



# NAVY NEWS

February 2017

## Protector ploughs ahead

● A WALL of snow and ice confronts ice patrol ship HMS Protector as she makes her way through the Gerlache Strait on her way to remote Brabant Island in Antarctica

(see pages 14-15)

Picture: LPhot Kyle Heller, HMS Protector



### Magnificent Severn

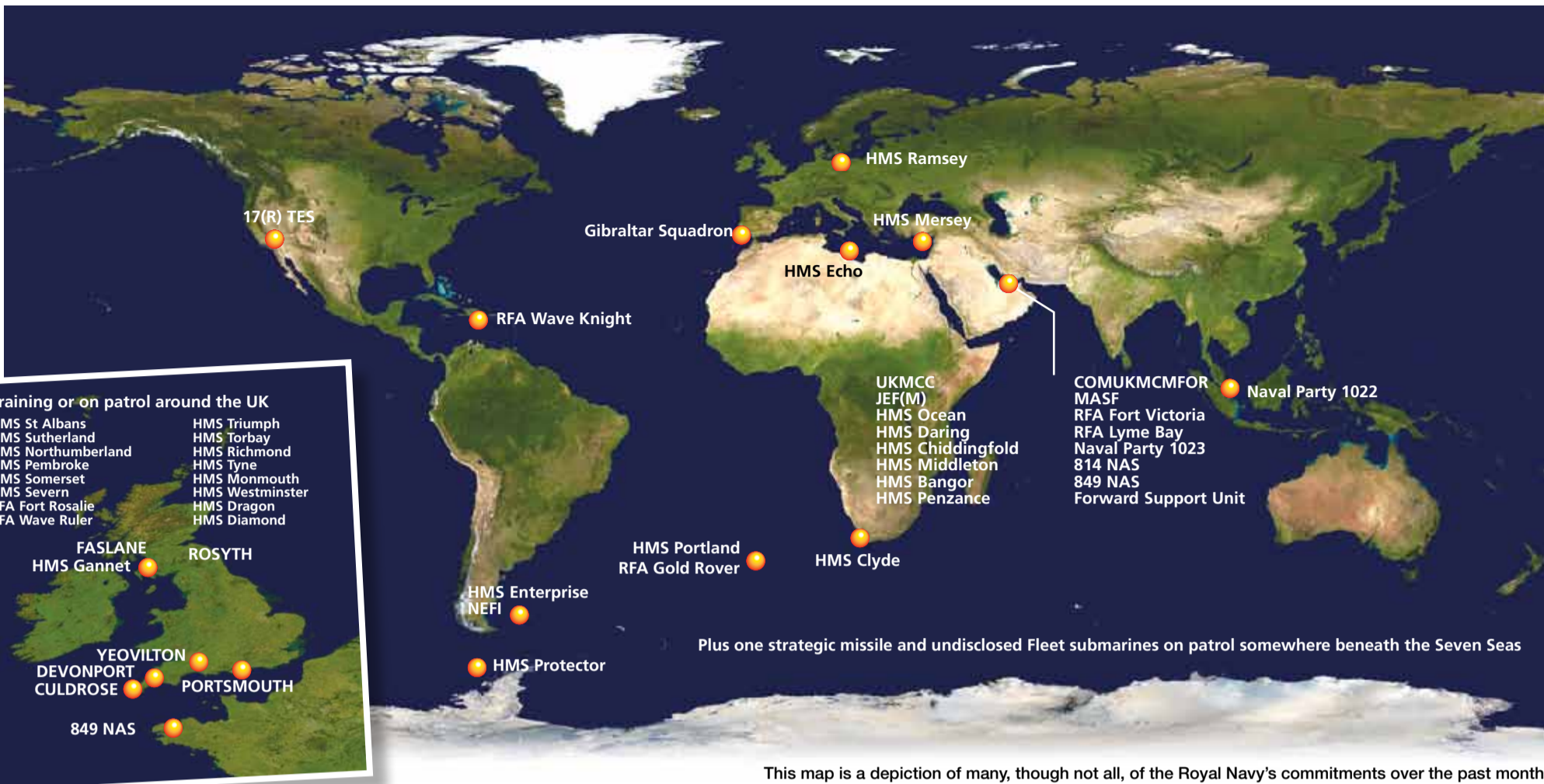
*On duty with the Cod Squad*

### Portland's potpourri

*Frigate's crew kept on their toes*

**INSIDE: Double-page 2017 Fleet poster**





**Training or on patrol around the UK**

HMS St Albans	HMS Triumph
HMS Sutherland	HMS Torbay
HMS Northumberland	HMS Richmond
HMS Pembroke	HMS Tyne
HMS Somerset	HMS Monmouth
HMS Severn	HMS Westminster
RFA Fort Rosalie	HMS Dragon
RFA Wave Ruler	HMS Diamond

**FASLANE**  
HMS Gannet

**ROSYTH**

**YEOVILTON**  
DEVONPORT  
CULDROSE  
PORTSMOUTH

849 NAS

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

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


**FLEET FOCUS**

Protecting our nation's interests

THIS month we mark the summer season in Antarctica with news of **HMS Protector** as she carries out her annual patrol of the region (see pages 14-15).

Also 'enjoying' the Austral Summer were the ship's company of **HMS Portland** (see pages 18-19) as the frigate, accompanied by **RFA Gold Rover**, visited South Georgia before heading North and calling in on the remote Atlantic island of Tristan da Cunha.

**HMS Clyde** is normally in the South Atlantic – but the Falklands' permanent guardship is currently undergoing an overhaul in Simon's Town, South Africa (see page 5).

Over to the Mediterranean and **HMS Mersey** celebrated a year on deployment (see page 11). The patrol vessel was on duty in the Caribbean before heading to the Eastern Med to join the NATO-led operation aimed at halting migrants making the dangerous journey to Europe.

Out to the Gulf and Royal Marines from **42 Cdo** joined their Kuwaiti counterparts for Exercise Cougar Voyage (see page 3) – the latest amphibious workout for the commandos during HMS Ocean's deployment to the region.

The 'unsung heroes' of the area – minehunters and their engineers – grabbed part of the spotlight in the Gulf (see page 9) during a flying visit from Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key.

Exercising in the heat – and the cold – were Royal Marines (see page 31); the men of **43 Cdo** went to India for boarding operations, and more than 400 British commandos, their US colleagues, reservists and sailors assigned to RM units, took part in **Exercise Green Claymore** in the Scottish Highlands.

To Gibraltar and personnel aboard **HMS Sabre** (see page 13) took their patrol boat to Tangier for some combined training with the Royal Moroccan Navy, and an act of remembrance.

Back around the UK and **HMS Severn** opened the Fishery Protection Squad's 2017 account with inspections on her first two days in the North Sea (see pages 22 and 27).

Battle staff from **Commander UK Carrier Strike Group** have been put through their paces ahead of the arrival in Portsmouth later this year of **HMS Queen Elizabeth** (see page 6). Personnel enjoyed their first meal aboard the RN's future flagship as the leviathan's galley was put to the test (see page 13).

Work is also to start on a £269m programme for **Crowsnest** – Merlin Mk2 helicopters fitted with enhanced mission systems, which will help protect the new aircraft carriers (see page 7).

The Silent Service's fourth Astute-class submarine **HMS Audacious** was formally named (see page 4), the first Royal Navy vessel in more than a century to bear the name.

**HMS Bulwark** led a host of homecomings at the end of last year (see page 6). Also returning to the UK were **HMS Chiddingfold**, **Vigilant** and **RFA Mounts Bay**.

Just days after **HMS Brocksley** left the cavernous ship hall in Portsmouth, fellow Hunt-class minehunters **HMS Atherstone** and **Quorn** moved in for their mid-life overhauls (see page 4).

A special 3D model of **HM Submarine E49** has helped create a permanent record of how the wreck is preserved (see page 20). The vessel sank off Shetland with the loss of all hands after striking a mine laid by a German submarine in March 1917.

The sole surviving vessel from the Battle of Jutland, **HMS Caroline**, has returned to her home in Belfast following repairs to her hull (see page 21).

We also look at the history behind the work carried out by Royal Navy medics at the **Institute of Naval Medicine** (see page 16).

Finally, Royal Navy veterans suffering from sight loss talk about the great work of **Blind Veterans UK** (see pages 28-29).

# Long-term focus is biggest challenge

## VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

**WELCOME** to the very first View from the Bridge – a new regular feature which outlines the Navy's perspective on some of the big issues that will shape our future.

THE recent passage of the Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov toward Syria garnered attention around the world, but perhaps the most interesting reaction was here in the UK.

Just a few years ago, several media commentators were asking why the Royal Navy needed large aircraft carriers at all; now some of those same commentators are saying they can't come soon enough.

At long last, people are waking up to the strategic value that the Queen Elizabeth-class will bring.

The UK faces direct challenges to our security at home, but also to our interests and alliances around the world. Many of the commonly-held assumptions about European security which we have taken for granted since the end of the Cold War are perhaps less certain today, and the distinction between conventional and unconventional threats is increasingly blurred.

We need to be ready to respond in kind. At the same time, the UK must seek new trading partnerships outside the European Union.

Rarely has the need to project global power and influence been more pertinent – so our new carriers, and their aircraft, will be much in demand.

A huge amount of work is



● For the second time in less than a fortnight at the end of last year, **HMS Sutherland** monitored a Russian warship as it sailed past the UK. Just days after keeping an eye on the destroyer Vice Admiral Kulakov, the **Fighting Clan** met up with the **Yaroslav Mudry** in the English Channel as the **Neustrashimy-class** frigate returned to the Baltic from the Med

Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow

taking place within the Royal Navy to address our immediate challenges in people and money, and to build our resilience for the future.

Those of you in the Service will know this is a priority for the First Sea Lord. We have a plan and our measures are at long last beginning to produce results, but more needs to be done and there is much work still to come.

However, our biggest challenge is to maintain our long-term focus.

Navies are strategic in nature. Other maritime powers such as the United States and China measure their ambition not in years but in decades, and we must do likewise.

The decisions we take today about equipment and procurement will be felt in ten or 20 years' time; and our ambition for the Navy now will shape the

United Kingdom's place in the world long into the future.

2015's Strategic Defence and Security Review laid the foundations by confirming the renewal of the nuclear deterrent and committing to the supporting equipment necessary for the credibility of Carrier Strike.

But this is just the beginning. Maritime Strategy 2035 goes beyond the direction set out in the SDSR 2015 to enable planning, prioritisation and implementation in the long-term: a proper UK naval strategy for the maritime century.

Over the following months, this column will unpack the strategy in detail.

It will explain how we will reshape the Fleet into a comprehensive Carrier Strike Group capable of fighting at scale, together with the implications for our standing commitments and

for the Royal Marines.

We will also explore the growing importance of technological innovation and international partnerships to our future, together with the changes we are making to ensure the Navy continues to attract and retain the people it needs.

Finally, we will consider how to deliver the government's ambition to increase the size of the Fleet by the 2030s.

In the meantime, serving personnel and civil servants should visit the Strategic Message House on the RN Intranet and read the strategy.

It sets out a series of changes that will affect all of us, but it also describes the historic opportunity that exists to bring about the one thing we all want to see in the years ahead – a stronger, larger, Royal Navy.

**BRAVO, Lima.**

A Royal Marine of 42 Commando advances towards the rising sun on sands once stirred by the legions of Alexander the Great and Nebuchadnezzar and laid waste by the nihilism of Saddam Hussein.

These are the outskirts of Failaka, a town on an island of the same name at the northern tip of the Gulf.

Thirty years ago, the island was gaining a reputation as a tourist destination. But then Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait in 1990.

They evicted the populace and turned the island into a fortress, using its buildings as target practice. More than a quarter of a century later and Failaka is still to recover as a community, but it has become an important training ground for Kuwait's armed forces.

And so Royal Marines joined their Kuwaiti counterparts for Exercise Cougar Voyage – the latest amphibious workout for the commandos during HMS Ocean's deployment to the region.

The helicopter carrier's rare visit to the kingdom allowed for some 'soft' diplomacy (hosting Kuwaiti VIPs and staff and students from the kingdom's staff college), and 'dynamic' diplomacy, combined, action-packed training with the host nation.

Lima Company, 42 Commando – normally based in Bickleigh, near Plymouth – form the heart of the Special Purpose Task Group carried by Ocean, an amphibious raiding party who've been repeatedly honing their skills with marines from the UK's Middle Eastern allies, Kuwait's being the latest.

Once colonised by Greeks under Alexander – the name Failaka is derived from the Ancient Greek for 'outpost' – and before them Nebuchadnezzar II, who built temples and a palace, the island enjoys a commanding position at the entrance to Kuwait Bay, about a dozen miles from the mainland.

The training consisted of a range of complex exercises from beach reconnaissance to close quarter battle drills and fighting in urban areas.

After the warm-up, the joint force returned to HMS Ocean ready to conduct a final assault – a night raid resulting in a full-scale attack on a town.

Under the cover of darkness HMS Ocean launched three waves of the combined marine force in landing craft from 9 Assault Squadron Royal Marines.

Before the first rays of winter sun hit the island they had secured a beachhead and begun to move towards the deserted town of Failaka. Under covering fire from the commandos and clouds of smoke, the Kuwaiti Marines got into position and stormed the target building, achieving their mission.

"The Kuwaiti Marines are a capable and professional force; we set about demonstrating what we are capable of, which developed their skills and added perspective to some of their procedures. The interaction between the lads and the Kuwaiti Marines was central to the success of our mission," said Capt Robin Bruce RM, in charge of the training team of Failaka.

Major Tom Noble RM, in charge of Lima Company added: "The extensive nature of the training required a high level of interaction between my troops and the Kuwaiti marines. This was achieved and the successful amphibious raid clearly demonstrates the ability of both countries to operate close to shore."

With the mission complete, the Kuwaitis returned to base whilst the Royal Marines returned to HMS Ocean. Behind them, peace and quiet returned to the deserted island of Failaka.

Picture: LPhoto Ben Shread, HMS Ocean



# A HARD DAY'S NIGHT

# An Audacious beginning

EMERGING from the man-made mist in the yawning shed where she has taken shape over the past seven years alongside her sisters, this is the Silent Service's latest hunter killer.

This is HMS Audacious – the first RN vessel in more than a century to bear the name, all 318ft, 7,500 tonnes and £1.5bn of her.

The fourth of seven Astute-class boats was formally named in BAE's construction hall in the presence of her 98 crew, many of the men and women who'd toiled on her for the past decade (the first 'long lead' items were bought all the way back in 2006), and the sponsor throughout the

submarine's 25-30-year life, Lady Jones.

It fell to the wife of the First Sea Lord to utter the words: "I name this ship..." before a bottle of local beer was smashed against the hull – as is tradition in Barrow.

"It is truly thrilling to name a nuclear submarine," said Lady Jones.

"The team in Barrow pulled out all the stops and the occasion was spectacular. The excitement of the families, including my own, was almost palpable as the curtains parted, and I know we all felt an enormous sense of pride as the mist cleared and we saw Audacious with her ship's company standing before her.

"The memory of this special day will

remain with me always."

She continued: "Soon it will fall to the men and women of the Submarine Service to bring her to life. I am honoured and grateful that I now have the opportunity to forge a lasting connection with them and their families.

"I look forward to following their progress as they take Audacious through sea trials ready for her commissioning, and I can't wait to see her flying the White Ensign."

Audacious is due to enter the water later this year for a programme of testing and the commissioning of the boat's systems.



## Hit me with your laser, er, burst

WHITEHALL is spending £30m turning science fiction into fact and testing laser weapons on Royal Navy warships.

Industry has been given two years to design, build and then test a laser directed energy weapon at sea and on land.

The weapon is intended to disrupt – or destroy – drones or missiles, fast attack boats and even incoming mortar rounds courtesy of a high-power, concentrated laser beam.

The US Navy already has a laser weapon fitted to the support ship USS Ponce in the Gulf, where it has shot down a drone, set fast attack craft on fire and 'blinded' sensors and instruments on weapons systems, firing concentrated bursts of laser energy rather than some sci-fi-esque 'death ray'.

In the UK, a consortium – Dragonfire – comprising a mix of major defence firms such as MBDA and BAE, plus science firms like QinetiQ, has formed to produce a similar weapon.

The £30m from MOD will assess how the system can pick up and track targets at various ranges – and in varied weather conditions – over land and sea when it is demonstrated in 2019.

If Dragonfire proves successful, the first defensive laser weapons could be fitted to RN vessels next decade.

## Rostock for Ramsey on NATO duties

HMS Ramsey became the first RN vessel of the new year to deploy as she spends the next few months attached to one of NATO's two minehunter groups.

The Faslane-based vessel made for the German naval base at Warnemünde, near Rostock, on the Baltic coast, to begin her assignment with Standing Mine Counter-measures Group 1.

Just two vessels were allocated to the group initially – flagship EML Admiral Cowan (previously HMS Sandown until sold to the Estonians a decade ago; they named her after the British admiral who played a key role in their struggle for independence from Russia at the end of WW1).

In time, the duo will be joined by minehunters from Lithuania, Latvia, Belgium, Norway, Poland and the Netherlands as they move around the waters of northern Europe practising mine warfare and conducting historic ordnance disposal operations – finding and destroying or neutralising some of the thousands of mines, bombs, shells and other explosive devices which litter the sea bed following two world wars.

# One out, two in

EVEN two 196ft minehunters look tiny in the cavernous ship hall in Portsmouth.

Not as much as one, though.

Just days after refurbished HMS Brocklesby left the enormous shed in the dockyard, HMS Quorn and Atherstone took her place – the latest Hunt-class minehunters to undergo a mid-life overhaul.

The shed was built to construct giant sections first of Type 45 destroyers then, once extended, even larger segments of carriers Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

With shipbuilding now concentrated on the Clyde, Portsmouth is now the 'Minor War Vessels Centre of Specialisation' – and the shed allows extensive maintenance work to be carried out without the need to worry about the weather.

Brocklesby was the first Hunt to undergo rejuvenation in the ship hall (you could fit 15 of the 750-tonne warships in the shed... except only 13 were built...).

Now she's back in the water, Quorn and the Crazy A have been lifted up, put on blocks and moved inside. Each will receive new Caterpillar engines to replace the original Deltics, plus other new machinery, sensors, systems, new galleys, new propellers, improved chilled water plants (crucial for potential operations in the Gulf, where two Hunts are deployed) and overhauled mess decks.

In all, each ship requires 9,000 maintenance jobs completing – the BAE engineers reckon the work will take 190,000 hours per ship – more than 21 years' work if carried out by a single person.

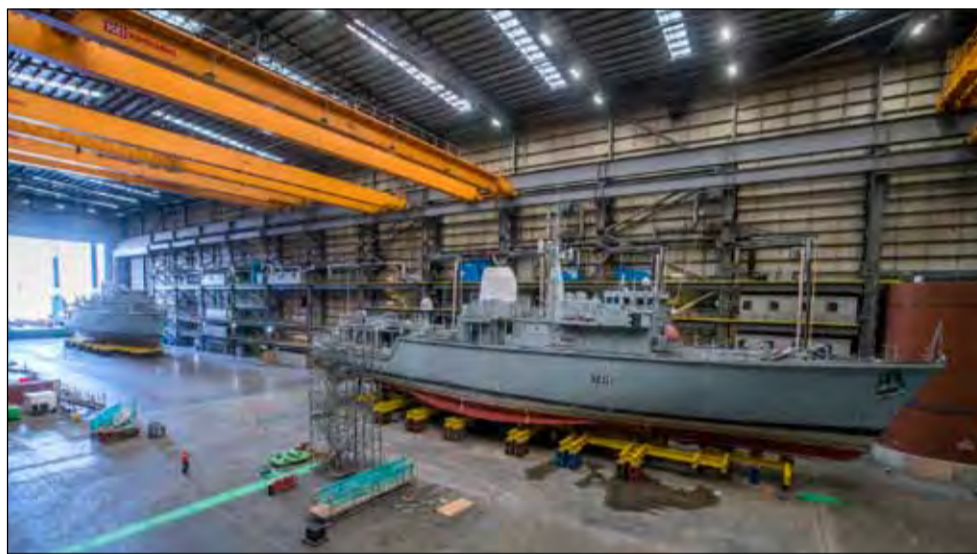
"It's an exciting time to be involved in the upgrade of the Royal Navy's minehunters and great to see the Royal Navy making best use of its undercover facilities for the Hunt class," said BAE's projects and operational performance director Barry Woolley.

"These ships are crucial to the mine counter-measures capability of the Royal Navy.

"We'll continue to ensure these vital ships are available for the Royal Navy to use for years to come."

And heading in the opposite direction, looking spic and span after a six-month overhaul, is HMS Shoreham.

The Sandown-class ship has been rolled out of her refit shed looking as good as new thanks to the efforts of engineers at



Babcock's yard in Rosyth. Up to 80 people a week – double the ship's company – swarmed over Shoreham from June to December after more than three years in the Gulf.

The Babcock team found the extreme conditions in the Middle East had taken their toll of the minehunter; painting the upper decks proved to be a significant challenge, but not as much as work on the fibreglass hull which had degraded more than expected in places (see right).

Experts in Rosyth and Devonport worked on the solution, as Babcock project manager Dave Gibb explained.

"With a fibreglass ship, maintaining sections of the hull takes time and precision," he said.

"The hull is approximately 25mm thick and consists of many layers of glass cloth impregnated with resin.

"Our tradesmen would work in small steps, first cutting out, then layering each section with the fibreglass cloth. It's not a skill you see very often as most ships are made of steel."

Other work carried out included refurbishing and installing a new galley, fitting a new fire detection system and improving the high-pressure air system.

Shoreham is due to be handed back to the RN in January, ready for further trials and training before taking her place in the front line alongside her Clyde-based sisters.

All Sandowns are hauled out of the water once every five years for a complete bow-to-stern, keel-to-topmast revamp. Next up will be HMS Grimsby in June.



## Gearing up for the T26s

WORK can begin apace on the gigantic gearbox which will help power the Navy's frigates of tomorrow after the Defence Secretary opened a state-of-the-art facility in West Yorkshire.

The complex unveiled by Sir Michael Fallon at David Brown Santasalo's works in Huddersfield will not only build the gearboxes for the class of eight planned Type 26 frigates, but also thoroughly test them – recreating the strains and stresses a warship goes through on the Seven Seas.

The gearbox for the 26s has been specially designed, converting the power generated by the Rolls-Royce MT30 engines – the same as those fitted to Britain's new aircraft carriers – to drive the propellers as quickly (when demanded), quietly and efficiently as possible.

The first gearbox will be delivered to BAE yards on the Clyde in 2018 where it will be fitted to the unnamed first ship in the class, which is due to be laid down in the summer of 2017.

Before each gearbox is handed over to the shipwrights, it will be put through the unique full-speed, full-load rig at the plant which attempts to replicate seagoing conditions, even down to a recirculating water system which mirrors the sea water cooling on a ship.

## Wildcat support

THE MOD has set aside £271m to look after the military's newest helicopter for the next five years.

As a result, Leonardo (formerly AgustaWestland), who designed and built the Wildcat, will continue to support it.

The deal signed with the Anglo-Italian firm will sustain 500 jobs at Yeovil and nearby Yeovilton, where all 62 Fleet Air Arm and Army Air Corps Wildcats are based.

Around 100 jobs will also be supported in the supply chain under the contract, which covers both support and training.

## Gdynia to drop in...

POLISH support ship Konradmistrzawery Czernicki paid a short visit to Portsmouth to learn how the RN deals with the threat of mines.

The Gdynia-built vessel – the first Polish warship to visit the city in three years – tapped the expertise of 2nd MCM Squadron before taking charge of NATO's mine warfare force in the Mediterranean, Group 2.

# Clyde takes block booking

THIS is something no-one has seen in more than half a decade.

