her job has earned her the Chip Dale prize.

LStd Samuel-George said: "It was a total surprise to receive this award. I never thought that I would get it, so I'm well happy."

Having joined the Royal Navy in 2006, LStd Samuel-George was assigned to HMS Raleigh last year.

She hails from the Caribbean island of St Vincent and the Grenadines, and currently lives in Plymouth with her husband



and ten-year-old daughter.

"I am planning to do my 22 years and I'll be happy with being a Warrant Officer by then, that's my future ambition," she said. "My current ambition is to get promoted to Petty Officer."

The Chip Dale award is named after a Petty Officer instructor within the Initial Naval Training School, who died in service in 2012.

Navy pair compete in cardboard vessel Boat that rocked

ROYAL Navy ratings Victoria Puk and Imogen Brown set sail in the annual Cardboard Boat Race in Gibraltar.

The two medical assistants are based at the Princess Royal Medical Centre on the Rock and a number of military personnel took part in the event, which raises funds for autism charities.

Each team had to design and construct a boat of their choice using only cardboard and limited resources, such as tape, glue and paint.

Medical Assistant Arran Stratton took on the role of chief designer, using his paddling pool to test his idea, which was then made into reality over several days in the medical centre's old plaster room.

After a lot of bad language, design changes from an aircraft carrier to a landing craft, costume designs and many tubes of No More Nails... HMS Beaver was completed.

The race took place at Ocean Village, with all the vessels on show ahead of the first event, a children's race – which ended with several competitors swimming to the finish line clutching the remains of their vessels.

HMS Beaver started off well but was soon overtaken by boats containing teams of four muscle men.

"Like most builds we had limited time to prepare the vessel so consequently



HMS Beaver had to forego sea trials at this stage, making the initial leg of the race the test phase," said Victoria.

"HMS Beaver performed admirably and I am pleased to announce that she came in fourth still afloat, albeit a bit wet – but afloat nonetheless."

The duo won the best fancy dress trophy for their beaver costumes, consisting of cardboard tails, ears and face paint.

The pair passed on their winnings – a £50 voucher – to Arran for all of his hard work.



Huddersfield unit supports canal festival

HUDDERSFIELD Sea Cadets took part in this year's Canal and Music Festival at Brighouse.

The family-oriented event delivered not only canal activities, but also a street food and craft market, live music and a real-ale festival.

Brighouse Business Initiative organised the extravaganza, with the support of the Calder Navigation Society and the Canal and River Trust, among other societies.

There were more boats to see on the canal this year, with free trips, more than 30 bands performing live – from brass to rock and roll – a street market with more than 80 stalls, demonstrations and a beer and Pimms tent.

Throughout the day, boats jostled for position – not only the canal trip boats, but also pleasure craft sailing up and down.

The canal was teeming with boats of all shapes and sizes, demonstrations of canal crafts and free activities.

In the canal basin, visitors saw how a canal lock works, learnt how to tie knots, saw birds of prey and even got to handle a snake.

The cadets took their new RS Quest sailboat along and invited members of the public to name the boat by choosing a name from 100 ships that served at the Battle of Jutland 100 years ago.

The team also set up a human fruit machine, challenging visitors to match three randomly-selected fruits, and staged a mini skipping display.

Words of wisdom

CELEBRITY supporters of the Sea Cadets have passed on words of wisdom as part of Remember a Charity Week.

In a campaign designed to help make legacy-giving a social norm, organisers asked for advice for future generations.

Former Royal Marines Cadet Paul O'Grady suggested: "A pet can make your life whole #RAC2016 #SCClegacy"

Actress Sarah Parish said: "Invest in a vegetable garden #RAC2016 #SCClegacy"

TV presenter and comedian Alexander Armstrong said: "Explore, dream, discover #RAC2016 #SCClegacy"

And celebrity gardening expert Alan Titchmarsh's contribution was: "Follow your passion #RAC2016 #SCClegacy"

Vanessa Boyle, Sea Cadets Legacy Manager, said: "We are thrilled to be part of Remember a Charity week. Legacies are a vital source of funding for Sea Cadets."

PT branch marks 60 years



● Members of the latest national PT course pose for a picture featuring the style of yesteryear (left) and today (right)

AUGUST saw the Sea Cadet Physical Training Branch celebrate 60 years of training and supporting cadets and volunteers through various activities.

The branch aims to recognise this milestone with a special badge that celebrates achievements of past and present, and the future vision to continue to promote the importance of healthy lifestyle for everybody.

The branch runs two national week-long courses a year, at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth, and numerous regional weekend courses to cater for the needs of the six areas and serve as stepping stones towards the national courses.

Participants range in age from around 13 to adults, who learn how to deliver PT, healthy

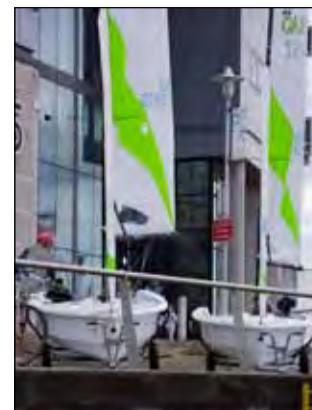
lifestyle and sports events back at their units.

Healthy lifestyle and recreational activities are seen as a vital element of the Sea Cadet Corps programme and experience.

Courses not only look at specific sports and activities, but also how to prepare the body for physical activity and how to recover, conduct circuits and the like.

Participants also go on to undertake tasks at area and national sporting events.

Being based at Temeraire, the home of Royal Navy sport and physical training, the national courses are able to draw on the expertise of regular RN personnel in terms of current thinking on PT and sports.



Belfast dinghies named

ABERCORN Basin in the port of Belfast was the setting for a naming ceremony involving Northern Ireland Sea Cadets' new RS Quest sailing dinghies (above).

The event took place in Belfast Marina with the Sea Cadet flagship TS Royalist as a backdrop – the first visit to the city since her launch last year.

The two dinghies were bought using funds raised from the general public at the Belfast Tall Ships Race and Belfast Tattoo in 2015, and are now going to leave a legacy by helping to train young people in sailing who will gain time on the water, experience and qualifications.

The Two Quests were named 'City of Belfast 2015' and the 'Belfast Tattoo 2015'.

Roy Taylor, TS Royalist's Sailing Master and Relief CO, said: "It has been a pleasure to visit the Port of Belfast again and even better that this is first time for the new TS Royalist."

"The vessel takes voyages on a weekly basis from March to October, and is open to all 14,000 Sea Cadets to gain sailing experience, but our emphasis is also on teamwork, communication, navigation – and fun."

Neal Somerville, Sea Cadets Development worker, said: "This has been a great opportunity to have TS Royalist in Belfast, to use this as an opportunity to name the two RS Quests and to leave a legacy behind the events – and to have these boats for many years to come is great."

Plaque presentations were made to Belfast City Council, the Belfast Tattoo, Belfast Harbour and Bangor Marina, and a certificate of appreciation was presented to the Belfast City Council Events Team.

Contract signed for first of two yachts

THE SEA Cadet Corps is aiming to raise £800,000 for two new yachts – and already has one of them in its sights as the first contract has been signed.

Local cadets from Falmouth & Penryn unit were on hand

to cheer on Sea Cadets CEO Martin Coles, who joined Rustler Yachts Ltd director Adrian Jones at Falmouth Haven to sign the contract for a Rustler 42 yacht.

The new yachts will replace the charity's current Tradewind 35 yachts after 16 years of service, during which time they

have taken some 4,600 young people on sea voyages.

Sea Cadets spent a year raising the £400,000 needed to replace one of two yachts, thanks to generous support from the City of London's Lord Mayor Appeal.

Sea Cadets CEO, Martin Coles, said: "Upgrading our

yachts is vital – without modern equipment we limit our efforts to inspire, to boost young people's confidence through access to skills and experiences that can help define them and their futures.

"These Rustler 42 yachts mean we can take more young people to sea, helping more to a great head start in life with a range of skills as well as an unforgettable, life changing experience."

"Across the UK, Sea Cadets help young people to find friendship, confidence and a new sense of direction."

"The new skills they learn with us, on water and on land, help them to feel that they really matter and part of the team."

"Our aim is to help more young people to see the future that they want – and make that future happen."

The new yachts are bigger, meaning the charity can help more cadets get to sea to experience an offshore voyage.

Adrian Jones of Rustler Yachts said: "It has been a privilege to have worked on this project."

"Rustler Yachts are delighted to have been chosen to build two very special new yachts for the Sea Cadets."



Royal seal of approval for boats

AFTER purchasing their second Trinity 500 rowing boat, the cadets at Newark unit decided they should be named.

After much thought they decided to call the boats (pictured above) Prince George and Princess Charlotte – which meant they would have to obtain permission from the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

A letter of approval from Kensington Palace duly arrived which said "their Royal Highnesses are deeply touched by the kind gesture and happy for you to proceed."

"The Duke and Duchess would have me send their best wishes to all at Newark Sea Cadets."

The letter was signed by the Assistant Private Secretary to the Duke of Cambridge

Baron presents Conwy with burgee



● Conwy County Sea Cadets with Lord Mostyn

SEA Cadets of Conwy County unit are award winners yet again.

Following a recent inspection TS Aberconwy have been awarded a burgee for the third consecutive year, recognising their high levels of efficiency and training standards.