No, not sunshine and clear skies. This is HMS Clyde, high and dry, the first time the patrol ship has not been surrounded by the waters of the South Atlantic since 2011. The Falklands' permanent guardship made the 4,000-mile crossing of the Southern Ocean to undergo a comprehensive overhaul after a five-year battering from the elements.

Although there's a dedicated engineering team at East Cove to support Clyde, there's no dry dock to carry out work below the waterline – removing marine growth which has built up... and creates drag in the water, reducing her top speed of 20kts – hence the crossing to Simon's Town in South Africa.

The passage took the patrol ship past the most remote of Britain's South Atlantic territories, Tristan da Cunha, which rises spectacularly out of the ocean rather like Skull Island in *King Kong* and is home to one volcano (Queen Mary's Peak) and just 265 people.

The weather in Tristan – which lies 1,800 miles west of Cape Town – prevented any of Clyde's sailors setting foot, sadly; conditions in the tiny harbour were too rough, and the ship has no helicopter to call upon as a substitute (luckily HMS Portland was there a few

days later – see pages 18-19).

The Atlantic crossing threw gale force winds and high seas at the 2,000-tonne warship, but during calmer moments, Clyde's crew were able to brush up on their birdwatching skills courtesy of a variety of avian visitors, including Tristan and wandering albatrosses.

Once in Simon's Town, home of the South African Navy, Clyde was manoeuvred into dry dock where divers made sure she lined up with large blocks on the dock floor used to support the ship once the water was pumped out.

As well as work on the hull, Clyde will also have maintenance work carried out on her upper deck and a host of engineering systems to ensure that she is ready for operations.

The ship's company are working side-by-side with staff from ARMSCOR, who run the dockyard, on the overhaul, but there's also downtime to explore the Cape peninsula, including a visit to Boulders Beach and its colony of African penguins – distant relatives of the Magellanic penguins the sailors are used to seeing around the Falklands.

While Clyde is undergoing maintenance, her place is being taken around the Falklands by survey ship HMS Enterprise which, in addition to providing reassurance to the islands' residents, is updating charts used by seafarers.



## Baggers mix with Brittany peers

TWO Sea Kings hopped across the Channel to train with French fighters and learn skills vital for strike operations from Britain's new aircraft carriers.

The helicopters from 849 Naval Air Squadron joined Rafale interceptors in the skies of Brittany and the Western Approaches to guide them on to 'targets' – exactly as their successor Crowsnest Merlins and F-35B Lightning IIs will do from the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The Airborne Surveillance and Control Sea Kings – the very last variant of the venerable helicopter still in service – were spending a fortnight at Landivisau air base near Brest for Exercise Skinners Gold (named after the Cornish tippie not the golden grass) as *Navy News* went to press.

It's the second time the baggers have been invited to train with the Charles de Gaulle's fourth-generation fighters.

Four years ago, the emphasis was on preparing the French flagship's air group for an impending deployment.

This time around, the emphasis is on developing the fighter control skills of the crews from the Culdrose-based squadron.

As well as providing early warning of incoming enemy aircraft – or missiles – the observers operating the radar consoles in the back of the Sea Kings can also direct friendly jets to intercept those threats, a skill which has faded with the demise of the Harrier carriers and the helicopters spending extended periods over Iraq and Afghanistan.

"As well as preparing the squadron for current operations, Skinners Gold will help us to regenerate our Carrier Strike capabilities – basically we will learn from the French to get ready for the introduction of the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter," said Lt Cdr James Taylor, 849's senior observer.

£269m investment in Crowsnest, page 7

## Daring's air heir

Destroyer HMS Daring is currently responsible for the military air space arching the Gulf after taking over from American cruiser USS Monterey.

It's the first time a British warship has held the duty of the Air Defence Commander in this region.

It's down to the ops room team on the Portsmouth-based Type 45 to provide the combined

tactical air picture covering an area of 819,200 square kilometres – nearly four times the size of the UK.

From the bowels of the destroyer, they can share that picture, thanks to the advanced communications suites on Coalition warships, with other operations rooms, as well as the Combined Air Operating Centre based at Al-Udeid in Qatar.



## The Thames they are a' banging...

THIS is the legacy of the Blitz which brought the capital to a standstill for one January night – until Navy divers blew it up.

Dredgers hauled up this German SD 50kg cluster bomb just a stone's throw from the Houses of Parliament.

It took all night – and the experience and expertise of the RN's Southern Diving Unit 2 in Portsmouth – to shift the explosive safely more than 25 miles down the Thames to Tilbury, where it was blown up at the end of an 11-hour operation.

"It was a long night for me and the team but this is exactly what we are trained for so it was a successful operation, although it was a little surreal carrying out our job right next to the Parliament," said Lt Mike St Pierre, the officer who led the bomb disposal team on scene.

"The bomb itself was in good condition considering how old it was, and it clearly still presented a danger. We removed it from the barge and towed it along the Thames, working very closely with the Met Police to safely close off bridges as we went, until we were sure we could detonate it safely."

Some iconic Thames crossings – including Waterloo and Westminster bridges – were temporarily closed to traffic before the bomb reached its destination... and then oblivion.



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# We're back...

ONE of the first Naval vessels to deploy in 2016 became one of the last back as RFA Mounts Bay returned after a marathon deployment in the Mediterranean.

The amphibious support ship was away from home for 349 days as she focused her efforts on trying to curb people trafficking/smuggling into Europe from Africa and the Middle East, and deal with the ongoing aftermath of Libya's civil war in 2011.

During the 33,000 nautical miles sailed on patrol, Mounts Bay was involved in

- supporting NATO operations in the Aegean to prevent migrants illegally crossing from Turkey into Greece;
- operations in support of United Nations Security Council Resolutions and the European Union in countering illegal arms trafficking into Libya;
- a Joint Operation with the Danish Navy to remove the last of Colonel Gaddafi's chemical agents from Libya,
- national exercises and operations in the region;
- maintaining her readiness to react to any rapid crises that the UK government wished her to assist with – such as evacuation and disaster relief operations.

The highlight for many aboard was the presence of Charlie, a Springer Spaniel military working dog, who joined Mounts Bay to 'sniff-out' illegal weapons and munitions during the mission off Libya – a first for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Next up, following a spot of maintenance and leave, are front-line duties in the Caribbean dealing with drug trafficking and providing relief and humanitarian aid in the event of a natural disaster in the region.

# ...so are we...

IT'S all change on the Cheery Chid after the minehunter's crew for the past six months return to Blyth from the Gulf.

Having steamed 8,363 miles (roughly the distance from Portsmouth to the Falklands), visited six countries and consumed 7,280 sausages, 2nd MCM Squadron's Crew 2 flew home for a pre-Christmas reunion with loved ones.

Twice a year the crews of all four minehunters deployed in Bahrain – two of Chiddingfold's Hunt class, normally based in Portsmouth, two Sandowns from Faslane – trade places with counterparts in the UK.

It means round-the-clock mine warfare operations and training can be conducted in the challenging Gulf environment, and crews build up masses of front-line experience.

Since Crew 3 took over Chiddingfold in the summer of 2016, they have been busy taking part in mine exercises with other navies, especially the US, and flying the flag for

Britain with our allies.

"The warm waters and high temperatures mean that machinery works that bit harder and needs constant care and maintenance," said ET(ME) Chris McQuoid.

"We have been busy throughout the deployment both repairing and replacing vital equipment so that the ship can keep doing her important job."

His CO Lt Cdr James Baker added: "This has been a challenging but rewarding deployment and I am extremely proud of the way my sailors have performed over the last six months."

"We are ready to hand over HMS Chiddingfold to Crew 1 who have flown out to relieve us and we are all looking forward to being reunited with our families back home in the UK."

It falls to Crew 1 to bring Chid safely home. She is being replaced after her lengthy spell in the Gulf, with Ledbury heading out to take her place.

# ...and don't forget us

THERE was a very rare traditional-style Naval homecoming for the sailors who perform the nation's ultimate duty.

Families were invited in to Faslane Naval Base to greet the 140-strong crew of HMS Vigilant back as the bomber returned from a deterrence patrol – the very last RN vessel home in time for Christmas 2016.

Normally, loved ones head to public land overlooking Gareloch to catch a glimpse of one of the ballistic submarines gliding past.

But for the first time, they were granted access to the Naval Base to witness the return.

Some 40 families took advantage of the opportunity, hosted in the comfort of the Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess.

"Usually we're at Rhu to watch the vessel come home," said Victoria Barnwell, who was there to welcome her husband Iain home.

Victoria had travelled from the east coast of Scotland with their three young children – all under six years old – for the occasion.

The homecoming event took around two-weeks to arrange and featured a bouncy castle for the children, games, face-painting, a buffet and even a visit from Santa Claus, all organised by the Silent Service's Command Warrant Officer Andy Knox, Vigilant's starboard coxswain PO Sheekey and Sophie McArdle from RN-RM Welfare.

Visits to a safari park, stays in hotels, a spa day, pizza nights, cinema trips and coffee mornings were all organised to provide support – and light relief – to Vigilant's families while the boat was on patrol.

# Something for le weekend

THERE was the rare sight of not one but five French warships on the Dart last month.

The Marine Nationale brought a flotilla of training vessels to the home of the Royal Navy's Officer Corps.

The Brest-based vessels – FS Lion, Guépard, Panthère, Jaguar and Eglantine – made the relatively short crossing from Brittany for a weekend visit to Dartmouth.

As well as opening their gangways to the public, the Lion and Guépard also hosted BRNC cadets as part of ever-growing ties between the two naval colleges.

The quintet are used by the French Navy to teach practical navigation and manoeuvring to students at the Naval Academy and the Brest Naval Instruction Centre, mainly operating in coastal waters.

# Bulwark's last hurrah – for now

YOU won't see this again for a while: sailors wearing the cap tally 'HMS Bulwark' delighted to be home from deployment.

After five years always on-call as the nation's amphibious assault ship, ready to respond to global events, Bulwark took her bow just before Christmas following an 87-day autumn deployment with the UK's Joint Expeditionary Force task group in the Mediterranean and Middle East.

Around 600 family members were waiting in Devonport to greet the 20,000-tonne leviathan, which was also treated to a helicopter fly-past, a landing craft sail-past and gun salute.

Mne Barry Cannon, from Plymouth, swept his twin sons Jack and Oliver, aged three, off their feet as they gave him a loud welcome.

"It's really good to be back home," said Barry, who operates landing craft with Bulwark's dedicated assault group. "The boys have changed a bit – they are talking a lot more now they've started nursery since I've been away. To be honest I've missed them ever since I left on the deployment."

First off the ship – courtesy of a charity auction aboard – to rush onto the jetty and into the arms of his girlfriend Danielle, 22, and his baby daughter Daisy was 25-year-old Std Mike Howell.

Danielle said: "It's double celebration today – Daisy's first birthday and her dad back home with us."

Life aboard Bulwark is now



● Wavy Navy... Four of HMS Bulwark's female junior rates show their delight at returning home

Picture: LPhoto Caroline Davies, FRPU West

beginning to wind down as she goes into extended readiness, as laid down under the Defence Review.

Her ship's company will drop to just 65 with many of her sailors filing up the gangway of her sister HMS Albion, which is carrying the assault ship mantle into the 2020s.

Bulwark's last active act for now was a series of exercises off Albania, Egypt and finally in Oman before offering some

training to the coastguard of Somaliland and flying the flag for the UK on a short visit to Haifa in Israel.

"Bulwark had a fantastic deployment," said her CO Capt James Parkin, "and my sailors and Royal Marines were outstanding ambassadors for the United Kingdom."

"They, and their forebears over the past five years, have delivered a ship with an outstanding reputation for getting the job

done in the Royal Navy and far beyond."

The final active year of Bulwark's life for now saw £14,000 raised by the sailors and Royal Marines courtesy of the ubiquitous cake bakes through to a 65-mile run around the upper deck in 12 hours by Mne Ryan Joslin, and an 'auction of promises' (such as first off the ship on her return) which alone brought in more than £4,000 for the RNRMC.

# Carrier Strike put to the test

ROYAL Navy warships have been learning how to work as part of a battle group with the nation's new aircraft carriers.

The Commander UK Carrier Strike Group (COMUKCSG) battle staff has been conducting transatlantic exercises ahead of the arrival in Portsmouth later this year of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

RN personnel have been taking part in Fleet Synthetic Training exercises used to put US Navy carrier strike groups through their paces.

Working from the Maritime Composite Training System site at HMS Collingwood, US carrier strike groups, including the USS Harry S Truman, have worked with ops room personnel from HMS Dragon and HMS Richmond, both of which played the vital protection role for the carrier.

Regular and reserve personnel from across the Naval Service, as well as colleagues from the RAF and defence experts from the US have also been involved in the role-playing.

The latest exercise saw COMUKCSG tested in warfighting techniques involving HMS Queen Elizabeth and 36 F-35B strike fighter jets.

LWtr Natalie Brady, of CSG, said: "The exercise allowed me to experience at first hand how impressive carrier strike will be with all the cutting-edge technology in the ships and aircraft."

Previous exercises have seen command and warfare teams from HMS St Albans, Richmond and Diamond take on the role of principal anti-submarine,



● The Combat Direction Center aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S Truman

anti-surface and air missile defence commanders working for CSG's Information Warfare Commander Lt Col Oli Coryton and Strike Warfare Commander Lt Col Phil Kelly, both of whom were based in HMS Queen Elizabeth alongside Cdre Andrew Betton, Commander CSG.

The three vessels provided invaluable realism to the exercise, as Type 45 destroyers and Type 23 frigates will be escorts for both HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales when they deploy.

"The personal relationship between the principal warfare commanders and the Commander of the CSG lies at the heart of future success in carrier strike operations," said Cdre Betton.

"Training in this way offers enormous benefit, not only in being more efficient and less

expensive than live training, but also in allowing a highly-tailored training package, delivered in a short space of time, focussed on the specific training needs of the team."

The next major step for CSG will be Exercise Saxon Warrior this summer when Royal Navy battlestaff will embark in the USS George HW Bush for a multinational exercise around Britain.

Cdre Betton added: "The UK's future carrier strike ambition attracts enormous interest amongst our international partners, presenting a powerful, credible and highly versatile capability in support of UK national interests."

"Fleet Synthetic Training has helped to build the expertise

of the UK CSG battle staff alongside US colleagues, specifically to prepare us for Saxon Warrior when the CSG battlestaff will return to sea, an important and exciting step towards operations with HMS Queen Elizabeth."

The build up of CSG has seen experts from the US Navy and US Marine Corps help to train and mentor the new COMUKCSG team, who have also worked closely with the RAF.





● Handlers and aircrew of 849 NAS prepare to carry out checks on a Sea King Mk7 aboard HMS Ocean in the Gulf  
Picture: LPhot Ben Shread, HMS Ocean

# Bags of extra work for Merlin

WORK is to begin turning the Navy's ultimate submarine hunter into its ultimate tracker of enemy aircraft and armour as £269m is pumped into replacing eye-in-the-sky Sea Kings.

After more than 35 years' service in various guises, first as airborne early warning for carrier task groups, latterly providing airborne surveillance and control over sea and land, it's being retired next year in favour of Crowsnest – a Merlin which essentially performs the same role, but in a much more powerful helicopter, and with considerably enhanced sensors and software.

As they have done with the Merlin programme over the past two decades, Lockheed Martin will oversee Crowsnest, with Thales providing the radar, sensors, computers and consoles crunching the data, and helicopter manufacturers Leonardo (formerly AgustaWestland) will perform the conversion of the airframes to accommodate the rather ungainly-looking black bag which contains the Crowsnest radar and will stick out of the side of the aircraft.

The work, said defence procurement minister Harriett Baldwin announcing the investment aboard HMS Dragon,

would sustain around 200 jobs in Havant, Crawley and Yeovil.

Crowsnest builds on the best of the technology from the existing Sea King Mk7 (SKASaC – pronounced 'skay-zac') and its Searchwater radar, adds to it with significant enhancements, and takes on board the advice of crews with 15-plus years' experience over land and sea, much of those spent in combat situations in Iraq and Afghanistan and currently in the Gulf conducting force protection and surveillance for shipping.

The result is a modified Merlin Mk2 with a radar dome on the side. Unlike its predecessor, the fact that the Crowsnest mission system is to be fitted when required, allows Merlin to switch between anti-submarine and airborne surveillance roles.

And as with the Mk7, the new variant will require a crew of just three: one pilot, two observers. It will take about six months for SKASaC observers to convert to the new aircraft type (the fully-digital Merlin is a couple of generations ahead of the Sea King), while it should only take them about eight weeks to learn how to use the computer consoles which

process the reams of data from the radar and sensors given their SKASaC experience. As for new aircrew, training for them should begin in the summer of 2019. All will be instructed by 824 NAS at Culdrose.

Updates to the mission system software every six months or so – taking on board suggestions for improvement/enhancement from the aircrew – rather than leaving computer systems stuck back in 2001/02 when the Mk7 entered service means there shouldn't be too big a step up to Crowsnest.

At the same time, technicians and maintainers will be instructed by their colleagues on the Merlin training squadron, 824 NAS, on looking after the state-of-the-art helicopter.

The Sea Kings are due to retire in October next year – just shy of the helicopter's 50th anniversary in the Fleet Air Arm – with 849 Naval Air Squadron in its current guise passing into history.

It will re-emerge, initially as a flight as part of the Merlin force in summer 2019 and eventually as a fully-fledged squadron, in the spring of 2020 when Crowsnest is due to be

declared operational, ready for Queen Elizabeth's maiden carrier strike deployment.

"The Sea King ASaC has served us very well indeed," said Cdr Simon Flynn, Sea King Force Commander and the man responsible for the changeover.

"Crowsnest takes what we do with the SKASaC and builds on it. It's absolutely crucial to the carrier strike group – critical for protecting the carrier and vital for strike operations. It's an integral part of the force – you cannot have carrier strike without it.

"Everything we are doing now with the Sea King ASaC is done with HMS Queen Elizabeth, Prince of Wales and carrier task groups in mind."

Underlining that point, 849 NAS joined HMS Ocean in the Gulf to re-learn the art of operating with a carrier group.

The squadron is rotating its three flights – Normandy, Okinawa and Palembang – through the Gulf, taking advantage of RN and RFA vessels operating in the region to get their sea legs back.

With the arrival of Ocean, however, the flights – currently Palembang – can considerably expand the training

(benefiting them and the future RN) thanks to Merlin helicopters embarked to protect Ocean's group from surface and, especially, submarine threats.

Now aircrew and task group staff can test the ability of the two different helicopter types to work together to help protect the task force from threats coming from every dimension.

Above all, Palembang Flight is glad to be back at sea, giving engineers and technicians the chance to re-learn the art of maintaining helicopters in a warship, aircrew the chance to get used to flying over the featureless ocean instead of featureless desert, and keep Ocean's flight deck teams busy.

"The sea is our natural environment, and whilst operating there brings many challenges, the equipment and my team have risen to the challenge," said Palembang Flight Commander Lt Cdr Chris Jones.

"The specialist skills that make us distinct from our Service colleagues are easily lost, so the opportunity to work at sea in a high tempo, real world operation is too good to miss, and I've been delighted with how we've performed so far."

"Thank you so much for your help and work in putting things right. I thought there was something wrong but after two rejections of my own enquiries, success at last!"

Tony Smith, FPS Member



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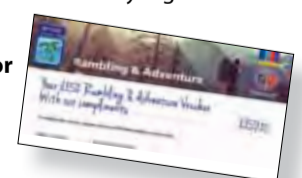
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# Phew, it's busy work at FSU

**MORE** than 260 engineering jobs to complete, including 14 substantial repairs and a generator replacement never done in the field before – all inside ten weeks?

No problem – not if you're the well-honed team looking after the engineering needs of Royal Navy ships in the Gulf, as Britain's second most senior sailor found on a visit.

Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key dropped in on the Forward Support Unit during a whistle-stop tour of RN vessels and units in the Middle East, including UK flagship HMS Ocean.

While Ocean's role as flagship of Task Force 50 – hitherto always led by a US Navy aircraft carrier – has grabbed the headlines, the day-in, day-out work of the minehunters and their dedicated engineers largely goes unnoticed.

Two 27-strong teams (FSU 1 and 2) take it in turns not just to look after Royal Navy vessels in the Gulf – but around the world as well.

The unit spends four months in Bahrain at immediate notice to help ships requiring engineering assistance, then four months back in the UK where the team is at five days' notice to respond to go anywhere in the world with all their kit and caboodle... and take part in the twice-yearly Joint Warrior exercises which have a heavy involvement from minehunter forces.

The teams mostly comprise marine and weapon engineers, plus a petty officer PTI acting as coxswain, two logicians and a leading seaman as the buffer.

At the moment, the engineers are exploiting the relatively cool temperatures – teens and low 20s Celsius – to prepare the minehunters for the punishing summer heat (45°C up to 60°C).

"From May, as the temperature starts to rise, it is too hot to work on the upper deck after 10am as any tools become too hot to hold," said WO1 Bob Nixon, in charge of the team currently in Bahrain.

His engineers found themselves faced with the challenge of removing, repairing then replacing the Volvo generators on HMS Bangor.

"It meant that the engineers had to call on expertise and experience to write the instruction book," WO1 Nixon added.

Although principally on hand to provide engineering assistance to the four British minehunters permanently based in Bahrain, the team also weighs in when



● Above and top: HMS Bangor's Volvo generators are removed – a first for the FSU team and (below) FSU2 Oic WO1 Bob Nixon chats with Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key in the workshop



needed by visiting frigates and destroyers, Australian and even US Navy warships.

Indeed, the Americans so like the unit's set-up they are looking at establishing one of their own.

ET(ME) Jamie Gourley is part of the chippy's party, chiefly responsible for looking after the fibreglass hulls of minehunters.

"The nature of the work out here is more technical and hands-on than what I was accustomed to on HMS Defender," said the 26-year-old from Livingston, near Edinburgh.

"I have enjoyed learning to operate the machines in the workshop, fabricating components for equipment onboard ships."

CPOET(ME) Mark Dungey from Suffolk is chief shipwright responsible for the hull and structure of all four Bahrain-based British minehunters.

"Every day is an adventure," says the 47-year-old, who restores vintage cars and scooters in his spare time. "I enjoy being able to do the job I was trained for. This is at-the-coalface, hands-on engineering."

The support unit has good facilities in a warehouse at Mina Salman port, but its present home is a long way from the waterfront – something which will be rectified later this year when the RN's new base in Bahrain officially opens.

The Prince of Wales opened part of the facility last autumn – his visit was the highlight of ET(WE) Ryan Thomas' tour of duty in the Middle East.

"I'm glad to be out here doing a job – it's an important role we're performing," said the 29-year-old father-of-one from Bridgend, "but I can't wait to get home and see my family, especially Charlie who's only 18 months old."

By the time FSU2 rotates through Bahrain again, the new RN naval base should be just about complete.

"We are looking forward to moving to the support facility as we've had a lot of involvement in the design of our new warehouse," said WO1 Nixon.

"It's situated on the waterfront close to the ships and will allow the ships' engineers to use our workshop facilities."

# It's elementary, my dear Yeovilton...

LT HAMISH Coles-Hendry points out some of the key controls on the nimble Grob trainer to Sub Lts Andrew Graham and Richard Shilton on the standings at Yeovilton.

A normal day at the Somerset air station?

Well no, because the two junior officers in the cockpit are the first to go through basic flight training at Yeovilton, rather than Barkston Heath in Lincolnshire – part of a programme to swell the number of pilots needed for the new F-35B.

727 Naval Air Squadron has traditionally provided 'grading' training – assessing whether a would-be pilot possesses 'the right stuff' to make it as a military aviator on the front-line.

From Somerset, successful candidates move to RAF Cranwell – the spiritual home of the RAF officer corps (and a former naval air station...) – to learn the fundamentals of flight with 703 NAS at nearby Barkston Heath.

With the advent of the F-35B Lightning II and the return of aircraft carrier operations with HMS Queen Elizabeth, the Fleet Air Arm and RAF need additional pilots.

To ease the burden on Cranwell, 727 is now providing what the military calls 'elementary flight training' – the



first time it has been taught at Yeovilton, apparently.

By the end of the course the students will be expected to be able to fly their Grobs solo, fly in formation feet from another plane, and safely navigate at low level.

Based on their performance, they will then either go on to fly one of the Fleet Air Arm's helicopters – the Merlin or Wildcat – or train to fly fast jets (Hawk trainers and ultimately the new F-35B Lightning II

stealth fighter).

"Elementary Flight Training for all three Services has until now been conducted at Cranwell, but with F-35 aircraft on the way, both the Navy and RAF need to train more pilots," explained Lt Cdr Jim Ashlin, 727's Commanding Officer.

"727's role is to ease some of that burden on our RAF colleagues and allow the Fleet Air Arm to grow in size and prepare for the new aircraft carriers' forthcoming introduction."

## Kiwi 'Swiss Army knife' ideal for RM

A MOCK terrorist camp has been created on Salisbury Plain to better train Royal Marines for urban combat.

Some £2.4m has been poured into a replica 'town' to provide the commandos and Army with a 'Swiss army knife' of a facility which can be used for pretty much any training purpose.

New Zealand Farm Camp traces its history back 100 years when it prepared Kiwi soldiers for the rigours of the Western Front.

The camp – just off the A360 near Gore Cross (51°15'22"N, 2°2'25"W on Google Earth...) – also served as an RAF base between the wars and into WW2, since when it's been used as a general training base.

By the early 21st Century, most of the camp was falling apart following heavy use, prompting a complete redesign and rebuild of the complex.

In place of a dozen wooden huts come 11 multi-purpose buildings (aka 'stone tents'). They can serve as the heart of a terrorist camp, but they can also double as a forward operating base, enemy stronghold or government/charity hub.

Street lighting has been installed, as has a new public address system while the roads surrounding the farm complex have been strengthened so they can cope with heavy armour such as the Army's Warrior armoured vehicles.

Among the first users of the new-look camp were the green berets of 40 Commando, in training to become the UK's lead commando group from May.

"The new and improved facility here at New Zealand Farm Camp is brilliant," said Capt Freddy Sankey of Bravo Company.

"It has everything that we need to continue with our training and it offers a complex and realistic environment for us to carry out this training."

"The strategically-placed hidden tunnels, gantries and arms caches are a useful addition to the training features on offer here and they definitely provide troops with a physically challenging and realistic environment in which to train."

## Medals on display at FAA museum

**YOU CAN** admire the many medals awarded to the Navy's – and nation's – greatest aviator, Capt Eric 'Winkle' Brown, now on temporary display at the spiritual home of the Fleet Air Arm.

For four weeks, the decorations and extensive log books of the pilot – who died last year aged 97 – are being displayed at the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton, alongside a WW2 Grumman Martlet fighter... one of the record number of 486 aircraft the test pilot once flew.

The aviator's papers, photograph archive, logs and medals were snapped up at auction by the National Museum of the Royal Navy late last year for £165,000 – thanks to "the intervention of an incredibly generous donor".

They will be on display until February 19.

His collection will return to the museum's display cases later this year, once historians and conservators have studied and logged them thoroughly for posterity.

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# Patrol ship completes year-long deployment Mersey mission

THE German frigate FGS Sachsen patrols the Eastern Mediterranean alongside HMS Mersey.

The ships are just two of the 50 vessels from 15 nations employed over a year on the NATO-led operation aimed at halting migrants making the dangerous journey to Europe.

Mersey, which joined the taskforce in August last year, returns to the UK this month – marking 13 months out on deployment.

The patrol vessel left her Portsmouth home in January 2016, heading for the Caribbean before travelling east to the Mediterranean and on to the Aegean.

During that time the River-class ship has:

- Sailed 38,000 miles – the equivalent of sailing around the UK 19 times or more than one-and-a-half times around the world.
- Visited 31 ports in 19 countries over three continents.
- Used two million litres of diesel – enough to drive the average family car 647 times around the world, or to the moon and back 30 times.
- Welcomed presidents, ambassadors, heads of Armed Forces and 350 excitable schoolchildren.
- Hosted 11 captain's lunches and ten evening receptions.
- Arranged 40 ship's tours, involving

thousands of guests.

What makes these stats even more impressive is that Mersey has a ship's company of just 52.

"What is truly outstanding is how a relatively small team has achieved such a huge effort in just one year," said Mersey's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr George Storton.

The second half of Mersey's deployment saw her head to the Aegean Sea – via a stopover in Gibraltar – to support the NATO-led operation to combat the migration crisis.

During the voyage the crew got to grips with the new life-saving equipment delivered to the ship.

The support was an extension of the UK's contribution and commitment to tackle illegal people trafficking and migration in the region.

Mersey worked with Standing NATO Maritime Group 2, led by the German Bremen-class frigate FGS Karlsruhe, *pictured right*, and then by the Dutch light cruiser HMLMS De Ruyter.

The German frigate FGS Sachsen took over as the taskforce flagship in December.

Over the past 12 months NATO say their operation in the Aegean resulted in an 80 per cent reduction in the number of migrants trying to reach Greece and Turkey.

The offshore patrol vessel – at 80m in length and a draft of less than five metres

– was able to provide the NATO taskforce with an enhanced ability to work closer to the shore.

SNMG2 worked closely with Greek and Turkish coastguards, alerting them to sightings of migrant vessels and enabling them to turn the vessels back or preventing them from attempting the dangerous crossing in the first place.

Mersey deployed to the Aegean from the Caribbean where she was on counter-narcotic operations.

In April last year she played a key role alongside the Canadian Navy and US Coast Guard in a £12 million drugs bust, where 304kg of drugs were seized.

Mersey also reinforced trade links with Central America and reaffirmed relationships with foreign partners, including the Mexican Navy.

Lt Cdr Storton added: "The whole ship's company has been involved in every element, from hosting presidents and making canapés through to developing life-saving procedures for the Eastern Mediterranean.

"This year really highlights the capability and flexibility of the offshore patrol vessel."

Personnel aboard HMS Mersey – some of whom gathered in their Christmas jumpers for a festive photo as the ship was in the Mediterranean for the holiday – marked their busy year on deployment with... you've guessed it, cake.



The end of November 1916 and Nigerian troops join the SS Mendi in the port of Calabar in the Gulf of Guinea, ready for a 5,500-mile journey to Dar-es-Salaam on the other side of the continent to take part in the campaign against German forces in East Africa.

This is one of the very few photographs of the ageing steamer Mendi, pressed into service as a troopship to meet the demands of war. She would make only two trips.

Our roll back 100 years as part of WW1 centenary commemorations with the photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum takes us to February 1917 and one of the darkest hours in the history of South Africa.

Having offloaded the Nigerians on the east coast, the 12-year-old steamer made her way back down the east coast of Africa to Cape Town, where a battalion of black soldiers was waiting to be ferried to Europe, for the Moloch of the Western Front needed feeding.

The year just passed had drained the Allied armies – the French at Verdun, Commonwealth forces on the Somme.

With the onset of winter, fighting largely stagnated, but it would soon resume with full fury; the new French Commander-in-Chief, Robert Nivelle, had plans for an offensive which would win the war. To that end, every man was needed at the front.

Britain turned to her empire – not for fighting men, but for labourers. By the standards of the day, black men were generally regarded as second-class citizens – certainly not fighting men. They were, at least, volunteers – unlike the soldiers of the British Army, conscripts since the beginning of 1916.

With pay considerably better than for ordinary labourers in the Dominion, there was no shortage of men coming forward. The government expected 10,000 volunteers; they got 25,000 for the South African Native Labour Corps. At the beginning of 1917, transporters began shipping the labourers to France.

The Mendi arrived in Cape Town in late January, where five officers, 17 NCOs and 806 men of the 5th Battalion



SANLC filed aboard for the three-week journey to Europe. Also loaded were supplies and an estimated £5m in gold bullion (about £1.5bn).

The labourers were crammed into three holds hastily turned into mess decks, with 2ft-wide bunks stacked four high.

After a short stop in Lagos to fit a naval gun on the stern SS Mendi made for Plymouth to pick up a destroyer escort – HMS Brisk – for the Channel crossing.

At about the same time as the Mendi departed Plymouth, the steam

packet meat carrier SS Darro was also striking out into the Channel, bound for a South Coast port.

Through the night of February 20-21 1917, the fog hugging the Channel grew thicker. The master of the Mendi posted extra lookouts, sounded his whistle frequently and switched on his external lights. The master of the Darro ploughed on through the night at full speed, taking no such precautions.

Around 5am, the two vessels collided about 20 miles south west of St Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wight. The Darro – twice the Mendi's

size – drove 20ft into the troopship's bow before extricating herself and disappearing into the mist.

Aboard the Mendi, master Capt Henry Yardley stumbled back to his feet, stopped the engines and ordered his carpenter to sound the ship, while ordering the lifeboats lowered immediately.

Any native troops in the forward hold were either crushed by the impact, or drowned as the Channel poured in – the force of the blow probably jammed their escape hatch.

As the Mendi listed to starboard,

the port boats stuck. At least one boat capsized as the South Africans overcrowded it.

Yet otherwise, despite their predicament, most men remained calm, steeled by the words of the Rev Isaac Williams Wauchope:

"Be quiet and calm, my countrymen. What is happening now is what you came to do. You are going to die, but that is what you came to do."

"Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers... Swazis, Pondos, Basotho... so let us die like brothers. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war-cries, brothers, for though they made us leave our assegais in the kraal, our voices are left with our bodies."

In the Mendi's death throes, some of the men reportedly broke out in song, while others supposedly performed a 'death dance' on the upper deck. Myth or reality, it quickly entered South African folklore.

Such stoicism and courage seemed to disappear once the men were thrown into the water with a temperature of just 3 or 4°C.

Spine-chilling cries pierced the dark – so awful that they were louder than the whistle sounded by HMS Brisk, which saved around 100 souls, and certainly audible aboard the Darro, which made no effort to rescue the survivors.

By dawn on February 21, 616 South Africans – all but nine of them black – were dead, plus 30 of the Mendi's crew.

The subsequent inquiry was scathing of the Darro's master, Capt Henry Winchester Stump, who was travelling too fast and too rashly in thick fog and then compounded his poor seamanship by disregarding international laws and failing to rescue stricken mariners.

For these – and other – failings Stump's punishment was pathetically light: suspension of his master's certificate for 12 months. In July 1919, he was back at sea – and in charge.

■ This photograph (Q 15435) 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](http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs), or by calling 0207 416 5309.

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## For Joe – 'a fine example of a Naval officer...'

A MEMORIAL corner has been dedicated to popular submariner Lt Joe Wright in the base where he served – and sadly died.

The 26-year-old from Conyer in Kent collapsed on a run around Faslane in January last year. Despite the efforts of friends and paramedics, Joe, who was serving with HMS Victorious' starboard crew at the time, was pronounced dead.

Despite his relative youth, Joe had a big impact during his time in the RN. A pub in Bournemouth held a fundraising day in his name, while six crew from HMS Talent rode from Plymouth to London in aid of the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity, which supported his family after his sudden death.

And in Faslane, Victorious' starboard crew, former shipmates from Joe's previous boat Tireless and friends and family attended a service of celebration of Joe's life in the chaplaincy before the Wright family – Joe's parents Janice and 'Shiner', plus fiancée, Charlotte – unveiled the memorial corner.

Joe was the third generation of his family to serve in the Royal Navy and the 'Wright Corner' in the Blue Room of Neptune's wardroom – used by some of the highest-ranking officers in the Silent Service – features a picture of the submarine officer alongside a portrait of his grandfather together with a set of his grandfather's numerous medals which have been lovingly restored.

"Joe was hard working, well liked by all ranks, kind and had an infectious sense of humour – he was a fine example of a Naval officer and he will be missed," said Lt Dan McFarlane, Victorious (Starboard) correspondence officer.

Pictures: LPhot Stevie Burke, FRPU North



## Daring's hump day

IF YOU only see one photograph of a naval officer in No1s riding a brightly-decorated camel on a beach in Bahrain today... make it this one.

Cdr Phil Dennis rides off into the midday heat, bringing to an end his tenure in command of HMS Daring.

With the Type 45 destroyer's mid-deployment break in Bahrain over and essential maintenance carried out to ensure the ship can continue air defence operations in the Middle East into the summer, Cdr Dennis handed over command to Cdr Marcus Hember (who's previously been in charge of Daring's younger sister Diamond).

Daring's crew and the team at ASRY – the Arab Shipbuilding and Repair Yard, where the work was carried out on the Portsmouth-based warship – decided a send-off with a ship of the desert theme would be just the ticket for Cdr Dennis, who took the helm of Daring in May 2014.

"It has been my privilege to have been the captain of HMS Daring for well over two and a half years," Cdr Dennis told his 200 sailors and Royal Marines. "I hope that you are as proud of your efforts as I am of you."

The ship's company formed a 'gauntlet of honour' on the beach, applauding Cdr Dennis as his camel was guided along the sand by an experienced local handler.

Cdr Marcus Hember is now in charge of D32 where, so the (unofficial) slogan goes, "dreams come true".

Picture: Tony Haile, ASRY



# A meal fit for the Queen...

THERE'S plenty to go around – no need to fight over it...

Medical assistants PO Elizabeth O'Gorman and LMA Louise Whalley and logistics officer Lt Katy Watts enjoy dessert (pictured by LPhot Pepe Hogan), rounding off the first ever meal onboard Britain's biggest warship.

The grills and ranges were fired up, the ovens and deep-fat fryers switched on and the dining room filled with tempting aromas as HMS Queen Elizabeth's brand-new galley was tested.

With the move onboard by the ship's company looming in a matter of weeks – followed by the leviathan's maiden voyage – the catering department had to make sure all the equipment fitted in the state-of-the-art galley was in full working order.

The team of 26 chefs made use of all the cooking implements, appliances and preparations areas – which meant much more varied lunchtime fare for the 100 or so diners (a mixture of ship's company and Aircraft Carrier Alliance employees responsible for building the future flagship) than usually on offer.

With a budget of £10 per head, the chefs served Balmoral chicken (chicken wrapped in bacon and haggis), pulled beef, noodle salad, dauphinois potatoes, sweet potato fries, bread, fruit cheesecake and chocolate pudding (*inter alia*) all accompanied

by, er, pusser's legendary diluted cordial.

"The trial run was a great success and it has put both chefs and the equipment in good stead for when the entire ship's company are served their first meal on board," said PO(C) Paul Cummings from Bristol.

"In all my time as a chef in the Royal Navy I have never seen a galley the size of this one, and the range of equipment means our jobs will be made much easier when it comes time to feed the whole ship.

"It was really nice to serve up this meal to a few of our colleagues as we tested the ship's galley and, judging by the smiles all round, I think they enjoyed it too."

Both Queen Elizabeth and her sister ship HMS Prince of Wales have five dining rooms to feed their 670-strong ship's company... and possibly as many as 1,600 souls when the fast jet and helicopter air groups and Royal Marines are embarked.

"Every sailor in the Royal Navy will tell you how important food is to morale, so it was a real privilege to be part of the first meal on board," said Lt Watts, from Dorset.

"The food was fantastic and the size of the dining spaces on board are really impressive.

"I think everybody here would give top marks to the chefs."



## Winkle still watching out for FAA fliers

MEET Winkle, the newest addition to the Fleet Air Arm, named in honour of Britain's greatest naval aviator.

The Bird Control Unit at RNAS Yeovilton is training the young peregrine falcon to keep the airfield as free as possible from birds.

Few things are more dangerous to fliers than bird strikes, particularly against engines; most famously US Airways Flight 1549 which came down in the Hudson River in New York back in January 2009 after flying through a flock of geese (an incident recently been given the Hollywood treatment as *Sully*, starring Tom Hanks).

Back in the mid-60s when CO of RNAS Lossiemouth, Capt Eric 'Winkle' Brown came up with idea of using birds of prey to keep the local seagull populace at bay.

Accidents involving bird strikes were costing lives and money – £120,000 per month on engine and airframe repairs (that's nearly £4m in 2017!).

The Naval falconry experiment established by the former test pilot, who died last year aged 97, helped to dramatically reduce strikes and save the Fleet Air Arm a fortune.

Bird units continue to this day at both RNAS Yeovilton and Culdrose.

## Artisan's '3D eyes' pass the test

THE Navy's '3D eyes' have completed three years of trials and assessment and are fully ready to look out for threats to the Fleet by sea and air.

First installed on HMS Iron Duke (which has since deployed with the system), all 19 Artisan radar sets have now rolled off the production line at BAE's Cowes works as part of a £105m deal to upgrade the Fleet.

The radar – which can be seen atop main masts – can track more than 900 targets simultaneously (in the air and on the surface), whether they're the size of an enemy ship cruising at 15 knots or a missile no wider than a cricket ball incoming at more than 2,000mph, and can see potential threats 125 miles away or as close as 650ft.

It's been designed to 'see through' all the invisible 'clutter' in our skies created by television, satellite and phone signals and can cope with more than 10,000 mobile phone signals trying to jam it.

All in all, it's five times more effective than its predecessor 996 (officially, Artisan is designated Type 997).

So far Artisan has been fitted to 11 of 13 Type 23 frigates, flagship HMS Ocean, assault ship HMS Bulwark, future flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth. It'll be fitted to her sister Prince of Wales, the remaining two 23s in their refit cycle, HMS Albion as she returns to front-line duties and there's a test variant installed at the MOD's Portsmouth Technology Park overlooking Portsmouth.

# Sabre's strait talking

PATROL boat HMS Sabre sailed 12 times further than normal when she broke the bonds that tie her to the waters around Gibraltar and crossed to North Africa.

The fast craft – top speed 37 mph – typically patrols Gibraltar's territorial waters alongside her sister Scimitar, various RIB inflatables and police craft.

With those waters only stretching a few miles from the shores of the British territory, the Gibraltar Squadron boats rarely lose sight of the Rock.

On only his second day in command of Sabre, Lt James Myhill had to negotiate the Strait of Gibraltar – used by around 200 large merchant vessels daily – to make the three-dozen-mile passage to Tangier for some combined training with the Royal Moroccan Navy, both tabletop and real, and an act of remembrance.

Defence Attaché Lt Col Charlie Warner RA, members of the British ex-pat community and Chief Superintendent Rob Allen of the Gibraltar Defence Police joined Sabre's half a dozen sailors at St Andrew's Church for a service of thanksgiving and remembrance for Commonwealth WW2 dead, followed by a wreath-laying at the war grave cemetery in central Tangier (pictured).

Lt Myhill shared some of



his theoretical tactical training with Moroccan sailors, discussed maritime security operations and explained how the Royal Navy manages open-source shipping information.

The weekend visit closed with Sabre heading back towards Gib in company with the Moroccan patrol boat P107 as the two fast craft practised attacking each other, before parting as friends – with an invite to the Gibraltar Squadron to return to Tangier later this year.

"The opportunity to refresh and strengthen relationship between the Royal Moroccan Navy and the Royal Navy has been a privilege," Sabre's Commanding Officer said.

"We share territory within eight nautical miles of one another and given the importance of the Strait of Gibraltar as an international conduit of trade, this sort of tactical development and sharing of ideas amongst naval officers is key."



# Royal Navy personnel aboard ice patrol vessel ensure a remote and

ROYAL Navy personnel last set foot on remote Brabant Island three years ago.

On that occasion bad weather thwarted their task of removing equipment which had been abandoned more than 30 years ago.

This time they had more success and tonnes of items were dug up from the ice and transported to HMS Protector.

Brabant, which lies more than 800 miles south of Punta Arenas, is the second largest island of the Palmer Archipelago within the British Antarctic Territory.

A party of Royal Marines aboard the ice patrol ship initially went ashore to recon the site, returning with a three-metre long black metal sledge, which had been used to transport a skidoo by a Joint Forces expedition in 1983-85.

Expedition personnel had to leave the island in a hurry when one of their party suffered a serious leg injury, leaving much of their kit behind.

Protector sat in choppy waters half a mile offshore while a number of her personnel endured a rough journey in the ship's Zodiac vessels.

They landed within sight of chinstrap penguins and a solitary leopard seal sunning itself on the pebble beach. The chinstraps delivered a frenzy of warning calls so loud it drowned out the sound of the boats' engines.

The previous day Royal Marines had moved sacks of equipment to the beach, but other abandoned kit was stuck firmly in ice on the other side of a steep ledge.

A flurry of activity saw sailors and marines attack the site with spades, saws and ice picks, freeing numerous items, including rope, skis, scaffolding, barrels and a pot of Sudocrem.

Working in teams, the crews also found maps, socks, photos and cutlery. One find, a spice rack, was handed to one of Protector's chefs, with the message "it may improve your culinary skills."

The task took several hours – during which the penguins kept a watch on proceedings – and after clearing the site, personnel covered the 'dig' with fresh snow.

Several tonnes of kit were taken back to Protector from Brabant, which lies off the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Earlier on her patrol Protector visited the British Antarctic Survey base at Signy Island in the region's South Orkney islands.

The island, situated below 60 degrees latitude to the North East of the Antarctic Peninsula, is home to a plethora of wildlife,

including penguins and many different breeds of seal that on whole number more than 20,000, the most prominent being the Elephant Seal.

The only humans that inhabit the island are five scientists from the British Antarctic Survey. However, due to the severity of the Austral winter on the island, the huts are only occupied during the Austral summer from November to April. The scientists undertake a number of projects while on the island, which benefit from the remote and unspoilt ecosystem that thrives on and around the landmass.

A contingent of Royal Marines went ashore to the base while Protector, which was greeted by a pod of whales, negotiated the neon blue and white icebergs.

The ship's survey motorboat James Caird IV surveyed the waters around the island before a number of Protector's crew prepared to go ashore for the night.

Personnel landed alongside a wooden jetty on Signy, once home to a whaling station.

A crumbling concrete jetty sits off to the side of the buildings, and a huge rusting cylinder, several metres in length, floats in the shallows in front of the encampment, once used for whale blubber; it is a potent reminder of the region's principal industry in a bygone era.

A huge whalebone adorns the entrance to the main hut with an old rusted whale harpoon sitting beneath it. The harpoon is the size of a man and several inches in diameter with a detachable arrowhead.

Countless more arrowheads line the top of each concrete pillar on which the main hut is built.

Led by Sgt Paul 'Simmo' Simpson, the RM Mountain Leader, the party skirted the rock-strewn shore of the bay in which the huts are clustered with a few further chance encounters with Elephant Seals tucked away amongst the rocks.

At the other side of the horseshoe-shaped bay the

personnel turned up the steep scree slope to proceed inland.

The group took some time to capture photos and take in the scenery.

One, Sub Lt Lauren Davis, even constructed a mini igloo amid much scepticism from the group.

Capt Robert Rudge said: "As daylight faded to twilight the air temperature began to plummet and the landscape plunged into a vibrant monochrome tone."

"To our front, the snow-covered land falls away to a lake in the bottom of the valley where the sound of much commotion can be heard from what one can only at this point assume is yet more seals."

"The snow-covered mountain at the opposite side of the valley shows signs of a recent avalanche, which is the only mark upon its immaculate veneer."