The burgee recognises that the unit is in the top 25 per cent of units across the Corps.

The burgee was presented by Lord Mostyn to unit commander Sub Lt (SCC) Jon Crowther RNR at a special awards evening.

After participating in a special Colours ceremony and watching drills and presentations, Lord Mostyn congratulated cadets, officers, staff and volunteers for their hard work.

Lord Mostyn was also presented with a memento of his visit, together with pictures of the opening of the unit in 1990 by his grandfather, the 5th Baron Mostyn.

The VIP guest said that the Mostyn Estate has been associated with the Sea Cadets for many years, and he looked forward to further visits.

The Mayor of Conwy Cllr Pat Hart also presented Queen's 90th Birthday Commemorative Medals to cadets James, Cameron and Josh – the trio, along with Rebecca and Elizabeth, who could not be present, were selected by unit staff for their commitment to the values of the Corps.

Busy week on Clyde for Bridlington cadets

CADETS from Bridlington unit enjoyed an action-packed week at Clyde Naval Base, courtesy of SMQ(N) and the affiliation between the two.

Cadets visited a Serco tug, the MOD Police Dog section, Defence Fire and Rescue, the dry ski slope, dog-watch sports and – the icing on the cake – a tour of HMS Astute, one of the Royal Navy's new class of hunter-killer submarines.

Bridlington staff and cadets are grateful to Hull unit for the loan of a minibus – and opened the visit to their cadets as well.

The visitors were accommodated at the Army Cadet Force weekend training centre at Arrochar, thanks to Highland Reserve Forces & Cadets Association (RFCA).

Organisers made sure evenings were not wasted – the cadets communicated with other cadet forces and ham radio enthusiasts around the UK and Europe using HF radio.

A/Lt (SCC) Martin Barmby RNR said: "We as a unit are extremely lucky to be allowed to visit the base and see the real Navy in operation every year for the past 11 years, and we look forward to hosting SMQ(N) when they visit us for Remembrance weekend."

"This will be the tenth time that our town has had a squad of serving RN to lead our parade."

"The highlight of this year's Remembrance weekend will be a mess dinner the night before, where we will host SMQ(N) as our guests."



Ian bags top qualification

THIRTEEN-year-old Ian (pictured above), a member of Long Eaton unit, has achieved the challenging Advanced Seamanship qualification, which only 17 have accomplished this year out of 14,000 Sea Cadets.

Ian's huge achievement is part of a national partnership with Carnival and Sea Cadets.

Carnival Corporation & plc, parent company of P&O Cruises and Cunard, is supporting the qualification, which will enable cadets aged between ten and 18 to broaden their career options in the maritime industry.

The qualification tests cadets on knowledge of rope work, rigging, splicing and whipping, canvas work and decorative rope work. Practical tests include working in a team to rig equipment such as sheer legs, gysns and derricks.

The inspiration for Ian to join Corps came from his great-grandfather, who served in the destroyer HMS Firedrake, sunk by U-boat's torpedo in World War 2.

Ian said: "Since joining I have gained many qualifications including in rowing, sailing, kayaking, power boating and piping.

"I represented my unit at the National Trafalgar Day Parade in London and achieved Cadet of the Year 2015, having joined in October 2014."

Torch handover

THE most senior officer in the Services paid a surprise visit to Predannack Airfield on the Lizard Peninsula.

Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshall Sir Stuart Peach was welcomed by the CO of Culdrose, Capt Dan Stemberge, as the Air Chief Marshall Peach received the RAF Cadets' 75th Anniversary Torch relay.

The torch, which passed through the hands of all 35 air cadet Wings across the country, was handed over by Plymouth and Cornwall Wing after it spent the night at RAF St Mawgan.

TS Royalist delivers historical dimension

SEA Cadet flagship TS Royalist helped Royal Mail celebrate 500 years of service with a voyage from Greenock to Liverpool.

The tall ship left Scotland on August 14, carrying mail bound for Merseyside to reflect the golden age of the packet sailing ship – one of the most significant links in the postal system.

The ship, which was partly crewed by Sea Cadets, arrived at Canning Half-Tide Dock four days later (pictured right).

Relief CO Roy Taylor and Sea Cadets were met by Liverpool's longest-serving and newest posties – Alex Morris, who has just turned 60, and who started work for Royal Mail delivering telegrams in 1972, and 19-year-old Leah Williams, who had been a postie for a matter of weeks.

Royalist resembles the historic packet ships which operated in the 17th and 18th Centuries.

She wore a specially-commissioned sail showing Royal Mail's 500th anniversary logo.

Packet ships ran from Tudor times until 1823, supporting the colonies as well as serving ports around Great Britain and Ireland.

They could cross the wide oceans as well as operate in estuaries and major rivers.

As well as mail 'packets' they also regularly carried bullion, private goods and passengers.

In times of conflict, and in areas where pirates operated, packets were obvious targets.

Alongside Royalist on the dock was a replica of the London to Holyhead coach circa 1785, another iconic form of transport which expanded the network from the late 18th Century onwards.

The London to Holyhead journey at that time could be made in little over 24 hours.

Royal Mail Operations Director Geoff Braden said, "Advancements in global travel make it very easy to forget the romance – and the very real danger – of delivering mail hundreds of years ago.

"This voyage honours the dedication of all the individuals – from mail coach drivers, to pilots, to sailors – who have delivered letters and parcels over the centuries.

"We are indebted to TS Royalist for their co-operation and thank the cadets on board for transporting the mail."

Martin Coles, CEO Sea Cadets, said: "We're delighted to be helping Royal Mail.

"The Sea Cadet movement is all about giving young people life-changing experiences and building opportunities for young people to learn new skills and forge friendships.

"This is another great chance for cadets to be part of something special and put it on their CV."



Building reserves

TWO adult volunteers were due to undertake a four-day 75-mile walk as *Navy News* went to press to raise desperately-needed funds for Long Eaton unit.

The land-locked unit – it is part of East Midlands district – has seen its reserves drop in recent times.

Now the volunteers, both of whom served as cadets at the unit, are spearheading a concerted effort to "get back in the black" by building up cash reserves.

PO (SCC) Jessica Bradshaw, 21, a member of the unit since the age of ten, and 18-year-old adult instructor Roxie Phillips, who joined at 11, planned to visit a war memorial at 14 different locations along the way.

At each they were due to pay their respects to the Service personnel commemorated, accompanied by the RBL.

It is hoped the walk will raise £1,500 – it is already nearly a third of the way to that target – and the pair will be welcomed back to Long Eaton at a garden party.

Further details of their walk, and a chance to donate, can be found on Roxie's JustGiving page – see www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/roxanne-phillips

Place at Welbeck

A CADET from St Austell unit has won a place at Welbeck Defence 6th Form College in Loughborough.

LC Rowan took up his place after gaining the necessary GCSE results.

Lt (SCC) Benjamin Nash RNR, CO of St Austell, said: "LC Rowan has worked exceptionally hard throughout the last 12 months in his studies and these excellent results do him credit.

"He has been a model cadet and we're very sorry to lose him, but also very proud of what he has achieved.

"He leaves for Welbeck with a great future ahead."

Rowan thanked staff at St Austell and said their encouragement got him to where he is.

Welbeck is a full boarding co-educational college, funded by the Ministry of Defence.

It offers an A level education to young people who wish to follow a career as a technical or engineering officer within the Armed Forces or as a civilian with the MOD.

College CCF provide guard

MEMBERS of the Royal Navy section of Victoria College Combined Cadet Force (CCF) provided the Ceremonial Guard for the Sunset ceremonies at the Jersey Boat Show.

Events began on the Friday evening with the RN Section forming a Halberdier Guard for the Beat Retreats by the Band of the Royal Marines, which was repeated on Saturday afternoon (pictured left).

On Sunday morning a combined squad of cadets from all three sections took part in the annual Lieutenant Governor's Parade, the final event in the Governor's Cup.

After the inspection and Sea Sunday Service the parade reformed for the presentation of trophies – the CCF came second in the Governor's Cup.

This year sees the 40th year of the RN Section at the college – see www.victoriacollege.je/combined-cadet-force



Gold stars on flying course Sea Scout stalwarts honoured

THE Sea Cadet aviation calendar closed at the end of July with the Advanced Flying Training course and the chance to gain the SCC's coveted gold wings.

For the first time Lee-on-the-Solent was the venue this year, with facilities and support provided by Portsmouth Naval Gliding Club.

The week involved plenty of revision, particularly on core subjects – principles of flight, meteorology, engineering, radio telephony and navigation.

Using the Grob 109 motor glider the cadets were introduced to the aircraft and during the week gained confidence in using the aircraft's radio to talk to the ground service and the air traffic controllers at Southampton whilst navigating.

The team were also treated to an unusual visit as three Spitfires, used for the forthcoming film *Dunkirk*, arrived at the airfield with members of the aerial special effects team.

The film crews and pilots found the original WW2 hangars and location ideal and decided to set up their operating base there.

This also allowed Sea Cadet Aviation's CO, Lt (SCC) Marc



Pether RNR, to fulfil a lifelong dream as he was allowed to climb into a cockpit and see what it must have been like for a wartime pilot flying into combat (above).