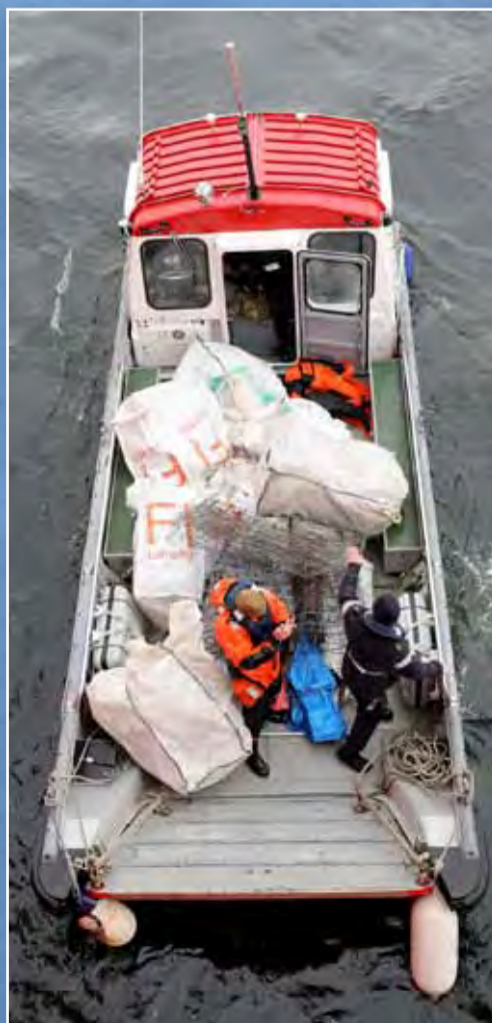
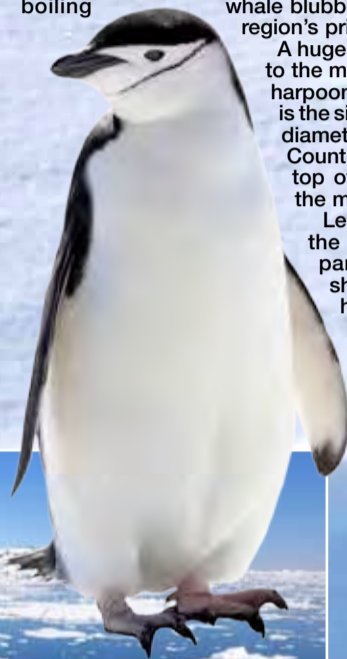
The sailors set up camp and went to watch the wildlife, mainly Elephant Seals, before preparing to welcome in 2017 with a dinner of sweet and sour chicken, chicken tikka and chilli con carne, washed down with coffee and hot chocolate.

Before leaving Signy, a number of the ship's company wrote postcards, which will not leave the island until March.

Protector left Devonport in October 2015 and completed an historic patrol to the East Antarctic and Ross Sea. She is due to return to the UK this summer.

Words: Capt Robert Rudge, RLC

Pictures: LPhoto Kyle Heller, HMS Protector



● Top left: Protector makes her way past neon blue and white icebergs; Top right: Personnel pile up equipment to remove from the island, watched by a colony of chinstrap penguins; Far left: It was hard going digging in the snow and ice; Bottom left: Personnel take a breather for a photo; Left: Protector's work boat is piled up with items removed from the island; Above: A seal on an ice floe; Below left: Mne Declan Kelly with one of the photos found at the site; Below right: Lt Emma Farley with a bowl she found in the ice



**uninhabited island in Antarctica remains a pristine haven for wildlife**

**OUT OF THIS  
WORLD**



# Institute of Naval Medicine is built on a proud history



THE Royal Navy has for centuries played a crucial role in medical advances, living up to the *From the sea to health* motto of the Institute of Naval Medicine.

On that historic foundation was built an organisation which gathers a range of specialised facilities and staff from maritime and occupational health disciplines together in a unique centre of excellence.

Historically, as a strictly-regulated organisation with a global reach and (generally) meticulous record-keeping, the Senior Service was ideally placed to identify, develop and test new theories as warships roamed from frozen shores to tropical beaches. Aspects of what we today recognise as physical health, mental health and occupational health appear regularly throughout the annals of the Navy, from the use of fruit to combat scurvy to the treatment of PTSD in the Georgian Navy.

James Lind – the 300th anniversary of whose birth was celebrated late last year – was appointed Physician in Charge at Haslar Hospital in Gosport in 1758, and proceeded to push back boundaries as he conducted organised clinical trials on the role of citrus fruit and fresh food in countering scurvy.

And while the Royal Navy of the Napoleonic era had a reputation for being a harsh environment, there were remarkable flashes of enlightenment – Vice Admiral Henry Garrett, who was Governor of Haslar Hospital from between 1820 and 1838, declared that “a seaman who has lost his reason in the service of the Crown should receive care and attention on a scale not less than a seaman who has lost a limb in the same cause.” When formally opened in October 1753 Haslar was almost certainly the largest hospital in the world, and claimed other



● The delicate process of sowing penicillin through a flame into culturing vessels is captured on film by Lt H W Tomlin at the Royal Navy Medical School in Clevedon in August 1944 – one of several images of the Navy's penicillin research facility and factory held by the Imperial War Museum  
Picture: © IWM (A 25173)

records as well, including the largest brick edifice in Europe.

A dedicated naval psychiatric unit opened in 1818 (taking around 100 patients from the Bethlem Royal Hospital in London – the notorious Bedlam ‘madhouse’).

But it wasn't until almost a century later that the instructional side of Naval medicine was

formalised by the creation of the School of Naval Medicine in 1912.

At first, Naval medical officers attended courses delivered by the London teaching hospitals, covering areas such as microbiology, clinical pathology, hygiene, vaccines and tropical medicine.

The school moved to Clevedon in Somerset in World War 2, and

in 1943 an adjoining factory was created for the production of penicillin for the Armed Forces and civilian establishments.

Royal Navy and civilian personnel carried out research into the recently-discovered antibiotic, and 40,000 sterilised milk bottles were used to grow penicillin.

The freeze-dried powder was packed and distributed from Clevedon, and when reconstituted with sterilised water it became injectable.

After the war the school moved once again, this time to Monkton House in Gosport, which had been requisitioned in 1941 as accommodation for WRNS personnel and was bought from its owner by the Admiralty for £9,850.

During the 1960s and into the 1970s the school adapted to support the Polaris nuclear submarine programme, and in 1969 its expanded role was marked by it being re-named the Institute of Naval Medicine.

Research, training and radiological protection service facilities were built, including a controllable environment residential chamber that was believed to be unique in Europe.

The INM's newly-defined mission was to optimise the operational capability of the Royal Navy and UK Defence by the provision of robust medical and scientific outputs, which also made it the *alma mater* of Royal Naval Medical Service.

Today some 250 INM and DSTL (Defence Science and Technology Laboratory) personnel work on site, and the Institute has responsibility for up to 100 doctors and dentists who are working with units and establishments around the world.

The Institute provides training and research in environmental medicine and science, survival and thermal medicine, human factors, applied physiology, acoustics and

vibration, underwater medicine, diving and hyperbaric medicine, and submarine and radiation medicine, providing scientific evidence to inform policy.

It also accounts for medical employability and standards, medical records, Medical Board of Survey and is the home of the Journal of the RN Medical Service.

Also on site is the Medical Service's Historic Library and Collection, gathered from RN Hospitals Plymouth and Haslar, together with the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service Museum and Archives.

The Institute welcomed a new Medical Officer in Charge last September – although with every RN doctor passing through its doors, the INM was familiar territory to Surg Capt Fleur Marshall.

Surg Capt Marshall joined the Senior Service as a medical cadet in 1992 prior to graduating from Bristol University.

She completed her house jobs in Bristol and Plymouth before the 1996 New Entry Medical Officer's Course.

On General Duties, she served at sea in HMS Norfolk (South Atlantic), Leeds Castle (return journey from Falkland Islands) and Boxer (Middle East and Far East), as well as shore jobs at HMS Drake and RMB Stonehouse.

After completing GP training in 2003 Surg Capt Marshall was appointed Staff Medical Officer to Flag Officer Sea Training, being responsible for collective



● Monkton House

medical training at sea.

While Deputy Principal Medical Officer at HMS Sultan in 2006 she undertook an ice patrol in HMS Endurance, and the following year was selected for promotion and assigned as the PMO of HMS Ark Royal.

She then completed the Advanced Command and Staff Course, which included an MA in Defence Studies, then in 2009 established a new post in Navy Command HQ – SO1 Primary Care (Afloat), with responsibility for healthcare governance in afloat units and medical support to all medical departments at sea.

A stint as Officer Career Manager (Medical) followed, when Surg Capt Marshall was responsible for more than 300 medical officers and presided over Admiralty Interview Boards for potential medical officers.

On promotion to Surgeon Captain in 2013, she moved to the newly-formed Defence Primary Healthcare as Regional Clinical Director (South), overseeing 20 medical facilities and their delivery of health care.

Another year of study, in London, including subjects such as strategy, international relations, global politics and economics ended with her taking over at the INM – the latest chapter in a career that demonstrates the opportunities and variety of a medical career in the Royal Navy.

Future editions of *Navy News* will look in more detail at some of the work carried out at the INM, in topics including diving, thermal and nutrition.

# Trio achieve sporting success

WITH fewer than four decades passed since the first dedicated course for female Physical Training Instructors (PTIs) there are still some milestones to be achieved.

And one such record was captured by POPT Donna Chapman when in 2015 she became the first female Number One Instructor in the 127-year history of the RN School of Physical Training (RNSPT).

As such, she had a key role in putting qualifiers through their paces on the gruelling six-month course as they strove to qualify as Leading Physical Training Instructors at HMS Temeraire, under the auspices of the Maritime Warfare School, based at HMS Collingwood.

The PT course content included circuit and weight training, strength and conditioning, fitness testing, sports science, and diet and nutrition. Qualifiers also cover basic coaching in a variety of sports including football, hockey, volleyball and boxing, plus topics such as event management and income generation.

The Open University now recognises the quality of training delivered at the RNSPT by awarding all students a foundation degree in sport and

fitness.

Donna said she felt extremely proud at making history in the tough world of RN Physical Training.

“I had my heart set on this role since I became a PTI in the Navy in 2008.

“Becoming the Number One Instructor is often considered the pinnacle role as a POPT within the PT Specialisation and I loved every minute of it.

“It's hard work but extremely rewarding and well worth it.”

Donna is now using those same motivational skills at RN air station Culdrose.

Another member of the PT Branch who would echo that sentiment is LPT Melanie Haslam.

Back in 2010 Mel, 28, failed an MSFT and was put on a Divisional Officer's warning – not the first time she had flirted with failure over her personal fitness.

And this came at a particularly awkward moment, as Mel, who joined the Royal Navy in 2005, wanted to go to Afghanistan to be a front-line female searcher.

Having been told she couldn't proceed until she had passed the fitness test, Mel knew that the only thing stopping her was her weight and diet – at around 14



● POPT Donna Chapman, the first female Number One Instructor in the 127-year history of the RN School of Physical Training

Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool

stone (88kg) Melanie knew she had to get her act in gear.

She started to train twice daily, lost the weight required and achieved 13m 30s on her 2.4km run – enough to gain a pass on the RNFT and secure the job in Afghanistan.

Mel went on deployment as an intelligence exploitation analyst and spent a further seven months trying to lose weight whilst also working 13-14 hour days.

She returned to the UK in February 2012 at just under 12 stone (76kg).

Her next draft was to frigate

HMS Westminister, and she took up crossfit to continue her personal health crusade – and she took every opportunity to use her own circumstances to encourage others.

Mel smashed her next fitness test – the first time she registered an ‘excellent’ – and the ship's PTI asked if she had ever considered transferring to the PTI branch.

She requested an aptitude test, which she passed, and she found herself on LPT qualifying course 61 in April 2015.

Mel took the course in her stride, and is now back in a Type

23, this time HMS Monmouth.

But that is not the end of the tale.

Mel has just competed in the Combined Service Powerlifting competition, gaining first place, and broke all four records (bench, squat, deadlift and total) in the RN Powerlifting Championships (see p45).

She also holds the Combined Service deadlift record.

Her next goal is the British and World championships in powerlifting this year, and would like to take a crack at the world record for deadlift, which currently stands at 190kg.

She has also tried her hand at skeleton bobsleigh.

Mel said: “Everything I set my mind to I achieve.”

“Coming from an RNFT failure to this is unbelievable.”

She said she still finds it hard to believe she has achieved the things that she has in only five years.

Anything is possible...

Talking of achievements, former Wren Annette McHugh, nee Tinkler, also played her part in Naval history when she joined her PTI course at the old Pitt Street site of HMS Temeraire back in January 1978.

Because Annette and her colleagues – 14 of them in all – were the first LWPT trainees to enter the system the traditional way, making it the first all-female



● Original trainees line up at Temeraire in 1978 – back row, from left, Judy Cotterill, Sue Oldman, Denise Wall, Julie Frowen, Ethel McMahon and Kathy Bean; middle row, from left, Sharon Brown, Gill Buck, Annette Tinkler, Maggie Edson, Sylvia Sims

course on the Navy's books.

Other women had already sported the crossed clubs badge – two petty officers passed a short sports assistant's course in 1975 at Temeraire, followed by a bespoke interim conversion course.

It was several years before the first mixed courses went through the Royal Naval School of Physical Training.



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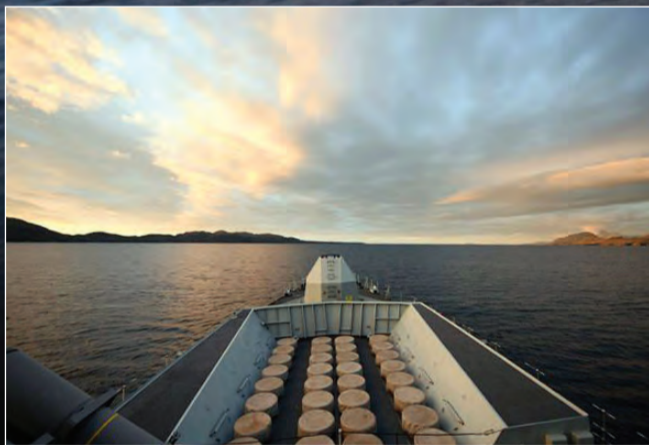
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# It's the height of summer in the South Atlantic – but that

© Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies





## Portland's potpourri



**W**ITH the upper reaches of the 6,765ft volcano Queen Mary's Peak shrouded by cloud – as it is much of the year – HMS Portland anchors off the most remote populated island on the planet.

Just days after enjoying the snow-covered paradise of South Georgia, the Plymouth-based frigate crossed 1,650 miles of the South Atlantic to Tristan da Cunha.

The island – at 38 square miles, the size of Coventry but with a population of just 265 – rises out of the South Atlantic 1,200 miles from the nearest inhabited land: Saint Helena, another distant British territory.

South Africa lies 1,500 miles to the east and South America 2,200 miles to the west. There's no airport, just a small harbour (too small for HMS Portland, but not her boats).

The islanders, almost all concentrated in the 'capital', Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, are British citizens, drive on the left-hand side of the few roads and spend the pound in shops.

Portland carried out a fishery protection patrol of Tristan's waters – the sea is rich with crawfish, one of the island's main sources of income – before dropping anchor for 24 hours in company with tanker RFA Gold Rover.

The short visit assured islanders the mother country had not forgotten about them, and allowed the sailors the rare chance to sample an island few people set foot on.

Keen to dust off their clubs after the passage from South Georgia were Portland's golfers who fancied a crack at the world's most isolated – and challenging – links course.

AB 'Smudge' Smith broke the course record with a below-par round of just 34 (over nine holes).

"It's a really tough course but great fun; I've never played on a volcano before. I was on good form today and I am really proud to have broken the Tristan course record," he said.

Footballers stretched their legs on the very uneven pitch against a local side who were assisted by 99 per cent humidity... and cows wandering around munching on the grass.

The rest of the ship's company used their time to explore Tristan. One group was led on a hike to the summit of Queen Mary's Peak, the volcano which dominates the island.

Back in 1961 the volcano, less than a mile away from the main settlement, erupted and the Royal Navy was called into evacuate the islanders.

"It is amazing to think that the huge hill we walked on appeared from nowhere over a couple of weeks! It is so close to Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, the islanders were very lucky they didn't lose everything," said Leading Chef 'Jonah' Jones. "I really enjoyed some time ashore in Tristan, the scenery is stunning."

Portland weighed anchor late in the evening to

continue her South Atlantic patrol.

Earlier in her deployment, Portland's crew soaked up the high summer with barbecues and dips in the ocean.

But before you feel too envious, it was a mere 3°C in South Georgia; the terrain was largely blanketed by snow and the water was a 'balmy' 8°C – two degrees warmer than in the frigate's home base of Plymouth.

The ship spent three days patrolling the waters of the remote island chain – which lies about 850 miles from the Falklands and just 900 miles from the northernmost tip of Antarctica.

As one of Britain's Overseas Territories, South Georgia receives regular visits from Royal Navy vessels – patrol ship HMS Clyde called in at the tail end of last year – to provide reassurance and support to the small population and British Antarctic Survey scientists monitoring the environment.

Portland is in the closing weeks of a nine-month deployment which began in the Gulf and Indian Ocean, joining in the international naval effort dealing with terrorism, piracy and drug-running.

After a month in South Africa to break up the lengthy period away and carry out maintenance on the ship, the frigate resumed her patrols, this time in the South Atlantic and briefly in the Pacific, flying the flag for the country and British industry in Chile.

Each port and nation visited since last June has offered sights and adventures, but nothing quite like South Georgia with its wildlife (king penguins, fur and elephant seals), deserted whaling stations, glaciers and fjords – too much to fully take in during a three-day visit.

The first day was spent at anchor in Stromness Bay on the north coast, where sailors were whisked ashore by boat to Husvik Harbour where they were greeted by some very grumpy seals.

**D**ay two found Portland in the next inlet along, anchored in Fortuna Bay where crew decided to open the world's most southerly pizza take-away. On the flight deck. With outside temperatures hovering at zero.

Head pizza chef, CPOET(WE) Tony White said: "I don't think I have ever cooked pizza with such an amazing view."

Assisting him with the preparation and baking was fellow weapon engineer CPO Dan Broome.

"Estate agents always say 'location, location, location'," said the 37-year-old. "I can't think of a better one for a pizza shop than this."

"We raised over £700 for Children with Cancer UK through a number of events such as selling these pizzas."

There was more fund-raising during the final stop of the brief visit: Cumberland East Bay and South Georgia's 'capital', the abandoned whaling

station at Grytviken where HMS Portland's 'Batman' and 'Robin' (25-year-old ET(ME)s Sam Barron and Sean Woods, better known aboard as Matelot and Throbbin') completed their eleventh 10,000-metre run of the ship's deployment... in superhero costumes.

"We've run ten kilometres at each stop," said Sean. "Bahrain was probably the worst with a temperature of nearly 50 degrees and ridiculously-high humidity. It's crazy to go from that to worrying about slipping over on ice down here!"

"The whole ship's company have been really supportive and we have raised nearly £2,000 for our causes – the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity and Parkinson's UK"

While the dynamic duo were trotting around Grytviken, their shipmates were visiting the whaling museum, Sir Ernest Shackleton's grave, and calling in at a Royal Mail post office.

At nearby King Edward Point crew met the British Antarctic Survey team and offered them a tour of the frigate.

Upon sailing, the ship's company posed for a photo in front of the world-famous Nordenskjold Glacier. The youngest sailor, ET(WE) Matthew Jeacock, who turned 18 over Christmas, had the honour of posing on top of the 4.5in gun.

"I only joined the ship a month ago and in that time I have flown in a helicopter, ridden in a sea boat, helped to fire the 4.5in gun and had a generally amazing time," the teenager said. "I think I have already ticked every box in the recruitment brochure!"

Capt Paul Stroude, the frigate's commanding officer, said after the high tempo of Portland's deployment, the few days in South Georgia offered a welcome opportunity to 'chill out' – literally.

"Despite being there in the height of summer, temperatures rarely got above freezing," he said. "But the ship's company wrapped up warmly and used some rare time off to explore the stunning scenery and meet the exotic wildlife."

The previous RN visitors to South Georgia were a hardy bunch; Clyde's sailors plunged into the water (temperature 0.8°C) for a 100-metre relay.

Not so the Portlanders. But they did brave the waters of East Cove in the Falklands (under 10°C) for a charity Boxing Day dip.

More than 30 crew – about one sixth of the ship's company – volunteered, among them Lt Cdr Gemma Britton, one of the frigate's principal warfare officers.

"I am a surfer and didn't think I would struggle with the cold but the water was another level of cold compared to that off the coast of Cornwall," said the 35-year-old.

Portland is due back in the UK in the spring.



## Same ship, different ear

VISITORS to Britain's most famous warship can experience the hellish maelstrom of Trafalgar as a new audio guide brings the battle – and HMS Victory – to life.

Tourists clambering aboard the legendary man o'war now receive a hand-held audio guide – the first time one has been used in the ship's nearly 100-year career as a museum.

The guide has been introduced as part of the massive revamp Victory is going through to restore her to her pre-Trafalgar appearance, preserve the ship and give tourists the full story rather than 'just' looking around an old warship.

So now visitors – nearly half a million every year – get to experience HMS Victory through Nelson's 'ears' – from joining her on September 14 1805 through to the decisive battle with the Franco-Spanish fleet six weeks later.

Nine of Victory's ship's company have been chosen to bring the ship to life through the audio guide, including her 36-year-old captain, Thomas Hardy, an 18-year-old midshipman and Nelson himself.

As the story unfolds, tourists move through the ship up to the quarterdeck and poop deck, which was opened to the public for the first time in 2016, before descending into Victory's bowels via the sick bay, gun decks, and the spot where Nelson died on the orlop deck.

As well as the audio guides – which will be made available in foreign languages in due course – the existing physical guides will remain on board to answer questions and guided tours will continue to run on weekdays between November and March.

## In awe of oral history @BRNC

WHAT was it like to pass through the *alma mater* of the Navy's officer corps in days past?

Now you can find out through the wonders of social media and a £45,000 oral history project.

Around 80 hours of recollections from more than 60 people who worked or trained at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth between 1930 and 1990 have been saved for posterity and are now available through Twitter.

The interviews span tumultuous military and social changes, from the demands of WW2 and the Cold War to the first women to be turned from civilians into Naval officers at the college.

"These interviews have provided a fascinating insight into what it really felt like to be at BRNC and are a priceless part of our history," said Cdr Rob Dunn, Dartmouth's second-in-command and chairman of the Britannia Museum Trust.

"The recordings show how much the place has changed – but the ethos of BRNC and the pride felt by cadets has remained a constant.