Pilots Lt (SCC) John Reeve RNR and Senior Pilot CPO (SCC) Carl Mason flew 16 hours during the week, with few hours lost to weather.

Top student was Cpl Smith from Worthing, and LC Jablonski and AC Maloney, who were both invited back to act as cadet instructors on the Bronze Wing ground school

course next year.

All were presented with flight holdalls donated by Pooley's Flight Equipment.

Lt Pether said: "2016 has been the best year so far for the Sea Cadet Aviation programme.

"A highlight was having a member of the team join the Royal Navy as an aircrew officer, and this shows the superb opportunities we offer and allows our cadets to broaden their horizons and open up doors for exciting careers."

THE 1st Oulton Broad Sea Scouts have launched two new Heyland 15ft pulling boats, named in honour of the group's former long-serving leaders.

The vessels were named after Group Scout Leaders David Harry and Syd Fowle at a ceremony attended by members of the respective families including Cdr Peter Harry RN (Rtd), the son of David Harry (pictured right).

Group chairman Malcolm Howard reflected on "the importance of honouring those who had given such tremendous service, whilst demonstrating the Group's ongoing commitment to the young Scouts of the future."

The group is one of 103 recognised by the Royal Navy, and Malcolm added that "the Royal Navy requires us to provide education in the principles of Seamanship, we can now do this in fit for purpose vessels."



● Cdr Peter Harry meets Oulton Broad Sea Scouts using a boat named after his father

Dervish prompts visits

EIGHT veterans of the wartime Arctic Convoys returned to northern Russia to mark the 75th anniversary of the first operation.

On August 31 1941 Operation Dervish arrived in Arkhangelsk unscathed after a voyage of almost three weeks, originating in Liverpool and sailing via Iceland.

Some 77 more convoys were sailed to and from North Russia over the next four years following Winston Churchill's crucial political decision to help the Soviet Union prior to the opening of a second front.

Vast quantities of tanks, fighter planes, fuel, ammunition, raw materials, and food were delivered helping, amongst other things, to sustain Leningrad through its 900-day siege.

The anniversary was celebrated in Arkhangelsk and St Petersburg – as Leningrad is now known.

There was a general recognition that this anniversary would probably be the last significant one to be attended by the dwindling band of veterans, now all in their 90s.

The HMS Belfast Association took the lead in responding to invitations from Russia – the cruiser escorted several convoys.

A group of 26 veterans, relatives and supporters gathered in Arkhangelsk on August 28, led by Capt Mike Matthews RN(Rtd), President of the association. Also in the city for part of the proceedings were the Princess Royal and her husband, Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence, and the Royal Marines Band from HMS Collingwood.

Four days were spent in Arkhangelsk, with wreath-laying ceremonies both in the British Military Cemetery and the city's Peace Square when the Princess Royal and her husband met the veterans and their supporters.

In St Petersburg the visitors attended the unveiling of a restored Sherman tank which had been lifted from the wreck of the SS Thomas Donaldson, sunk in 1945 in the Barents Sea.

There were more ceremonies and speeches at the spectacular monument to the memory of the Participants of the Arctic Convoys in front of the Maritime College, and the visit ended with a trip to Kronstadt Island to see St Nicholas Cathedral.

Mike Matthews said: "High amongst my abiding memories must be the vigour of our veterans."

"They all rose to the occasion as the adrenaline kicked in and this rubbed off on the rest of us."

"Next comes the interaction we had with our young helpers both in Arkhangelsk and St Petersburg. They just could not do enough for us."

"And finally a measure of the prominence given to the British and Russian veterans must be the privilege of jointly laying the first wreath in Peace Square ahead of the Princess Royal. A singular honour."

Falklands veteran is back in Bristol

A FALKLANDS veteran has returned to his ship for the first time in almost 34 years – and quickly found himself in familiar surroundings.

John Giles joined HMS Bristol in early 1980, straight from WEM(O) training at HMS Collingwood – like most of his colleagues, it was the furthest and longest he had been away from home.

In pre-social media days, keeping in touch with family and friends was a matter of writing a letter or queuing for a public telephone.

John's new home on the Type 82 destroyer was 4J Stbd and he was introduced to his new colleagues "who soon became friends, and who in the subsequent two-and-a-half years became my surrogate family."

His first workplace was in internal communications, putting him in contact with most of the ship's company.

"The experiences over the following two

and a half years were life forming for me.

"Taking a dip in the warship swimming pool, formed in the void left where the mortars used to be.

"Jumping off the side when hands to bathe was announced somewhere off North Africa – and only realising later that the marines with rifles on the upper deck were on the look out for sharks, not potential deserters."

There was even a missed coach bound for the ship in Wilhelmshaven after a night out in Hamburg, though John and a shipmate quickly reported in to HMS Bulwark, in Hamburg at the time, and avoided being carpeted on their return to Bristol.

"All my of my memories are punctuated by going back to the Bristol once time was called. A home from home – with family to boot," he said.

Almost two years after joining Bristol the ship sailed for the South Atlantic.

"I had done the rounds of a few of the WE departments, finding myself back in internal comms for our time in the Falklands," said John.

"My action station was alone in the amplifier compartment. My tools consisted of rolls of wire and field telephones – they were to be run between strategic departments if conventional comms were no longer available.

"On the occasions when we were at action stations and we began the anti-missile manoeuvres, they became quite thought-provoking moments – hearing the Atlantic Ocean across the passageway, with my action station at sea level, where Exocets entered..."

On one occasion, when they were stood down out of the Exclusion Zone, life onboard, for half a day, was transformed.

"Murderball seemed to be a good idea – at least it was until I was upended and dropped on my shoulders."

John was close to being transferred to hospital ship Uganda, but the decision was made to strap him up and let him sit on an incident board for 12 hours a day to recuperate.

He celebrated his 21st birthday on the way back North.



● John at his former workplace in HMS Bristol

"I went on board as a teenager, not long out of school, and as I stepped off in Portsmouth in September 1982, I was ready to take on a big wide world."

This summer, thanks to his wife Jackie and WO1s Pete Morewood and Sid Hannant, John went back on board for a tour – Bristol is now a harbour training ship permanently berthed at Whale Island.

"Walking round was quite surreal," he said. "Of course she has been transformed to fulfil her new duties, so certain parts are almost unrecognisable."

"However, entering certain compartments, walking down certain ladders, I could see people and hear voices that invoked memories as if it was yesterday."

"Those were the people who played a pivotal role in my life aboard a ship that will always have a special place in my memories."



● John gets his head down in his old pit on board HMS Bristol



● Surgeon Capt Haydon's bicorn hat is tried for size by his great-granddaughter Chloe

Relative success

"OH, that box probably belonged to my great-grandfather!" exclaimed Alice Daly, who had been researching her family history on the Internet when her attention was caught by the 'Mystery Box' on the website of Marshland Maritime Museum of Clenchwarton, near Kings Lynn.

Mike Smith, owner of the museum, had acquired the hat box and contents over 15 years ago from a dealer.

The inside of the box is shaped for a bicorn hat, as worn by officers in No 1 dress uniform from the late Victorian Navy up to September 1939. The box also has places for two gold shoulder epaulettes.

Alice and her family recently visited the museum and were reunited with great-grandfather's headgear – the officer was Surg Capt Maurice Willoughby Haydon, who served in the Royal Navy from 1904 to 1927.

He was present at the Battle of Jutland as Staff Surgeon in light cruiser HMS Galatea, flagship of the 1st Light Cruiser Squadron.

Admission to the museum is free, though a donation towards upkeep is appreciated.

Just phone ahead and Mike and his wife Jo will put the kettle on.

www.marshlandmaritimemuseum.com

Counselling offer Brothers reconnected by Sailors' Society

AGED Veterans have launched a counselling service in which RNA Welfare Officers in particular will be interested.

The service was launched in June this year, based on the Grosvenor Trust counselling project, a free service supporting members of Blind Veterans UK which has been operating since 2012.

The project features a consortium of military welfare and veterans support charities behind lead group Blind Veterans UK, including the RNA, BLESMA The Limbless Veterans and the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

Its mission is to provide free and confidential counselling to UK veterans born before January 1 1950.

The service can provide counselling to help veterans cope with a variety of issues including depression, anxiety, loneliness, bereavement or anything that is

causing a sense of isolation, loss or social exclusion.

Counselling is also offered to veterans' carers and family members who are affected by the veteran's circumstances.

Most requests to provide counselling for a veteran will be made online by a welfare officer working for a veterans charity, although a veteran, their relative or carer can self-refer for counselling.

The quickest way for a welfare officer to make a counselling referral is to complete the online application form – see www.agedveteranscounselling.org.uk

Alternatively you can phone Wellbeing Solutions Management, the provider of this service, giving details or requesting an application form by post – call 020 7708 5000 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am–5pm).

Further details are available in the September *Semaphore Circular*.

TWO former seafaring brothers who had lost touch have been reconnected, thanks to international maritime charity the Sailors' Society.

Robert Griffin had become increasingly worried about his brother Norman, who lives in New Zealand, after being unable to reach him for more than two years.

But Robert's fears were allayed when he finally got to speak to Norman last month.

"We were thrilled and so was he," said Robert. "He's not a very well man sadly, but he was cheerful enough talking to me."

Robert, 81, who spent nine years in the Royal Navy, last spoke to his brother in 2014.

He had all but given up hope of speaking to Norman again

until the Sailors' Society came to the rescue in response to a call for help from Robert's son Steve.

Robert said: "We spoke about the family and it was brilliant to talk to him after all this time."

"He wished my wife and I a happy 60th anniversary."

"We spoke for more than 20 minutes and weren't worried about the time as we were just pleased to catch up."

"He told me that one of his friends had recently passed away and our call cheered him up a bit."

Norman, who has just turned 83, was in the Merchant Navy and moved to New Zealand in the 1950s.

He had been living at the Seafarers' Union in Auckland until a fire destroyed the building in 2007. Since then, the brothers have struggled to maintain contact.

Steve, 52, was spurred on to track his uncle down by his parents' anniversary.

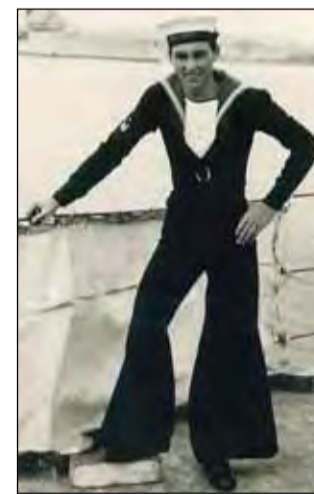
Knowing that his uncle was in the Merchant Navy, Steve searched online for organisations that help seafarers and found Sailors' Society.

He sent them a Facebook message, and within 24 hours the charity, which has a sister society in New Zealand, had tracked Norman down.

Social media is just one of the varied methods the brothers have used to get in contact.

Robert spent 18 months with the Navy in the Mediterranean between 1953-55.

At the same time, Norman was



● Robert Griffin on combined ops HQ ship HMS Meon

travelling from the UK to New Zealand on a merchant vessel.

Robert said: "I was on HMS Meon and we docked at the Grand Harbour in Malta."

"There was a light flash across the way and a signal officer came to tell me that someone wanted to speak to me personally."

"I went up to the bridge and flashed the light back – it was my brother Norman half a mile away on a merchant ship."

"We had a good chat on the signal lamp. We almost got reprimanded for sending personal messages but my skipper took it well."

www.sailors-society.org



Merchant mariners honoured

THE UK's dependence on merchant mariners was commemorated across the country last month.

One of the most visible signs of Merchant Navy Day was the flying of the Red Ensign at an estimated 365 locations.

The charity Seafarers UK asked local councils in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to hoist the Red Ensign – the British Merchant Navy's official flag – on civic centre flagpoles and in public places.

And from the heart of the country in Birmingham to Tower Bridge, standing astride the former shipping mecca of the Pool of London, the Red Duster was raised to mark the efforts and sacrifice of civilian sailors in peace and war.

Merchant Navy Day has been commemorated in the UK since 2000, and September 3 was chosen as it was the date in 1939 that Britain entered World War 2.

Merchant vessel SS Athenia was torpedoed just hours after hostilities were declared, with the loss of 128 passengers and crew.

Now, as then, the UK relies on maritime trade – 95 per cent of imports go through British sea ports, including half of all food.

Representatives of Royal Naval veterans' associations, including the RNA, and a detachment of Royal Naval Reservists from nearby HMS President, attended the annual commemorative service at the Merchant Navy Memorial in Trinity Square Gardens, London.

The memorial bears the names of almost 36,000 men and women of the Merchant Marine and fishing fleets from the two world wars who gave their lives for their country, and whose bodies were lost at sea.



● Members of the Valiant Association enjoy the firework finale to their reunion at Devonport Naval Base

Valiant celebration

MORE than 300 former submariners from HMS Valiant and their partners celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first commissioning of the nuclear submarine.

The grand reunion, organised at Devonport Naval Base by the Valiant Association, started with a service of celebration in

the chapel of HMS Drake before a lunch in the Senior Rates' Mess.

The groups then toured HMS Courageous, lying opposite the hull of Valiant in the base.

There followed reminiscences to the assembled company by means of a roving microphone, ably compered by Rear Admiral Jeremy Larken.

After supper an impressive display of fireworks signalled the end to the proceedings, although those with sufficient stamina continued late into the night at the Holiday Inn.

Amongst the guests was Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce – who had joined the submarine as the most junior officer in 1967 – and Vice Admiral Simon Lister, the patron of the reunion and former Engineer Officer of Valiant.

Indeed, so many officers from Valiant reached Flag Rank that she has been referred to as 'the Admiral Factory.'

In the early years of her 26-year life, Valiant had a reputation for surmounting any problems without failing to meet her commitments, thanks to the unfailing efforts of her engineering department.

She even acquired the affectionate title – the Black Pig. Much of the equipment and

systems in Valiant were British prototypes, with a particular emphasis on noise reduction.

Valiant's first commitment, even before she left builders Vickers in Barrow, was to conduct extensive noise and vibration trials moored between buoys and at sea.

By the time she was commissioned Valiant was arguably the quietest submarine in the world, bringing the double advantage of reducing the probability of detection and improving Valiant's ability to detect other submarines.

This vital feature was a staff requirement for Britain's nuclear deterrent to be deployed in the four Resolution-class ballistic-missile submarines that followed.

Silence was vital to the concept of the submarine-borne nuclear ballistic missile deterrent, and this was the reason that exceptional effort was put into the noise performance of Valiant, whose propulsion and ships control systems were to be adapted for Resolution class.

Another vital requirement for the deterrent was that the submarine should be capable of prolonged unsupported periods at sea.

For this reason, the primary aim of Valiant's deployment to

Singapore in early 1967 was to test this capability.

She completed the dived return passage to the UK at full power in the record time of 27 days.

During her 28 years in service, Valiant completed many successful missions so all the ships companies represented at the 50th anniversary reunion were able to exchange exciting experiences from their days on board.

Three former Commanding Officers – Dan Conley, Christopher Wreford-Brown and Simon Bebbington – recounted their adventures from the midlife and end of the submarine's life.

Vice Admiral Lister closed the more formal proceedings by thanking the President of the Senior Rates' Mess for the excellent hospitality all had enjoyed.

He also thanked the chaplain for the commemorative service, duty staff in Drake and the naval base for their cooperation, and the guardians of Courageous for allowing and guiding the tours.

Finally, Vice Admiral Lister paid tribute to the Valiant Association, whose members had conceived, planned, advertised, organised, managed and underwritten this truly grand reunion.

Kenya trainers gather

VETERANS and friends of the Royal Naval Training Team Kenya gathered in Plympton St Maurice for their annual reunion, to rehash their service in Mombasa during the 1960s and early 70s and to remember those who have moved to a calmer anchorage.

A loyal toast was made to the Queen and a warm welcome extended to younger guests who were attending for the first time – two of whom were born in Mombasa all those years ago.

The usual guest of honour, Hilary Hall, was unable to attend this time, and her kind words and ready smile were missed.

Arthur Coxon reminded all that this year was the 50th anniversary of the Kenya Navy's three patrol craft – KNS Simba (Lion), KNS Chui (Cheetah) and KNS Ndovu (Elephant) – sailing from Portsmouth to make the epic journey through the Suez Canal to East Africa.

To mark the occasion Arthur gave attendees a not-too-brief overview of those early days.

The hosts at St Elizabeth's House were thanked for allowing the visitors the use of their spectacular function room.

Trafalgar dinners

HMS NELSON in Portsmouth and the Victory Services Club in London are both hosting Trafalgar dinners this month.

The London event, to be held in the newly-refurbished Trafalgar Room at the club, close to Marble Arch, is to be held on Friday October 21 and costs £45 per person.

For details contact the VSC events team on 0207 616 8305 or email events@vsc.co.uk

The Portsmouth dinner, in Nelson Wardroom, is on Saturday October 22 and is organised by the 1805 Club, which was founded in 1990 to preserve the monuments of the Georgian sailing navy and to inform and educate members and the public about this period.

This dinner costs £87.50 per person. For more details of the club see www.1805club.org

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery aircraft in our August edition (right) was the Hunting Percival Sea Prince, and the former RAF station was Long Marston.

The correct answers were provided by G Scott of Merseyside, who wins £50.

This month's mystery ship (above) underwent major changes throughout her life.

Work started on her at John Brown's yard in 1941 as a light cruiser, but she was not commissioned, in a different guise, until March 1959.

She was later converted to a helicopter and command cruiser, and was finally scrapped in the mid-1980s.

1) What was her name, and 2) what was the name she was given while first in build on Clydebank?

We have removed the pennant number from the image.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News,



Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

The closing date for entries is November 11.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our December edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 260

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

Tayside anniversary

VETERANS First Point (VIP) Tayside marked its first anniversary by holding a celebratory event for veterans and partner agencies from across Tayside in Dundee last month.

The organisation is a partnership between NHS Tayside, Veterans First Point (Scotland) and Tayforth Veterans Project, a veterans' charity located in Dundee which is winding down after four years.

VIP Tayside host a daily drop-in at City Quay each weekday between 9.30am and 1pm.