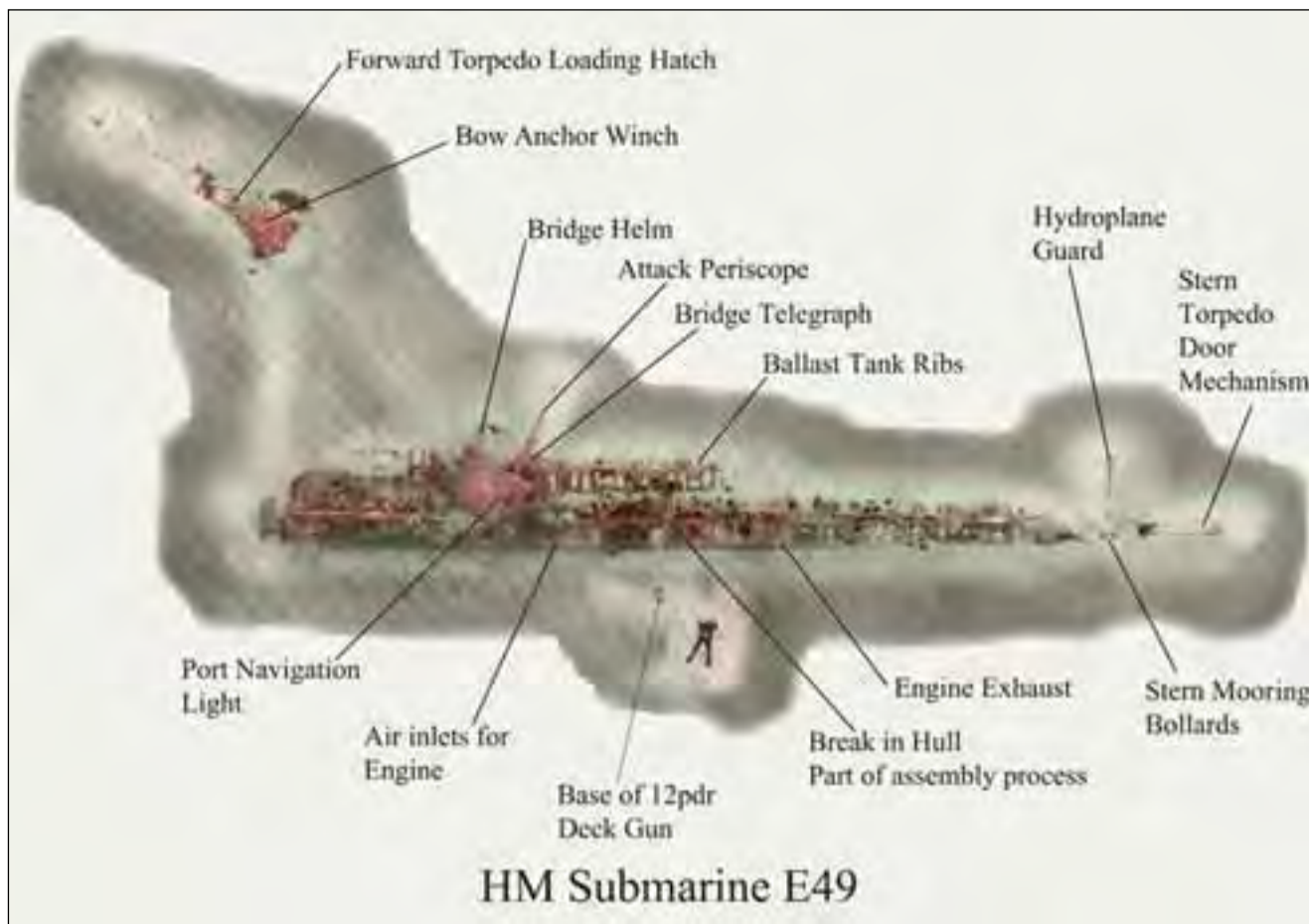
"Some of our contributors have had prestigious careers within the Royal Navy and in the wider world, including the First Sea Lord and the first woman to command one of our major Naval establishments."

You can listen to the accounts – recorded thanks to a £45,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and support from the Britannia Association – via [@brncoralhistory](#) on Twitter...

...or you can listen to extracts which will be used at an exhibition BRNC is hosting in May, followed by a mobile exhibition travelling the UK and beyond.

The project runs until the summer.

If you want to record your Dartmouth memories, email [brncoralhistoryproject@gmail.com](mailto:brncoralhistoryproject@gmail.com)



# 3D model captures Great War wreck

LYING at a depth of 32m in Balta Sound, Shetland, and surrounded by near-white sand lies the wreck of HM Submarine E49.

The story of her loss is known and documented, sinking with the loss of all hands after striking a mine laid by German submarine UC76 on March 12 1917.

The ever-shifting sand means the amount of the submarine visible is variable, but as a special 3D model produced by Simon Brown Images shows, the mine damage inflicted is apparent with the bows lying to the starboard side (*top of 2D representation, above*).

However, the overall preservation of the wreck is excellent considering the 100 years of immersion.

Regular readers of *Navy News* may recall Simon's previous underwater photographic work documenting HMS Royal Oak in 2009 and the coverage of the various Fleet Diving Units.

But with the advent of a technique called photogrammetry it is now possible to capture and present far more detail than a mere 2D photograph can on its own.

Taking 1,300 images of the submarine took the entire dive, but this was just the beginning as processing all that data and creating the model took several days of solid computer effort.

But the results were worth it, capturing and creating a permanent record of how the wreck is preserved and lies today



● HMS E20, a sister boat to E49, pictured during her brief World War 1 career. The E-class submarines, in the hands of bold and skilful crews, were regarded as the best British boats of the Great War

whilst allowing the non-diver to explore to their heart's content.

The model is georeferenced too, so it is possible to view the wreck in mapping applications.

The addition of a diver in the scene adds a sense of scale.

Humans tend to move a little, even if trying to remain still, and the software that aligns the images tends to ignore movement so seeing diver Rob alongside the wreck is an added bonus.

Another product of the model is the 2D orthophoto, a diver's eye view of the entire wreck with a level of detail that allows the viewer to count the individual sea urchins.

Simon tracked down a contemporary Admiralty chart

of Balta Sound in the National Library of Scotland, allowing the submarine to be placed in context of the final resting place.

Such a chart, dated 1914, was almost certainly carried aboard the submarine on the morning of her loss.

The wreck currently does not enjoy legal protection, but the isolated location (Unst, the nearest inhabited island, is Britain's most northerly island), coupled with the deep respect shown by the dive boat skippers that do visit the wreck, help to ensure the submarine remains untouched.

The 3D model has created a permanent record of what was, and was not, present on the wreck at time of recording – something

future visitors and historians may well find useful.

To see the full 3D model, go to <https://sketchfab.com/models/40d1c47a4d7447feb42e643cea895d7a>

Signed prints of E49, with chart background, are available through <https://simon-brown.pixelrights.com/albums/LheWCb/e49-and-rob>

E49 had been visiting Baltasound in March 1917 to repair some sea damage, and she was sunk on leaving the area. The wreck was found by the Shetland Sub-Aqua Club in 1988.

Former local policeman Harold Evans plans to mark the centenary of her loss with a ceremony next month.

## Historians to discuss Jutland

A DEBATE on the Battle of Jutland takes place at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard on February 2.

Chaired by TV historian and broadcaster Dan Snow, the debate is organised by the National Museum of the Royal Navy and promises to get to the heart of a battle that has divided opinion for 100 years.

Joining the panel is Dr Stephan Huck, the Director of the German Naval Museum,

historian Dr Andrew Gordon, author of *The Rules of the Game* – for many, the definitive book on the battle – and Dr Laura Rowe, lecturer at the University of Exeter, whose primary research interest focuses on the social and cultural history of World War 1 and on the Royal Navy in particular.

The final panel member is Nick Hewitt, author, broadcaster and naval historian, and the National Museum's project leader for the

blockbuster exhibition that opened in May at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard – *36 Hours: Jutland 1916, The Battle That Won The War*.

Tickets for the debate, which takes place in Action Stations at 7pm, cost £10 (no concessions) and are available online at [www.historicdockyard.co.uk/jutland-debate](http://www.historicdockyard.co.uk/jutland-debate) or from the Visitor Centre at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard between 10am – 4pm daily.

## Victims of Third Ypres remembered

RELATIVES of men who fought in the 'worst' battle of World War I can pay tribute over two days of centenary commemorative events this summer.

To Britons, nothing better encapsulates the horrors and seeming futility of the 1914-18 conflict than the Third Ypres – better known as Passchendaele.

The attack was meant to sweep across Flanders and capture Bruges and Zeebrugge – capturing bases used by German submarines which in the spring and summer of 1917 threatened Britain's sea lanes like never before.

Instead the attack bogged down in the Flanders mud, getting no further than the Belgian village which gave the battle its name.

That advance carried the Commonwealth armies forward just four miles – at a cost of 245,000 dead or wounded and 180,000 casualties on the German side.

Sailors account for at least 3,126 of those Allied casualties; in the final stages of the battle, the sailor-soldiers and Royal Marines of the 63rd Royal Naval Division were thrown into the line one and a half miles west of Passchendaele. Over five days, they battered their way forward around 1,000 yards – a little over half a mile.

A century on and the beginning of the battle forms one of the centrepieces of the UK's Great War commemorations.

The two days of events open at 8pm on July 30 at the Menin Gate, where the missing of the Ypres Salient are listed and where for 90 years the town's fire brigade have sounded the *Last Post* in tribute.

After the short ceremony, attention moves a few hundred yards to the market square and Ypres' iconic Cloth Hall – razed by German shells during the war and subsequently rebuilt – where a series of live performances, with images and film projected on to the building, will tell the story of the battle.

On the next day, July 31, the focus shifts to Tyne Cot cemetery near Passchendaele where 47,000 Commonwealth dead are remembered – 12,000 in graves, 35,000 on a wall to the missing.

Although it's the largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission graveyard in the world, space at the service of thanksgiving will be limited to 4,000 people, with priority given to descendants of the men of 1917. A ballot is being staged to allocate the 4,000 tickets, which will be issued in pairs.

Relatives must apply online at [www.passchendaele100.org](http://www.passchendaele100.org) before February 24.

## South Africa's darkest hour

THE Royal and South African Navies join forces this month to commemorate one of the worst disasters in the Commonwealth country's history.

The troopship SS Mendi took 616 South Africans – all but nine of them black troops – down with her when she was rammed in fog off the Isle of Wight on February 21 1917.

To mark the centenary of the tragedy, frigate SAS Amatola is visiting the UK to support ceremonies ashore and over the wreck site.

RN divers intend to visit the wreck to place the South African flag and wreath in memory of all 646 souls lost.

And destroyer HMS Dragon is scheduled to join the Amatola over the wreck for the service of remembrance.

■ See page 12 for the story of the Mendi disaster

# Welcome home Caroline



HMS CAROLINE is slowly eased into her mooring as she returns to Alexandra Dock in Belfast's Titanic Quarter following repairs to her hull.

During the work at Harland and Wolff's Heavy Industries Dock, the sole surviving vessel from the Battle of Jutland had 1,700 rivets repaired.

At the peak of the work, 14 teams of welders were repairing one rivet every 90 seconds.

Tonnes of barnacles were blasted off her hull before she had a marine-grade paint scheme applied. It was the first time in 32 years that the ship had been out of

the water.

The veteran light cruiser opened to the public last June, a day after the centenary commemorations for the WW1 battle, but vital work on her hull was delayed in order to capture summer visitors, with 16,000 people going aboard in five months to witness the result of her £15m restoration project.

She was one of more than 150 British warships that locked horns with the Kaiser's High Seas Fleet in the North Sea at Jutland, when she charged at the German lines on at least one occasion to unleash torpedoes.

The ship, which was nicknamed Lucky Caroline, was one of the fastest afloat in her day.

She was later taken to Belfast and used as a drill training ship and even a Naval operations headquarters during WW2.

Repairs to the ship which displaces 4,000 tonnes and is 122 metres long were completed last year, making her safe for the next stage of restoration.

Caroline boasts the accolade of being the most accessible ship in the National Museum of the Royal Navy's collection, thanks to the installation of three glass lifts giving access to three of her decks.

Picture: Robbie Hodgson

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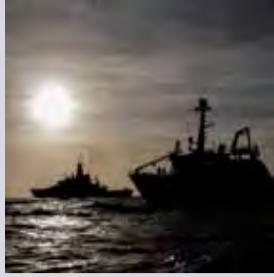
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# You never know what you'll find as a fishery protection ship in the January sails

## AND on the seventh day, God may have rested.

The Cod Squad were just warming up. First light on the seventh day of the new year, a cold, clear, calm Saturday morning and HMS Severn accompanies a trawler in the North Sea as her boarding party prepares to inspect the catch aboard – the first of several hundred boardings which will be conducted by the men and women of the oldest formation in the Senior Service, the Fishery Protection Squadron.

Approaching as the rays of the weak winter sun began to illuminate the sea, Sub Lt Robbie Neilson and LCH Nathan 'Pat' Garrett, Severn's senior boarding officer and his assistant, climbed up the swinging vertical ladder on to the vessel's deck to inspect the haul – and ensure crew were abiding by international quotas.

The Royal Navy operates three River-class ships mostly on fishery protection duties around the UK – occasionally sending them further afield to the Caribbean or Mediterranean, where HMS Mersey is currently engaged in preventing people trafficking.

Routine marine enforcement patrols are conducted every month of the year to enforce both UK and EU fisheries legislation to ensure the waters of the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone are used in a sustainable and proper manner – a modern-day version of a mission to protect Britain's fishermen going back to the late 14th Century.

In 2017, Severn opened the squadron's account with inspections on her first two days on the 'eastern patrol', which concentrates on activities in the North Sea.

"Everyone on board has a part to play, not just the boarding teams and their sea boat crews who spend hours away from the ship in all weathers," explained Lt Chris Poulson, Severn's second-in-command.

"Everyone is involved from the bridge team who manoeuvre Severn in close proximity to fishing

vessels and the marine engineers who maintain the boats to ensure they're in tip-top condition, to the weapon engineers who keep the radars turning and the chefs who never seem to leave the galley."

On returning from a six-hour boarding in cold, murky conditions, Sub Lt Neilson from Stirling in Scotland said: "It's good to be back on fish! They're long days – especially when you're keeping watch overnight as well – but it's our core business."

Lt Poulson admits that the duties of the squadron – nicknamed the Cod Squad by the rest of the Fleet – "may not be the most glamorous tasks the Royal Navy undertakes, but we in Severn enjoy them as we are at sea doing our operational role day in, day out."

Indeed two out of every five vessels inspected by the Severn or her sisters Tyne and Mersey are found to be infringing the legislation in some manner.

Minor infringements will result in a verbal re-brief – basically a verbal warning, reminding fishermen of the rules.

If that's deemed insufficient, the skipper will receive a written warning – rather like a police caution.

More serious transgressions result in a FAP – financial administration penalty, or fine – or, alternatively, the Marine Management Organisation will ask the crew to provide witness statements and evidence so a legal case can be prepared... or they can demand the offending fishing vessel is detained in a nearby port pending further investigation.

And on her maiden patrol of 2017, Severn gave the squadron's first verbal re-brief... and forwarded the first witness statements to the MMO... and conducted the first detention of the year. No FAPs though.

But there's much more to these nimble little ships than 'just' fish. They're the eyes and ears of the RN in home waters on a daily basis. They pop into places around the British Isles the rest

of the Navy doesn't. And their versatility has been proved by patrolling the Caribbean (Severn and Mersey) and preventing people trafficking in the Aegean (Mersey). Hence why five enhanced, second-generation River-class ships are being constructed on the Clyde right now.

Indeed, aside from fishery duties, Severn's 2016 was marked by (deep breath) training navigators for the RN and Allied navies, acting as a target for would-be submarine commanders, exercising with the Irish Naval Service, eight activations on 'national tasking' (responding to incidents in home waters), a visit to the Jersey Boat Show and participation by the ship's company at four different remembrance services in London – "achievements of which my ship's company can be truly proud," said Severn's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr James Reynolds.

"2017 will be no different for the Fishery Protection Squadron. With the return of our sister ship Mersey from her deployment to the Caribbean and Mediterranean, and the transition to the new offshore patrol vessels, it will be an exciting year. This success is only achieved by teamwork, commitment and pride, all of which, in the greatest traditions of the Service, the ships' companies of Severn, Tyne and Mersey and Squadron Staff have in spades."

Typically the ships spend a couple of weeks on patrol before returning to port to take supplies on board and change some of the crew, rotation which allows the trio to be at sea far more frequently than some of the larger craft in the Fleet.

"The ships of the Fishery Protection Squadron work incredibly hard when conducting marine enforcement operations in UK waters," said the squadron's Commanding Officer Cdr Will Peters.

"The task is crucial to ensuring compliance with fisheries regulations so that fish stocks are managed in a sustainable way, ultimately contributing to the protection of the UK's economy."

Pictures: PO(Phot) Carl Osmond, FRPU East





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# 'This place gave

**G**ERRY Jackson pedals away on an exercise bike in a gym, urged on by Ron Malyan. Both are Royal Navy veterans and the banter is non-stop.

It's not a particularly unusual sight – or sound. But Gerry is visually impaired and the gym is at the Blind Veterans UK centre at Ovingdean, near Brighton.

Gerry, 77, who served in the RN from 1955 to 1982, has been a regular at the centre for 17 years.

"This place has kept me alive and given me my life back," said Gerry, who lives in Worthing and spends two days a week at the centre.

"I've had a hip replacement and I'm working on building my muscles back up."

Gerry, who completed his Commando Course with 42 Cdo, is a veteran of the Falklands War.

"I arrived in the Falklands to join up with 42 Cdo. I was on the Ambuscade and as I arrived I saw HMS Antrim being strafed in San Carlos Water. (The destroyer was hit by a 1,000lb bomb but it did not explode).

"I enjoy the rifle shooting here, it's good for rest and relaxation but mainly here you get to meet people."

Keeping tabs on Gerry is fellow RN veteran Ron, one of the centre's 500 volunteers.

Ron, 75, who served from 1957 to 1969, started in the Fleet Air Arm before switching to General Service and ending up at HMS Collingwood.

"It's great to meet up with ex-Navy men here, the facilities are great," said the former radio operator, who began volunteering thanks to his late wife Rosemary.

Blind Veterans UK was founded in 1915 as St

Dunstons and the charity's initial purpose was to help and support soldiers blinded in World War 1.

The charity, which relies on fundraising, has gone on to provide free support to more than 35,000 blind veterans and their families over the years, spanning WW2 to recent conflicts including Iraq and Afghanistan.

The charity currently supports approximately 4,300 veterans; 18.2 per cent of those served in the Royal Navy or Royal Marines. Around 400 members are aged under 60 and 40 per cent are former Servicewomen.

The youngest veteran the charity supports is 24 and the oldest is 105.

This year signals some big changes for the charity. From April it is setting up 19 community hubs throughout the UK and Northern Ireland, with the aim of doubling the number of people receiving support to 8,000 by 2022.

It is estimated that over the next five years more than 40 per cent of veterans supported by the charity will be aged over 90, hence the decision to invest in community-based teams.

The teams will comprise health and social care professionals, including specialists in fields such as IT training and adaptive living.

The charity will be increasing the number of front-line staff and the teams will continue to expand as the number of beneficiaries increase.

The charity – which also hosts annual reunion dinners across the UK, ranging from around ten people to up to 100 – will also be opening pilot facilities in areas where there is a high density of potential beneficiaries over the coming years to complement its existing centres in Llandudno and Brighton.

"It's all new and massive for us; we want to provide a national service and will present a

two-pronged attack, giving people the choice of training at home or at one of our centres," said Lesley Garven, who manages the Brighton centre, overseeing the work of the 200 or so staff.

"Blind Veterans UK has been very centre-centric but now we are expanding to meet the needs of members in their own communities."

Blind Veterans UK says on average veterans struggle with sight loss for six years before seeking help from the charity.

Towering over the Sussex coast road, the Art Deco building was the first to be constructed with blind and visually-impaired people in mind. Built in 1938, each of the seven floors is an exact replica of each other.

"There is only one rule here, that is that you walk on the right," said Lesley.

**T**o assist visitors, there are handrails with bumps on them – one bump indicates a single door ahead, two bumps indicates a double door.

The charity holds around 32 introductory weeks a year.

"We give people their dignity back. I've often seen at the end of a welcome week how we give people their confidence back," said Lesley.

A normal introductory week involves arriving at the centre on Sunday and being given an orientation of the building. Monday consists of a welcome briefing and being issued your timetable – including the chance to try out sports such as archery or riflshooting or bowling.

An induction to the gym, which overlooks the swimming pool, and taster sessions in the arts and crafts room, including such pastimes as mosaic work, painting and woodwork, are also included.

A few visitors like to continue with painting

at home, so they are given an easel, paints etc. Others opt for picture framing to earn a little pin money, while some make craft items for the centre to sell to help with fundraising.

The centre holds themed weeks during the year, such as a photography week. This year the charity will hold its first women in the military week.

A number of gadgets are available for the visually impaired to use in their own homes, anything from plastic bumps (bumpons) to be installed next to their oven hobs so they can place a pan in the middle of the hob, with the handle lining up with the bumps, to a water indicator which beeps when a cup is full, to talking microwaves, easy readers and tinted glasses.

The centre, which also has a self-contained one-bedroomed flat, currently has 32 permanent residents, including Royal Navy veteran Ted Pepper, 84 this year.

Ted, who served in the Senior Service from 1949 to 1966, has lived at the centre for four years.

"This is the best nursing home in the country," said Ted, who was in the communications branch. His first ship was HMS Superb and he also served in HMS Gambia, Bermuda and Glory.

"I do walk about and I go to the gym every day to use the bike and exercise bands to strengthen my leg muscles. In the afternoons I like to retire to my room and listen to a talking book."

Ted, who has two sons and two daughters, was living in a flat in Maidstone but had a couple of falls and decided to move to the centre.

"I often get people visit me who I used to serve with. I like meeting people.

"I've been around the world a few times,



● Left, Rosalind Blowes, on her induction week, enjoys a spot of rifle shooting in the centre's sports hall; Right, Royal Navy veteran Frank Bloss in front of the centre's registered war memorial



# me my life back'

through Suez and the Panama Canal. I definitely miss the comradeship that you get in the Navy."

Around 80 people a day visit the centre for companionship and support, such as RN veteran Frank Bloss.

"I think Blind Veterans UK are fantastic," he said. "I've been both here and to the centre in Wales, both are different but the staff are amazing. They gave me a reader which is only two inches smaller than our TV."

Frank, 80, served as an engineering mechanic in the RN from 1956-58.

After training at HMS Raleigh, he went to Newcastle and joined HMS Scarborough, the anti-submarine frigate.

He sailed in May 1957 for NATO exercises in the northern Atlantic, visiting Bremen.

"I spent a lot of time at sea and thoroughly enjoyed it. It was a small ship which is what I wanted."

Frank, who finally retired at the age of 70, initially suffered sight loss following a car crash in Canada. After recovering he was told his sight would become an issue in later life.

About 15 years ago Frank realised his sight was worsening and he moved to Surrey nine years ago, following the death of his wife.

It was in his village that he met Jane, also blind, at a blind bowling club. The couple married in 2011.

"We travel a lot. We've recently been out to Dubai to see my son and his family and later this year we are off to Norway for an Arctic cruise."

One of the most popular rooms at the centre, apart from the bar, is the arts and crafts workshop.

There are around a dozen regulars with more than 100 different crafts available, including ceramics, woodwork and punch paperwork,

from a basic level to very skilled. Qualified instructors deliver around 20 different sessions each week. Currently the centre is working on a series of large mosaic panels commissioned by Brighton Eye Hospital.

The centre also has its own registered war memorial, currently decorated with ceramic poppies, in the style of the installation at the Tower of London in 2014 called Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red. All the poppies were made by members at the centre.

Along with nearby Roedean School for Girls, the centre was requested by the Admiralty to become home to HMS Vernon during WW2, during which time veterans from WW1 moved to Shropshire. In 1945 they returned to help in the rehabilitation of those blinded during the new conflict.

During this time consultants from Moorfields Eye Hospital in London were based at Ovingdean and carried out more than 100 operations on injured personnel.

One room is called the Stables, a reminder from 1938 when a number of residents enjoyed gambling. Even today the centre has a couple of runners who take bets to the betting shop in nearby Rottingdean.

"It's a real hotchpotch of people here but the key thing is the common bond of ex-Forces and blindness," said Lesley. "No matter your ability, we can support you with holidays or training."

"The vision for the centre is that every member should leave here with a sense of purpose, wellbeing and family."

"It's a great place to work. I know we make a difference."

Find out how Blind Veterans UK could help you or your family by calling 0800 389 7979 or visiting [noonealone.org.uk](http://noonealone.org.uk)

## Plunged into the loneliest of worlds

In common with all visitors to Blind Veterans UK, I was given the 'blind induction', writes Lorraine Proudlock. This involved walking around the building and then eating lunch while blindfolded.

It's a fearful moment as the blindfold is put on and I was led around by Jo Sinkins, a rehabilitation officer, who said she would ensure I got the 'harsh' treatment (obviously those who are visually impaired get the good treatment).

Putting your trust in someone you met less than five minutes earlier is daunting. Jo led me at a fast pace - too fast for me - along a corridor. I had to ask her to slow down, something visually-impaired visitors often fail to do as they initially struggle with sight loss.

"Stairs" barked Jo, failing to tell me if we were walking up or down - it was up, thankfully, as I forced each foot to the back of each step, terrified of falling.

We then waited for a lift. In total silence. I shuffled into the lift, trying to ensure I didn't walk into anyone.

No one spoke during the trip to the dining room.

"Your chair's there," said Jo as she led me into a room.