The team provide a range of information on topics including health and wellbeing and social networking as well as signposting to organisations and charities that can provide additional support.

http://veteransfirstpoint.org.uk/drop-center/tayside

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AMAZING FREE SHIPS OF THE FLEET POSTER

Get to know your Lynx with manual transmission

AH, the trusty Lynx. It's a lovely looking helicopter, particularly in its Black Cats livery as a stunt aircraft. Slender. Sleek. Nimble. It looks the business. Tooled up with weaponry it looks the business too, writes *Richard Hargreaves*. Yes, it is a cracking bit of kit – indeed, the fact that Wildcat is modelled heavily on the Lynx is proof that the designers in the pre-computer age largely got things bang on. But I must confess I've never particularly enjoyed flying in them. Due to the helicopter's agility pilots have a habit of throwing them around (the wing over being their favourite, but not my stomach's). And a dozen or so years ago, when I was beginning my career in naval journalism, Lynx did suffer from several accidents/crashes – most of them fatal, though the causes were many and varied (not least bad luck...).

Plus there's the passenger experience. The inflatable seat (aka 'bouncy castle') in the rear cabin is awkward to sit on

if you're the sole traveller. Now put on your goon bag and squeeze in with three other passengers. Still, it's better than the dead man's seat right at the very back... Of course, Lynx wasn't built for my comfort. It was built to support global RN/Marine Nationale operations (and has proved remarkably successful with other countries too). You can't imagine a destroyer or frigate deploying without one on the back (admittedly the Merlin has increasingly taken its place on Type 23s).

Otherwise, Lynx has become an iconic naval helicopter. Which is not bad for a machine designed all the way back in the early 60s as a battlefield reconnaissance helicopter for the Army. Having dis-assembled the Sea King Mk5, then put it back together, aviation engineer and enthusiast Lee Howard does the same for the Lynx in Haynes' latest **Owners' Workshop Manual: Westland Lynx 1976 to present** (£25,

ISBN 978-0-85733-8143). Despite the title, the Lynx story begins a decade earlier when the RN began to show an interest in Westland's WG-13 being touted around the Army. Then the French got interested too. In a deal with our allies across the Channel, three helicopters would eventually be built for the two nations' armed forces: the Puma, Gazelle and Lynx (Westland preferred a name beginning with 'w' as with Wasp, Whirlwind and Wessex... but it's not a letter commonly used by the French...).

The first naval variant of the Lynx – rather more complicated than the Army model, hence more than £50,000 dearer at £275,000 (about £9m today) – flew in the spring of 1972 and joined the FAA four years later.

That was the HAS – Helicopter Anti-Submarine – Mk2. Followed by the Mk3. The Mk3 ICE (for service with HMS Endurance in the Antarctic). The Mk3

GM (Gulf Mod – for operations in the Middle East). And finally, the last model in service, the Helicopter Maritime Attack Mk8 – easily distinguishable from its predecessors thanks to its 'cluttered' nose with sensors and cameras.

The Mk8 is the Lynx apotheosis... but it's still essentially a helicopter of the late 60s and early 70s. The cockpit is very much 'anadig' (or is it digilogue?), with the pilot largely relying on old school dials and switches, and the observer on a mix of visual displays and knobs (the successor, Wildcat, is all digital by contrast).

Pretty much every major working part of the Lynx is photographed and explained in detail – just in case you need, for example, to fiddle around with the female disconnect coupling at the end of No.4 driveshaft (and you might, for one Mk3, sans engines, was recently on sale on eBay for the bargain price of £33k).

The author also runs through start-up processes, the daily routine for air and ground crew, integration of a ship's flight

aboard a Type 23 and the fate of the aircraft when the last Mk8s retire next March (five former FAA Lynx survive either as gate guardians or museum pieces).

As with Lee's previous tome, to complete the Lynx story you need some Lynx stories – first-hand accounts from counter-piracy, drugs-busting and life-saving missions.

And here is the only slightly disappointing part of an otherwise excellent book. Not the accounts themselves – they're lively and perfectly depict what has made the Lynx such a special helicopter.

But a few more would have been nice covering a wider spread of the helicopter's long service with the Fleet Air Arm; they're all drawn from the last half-dozen years of its career.

Accounts from the Falklands and especially the first Gulf War, when its Sea Skua missiles are credited with knocking out a sizeable proportion of Saddam Hussein's navy would have been welcome additions.



The sailors' view of Nelson's wars

IN THE remarkable *Letters of Seamen in the Wars with France*, Helen Watts, project archivist at the Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York, and Anne Hawkins, formerly Secretary of the Ships Names and Badges Committee, have collected 255 letters written from and to seamen and other non-commissioned personnel of the Royal Navy during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars of 1793 to 1815, writes *Prof Eric Grove*.

The letters are complemented by an extraordinarily deep and well-researched scholarly analysis and apparatus with 74 pages of introductory material that discusses the main historical themes brought out by the correspondence. The book concludes with almost 100 pages of biographical material on the correspondents and others mentioned in the text as well as the ships that appear in the correspondence. The approach could not be more thorough and the editors deserve heartiest congratulations for their enormous efforts.

The editors make several crucial points. They have scoured the archives for the relatively small number of letters that survive. This was not a reflection of illiteracy, an accusation levelled at sailors by previous authors. Over 60 per cent of the lower deck seemed to have been able read and write, like other equivalent tradesmen and artisans in civilian life, so much so that in 1795 a privileged postal rate was introduced for the correspondence of sailors. Communicating with home was important to them, part of an unappreciated care for those left at home. Seamen were not feckless; they remitted money to wives and families and tried to keep in touch as much as possible with developments at home. The preoccupations of Nelson's sailors would be recognised by more modern ratings.

A most interesting conclusion drawn from the letters is the wide range of backgrounds of sailors of this time. Several did come from the expected backgrounds – seamen from warships and merchant ships – but others came from the expanding inland working class.

Notable among these was Richard Greenhalgh a weaver from near Bury in Lancashire. He volunteered as a landsman in HMS *Illustrious* at the

THE GROVE REVIEW

beginning of 1793 and moved to other ships reporting to his parents that he felt quite at home given the number of people from Bury and Bolton; perhaps a sign of a recruitment drive in industrialising Lancashire at the outset of the French Revolutionary War. He served in HMS *Caesar* at the Glorious First of June. In his next ship, *Powerful*, he had learned the ropes sufficiently to be rated able seaman. He then served under Cornwallis and Duncan, seeing action under the latter at *Camperdown*. In 1799 he served under Nelson in the Mediterranean in *Bellerophon*. He then moved to smaller ships but was getting increasingly dissatisfied at his long absence from home and deserted in Naples in 1802 from the sloop *Racoon*. He then used his skills to work his passage home in merchantmen. He seems to have safely returned home, married, had a family and may have lived on as a weaver into his seventies in the 1840s. His prolific correspondence provides a particularly useful window into the thoughts and feelings of such a sailor from a non-typical, but far from unique, background.

The letters confirm the modern analysis that life on board the late 18th and early 19th-Century fleet was far from the old-fashioned view of poor conditions and harsh punishments. Some captains, not least *Victory*'s Hardy, were overly harsh, making life on board the ship unattractive to the ship's company. Other officers were, however, popular because of their 'very good usage' that their men would happily follow them from ship to ship, for example *Captain Molloy* from *Ganges* to *Caesar*. Rather sadly, *Molloy* was dismissed the service after damage to his ship prevented him from engaging the enemy sufficiently aggressively to please his superiors on the *Glorious First of June*.

Part two of the book concentrates on the mutinies of 1797, especially that at the *Nore* in May and June. The letters written by the mutineers were intercepted by the authorities and provide all but one of the letters

in this section. As the editors put it: "As a whole the letters show varying levels of support for the mutiny among the ships of the North Sea Squadron and at the *Nore* and the force of feeling among mutineers generally. We also see some of the mutineers' violent attitudes towards those whom they thought were not wholehearted supporters, and the fact that in some cases either whole crews or individuals felt that they were under duress to submit to the wishes of the mutineers." The primary cause of the unrest seems to have been problems with pay (and over-dilution of rum!), plus a certain war weariness, although there is some evidence of more political motives. Literate sailors had access to such literature as Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man*, which, despite the pressure of work on board they did have time to read (and write letters).



Whatever the motivation, loyal sailors were eventually able to regain control, some stimulated perhaps by the strong disapproval reflected in some of the letters from shocked relatives at home. The book's conclusion demonstrates the need for further research into the vexed question of the connection between the 'quota men' conscripted in the mid-1790s and the mutinies as well as how many mutineers took part in the subsequent victory at *Camperdown*. More work needs to be done on how extensive the mutinies actually were; the letters show disturbances at *Plymouth*, in the *Downs*, off *Brest* and at *Cork* as well as at *Spithead* and the *Nore*.

In all, this is a most significant and fascinating book that adds a great deal to our ever-improving knowledge of the period.

Letters of Seamen in the Wars with France 1793-1815 (Boydell Press, ISBN 978 1 843383 8968) is a substantial volume in every respect being 688 pages long including preparatory material. Inevitably, therefore, it is expensive. By modern standards, £95 is, however, a reasonable price for a work that gives a mass of new insights into the human and social dimension of the Royal Navy in its classical period.

Slooping with the enemy: the Yangtze incident in full

THE UK's relations with China in the first half of the 20th Century were bookended by international crises with the Royal Navy at the very heart.