I felt my way into the chair and established there was a knife and fork on the table.

My lunch arrived. A vegetable tikka curry. No one said there was a poppadum lying on top. I found out the hard way, smashing it with a fork.

My first forkful of food was empty - I was holding the utensil the wrong way up.

The second attempt delivered some rice. At no point was I able to get curry and rice on the same fork. I didn't even bother with the bowl of yoghurt.

"Would you like some water?" I could hear it being poured into a glass but had to feel my way towards the glass - just avoiding putting my hands in photographer Louise George's plate of stew. Louise also went through the blind experience, with her biggest concern not spilling her lunch down her white shirt!

The entire experience was sobering. Sight loss left me feeling totally isolated, even in a building full of people. I felt invisible and utterly alone.



● Left, Elizabeth Ray works on one of the mosaic panels commissioned by Sussex Eye Hospital in nearby Brighton; Right, Gerry Jackson is urged on in the gym by fellow former Royal Navy Serviceman Ron Malyan, who now works as a volunteer at the Ovingdean centre



Pictures: LPhoto Louise George

# Savage lived up to name

RE: THE September issue of *Navy News* regarding Phil Symes and his 46 years since the last tot time.

Whenever tot time is mentioned I cast my mind back to January 17 1961 when I joined the destroyer HMS Battleaxe.

She was my first ship and I was aged 16 years and nine months.

I was sent to No13 seaman's mess and there were 17 mess members, including 11 ABs, one of whom was AB Savage.

Lunch was served, along with the rum. As I put my plate forward to receive my dinner I knocked AB Savage's tot over.

He certainly lived up to his name and he was very unkind to me for quite a while after that.

The second incident I remember was August bank holiday 1966 onboard HMS Aurora.

Three watches were given a long weekend and out of 32 members in 3E mess, only eight remained onboard.

But when tot time came the next day, and for the following three days, 32 tots were still issued.

We had to hide what was left early evening each day in case the officer of the day could smell it when he did his rounds.

Happy days for the second story, but not so for the first.

**B Button**  
Suffolk

# Carriers are great

I WAS most interested in reading the article concerning HMS Amethyst and her eventual scrapping at Devonport in 1957 in October's edition of *Navy News*.

Whilst working on ship keeping duties at Faslane I seem to recall that prior to her final demise she was taken from Faslane under tow to Belfast.

Did this happen or is my ancient memory playing tricks on me?

Answer please if possible. Many thanks.

On a different tack, I was recently taken to see the new carriers at Rosyth. A wonderful experience.

Certainly a bit different from a draft I undertook on HMS Warrior in the 1950s.

Keep up the good work *Navy News*.

**Billy Duncan**



# I was a hero (for one night) in Albion

MANY pleasant memories are awakened when browsing *Navy News*.

For me, one of the most unusual is when 42 Commando are mentioned, which is quite often.

I recall the one night only when I was a hero for a large contingent of 42 Commando in 1967.

It happened as a result of the carrier HMS Albion being off Aden for the withdrawal of the final British troops - 42 Cdo.

It was said that the CO of 42 Cdo, Col Dai Morgan, was the last man to leave. He had a reputation of being a strict disciplinarian.

Albion, with its many passengers, left Aden for Singapore, via Gan in the Maldives.

It was suggested that we put on a variety show to help raise morale of all aboard.

I decided to do an act as a female impersonator, Miss Nobelia, involving some jokes

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



**PG Clarke**  
Norfolk

and songs.

Many of the lads were convinced I was one of the female hospital staff we had taken onboard.

Col Morgan came back stage during the interval and thanked me for including him in one of my dits in my act and for giving his lads something to cheer about.

What memories.



● PG Clarke as Miss Nobelia aboard HMS Albion in 1967

# Thanks for the rum

A BELATED thank you for printing my offering in your November issue.

I got a large bottle of the dark stuff for doing so.

The first time I had 'neaters' was on the minesweeper Firth of Forth. You had to drink it straight down as the bosun wanted the glass.

I felt like I'd swallowed a hand grenade.

I will treat my prize bottle with more caution.

I look forward to reading *Navy News* each month as it still stirs memories for me.

I was a stoker on middle watch, dipping water tanks.

Access was on a messdeck as a mean reading was taken to allow for the roll of the ship.

You had to walk under hammocks to do this job.

I was singing to myself when I heard a voice from a hammock: "That's a hateful noise."

I replied: "I sing for my own pleasure mate, not yours, now where was I?"

Another voice came down from above: "You were about to lay down and die."

There was some sharp humour and rivalry onboard then.

**Alf Lee**  
Wales

# Difficult to keep up with the changes

I AM aware that I'm getting on a bit now and easily confused, I think, but I've lost track of whatever has happened to stokers, and for that matter, pretty much all the other branches in the Navy.

Do we still have stokers? What are they called nowadays? What is the rank progression?

Do we still have greenies, those beings who stokers loved to bait.

What are those famed drinking partners of the stokers mess, the chefs, called nowadays or do they have some fancy title too?

I've lost track of the changes and responsibilities within the Service though I do know a young man, the son of a friend, who talks in abbreviations which I can't relate to, who claims to be a stoker but is trained to shoot a machine gun.

Hell's teeth, stokers with guns was a recipe for disaster in my day.

**Bob Dixon**  
Bicester

# Whitener ran down my face

WHEN did black caps end?

Some people said white caps were black caps with a white cover on.

I was issued with both a black cap and a white cap that we had to blanco.

When it rained the Blanco ran down your face.

**J Grisman**

# NAVY NEWS

Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

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Editor: Mike Gray 023 9262 5257 or Mil: 93832 5257

## Editorial

News editor:

Richard Hargreaves

023 9262 5255

Production Editor:

Lorraine Proudlock

023 9262 5282

[edit@navynews.co.uk](mailto:edit@navynews.co.uk)

General enquiries:

023 9262 3553

## Business

Business manager:

Lisa Taw: 023 9254 7380

Subscriptions: 023 9254 7114

[subscriptions@navynews.co.uk](mailto:subscriptions@navynews.co.uk)

Fax: 023 9254 7117

Advertising: 023 9254 7380/ 023

9262 3553

[advertising@navynews.co.uk](mailto:advertising@navynews.co.uk)

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# Our poignant visit to Thiepval



My wife and I went on a five-day battlefield tour of the Somme, where we also attended the daily memorial service conducted by the Royal British Legion at the Thiepval Memorial to the missing and laid a poppy wreath.

We attended a service on the 100th anniversary of the death of my wife's great uncle, Pte Augustus Blackburn, who served in the 1st Battalion of the Royal Marine Light Infantry.

He was killed in action on the first day of the Battle of the Ancre, which was the last major offensive of the Battle of the Somme.

He was one of the "missing with no known grave" and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

It may interest your readers to know that as the Senior Service, those members of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines who were killed on the Somme with no known grave are in fact commemorated on Pier and Face 1A of the memorial.

The memorial commemorates over 72,000 British and South African Servicemen who fell on the Somme between July 1915 and March 1918.

The Royal Naval Division (later known as the 63rd

Division) took part in several major campaigns of WW1, including the defence of Antwerp, Gallipoli, Ancre, Gavrelle, Passchendaele and the battles of 1918; but it was over the first two days of the Ancre (November 13 and 14 1916), where the division suffered the most casualties.

The small village of Beaucourt-sur-l'Ancre was one of the main objectives and was taken on the morning of the following day but with considerable loss of life.

A memorial to the RND in the form of an obelisk stands on a small mound on the edge of the village and has a plaque which displays all the crests of the RN and RM battalions that made up the division.

When we visited there were two poppy wreaths in remembrance of Lt the Hon Vere Harmsworth and Lt William Ker of Hawke Battalion who were also killed on November 13 1916. Lt Harmsworth is buried in the nearby Ancre military cemetery, but Lt Ker is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

**Phillip Goodbody**  
(ex Warrant Officer Communications Yeoman)  
Fareham, Hampshire

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and full address, not necessarily for publication. If you submit a photograph which you did not take please ensure you have permission to use it. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions.

# Hot and cold weather training for Royal Marines



## When the Goa gets tough...

**A** ROYAL Marines boarding team climb up the side of an Indian Navy tanker as part of a joint maritime exercise.

Personnel from 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group worked with their Indian counterparts for Exercise Konkan off Mumbai and Goa, which involved the replenishment and repair ship INS Aditya.

Konkan is an annual military training exercise conducted between the Royal Navy and Indian Navy.

In December 2016, the week-long exercise focussed on maritime security and, in particular, boarding operations.

"The exercise has given us an opportunity to learn a lot from each other regarding the tactics and procedures necessary to effectively conduct specialist maritime boarding operations anywhere in the world," said Col Jock Fraser, the Commanding Officer of 43 Cdo.

Ranks from 43 Cdo's S-Squadron contributed to the exercise which aimed to improve mutual understanding between the naval services of both maritime nations.

Training consisted of joint boarding exercises as well as close-quarter battle and casualty evacuation training.

The exercise was conducted in two phases at Mumbai and Goa. The first phase comprises a command planning exercise involving the two navies, where planners from both sides undertook planning for combined maritime operations.

The second phase was a live exercise off Goa, involving interaction between the Indian

Marine Commandos (MARCOS) and the Royal Marines.

Both phases involved sharing best techniques and lessons learned from recent operations, especially in the field of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and non-combatant evacuation operations.

Both the Royal Marine and Indian Navy personnel benefitted from the opportunity to compare training, tactics and procedures.

Although their primary mission is to safeguard the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent, Clyde-based 43 Cdo regularly provide Royal Marine Boarding and Maritime Sniper Teams to Royal Navy ships deployed on counter-piracy, counter-narcotics and maritime interdiction operations around the world.

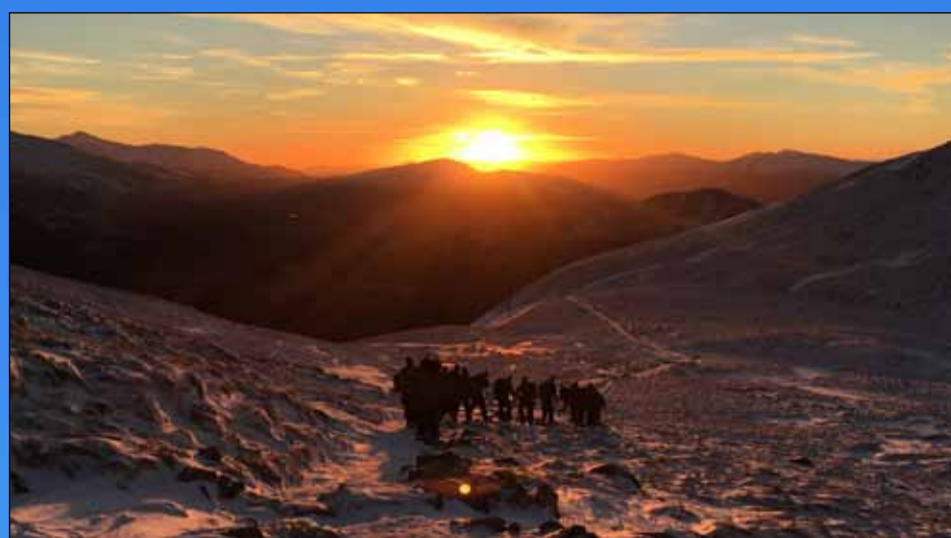
Last year a Royal Marine sniper from 43 Cdo, operating from RFA Wave Knight, assisted in the seizure of more than £40m worth of cocaine in the Caribbean.

Col Fraser, who visited the exercise and also gave a presentation on the UK's amphibious capability to the Indian Staff College, added: "I would like to thank the Indian Navy for the very warm welcome we have received."

Named after the tropical Western coastal region of India, exercise Konkan was institutionalised in 2004 and is hosted in rotation by both the navies.

INS Trikand travelled to Devonport for the 2015 exercise.

43 Cdo, a 550-strong unit based at HM Naval Base Clyde, is part of 3 Commando Brigade, the UK's high readiness expeditionary amphibious force.



## Arctic role

**T**HE sun goes down on the nation's highest peak – and another day's training in the mountains for Royal Marines honing their winter warfare skills ahead of the Corps' annual stint in the Arctic.

The green berets – who are Britain's specialist cold weather warriors – prepared for sub-zero temperatures and the rigours of living and fighting in snow-blanketed mountains with 16 days in the Scottish Highlands.

More than 400 British commandos, their US colleagues, reservists and sailors assigned to Royal Marines units were immersed in a world in white on Exercise Green Claymore (there's not much green, mostly white or rocky grey... and no claymores), the annual 'toe in the (icy) water' for the Corps before it decamps to the Norwegian Arctic for three months of hardcore winter warfare training.

In Scandinavia, the marines can expect temperatures as low as -30°C (below that all training ceases as it's deemed to be too dangerous); on the slopes of the Highlands, it was a 'mere' -12°C.

For the past three years the package has been run from Cameron Barracks in Inverness, an excellent base for training in the North-West Highlands, where the changeable weather, isolation and rugged terrain make for a very challenging environment making for a valuable training experience.

Before any thought was given to tackling Britain's tallest mountain, the 16-day training package – offered in three tranches of up to 180 troops apiece – begins with the billy basics.

After lectures and demonstrations, building physical fitness and strength on low-level route marches, the trainees headed out into the mountains for medium and high-level routes.

For those lucky enough to find a weather window, there was the chance to have a go at the 1,062m (3,484ft) An Teallach (Gaelic for 'The Anvil' and pictured below), located about six miles outside Ullapool. And for those unlucky enough... when temperatures dropped to 12°C below zero and a layer of snow meant a crossing was impossible, there was snow and ice training on its slopes.

In addition, the groups spent a day exercising in a quarry at Ballachulish, near Glencoe, and carried out a river crossing in the frigid Scottish climate... all leading to a final four-day exercise where trainees had to practise all the skills they'd been taught during the preceding 12 days in a tactical environment.

'Enjoying' the experience alongside various companies from the RM's three main fighting units, 40, 42 and 45 Commandos were marines from specialist intelligence unit 30 Commando, the amphibious warfare experts of 1st Assault Group, crews and engineers from the Viking armoured squadron and logistics support teams such as chefs and medics.

And Americans from 3/8 Marines, who were taking a brief break from their role as the Black Sea Rotational Force, and fancied a spot of cold weather training.

"For some of them Green Claymore was a unique experience as many had never spent any time in the snow or the mountains," said Maj Paul Forrest of Arbroath-based 45 Commando, whose unit provided many of the experienced mountain leaders overseeing the training.

"They were without doubt the most vocal group on the hill, although a spell of exceptionally good weather did leave them wondering what all the fuss was about."

On top of the 419 people successfully trained, the exercise was a useful workout for the 70 instructors and support staff.

"The success of this year's exercise must go down to the enablers," said Maj Forrest. "In particular the chefs, logisticians and drivers who kept everyone on the hill, fed and equipped, while dodging salt-licking deer on the roads in the process."

"On the whole, the exercise ran smoothly, offering an excellent package overall, delivered in very challenging conditions."

Much of the Corps is now deployed inside Norway's Arctic Circle for combined winter exercises with our allies, reaching its climax in early March with Joint Viking 17 involving British and Dutch marines and the Norwegian Army.



## Charity chief awarded OBE

ROYAL Navy and Royal Marines Charity CEO Robert Robson has been awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours.

Robert, pictured right, joined the RNRMC in September 2008 as Chief Executive Officer, a move which he says brought him back "home", having previously served as a warfare officer in the Royal Navy in the 1980s.

After a 20-year career with Barclays, which took him all over the UK and Europe, he took the helm of the charity at the beginning of the voyage of discovery that awaited.

His range of involvement in the charity sector includes being a governor of the Royal Star and Garter Homes, director of Cobseo – the Confederation of Service Charities, and of Veterans Scotland.

He is also a member of the finance committee of the Mary Rose Trust, a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights, and a Younger Brother of Trinity House.



Upon hearing of his honour, awarded in recognition of his services to Naval personnel, Robert said: "It was a huge surprise. I had to read the letter twice.

"I am delighted and honoured to accept the award of an OBE. So many people have enabled the success of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and I will wear it with pride as a reflection of our joint achievements."

# Home from home at Navy Mews

**THREE flats for Naval families have been opened at Portsmouth Naval Base, thanks to funding from the RNRMC.**

The accommodation, opened by Defence Minister Mark Lancaster, offers a home from home for Service personnel.

The flats, known as Navy Mews, can be hired for short periods – such as weekends, or up to a fortnight – by military men and women on a priority basis, favouring single parents or others restrained by circumstances from spending time with their families.

The project, the brainchild of Portsmouth Naval Base's accommodation and facilities team, was supported by the RNRMC, which granted £250,000 for the project in 2015, Portsmouth Naval Base's own Leisure and Amenities fund and the support of BAE Systems, who delivered the project at cost.

LH Andy Till, who was the first member of the Naval Service to use the accommodation, said: "I stayed here with my daughter for two days and it's just like being at home.

"It has everything you need and my daughter really enjoyed it. She's asked to come back but I think we should let other families enjoy it before coming back ourselves. I'll definitely recommend it to other guys I know in my situation and encourage them to use it as well."

Robert Robson, Chief Executive of the RNRMC, said: "Providing these flats for our families will make it so much easier for people to spend time together – and at a time when the Naval Base is readying itself for the arrival of the two biggest ships in the history of the Navy, they have never been more badly needed."



● Members of the team that helped to decorate the flats, back from left, AB1(WS) Beevers and AB(Logs) Clancey Welford. Front: AB(WS) Simon Lally and AB(WS) Nathan Jenkins

Pictures: LPhoto Louise George

Cdr Martin Evans, the Portsmouth Naval Base Executive Officer, said: "If a Service person is the primary caregiver in a child's life, the MOD will always provide a permanent home – however separated single parents often struggle to retain quality contact with their children because of a combination of the restraints imposed by Service life, the costs involved, and the lack of an accessible 'home-from-home' facility."

The flats can sleep between three and seven people, and have a full suite of modern appliances, games, kitchenware, central heating and TV equipment. The buildings will be maintained by the base's accommodation and facilities team.



● LH Andy Till has stayed at the accommodation with his daughter

### FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH

#### Devonport Naval Base



A CHARITY cake sale in Devonport Naval Base has raised £800.

The cakes were made by Naval base contractor ESS employees Lauren Marlow and Jo Day and event organiser LH Hannah Nelder and Jacqueline Clink at the HQ of FOST.

Hannah said: "I decided to organise this as I have found it is a great way to bring personnel together to raise morale and socialise in a more informal environment. It also has the added bonus of raising money for good causes."

The money is going to the RNRMC and Jeremiah's Journey, a Plymouth-based charity which provides support to bereaved children.

Hannah added: "I am always an advocate of charities that have a connection with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. Jeremiah's Journey and the RNRMC both fulfil this criteria."

## Centenary of Forces game Cash aids veterans

THIS year marks the historic 100th Army v Navy rugby match, which takes place on April 29.

We are challenging you to do ANYTHING related to the number 100 to raise funds for the RNRMC.

Will you see who can do the most burpees in 100 seconds? Will you bake and sell 100 cakes? Organise a quiz with 100 questions? Or take on a 100-mile sponsored cycle ride?

So far we have pledges from personnel at HMNB Devonport for a bike ride to Twickenham; a 100-mile walk conducted by ex-WRNS; a prize draw at RNA WORTHING; and 100 bouts of kickboxing from the Royal Navy Muay Thai Association.

To register your interest visit <http://bit.ly/T100navy>. For details email [fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk) or call 023 9387 4630.

WORTHING-based Queen Alexandra Hospital Home has been awarded a grant of £20,000 from the RNRMC and Greenwich Hospital.

The grant is towards the costs of delivering a tailored rehabilitation programme to disabled Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans and their dependants.

It will help residents like Michael, a former RN psychiatrist. Michael went to live at QAHH in April 2010, as he had been diagnosed with Parkinson's.

"The physiotherapy sessions are very helpful. I am toning up the muscles in my arms and legs, and try to walk when I can," he said.

To find out more about QAHH, or to support the charity's work, visit their website at [www.qahh.org.uk](http://www.qahh.org.uk)

A CHAIN of mayors will be suspended from the Emirates Spinnaker Tower as civic leaders try to raise thousands for charity.

The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Cllr David Fuller, will be leading his contemporaries from neighbouring councils in the challenge on Sunday, April 30.

He will be joined by the mayors of Eastleigh, Southampton, Winchester, Gosport and the chair of East Hampshire.

Cllr Fuller decided to take on the daunting 100m drop as the culmination of his charity fundraising efforts during his year in office, which he hopes will raise more than £60,000 to be shared between the RNRMC, NHS Trust Oncology & Haematology, and Help 4 Special Children.

He will become the first Lord Mayor from the city to take on the feat and the idea proved popular with his opposite numbers from Gosport, Winchester, Havant, Eastleigh, Southampton and East Hampshire all signing up to take part for their respective appeals.

Cllr Fuller said: "It is an



● Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, third from right, will lead the abseil of civic leaders

honour to represent the city as Lord Mayor and I wanted to make sure I used the opportunity to raise as much money as possible for good causes in the area.

"A big event like this was an obvious choice and the Emirates Spinnaker Tower is an iconic building not only for Portsmouth but our entire region so it seemed natural to get other mayors involved.

"Once we had the idea everyone was very enthusiastic, although I'm sure there will be a few nerves on the day, and hopefully this will help everyone to generate as much money as possible for their charity appeals.

"I'm terrified of heights but hopefully this will inspire the people of Portsmouth to dig deep and help support some fantastic charities. Swinton Insurance has already committed a significant

amount and I'm hoping more businesses will come forward ahead of the big day."

Anyone who wants to sponsor Cllr Fuller can do so at [www.localgiving.org/appeal/spinnakermayors](http://www.localgiving.org/appeal/spinnakermayors) or by sending a cheque made payable to 'HIWCF' to Marcella Payne, Lord Mayor's charity coordinator, Lord Mayor's Office, 2nd Floor, Guildhall, Portsmouth, PO1 2AB.



## Cooking up a storm at Olympics

CHEFS from the Combined Services Culinary Arts Team took two golds and one silver at the IKA Culinary Olympics in Germany.

The Royal Navy was represented by LC Andy Durham, pictured fourth from left, who said: "The IKA Culinary Olympics only comes around every four years and to be part of a highly-skilled chef team who produce first-class food is amazing."

The 30-year-old, who is currently serving at the Defence Maritime Logistics School at HMS Raleigh, added: "My day-to-day job at sea is very different, cooking in the most challenging and demanding conditions and I am very proud to showcase my skills on the world stage."

A dozen chefs from all three Services competed at the event in Erfurt, where 2,000 chefs from 59 nations cooked in

the pursuit of glory.

The CSCAT team won gold for pastry arts and culinary arts. Their library-themed cold table, included petit fours, hot and cold finger foods such as goat cheese and Calvados mousse, a festive platter of yellow fin tuna and lobster, four desserts and a five-course meal featuring hay-cooked poussin and honey pork belly.

The team also went on to win silver

in the Regional Community Catering Challenge, producing a traditional British three-course meal and salad bar for 150 customers.

Team captain Cpl Liam Grime said: "It's a privilege to lead such dedicated people from across all three Services."

Formed in 1997, CSCAT represents the Armed Forces in world-class national and international competitions.

Picture: SAC James Goff, RAF

# Duo tuned in to Admiral's work

ROYAL Navy Officers from HMS Collingwood took time out from their training to visit the grave of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Bradwardine Jackson in the churchyard of St Mary's Church at Hayling Island.

Two officers, who are training to become weapon engineers, spent time at the grave tidying the site, working with Clive Kidd, the Curator of the Heritage Collection at HMS Collingwood, who had originally made contact with Elaine Emerson, who runs the St Mary's Parish Office, regarding the condition that the grave was in.

Henry B Jackson was born in 1855 in the village of Darfield, just outside Barnsley, Yorkshire. He joined the Royal Navy as a cadet in 1868. Jackson specialised as a torpedo officer, one of the predecessors to the present day weapon engineers.