In 1900 it had dispatched warships and landing parties to help relieve Westerners holed up in Beijing as a result of the Boxer Uprising. Half a century later and it was the Navy who were trapped, sloop HMS *Amethyst* cut off at Nanking – China's then capital – more than 150 miles from the open waters of the East China Sea on the country's most famous waterway, the Yangtze.

Veteran of the war against the U-boats, the *Amethyst* was dispatched to Nanking as guard ship for the British Embassy and Communist forces raged nearby.

The Australians and Americans had deemed it too dangerous to send a ship so far up river. But not the Admiralty. On April 20, the men of the *Amethyst* paid for their leaders' nonchalance when she came under heavy fire from Communist forces, eventually running aground some 50 miles short of Nanking.

And there she stayed until the end of July, despite relief efforts, despite secret negotiations with the Communists. In the end, *Amethyst* took matters into her own hands and made a breakout.

Sixty years ago, this was a tale every Briton knew. Newspaper and newsreel coverage of the incident was widespread in 1949. Books followed. And a film.

But today, beyond the dwindling band of survivors and naval/Asiatic historians, the *Amethyst* incident is largely forgotten.

Brian Izzard, who wrote an excellent biography of controversial submariner Anthony Miers, brings it back into focus in **Yangtze Showdown: China and the Ordeal of HMS Amethyst** (*Seaforth*, £25 ISBN 978-1-84832-2240).

With the passage of nearly 70 years, the author has been granted access to official documents and papers denied to previous researchers (including many documents originally due to be under lock and key at Kew until 2030). He also interviewed a dozen *Amethyst* veterans, plus crews of other vessels involved in the incident.

What emerges is, at times, a much richer story than the one offered for the past six decades.

The Foreign Office – which requested the warship's presence in the first place – comes across as particularly supine; it was far more concerned with causing any offence to the Communists than saving *Amethyst*.

Nor do senior naval officers come out

particularly well. They were dismissive of the sloop's acting commander, John Kerans, who replaced Lt Cdr Skinner, killed in the April fighting.

Admiralty observers thought Kerans weak, a poor leader unable to control his men, possibly "fond of the bottle", prone to bouts of depression and resigned to the course of events. Nor was he a huge fan of the ship's famous rat-killing cat, Simon.

But then the observers didn't think much of the crew either. The *Amethyst* had a poor reputation before the incident. With the deprivations of food shortages and amenities on board, that merely grew worse.

They underestimated the man and his crew. When it came to *Amethyst*'s breakout John Kerans intended to go down fighting, the battle ensigns flying – although the escape when it came was far less bloody than the attack on the ship back in April.

Amethyst was already a household name, now her crew were feted when they returned home, interviewed by the international media (though they were sternly reminded not to criticise the Chinese Communists) and treated to a parade through the heart of London and a reception at Buckingham Palace.

The Admiralty wanted a film made of the episode. The Foreign Office said 'no'. But eight years later they relented.

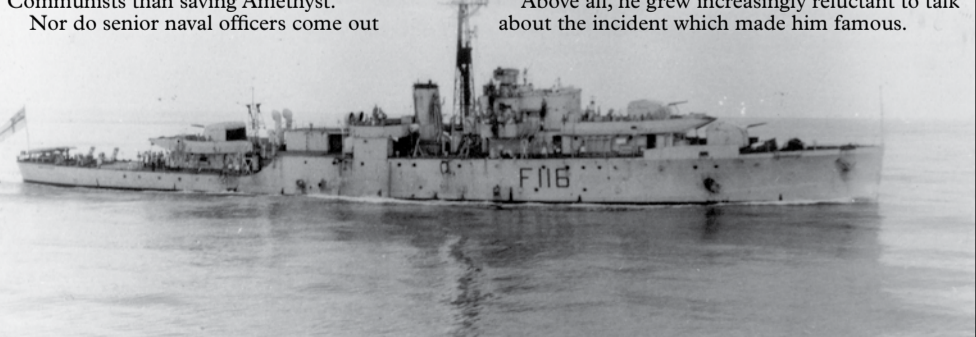
Suffolk's River Orwell doubled as the Yangtze, *Amethyst* played herself and fresh from playing *Dambuster* Guy Gibson, Richard Todd stepped into another hero's shoes to play Kerans.

The *Yangtze Incident* wasn't entirely accurate and glossed over political issues, but it went down reasonably well at the box office (the 15th most popular film of the year). And it marked *Amethyst*'s swansong.

More heavily damaged by the special effects used to recreate her skirmishes with the Chinese than by the actual fighting, she was broken up in Devonport in 1957 – about the same time as audiences were taking their cinema seats to watch her exploits.

As for John Kerans, he never really settled after the incident. Officers who shunned him before the incident thought no better of him – he was branded "the stupidest officer in the Royal Navy". He served a single term as a Tory MP for Hartlepool... despite living in south London, tried (and failed) to be bursar of a boarding school before ending his working career dealing with Servicemen's pension appeals.

Above all, he grew increasingly reluctant to talk about the incident which made him famous.



● HMS *Amethyst* en route for Hong Kong after breaking out of her blockade on the Yangtze – as seen from HMS *Cossack*. Picture: Les Belton, Bournemouth

Looking good for next year

THE Royal Navy Volleyball Association continued to produce strong performances this year following on from their record-breaking 2014-15 season which saw the men win both the Royal Navy and UK Armed Forces Team of the Year titles.

As the reigning Inter-Service champions, and having had a good three-day training camp under a new coach, the men's squad were confident entering the final competitions.

The Crown Services was held at the LEAF Elite Athlete Academy, Bournemouth, followed a month later by the Inter-Service contest.

Day one of the Crowns saw the men start strongly against both the Army and the Police, narrowly losing both matches 2-1, finishing third in the tournament.

The women's draw was equally competitive and, despite missing some senior players, there were high hopes for some strong performances in the tournament.

Finishing the tournament in mid table, they had pushed the Army all the way, narrowly losing 2-1, and secured a victory over the RAF.

The Inter-Service competition was hosted by the RAF at RAF Cranwell, and first up were the Royal Navy v RAF with the Senior Service establishing a one-set lead.

Sets two and three went the way of the RAF with the Navy levelling the match 2-2 in the fourth set.

The fifth and final set was just as closely fought with the RN eventually gaining the two-point advantage needed to take the final set 16-14 in a match that had lasted two-and-a-half hours.

As expected, the Army put up a strong fight and the match followed the same pattern as the first with the Navy finding themselves on the back foot after three sets. Again however, they showed their mettle to tie the



● LMA Michelle Carter prepares to defend a serve

Pictures: Gordon Elias

game and take it into a final set.

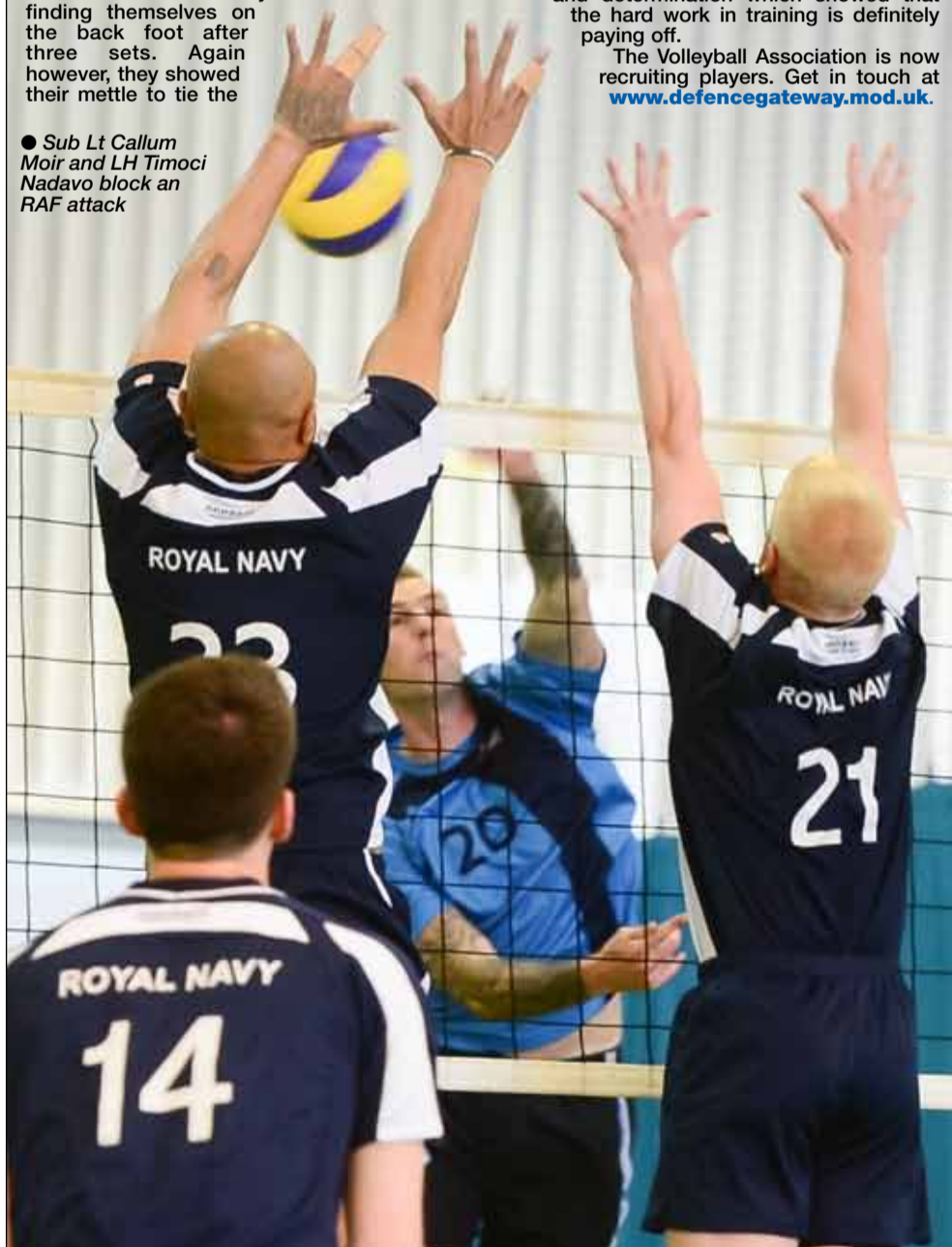
With the title on the line, the final set proved to be one step too far for the team as they lost narrowly to the Army. With all teams winning one match each after the RAF had beaten the Army earlier it led to a count back and the RAF went on to collect the Inter-Service title.

With the Army and RAF women's teams both turning up with full strength squads it was always going to be a tough challenge for the RN.

Despite going down to both the RAF and Army there was an incredible amount of fight and determination which showed that the hard work in training is definitely paying off.

The Volleyball Association is now recruiting players. Get in touch at www.defencegateway.mod.uk.

● Sub Lt Callum Moir and LH Timoci Nadavo block an RAF attack



Lee lands RN race title

ROYAL Marine Cpl Lee Howarth took the Royal Navy Road Race Champion title after his competitors failed to topple him during the final round in Wales.

Sunny conditions greeted competitors at the Anglesey Circuit which gave the Royal Navy riders the chance to showcase their newly-painted fairings in team colours.

Cpl Howarth, who switched to the 500 class this year, was unable to make the final round and, as title leader, it was up to the others to beat him.

Cpl Ben Hollingworth continued his storming performance in the GPI Freshman class taking two second places and a first in class. However, he was unable to close the gap enough and finished fourth in the Navy Championships.

The battle for second and third turned into a barnstormer with Sgt Stevie Elliot and Charlie White pushing each other right to the checkered flag.

In the end Charlie did enough to take second place in his first year of racing.

Next up for the team is to retain the Inter-Service title.



● Lee Howarth was named Royal Navy Road Race champion

Family fun at the racetrack

The second Combat Stress Families and Armed Forces Race day, will be held at Wincanton Racecourse on Sunday October 23 2016.

The generous support of those who attended the first fundraising day in 2014 helped to raise just over £50,000 for Combat Stress, the Veterans' Mental Health Charity.

The charity is now supporting more than 5,900 veterans and their families, a greater number than at any time in its history.

It is half term and families will be able to enjoy an action-packed day of top-class jump racing and

plenty of entertainment.

Come dressed up as your movie superhero, princess or real-life hero. Adults are encouraged to enter the family into our fancy dress competition.

The course enclosure will be transformed into a playground for little superheroes with free adventurous activities in between the racing.

Gates open at 11am and the first race is at 1.40pm. The event ends at 4.45pm.

Advanced tickets are available from £16. Children aged 17 and under go free. For details visit www.wincantonracecourse.co.uk



Royal Navy Rugby Union Referee



Want to "keep your boots on" and stay involved complete the RNRU subsidised RFU Level 2 Refereeing Course:

- Stay Active
- Personal Development
- Expenses Paid
- Subsidised Training
- Subsidised Kit
- Male & Female Referees Needed

Courses run around the UK throughout the year

For further details contact:
Gaz Fairbairn
rugbytime@hotmail.co.uk



www.navyrugbyunion.co.uk/community-rugby/referees

Welcome sight after epic trip

TWO military yachts which have circumnavigated the globe during the last 12 months – testing the endurance and teamwork of hundreds of Servicemen and women – have returned to the UK.

The 72ft adventurous sail training vessels travelled more than 35,000 miles during **Exercise Transglobe** and have been crewed by a total of 392 soldiers, marines, sailors and airmen.

Her Majesty's Sail Training Vessels Adventure and Discoverer set off from the Joint Services Adventurous Sail Training Centre at Gosport on July 25 last year and in 13 legs have visited harbours including Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, Sydney and New York.

The yachts started their last leg from Halifax, Canada, on July 24, and returned to the JSASTC in August.

Becky Walford, a staff skipper at JSASTC, skippered two legs – one on each yacht. She was in charge of Adventure on the last leg and Discoverer on leg nine between Montevideo and St Lucia.

The 44-year-old from Gosport said: "It is fantastic to be back and to have helped make the exercise a success – it is a tremendous achievement. Our Service personnel have been tested to their limits in trying conditions and they have all come through."

She said the most arduous conditions she experienced was the extreme heat on her first leg.

"It was 45 degrees inside the boat and people were getting fractious – that was a huge test for us all."

"But to see some of our novice sailors mature over the exercise and deal with some really tough conditions was really rewarding. To see the crews develop as teams was another highlight for me."

"It has taught them resilience and tolerance and the ability to deal with people from different levels outside of a typical military environment. For example we had an air cadet just starting out in his career and an air vice-marshal nearing the end of his. But there is no rank structure on the yachts – we were all on first-name terms which was strange at first for many of the younger crew members."

Becky's personal stand-out memory was the wildlife.

"The ocean wildlife was amazing – sharks, whales and dolphins within touching distance," she said.

About 130 of the 392 service personnel who took part in the exercise were at the JSASTC to welcome home their colleagues. Many families of the sailors also attended and were given tours of the yachts.

■ JSASTC is currently recruiting instructors. If you are interested email NAVYPERS-JSASTCVM@mod.uk



Pictures: PO(Phot) Ian Simpson



● CHF's tug-of-war team in action at the Braemar Games

Pictures: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, CHF

Royals show pulling power

THE Royal Navy entered two teams into the Inter-Service tug-of-war competition at the Royal Braemar Gathering.

Competing in front of the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal, teams from Commando Helicopter Force, based at RNAS Yeovilton, and Commando Training Centre from Lymington in Devon, were asked to take part in the invitation-only event by the Royal Braemar Highland Society.

The invitation followed the appearance of a CTCRM side at last year's games in Aberdeenshire, the first time the Royal Navy had taken part in more than ten years.

Each team consists of eight on the rope and one coach and the sport has strict weight categories; At Braemar the team must not exceed 640kg, which averages out to 80kg per participant.

Held at the Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park, the Games take place on the first Saturday of every September and attract visitors from around the world to watch a variety of traditional events including piping, Highland dancing and tossing the caber.

Both Royal Navy tug-of-war teams lost in the knockout stages of the plate competition to the eventual winners, 4 Regiment



● CTC's tug-of-war team feel the strain at the Braemar Games

Royal Artillery.

Tug of War, which is fully funded as a category B athletics sport, is growing in popularity across the Armed Forces.

The sport includes an indoor form which would be ideal for the crews of large ships as they

could train in the hangar or vehicle deck.

If you are interested in building a tug-of-war team to represent your ship or unit contact Maj Steven Sutherland RM at Navy Command Headquarters.

Jamie takes bronze in Rio

FORMER Royal Marines have been in sporting action at the Paralympics in Rio. Jamie Burdekin picked up a bronze medal in the quad doubles wheelchair tennis.

Burdekin, 36, along with partner Andy Laphorne, triumphed after four hours and 25 minutes on court – the longest ever wheelchair tennis match in Paralympic history.

He was injured in a car accident in Liverpool in 2000 – the night before he was due to pass out from Lymington – and three years later was introduced to wheelchair tennis.

Former Royal Marine Joe Townsend, 28, who lost his legs to an IED in Afghanistan in 2008, finished sixth in the Men's PT1 triathlon, and needed medical treatment at the finish line after the gruelling event.

Cpl Phil Eaglesham, currently serving with Hasler Company in Plymouth, missed out on a place in the Mixed R5-10m air rifle shooting.

Eaglesham, who contracted the rare disease Q fever while serving with the Royal Marines in Afghanistan six years ago, represented his home country of Ireland.

Pirates capture talented duo

TWO Royal Navy associate rugby union players have signed for the Exeter Chiefs

Cornish-born musician Edd Pascoe, 24, and Fijian-born logistician Timoci Kava, 27, are looking forward to a full and interesting season with the Pirates and welcome the challenge of championship rugby.

Musician Edd, who plays trombone with the Plymouth Royal Marines Band, was educated in Falmouth. His rugby started with Penryn and he has represented Cornwall at junior level.

On joining the Royal Marines Edd took a break from playing, but began again with the Royal Navy under 23s and Gosport & Fareham RFC.

An invitation to attend the senior Royal Navy camp spurred him on and in his final season with Royal Navy under 23s he captained the side.

He gained his first senior cap when used as a replacement against the French Navy, followed by starting in the back-row against the RAF and the Army at Twickenham.

Returning to Cornwall, he played for Redruth last season.

Still playing for the Royal Navy, he was part of the Royal Navy Team that won this year's Inter-Service Championships and received a call-up to a UK Armed Forces side that played against Saracens in London.