In 1885 Adm Jackson was appointed CO of HMS Defiance, the Torpedo Training School based in an old wooden walled ship.

Whilst in Defiance, independently of Marconi, he developed wireless telegraphy. By 1896 he had succeeded in communicating – in Morse Code – with another vessel, HMS Scourge, at a range of 2.5 miles. The equipment used was a spark transmitter and a simple coherer receiver.

In 1901 Adm Jackson was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, which recognises engineering excellence, partly for



● The two midshipmen tidy up Admiral Jackson's grave

his work on wireless, described by the society as "aerial telegraphy."

He was appointed a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in 1906.

He rapidly rose through the Naval Service and became First Sea Lord in 1915 and Admiral of the Fleet in 1919.

After WW1 he worked tirelessly in the nascent wireless/radio industry. He died in December 1929, aged 74.

Talking of his involvement with the project Clive said "It's a pleasure to introduce the next generation of weapon engineers to the pivotal role

Admiral Jackson played in the development of wireless in the Royal Navy.

"It was his work and that of other pioneers that led to the highly complex electronics systems that are an essential part of the RN today."

Mid Chelsea Baker, who tidied the grave with Mid Kye Thomas, said: "Learning about Admiral Jackson's work proved a rewarding experience and restoring the memorial gives him the recognition he deserves as a predecessor of the weapon engineering branch."

## Contest inspires young engineers

POTENTIAL scientists have been rewarded by the Royal Navy for their engineering innovation.

Pupils from Widwell Primary in Plymouth were presented with awards for designing and making small-scale model vehicles.

The children worked in teams and had to take into account the cost and safety of the vehicles and imagine they had to carry nuclear waste.

The competition was organised by the Ministry of Defence apprentice engineer scheme at Devonport Naval Base to help inspire new recruits for the future to study relevant subjects such as science, technology, engineering and maths.

Teacher Beverley Holder said: "Many children were inspired by the apprentices who spoke to them about different jobs that they did at the dockyard."

Apprentice engineers James Cooke and Phoebe Loveridge acted as mentors for the Widwell teams. James, who wants to work in nuclear power for the Royal Navy, said: "It was very rewarding working with the children. They were very dedicated and keen."

The event also gave the MoD apprentices a chance to build on their professional skills such as citizenship, where they are thinking strategically and building on communication and leadership skills.

Presenting prizes was Lt Gary Smith. The winning team were Sawyer Teft, Sarah Davies, Daisy Green, Ben Kirkham, and James Evans.

## Epic cycle ride brings reward

A TEAM from Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare spent ten days cycling between the welfare offices in the UK to raise funds for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund.

The team consisted of cyclists WO2s Neille Adler and Darren Taylor and PO Jenni Wheldon and two support crew, CPO Neil Ingram and PO Keith Warham.

During this challenge the team visited the major RNRMW welfare offices starting at RM Condor (Scotland) and finishing at RNAS Culdrose (Cornwall).

The ride was challenging but rewarding with the team seeing some great sights and having a great experience; the highlight was being met at Culdrose by giant pasties.

Neille said: "We are both tired and elated after what has been an epic adventure for a team of riders who are relative novices in the sport of long distance cycling."

The team raised £4,823.29 for the RNRMCF.

The full details of the epic journey can be read via the #RNRMW1000 blog on the Royal Navy Website at [www.royalnavy.mod.uk/RNRMW1000](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/RNRMW1000)

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund

The only charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents serve, or have served, in the Naval Service.

Originally set up as an orphanage, we now assist children with a wide range of needs and at times of family crisis. Applications can be made at any time and those seeking assistance can contact the office directly for an application form, or download it from our website.

311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN • t 023 9263 9534 • [rnchildren@btconnect.com](mailto:rnchildren@btconnect.com)  
[www.rnrmchildrensfund.org.uk](http://www.rnrmchildrensfund.org.uk)



● WO1s Knox and Burbury and CPO Anderson planted bulbs with John McPherson of Helensburgh and Garelochside Rotary Club

## Crocus campaign to fight disease

THREE sailors from HMS Neptune supported the Rotary Club in their campaign to raise awareness of polio.

WO1s Andy Knox and Wayne Burbury and CPO Murray Anderson joined John McPherson, Vice President of the Helensburgh and Garelochside Rotary, to plant crocus bulbs at the top of Helensburgh's Sinclair Street.

The purple crocus is a symbol of Rotary's worldwide campaign to eradicate polio, with its colour representing the purple dye used to mark the finger of a child who has been immunised.

For more than 30 years, Rotary and its members have been committed to fighting to eradicate polio across the world. The amount of polio-endemic countries has dropped from 125 to just three, with over 2.5 billion children receiving vaccinations thanks to the help of Rotary.

Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland's latest campaign, Purple4Polio, is designed to unite communities to engage in activities as part of the final push to eradicate polio for good.

President Sheenah Nelson and Rotarians Colin Shannon, Geoffrey Cartwright and Mr Macpherson, all members of Helensburgh Garelochside Rotary Club, have visited local schools to plant crocuses and speak to the children about the End Polio campaign.

"We were delighted when WO Burbury, WO Knox and CPO Anderson showed their support for our campaign by joining us to plant crocuses in Sinclair Street, Helensburgh," said Sheenah. "We look forward to the reciprocal planting which will take place at the Naval Base sometime this year."

For further information go to [www.rotarycrocus.com](http://www.rotarycrocus.com)



● Lt Cdr Rupert Bradley with his daughter Madeleine

## School run – by helo

PUPILS at Truro School were visited by a Sea King helicopter from RNAS Culdrose as part of their careers education programme.

The Sea King was flown in to school grounds by Lt Cdr Ian Chudley and his crew, who then gave students a tour of the aircraft, followed by a presentation and question-and-answer session over lunch.

The day was arranged for pupils between 4th Year and Sixth Form, and visiting Air Cadets from Penair School, who are considering a career in the Royal Navy or RAF.

For two students it was an especially exciting day, as both Cam and Madeleine's fathers were among the crew that flew in on the Sea King.

Head of careers at Truro School Nancy Kenward said: "It was a fantastic and unique opportunity for pupils who are considering this as a career option to look around the Sea King and have questions answered by the crew. The group of students who later had lunch with the pilots and crew gained a real insight into the range of careers in the Navy."

Hundreds of students from all year groups of the school gathered on the school playing fields later in the afternoon to watch the Sea King circle the school grounds before departing back to its base at RNAS Culdrose.

## Pupils are hands-on with engineers

A GROUP of enthusiastic youngsters from Ferndown Upper School visited HMS Sultan with the Jon Egging Trust, in order to be inspired by air and marine engineering within the Royal Navy.

Fourteen pupils spent a day at the base, touring the facilities and getting involved in a number of hands-on tasks, including the replacement of aircraft components using hand tools, wearing sea survival equipment and boarding a life raft.

Kimberley, 14, said: "It's been really good to get our hands on things and learn how to do things for ourselves. I didn't think that they would actually let us take apart things. The people I've met have been really nice, friendly and encouraging."

## Course success for direct-entry aircrew

THREE of the first Direct-Entry Aircrewmen to pass their Sensor Operator's Lead-in Course (SOLIC) graduated from 750 NAS at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall.

The trio, NA(ACMN)s Christine Bevan, Jack Cokell and Andrew Smith, are some of the first to join the Royal Navy's Aircrewmen branch straight from HMS Raleigh, where they started their initial training.

Since then they have begun flying training with 750 NAS alongside Royal Navy observers who complete their Basic Flying Training operating in the squadron's King Air Avenger aircraft.

During the eight-week SOLIC course the students clocked up 18 hours in the air whilst navigating around the skies of Cornwall.

The course focuses on airmanship and challenging decision-making as well as a mixture of ground-based simulators and flying exercises.

"I've really enjoyed SOLIC," said Christine, who also picked up the Jim Scott award for best student.

The trio will now move onto a 12-week acoustics course, learning about submarine hunting.

On completion, they are destined for 824 NAS where they will fly and learn about the Merlin Mk2.



● Andrew Smith, Jack Cokell and Christine Bevan

# Top accolades for helping migrants

NAVAL Service personnel picked up awards at a ceremony celebrating the courage and excellence of the Armed Forces.

The Sun Military Awards, known as the Millies, was hosted by TV presenter Lorraine Kelly at the Guildhall in London.

She was joined by celebrities from the worlds of sport, entertainment and politics including presenter Carol Vorderman, England rugby player James Haskell and one of the judges Penny Lancaster.

Jeremy Clarkson presented Ruairi Holohan with the Best Reservist gong.

The dad of one from Dublin was one of the first Royal Navy Reservists to take part in the 2015 migrant rescue operations in the Mediterranean.

Called up for duty for his linguistic skills and deployed on board HMS Bulwark, Lt Holohan, 44, spent five weeks speaking French and Arabic to the thousands saved by the RN.

The social care worker cared for youngsters plucked from the sea – even making up bottled milk for scores of infants.

"It's an absolutely amazing feeling," he said. "I am taking credit on behalf of everyone in my unit who has been rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean."

Susanna Reid presented Surg Cdr Matthew Turner, pictured right, with the Individual Hero Overseas Award.

The 44-year-old from Somerset led a medical team on chartered commercial ship VOS Grace to help tackle the migrant crisis in the Aegean Sea.

During the three-month deployment from November 2015 to January 2016, he and his team tackled the migrant route from Turkey to the Greek islands.

His team rescued more than 4,250 migrants, including nearly 1,000 children, 200 of whom were under the age of one.

Olympic cyclist Mark Cavendish and his wife Peta Todd handed Lt Cdr Joe Meadows the Inspiring Others award.

Married dad-of-four Lt Cdr Meadows, 49, of Suffolk, has racked up three decades of volunteering, inspiring and nurturing hundreds of cadets achieve their potential at Beccles



● Lt Ruairi Holohan received a Millie for his work with migrants while aboard HMS Bulwark

Sea and Royal Marines Cadet Unit.

He inspired Lt Nathan Buchanan, who completed two tours of Afghanistan with the Marines before being commissioned as an officer and gaining the Sword of Honour as top student on his Officer Training Course.

Before the ceremony all the nominees were hosted at a reception at 10 Downing Street by Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and Armed Forces Minister Mike Penning.

Other winners were:

■ Hero at Home – Individual: Sgt Adam Threlfall, Airborne Delivery Wing

■ Hero at Home – Unit: 11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps

■ Overcoming Adversity: Cpl Stuart Robinson, RAF (Veteran)

■ Hero Overseas – Unit: Operation Shader, RAF

■ Innovation Award: Trauma Simulation Ltd

■ Judges' Award for Special Recognition: The 2nd Battalion, Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (2 LANCS)

■ Support to the Armed Forces: Fisher House and The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham Charity





## Let's hear it for the trombones

TALENTED young musicians from Hampshire and West Sussex have been rubbing shoulders with some of the best military musicians in the business, in a master class, at the prestigious Royal Marines School of Music in Portsmouth Naval Base.

Keen to inspire musicians of the future, the Royal Marines Band Service invited 48 secondary-aged pupils from Hampshire and West Sussex, to join a one-day workshop.

These events are run throughout the year to give an insight into the educational and career opportunities offered by the Royal Marines Band Service, while providing inspiration to the young musicians of the future.

The pupils received tuition and performed alongside new recruits and experienced musicians from the Portsmouth-based Band of HM Royal Marines, also known as the Royal Band.

Maj Pete Curtis, Director of Music Training at school, said: "Days like this are really important because we are all really proud of being in the Royal Marines Band and want youngsters to be aware of the great opportunities we offer for a career in music."

"The students were really engaged; they clearly had a good background in music and come from schools where music is flourishing, and that's really good to see."

Ex-RM WO Band Master Ian Monnery, now a music teacher, said: "I don't think many will realise what goes on behind these walls, the quality of the music, the training, the fact you play at prestigious venues and on top of that get paid to do it."



● Sgt Nick West is joined by musician Max Higdon from West Sussex

Picture: LPhoto Guy Pool

## Ton up for Seafarers

SEAFARERS UK is holding a number of events this year to mark its centenary.

The highlight will be next month when the charity will host a centenary dinner at the Guildhall in London.

Admiral Lord West, who will be the after-dinner speaker, said: "The make-up and capability of the UK's maritime sector has changed dramatically since 1917, and whilst we are still very much an island nation, with serving seafarers in the Royal Navy, Merchant Navy and the fishing fleets, the numbers of those actively involved is reducing every year."

"Within this context, there is a very important and continued role for Seafarers UK to play."

For more details about booking to attend the centenary dinner on March 28, or information on other centenary events, visit [www.seafarers.uk](http://www.seafarers.uk) or email [centenary@seafarers-uk.org](mailto:centenary@seafarers-uk.org)

## Dinner date for diaries

A MESS dinner to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Falklands War for all those personnel still serving in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines who took part in the campaign will take place on Friday June 9 in HMS Collingwood Wardroom.

It will be an all-ranks/rates event and the only criteria for attendance is possession of the South Atlantic Medal and to still be serving full-time or as a Reservist on any form of commitment.

Further details of the dinner, including cost, accommodation, etc, will be issued in due course, but if you are eligible you are encouraged to save the date now.

Any questions on the event should be forwarded to Cdr N J Hall RN, e-mail [neil.hall324@mod.uk](mailto:neil.hall324@mod.uk) or telephone 023 9272 7142.

# Our man in Oz gets reward from hosts

**WHILE his colleagues in the UK shiver in winter, Cdr Rob Donovan is enjoying the Australian summer – and celebrating receiving a commendation from his hosts.**

The RN logistics officer, currently embedded in the Australian Defence Force's Joint Logistics Command in Canberra, received an ADF Silver Level Commendation from Maj Gen David Mulhall.

Cdr Donovan has worked on delivering the ADF's maritime and amphibious capability from the Port of Darwin in the Northern Territory.

The ADF needed to provide suitable berthing and landing facilities for its two new amphibious landing helicopter dock ships, HMAS Adelaide, pictured below, and Canberra.

The answer to the issue was

to use commercial facilities wherever possible and Cdr Donovan was responsible for negotiating an innovative agreement to guarantee access to the newly-privatised Port of Darwin.

The deal has set the template for further agreements across Australia.

At the same time Cdr Donovan was involved in the planning and building of a new amphibious loading facility – the Multi User Barge Ramp – at Darwin.

He negotiated a new access and maintenance agreement, which included significant investment by ADF.

"You can see I am not just enjoying myself in the sun in Australia, there is a lot of work going on," said Cdr Donovan, who is pictured receiving his commendation from Maj Gen Mulhall.



## Bright future as weatherman leaves regulars

AN experienced weatherman working at RNAS Culdrose has given his final met brief in the Royal Navy after 32 years' service.

WO1(METOC) Paul Hulford, presented his final study and calculations of the day's weather to Wings, Cdr Jason Phillip, and air traffic personnel.

Paul's briefings regularly made up the forecasts that are the starting point for all flying from RNAS Culdrose, as well as seen by national and international organisations around the world.

"I started my met career here at Culdrose at the Navy's Met School in 1985," said Paul. "I was a Naval Airman

METOC(Observer) then, taking readings and using all the instruments around the tower and feeding them to the forecasters."

Since then Paul has served on some of the Royal Navy's large capital ships on all the oceans of the world.

"Over my 32 years I've had some happy memories serving on the carriers

Ark Royal and Illustrious, as well as working with the embarked air groups on exercises and major operations."

Paul is not retiring from the Service completely as he will be part of the Royal Navy Reserve Air Branch based at Joint Operational Meteorology Oceanography Centre at Northwood.

## Cheery Chid hosts chef

■ FORMER Royal Navy chef Robert Irvine, now the star of the US Food Network show *Restaurant Impossible* visited HMS Chiddingfold in Bahrain.

As a young AB(Chef) in the RN, Irvine served in the Royal Yacht Britannia, catering for the Royal Family and heads of state.

A keen supporter of the Armed Forces, Robert has spent months touring with USO, the organization which provides entertainment to US forces deployed around the world and took time out of his schedule to get back to his Royal Navy roots.

His visit included a tour of the Cheery Chid, a coffee with junior rates and time in the galley with the ship's own catering team.

He went on to invite AB(Chef) 'Tug' Wilson to join him on stage at his live show later that evening. Tug accepted the invitation and found himself (with a little help from ET(ME) Tom Howe) in a 'cook off' with Robert himself. The winner of the competition was decided in a blind taste test from members of the audience, where Tug's peanut chicken dish was judged to be the best.

■ THE Maritime Volunteer Service is seeking to recruit a new chief volunteer officer from serving or retired RN personnel or civilians.

The post involves managing the day-to-day operations of the service and a requirement to attend the meetings of the National Council, held in London four or five times a year.

For more information visit the MVS website at [www.mvs.org](http://www.mvs.org) or telephone 01925 715033.

Application forms can be obtained via email to [hq@mvs.org.uk](mailto:hq@mvs.org.uk) or by using the Contact Us page on the website. The closing date is March 31 2017.

■ PERSONNEL at HM Naval Base Clyde raised £1,500 for the charity Cash for Kids after holding a wear your Christmas jumper to work day.

Hundreds at the military site swapped their uniforms for festive finery, sporting a variety of cheesy Christmas jumpers for the good cause.

Naval Base workers were asked to donate a minimum of £1 in order to be able to wear their Christmas jumpers.

■ A TEAM of serving and ex-submariners raised £1,350 for the Anthony Nolan Trust by organising various fundraising events.

The ship's company of HMS Tireless, which was decommissioned in June 2014, held a reunion at the Royal Navy Comrades Club in Portsmouth which was attended by 70 former boatmates.

During the reunion there was a raffle and auction, which raised £725. Some of the prizes on offer included a handmade set of dolphins, an engraved cheeseboard, and a Tireless portrait painting.

■ HMS Sultan Wives Club put their baking skills to the test to raise £1,000 for good causes.

The money was split between Leesland School towards the costs of refurbishing their swimming pool and Alabare Christian Care Support, who help support homeless veterans in the Gosport and Fareham area.



## Welcome to Belfast

TS ROYALIST makes her way into Belfast for her first visit to the city.

The Sea Cadets' flagship was led into port by a fire tug spraying the way past the rigs and cranes.

During her visit, she hosted cadets from the 11 Sea Cadet training ships in Northern Ireland, as well as hosting a reception for local dignitaries and the naming ceremony for the region's two new RS Quest sailing dinghies.

Since her launch in 2015 by Princess Anne, TS Royalist has circumnavigated the UK with hundreds of cadets setting sail on their own great adventure, meeting new people and learning new skills.

Picture: Oliver Coote, BRNC



## Top yachting

FORMER Sea Cadet Zara Roberts has been awarded the prestigious RYA Yachtmaster of the Year award.

Zara, 30, who learned to sail, windsurf and powerboat with Scarborough unit, received the award at the London Boat Show from the Princess Royal.

RYA Yachtmaster of the Year is awarded to someone who possesses outstanding skills and knowledge as a skipper and will have successfully demonstrated their expertise and experience during their Yachtmaster exam.

Zara, who runs a nutritionist and personal-training business, said: "Passing the Yachtmaster exam means the world to me."

# Car-crash hero

BRAVE teenager Lewis kept calm and used his Sea Cadet skills to rescue his injured family after a car crash.

AC Lewis, of Ballymena unit, kept his relatives calm and lifted them to safety.

Following the two-car collision between Ballymena and Antrim, Lewis helped his father, Thomas, his father's partner, Hazel Edgar, and her son, Stuart – and said

he would not have responded in this way had it not been for Sea Cadets, which taught him the skills and values.

AC Lewis, who is now recovering from the incident, realised that he had to prioritise his actions, and accordingly lifted Stuart out of the vehicle.

The 16-year-old student, who has applied to join the Royal Navy Reserves, said: "My dad's partner's son is only eight years old and has cerebral palsy, so I was quite worried about him – he was first on my priority list to get out of the car in case he had a seizure.

"I lifted him out of the window to a passer-by.

"I went back for my dad, because he was in the air from the seatbelt – he had no support at all, and I helped him.

"My dad's partner said she was finding it hard to breathe because the seatbelt was round her neck, so I tried to calm her down."

Ms Edgar was cut free from the wreckage by emergency services.

"When I got out of the car, I was checking everyone was OK," said Lewis.

"I tried to keep everyone positive and told everyone to stay still.

"My thought at the time was just to make sure everyone was all right.

"Looking back, it could have been much worse.

"If I wasn't in Sea Cadets, I wouldn't have known what to do.

"What you are taught at Sea Cadets doesn't compare to what



● AC Lewis

taught to think positively, and that is what I tried to do."

The chairman of Ballymena unit, Ruth Verner, said: "Ballymena Sea Cadets is very proud of Lewis, and always is.

"He is a fantastic cadet to have at the unit, and he is very dedicated and very good with the younger cadets – they all look up to him.

"It is no surprise that he would be so selfless and demonstrate the values Sea Cadets has taught him.

"There is a football tournament this Sunday [less than a week after the accident], and he is still planning on playing in it.

"His dedication to the unit is to be admired."

you are taught at school.

"Sea Cadets has built my confidence, and helped with positive thinking – you are always

The crash took place on Monday January 2 on the main dual carriageway between Ballymena and Antrim.



● The family's car in the aftermath of the crash

Picture: PSNI

## 'Best kept secret' is revealed

STAFF (and cadets, volunteers and supporters) think that the Corps is the best kept secret around.

So this month the organisation is using #BestKeptSecret and encouraging units to base their usual annual recruitment drive around that hashtag, encouraging communities to join in the conversation.

Sailing, rowing, kayaking and rock-climbing are just some of the fantastic activities on offer at Sea Cadets.

The national youth charity is encouraging young people aged between ten and 18 to visit their local unit and find out what amazing opportunities are on offer to them.

Cadets can enjoy a variety of activities, from dinghy sailing to band practice, and also have the opportunity to go on offshore voyages or sign up to the International Exchange Programme, under which they can travel to places such as Bermuda, the United States, Hong Kong and Australia.

Nationally-accredited courses are also on offer, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and BTEC qualifications.

Captain Sea Cadets, Capt Phil Russell RN, said: "There are countless opportunities for young people at Sea Cadets.

"They can enjoy water-based and land activities, go on offshore voyages and take part in recognised schemes, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, all while boosting their self-confidence and making new friends.

"Sea Cadets is committed to ensuring all young people have a bright future. With us, they will develop life skills which will set them in good stead for whatever they choose to do later in life."

Find your nearest Sea Cadet unit at [www.sea-cadets.org/find-your-nearest-unit](http://www.sea-cadets.org/find-your-nearest-unit)

## First Clasp

CPO Karen Derbyshire, of Leicester Unit, received the First Clasp for completing 18 years with the service.

Karen, of TS Tiger, already holds the Queen's Cadet Forces Medal for 12 years of service.

She joined the unit more than 20 years ago.

## No.10 reward for Tormentors

WOULD you let this lot run the country?

Well, actually, you could do a lot worse...

Four female cadets pose in front of the UK's most famous political address – part of an unforgettable day in the capital for the boys and girls of TS Tormentor from Warsash.

As a reward for all their efforts supporting the local community and winning the Canada trophy, Fareham MP Suella Fernandes invited the unit for an exclusive VIP guided tour of the corridors of power.

She showed the youngsters around the Houses of Commons and Lords before joining cadets in Downing Street for a photo opportunity outside No.10 Downing Street.

OC Andrew (aged 13) thought it was "pretty cool, especially standing in the very chamber where you see the Prime Minister and MPs on the telly."

The unit's OIC PO Adam Travell added: "This was a great ending to an amazing year for Warsash unit and a real treat for everyone who could come along."

## Whitehaven stalwart mourned

MEMBERS of Whitehaven unit are mourning the loss of their former Commanding Officer and long-standing supporter, Lt Cdr (SCC) James Ryan RNR.

James Ryan's association with the unit spanned a total of 36 years, including 26 years as Commanding Officer – a record which has never been beaten.

James joined Whitehaven as a Sea Cadet in 1946, rising through the ranks to become a Petty Officer Cadet.

He made the transition from cadet to a junior officer with TS Bee in 1953 and became the unit's First Lieutenant in 1955.

James was appointed as Commanding Officer in 1956, a post which he held until his retirement in 1982.

As a cadet, James had the honour of being

selected to attend the first Commonwealth Sea Cadet Camp, hosted by Canada in 1949.

As a Sea Cadet Officer, Lt Cdr Ryan received the Cadet Forces Medal in 1961, a bar to the medal in 1973, and a rarely-awarded second bar shortly before his retirement in 1982.

Whitehaven unit president Lt Cdr (SCC) Bill Hurst RNR – who is himself a former Whitehaven cadet and Commanding Officer – said that James was an active and enthusiastic CO, well-liked and respected by all who knew him.

"Jim Ryan expected much from both the cadets and his fellow officers. He was dedicated to the unit and inspired everyone to give their best.

"He will be very much missed and, on behalf of everyone at TS Bee, I would like to extend our sincere condolences to Jim's family at this difficult time."





● RFA Cadets get a Royal Navy sailor's eye view of a replenishment at sea as HMS Portland takes on fuel from RFA Gold Rover in the South Atlantic

# (Port)land ahoy as cadets swap ships

JUNIOR sailors on Britain's oldest Naval ship swapped places with young counterparts from HMS Portland for an extended taste of life in the other's service.

Three RFA Cadets and six Young Officers undergoing training aboard veteran tanker RFA Gold Rover and frigate HMS Portland crossed to each other's ships as they ploughed their way across the South Atlantic.

Portland is in the second half of a nine-month deployment split between countering terrorism in the Indian Ocean and promoting and protecting British interests in the South Atlantic.

With 210 sailors and Royal Marines aboard, Portland has a crew nearly four times the size of the Tyneside-built tanker, which is due to be retired in the spring after 43 years' service, while the frigate is due to go into maintenance when she returns to the UK.

The cadets swapped a world designed at the beginning of the 1970s, where even trainee officers enjoy two-man cabins, for a 1990s warship with large messes with bunk beds stacked in threes.

By comparison the RN Young Officers experienced the comparative luxury of large single cabins on board Gold Rover.

"Though accommodation arrangements were somewhat more cramped than we are used to, it was an educational experience and we were shown great hospitality by the Royal Navy," said Cadet Chris Dorling.

With just 56 people aboard, the RN guests were interested to see how the tanker crew coped with emergencies – a mock galley fire was laid on, while the RFA cadets saw Team Portland deal with a simulated helicopter crash on the frigate's flight

deck.

The frigate experience included time in the ops room (Gold Rover doesn't have one, just her bridge...) watching console operators deal with various simulated attacks.

And the RFA cadets got airborne in the ship's Lynx – the very last one deploying on an operational mission before the helicopter is retired next month – as the two ships negotiated the stunning Patagonian Canals at the foot of South America.

The highlight of trading places was a replenishment at sea or RAS when fuel lines were passed from Gold Rover to Portland to refill the latter's tanks.

On the tanker, the Royal Navy trainee officers observed the chief officer prepared for the refuelling by walking the lines and opening and closing the correct valves and starting pumps so fuel is recirculated prior to connection. They then watched the winch driving and the monitoring of flow rates and tank levels from the RAS control room.

By contrast, the RFA cadets witnessed the way a receiving ship breaks the initial pressure wave to take position using the fast back/down approach and the constant minor changes of course and speed need to maintain position with ship to ship pressure interactions.

"It was interesting to observe the RN approach to bridge management and to see how the different departments on board work together," said Cdt George Macgregor.

Fellow RFA cadet David Dale added: "Seeing the job from everyone's perspective can only improve the mix. Moving forward I feel I better equipped to work with the Royal Navy. All in all, it was a great experience enjoyed by all."

## Naval Families FEDERATION

As we step into 2017, here's a round-up of some stories which may be of interest:

### Service Pupil Premium Guide

The MOD has now produced a booklet showing a selection of effective, creative and innovative ways in which schools have used Service Pupil Premium. You can read the guide in our Education section of our website at [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk).

### Bishop Speaks Up For Service Families

The Bishop of the Church of England in Portsmouth, Rt Revd Christopher Foster, led an important debate in the House of Lords on January 9, to ask the government "what is their assessment of the role of the Armed Forces Covenant in ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated with fairness and respect."

### Fifty per cent Discount Courses For Naval Spouses

The Marine Society are now offering a discount on education courses, through their partnership with Greenwich Hospital. They are offering GCSE, IGCSE, AS and A Level courses in a number of subjects at a 50 per cent discount for all Royal

Navy and Royal Marines spouses. Please email [education@ms-sc.org](mailto:education@ms-sc.org) to find out more.

### Continuity of Education Allowance

From February 1, all Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) Eligibility Certificates (EC), whether renewals or initial applications, must be submitted using the new electronic form on JPA. Paper format ECs initiated after this date will be rejected.

### Help Make Transition Better for Families

If you are leaving the Royal Navy or Royal Marines and you have at least nine months left until your final day of service, we want to hear from you! We're running a two-year project to gain a better understanding of the transition process and the challenges that surround it. To say 'thank you', you will receive a gift from ESS. If you're interested or you know someone who might be, call 023 9265 4374 or email our Lucy Heaver, Transition Liaison at [Transition@nff.org.uk](mailto:Transition@nff.org.uk). Help us make transition better for families.

As always, contact us with your feedback and questions either via email [contactus@nff.org.uk](mailto:contactus@nff.org.uk), social media or give us a call on 023 9265 4374. We are your federation.



# WELFARE

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● Prince Michael of Kent toured the facilities at HMS Calliope

**Royal says thanks to Calliope family**

THE Honorary Vice Admiral of the Royal Naval Reserve – better known as Prince Michael of Kent – dropped in on Gateshead's unit to thank families and employers for their support, and reward some stalwarts of the Service.

He told all present at **HMS Calliope** that the ongoing encouragement and moral – and physical – support of loved ones and employers was key to enabling Reservists to carry out their important duties alongside their Regular counterparts in the Regular Royal Navy.

During the reception at the establishment on the south bank of the Tyne, three Calliope officers who'd accumulated nearly 100 years' service in the Reserve and Cadet Forces were presented with awards to mark their achievement.

Head of the Royal Naval Reserve Medical Branch (and a consultant general surgeon at Sunderland Hospital) Surg Cdr Peter Small, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, was presented with the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (VRSM).

Lt Cdr Duncan Young was presented with a second clasp to his VRSM. An experienced mine warfare specialist who's spent periods as a 'full time' Reservist working alongside his regular counterparts, Duncan is a

resilience officer for Sunderland City Council during the week.

Lt Paul Ladislaus was presented with the first clasp to the VRSM. Paul is a Maritime Trade Operations Specialist and he has spent time in the Gulf supporting anti-piracy efforts.

Paul is a chartered chemical engineer with Thomas Swan & Co Ltd, a North East-based independent firm manufacturing speciality chemicals.

He took his boss Dr Andy Goodwin to the reception to give him a greater insight into the RN.

"It was a great opportunity to visit HMS Calliope and learn more about what Paul does when he goes away with the Royal Navy," said Dr Goodwin.

"We appreciate that he gains leadership skills with the Reserve Service which he brings back into our workforce and makes a positive impact."

Calliope's CO Cdr Ian Berry said: "We are very privileged that His Royal Highness was able to take the time to present these three individuals from very different civilian careers with their long service awards.

"However, we should also recognise that they could not have achieved this without the support of their employers, friends and families."

**Dedication rewarded**

THE senior training officer of **Bristol University Royal Naval Unit** has received a top award in recognition of his dedication to training students over the last 20 years.

Lt Christopher Cameron was selected to receive one of Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Bristol's certificates for meritorious service.

A former Gordon Highlander, Lt Cameron joined Bristol URNU as a training officer in 1995.

Since then he has mentored more than 350 URNU students, teaching them skills such as navigation and leadership, as well as accompanying them on several deployments around the UK and Europe.

"I am shocked but thoroughly thrilled to have received this," said Lt Cameron, who lives in Wiltshire.

His CO Lt Lorna Wilson said: "Lt Cameron is extremely



● Lt Cameron receives his award from Mary Prior, the Lord Lieutenant of Bristol

dedicated, whilst leading by example in motivating and developing the students.

"He is thoroughly deserving of this award."

**Six of the very best**

FOUR reservists from **HMS Sherwood** were rewarded for their services to the Royal Naval Reserve, with a further two presented with long service medals.

AB Daniel Simmonds received the Chief Radio Supervisor Hall Recruit Trophy for impressing his command during phase one training.

AB Richard Cooke received the Sherwood Shield for the most improved rating.

Sub Lt Victoria Rogers received the Towle Sword for commitment.

And PO Andy Maltby was presented with the CO's Cup for his contribution to the East Midlands unit.

POs Andrew Maltby and Derek Parsons received clasps for 30 years' service and 15 years' service respectively.

Sherwood's Commanding Officer Rob Noble said: "At the very heart of the Armed Services are its people. This is no different for the Royal Naval Reserve here at HMS Sherwood in Nottingham.

"It is therefore key that we recognise those members of the ship's company that have gone that extra mile."

For more information about East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association visit [www.eastmidlandsrfa.co.uk](http://www.eastmidlandsrfa.co.uk)

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# Raising the bar

● Right, Melanie Haslam receives her trophy from referee Paul Collinson; Below, AB Ash Crabtree, from HMS Queen Elizabeth; Far right: Mne Sam Fowler of 43 Cdo; Bottom, Leading Chef Wesley McGuinness, of HMS Trenchant



ROYAL Marine Sam Fowler grimaces as he makes a heavy lift during the annual Royal Navy power-lifting competition.

The efforts needed were clear to see on the faces of the 38 competitors.

The contest, held at HM Naval Base Devonport, included power-lifters from the Army and RAF going into battle against their counterparts from the Senior Service.

LPT Melanie Haslam, from Plymouth-based Type 23 frigate HMS Montrose, took the trophy for top female at the contest, with a lift of 360kg.

Top man was event organiser LPT Andrew Davey, an exercise rehabilitation instructor with Hasler Naval Service Recovery Centre in Devonport. He lifted a total of 698.5kg.

LPT Davey said: "This is an increasingly popular sport because it is easy to measure your progress compared with some similar disciplines and is good for fitness.

"The competition has widespread appeal – open to grassroots and international competitors alike.

"The latter put their egos on the line by taking part and are therefore, a good example to the others.

"Devonport has been a good showcase for power-lifting with a keen audience of colleagues. The sport is going from strength to strength."

Anyone interested in taking part in power-lifting should contact LPT Davey on [NAVY PERS-HASLER ERI4@mod.uk](mailto:NAVY.PERS-HASLER.ERI4@mod.uk)

Pictures: LPhotos Ken Gaunt and Baz Wheeler, FRPU(W)



## Navy fencers are a knockout



A TEAM of three Naval officers from Naval Command Headquarters in Portsmouth have won an annual **fencing** knockout competition in London.

The Royal Navy Knockout competition is an inter-unit team contest which takes place each year on the drill deck of the London Royal Naval Reserve Unit, HMS President.

Originally established to provide teams for the once much-loved Royal Tournament, it now lives on as a high-profile event in the calendar of the Royal Navy Amateur Fencing Association.

The trophy was won by a Portsmouth team consisting of Cdr Al Richter (CNPers), Lt Cdr Rubin Nash (Warfare Division and Captain RNAFA) and Lt Guy Woodward (SM Division).

"It is a great honour to bring home the trophy for what is such a fantastic, long-running event in the fencing calendar," said Lt Cdr Nash. "But it is even more satisfying in the face of such stiff competition."

Fencing in the Royal Navy is thriving, encompassing all levels from beginners to Commonwealth medallists.

With regular competitions throughout the year, including tours to Guernsey and Canada, new fencers are always welcome.

There is also club training every Tuesday at HMS Temeraire, and fencing is now a recent addition to Wednesday afternoon sport at Britannia Royal Naval College.

Anyone interested in taking part should contact Lt Cdr Nash on [rubin.nash648@mod.uk](mailto:rubin.nash648@mod.uk)



● Bangor's runners, back row, from left, AB(MW) Rattray, LET(WE) CIS Lewis, AB(LOGCS) Harland, Lt Hughes, ET(WE)CIS Smith, PO(MW) Bowes, Lt Callender and Sub Lt Spedding; Front row, from left, LS(MW) Hall, AB(MW) Forster and LLogs(CS) McIntosh,

## Bangor's Fozzy rocks

MINE Counter Measures 1 Crew 7, currently on board HMS Bangor, are in the middle of a maintenance period in Bahrain.

The crew took advantage of time alongside to stretch their legs by taking part in the Martin Luther King Jr 5km run at the US base.

While for most this was purely a chance to get their hands on a free T-shirt, AB(MW) Ben 'Fozzy' Forster came back with much more.

He took the gold in a time of 18:05, beating not only the RN MCM and UKMCC representatives but also a field of roughly 200 Americans.

## Jump to it, here's a really great offer

TANDEM flights are now available with members of the Royal Navy Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association.

Experienced paragliding pilot Lt Cdr Andy Claxton has recently been equipped with a tandem wing and harness, thanks to funding from the Sports Lottery, and can take people for a flight in Hampshire.

He said: "After ten years of flying solo I recently qualified as a tandem pilot so that I too could give people the same opportunities to experience a very unique way to fly, to see the smile on their faces and perhaps inspire new potential pilots into our amazing sport."

The association also has experienced pilots with tandem equipment in Dorset, North Devon and West Cornwall. Anyone who would like to apply should contact RNHPA Secretary Lt Cdr Tim Oatley on 93871 2920 or via military email. After you have experienced your tandem flight, you are highly likely to decide that you wish to continue further in the sport.

The initial two courses that have to be completed are the Elementary Pilot course, and then the Club Pilot course. Paragliding is recognised as both a sport and adventurous training and therefore all the courses attract duty status and are free to the individual if training with the Services, a saving of approximately £1,100 over your civilian counterpart.

After successful completion of

these courses, club pilots can then fly in the UK at a local civilian club, under the watchful eye of a club coach, until they have gained experience and pass their "pilot" rating.

There are two ways to apply for the free courses, depending on whether you wish to learn in the valleys of Wales or the alpine setting of Bavaria.

To apply for Wales, visit the Joint Services Paragliding Centre intranet site, or refer to 2016DIN07-142.

For Bavaria, visit the ATGA site on the Defence Gateway, available via the internet. For more information, contact a member of the RNHPA, via Lt Cdr Oatley.

Last year the RNHPA, which competes at the Inter-Services Championships, secured funding for equipment which it targeted at junior rate level in a bid to encourage take up of the sport. There is still some equipment available after successful completion of the Club Pilot course. It will cost £10 a month in service charges and pilots will need to buy their own paragliding helmet, which costs around £80.

Additionally, the UK Armed Forces Paragliding Association and individual Service associations offer subsidised training exercises and overseas expeditions throughout the year where you can get to fly over the flatlands of Spain, the notorious mountainous Antioquia province of Colombia, the foothills of Nepal and of course the Inter-Services in Wales.



## Thrills and spills lead to trophies

MEMBERS of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Road Racing Team gather with their silverware from last season.

But the sport is not just about the trophies, as Royal Marines Road Race team captain Brian Fuidge explained.

"Sitting on the grid with 30-plus motorbike engines rumbly in the background, the marshals waves his flag causing a roar to erupt as the bikes' revs are raised in preparation to be launched.

"The red lights come on and then go out; I release the clutch so the bike blasts off the start line and down the long straight, overtaking a rider or two before leaning into the first corner. What a dream start to a racing career for any bike rider.

"That, however, isn't always the way of things as I found out when my engine stopped, requiring a bump start from the marshals as my competitors disappeared into the distance.

"To add to the experience halfway into the race I ran on into a corner, hit a divot in the grass and parted ways with my machine.

"Best to get the first one out of the way early on perhaps. Not

to worry, a few hours and some pusser's black maskers later, the bike and I were all set for race two and the exhilaration was like nothing I've experienced before.

"Throttle on the stops all the way down the back straight before braking hard, dropping three gears and plunging the bike into the corner, knee slider scraping the tarmac, before flicking it over for the next.

"Such a unique sensation that riders either know and love or aspire to achieve. After that the weekend got better and better and now I'm hooked."

The main effort goes into getting the bike ready for racing, and is often underestimated, but buying a pre-prepared one is a simple solution.

All you need to do otherwise is ensure you have the kit required and obtain your race licence. It's a one-day course consisting of a morning in the classroom learning the necessities of racing and then a few laps around a track following the instructor so your ability can be assessed.

If you are interested then contact the RNRMRTT at [www.theroyalmarinescharity.org.uk/sports-associations/motor-sports/](http://www.theroyalmarinescharity.org.uk/sports-associations/motor-sports/)



## Seahawk flying high in Navy Cup

RNAS Culdrose's rugby union team secured the Navy Cup for the second consecutive year – avenging defeat by Britannia Royal Naval College two years ago.

HMS Seahawk started the better and was rewarded for some fine forward play inside the first nine minutes.

Seahawk skipper AET Sam Carter ran in to post their first points on the board.

His conversion narrowly missed but he made amends with a penalty kick minutes later to give the airmen from West Cornwall an eight-point lead at the midpoint stage of the first half.

BRNC, made up mainly of Officer Cadets who have newly joined the Naval Service and have only been together for a few weeks, rallied well and applied pressure, but they were hit with a counter-try that showed full back LAET Paul Saberton's football skills, as much as his rugby ability.

Carter's extras gave Seahawk a 15-0 cushion, but the Dartmouth outfit were not going to lay down and they ending the half in a strong position.

It was the Dartmouth skipper OC Luke Tupholme who ran home a try, but



● Capt Ellie Ablett presents the Navy Cup to AET Sam Carter, the captain of HMS Seahawk's rugby union side

missed the conversion to bring the score back to 15-5 at the break.

Seahawk came out strongly for the second half and increased their control on the pitch soon after. BRNC gave away a penalty within easy range of

Carter's boot.

After that they allowed BRNC to get themselves back into the contest. For long periods the defending champions were under the cosh, but with just a few minutes remaining the incessant pressure finally yielded points for the 2014 cup winners and they got a try.

A reverse pass from Luke Tupholme to OC Guildford allowed him to race in and score, closing the gap and with Tupholme's conversion, it made for a fitting 18-12 result to Seahawk.

"The boys dug out blind tonight," said AET Carter. "We took on a lot of pressure in the second half and credit to everyone we managed to hold them off.

"Fair play to Dartmouth, they were close at the end but I think our spirit held us together as a team. I'm well happy with that."

OC Tupholme, skipper of the BRNC team, said: "It was a spirited performance from us I think.

"This team was put together around the new intake 15 weeks ago. It is credit to our coaches that we got to the final and played well."

PICTURES: John Walton



## Victory for the officers

ROYAL Marines from 30 Commando competed in their annual Boot Match – a game held in every RM unit.

Senior non-commissioned officers went head-to-head against the unit's officers at the Royal Navy playing field in Keyham, Plymouth. The officers triumphed 17-7.

Regimental Sergeant Major of 30 Cdo IX Gp, WO1 Liam Douthwaite, said: "It was a real clash of the titans and a fiercely-contested game.

"Both teams played exceptionally well having had little time to practise and they showed true commando spirit."

PICTURES: LPhot Joel Rouse



# Only another 90 laps to go...

## Pair feel the heat aboard HMS Ocean



WITH temperatures topping 30°C, the last thing most people would do is train for the London Marathon.

But LMA Rachel Peet and LET Daryn Jackson have little choice; they are both currently in the Gulf aboard Fleet Flagship HMS Ocean.

During the six-month deployment, the duo have taken every opportunity they can to put in the miles ahead of the race on April 23.

Rachel, who has run the London Marathon before, and Jacko, who will be making his debut, are fitting in training around their usual work routines and

watch-keeping duties.

With around 800 personnel vying to use the ship's four treadmills, it can be tough.

The pair have limited access to the flight deck, which, at 203m in length means they need to run more than 100 laps to cover the marathon distance of 26.2 miles.

"Our departments and command chains have been understanding and flexible, assisting us in our training aboard," said Rachel.

The duo are fundraising for the Royal British Legion and donations can be made at [www.justgiving.com/Daryn-Rachel](http://www.justgiving.com/Daryn-Rachel)  
Picture: LPhoto Ben Shread, HMS Ocean

# Best of British

## Olympic maestro praises Royal Navy indoor rowers



● Lt Craig Guest is urged on by his wife Lt Cdr Ruth Guest. Both won bronze medals for the Royal Navy with personal-best performances at the British Rowing Indoor Championships

EIGHT medals and 16 personal bests were the order of the day as Royal Navy personnel took part in the British Rowing Indoor Championships at the Lee Valley Olympic Velodrome in London.

The 25-strong RN team topped the event with a fourth place in the men's 4km relay, where they faced world-class opposition.

Rowing coach Jürgen Gröbler, who mentored GB rowers to golds in eight consecutive Olympics, complimented the RN team on their performance as he joined them for a post-race photograph.

Finishing within 15 seconds of GB1 and GB2 teams were Lt Cdr Jim Thomson (NCHQ), Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol), Lt Craig Guest (HMS Collingwood) and Lt Callum Fraser (HMS Vanguard).

PO Sean Gaffney (RNAS Yeovilton) won the men's adaptive legs, trunk and arms 1km in a world-class time of 3min 4sec.

Navy veteran CPO Collin Lieba (FOST), AKA Mr Plymouth 1992, won a gold medal in the men's heavyweight 50-plus 500m race in a time of 1min 20.8sec. CPO Lieba was beaten into second place in the men's heavyweight 50-plus 2km by WO1 Tiny Nash (HMS Temeraire), whose world-class time of 6min 20.1sec showed a ten-second improvement on the previous year.

Gold was also won by C/Sgt Duncan Jamieson in the men's heavyweight 30-plus 500m in a time of 1min 19sec.

For the women, Lt Alex Kelley (BRNC Wales URNU) won a silver medal in the women's heavyweight 30-plus 2km, recording a personal-best time of 7min 20.2sec.

Lt Cdr Ruth Guest (Institute of Naval Medicine) and husband Craig both won bronze medals, both rowing personal bests. Ruth recorded a time of 7min 35.7sec in the women's lightweight 30-plus 2km and Craig rowed 6min 15sec in the men's heavyweight 30-plus race.

Missing out on a medal was Lt Cdr Thomson, who finished fifth in the men's heavyweight 40-plus 2km, with



● Jürgen Gröbler, left, with Lt Guest, Lt Cdr Hyde, team manager Paul Winton, Lt Fraser and Lt Cdr Thomson

a personal best of 6min 14.9sec, which made him the fastest Royal Navy rower at the championships.

CPO Tim Cox (HMS Collingwood) and the youngest team member AB Tom Walker (HMS Argyll) finished in fourth place in their respective races. CPO Cox rowed a time of 6min 43.3sec in the men's lightweight 40-plus 2km, with AB Walker recording a time of 6min 27.2sec in the men's heavyweight under-23 2km.

Personal bests over 2km were also achieved by: Lt Cdr Charlotte Peattie (PJHQ), Lt Cdr Hyde, Lt Stu Moss (HMS Sultan), Lt Fraser, C/Sgt Jamieson, CPOPT Daz Hoare (HMS Excellent), CPO Mark Campbell, PO Matt Parkinson and LPT Aaron Snowdon (all HMS Collingwood), POPT Chazz Charrett (HMS Temeraire), Cpl Dave Moody (40 Cdo) and NA(SE) Aaby Aldridge (HMS Queen Elizabeth).

Credit is also given to the three who just missed out, Lt Cdr Rory West (HMS Collingwood), Sgt Sam Arnold (CTCRM) and POPT Ian Robinson (JSU Northwood).