Fijian Timoci, or 'Jimmy' as he is

sometimes called, was a star player in the HMS Seahawk side that lifted The Navy Cup this year, beating 40 Commando in the final.

Presently based at RNAS Culdrose where he works in the Logistics Department, Timoci first trained with the Pirates near the end of last season, before putting pen to paper this summer.

A recognised back-rower, he has also played in the centre, as well as being a very useful sevens player, he is a physically robust performer with pace.

Timoci comes from a gifted rugby family. Two of his brothers and two nephews have played at a high level, and he himself has been a member of the Royal Navy squad.



Picture: LPhoto Joel Rouse

● Cpl Al Laoutaris (bottom) training with Sgt Alec Gayson

From Vegas to the zoo for training session

FRESH from the heat of Las Vegas at the World Masters IBJJF Champs, the Royal Marines Brazilian Jui Jitsu Team found themselves in the tiger enclosure at Dartmoor Zoo.

The Marines were assisting Dartmoor Zoo with the digging of a 'bath' for the zoo's resident tiger, Vladamir.

Tim Steward, head of maintenance and development at Dartmoor Zoo said: "The Royal Marines have helped us throughout our journey in the past few years. The Commando Training Centre Royal Marines kindly donated lots of the old

style combats, so now we have uniforms which is great."

C/Sgt Sam Sherriff, of The Camber Sailing Centre, 30 Cdo said: "When we discussed having the jaguar as our mascot on our logo with the owner of Dartmoor Zoo, Benajmin Mee, it became apparent that we could assist Dartmoor Zoo as it is based around the good will of local businesses and charities.

"As part of the Royal Marines Brazilian Jui Jitsu Team, we are always looking for an excuse to train, so we set up the mats and rotated through some drills in what is a very unique location."

Stu's record attempt

ROYAL Navy Royal Marines Cycling Association member Stu Baker aims to break the world record for cycling from Gibraltar to London, taking in France and Spain in only seven days, to raise funds for two mental health charities.

Stu Baker, an ex-Naval Engineer and an Instructor at Commando Joes, will take on the gruelling challenge during Mental Health Awareness Week, between May 8-14 2017.

The ride will take him through Spain and France, 1,458 miles of rolling roads, climbing 76,000ft of hills.

The attempt is in aid of the Mindset Triangle, a charity which works to help men identify and treat mental health symptoms.

Stu is organising a Sportive starting 50 miles away from Big Ben for members of the public and the Armed Services to sign up to and raise money for the charity, and also to join him on various parts of his journey, culminating in a big party finish.

Stu said: "Coming from a career in sport and fitness, I have come across various examples of how exercise has helped sufferers of mental health to understand and control their condition.

"The charity Sport in Mind predicts that one in four people will be diagnosed with a mental health illness at some point in their lives, so you can see what an issue it is.



"I myself live with depression and anxiety and want to raise awareness of the support that exists to mental health sufferers and help raise money to continue to treat mental health issues.

"What is really close to me is to work closely with veterans and still serving personnel. Cycling the distance from Gibraltar to London in seven days is going to be the biggest challenge of my life, but it's nothing compared to the challenges faced by mental health sufferers every day."

Details of Stu's 50 mile Sportive and how to sign up will be made available later.



CYCLIST Rob Smith tears through the woods at the Royal Navy Royal Marines Cycle Association cross-country championships.

The event at Longmoor training camp in Hampshire included a grass-roots development day designed to give newcomers the chance to see what racing is all about.

Picture: LPhoto Sean Gascoigne



Pictures: Oliver Hutton

Brothers march on towards IS trophy

ROYAL Navy Rugby League held off a massive second-half onslaught to record an unprecedented third successive victory over the Army in the second round of the Inter-Service contest.

The Army made a strong start to the match at the AJ Bell Stadium in Salford but it was the Brothers who broke the deadlock.

A quick play by Kev Botwood and an equally-swift pass to the left by skipper Ben Taylor found Ryan Mathews, who made for the line but slipped a pass inside to prop Adam Birkett who, despite juggling the ball held on and crashed over to the left of the posts.

Mathews converted to make it 6-0 after 12 minutes.

Eight minutes later saw the RN score again. A high speculative kick by Jarron Southernwood bounced into the path of Tom Loxam, who sped the remaining ten metres to touch down and give Mathews a straightforward conversion.

The Brothers then saw their RN IS debutant Lee Gaskell sustain a serious leg injury, which delayed the game for ten minutes while he received treatment and was taken off the field.

The Soldiers were reduced to 12 men for ten minutes either side of the break after a professional foul.

The RN scored another converted try before the break as Nathan Lee found himself in space 15 metres out



and touched down right of the posts. Mathews converted again to take the score to 18-0 at half time.

The second half began with the Army piling on the pressure and eventually scoring a try thanks to Jordan Kerman, with Danny Hunter converting.

The Soldiers scored again following a flowing move which saw Sak Yabia with space to finish well out wide. Hunter again converted.

The game began to open up as both sides started to tire but the Royal Navy bid to strike the crucial blow as, following good play from Southernwood, Mathews

fed man-of-the-match Richie Metcalfe, who was kept out by a desperate Army defence. The respite was brief as Mathews slipped under the Soldiers' defence from a metre out to poach the match-winning try, which he converted.

As the seconds ticked down Mathews scored a drop goal from 15 metres out to settle the match at 25-12.

RN: Sean Houghton, Mike Haldenby, Nathan Lee, Tom Loxam, Josh Coupland, Kev Botwood, Ryan Mathews, Mark Robinson, Jarron Southernwood, Adam Birkett, Ben Taylor (Capt), Lee Gaskell, Jack Basher. Reps: James Parry, Andy Parrott, Steve Riley, Richie Metcalfe, Lloyd Williamson.



Pictures: Paul Saxby

Great lengths

Navy swimmers hit form at Inter-Services

ROYAL Navy swimmer Emma Miles pushes away from the wall at the start of her 200m backstroke race at the Inter-Services Swimming Championships.

Lt Miles picked up a bronze medal in her event at RAF Cranwell as the Senior Service women's team put up a strong display to win medals in all but three events – but ultimately had to settle for an overall bronze.

The RN men's swimming team fared better – successfully defending their title with strong performances from the outset.

LACMN Liam Armstrong put in an outstanding display in the 800m freestyle to take gold ahead of an RAF veteran with Mne Lee Ormerod, fresh from the water polo contest, in third place.

LACMN Armstrong then grabbed his second gold in a closely-fought 200m freestyle race.

Royal Marines Ash Dougan and Tom McKenny completed a one-two finish in the 100m butterfly while Mne Liam Spruce and Mne McKenny took first and second place respectively in the 50m freestyle.

Mne Luke Winberg took gold in the 4x50m individual medley with Mne Dougan taking silver,



● Royal Navy swimmers put in great performances at the Inter-Service championships

while Mne Andy Egan grabbed silver in two breaststroke races.

Also in the medals were: OC Michael Duncan, bronze in the 200m breaststroke; Sub Lt Ewan Simpson, silver in the 100m freestyle; Mne Ormerod, silver in the 400m freestyle; Mne Alex Rae, bronze in 100m backstroke; LPT Stu Mantle, bronze in 200m backstroke.

Team swimmers Mid Andy Dementriou (100m backstroke), Sub Lt Ben Adams (400m freestyle) and OC Callum

Fitzsimons (100m breaststroke) all scored invaluable points to add to the men's team's winning tally.

The Royal Navy men convincingly won both the medley and freestyle races, with Mne Martyn Margason and Mne Steve Winterbach completing the line up for the freestyle, neither of them taking part in individual events.

For the women's team LNN Samantha Eagle was the star of the show, taking golds in

the 100m freestyle and 100m backstroke, smashing Inter-Service records in both races.

AB Rebecca Johnstone won a bronze in the 100m freestyle and silver in the 50m freestyle, while AB Libby Francis picked up a gold medal in the 100m butterfly, leading the field by more than two seconds in her first Inter-Service competition.

AB Aimee Ballantyne held off stiff competition to take a bronze medal in the 50m freestyle and also in the medals were



● Mne Luke Winberg took gold in the 4x50 individual medley



● OC Rabuzin dives in

by nearly three seconds.

OC Hana Rabuzin added to the women's tally by picking up points in the 100m and 200m breaststroke races.

The overall standings saw the women finish third 13 points behind the winning Army team, closing a gap which has historically been more than 40 points.

The Royal Navy Water Polo team were also in action at RAF Cranwell, taking second place in their Inter-Service contest.

The team battled hard against the Army to come back from 5-1 down to draw 12-12 before taking on the RAF, who won 5-3.

The Portsmouth water polo team also made their debut in the Hampshire County Development League, finishing fourth in the second division.

The league allows developing clubs to compete during the season to help develop new players and allow people to try out the sport.

The team will be competing in the league for the coming season. Anyone interested in getting involved should contact the Royal Navy Swimming Association.

AB Francis (4x50m individual medley) and OC Isobel Rawlinson (200m freestyle).

The women's team saw their greatest achievement in the 4x50 freestyle relay; LNN Eagle gave the team a fantastic start before handing over to ET(ME) Rachel Barber and AB Ballantyne.

AB Johnstone swam the final leg, entering the water ten metres clear of her nearest rivals and finishing four seconds ahead of the second-placed team, breaking the Inter-Service record